

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

AMBASSADOR WILLIAM G. WALKER

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is the 7th of May, 2001. This is an interview with William G. Walker. My name is Charles Stuart Kennedy, this is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. And so, we will start at the beginning. Bill, could you tell me when and where you were born and a bit about your parents?

WALKER: Yes, I was born on June 1, 1935, in Kearny, New Jersey; I believe named after General Phillip Kearny.

Kearny, New Jersey, when I was born was very, very heavily populated by Scots who came over during the '20s from Paisley, Scotland. There was a big thread industry in Kearny, and also a shipbuilding industry. Paisley, Scotland had both those industries going way back. Both my parents came from Paisley, Scotland in the 1920s. Married here in the States.

Q: Had they known each other before?

WALKER: They had known each other, yes, the families had known each other in Paisley. They were both from working class families. I happened to be doing little genealogy studies over the past couple of years. These were people who were on the margins in Scotland. Making it somewhat difficult to trace ancestry. But anyway, they were both Scots, and my father's family had come over earlier, and had brought over his parents and older brother and that sort of thing, and my mother's family, which was a big one, also brought over the whole family, and they all ended up in Kearny. And so my early memories are of living almost as a Scot. My early English was very heavily accented with a Scottish brogue.

Q: What was the sort of background they had as far as schooling goes?

WALKER: My mother, I believe, as most kids in the British Isles in those days went to about the age of thirteen or fourteen. Like her older sisters and aunts and everybody else that wasn't married, at least as a female, she went into the mills. So I think she worked in the thread mills in Paisley. My father was better educated. He eventually got a degree in engineering, but it was mostly coming up through the apprenticeship system. And when he ended up in Kearny, he got involved with RCA.

Q: Radio Corporation of America.

WALKER: Radio Corporation America, that's what he did most of his adult life, as sort of a, I'm not sure if he was really an electrical engineer, but he was in that phase of what was then making radio tubes, making vacuum tubes. So he was better educated. My mother was a mother. She took care of the house, that sort of thing, as I guess she did from the day she got married.

Q: Did you have brothers or sisters?

WALKER: I had two older sisters, but one died in childhood before I was born. My sister is about four years older than I am, she was also born in Kearny.

Q: Kearny, what kind of a, you said shipbuilding, is it on the shore?

WALKER: No, no, it's right across the New Jersey meadows from New York City, but it's on the Passaic River, so they didn't have a shipbuilding facility there. It's in the Newark-Harrison part of the other side of the Jersey meadows from New York. I had a

richness in my early youth. My father's older brother, who was a second father to me, lived in the house that we lived in, in fact it was his house. He was a carpet designer, worked in New York City. So almost every year, after I reached a fairly young age, maybe four or five, almost every weekend he would take me or the family would go over to New York City, and I sort of grew up in the museums and the sights of New York City. I have a very pleasant memory of, what were the war years actually, from the age of five to the age of six, or ten or eleven, I spent in grammar school in Kearny, but weekends in New York City with my uncle or with the family, doing the sort of cultural stuff.

Q: Great. Well, while you were in grammar school, were there any teachers or sort of subjects that kind of inspired you or grabbed you?

WALKER: Yes, absolutely, there was. The public schools in Kearny, New Jersey, back then at least, were really very, very strong, very, very good. And I went to one, Roosevelt Elementary School, in which there were at least, well all my teachers in elementary school were quite strong, all women. But there were two that were particularly strong, one was a woman named Mary Lennon, who I had in the fourth grade. Mary Lennon was an incredible woman who taught all the subjects, since it was the fourth grade, but she eventually became superintendent of school in Kearny well after I'd left. She was a warm but rigorous, disciplined person, and took a shine to me, and I learned an incredible amount from this woman, all the way from learning about the life of George M. Cohen, because she wrote musical shows, and I ended up being Harrigan in one of them, and to this day I sing that song whenever I can.

Q: H A R R-I

WALKER: R I G A N spells Harrigan! And she called me Harrigan to the day she died, and always was an inspiration to me in terms of doing well in school, learning some of these things that maybe not everyone gets involved in. The other woman was quite a different person, Miss Zinc was her name. She was my third and fifth grade teacher, I had her twice, and she got me interested in such things as birds. She was an avid birder, and for some reason or other she took us out on field trips and got us into this thing about being out and looking at birds through binoculars, and to this day, I've got feeders in my yard, I watch birds. I try to impress people by identifying birds as they fly, that sort of stuff. But these two women were both very, very crucial in terms of sort of making me want to do well in school, if nothing else.

Q: Well as you moved on, elementary and then towards high school, how about reading?

WALKER: I am a late comer to reading as a real pastime. I've gotta take you out of Kearny, because at the end of the war, '46, '47 period, my father's health went to the point where he was told "You better go out to a warmer climate, get away from the dampness of the east coast." And we ended up moving to California, took six weeks to drive out to California.

Q: Good heavens, why six weeks?

WALKER: Well, we did the entire United States.

Q: Oh, okay.

WALKER: Just five people in a 1941 Oldsmobile. We never had had a car before. We bought this car after the war, used, because there weren't any new ones around. You had to be on a waiting list to get a car. So my dad bought this used car. He had known how to drive before he was married, so he knew how to drive. We sent uncle Bill out as an advance party, he went out to Santa Monica, California, bought a house, and came back to the east coast. The family, the four of us plus uncle Bill got in the car and drove to the west coast, taking five and a half, six weeks. We wandered through up to Wisconsin, we did the whole United States.

Q: Great!

WALKER: Yes, another great experience. But when I got to California, and went into junior high school out there, I discovered that my elementary school education in New Jersey, of all places, had put me well ahead of those who had come up through the California elementary school system. And so I kind of coasted for a couple years. And within that period, when I might have been reading a lot, when I should have been reading a lot, when you start getting into doing things like writing book reports, I was kind of cheating. I sort of had this knowledge of some books, so I didn't actually have to read them to write a book report on them. It really wasn't until I was into late teens or '20s that I really got into reading, both as a pastime, as a pleasure, as something where you can learn things that you didn't know existed before. So I consider myself now an avid reader. I'm a non-fiction reader. I don't really enjoy or get into fiction as much as others do, my wife is a very avid reader, and she reads everything, but mostly fiction. I've always been into non-fiction. But as I say, a latecomer to reading as both a pleasure and a learning tool.

Q: Well how did you find, you were in California from, what, 1947, so about twelve. How did you find the California school system?

WALKER: I found it as I said not as challenging as I had undergone, maybe with Ms. Lennon's teaching or Miss Zinc's teaching. I went out there and from the moment I hit junior high school, all the way through high school, I was a star. I was a straight-A student. I was the one the teachers like, because I seemed to have picked up some of these things, which I'd actually picked up before. So I wasn't impressing myself, but I seemed to be impressing them. The school system was good, the Santa Monica school system, I don't know if you're familiar with California. Santa Monica is this enclave, the beach town of Los Angeles. It is a separate entity so it has its' own school system. Within the Los Angeles area the Santa Monica schools were and to this day are considered exceptionally fine schools. But they weren't at the level that the Kearny schools had been. More on the social side, more on the extracurricular side, which was fine with me.

Q: Well, I would have thought, I mean later I guess it got into an art, but I would have thought that being right on the beach there and all this, that this would have had an enervating effect on everyone. I mean all the girls seemed to be beautiful, the Hollywood influence and all that.

WALKER: Not when I was there.

Q: Different breeding.

WALKER: Yes, I grew up twenty blocks from the beach. I spent an awful lot of time from the age of twelve to the age of whenever I left California to come into the Foreign Service on the beach. I became a very avid surfer before surfing was the craze it was later on. I became very avid in terms of beach volleyball. There were things you could do all year round in southern California. But I also had the downside of those things, which is my complexion. You know, I was the kid who was always covered in Zinc Oxide, because I peeled three or four times a year.

Q: You've got a good Scottish redness?

WALKER: Redness to me, right, yes, my wife insisted yesterday as a matter of fact that I must be a Viking rather than Celtic type because of my redness. I spent a lot of time on the beach, but when you're covered in Zinc Oxide and weight a hundred and twenty pounds, which is what I did up through adulthood, and are six feet tall, those beautiful southern California girls tend to not pay much attention to you. I read that page of the comics many a time.

Q: This is a Charles...

WALKER: Charles Atlas. Well, I was the kid on the ground with the sand and the problems with the big muscular guys, you got it.

Q: What sort of subjects particularly grabbed you while you were in high school

WALKER: High school I was best at anything involving mathematics, and anything involving art. Perhaps derivative from my uncle, who was a carpet designer, who had done some really spectacular things in the way of the art world. He for instance designed a rug that was in Radio City Music Hall. It was the main rug, it was an enormous thing, and it was just the classic of its time. So I was really quite interested in art. He, of course, pushed me, and was always buying me paint stands and this sort of stuff. And I was pretty good at it, so the drawing classes, the mathematics classes up through calculus, were where I was able to shine. And both of them to this day remain of interest to me.

Q: Did you get, I mean you were in what was known as La La Land and all, did you get involved in, I mean were you seeing a lot of movies and things like this?

WALKER: Yes, I saw a lot of movies for two reasons. One, because this was what one did on Friday nights and Saturday nights, was go to movies in Hollywood or along Wilshire Boulevard or in Santa Monica itself. I almost always went with my pals rather than with those beautiful girls we were talking about earlier. But I saw an awful lot of movies. That was one part of it. The other part of it was, this sister of mine, the older sister, when we got to California she finished high school there, and went on to junior college, then went on to work and got a job at Metro Goldwyn Mayer, MGM. She was very good at what she did, started out at the lowest level, but quickly worked her way up. Ended up as a publicist for MGM. As a result of that, I spent a lot of time on the MGM lot, and this was back when MGM was the king of Hollywood in terms of the big studios.

Q: More stars than in heaven.

WALKER: You've got it. She was sort of a social loner herself, so when she was invited to go to premiers and stuff, she would take me along.

Q: Oh, wonderful.

WALKER: So I used to do a bit of that. So I did get in to the La La part of southern California as well as the more serious part.

Q: Well, while you were in high school, what were you pointed towards, did you have any idea?

WALKER: Again, I had a great deal of luck in high school. There were some very, very good teachers at Santa Monica High School. The last honor I received, early part of May, I was invited out to California to be inducted into the Santa Monica High School Hall of Fame.

Q: Oh.

WALKER: Now I know how that sounds, a High School Hall of Fame, but in Santa Monica, we're talking about a number of movie stars are in the Hall of Fame. There are some very serious people in this Hall of Fame, it's a fairly small Hall of Fame. In the ten-minute speech I was able to give, two of us were inducted this year, and in my speech I mentioned two of my teachers who had been sort of the same sort of inspirational sort of people, both of whom have passed away. One was a fellow named John Crawford. He was a mathematics teacher but he used mathematics to teach you how to win basketball games, how to play horses, how to figure the odds on horses, probability, this sort of stuff. He was a bit of a whacko, but he was also quite inspirational in terms of getting you into some of the things that mathematics can be used for, which we don't usually think of. That was one thing, for instance, his theory of how you win a basketball game. Back then there was no twenty four-second rule. His theory of winning basketball games, and he was a basketball coach at times, was you get control of the ball, and then you just use up the whole clock dribbling the ball. And if you're a better shooter than the other team, you wait for the very end, and then you take one or two shots, and since your percentage

is better than theirs you win by like two to nothing or something. Not exactly going to put you in a very good position these days, but back then it made a little bit of sense. That was John Crawford, a very inspirational teacher.

The other fellow was John Kennedy. He was my English teacher, my Philosophy teacher, very quiet man, very cerebral. But he also brought into the classroom when studying English Literature things that had nothing to do with English Literature, but just made your mind go off in directions that you never thought of before. So those are the two sort of teachers on the substance side that were quite inspirational.

But I also had a counselor, a fellow named Kelley, Mr. Kelley, who pointed me in the direction of getting a scholarship to go to college. Was the first to look at my interest in mathematics and my interest in the art world and say, "There's a perfect combination for you here, and that's architecture." And I ended up getting a scholarship with the University of Southern California to study architecture as a result of that.

Let me go back just a smidgen here. My father, when he left RCA in Kearny, and was told for his health he should go out to California, he went to his boss at RCA and said "I've gotta move to California." They said "Great, because we've got plants out there, that we can use you. So we'll transfer you out to Southern California." That was one of the reasons we could take six weeks and spend all our money driving out to California because he had the job assured out there. When we got out there, I'll never forget, because I piled into the car with him the day we went out for him to go to this new plant and check in and show himself. I'll never forget him coming out, and he was quite downtrodden, because he'd been told one, the job wasn't there, they never heard of him. And two, he was now over forty-five, and they didn't hire anyone over forty-five in those days. So he was out of work for about four years. He went off every day, my dad was a very, very serious, low-key individual, had a very high work ethic, he just felt that if you didn't work there was something wrong with you or something, you know, it was your fault. He went out every day looking for a job for four years. And it was four years before he found one, because, '46, '47, all the GIs were coming home. There were lots of young people getting jobs, no one would hire anyone over forty-five. So we went through a fairly tough time, except I didn't notice it. We lived in this very nice house in Santa Monica. It was the house that my uncle went out and bought for twenty-five thousand dollars, sold twenty years later for over a million. Of course the people that bought it just tore it down, put up another house which they've got on the market now for over two million, so it's that sort of a real-estate situation. We lived on my uncle's retirement from the carpet business, and lived a comfortable life. I had some odd jobs.

Q: I was going to ask, what sort of jobs did you have?

WALKER: Delivering papers for the Santa Monica Evening Outlook from about thirteen, fourteen years of age 'till about fifteen. Then ended up a year or two later delivering furniture in Southern California, which was kind of fun. As a hundred and twenty pounder trying to move pianos around it was interesting. But again some people taught me how you lever your strength against strange bulky objects and get them upstairs.

Luckily in Southern California nothing's much over two or three stories high. When I was in college I worked at the Bank of America as a teller, I worked at Douglas Aircraft as a draftsman, mostly summer jobs but usually they would go into the Fall. Then I at some point decided that I'd have to give up the job to knuckle down and study. I was I guess a fairly sociable person, but mostly with a gang, mostly with the other guys who were into the same sort of interest I had.

Q: What about, during this time up through high school, at home? I mean did the family sit around the dining room table and talk about world events or politics or that sort of thing?

WALKER: Not very often, but a few times we did. We were a family of course, almost like the Brady Bunch type of family, you know, we ate breakfast together, dad went off, mom would prepare lunch, and then we'd have dinner together, the family always got together for dinner. My dad and my uncle both read the papers every day and were current of what was going on in terms of world events, relatively. My dad was one of these people who had been an early supporter of Franklin Roosevelt, but then had, for some reason or another, turned against him at some point, and as this problem of his unemployment, it made him a bit, not cynical, but a bit discouraged about the way things were going. And he and I often got into arguments over politics. The politics of California, the politics in Washington. We certainly watched the conventions, which was a big deal on early television, you know. You'd watch the whole thing from gavel to gavel, and he and I would quite often argue about it. And I of course thought he was, not a fool, but I thought he was a bit stodgy in his beliefs. I was the young liberal, you know, I knew what was really going on the world and he didn't. Yeah, we had those conversations, but it wasn't something that we did with any regularity, for one reason because we would always get in an argument over it.

Q: Well, so you went to the University of...

WALKER: Southern California. USC.

Q: USC. You were there from when to when?

WALKER: I went over in 1953, into the school of Architecture, which was by far the preeminent school of architecture west of Chicago. Small in number, isolated on the USC campus. The USC campus' reputation was of a party school, beautiful girls, sororities up the wazoo. And I entered this very small enclave where it was all males. You worked your tail off trying to design great buildings. You didn't have time for much of a social life. And I really didn't like it. If you know where USC is, it's down right in the central part of Los Angeles. I didn't live on campus, I commuted in from Santa Monica every day.

Q: Take the bus up Wilshire?

WALKER: No, I drove. I drove every day, and it was good because when my dad finally found a job it was on the way in. My sister worked in Culver City, on the way in. So I was sort of the family chauffeur. We had one car. I drove, dropped my sister off, I dropped my father off, went to school, came back in reverse. So I drove to school, I commuted. Got used to that sort of southern California forty-five minute commute every morning. But I was not happy at USC in terms of either the profession I thought I'd chosen or how well it was going.

Q: By any chance, did you start reading, did you get into The Fountainhead, and Ayn Rand and all that?

WALKER: No. People told me I should, but...

Q: Because this really grabbed a lot of young people.

WALKER: It didn't grab me. I saw the movie actually, with Gary Cooper. That didn't particularly grab me. But anyway, from '53 to '57 I was in the School of Architecture at SC. I took a year off in the middle, because my sister invited me to go to Europe with her. She was going to go off and do a grand European tour. She had saved up some money. She asked me if I would go. I saved up a little money from working at Douglas Aircraft, and I said sure. So we went over to Europe, 1956, spent about four months there, grand tour, driving around. It was great, wonderful.

Q: Did that inspire...

WALKER: Europe was still cheap. Yes, it did have an effect as to what comes later. My sister had always told me that I should try and learn a foreign language, I tried French in high school, I was horrible at it, and I said, "Forget that." The Hollywood crowd got very interested in going down to Mexico, seeing bullfights and such, so I went down there a few times. Got slightly interested in it but when she took me to Europe we spent a month in Spain, and Spain really caught my attention. Spain back then was under Franco still, it was cheap, which also leads to something a little later, so yes, that sort of opened my eyes to the world outside of California. But I came back from the trip and went back to USC for what was essentially my third and fourth year, it was a five-year program, Architecture. At this point, I sort of thought to myself, University of Southern California graduates back then, about twelve architects a year. Out of an incoming class of about forty or fifty. It's a long grind, very few people completed it in five years, I was already a year behind. I wasn't doing particularly well, I was also having a little problem with my health, which I look back, maybe I had whatever is the thing where you want to sleep all the time.

Q: Narcolepsy?

WALKER: No, but a variation of that where you're kind of weak and stuff, and I was going home after this commute, doing the schoolwork and coming home, and I was really, I was tired a lot at home. Stayed up a lot at night doing these projects, building

models, doing plans. And I was thinking to myself, architects who would come to lecture at the school would tell you about how tough it was to get into the profession. That the market for architects in southern California was supersaturated, lots of people graduating from Yale School of Architecture, some of the other good schools around the country, would come to California. The building codes were easier out there, people had money out there, so there was a lot of architectural activity. It was a nice place to do architecture. And so there was a super saturation of the market, and we were graduating twelve a year, going out into this market. In about '55 or '6, the University of California system, this humongous system, opened a school of architecture up in San Luis Obispo, and they had an incoming class of something like 400 people, and they were going to start pumping out another 150 or 200 a year. So I looked at myself, and said "I'm not gonna make it, I'm not gonna be a particularly good architect. And do I want to go out there and swim around and be a sort of glorified draftsman for the rest of my life?" So in '57, there was a problem with Lebanon and the U.S. landing in Lebanon. And there was some concern, the draft was breathing down a good number of our necks. Two of us, a buddy of mine, a buddy who later became a very good architect, we decided that we better get into the Army. They had just opened up a six-month program, join the reserve, do six months active duty, so we went down and enlisted. And I became an arts and monuments officer, in a reserve civil affairs unit in Los Angeles. And went on active duty, came out in '58 at which point I decided not to go back to USC, so I transferred over to UCLA. Back then it was still relatively easy to get into UCLA, and took Political Science, just because I figured this was something I was interested in.

Q: Do you have any thought about, you know, after your tour of Europe and all, international career or diplomacy or anything like that?

WALKER: Absolutely. In my last year at the University of Southern California, I had another inspirational teacher, and I took as an elective a course in international relations. And the professor, who's name I don't even remember now, he was a German Jew who had relocated to California after the war, and he taught this course in international relation. And I'll never forget, he was the first person who mentioned the words "Foreign Service" to me. And I remember, he mentioned that they were giving a test that year, and it was the Foreign Service Entrance Exam, and he said that those of us in the class that had got an interest in international relations, as a result of that class, it was an introductory class, maybe we should take the Foreign Service Exam, just to see how we might do. He made it easy to sign up, I can't remember how, he brought in applications or something. So I signed up, took the test, and passed. 1957, whenever it was given that year. No, excuse me, 1956. When they notified me I had passed, and would be invited to come to Washington and take the orals, I was heading towards Fort Ord and my Army career. And so I just assumed that there was no way you could postpone this thing, and just dropped it. But that was my first sort of interest or knowledge of the Foreign Service.

Q: Well then, at UCLA, was it a different life?

WALKER: Yes, it was a very different life. It was a ten-minute commute from my home rather than forty-five minutes, UCLA is in Westwood, which is right next to Santa

Monica, so it was close by. UCLA is a great place, it's a wonderful school, and I went there as an undergraduate. I just had to do one final year to get my BA, and I took courses in international relations. I was interested in the politics of the world rather than the politics of the U.S. by this time. So I took courses in the politics of China, which was, thought to be an emerging power at the time. I took a lot of courses like that. And yes, I guess it was a year and a half later I got my degree.

Q: Did you get caught up in the election of 1960, which engaged I think a lot of people. This is the Nixon-Kennedy election.

WALKER: Very much so. Let's put it this way: At one point in time, back when I was having these fights with my father over politics, California was represented in the Senate by Richard Nixon. My district of Santa Monica was represented by a fellow named Donald L. Jackson, about whom I've got a great anecdote later on. Donald L. Jackson was on the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Q: Oh, God.

WALKER: And was a fierce proponent of anti-communism. He was a marine hero from World War II. He was our representative in the House. Our representative in the state congress was another American Firster who was on the California on Un-American Activities Committee of the legislature up in Sacramento. I hated all three of these guys.

Q: How can a place like Santa Monica produce this?

WALKER: Oh, Santa Monica was an extremely conservative little enclave. It has since become the People's Republic of Santa Monica, but that's much later, that's after I left. The paper I delivered, the Evening Outlook, which has just gone out of business, was a very conservative paper owned by the McLure family, and their editorials were pro Nixon, pro Donald L. Jackson. Even though I delivered the paper, I couldn't stand the paper. So when the election of '60 came along, I wasn't sure about this guy, John F. Kennedy, but I sure as hell was pretty sure about what I thought about Richard Nixon. And, as I said I watched the convention from gavel to gavel. Both conventions, and I found Kennedy attractive. I watched the famous debates, and came to the same agreement that the historians have, which is Nixon looked like a crook, sweaty, nervous bad guy, and this other guy looked pretty good. But I still was very cautious about Kennedy. One, because in these arguments with my father, he told me about Kennedy Sr.

Q: Oh yes. Joseph Kennedy.

WALKER: Joseph Kennedy supposedly ran rum during prohibition. He got where he is by manipulation of the system. He went to London as Ambassador and then he became this right winger. You can't trust the Kennedys. That was my arguments with my father. At the same time, I must admit, I was concerned about the Catholic issue. I mean, just vaguely concerned about it, nothing serious. I was concerned with a whole range of

things, but as I said, he looked attractive and the other guy was someone I had really disliked for a long time, so my preference obviously went to Kennedy.

Q: Just back to the Army time, what sort of things were you doing?

WALKER: I went into the Army, and went up to Fort Ord for my basic training. To this day I remember my first day of basic training, going through the gate it was almost like going into San Quentin for me. I mean, you know, the gates close behind you, the drill sergeants come out and they scream at you. I was separated from my friend, we thought we were gonna be in the same unit, he went off to one unit, I went to another training unit. I came under a very, very strict and strenuous drill sergeant, who was an incredibly rough and ready guy. He came in one night and threw up all over me because I happened to have the bunk where the door was, and he came in and he'd just lost his girlfriend or something and he went out and got drunk and just threw up all over me. This kind of a guy. But it was a unit in which we got no passes throughout basic training. We were confined to the area. We worked our tails off, from four, four-thirty in the morning 'till ten, eleven o' clock at night, every night through basic training. My buddy went off to this unit which was just the opposite. They got passes from the first weekend. He used to come and visit me and wonder why I couldn't go out to Carmel with him. Anyway, I had a really rough twelve weeks of basic training at Fort Ord. But it made me into a pretty good soldier. I became pretty good at drilling and shooting and all these good things that you're supposed to do. When I came out, when I walked out of the gate of Fort Ord after twelve weeks, I was rough and tough. I mean, I'm not the type of guy that normally would fight but if someone had insulted me I would have probably taken him on. That lasted about twenty-four hours. Because, when we got our onward assignments, which was only gonna be for another three months, three and a half months active duty, I got San Francisco, the Presidio of San Francisco. And I went up to San Francisco with my duffel bag and my shiny new brass, private stripes the whole bit, and reported into the Presidio of San Francisco. When they looked at my 201 file, they said, "Oh, you're an arts and monuments person? Well you better, we've got sort of a public affairs / civil affairs operation down in a little cottage, something like this on the Presidio. You go down there Walker, report in, that's where we'll put you." And I went down and reported in to a very unusual commanding officer, a WAC Colonel, back when there were few woman officers who were sort of regular army.

Q: WAC stood for Women Army Corps.

WALKER: Army Corps, yes. And this woman was terrific. I walked in straight out of basic training, saluted, and did all the things you're supposed to do, and she was obviously not used to this. The people who were around her were sort of Public Information Officers and Civil Affairs Officers, they weren't into this. And here's this brand-new twenty-two year old private or whatever I was ready to kill if ordered to. And she said, "Private Walker, you're a student of architecture. I don't know what we can do with a student of architecture here. And you're only going to be with us for a short time. So here's what your first duty is: Your first duty is to get to know San Francisco, it's a wonderful city. Spend as much time as you can, it's right out the gate, you're on

Lombard street. You go out there and get to know San Francisco. You can probably find a lot of people here with your interest in architecture, and there's museums." "Oh yes sir, yes sir, yes." And she said "But I do have a project for you. There's an old fort right under the Golden Gate Bridge, right at the buttress of the Golden Gate Bridge, it's called Fort Point. And it was built in the design of Fort Sumter. And it was put there to guard the Golden Gate, there's another one on the other side, Fort Baker. This thing is falling apart, hasn't been used since it was sort of a radar station in World War II. We give tours of it. I'd like you to devote yourself to getting to know that fort. Do some historical research. Maybe we could use you. Maybe you could do some posters of what it used to look like. You draw right? Yes. Why don't you put some posters together? We hang them up when you give the tours."

So for my three and a half months or whatever it was at the Presidio, I gave tours to boy scout troops, cub scout troops, blind societies, whoever came to the Presidio who wanted to go through this army base. And that was what I did maybe two or three times a week. The rest of the time, when I was supposed to be doing these posters and doing this historical research, the Colonel said, "Look, we don't have much of a facility for you, in fact, we're going to put you over in the headquarters building, where we found a room for you." And what they found for me was an officer shower room that was not being used as a shower. She said "What do you need in the way of resources? I said, "I need a drafting table, I need this, I need that." She let me go to an art store and buy whatever I needed, so I filled this shower room with all this stuff. The god's honest truth, I went in there almost every day and fell asleep. At the end, every time she'd see me and ask me how my posters were coming, I'd say "Oh, coming along very well."

I was thought to be a poster genius because I had produced these things which as an architecture student you learn how to render. You can do things very quickly and I put these things together, but most of the time I was sleeping in the shower room. It was a very nice life and I took her at her word and I went out and got to know San Francisco. I went out every night. I'd go to the Hungry Eye and got to see the Kingston Trio.

Q: It was a high time.

WALKER: It was a high time. It was a nice time to be in San Francisco.

Q: That was before it turned druggish and all that sort of stuff. It was really artsy.

WALKER: It is a wonderful city. Back then it was less dangerous, less funky.

Q: Yes, so we're back to UCLA. When you were, you had taken the Foreign Service exam. What happened when you came back to UCLA?

WALKER: I came back to UCLA. I actually got out of the army a few days early because my best friend was getting married and I was best man and I didn't even do the whole six months, five months and three weeks or something like that. I was without a doubt one of the worst soldiers that Uncle Sam ever paid for being a soldier.

When I got back to Santa Monica I decided I wasn't going to live with my parents. This friend that I became best man at his wedding for, was an artist. So he had a sort of a job to support himself while he was doing his artwork. He had a job at the Santa Monica post office. He said there was an opening there. I took the exam, passed with flying colors and became a postal clerk. I did that full time while I went to UCLA to get my degree.

Q: How did you find the postal employees? Today the people sort of look cross eyed when you mention postal employees because we've had some mass shootings by people that are disgruntled postal clerks coming in. What were they, and I'm just curious.

WALKER: I can tell you, there's no separation between the postal clerks of my era and the postal clerks of today who come in and shoot. Then I was on the shift from 3:00 in the afternoon until 11:00 at night so I could go to school in the mornings. On that shift there was one young fellow who sat next to me, a war vet. He ended up barricading himself in his house with a gun saying the communists were coming in. He couldn't come to work because the communists were coming through the windows. I was sent out to talk him out of the house. He ended up in Camarillo State Mental Hospital a few days later. That was Vic. One kind of really funky thing in Santa Monica back in those days was at Muscle Beach where all these strange guys would build their physiques back before this became a fad. A whole bunch of them worked in the post office because I guess it was an easy place to get a job and make some bucks so they could work on their bodies during the day. One night the cops came in and rounded up all these guys and hauled them off. They had been doing some very nasty things to young girls. There were some really funky people working there. At the same time, I found the work at the post office to be kind of exhilarating; going out, delivering special delivery letters.

One night going up to Marion Davies' huge mansion and delivering there and the next night going to the other end of town where there would be 12 Mexicans living in one room getting their special delivery letters from Mexico. I found it interesting and luckily no one did come in and shoot the place up, but there were people who looked capable of that sort of thing. The post office is an interesting place. Every time I go into a post office these days, not every time, but quite often I tell them I used to do what you're doing now back in the old days. We get into these same sorts of conversations.

Q: How did things proceed?

WALKER: Well, I saved my money while I was at the post office because I was going to school and working full time. I didn't have much time to spend my money, so I was able to put away a couple of thousand dollars, a little over \$2,000. When I got my degree in January of '60 I said to myself, one I'm not going to be a postal clerk for the rest of my life that's for sure, but I'm going to go to Europe. My sister was right. I should learn a foreign language. I also want to go to Scotland for a while. I had visited Scotland once before with my sister and this was a chance to go to Scotland and spend a few weeks or a month. I had some relatives there. And then my real plan was to go to Spain and learn Spanish. My original plan was to go to Madrid, which we'd spent a week or so in when

I'd been there the first time and really enjoyed it. When I went to get my visa, because back then you still had to get a visa to go to Spain, I went to the Consulate General of Spain on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles and went in and talked to a consular officer. When I told him what I was going to do I was going to go to Spain and live for as long as my money lasted, when he asked me where I was going I said Madrid. He said, "You don't want to go to Madrid. It's the winter. It's very cold there. It's huge. You want to go to Valencia, my hometown." He talked me into going to Valencia. It's down on the coast. You're right by the ocean or by the Mediterranean anyway. It's warmer. Oranges are falling off the trees. It's just like California. He thought Valencia was much better, plus your money would hold out a lot longer in Valencia. So, I said, okay.

I took my money. I went down to the Volkswagen dealer and this was when the little old Beetles were becoming very, very popular and you could still buy a Beetle delivered in London for \$1,200. So, I took a big chunk of my money and bought a Beetle to be delivered to me in London. I got a ticket on an ocean liner, which was still the way to cross the Atlantic, and took off for Europe. I went to Scotland first to see my relatives on a little island off Scotland and they immediately fixed me up with a local girl and I fell madly in love with her. So I spent longer in Scotland than I had thought I was going to. I sort of became engaged to her I guess you would say. But then decided I better go to Spain because my money was going to start running out in Scotland. I drove down to Spain. Went to Valencia. Went to see a dentist who this consular officer had told me about. When I told him what I was there for he said oh, I've got a family that would love to meet you. They'd love to put you up. They won't charge you very much. So, I ended up room and board with a Spanish family. They too introduced me to a young lady who I fell madly in love with. And I lived in Valencia for about six months. I ended up teaching English there. This was at the binational center, the USIS binational center. I ended up teaching English there. And spent a wonderful six months in Valencia, Spain trying to learn Spanish.

I arrived with I think it was about \$900, \$800 or \$900 left in Spanish pesetas. I'll never forget going into one of these places where you exchange for foreign money in New York City on the way out and asked what the pesetas were worth. They called me and said how much do you want to buy? I said \$900 or whatever it was. They said, oh, you've got a very good rate. They gave me a whole roll of Spanish pesetas which I hid away someplace in my luggage to make sure no one robbed me on the way over there. God knows who would rob you with Spanish pesetas back then. Anyway, I went to live with this family, earned a little money which stretched the \$800 or \$900 of pesetas and I lived like a king. My room and board was taken care of. The family were a nice family who were embarrassed to charge me anything practically, so I almost had to beg them to take the monthly stipend I was giving them which was practically nothing. The two girls in the family ended up being my students at the binational center. What I did an awful lot of the time at night was to go to local bars and talk about bull fighting and talk about this, that and the other thing. In the classiest hotel in Valencia at that time, the Astoria Hotel, they had a wonderful cellar nightclub and I went there quite often. I got to know some of the people there and there was a young man there almost every night that I was there and where I would buy a drink for myself, he would buy drinks for everybody. Where I was

dressed in jeans, he was beautifully dressed. I got to know him and I finally said, "What are you doing here. You're an American like I am." He said, "I work here." I said, "Oh, really, what do you do?" He said, "Well, I'm the American vice consul here." I said, "No kidding. Is this what a vice consul does?" He said, "Yes, I have a very nice life here." I went to see his apartment, government paid, it was a penthouse. He was a young fellow named Charles Grover, Chuck Grover. I don't know whether you ever knew Chuck. Chuck was handsome. Chuck had a beautiful wife. Chuck played good tennis at the Valencia Country Club, which I had no chance of getting into. He had a nice life. I said, well, I took the test a couple of years ago, but when they invited me to take the orals. He said, "You could probably have gotten it postponed until you got out of the army, but take it again. If you passed it the first time, you can pass it the second time and we're giving it overseas this year." So, I signed up to take the written exam and I took it one Saturday at the consulate in Valencia. Chuck was off playing tennis that morning, so the consul had to come in and administer the exam to me. I was the only one taking it. So, this was the best way to take the Foreign Service exam, by yourself in a room and I passed with flying colors.

A few weeks later I was leaving because my money was running out. I'll never forget in the breaks between the various parts of the exam the consul would invite me into his office, give me a cup of coffee and he was a sour old son of a gun. I remember him saying, you're really wasting my Saturday here Walker. I could be out playing tennis with Chuck. I said, "Well, you know I passed the exam once before." He said, "Well, if you passed the written, you're never going to pass the orals. There's no way you'll pass the orals." He started telling me anecdotes about him taking the orals and how tough it was. His best friend had taken the orals and happened to mention in passing that he had taken a music appreciation course once so the whole orals were about music and the guy fell flat on his face. He really talked me into being terrified of this thing called the orals. Three or four weeks later I left Valencia, come back by ship again and arrived in New York the night before John F. Kennedy's inauguration. New York was blanketed by a snowstorm. The whole East Coast was blanketed by a snowstorm.

Q: That was really a mess.

WALKER: Yes. I got stuck in New York City for about a week. I shipped my Volkswagen from Spain to New York two or three weeks before I left so it would be here in time for my arrival and then I'd drive back to California. Instead it was under a huge snow pile in a Brooklyn navy yard. So I got stuck in New York for about a week. It was a wonderful week. John F. Kennedy had become president. During this period of time all I knew about John F. Kennedy was what I was seeing on the television screens, I became very worried about John F. Kennedy because he named Bobby Kennedy, his brother, as the attorney general. He did some other things along those same lines. I started thinking my God; maybe my father was right. Maybe this guy is not what he appears to be. It wasn't until seven, eight or nine months later. I'm jumping ahead a bit, but when I joined the Foreign Service, one of the first outside activities I got involved in was one day someone said President Kennedy is going to give an address to a foreign policy association type of thing up at the Woodner Hotel, I believe. We want to make sure the

audience is full so we're trying to encourage young officers like yourself to get up there. So I went up very early not having much else to do and I sat in the front row. There were other Foreign Service officers, but much more senior ones and they were all sitting there before the lunch started essentially saying nasty things about President Kennedy. That they were all very suspicious of him. Then he walked in and he gave his speech. At the end of his speech every one at that table, myself included, were big John F. Kennedy fans. He was that inspirational. The speech was about his vision of America in the world and of the Foreign Service. I mean he just wrapped us up in his arms and smothered us with attention and affection. Even these older, more cynical, more worldly-wise senior officers at the end of the speech said, we're all wrong. That guy really knows what he's doing. From then on, I was a Kennedy fan.

Q: Do you remember the oral exam?

WALKER: Oh, do I remember the oral exam! Yes.

Q: Can you talk about it? I always try to grab this experience.

WALKER: Okay. Yes, I can. I was invited to take the exam either in Washington or in Los Angeles. By this time the exam was being given around the country with traveling panels. Of course I had no idea that I was going to get in. I assumed I was going to flunk because that was what the consul had told me in Valencia. So, I went, I didn't do any preparation for it. Between the written and the orals they sent me materials that sort of told me about the Foreign Service. I didn't even look at it. I had no idea what the Foreign Service did except what I had seen Chuck Grover doing in Valencia which looked kind of nice, but I thought that can't be what they pay you for. I was very relaxed about it. I went down to Los Angeles and into some federal building. I was invited in by the chairman. There was no one else there taking it that morning. I went in and sat down in front of I guess it was four members of the panel. It wasn't tricky. They weren't trying to trick me I don't think, but they had my record there. They started asking me about my interests. I really enjoyed the exam. It was sort of a question about, when they asked you a question if you didn't really know the answer, do you fake it or do you try to get away with making them think you know more than you do? Or do you just sort of honestly say I don't know what you're talking about?

One example. One of the early questions was tell us about your reading habits, Mr. Walker, what do you read? At that point my consistent reading was Time Magazine every week, and local newspapers, L.A. Times. I didn't think that was what they wanted to hear that I had passed the written exam based on my Time Magazine reading. I knew they wanted to hear something more impressive than that and God knows why, but I said, well, you know, I read newspapers obviously, but you know, for deeper reading I get Foreign Affairs. Foreign Affairs I was only familiar with in that international relations course three or four years earlier, right, when I'd been assigned a couple of articles. I knew that was where serious people did their reading about foreign affairs, so I mentioned Foreign Affairs. One of the members looked at me and said, well, Mr. Walker, why don't you take an article out of the recent Foreign Affairs and tell us about it and

what it was all about and sort of analyze it for us, what did you think of it? Well, here I am. I thought, oh Christ. For some reason I remembered the article that I had read in this international relations course and I thought to myself will they remember this article? I was trying to calculate in my mind whether they might. I said, well, there was that article I was particularly interested in that article about the 200 mile economic fishing zone, this big thing between Japan and Korea. That was an article that really impressed me. I was really quite taken by it. Their follow-on questions indicated to me that they didn't know whether this was a recent article or what the hell I was talking about. One of them said, well, Mr. Walker, what fish was involved in this dispute? I thought, oh Christ, here we go again. Are they going to know what fish? So, I mentioned cod or something. It was pure B.S., but I was, this is cheating, it was sort of like a game to see how far I could take them without them actually catching me out. Shortly thereafter they started asking me about being in Spain and one of them looked at me and in horrible Spanish, horrible Spanish, he turns to me and says, well, Mr. Walker, you've just been in Spain for six months, what do the people there, you speak Spanish now? I said, absolutely. I thought this guy is so bad, my Spanish is much better than his. He said, well, let's talk in Spanish from here on. Tell us what do the people in Spain think about the United States? I B.S.'d a little bit. What do they think about Ernest Hemingway? Do you have a favorite Hemingway book? Again, this guy's Spanish is so bad, bad conjugations, agreement of nouns and adjectives all wrong, hey, I can't miss. Of course, about ten sentences into my Spanish two of the other guys come in with absolutely bilingual Spanish and almost destroyed me right there. On that one I got caught out. We finished up. I was there for three and a half hours. There was no one else waiting, so I guess they just decided to pass the morning with me. As I said, I really enjoyed it. They said, okay, Mr. Walker, why don't you sit outside and we'll be with you in just a minute? I walked out. No, I forgot a major faux pas. They said, well, what do you think you would do in the Foreign Service Mr. Walker? What does the Foreign Service do? Why would we send you overseas and tell you to live overseas? Since I knew very little about the Foreign Service, I said, well, what I think I'd guess you want people to go overseas to find out what's going on and write it down and send it back to Washington for analysis. I said more than that, but that was the thrust of what I was saying. They said, well, what happens with the material that gets sent back to Washington? Why do we collect this material in Washington? I said, well, I think you get it back there and you analyze it and you decimate it all over Washington. He looked at me and said, what? I said, you decimate it all over Washington. He says, you don't mean disseminate do you? I said, that's the word I'm thinking of. Anyway, that was very close to the end and they asked me to wait outside. I thought oh Jesus. They were in there and they started laughing. The whole panel was laughing. I was just about to stand up and walk over to say to this secretary there because I already had it in my mind that I was about to say, I don't mind them telling me I haven't passed, but to laugh at me really offends me and I'm leaving. Just as I was about to get up the chairman walked out and said, congratulations Mr. Walker, we've passed you. I said, what? They all came and shook my hand and congratulated me and said you've passed. It was, I do remember that entire thing. It was very different from what this consul had told me.

Then we got into another strange part of the entry process. They said, look we put together classes every couple of months; A-100 courses, and it might be six months. It might be even longer before we get around to you, so there are a couple of things you have to do. You have to fill out all these papers and the most important thing, the thing that takes the longest, is the FBI security check. That's one thing. Another thing is the medical examination. We advise you to go and take these papers to your nearest government medical facility and get your medical. I said, great, sure. Right away. I left. I drove back to Santa Monica my usual 45-minute commute. I was just elated that I passed this exam. Then I started worrying about these next two things. One, I was underweight and two the security thing. I'd been in Europe. I didn't know what that entailed. It sounded like it was going to take a long time. As soon as I got home I filled out the papers and the next day I went to the Veterans Administration Hospital Building in Westwood near UCLA and showed up to take my medical or to set up the appointment. I'll never forget I went in and there was this big counter and a VA Hospital nurse behind the counter. I walked up and she was used to seeing guys who were veterans who were much older and here's this young guy and I said, I'm supposed to take the government physical exam. She said, what's it for? I said Department of State. She said, okay, come in tomorrow for your regular exam and here's a sheet, take this to the list of psychiatrists on there and go and have a psychiatric exam. I said, psychiatric exam? She said, yes, the State Department. Anyway, she must have read the wrong form because there was nothing obvious about me that needed a psychiatric exam. Anyway I took the physical exam, passed that with flying colors and the next day went down to see this Beverly Hills psychiatrist. I'll never forget this big huge Beverly Hills psychiatrist, the proverbial leather couch, the little guy sitting behind the big table. Within minutes of going over my papers, he said, so I see you've just been in the army? I said, well, a year or so ago, two years ago. Well, tell me, up in San Francisco right? Well, tell me about your homosexual experiences. I said, I haven't had any. He said, you've got to be open with me. There's no guilt, just tell me about them. I said, I'm sorry. He said, Mr. Walker, come on. You're a very mature, 23-year old or whatever the hell I was, you've been in the army, San Francisco, I'm sure you have been approached. I said, God damn it, I haven't. I got so mad at this guy for insisting that I almost walked out. I started yelling at him because I was so mad. He said, the interview's over. I walked out. I said, that's it, I've blown it. I was so mad at this guy. Two months later when I'm in the A-100 course and I'm sitting in the old FSI, Arlington Towers cafeteria, with my fellows, and we're all talking about taking the oral exam and how did it go and what about this, that and the other. I said, what about that psychiatric exam, boy wasn't that a killer? They all looked at each other and said, what psychiatric exam? We went off and we looked up the regs. Or whatever it said, and it sort of said in the course of the medical examination it might be determined that the applicant needs to go through a psychological examination. They all assumed that I had obviously said or done something that indicated that I needed this.

Q: Well, you'd been to San Francisco.

WALKER: That's right, God almighty. Anyway, the entering process was great.

Q: Well, let's talk a bit about the and by the way you mentioned girlfriends. Were you married at all or anything like this?

WALKER: Not at this point, no, not at this point. I had these two very sort of serious, semi-serious things in Europe, but when I left Europe, I left them behind. When I got back to California I took up with a young lady who was Filipino from Hawaii and we were sort of a solid thing up through my taking the orals. There was some concern I had about the fact that I was living with this gal at this point and when they told me about the security background I thought back then.

Q: It was a different world.

WALKER: It was a different world and I thought oh God. Another anecdote. Same sort of anecdote as like the psychiatrist. I went downtown Los Angeles to be interviewed by an SY agent, DS (Diplomatic Security) agent, who was going to do my case, my background investigation. I'll never forget this and I wanted to get this done real fast because I didn't have a job at this point and I wanted to come into the Service. I wanted to know if I was coming in sooner rather than later. I go down to Los Angeles, go up to the Federal building, go into the office of this guy, big fat ex-cop sort of, the old SY service, right?

Q: Their initial was probably X.

WALKER: That's right. He starts talking to me and for some reason or other I told him this thing about the psychiatrist. I said you know, if I'm going to come in because I just blew up at this guy who was asking me about homosexual experiences. He said, well, tell me about it Walker. I said, look as I told the doctor and I'm telling you, I haven't had any of these. He said, come on now Walker. This doesn't count against you. He said, well, have you ever done this? No. Have you ever done that? Then he used the coarsest versions of this to ask me if I'd done certain things. I kept saying no, I'm telling you I haven't done any of those things. I don't know if I'm not attractive to men or something, I just haven't, so help me God, I haven't done any of these things. So, all through this I was thinking I was going to tell him about my girlfriend, no I better not. All through it I was worried because he said, well, tell me about some of your neighbors. Who are your neighbors because I'm going to have to go out and interview them? I said, oh, God. Should I name some neighbors? Any girlfriends? I said, well, I've had a couple of girlfriends. So, I thought to myself I wonder if he's going to go out and talk to my neighbors and maybe talking to Lucy which was the girl's name. I finally told him about her, but I didn't say we were living together. I said, "By the way, when might you get out there because she works, she's a nurse, she works at nights, I mean." He said, "Oh, I won't get out to Santa Monica for maybe another month or so because I've got all these other cases here in my in box. I'll get out in maybe a month or so." I said, "Okay, great" thinking to myself I'm going to have time to prepare all my neighbors and my girlfriend so that no one tells them that we're living together. Got in my car, I drove home, think I stopped lunch, went to see my girlfriend just to be the first to tell her to make sure I told her this. Of course, his car was outside. He had beaten me back to Santa Monica. Luckily,

either she did or she didn't tell him, but it didn't seem to make any difference since I passed the exam.

Q: Well, it probably took care of the homosexual thing.

WALKER: It was a great process.

Q: You came in your A-100 class, when did you arrive in the Foreign Service?

WALKER: The first week of September, 1961.

Q: What was your class like, your A-100 class like?

WALKER: I drove to Washington in an MGA, a little two seater convertible with all my possessions on the seat next to me which obviously means I had a couple of changes of clothes and that's about it. I owned nothing else. I had traded my Volkswagen to my sister for this little convertible. Drove east, got here in three and a half days. Had no idea where I was, came down Wisconsin Avenue, I guess I came down 270 or something, came down Wisconsin Avenue, came to the river, drove across the river. I had to find a hotel. I knew the hotels and motels in the center of town were expensive, so I drove for 20 minutes or half an hour ended up out in Falls Church some place. There was a cheap looking motel sign. Yes it was out (Route) 50. I talked to the owner of the motel. I said, "What's it like getting into Washington in the morning? What's the commute like?" He said, "When are you leaving?" I said, "Well, I have a 9:00 appointment at the State Department." He said, "Well, you better leave at 6:00 because this traffic is bumper to bumper." It's late summer. "Have you got air conditioning?" "No, I don't have air conditioning." Well, you're going to be pretty hot." Sure enough, the next morning, the traffic out here on 50 was horrendous. This was when it was still four lanes. Anyway, drove into Washington, parked the car some place, went into the State Department through the main diplomatic entrance, went up to the counter and said I've got my letter here, I'm coming into the Foreign Service. All right, you go to room 24 32A or something like that. Back then it was an open building, that was all you did at the counter. I strolled off. As I was walking down to look at a map, this very sharply dressed young fellow walked past and he looked at me and he said, "You lost or are you looking for something?" I said "Yes, I'm looking for room 2400 corridor." He said, "Oh, I'm going there, I know where it is." So, I'm walking along with this guy. He reaches out and says, "Hi, what's your name?" I said, "Walker, Bill Walker." He said, "Oh, really? My name's Walker, too." I said, "Oh, great, where are you from?" He said, "I'm from Santa Monica, California." I said, "I'm from Santa Monica, California." He said, "Did you go to Santa Monica High?" I said, "Yes." It turns out both our names were Walker, both gone to Santa Monica High, we were in the same class at Santa Monica High and it turned out he was going to join the A-100 course, he was also in the class. This was Lannon Walker, I don't know if you know Lannon. Back then he was called Rick Walker. Rick Walker I think throughout his entire career was always a couple of steps ahead of everyone else in terms of knowing where he was. His father had been an attaché in Paris so he knew the lingo. He was sort of one of the leaders of our class. The class

was divided in two. Both sections were under the old O1 officers. Mine was under a fellow named Thomas Jefferson Duffield, III. There were about 30 of us and 30 in the other section. In my section who was in there? Peter Tarnoff was there. He was a good friend of Rick Walker because they both spoke fluent French and chatted away. They sat on either side of me so I was between these two future giants of the Service. Who else was in there? There was a guy named Bill McDonough who was a former naval officer who was obviously extremely bright, but thought himself even brighter. He was like a good number of the people in the class; was married and had a couple of kids. He ended up thinking the Foreign Service was not for him. He was too bright for the Foreign Service after doing two overseas tours and one in Washington. He left and is the chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, one of the leaders of the United States banking community. Who else was in there? We had a mixed bag.

Q: Did you have women?

WALKER: We had in our section two women out of the 30-some and in the other section there were two women. I fell in love with one of the women.

Q: You seem to have a problem, I won't say a problem, but susceptibility.

WALKER: It turns into a problem later on, but yes, I kind of fell for one of the women which turns into a story later on. It turned out that my taste couldn't have been too bad because Thomas Jefferson Duffield, III also fell for her. It was a kind of a stupid, older man, younger woman sort of fashion and Bill McDonough also took a shine to her. I was the only single one among the males who took a shine to her so I had better luck with her than the other two. There were four women, two USIS and two State. Harriet Isom was one of the women who later became ambassador a couple of times.

Q: What about the were there any minorities in your class?

WALKER: One black officer, but he was in the other section. My section was all white. No Asians and the only minorities were several Jewish officers. One thing that had happened though if we're talking about the old Foreign Service as opposed to the new, that class, was it that class? No, it was that year I believe was the first year in which a non-Ivy League school contributed more candidates than Ivy League schools and it was the University of California and I was part of that group. So, at least we were reaching out in that direction if not into more minorities.

Q: Coming in in '61, do you think that your group was at all caught up in the idea of public service. President Kennedy particularly expressed in his "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Was this sort of part of the ethos at the time?

WALKER: Yes, I think so. This was also jumping ahead a few months. I went to Peru and arrived in Peru in mid '62 a year later, seven or eight months later with the first wave of Peace Corps volunteers going out into the world and one of the first groups went to

Peru. I always felt that if I had been a couple of years younger and hadn't passed the oral exams and had fumbled along the way someplace, I would probably have been taken up with the idea of joining the Peace Corps as I wouldn't be surprised if a number of the other students in the A-100 class wouldn't have. Yes, that was there. The class had great diversity in terms of our backgrounds and what parts of the country we were from, etc. and our academic background. I remember the first day when we sort of got up and introduced ourselves and gave a one or two-minute speech telling where we came from. I was terribly impressed with the depth of background or interest in the Foreign Service many of them described, which I didn't have. I was sort of pleased to hear that some of them, at least, came from the same sort of background that I had.

Q: It is sort of a humbling thing of where one thinks well, what am I doing here?

WALKER: Yes, exactly. I remember that was one of the first times I remember thinking. I came in in such a serendipitous fashion, but when I heard about these people who spent all their young adult years preparing to come into the Foreign Service, going to the right school, going to Georgetown, getting their masters in Foreign Service so they could prepare to come into the Foreign Service. Well, what happens if they slipped over one of these little obstacles, then what do they do? Whereas if I had missed I would have put it down to well, I'm just not good enough and I would have gone off to do something else, probably the Peace Corps. But the ethos of service to the country I think was there for sure. I certainly had it. I felt terribly guilty about my military service. What a sham that had been, but I think that was part of it.

Q: Looking at the A-100 course, what did it do? Did it sort of get you ready for the Foreign Service or is it more a bonding time or inoculating you for government work?

WALKER: No, it's already been inoculated. It at least revealed to me what the Foreign Service did which I at that point really didn't know. I'm serious, I did not know. Our two leaders, the two leaders of the class, Thomas Jefferson Duffield, III and the guy who was leading the other group. He was an 01 economic officer. They were both kind of jokes. They really did look like a throwback to something from previous years. That didn't impress me, those two guys. My fellow students did impress me because many of them were better educated than I was. Many of them as I say knew what they were getting into. I don't remember much of anything about the substance of what was taught. I remember I was among the quieter folks in the group because I was worried I was going to say something stupid like disseminated/decimate and that sort of stuff. There were others in the group who were obviously much more articulate, much more sure of themselves, etc.

I remember one of the assignments was to give a little speech, ten minutes max. Everyone was going to have to do it. The subject was up to you, the only hook was you were supposed to take a subject that began with the same letters as your last name, whatever the hell that means. So, I went home. By this time I was sharing an apartment with a fellow who had become one of my best friends, Murray Zimmerman, and semi-sharing the apartment with this USIS officer who sort of stayed with us from time to time, a sort of three's company sort of arrangement. I went home and thought about this.

Something that begins with my name, the same letters. What am I going to talk about? Oh my God I've got to get up in front of those guys and oh God this is a disaster. Anyway, the day before I was supposed to give my little talk I was in the drug store and I saw a book in the pocketbook section, and it was something like the connoisseur's guide to wine or something like that. Then the subtitle was how not to be a wine snob. For some reason wine, W, Walker, W, I decided I'd read something in this book and I'd be able to give something of a speech about wine. Went in the next day, got up in front of this class and gave a speech about wine. My speech was essentially because this was sort of the theme of this book, which I'd only read the introduction to; the theme of my speech was sort of putting down wine snobs.

The thrust of my speech was hey, don't worry about whether you drink a red wine with this or a white wine with fish, don't worry if you drink Cabernet Sauvignon with this type of fish, don't worry about any of those things. Drink the wine that you enjoy. Don't worry about having the right glass for the right wine, drink it in a beer stein if you have to, just enjoy wine, right? That was my theme. I finished. "Any questions?" Thomas Jefferson Duffield, course chairman from the back of the room. Harvard man. Europeanist. Wine connoisseur, in his own mind. He said "Well, you know Mr. Walker, I don't understand this. You obviously don't know anything about wine. To say that you drink it out of a beer stein." So he asked me a couple questions. So I think, well he's an old fuddy-duddy, doesn't know anything at all. So that's why he's asking these questions about the right glass for the right wine, so I give him some sort of smart-ass answer, and then out of my fellow students, three or four of them had questions. And it turns out I had three or four wine-lovers in the group, and they just didn't like...

The A-100 class, I look back on it as enlightening in that I learned what the Foreign Service did and didn't do. I learned some of the legends of the Foreign Service about, you know, become a Political Officer if you can, that sort of stuff. But other than that, I just enjoyed myself there.

Q: Today is the 16th of May, 2001. Bill? First place, what did you see for yourself? You're getting out of the A-100 course in 1962, what did you see for your career?

WALKER: I had very little idea of what was before me. I think I mentioned earlier I was very impressed with the quality of the other students in the class. There were the students who had gone to all the right schools, there were the students who had taken me on in terms of wine sniffing and that sort of thing. I felt that I was, I was maybe not up to the quality of what the other students were. When it came time to get these onward assignments, which was the day or so before the end of the class, I was hoping to go to Europe. I lived in Spain for a while, I certainly hoped to go back to Spain, I felt that that was, that was something I would really enjoy, going to Europe and living the life that I had just seen this young vice consul in Valencia living. I had told a good friend of mine in the class, another fellow who had come out of California who was, much like me, had no idea what the Foreign Service was about, he had taken the test on a lark. A guy named Jim Reeves. And I told him about what a great place Madrid was, and lo and behold he was in front of me in the alphabet, and when it came to announcing Jim Reeves' first

assignments it was to go to Madrid. And then a few minutes later came to the W's of the class, and they announced I was going to Lima, Peru. I had no idea what Latin America was about. I had no idea what Peru was about. So I came out, essentially saying sounds like an adventure, sounds like something that would be fun to do. But in terms of having focused as to where I might go in the Foreign Service or what my other wishes might be, I didn't have a clue.

Q: Okay, well then you went to Lima, and you were there from...

WALKER: I did a few things first. I came out of the A-100 class, I guess in late '61, or early '62, it was a twelve-week course I think at that time. And I knew I was going to Lima, Peru. They told me I should take a little brush-up Spanish to bring me up to the three level. And then I obviously had to take the Consular course, because as every young officer, I was going out on a rotation position, and I was going to have to do consular work. So I took, I got those out of the way, and I still came out of it in March or so, something like that. And I wasn't gonna go off to Lima until mid-summer, so what they did with me was they put me on the Peru desk. And the Peru desk at that time was run by a fellow named Dick Poole, who was your old Foreign Service type, Harvard man. Very articulate, wrote like a charm. And again I was incredibly impressed by this guy, and his knowledge of Peru. And so I again was put in the position of saying to myself "God, if this is what everyone else is like, I'm gonna have a struggle here."

I was only on the desk a month or so when a very unusual thing happened. We're talking 1962 now, early '62. And it turns out that at that very point in time, IBM, and I believe General Electric, had convinced the State Department that the wave of the future was this thing called computers. And they got the State Department to agree to a test program. They sold the program on the basis of this is gonna be a great boon to condensing huge amounts of information, put it in a machine and then asking questions and getting out very finite answers. And so they put together a quick and dirty program with an IBM fellow who came in, a fellow named Wally Francis, who later became an information guy for the State Department. And they herded up four young officers who weren't doing a hell of a lot, waiting for an outgoing assignment. And I was one of them. And we went over to a place on Pennsylvania Avenue above a People's drug store, they had taken some offices over there. And for about three months I worked on this project. They took the smallest geographic unit that the State Department had in its files, so that they would be dealing again with a very small bundle of information. They wanted to put everything we knew about that particular political-geographical entity into a computer, so that we could go to Dean Rusk and hold a demonstration for him, and he could ask the questions and we'd pop it in and out would come his answer. And he would be shown very dramatically that this was the wave of the future, and desk officers and others who had to crunch lots of information would see the benefit. So for three months, myself and one other officer did the data input, and we went through every piece of paper that the State Department had on Angola. At that point in time Angola was in the ferment of coming out from under colonial rule.

Q: Really didn't come out until '74...

WALKER: The final exit was much later. But there was a serious guerrilla operation in the back country. The forces of revolution were doing very well thank you against the Portuguese colonial authorities. So for a very short period of time I felt that I was the world's greatest expert on Angola. It turned out by sheer coincidence that the Desk Officer for Angola at the time was Chuck Grover, the feller who I'd known in Valencia who had impressed me, and again he impressed me with his knowledge about Angola. To make a long story short, we worked very, very hard on this. We condensed everything to key words, gave it to card punchers, who punched out those cards you used to use in computers. We would go over to the Pentagon a couple of times a week in the middle of the night, because they had the only big frame computers in those days that could take the information of the quantity we were putting in. They were using it during the day and during most normal hours for their own uses, and we could only use them in the middle of the night. So once a week or twice a week we'd go over at three AM to see if our program was working. We ended up after three months or whatever it was doing a demonstration for Averell Harriman, who was the Deputy Secretary at the time. And it went well, he had some questions, we keyworded it, popped it into the machine, and out came suitable answers. And so we later did a demo for Dean Rusk. Never forget it. Dean Rusk asked a question, which was a fairly general question. Something along the lines of, "Are there weapons coming in from outside?" Was generally the question. So we keyworded weapons, outside, external forces, we put all the keywords we thought we could, put it in the machine... the wheels spun, the cards flew, and out came an answer, which unfortunately was about this big...

Q: We're talking about a foot high.

WALKER: Yes, about a foot high. And Rusk looked at this output, and I think you could see, you could read his mind, which was "I asked a very simple question, and as Secretary of State I'm not about to go through a foot worth of information." So obviously we had miscalculated how to ask the question of the machine. Back then this was pretty primitive computer stuff. I sort of feel personally responsible for the fact that the State Department was late in coming to the computer game. In fact, I'm not sure we're still there yet.

Q: It's fair to assign the blame on you...

WALKER: Well I shared it with a guy named Frank Tumminia, who was my other substantive officer, and all those who contributed to the project. It opened my eyes to the fact that there was something called computers. A footnote to that story is during that same time, I remember, for some reason or other, maybe it was in the A-100 course, maybe it was in the consular course, we went up to IBM's headquarters up here in Bethesda. I'll never forget going in and sitting at the reception desk was a woman who was using this typewriter with a little ball that jumped around, back and forth. And we were just awestruck with this technology, which was obviously something IBM had not put out to the public yet, but we had no idea you could do this with a little ball that bounced around rather than these big things.

Q: Selectric typewriter.

WALKER: Yes. So that's where we were in terms of our technology, and as I say, three decades later I was still cursing the fact that we had screwed up with Dean Rusk and turned him off as far as computers were concerned.

Q: Well I found that when I was in Personnel, the early, early '60s, and we were using the McBee system, which worked very well, which was a knitting needle, and you punch things on a card, you punched out things, and actually, with three-hundred people in Personnel, you could quickly find out those of us who were Portuguese and were unmarried and all that.

WALKER: That's the level we were talking about in this project.

Q: It's the same thing, except with a knitting needle. It worked. I think that technique went back to the 1880s, I think, actually.

WALKER: Well, whatever it takes. Anyway. Finished that project. While I was on the project, this fellow who was lucky enough to go to Madrid, and who I resented for the fact that he obviously put down Madrid on his wish list based on my saying what a great place it was, he got it, I didn't. We still remain good friends, and during this period while I was doing this computer project, he and his wife entertained a young lady from California who was out visiting, who was at Smith College. We went to New York, we had a weekend together, we had a wonderful time. And in June I married her just before taking off for Lima, Peru. So I became a married Foreign Service Officer.

Q: Sort of to fill in here, but could you tell me a little bit about your wife's background?

WALKER: Absolutely. I met her because this fellow officer and his wife were both in the ice-skating game. The wife of the Foreign Service Officer, my buddy, was a professional ice skater, she'd skate in the ice follies, this sort of thing. Her husband, the trumpet-playing Foreign Service Officer had in some way been involved in ice shows and this sort of stuff. The young lady who came down to visit them who was going to Smith College, she was from a family out in California up in the bay area. Her father, who had a construction company had worked his way up from carpenter to heading this construction company that built quality homes in northern California during the '50s and '60s. To the extent that those homes are still the choice homes in the bay region. If you see a house that says "Frasier built" you know it's a good house. Anyway, her father had made considerable amounts of money. She was an ice skater, and in late '61 I believe it was, I can't quite remember the date, she was engaged to a young man who had gone off to the Air Force Academy, was in the first class at the Air Force Academy. He was an ice skater, and he and his sister in 1961 came in second in the U.S. Ice Skating Championships. They came in second in pairs. In late '61 the U.S. team went off to the World Championship in Prague. The couple that had won the gold medal in pairs for some reason could not go, so this young chap, Air Force cadet and his sister, who had

taken the silver, went on the plane to compete in Prague. This was the plane that crashed in Belgium. The entire U.S. ice skating elite was wiped out.

Q: Tragedy.

WALKER: This was the fiancé of the woman who became my wife. She was, I've always thought, devastated by her fiancé's death, the same part of the country, from the same background in ice skating going off and getting killed like this. So she went to Smith College. She came down here for a few weeks at the end of the term to visit Washington. She met me, and I've always thought, our marriage later broke up, and I've often thought there was something there having to do with, that she sort of, I got her on the rebound sort of from this tragedy. She was only nineteen when I married her, and she was sort of overwhelmed in Peru. One day she was in Smith College, and two months later she was a married woman living in Lima, Peru, and was the low wife on the totem pole, and those were back in the days when the DCM's wife took the young ladies by the hand and showed them what hat to wear, and this sort of thing.

Q: And gloves.

WALKER: And gloves, and the whole bit, even in Lima, Peru, which is a fairly formal city. So with the best of intentions, I think, the DCM's wife and some other of the older gals sort of overwhelmed and intimidated young Ann.

Q: Well that can happen. Well then, you went to Peru, you were there, what, August '62 or '63?

WALKER: I was there from like August '62 to Summer of '64.

Q: What was, you know, I realize you were not exactly in control of American relations with Peru...

WALKER: I wasn't.

Q: At the time. But how would you say, what was the sort of the state from your perspective of relations at that time, and then let's talk a bit about how you, this is your first time around the state of the government in Peru.

WALKER: Well Peru, when I got there, was going through that cycle, it was under a military government when I got there. And we were pressing very hard for it to become a civilian democratic state. This was, you know, a year and a half into the Kennedy administration, the Alliance for Progress. I mentioned earlier that Peace Corps had descended on Peru in big numbers, and it was the first mission in that part of the world. So we were very hopeful that the military was going to step down and a civilian government was gonna come in. While I was there, in that first year I was there, Peru got the word that the U.S. was very interested in their becoming a non-military regime, and so they said "We're gonna have elections."

I of course was down in the consulate for the first six months. My boss was stark raving mad. Seriously, had a very serious set of mental problems. He had come into the service in the aftermath of World War II. He'd been with the immigration service in Europe interviewing refugees who wanted to come to the States. I heard incredible stories about him and from him as to how he had dealt with the Germans that came into his office that were coming to the States, to the extent that he told me that he was very proud of the fact that when a German came in who was cleared to go to the States, before he would issue them the papers, he made them stand in the corner and salute the American flag for five minutes or something like that. He also, he was adamantly against Americans marrying foreigners. He did all sorts of things. I remember the first time an American woman came in who had just married a Peruvian, and she was looking for some paper, and I had to go and ask him a question about it. He said "Send her in." A few minutes later she came out in tears, and he told her he was gonna take her citizenship away from her, that she'd gone through a ceremony with a foreigner, and therefore she obviously lost her allegiance to the United States. And he went to the point of asking that I check to see how many American women were married to Peruvians. He was going to take all their citizenships away from them. He also declared any Peruvian who was in a labor union to be a communist. Why? Because at some point the major federation in Peru had been taken over by the communists. A lot of people left at that point, but a lot of people stayed behind to fight, to recapture it. Well, he came to the conclusion that anyone who would stay in the labor union when it was under communist leadership, even if they were trying to fight to get it back, had somehow supported communism, therefore were communists, therefore were ineligible for visas to go to the United States. He had all these crazy, craziness. The irony of that story, the footnote to that story, is that shortly after I left Lima and went to Arequipa, his daughter took up with a Peruvian and married him. She ceased to exist in his life. He wouldn't talk to her, see her, wouldn't have anything to do with her. Much to the chagrin obviously of his wife, her mother, and the other kids in the family. But he was a very, very strange man.

Q: Well, did, you're up against something like this, and you're the new boy on the block, were you sort of waiting for somebody to come and yank him out of there?

WALKER: No, I was terrified. I minded my P's and Q's. I was on the visa side. Shortly after I got there I sort of was the head of the visa section, which was two or three officers, and two junior officers came in after me, so I was the senior one. And I pretty well stuck to my visa stuff. Another example of his method of doing business. In late '62 we got, I remember hearing on the radio, or someone came running in saying a Brazilian airliner has crashed coming in, landing at Lima airport, and currently there's twenty to thirty Americans on board. Big Varig jet, and I ran into see Mr. Clark. I had taken the consular course, I heard what is involved in a major crash with Americans on board, finding the bodies, getting their effects, notifying, identifying, all these things. So I ran in to see Mr. Clark, who did the American citizens. And I said "Sir, there's been a crash, it was a Brazilian plane and evidentially there were a lot of Americans on board. That's all we know right now, but I'll keep you posted." He said, "I'm going home." I said "Oh, really?" He said, "Yep, Friday afternoon, five o'clock" whatever it was, "I'm going

home.” I said, “Well, okay, we’ll reach you as soon as we have more information.” He said, “No, get hold of the duty officer. Over the weekend that’s the duty officer’s responsibility.” He went home, and I discovered that he didn’t have a phone at home, so we couldn’t reach him. I ended up going to the morgue and wading through vats of formaldehyde and pieces of bodies, and I did the whole airplane crash, because Wally Clark didn’t do things like that on weekends. He was a very funny man. But to answer your question, you know, I saluted and did what I was told. Actually, I thoroughly enjoyed my six months doing consular work in Lima, Peru. At the end of six months, they moved me up to be staff assistant to the Ambassador, part of the rotation program. And I was dual hatted as staff aide to the Ambassador and in the political section.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

WALKER: A fellow named J. Wesley Jones III, I believe. His daughter was a Foreign Service Officer, Frances Jones. And J. Wesley had been previously Ambassador to Libya. He again was a man of the old school. I don’t think I ever saw him except in his dark suit with dark tie and white shirt. He was very, very decent, very impressive man. And was a good man to work for. I worked for him for six months.

Q: What sort of work, can you think of any sort of issues that came up for you to deal with when you were working for him?

WALKER: Oh, absolutely. I can think of several of the things that stick out in my mind. First, as staff aide to the Ambassador I was sitting there after the Ambassador had gone out to lunch when the phone call came in from the Department to say President Kennedy has been shot in Dallas. And I was the one who got the word out that this had happened. I was the one who ended up doing a lot of the legwork in terms of putting together what Embassy Lima did for this tragedy. And I’m sure you remember the horror that this provoked around the world, you know, incredible.

Q: I was in Yugoslavia. We had mobs coming to the Embassy.

WALKER: And I put together the book for people to sign. Went and sat by it, sort of the protocol fellow when people came to sign the book. Fielded a lot of the queries that came in from the phone to the Ambassador. I took most of them and sort of kept him away from any but the most important. I vividly remember those days, and how struck we in the Embassy were, but also how struck Peru was by the tragedy. Later on, there was a number of occasions. I’ll mention one of them. Peru started naming schools after him and naming this and streets, and we got very involved in that with the Ambassador going to a number of these things. That’s something that stands out in my mind, the whole thing with JFK’s assassination and the aftermath.

I also remember, this was also the period, I remember also getting the phone call by happenstance, and I guess it was followed by cables. It was earlier on when the Cuban Missile Crisis was underway, and I was the one that went around the Embassy on the basis of the DCM telling me to do so, telling everyone “We’re all gonna gather in the

auditorium to listen to a pronouncement coming out of Washington.” And the pronouncement was such that it almost sounded like World War III was about to descend upon us. And that produced a hell of a lot of tension, as it did I’m sure in Yugoslavia and elsewhere, in terms of what happened. These missiles start flying. We’re in Lima, Peru for god’s sakes. So really, dark hours in that situation. There was also the fact that while I was staff aide to the Ambassador, Peru did in fact hold an election, and a civilian president was inaugurated, a fellow by the name of Belaúnde Terry. Since I was staff aide to the Ambassador, I was the control officer for the delegation that came down from Washington under the leadership of Senator Morris.

Q: Wayne Morris.

WALKER: Wayne Morris of Oregon, a very liberal fellow. He had an interest in Latin America, had always shown interest in Latin America. So he was head of the delegation. It was a large delegation. The Kennedy White House was very pleased that Peru was moving in this direction. They had Edward Durell Stone, who was the architect who had designed our Embassy in Lima. We learned that Terry was an architect, so we put our foremost architect on the delegation, a fellow named Dougan, who was one of the architects of the Kennedy electoral victory, who later became president of New Jersey State University system was on there. In other words, it was a very impressive delegation, and here I was, sort of leading them around Lima and helping them with Spanish and helping them with the things you do with a delegation. Again, I was really very impressed with what I was involved in, what I was thinking of myself maybe not as leading U.S.-Peruvian relations, but involved in things that were of importance.

Q: Well this is, I mean this is the thing about the Foreign Service, all of a sudden you find yourself as a fairly early rank, the low rank, sort of mixing and mingling, I mean, and sort of directing, you know, actually.

WALKER: Exactly, exactly. So I thoroughly enjoyed that six months or whatever it was. During this time, I’ll never forget the Political Counselor, a fellow named Carl Barch, who has since died. Again, I was so impressed, I was impressed with the DCM, a fellow named Doug Henderson who later became Ambassador to Bolivia, with this fellow Carl Barch, who was the Political Counselor, with the Ambassador himself, these were all giants in my view. They wrote beautifully. They knew so much about what they were dealing with.

I didn’t discover until it happened, but it turned out the DCM and this Political counselor didn’t get along, they didn’t see the situation in the same way. And finally the DCM used some excuse and got Carl transferred. So at the end of his tour, I was in the political section, and staff aide. And I’ll never forget the day Carl departed. We were all sorry to see him go, he was a good man, and big roly-poly sort of guy. The day he departed, he got drunk. He hid in a closet in the chancery, he didn’t want to see the DCM. He saw the DCM coming, he jumped into a closet, we sort of found him there. We put him in his car, we sent him off to Lima, Callao, back then you could still go by boat to the north, he was gonna leave by ship. And he went down to Lima, Callao. I never will forget, because a

couple hours later, I was in the political section with the remaining officer, a fellow named Curt Cutter, who was also incredibly impressive. And we were sitting there and the phone rang and I picked it up, and it was Carl, and he was calling from Lima, Callao, and he was saying “I just heard on the radio about the big demonstrations out in front of the Embassy, what’s it all about?” I said “Demonstrations in front of the Embassy? We haven’t heard anything about demonstrations.” He said “Maybe you might look out the window.” I looked out the window, sure enough there’s this huge crowd. And I thought to myself “Well, we political sections don’t always have a handle on what’s going on.” I ended up running out to see what was going on, and shortly thereafter the water cannon truck came down and doused me along with everyone else that was in the mob into a doorway and let us have it. And that was the first time I remember smelling tear gas, because they launched some of that into the crowd. But the fact that we didn’t know there was a demonstration taking place, and this guy in Lima, Callao did, showed that he was a better political officer than we were.

Q: Do you know what prompted the demonstrators?

WALKER: Yes, they had raised bus fares or something. These were mostly students. In Peru, if you want to get a crowd in the street, you raise utility costs or bus fares, and everyone comes out, and that’s exactly what this was all about. Anyway, in December I guess, ‘63, I got a cable from the Department, personnel cable. And it said “You are being transferred from Lima to Arequipa. Quarters unknown.” Back then we had a two-officer, two State Department officer consulate constituent post in Arequipa, Peru, to the south, second city of Peru. I’d never been to Arequipa. I heard stories about the consul down there, who again was kind of a strange fellow. I went in and showed this cable to the Ambassador, he said “Well, you know, they want you to go down as soon as possible, so you better get down there right away and see if you can find some housing and come back here and pack up and get your wife, and go to your new assignment.” So I think that afternoon I got on a plane and flew down to Arequipa, met the people I was gonna work with, two State officers, I would be the second. A USIS officer, one, and one CIA guy. That was the consulate. They took me out, showed me the house of my predecessor, I said, “Yes, I’ll take it.” So I signed the lease. Flew back to Lima, and Monday morning I went into the office the DCM wanted to see me. A fellow named Ernie Siracusa, who had just taken over.

WALKER: Ernie Siracusa, bless his soul, was what I would call a tough DCM. Doug had been Mr. Smooth, Ernie was Mr. Tough Guy. He wanted to see me. I went in to see him, he said “Walker, I understand there was a cable in last Friday when I was off from State Department.” I said, “Yes sir, I’ve been transferred to Arequipa, and I told the Ambassador.” He said, “Well you don’t think we’re gonna let you go, do you?” I said, “I hope you’re gonna let me go, I just signed a lease, told my wife, we’re mentally prepared to go, and they’re waiting for me down there.” He said, “We’re going to fight this.” I said, “But the Ambassador told me, you know, that he accepted.” “He’ll listen to me, we can’t lose you, you’re not going.” I said, “Oh god. Well, okay, you guys fight it out over me, but let me know soon, because I’ve got a feeling I’m gonna have to pay some money to get out of that lease down there.” I think, maybe the one time Ernie lost, he lost this

fight with personnel and the Department, because I was shortly on my way to Arequipa. I was only there eight or nine months, but Arequipa was an idyllic spot. Old colonial Spanish city, it's about eight-thousand feet high. Eternal spring, beautiful climate. Laid back, not much to do. And I got into some things down there that just, you know, they'll stay with me the rest of my life.

Q: Why would we have a post there?

WALKER: Well Arequipa, back then, was where the leadership of Peru, the political leadership of Peru came out of. I served in a number of countries where you would have two cities, you've got the political capital, and then you've sort of got an economic engine where the leaders come out of for some reason or another. In Honduras, it was Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. In Bolivia it's La Paz, the political capital, and then Santa Cruz which is the economic engine. I've been in these places. The cities always are rivals. At some point in the past we had decided that Arequipa was important enough to put a listening post in. We used it also, by the time I got there, southern Peru was where an incipient guerrilla movement got started. Later it was really with Sendero Luminoso, which was the real bad guys, but back then there were kernels that this sort of movement could take off as sort of groups. In fact, just before I got there they had captured the leader of this group called Ido Blanco, and he was in the local pokey. The CIA guy was supposed to be looking into that, it was partly to cover what they were doing. And back then we also had, you know, Peace Corps volunteers all through that place that needed some tender loving care. There were reasons to have the consulate there. Four or five years after I left, in an economy move they closed it up and never thought again about it, but it was by no means overly taxing. It was a fascinating place.

Q: What were you doing?

WALKER: Well in theory, you know, man of all trades, jack of all trades. I was certainly the consular officer. I was supposed to do all those sort of things, which was not taxing. If we got one or two visa applicants a day, it was overwhelming the system. But I did a lot of travel around the consular district. We did have some interesting American citizen service cases. An old woman who was a fascinating woman, she was the first female PhD to graduate from Stanford University. She had gone through Africa with Teddy Roosevelt back in 1912 or something like this. She had come to Peru. She was a scientist, unmarried. She was raising chickens to experiment on, and one day one of her servants, she lived way out in the boonies, one of her servants came in and said she was really in bad shape. I went out there to find her. She was lying in bed in this farmhouse that looked like something out of Great Expectations. You know, the old woman who is covered with cobwebs. This woman was in a bed covered with Pepto Bismol bottles. And she was bleeding. I got her in my car. We took her to the hospital. Got a doctor for her, and she died. At which point I went out to take charge of her estate. It was incredible. She had archived all her travels through Africa with Teddy Roosevelt. Pictures, the original camera was there. What she had done with her life was incredible. She was in her late 70s. The reason she died was the doctor, who was the consulate doctor, told me that he had had to hold off giving her a blood transfusion because he wasn't sure whether she

was negative or positive, or what her blood type was. And I said, “Yes, but she was bleeding to death. Why didn’t you give her one,” you know, “If there’s incompatibility of blood, you know, children born of this could” I said, “She’s seventy-nine years of age. I doubt she’s going to have a child!” You know. Anyway, that showed the level of medical treatment in Peru at the time. Anyway, I later visited Stanford and found out what an icon she was in terms of Stanford, in terms of women, in terms of women scientists. And there she was living in this horrible dirty filthy house outside of Arequipa Peru.

We had Peace Corps volunteers die. We had all sorts of things happen. I did all that. The Consul, bless his soul, George Mitchell was his name. He was difficult to deal with in a different way from my first boss in Consular affairs up in Lima. He was also a super patriot. His Fourth of July celebration was something to behold, considering it was in Arequipa, Peru, and twenty local officials came to it. He had gone to the Sorbonne, I believe, and claimed that he was a fluent French speaker, and when someone came down from the French embassy that I knew in Lima and visited me, I said, “Do you want to talk to George, because he’s always talking about how he misses being able to converse in French.” And so I took him in there, and it was quickly discovered that George knew about three words in French. He was a difficult man to work for, but again, if you were to ask me the question that you asked about Mr. Clark, in that how did you deal with this, I dealt with it by trying to get along with him. My successor, who later became a very close friend, who is a bit more brazen than I am, he replaced me, he found that George was a bit of a racist, and was a bit of a bigot in certain ways. And he just took him on, brand new junior officer took on this guy, and it almost destroyed his career. I, on the other hand, sort of went with the flow.

Q: Both in Lima and Arequipa, how did you find, you and your wife trying the social life there. I mean this is your first, there you are.

WALKER: I thoroughly enjoyed it, obviously. I mean getting invited to the Ambassador’s residence because I was his staff assistant. That for me was a high. I later discovered that my wife was very uncomfortable at these things, one being told what to do or what to wear or how to act, and two being ten years younger than most every other woman in the room, if not thirty or forty years younger than many of the women in the room. So she was uncomfortable. When we went to Arequipa it was totally different. Arequipa, small elite that runs the city, mostly little dinner party sort of things. To give another example of my boss’ way with things, one of my duties was to do the sort of consular circuit, which was done by a little rickety train, went up to Lake Titicaca and over Cusco, Machu Picchu was part of our district. So I really enjoyed this, you know. This crazy little train, put-put up into the Andes, circulate around, go see Peace Corps volunteers in these various little villages. My wife became pregnant while we were at Arequipa. And when she was about three months pregnant, I went off on one of these [break in transcript]

Q: You were saying when you came back.

WALKER: He picked me up at the railway station, which I thought was a little funny, and on the way back he said, “Oh, something happened when you were gone, Bill. Your

wife miscarried.” And I said “Oh, my god, I wish you’d notified me.” “Well, we thought that it’d be best, you know, you finish the trip. Nothing could be done, I took her to the hospital, she’s home, she’s fine, etc.” I said, “I’m sure it was quite a bad experience for her.” “Well, she’s okay.” So I said, “Fine.”

About a week later, George called me into his office, and he said, he said, “Bill, I’m filling out your rating. Your efficiency report. And there’s a block here for how well you entertain. And there’s also a thing here about your wife, and you know, we haven’t been to your house yet, we don’t know how you entertain. Could you and your wife put together a sort of social event so we can be invited?” And I said, “Great!” So, I went home, I said, “Maybe we could do this a month from now, you’re still sort of recovering from the miscarriage, so we planned something about a month out, I went back and told George, he said, “Oh, no, no, we’ve gotta do it much faster, because I’ve gotta get this in, there’s a deadline, so could you do it this weekend?” So I called up a couple of couples in the local scene to show that I knew some locals, invited them over to dinner on that Saturday night. My wife was all atwitter, this was not what she wanted to do, she was recovering from a miscarriage. And I’ll never forget going in to see George a couple of days before it happened, and saying, “George, I’ve got the invitations out, and the Mayor is coming with his wife, and Carlos so and so is coming with his wife, so it’ll be ourselves and the three couples that I’ve invited.” And George said, “Oh, you invited us, did you?” I said, “Well, of course George.” He said, “Well, we haven’t gotten an invitation.” I said, “George, this is being put on for you, you wanted to come and see.” He said, “Well, please send us a formal invitation, I’d like to see it.” It was that sort of a formality, just drove me up the wall, but again, I gave the invitation and he accepted graciously, and we held a function and everything went fine, and I’m sure he said very nice things about my wife and I and our ability to socialize, but it was crazy little things like that.

The fellow who represented the agency, it was a real wacky four-person consulate. I swear to god, you probably don’t believe this, I was the only sane person there. The Agency guy was this big bear of a guy who had, he had this problem narcolepsy, or something like that. Every time I saw him at a function, every time I went to dinner where he was present. And he would fall asleep. And you would be sitting there, and all of a sudden there was this big bear of a guy with his head down snoring at the function. Now this is not the sort of unobtrusive, melt into the crowd sort of a person. Everybody in town knew who he was. The USIS guy, David Hakim was his name, was a naturalized American citizen, he was Egyptian-Jewish. And apparently, in ‘56 I guess it was.

Q: The Suez crisis.

WALKER: Suez crisis. Nasser. A lot of the Jewish community left in a hurry. He came out. He ended up marrying an American gal who was the daughter of concentration camp victims. They were both very serious Jews, this had been a big part of their lives. She because of her parents, he because of having to leave his roots in Egypt. She was a delightful person, he was the super patriot. You could not say anything, even in the lightest jest, that indicated that America was not perfect. Maybe this is what you need as

a USIS officer, sort of telling the world about America. But if his wife maybe it's come across, I like to laugh, I like to joke, I like to be light at times. The one George's fourth of July function I went to, I'll never forget, they had this beautiful house with a stairway up to the house. George insisted that we get a local military band to play the Star Spangled Banner, and you can imagine what a Peruvian military band is in southern Peru, how their skills might interpret the Star Spangled Banner. They were down at the bottom of the stairs, and as guests cars pulled up and they got out they were supposed to play the Star Spangled Banner. And this stairway led up to George and his wife Nina, who was another strange little character, standing up there, sort of the American consul ready to greet his guests with the music in the background. I'm standing down at the bottom. David Hakim is there with his wife. And I made some crack about, last time I saw this scene was out of a Shirley Temple movie or something. I expected them to tap-dance down these steps in a minute, right? David's wife saw the humor and laughed a little bit. Hakim turned on her and just chewed her ass out for not being serious enough in what was a very solemn occasion. It really did look like a Shirley Temple, Nelson Eddie movie of some sort. Anyway, I guess they did not appreciate my lack of seriousness at such occasion.

But, again, I thoroughly enjoyed the time I was in Arequipa, we did a little political reporting. I remember there was a local strike, and George, this was the first time he asked me to do a report. We want to tell Washington what's happening in Arequipa, so let's do a report on this strike. I couldn't find out anything that was of interest to Washington in this little local strike. And I sat, I remember sitting in front of my typewriter sort of poised, trying to figure out what the hell. And I wrote some inane, stupid, little thing, just to get the task off my desk. And turned it in, and George called me in to tell me how great this was, and he was gonna move it around, and you know, Washington would really stand up and see that we were doing our share of reporting from Arequipa. Made no sense to me, but if that's the way constituent posts act, fine. Anyway, it was interesting.

Q: How did you find, you know, dealing with Peruvian authorities and all? What was your impression?

WALKER: Um. Let me go back to Lima. My wife and I are staying in a hotel, we had just gotten there. We inherited, or we took over the apartment of my predecessor, a very nice sort of penthouse apartment, and we inherited a maid. This was another thing that made my wife sort of uncomfortable. She had never lived in a situation, as most Americans haven't, with a maid in the house all the time. Anyway, over the course of about three or four weeks, I somehow noticed that my shirts were not where I thought they were. And I ended up with one shirt, and I knew I had brought down eight, nine, ten shirts. But I had only one shirt. And my wife's dresses started, we couldn't find them. Every time we'd ask the maid, "Oh, they're in the wash." Or something. "Where's my blue dress?" "Well, it's in the wash, ironing." And one day my wife noticed that under our maid's smock, was her blue dress. So she called me up, and I came home, and we discovered that the maid had been making off with all our clothes. We discovered that she had a boyfriend, and this was why my shirts were going as well as the dresses. We

were a bit upset that the woman had sort of done this to us. And my first thought, I called the Embassy and told them this, and they said “Well, notify the police, if you’re gonna put in an insurance claim, you’ve gotta notify the police.” So I had the embassy call the police. And before the police came, the boyfriend came to see me, and he said, “Don’t let the police take her.” I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “Well, senor, you probably don’t understand what it means for a young woman to go into a police station. At best she’ll be beaten, at worst she’ll be raped.” I said, “Oh, no, you’re exaggerating.” Anyway, I said, “We’ll go down to the police station.” And we went down, and they brought her out, and she had obviously been badly, badly treated. And so I immediately dropped charges and got her out of there. This to me was sort of working level Latin American officials that the people come in contact with, corrupt, vicious, avoided at all costs by the local people. To this day, I’ve gotten, if I’m into an issue that’s Rule of Law, and it’s got to do with what starts a war in El Salvador or Peru or these places, it’s a lack of justice for the vast majority of the people. And this treatment by authority and that sort of thing, and that was what came out of that particular incident. I was, as I said earlier I was on the receiving end of water cannon, of teargas in Arequipa. There were a couple of times, I don’t even remember the occasion, there were a couple of times when mobs came to the consulate. Not to attack us, but to just stand outside and chant nasty things. George would always call in the local authorities to take care of it. They would send over the assault guards who would come down the cobblestone streets on horseback with batons and just beat the crap out of people. That was sort of my impression of local authorities. Not a very favorable one, to say the least.

Q: Did you get any feel for the Spanish heritage versus the Indian heritage. I mean, well really, the Indian situation in Peru at that time.

WALKER: Not good, it’s still not good. Later on in Bolivia, I encountered it at a higher level. No question about it, anyone who is marginally dark-skinned in Peru is a second-class citizen. The elites of Peru up until fairly recently have been European in origin, have been proud of their Spanish heritage. There’s also various colonies of other European nationalities that have gone to Peru over the years. And if you’re from French background or German background, you’re accepted, not quite as pure as those who go back to Pizarro, but nevertheless accepted as white. Everybody else is not. Lots of words that are derogatory for the people of Indian background. And yet, I was able to spend quite a bit of time going around, Machu Picchu, Cusco, that sort of thing. Wow! Talk about a culture. Talk about an advanced culture, they really did. Later on, when I was at UCLA, I did some studies in anthropology of Peru, archaeology of Peru. Incredible. It was incredible what they had there before we came along. But the efforts to foment peasant uprisings came to naught. Shortly after I left, when I came back two years later to the Department on the Argentine desk was when we were chasing Che Guevara around, and we caught him in Bolivia. And even he badly miscalculated, thinking that all you’ve gotta do was find a peasant who was downtrodden and you had a leftist revolutionary, and it’s just the opposite. They’re very, very conservative. The Indians in Peru, in Bolivia, Brazil, they live on a knife’s edge. They don’t take chances, because a slight mistake and they’re ruined, so they, they’re not revolutionaries. What they got, they hold

on to. But some incredible, I mean Peru is a wonderful country, I would have loved to have gone back there at some later point.

Q: Well you left there in '64. Whither?

WALKER: Whither! In my little house in Arequipa, Peru, one night, phone rang, and over the horrendous international connection of those days, someone in the Department said, "You're being transferred." I said "Yes, I'm due out shortly. Where am I going?" "You're going to Naha." No idea where it was. Didn't have a clue. And I don't know why, I guess I should have.

Q: Well, it's not exactly a name that is on the lips of everyone.

WALKER: Well, I certainly didn't know where it was. I, "Where is Naha?" He said "Japan." I said, "Oh, okay. Japan sounds great." My wife was quite taken with the idea of going to Japan, and we were going to go out there, and the next day I somehow found some sort of book that had a map of Japan, I thought Naha was Nara, mainland Japan, and all of a sudden I found out that it was this place called Okinawa, and it was actually under our authority and jurisdiction at that time. But it was still a different part of the world, and I greatly looked forward to going out there.

Q: Did you go back to Washington first?

WALKER: Yes, I went back to Washington, and went on home leave in California. Washington wasn't for more than a few weeks I think, if I remember right. I sent my wife to California to be with her parents, and I went via Washington for five days consultation or something like that. No language training, no area training. Straight out to Japan.

Q: Now to just capture the spirit, I think I knew the answer, but what sort of consultation did you have before you went out?

WALKER: I have no memory of it whatsoever.

Q: I think the answer is probably "Here's your ticket. Go to the following. Sort of administrative things."

WALKER: I'm sure that's what it was, I'm thinking.

Q: Normally you'd be sitting down and being given American relations with Okinawa issue before sending an officer.

WALKER: If it was there, I erased it from my memory bank. But I'm sure there was a check sheet with go to personnel. Back then you had to carry some papers around and ensure the payroll that you were transferred, and you signed in the lounge, and all these things. So I went through all of that. Flew out to California, joined my wife, we spent home leave there. And I guess near the end of the Summer sometime, got on the plane

and flew to Tokyo. Spent a couple of days in Tokyo, going through consultations at the Embassy. Which I do remember as being more tied-in with what I was about to face in Okinawa. The Ambassador at the time was Edwin Reischauer, who was again a giant of Far Eastern academia. I got to meet him. I was very impressed with the fact I met the Ambassador in what was, compared to this consulate that I had just come out of, this four-person consulate, half of Tokyo seemed to be the embassy. Annexes here, annexes there. Japan was, when people asked me how my tour in Japan was, I say I was there when it was still cheap. We stayed at the Okuda Palace, which was a wonderful hotel, still is. My wife had a high school friend, an exchange student who had lived with her family for a year in California who was back, married now in Tokyo, so we spent time with them. My wife thoroughly enjoyed Japan. She studied the language, she went up to Tokyo several times from Okinawa, stayed with this friend. She really liked Japan very, very much.

Q: Well then you were in, on Okinawa from '64 to what?

WALKER: '66, the end of '66.

Q: Well then we had this sort of, at that time sort of this peculiar relationship with Okinawa. Could you talk about what the situation was at the time?

WALKER: Well it was a very peculiar situation, because Okinawa was totally administered by the United States. It was under the authority of a High Commissioner, who was an Air Force three-star general, who reigned over Kadena Air Base and all of Okinawa, and the Ryukyu Islands to the south. It had been the scene of the last battle of World War II, it was still very badly damaged.

The particularly unusual thing as far as the consulate was concerned, was the fact that we were doing all these consular things: attesting to marriages, issuing visas to go to the States, notary public acts. All the consular functions we were performing from what was essentially a U.S. administered territory. So we were never quite sure of what the legality of any of our acts was, and no one wanted to put this question forward, because that might in some way impinge on the U.S. authority to administer Okinawa. We didn't want to say, we were sort of a branch office of Tokyo, and some of our consular things had to go up to Tokyo, for them to put their seal on it, to make sure it was legal. But we were doing all sorts of things there that might not have stood the test of a judicial review at some point. Issuing birth certificates, all those things you do as a consulate.

The consulate itself had a consul who was a Japanese language officer, who was usually the best graduate of the school in Yokohama for Japanese; usually someone who had done two years of Japanese. The consul was essentially there to do political reporting independent of what DoD was saying about Okinawa. Because DoD considered it their fiefdom, and State Department wanted a sort of an independent view, much more contact with the Okinawan population to see what was cooking there. There were two consular officers there, more or less junior officers, of which I was one. We had two sort of administrative officers, one was a communicator, administrative type, and then there was

an American secretary, and that made up the staff. We were on a naval base, we were on naval air station, Naha. In an old lighthouse from the Japanese days. The consulate did the entire range of consular affairs and it was a very busy consulate. We had twenty-some thousand American GI's, marines, sailors on the island. Many of them with their families. Lots of births of American kids at the military hospital. Lots of marriages of GI's to Japanese gals. Lots of normal things, passport issuances.

What sort of made my tour particularly interesting was the fact that the Vietnam War took off while I was there. I was in the officer's club one night, and the next table, it was a huge table with all these marine officers, and I recognized General Krulak, three-star general who was the father of the just-left commandant of the Marines, his son. But back then, General Krulak was the head of the Third Marine Division, I'll never forget at the end of the dinner, or at the end of their dinner, he stood up and gave some toast, they all stood up and toasted to the Marines, or *semper parati*, or something like that. And the next day, the headlines were "3rd Marines, First American Ground Troops Land in Vietnam." So that was the real opening of massive, LBJ's opening of Vietnam to U.S. ground troops. And from that point on, we had a hell of a lot of business of issuing passport to special forces guys that were going down into the region. We also had an incredible expansion of an area that I had not thought about before, even though I had done quite a bit of consular work, but which became an overwhelming burden for the consulate, me in particular because I handled it, which was the shipping and seamen. The war broke out, we had all this need to get supplies down to Vietnam, the American shipping industry was called upon to do this, the Navy didn't have the in-house capacity to take all this stuff to the Far East, so they went out, and they got a lot of liberty ships out of mothballs and San Francisco Bay, the old Henry Kaiser stuff. They pulled ships from wherever they could find them, then they had to get crews. And so they went out, and I'll never forget seeing a booklet put out by the Seafarer's Union. There was an ad saying: If you've ever had a ticket as a merchant-marine sailor, and you want to get it back, whether it was taken away from you for crime or drunkenness or whatever, come back, we're willing to give you another chance. So the ships that came out there, many of them were on their last legs, I remember one came out, it had broken down twenty-some times crossing the Pacific. The crews were a rum bunch, to say the least. I put down mutinies. I had, I don't know how many times a week I would have crews coming in that wanted to sign off or sign on for various reasons. I got into the minutia of shipping and seamen, again doing things that we had no idea, the legal basis. Back then consular officers theoretically could fire, could take people off ship's articles, could fire captains. I did that many a time. But the question was, was I a consular officer as intended in the regs? It said that a consular officer can fire a captain. I had incredible experiences. We had murders on board ships. You name it, those guys got into it. And Okinawa was a place where a lot of guys wanted to jump ship, because they'd been to Vietnam, and were coming out, and they found out that hey, you could be shot at down there, going up some of these rivers. So we had times when whole crews wanted to sign off. And back then, again, I have no idea what happened to shipping and seamen in the interim years, but back then, if a guy wanted to sign off the articles overseas, the captain had to pay him off in front of a consular officer, and you had to count his money. Well these guys were making incredible amounts of money. And you know, I would pay guys off, ten-thousand dollars, count it out in front of

the captain, sign him off the articles, put the stamp on, the ship would sail, and a week later the guy would come in looking for a repatriation loan. "What happened to your ten thousand dollars for god's sake?" "Oh, well, I met a gal, you know. Great bars here, you know, I almost bought a bar." It was just, it was incredible stuff. I saw a slice of life that I would never have seen. But there were other interesting things.

Q: Let me ask a question, how did you put down a mutiny, what does one do to put down a mutiny as a consular officer?

WALKER: Well, the one I remember the most, it got even more dramatic than some of the others. I was home, I think I was sick, I was home one day. The other consular officer, this guy was a very, I keep talking about these strange people, this guy was very strange. He was about yea tall, and he weighed about two-hundred fifty pounds.

Q: We're talking about five feet tall.

WALKER: Yes. Very, very short man. He had a lot of hang-ups. Married to a Japanese girl, he had served in Hokkaido, he met a Japanese girl named Mary. He had started out in the Foreign Service as a diplomatic guard on the boats going to Europe that took pouches over, and he went along as a guard. He graduated from that into something administrative, I guess he mustanged in or something, now he was a very junior consular officer. A very strange man. Anyway, he was in charge, since I was home that day. He calls up, he said, "Bill," he said, "There's a captain in here who says his crew is mutinous, and he wants us to do something." I said, "Well, do it." He said, "Well, I'm not gonna do it. You handle shipping and seamen, and I've seen what these crews look like, and they're all big huge drunken guys, I don't want to deal with this." I said, "Okay Harris, I'll be right in." I drove in, the Captain was out of his mind saying that they had mutinied. They had tossed him off the ship, and it was a ship that was out in White Harbor, which was up in the north end of the island. I said, "Well, let's go up and see what we can do." He said, "I'm only going on board if you'll go with me." I said, "Okay." So we drove out. I'll never forget, because we got there, this liberty ship was bobbing up and down out in the harbor. It's raining, it's a nasty day in Okinawa. We go out into the bouncy, bouncy boat, we get to the bottom, looking up the side of the ship. The Captain sort of tries to assert his authority, and they give him various signs, and what can he do? And he said, "I've got the Consul right here with me." And I say, "I'm coming aboard. And you better let me. I tell them about my authority." So they throw a rope ladder over, and I'll never forget, sitting in this little thing, and we're coming close, and the rope ladder's dangling, I'm thinking if I jump and miss, I'm down in the middle here. I jump, caught the rope ladder, climbed aboard, and I let the captain remain down below so I could talk to his men and find out what the complaints were. And the complaints were stupid stuff, I remember. One of the complaints was that, I mean they were looking for an excuse to get off the ship, and he wasn't gonna let them get off, and that's why they mutinied.

To answer your question, what did I do? I sat down, I wrote out something, with the authority vested in me, you know, I tell you that you are on the verge of mutinous

behavior, and you are warned, as there are penalties now. And I literally stuck it up on some structure of the ship, and said, “You guys better read that, I’m, you know, that Captain comes aboard and he takes charge. He’s in charge of the ship until you get off, get signed off legally.” So that was how I put down the mutiny. I thought I put it down anyway, I don’t know if I had or not, maybe they were just. I remember they complained they weren’t getting their milk ration. Half of them were smelling of booze and... “What do you mean?” “Well, here in our contract with the union and the shipping company, you know, it says, every man will get so much milk a day, and they haven’t given us our milk.” And I said, “You really want your milk?” They said “Hey, we’re entitled to it, they’re not giving it to us, we can sign off. They’re not living up to the contract, we want off this ship.” That kind of stuff. Interesting folks.

Q: Really, those of us who have dealt with that, it’s a little bit, particularly at that time, these were really the refuse. The good seamen I’m told, you know, would either be on the European trade or coastal trade. And you had what you called the China coaster. Later I was consul general in Saigon, and I had to deal with these people. But by that time we got a little better, we had a member of the Seamen’s Union, and a Coast Guard officer, and a Vice Consul, and the three would appear on the ship at the same time, and that wiped them out.

WALKER: Well, I mean, you know, to show you sort of the quality of the folks that were running these ships. And the ships, as I say, were worse than the crews actually. One day a master came in. And he sat down and just told me the problems he had. With the crew, with the ship, everything was going wrong. And at the end, I said, “Well gee, some of these things are things I’m sure you’ve encountered before.” He said, “No, I’ve never encountered anything like this before in my thirty years as a master.” I said, “God, that surprises me, because some of the things you’re talking about, I’ve seen on a lot of other ships.” I finally got along and said, “How long have you been a master?” “I’ve been a master for three decades.” I said, “No kidding. How long have you been plying the Pacific?” He said, “This is my first trip over the Pacific.” I said, “You’re normally on the Atlantic side?” He said, “Well, sort of.” And I said, “Well, what sort of ships have you been master on?” He sort of hemmed and hawed. He said, “This is the first time I’ve been on a blue water ship. I run a ferry in New York Harbor. And that’s my master’s ticket. And that was good enough to get me, when I saw this, good money, and adventure, I thought this _____” But he was a ferryboat captain. And now he had this big ship and he had no idea what to do.

Q: Well now, how did you find dealing with the military, because there must have been times when you would find yourself either nose-to-nose with the military, military justice system or something like that. I mean, we’re two different breeds of cat.

WALKER: Yes. Well, let me tell you sort of how our relations with the military went. Illustrated by this anecdote. As I said, the consul’s role there was to interface with the Okinawan population, with Japanese authorities that were there. To keep things as smooth as possible, because there were always the frictions with the local community and

our military bases. I served under three different Consuls, all of whom were Japanese language officers.

Q: Who were they? Do you recall?

WALKER: Yes, first was a guy named Dick Finch, subsequently died. Also a strange guy, he thought he was really a sumo wrestler. He was really into the Japan thing. Who was the second one? Joe Lahey was the second one. And Carlton Brower. These were my three principal officers. And I of course was impressed with the fact that they had Japanese at the level they did. Joe Lahey, the second one, came to me one day, and he said, he said "Bill, I think you told me you were an architecture student at one time?" I said, "Yes." He said, "I'm telling Washington, I'm telling FBO that we've gotta get a house for me off-base. And I'd appreciate it if you would sort of help design it or do whatever it takes to make sure it's the right sort of house, because FBO will probably set up a little U.S. bungalow here, and I want something that sort of fits in with Japan. I said, "Sure, I'd be more than happy to do so. Why are you moving off-base? Because there's a lot of comforts on-base. People mow your lawn, people take care of the property." He said, "Yes, but last night, I gave another party in which I invited local authorities, and the guy who was the head of the Okinawan government was refused admission at the gate, because he didn't have some sort of ID, and they wouldn't let him in." Now this is a guy who was, in our sort of description of Okinawa, we've got the high commissioner, our military guy, but he worked hand in hand with ____ what did they call him ____ it was a title that the Okinawan authority had. And he was sort of our public governor, and he couldn't get onto the base, because the GI didn't know who he was, and didn't take him at his word because he was Japanese, and so he was turned away and was very insulted. And Joe said, "This happens all the time, every time I give a function for Okinawan authorities, half of them don't make it so they can't get through the goddamn gate, so I'm gonna get off-base." We ended up designing a house and building a house so that he got off-base. But there was that sort of thing. The sort of lack of sensitivity by the military authorities to what the situation was. You know, they were always taking over more land for a new range or something and just sort of displacing the Okinawan farmers, and thinking that no one was going to object. And we were sort of there to sort of cushion it.

During my time on Okinawa, I was sent up to Tokyo, for I think about a month in the middle of the tour, to work in the political section in Tokyo. There were some Okinawan issues coming up, the major one of which was, we had finally given permission to the Prime Minister of Japan, Sato was his name at the time, to visit Okinawa. And this was the first time we were gonna let them come at that level and see Okinawa. Since I knew Okinawa, I was sort of the guy in the political section who handled the visit of Prime Minister Sato to Okinawa. And about eighty percent of my time was spent on the phone to military guys in Okinawa. Every time I called and said, "When the plane comes in, Bob, you're gonna have to do this." And you had to go through the whole pitch about why it was important that we treat the Prime Minister of Japan in the way he should have been treated rather than, well, he doesn't have this priority. All sorts of DoD regulations and imperatives made it extremely difficult to make this visit go the way the Embassy

Tokyo wanted it to go. And it wasn't bad feelings, it was just ignorance and lack of sensitivity to what the situation was.

Q: Later, when the reversion movement started really going, there was a real, that's when, sort of, particularly for the Marines, we won it with our blood, and they can't have it.

WALKER: Well that was still the prevalent feeling among the military on Okinawa while I was there. Another anecdote I vividly remember. A military lawyer comes in and sees me one day. A Lieutenant. And he says, "I've been assigned to defend a young marine who is up in the brig up at Camp Hansen. And this marine, well, he's a nice young kid, but had problems with discipline, and sort of one thing led to another, and each time it got worse and worse, and now he's up there, and he's facing a long time in the brig. They've got him for desertion or something. Sort of snowballed, and now he's really in serious, serious trouble with the marines, and he's up in Camp Hansen. And he's got an idea. He's come up with this idea, I, his lawyer, didn't know how to handle it, so I thought I'd come and ask you about it. He wants to renounce his American citizenship." I said, "Really?" He said, "Yes, he's heard in the scuttlebutt of the prison, that if you renounce, if you're not an American citizen, and you're in the Marine Corps, you can ask to be discharged, and they have to discharge you. And therefore he will get out of the brig and get out of the Marine Corps." And I said, "Well, you know it's _____" Back then anyway, it was a fairly rigorous process you had to go through. It has to be done in front of a consular officer. There was a declaration you've gotta do. It's gotta go back to Washington. All sorts of implications. And the lawyer said, "Well look, okay, I understand what you're saying, but could you go out and talk to him and sort of clue him in to maybe this isn't the wisest thing he can do." And I said, "Sure." So I drove out to Camp Hansen. Marine brig, you know what it's like, pretty strenuous sort of place, lot of big guards around and this young man comes in and sits down, and I said, "Look, I understand you're thinking of renouncing your citizenship, let's talk about it. What are you gonna do after you get out of the Marine Corps, say this is a successful ploy and you are discharged." I said, "You know, you'll have renounced your citizenship, you won't be able to go to the U.S." He said, "Oh, I thought about that, got a girlfriend here, Japanese girlfriend. Her family likes me. I'll just stay here in Okinawa, and make my way." I said, "Well, have you thought what happens when this reverts to Japan? I mean, we're gonna be here for a year or ten years, or a long time, but you're a young man. Sometime during your lifetime I'm predicting this will become Japan again, and you're gonna be here as a foreigner, and let me tell you how *gaijin* are treated here in Japan. Especially a *gaijin* who has no other citizenship to fall back on. An American passport holder married to a Japanese girl, you'd probably be okay, but you won't have an American passport. You will be what we call a stateless person." We talked this through. And it finally dawned on him that maybe this wasn't the smartest thing to do. We finished up, and he said, "Okay, well, I'll think about it, I'll talk to my lawyer some more." So I went outside, there was his lawyer, and his lawyer said, "How did it go?" I said, "Well, I think I talked him out of it." He said great, great. He said, "I've got a list here of all the other guys you're gonna have to sit down and talk to." Every guy in the brig had sort of the same idea. And each

one, so I had to sit down with I can't remember how many at once, but it was a huge crowd of guys.

Point of story, again, the military guys, maybe it's unfair to take this as a sample, but the military guys had the feeling we were there forever, it was our territory, you know, we won it fair and square, and by God we were gonna be forever here. Very little interaction with the reality of being a foreigner in Japan. Had a call one day from a young lady who said, "I heard you're gonna give the Foreign Service exam here next month." I said, "Absolutely." She said, "I heard that I can sign up and come in and take it." I said, "Absolutely." She said, "Well, I'm the daughter of Colonel so and so, and I live up here on Kadena airbase, and I'd like to take the exam." I said, "I'll send you the papers, fill them out, we'll get you on the list." She said, "Well, where do you give the exam, do you give it out here on Kadena airbase?" I said, "No, no, no, we give it down here in the consulate." She said, "Where's the consulate?" I said, "It's down in Naha." She said, "Oh, Naha. Oh, okay. How do you get there?" I said, "Well you come out gate one, and you turn left on highway 1, and ten minutes, fifteen minutes later you're in Naha. I said, "You know, when you get here, just go to Deneo..." She said, "Look, I've never been off Kadena Air Base, so I don't know what you're talking about." I said, "How long have you been here?" "Eighteen months or so." I said, "In eighteen months you have never been off Kadena Air Base?!?" She said, "Oh, we've got everything here." I said, "Well, fine, come and take the exam, but most people who join the Foreign Service join because they like to interact with foreign cultures, and you are a couple hundred yards away from a very interesting culture and you've never come off the base." It was that sort of thing.

Q: Did, how about your travels? Did you get around much? Sort of avoiding the artillery ranges and things like that.

WALKER: Not much. I saw more of mainland Japan, I went up twice, and took the opportunity to go by train and see Nara and see this and see that. The southern end of Okinawa was mostly bases.

As I said, the island was still recovering from the Battle of Okinawa, some fifteen years before. But we had not done much to assist in that recovery. So it was still pretty haphazard. The Okinawan community was still poor, was still overwhelmingly farming. Naha, the city which I understand is now a typical high-rise Japanese mainland sort of city back then was nothing of the sort. The only trips I took out of Naha, out of the southern end of the island, which is the main portion of the island, was up to a sort of R&R officers' area up in the north, which is a place you'd go and do scuba diving, and all the facilities that the military put in as sort of an R&R operation. But there wasn't that much to see, other than the bases. Out to White Beach, which is where the Navy would come in, that sort of thing. Socializing was mostly within the consulate, group, USIS, USIA, had a FBIS station out there.

Q: Foreign Broadcasting Information Service.

WALKER: Information Service, yes. That was one of their big receiving end of things. I was the only one at the consulate who did not live in Kadena airbase. We lived in a Japanese-style home in the community. But all the others, up until we built the house for the consul, lived on the base. And they lived in houses that were surrounded by the fittest foreign nationals, so there were people from India, from Burma, from Thailand, from Vietnam. So it was a neat little international community there. And that was, for the most part, where we socialized. We socialized mostly with the business people. Probably my closest friend down to today came out of that milieu, Jeff Dieterich.

Jeff married a young Okinawan gal, who was an absolutely wonderful woman. We established a friendship that lasts down to today.

Q: Well now, did you, was the, maybe it wasn't at that time, but later the Mayor of Naha who became world renown, I mean I'd never been to Okinawa, but I certainly for years would hear about the Mayor of Naha, was a communist or something like that.

WALKER: Well he was certainly an Okinawan nationalist. I don't know if that equates with communist or not. Yes, he was around when I was there. We had the good Okinawans and then we had the Okinawans who followed him. Every once in a while he'd have a demonstration at the front gate to Naha airbase or to Kadena. This was when, in those first years of Vietnam, the B-52's flew out of Kadena in a steady stream all day long. I mean they just, one end to another, incredible numbers flying down to Vietnam, dropping their loads, coming back. The farmers around Kadena airbase, many of whom had been displaced by the base, you know, complained that the noise was killing their cattle or whatever animals they had or were destroying their crops. And this fellow, I think he was Mayor, he had some position_____.

Q: At one point he was Mayor.

WALKER: Later on I know he was Mayor, but I'm trying to remember what he was when I was there, he would organize these demonstrations in front of the base. Holding up the signs "Go home". But we had this other group who were our Okinawans, who had set up this sort of parallel structure. The High Commissioner, three-star General, handled the government of the Ryukyus. The Government of the Ryukyus was a two-phased operation. There were sort of Cabinet Ministers who were Americans, there were two Foreign Service Officers out there, a guy named Jerry Warner was head of the Political section. It was sort of like a state government, and with departments headed by Americans. Parallel to that, there was another government which were their counterparts who were Okinawans. And that was sort of like a provisional government that we pretended was sort of running things when in fact it was the Americans who were running things, and if they didn't run things right, the military three-star was able to circumvent anything they did wrong. I'll never forget meeting the woman who was the Commissioner of Education on the American side. A sweet old lady from someplace in New Jersey. And she came in, we got to talking about the educational system for Okinawans, which was pretty bad. One example being the fellow who was my Japanese teacher. I took lessons an hour a day for as long as I could stand it. He was a very, very

bright guy. His goal was to get into Tokyo University, which is the pre-eminent University in Japan, at which point his future would be made if he could get in. He was absolutely bi-lingual in English. He'd studied in the States. He wanted to get into their English language program. He flunked. He went up and took the test, I don't know how many times he flunked every year. Why? Because he was not grounded in Japanese. He did not know enough Kanji characters. That had been lacking in the schools we set up on Okinawa for the local kids. We didn't think they had to learn all that crap they learned in Japan's schools. So here was a guy who's only future was gonna be as a Japanese person, but in spite of his qualifications in terms of the subject matter, he couldn't pass the entrance exam to Tokyo University. So when this woman came out, I was talking to her about this and saying "You know, we're really short-changing the Okinawan kids who, their future is as Japanese, not as little semi-American kids." So we got into a discussion, and I said there was something definitely wrong with this woman's approach to education, I said "What's your background?" "Well, I'm from New Jersey, I was a teacher in New Jersey." "How did you come to Okinawa and become the Commissioner of Education?" "Well, my husband was the Commissioner, but he died a year ago so they gave me the job." I thought to myself: If this is what is teaching these people what an American school system is, God knows they don't need an American school system, but even if they did, this is not the person to bring it to them. But on the parallel side were our Okinawans, who had signed on board to sort of have the titles but not the reality of running things. They were the people that the Consul would invite to the house and then not be able to get them through the gate.

Q: These were the Tane.

WALKER: Tane.

Q: Did you find yourself, as so often happens where we have military bases, here of course the military base is so overwhelming, probably a different thing, but sort of trying to get, not at the upper level but just at the gate-guard level or maybe a little higher working with the military to keep them from getting too overpowering and insulting the local people?

WALKER: We didn't do much of that. When the High Commissioner, the three star General, would think it necessary to sort of hold a country team meeting of his base commanders or whatever, the Consul would be invited as sort of another voice. But his influence or his ability to influence things was pretty pathetic, pretty low. Reischauer came down just once when I was there. Now he was impressive, obviously, the American ambassador to Japan. The fellows we had who were in this U.S. Cabinet sort of thing, Jerry Warner, who was a fairly senior Foreign Service Officer, John Bonjo came down at a lower level, ran one of the outfits, was sort of the political section head. They had some influence, but not very much. That was what they were there for, to sort of give the military leadership a flavor of, they were Japanese languages officers, etc. But any time a military task came face to face or came up against a sensitivity of the locals, it overpowered it. I mean just ran right over it.

Q: Was the word 'reversion' even a word at that time?

WALKER: Yes, it was a word, it was a word. The then or future mayor of Okinawa was demanding reversion. This was the word you would see in the English signs at least. Yes, it was out there, but we were adamantly opposed. We weren't giving them any encouragement. I mean the Vietnam war was going on during this period and it just wasn't in the cards. I don't remember having many, maybe I just wasn't in that loop, but I don't remember the sort of things that we've heard over the last few years of GI's raping a girl or murdering someone. I can't imagine those things were not happening, but it didn't come to our attention. The ones that came to my attention were this shipment, or seamen who misbehaved, usually it was riotous behavior and breaking up bars or not paying the girls, and that sort of thing. But, the bases back then were, certainly Kadena, but the other bases, you know, were surrounded by the honkey-tonk bars, as I'm sure Vietnam must have been as far as the eye can see. There it was a bit smaller, but it was still the same sort of thing. We had a number of servicemen took their discharge on Okinawa. Not like the guy in the brig who wanted to get out of the service. But they, at the end of their tour they took their discharge. They were thinking they could live on their small pensions since Japan was, as I said, cheap; certainly Okinawa was cheap. And most of them drank their pension. We had a lot of that stuff, shipping bodies back. I certainly, you know, I certainly learned, if I didn't learn it when I was in the U.S. Army, I learned about the community that surrounds U.S. bases. A lot of ex-pats who had set up used car lots.

Q: Or as bible salesmen.

WALKER: Yes, bible salesmen.

Q: And car dealers. Very sleazy too.

WALKER: Yes. The guy that I rented the house from, as I said, we didn't want to live on base. My wife was into the Japan side of things. So we looked around, and finally someone told us to go look at this house, and we went to see the house. Wasn't particularly great, but it, half of it was Japanese, with the Tomi and Soji screens, and then half of it was western, so we could live either style. We moved in, at which point we discovered that the owner was a Japanese woman, Okinawan woman, who was the mistress of an Army captain, and he had several mistresses, and when he dumped them he gave each one a house. Very generous sort of way to break up, I guess. And when I sort of heard about this guy, he'd been a captain in the Army, he took his discharge on Okinawa, and he got into the PX (Post Exchange) business, and running clubs. While I was still on Okinawa he was arrested in Vietnam. Remember when the Sergeant Major of the Army got arrested for maiming...

Q: For running a whole string of clubs...

WALKER: String of clubs, it all had to do with clubs, and making a fortune off it. Well, this guy was his partner. And this is how he afforded all these houses that he could give

to his girlfriends. So even captains occasionally went wrong. There was that sleazy element of, you know, a lot of the tattoo parlors, and Hong Kong tailor shops and all that were surrounding the bases, and we were sort of a part of that because we didn't live on base, but saw a good bit of it.

Q: This is the 25th of May, 2001. Bill, 1966, you're off to where? The United States?

WALKER: Yes, I was called back to serve my first tour in Washington, and at the end of 1966, I was told I was being transferred back to be an Argentine Desk Officer. So I took that assignment and arrived in Washington sometime in I think January of '67.

Q: Okay, so you were there '60s... on the Argentine Desk from when to when?

WALKER: I was there for a year and eight months, because in the following summer I was transferred to university training.

Q: Okay, so '67 to '68.

WALKER: Yes, exactly.

Q: Okay. What, well first of all the wiring diagram, who was the, '67, '68, who was the head of ARA and then who was sort of your immediate boss?

WALKER: The Assistant Secretary at the beginning was a guy named Ed Martin, who later became Ambassador to Argentina. Bob Sayre was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for sort of political affairs. There was another Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, that's how they split up the DAS positions back then.

Q: Where did the Argentine desk fit? It fit into what is something called...

WALKER: APU, Argentina Paraguay Uruguay. The country director was a fellow named William Krieg. His Deputy Office Director was a fellow named Bill Lowenthal. The head of Argentine Affairs was a guy named John Dreyfus, and I was sort of the number two officer on the Argentine Desk.

Q: What were the status of relations with Argentina at that particular time?

WALKER: One more time I was facing a Latin American country with a military dictatorship in power. It was under General Ongania. Relations were pretty good because Argentina was going through one of its periodic economic booms. It was a military government that had put in some good technocrats on the economic side, and they were doing pretty well. One of the fears at the time, one of the issues we followed was what is Juan Peron doing in his Madrid exile? We all assumed that he would never return to Argentina, and were somewhat surprised sometime later when he did go back. And then there were all the traditional problems we had with Argentina going back to the 1940s; imported their beef, hoof and mouth disease infecting their herds.

One of the highlights of my time on the desk, I well remember, was the widow of President Kennedy deciding that she wanted to go back down to Argentina because her husband, John F. Kennedy, had spent a few months on a ranch down in Argentina as a young man. And he had often talked about this. And now that she was a widow with the two children, she wanted to sort of revisit this place that her husband had talked so favorably about. So from one day to the next, we got a call from Senator Edward Kennedy's office. He was at that point in time sort of taking care of Mrs. Kennedy in terms of things like this. He called up one day and said, "We don't know exactly where my brother Jack stayed, but you tell the Embassy down there to locate the landowner who was his host and find out where he went and then get him to invite Mrs. Kennedy and the two kids." And that was a bit of a task, but we arranged it, and we got them down there. Much to my surprise, after she left with the kids, and it was declared to have been a very successful holiday and she did everything she wanted to do, there were two problems that remained. The first was, she hadn't paid a lot of bills, big telephone bills and other things that she should have picked up. She just sort of said "Well, send the bills to Washington." And when the bills came in, apparently no one was paying them, and so we had this sort of embarrassment of trying to talk some people who were down there into waiting longer or renouncing the bills or... that was a bit of a problem. An even more embarrassing problem arose shortly after she came back when we got a call from Senator Kennedy's office. They had just heard that a rather enterprising photojournalist in Argentina had staked out a watering hole on the property of this landowner, and evidently had taken some pictures of Mrs. Kennedy changing her clothes behind a bush, with a long telephoto lens. And again we were given a sort of abrupt instruction to find the photographer and get rid of those pictures because this was going to be terribly embarrassing to Mrs. Kennedy. We gave this instruction to Ambassador Ed Martin. If you know anything about Ed Martin, he was a very, he was the old school type of diplomat. I never saw him in anything in other than a dark pinstripe suit, very, very conservative. He expressed several times in several ways that he did not think this was a proper role for an American Ambassador to sort of chase a paparazzi and somehow convince him not to publish pictures that he had taken, however indiscreetly. It didn't work out totally, I think a couple of the pictures appeared...

Q: I think I saw something about them.

WALKER: I think later on, something similar happened when she was in some island in the Aegean, she was with Onassis. But this was a precursor of that sort of event. And I remember the Kennedy family sort of coalescing around this mission, you will get those pictures back, we're not gonna permit this to happen.

Q: Well, the telephone bill, I've talked to other people who say that one of the worst things to do was to have something like Robert Kennedy and Ethyl Kennedy visit, or other Kennedys, because they didn't pay their bills.

WALKER: Oh, really?

Q: And they would run up big, not just that, but somebody would say “Could you get some wine for us?” And so they’d raid private cellars and wouldn’t replace it. You know, I mean, they weren’t good guests.

WALKER: Apparently not, I mean this is exactly what was my conclusion from this visit. Certainly Jacqueline Kennedy, you know seemed to make an awful lot of demands on her hosts, and then sort of stuck ‘em for it, for some of the costs of those demands being fulfilled.

Anyway, my time on the desk was a pleasant time. I got a bit of the flavor for how Washington worked, even though it was at a Junior Desk Officer level. Another thing I well remember from that time, which I carried over for later when I became a DAS. One day the more junior officers on the desks were invited up to the front office of ARA, and sitting in front of us at a big table was Bob Sayre, the DAS for political affairs, and his colleague, who was I remember very redheaded, quick tempered fellow who was the economic DAS. And Bob began the conversation by saying, “We’ve heard some complaints that you junior officers, you younger officers don’t feel that you’re being included in decision making and your voices are not being heard, and therefore we thought we’d hold one of these meetings every week or so, sort of to get those opinions and feelings out of you. So what we do is we want to generate some discussion and debate, and so who wants to go first? Give us some feeling for any problems you have with the way our policy is going in the hemisphere.” So we all looked at each other, and finally one young guy raised his hand, and in a fairly, very polite old Foreign Service sort of way, mentioned that he thought one of the policies, which I don’t remember what it was, was perhaps a little off and that maybe we could go in a somewhat different direction. When he finished, the two DASs jumped on him with both feet and just destroyed his arguments. And when they finished, then turned around and said, “Does anyone else want anything?” That was the last we heard of any dissent opinions or any further meetings of this sort, that was the end of it. And I don’t think those two DASs had a clue as to why the meeting had turned out with so little success. I mean they just destroyed this guy in front of his colleagues for voicing a somewhat different view from what was conventional reason at the time. So later on I decided that this was not the way to go if you wanted to hear from the staff.

Q: Well this is the beginning of sort of the late ‘60s, you might say wasn’t just Vietnam, it was other things.

WALKER: Correct.

Q: We wanted to be heard, and there was an organization called JFSOC

WALKER: JFSOC, yes.

Q: Junior Foreign Service Officer Club.

WALKER: I became involved in that.

Q: And it was making noises about, I think the culmination was in '70, the Spring of '70 when American and South Vietnamese forces went into Cambodia, and a petition went around, and it got to the attention of Nixon and to the press, and Nixon saying "Fire those guys in a moment." The State Department buried the thing, but it was... I mean this is the beginning of... trying to open a dialogue and they didn't know how.

WALKER: Well, JFSOC, I was marginally involved with them. Two of my friends, one I mentioned earlier, this young, very bright fellow with the same name and came from the same part of the world, Lannon Walker, was very involved in that. Another fellow, close friend who was in Peru with me, who later became Ambassador, Adrian Basora was involved in it. They were involved in it at the beginning, before I think it took off in this direction of not being totally in favor of what was happening in Southeast Asia. I distinctly remember, while sitting on the Argentine desk one day, being told that they were cutting orders for me to go up to a convention up in New York City that the American Foreign Policy Association was giving. And Vice President Humphrey was gonna go up and he was gonna give a speech defending what we were doing in Southeast Asia. And the State Department, I guess, had promised a certain number of seats would be filled by young officers who would be supportive of this. And I went up there, and I remember vividly how raucous this meeting was, and a number of young people that I knew from my days in Peru who had been Peace Corps volunteers showed up. They had become very disillusioned with the U.S. government, it was an organization that was thought to be, you know, very far to the left, the returning PCVs. And as I said, I knew a couple of them, and they got up and were very disruptive. Lannon Walker and some of the others who were part of this group that I was supposedly in, got up and tried to show another viewpoint from young people in the audience, but it really didn't work. It was a terribly raucous meeting. There were a lot of emotions, a lot of insults launched at poor Vice President Humphrey who was just trying to make a case for what we were doing. Luckily I left Washington before it got too bad. There were a couple of sit-ins at the Pentagon. There were a couple of attempted surrounding State with people who were against the war in Vietnam. But it never really went as far as it did later, when things got very, very nasty.

Another event that took place while I was on the Argentine desk was the assassination of Martin Luther King. And I'll never forget, because we got the news early afternoon of whatever day it was, and my secretary, who was an African-American lady. She brought the news. And you really didn't know what to say, it was such shocking news. And I remember she said that she was worried about going home that night because of what might take place in the part of Washington she lived in. And sure enough we went over to the window, and you could already see the smoke rising from some of the fires that were set on 14th Street and further east. I lived at that time on 17th and S, Northwest, which was a zone in transition. And I'll never forget getting calls from several friends, Foreign Service Officers who lived in northern Virginia, lived further out into Maryland, calling me up and saying "You know, some of those fires are very, very close to where you live Bill, you've got a wife, you've got a baby. Maybe it'd be wise if you came and stayed with us for a few days until this thing calms down." And I said "No, no problem." I went

home, and over the next couple of days saw that block that I lived on occupied with armored personnel carriers and Jeeps with national guardsmen and all this sort of stuff. The fires came very close to my apartment, in fact at the corner of 18th and S, there was a little enclave of stores, including a drycleaners which someone put to the torch, and I lost my three best suits. But those were very, very tough days in terms of some of the turmoil that was going on here in the U.S. As I say, luckily for me I guess, in the summer of '68, I happened to run into a friend of mine who was in the personnel business, and we were walking around the Department at noon. He happened to mention that he was desperately trying to find some young officers who wanted to go out to university training. And a little light clicked on in my head, and I said "I would love to go out to university training, that sounds like a really great thing to do." And he said "You know, the legend in the Foreign Service is, it's not good for promotions, it takes you out of the mainstream." I said "Well, I'd really like to do that." So he just went back to his office, and within days, if not hours, I had my orders assigning me to university training, starting in the summer of '68.

Q: Well, going back to on the desk, while you were doing that, other than taking care of Mrs. Kennedy's photos and telephone bills and all, what would sort of a normal day, sort of the work of a junior officer on that be?

WALKER: You know, culling the incoming traffic to see what was of interest to higher-ups. Writing things for the seventh floor, if there were incidents, if there were things that important. A lot of briefing of businessmen going down to Argentina who wanted to know what the situation was. A lot of within the Department meetings on issues in which we just had to have a meeting to determine what we should do about the etosis scare, the hoof and mouth scare. A lot of inter-agency and inter-department meetings on weapons sales, export controls, going to this military government. My boss was John Dreyfus.

He was an extremely gifted officer, Marine veteran of World War II, combat photographer. Excellent Spanish. He did the heavy lifting on the desk, no doubt about it. And I did sort of the bits and pieces that he would pass on to me. He was very generous as a boss in terms of not holding all the interesting stuff for himself and passing on good stuff to me. But it was a real mishmash, you know, I didn't know, any day when I came in how my day was gonna go, which was the way, I later found out, DASs performed.

Q: DAS being a...

WALKER: Deputy Assistant Secretary. So it was, it was a good view of how Washington works, or how the State Department's part of Washington works. I got up to the front office and met Dean Rusk a couple of times. I can't remember what the issues were or why I was sent up, but it was a good office. Bill Krieg, as I say, was the country director. He had a great dream, and that was, he was definitely the Department of State's pre-eminent expert on Paraguay of all places. He knew Paraguay, he'd served there, he liked it, he gave it an inordinate amount of attention considering that the other countries, in his portfolio, Argentina was a much bigger, much more important country, but he was very interested in Paraguay. And the reason, I think was that he wanted to go there as

Ambassador at some point. When our Ambassador to Paraguay finished, we were all sitting around waiting to see who was gonna be the next Ambassador to Paraguay. Bill Krieg obviously thought of himself as the preeminent candidate for the job. And we waited and we waited and things became more and more tense as no announcement was made. This went on for weeks I remember. And one day, someone in the office who was listening to the radio, and the President announced that he had just appointed someone named someone named Benigno Hernandez, a lawyer from I think New Mexico to be our ambassador to Paraguay. And the radio station or the network had gone out to see Mr. Hernandez, and they asked him such questions as, "Why do you think you were being named Ambassador to Paraguay?" He said, "I have no idea, I've never been there, I don't know anything about it." And this almost destroyed Bill Krieg, he really felt crushed. Benigno Hernandez turned out to be a good Ambassador, but it was that, gee, I don't know why I've been named, I've never thought of Paraguay, I don't know anything about it, and here was this guy who was totally prepared and was dreaming about it for the last ten years of his career and he didn't get it. So these were the sorts of the vignettes I walked away from the Argentine desk with.

Q: Did, did you get any feel, on Argentina, was the government a particularly nasty one, had the disappearances started or was that later?

WALKER: That was more later. That was into the '70s, that was when the dirty wars broke out, not just in Argentina, but in Uruguay and in Brazil and in Chile. When a number of the military governments just decided that the threat from the left was becoming much more serious than it was when I was on the desk. When I was on the desk, yes, there were leftist groups down there. We had an American army captain who was sort of a military fellow, went down to Argentina. And he was assassinated one day, and the military government tried to portray it as some sort of leftist terrorists who had killed him because he was an American. We never quite straightened it out, it was very, very, very difficult. We also had our bi-national center up in Cordoba, which is the university town of Argentina, was bombed one day. Again the government said it was obviously these incipient leftist terrorists, but we never got to the bottom of it. There was that level of sort of anti-Americanism mostly directed against the government, but we were seen as somehow in cahoots with those governments. But it was nothing like what happened later in Argentina, which was the Dirty War.

Q: Now did the, Malvinas/Falkland Islands raise their ugly head when you were there?

WALKER: That's been a perennial problem for Argentine desk officers going back a long way. I was very interested in that issue.

When I was at UCLA, before I came into the Foreign Service I wrote a long paper on the Malvinas, in which I took the Brits' side of the issue. Spent a lot of time researching it. So, here I am on the Argentine desk, now I've gotta argue the other side. And sure enough, in the middle of my tenure on the desk, some university students in Buenos Aires decided that for the glory of Argentina they were going to capture the Malvinas. And calling themselves, I think it was the condors or something like that, they hired a plane,

and a bunch of them, ten, twelve of them, armed, flew over to the Malvinas, landed in Port Stanley, which at that point in time was a grass strip in which sheep grazed most of the time, they didn't have much air traffic. And this damn plane landed, and they all piled out, and didn't have a clue as to what they were up to. And sort of made some sort of "Pronucimiento" declaring that this was now a part of Argentina. The security forces on the Malvinas at that time were a handful of sort of British Bobbies, the Falkland Islands version of London Bobbies, who came out to the airport, looked at these guys, saw it wasn't really a very serious operation, and took them into custody. No shots were fired. And this was a bit of a problem, getting them back, getting the plane back. It raised the whole Malvinas issue once more to the forefront, so we dealt with that, yes.

Q: Well how did we get involved?

WALKER: We were seen as sort of an honest broker between the two countries. Later when the invasion of the Malvinas took place, in 1981 was it, again we were seen at first as an honest broker between the two sides. When we ended up siding with Margaret Thatcher and the Brits, the Argentines became extremely upset with us, and I knew because I was in some contact with Argentine military advisors in Honduras at the time, and they just stopped speaking to us. But back in the '60s, we were thought to be a bridge between the two sides on this, and of course we were cautioning everybody not to use force, that somehow we could figure it out in terms of the history of the issue, the legal positions.

Q: Well we almost had the damned place, I mean I think we laid claim to it, at least one of our frigates I think landed some people there one time.

WALKER: Well back, for most of its early history, the Falklands were sort of a whaling station, and ships from all sorts of countries went in there, including an awful lot of ships from the U.S. whaling fleet. And I think there were times when we thought of ourselves as the pre-eminent presence on the islands. But the Brits and the Argentines kept trading back and forth, little parties would go in and chase out the few guys that were there representing the other country, and then the others would come back. Depending on when in history you determined there was a legitimate presence there, that determined what your position was, as to who now owned it. The Brits having physical possession of the island, I think, have a stronger claim, but that doesn't convince the Argentines.

Q: Well, you went to University training, this would be '68, '69?

WALKER: '68, '69.

Q: What were you taking, where did you go, what were you doing?

WALKER: When I first asked those questions, where do I go, and what will I study? The answer was, "Well, you can go anyplace except to a university that you attended before, we like to spread you around, so you should be going to any place except USC and UCLA." And I said, "Well, I'd really like to go back to UCLA. They've got a dynamite

Latin American studies program, and that's what I will be studying." Some effort was made to have me go the University of Texas, which has a good Latin American studies program, University of Arizona was getting a big Latin American studies program. Yale, a couple other places. And I said, "You know, I think it'd be much easier for me..." It's kind of late in the day, because I came to be a participant fairly late in the game, I said, "I think it'd be easier for me to get into UCLA." And anyway, I somehow convinced them I should go to UCLA. UCLA accepted me, and the next thing I knew I was heading out to UCLA for Latin American studies.

Q: Did you, did you have family around where you stayed?

WALKER: My parents were living in Santa Monica, which was the family home when I had been growing up. But I now had a wife and a child, so we ended up taking an apartment in Santa Monica. I quickly came to the conclusion that this is by far the best way to go do graduate studies, is when someone has paid your full cost.

And your fellow students hearing that you were a professional Foreign Service officer give you a little more respect than they might otherwise, and professors did the same. So I thoroughly enjoyed my year at UCLA. The slight problem I had was when I got out there, when I was trying to convince the Department I should be sent to UCLA because of their great Latin American center, there were a number of professors I named who were eminent scholars in the field of Latin American studies. And unfortunately, when I got there it turned out that the two that I had named were both on sabbatical, and so I had to sort of scramble to find courses that sort of fit in. When I called the Department and talked to my friend who had signed me up, and said, "Golly, you know, the Political Science courses that I was hoping to take, international relations course that I was hoping to take, aren't being taught this semester or this quarter. What should I do?" His answer was, "Take whatever interests you that sort of looks like it relates to Latin America." So I signed up for a whole bunch of anthropology courses and literary courses. It was great. And I took a Latin American geography course, and I had no knowledge of how interesting geography can be. The same with some of the anthropology courses. My only regret was that I took two or three courses having to do with the anthropology and the archaeology of Peru, where I had served, and I just wished I had had those courses before I served there, because it just opened my eyes to all sorts of incredible things that Peru represented. But that year was a very good year, very beneficial. For me personally, I don't know whether it did anything for the service.

Q: Well, you know, all this goes into the databank, you know. What about, '68, '69, things were really beginning to heat up, and California was one of the places, we're talking about politically, on Vietnam, but it was more than that, it was sort of a youth movement, and don't trust anyone over thirty and all that.

WALKER: Yes. Well, one of the reasons I went to UCLA, my other major candidate for where I wanted to go was Cal-Berkley. But Cal-Berkley had already exploded. The free speech movement, Mario Savio and those guys were running around, and I guess the Department, but I agree, that was probably not the place to do the most serious study.

There were a lot of campus strikes and sit-ins and all this kind of stuff. And I remember UCLA as being free of that sort of stuff. So again I told the Department not to worry about that issue, that I would go to UCLA and it wasn't a particularly politically sensitive school. Well, what had happened was in the six years, seven years since I'd been to UCLA, certain things had changed, and this was one of them. When I got to UCLA, I was astounded to find out that they were starting to have similar reactions to what was going on at Berkley. There were sit-ins and all sorts of things. There was also the question of racial turmoil. The Black Panthers were starting to come to people's notice. And on the UCLA campus while I was there, there was a shooting, a Black Panther, a young Black Panther was killed on campus, and this was really shocking because those sort of things "didn't happen" at UCLA.

I'll never forget, another Foreign Service officer went to UCLA with me, a guy named Joel Speiro. Joel Speiro had been in the A-100 course with me. He was an economic officer, so he was going out to do graduate economic studies. He was a lawyer from the east coast, I think he was from Philadelphia if I'm not mistaken. Joel was very much going to California as the land of Hollywood, the land of beaches and sunsets and you know, the golden view of California. And we saw each other occasionally on campus, and he was just delighted to be in California, this was all he had expected.

One day, I was requested by someone in one of my classes, if I would go and appear before an organization called the Brown Berets. The Brown Berets were the Hispanic equivalent of the Black Panthers. They went around campus with berets on, brown berets, and T-shirts with various Spanish slogans on them. And I remember later that day as I was thinking about this invitation to appear before these guys, I was thinking "I don't want to do that." They wanted to talk about the State Department and its role in Foreign Affairs. Our Cuba policy. And I remember seeing Joel that day, and I happened to mention to him that I'd received this invitation. And he said "Oh, well, you know we're supposed to go out and sort of proselytize for the Department, and this is a great opportunity to do so." And I said, "Well, Joel, if you'd like to take it for me." He said, "Absolutely." So he went and appeared before this group, and I saw him afterwards, he was almost in tears. They had so badly mangled him, screamed at him, cursed at him, threw things at him, none of which he expected. He had absolutely no feeling that this was the sort of reception he was going to get. And all I could say to myself was, "Thank God I didn't go." But it was a time of those things starting to really take over, being on a campus like UCLA, which traditionally is thought of as a fairly leisurely southern California, cool place.

Q: Well then, after this time, were you off somewhere or back to Washington or what?

WALKER: I kept obviously in contact with my friends in Washington, and luckily a fellow named Harry Winer, who was a friend of mine, had become personnel officer, an assignments officer.

Harry was assigned 06s or whatever I was. I had put in my usual request for Spain I guess again, I was still trying to go to Spain, and I had a couple other choice spots,

probably in Europe, I don't remember what I was asking for. But Harry called up one day, and said, "I got a deal for you Bill." I said, "What's that?" He calls me up out in California, he said, "Bill, I got a deal for you. How would you like to go to Rio de Janeiro?" I said, "Well, it's not top of my list, but you've always said great things." He said, "Oh, this is, Bill this is a great assignment. It's got a lot of challenging problems, again it's under a military government, which Harry was adamantly against, but we just appointed a new ambassador down there, C. Burke Elbrick, who's a real pro, comes out of Yugoslavia."

Q: I served with him in Yugoslavia. Fine man.

WALKER: A fine man. And he had served in Portugal early on in his career. He was in Lisbon when Humphrey Bogart was in Rick's bar in Casablanca. He was part of that sort of pre-war, early war.

Q: He was in Poland when the Germans invaded.

WALKER: He was a Europeanist of the first order. Anyway, he was coming down as ambassador, and there was a five-man political section, and Harry said, "You'll go in as the number three, but the number two is close to retirement, and when he moves on you'll move up to number two. Plus I'm going to assign a mutual friend of ours, who replaced you in Arequipa, and he's ready for reassignment, I'm gonna put him in right behind you as the number four, and he'll move up to number three, a fellow named Bob Conner. And so it'll be a happy little political section." And I said, "Why not?" And this required coming back to Washington for Portuguese training which was, at that point I think a four-week transition course from Spanish to Portuguese. So it meant going back to Washington for five or six weeks. It meant a pleasant jaunt down to Rio de Janeiro and sounded great, sounded like a very peaceful, enjoyable place to go. So my wife and I and the baby drove back to Washington, settled into the Woodner Hotel up here on 16th Street, and took Portuguese lessons at FSI. The Portuguese department at FSI at that point was mostly a collection of Brazilian characters, and we got to know all of them. My wife thoroughly enjoyed Portuguese training, I was less into the language training than she was, but I still picked up pretty good Portuguese. It was at this point that I really got to know Alec Watson. Alec was in there, he was going to Brasilia as a political officer and we got to know Alec even better than we'd known him before. We had a nice group of people, a fellow named Paul Taylor who later became an Ambassador as well. Was going to Sao Paulo. So I got to know people who were going to the various posts in Brazil, and lo and behold, I guess it was in September of '69, we flew off to Rio de Janeiro. And spent the next three years there.

Q: So you were '69 to when?

WALKER: '72.

Q: In Rio.

WALKER: In Rio.

Q: Well, tell me what you did, and what happened.

WALKER: Oh. Many life changing experiences in Brazil. Going back to our relations with Brazil at the time, we got there when Brazil was under a military government. A fellow named Emilio Garrastazu Médici was the President, a general, and from top to bottom the government was a military regime. This was when left-wing terrorism really took off in that part of Latin America. Big time. And I guess I should have discovered this almost from the day I landed in Brazil. I'll never forget, reading in the Post Report, that there were times in Brazil when you needed a tuxedo, because occasionally there were formal sort of events, and I'd never owned a tuxedo, but I went out and bought a tuxedo.

I bought a tuxedo for 40 bucks or something like that. And I'll never forget, because when I went up to pick it up, I was driving back down the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, and listening to the radio, and overcame the announcement that our Ambassador to Brazil, C. Burke Elbrick, had been kidnaped, and was being held by leftist leaning terrorists. And I remember wondering if this was going to affect me or my assignment, what sort of impact this was gonna have, but it was really a shocker. These sort of things didn't happen in Brazil. If it was a shocker to me, I think it was even more of a shocker to C. Burke Elbrick and his wife. This was days before I was gonna leave for Brazil, bringing up my tuxedo. So whenever it was, a few days, a week or so later, 10 days later, I can't remember how long he was in custody of the guerrillas, but I flew down to Brazil with my wife.

When I reported into the Embassy, which back then was still pretty much an open building, I remember being told by the administrative section that, "You are the first officer to arrive since Ambassador Elbrick's release by the kidnapers. And obviously this shook him up, badly, and we want to get him back to a normal routine, Foreign Service routine, so you know there's sort of, any new officer is supposed to call on the Ambassador and your wife is supposed to call on his wife. So you're gonna be the first one to call on him. But Walker, for God's sakes, don't bring up the kidnaping, right?" "Yes sir, obviously, this is the way you want me to handle it." So that afternoon, they set up an appointment for me, and I went up to the front office, which was a very lovely front office, beautiful Brazilian Jequitiba wood. And I was ushered in to see Ambassador Elbrick. And there was sitting, with his pinstripe suit on, because he was again one of these Europeanists who always had on his formal Foreign Service attire, and he had a big bandage over one side of his head where they had whacked him. And here you're looking at his man, and you're sort of thinking to yourself, "Gonna be hard, but I'm not gonna say anything about the head or the events or anything like that." And of course he looks at me and his first question is, "What are they talking about in the States about my kidnaping? How do they see it in the Department? What do you know about my kidnaping?" So that blew me right out of the water and we spent the whole time I was there talking about his recent problem. He never recovered. I remember meeting his wife.

Q: Elfie.

WALKER: Elfia, something like that. And I remember several times hearing her express one variation of, "We served in Europe during the war, we served in Europe after the war, we've been in really tough assignments of the Foreign Service. And Burke is, you know, this is his last post, and we were coming here to spend a couple years going to Carnival and traveling around Brazil and leading a nice, comfortable farewell tour sort of life. And here within two weeks of his arrival, he's hauled off by these young terrorists who gave him a bad time." They never really recovered from that feeling of "What's going on?"

Another thing contributed to Elbrick's problem very shortly after my arrival, maybe a month, maybe a little longer, I can't quite remember. But our consul in Porto Alegre, which is the southernmost city in Brazil, down in the German, Italian part of Brazil. All white. Where Portuguese was not taught in the schools except as a second language, because German and Italian were sort of the primary languages down there. The fellow who had just arrived in Porto Alegre as the new consul was a good friend of mine. He had served in Peru with me, he was a bit older than I was. Very fine officer named Curtis Cutter. Within days after I got to Brazil, Curt Cutter was coming through to go to Porto Alegre to his new assignment. Since I knew him, I was made control officer for his couple of days in Rio, when he was gonna get consultations with the Embassy. And I went out to the airport to get Curt. Curt had also gone off to university training, to Stanford with a wife and two children. While at Stanford his wife divorced him and took the two children. In the interim, we introduced him, after he had gotten the divorce, we introduced him to a young German girl who was living in the United States. He married her. While he was at Stanford she had a set of twins. Shortly thereafter she had a second set of twins. At that point his ex-wife died, and so his two children from the first marriage came back to him. When I last saw him, he was almost living alone. I go out to the airport to meet him, he's coming in with his wife, six kids, of whom four are these little babies, plus a maid to take care of them, it was quite an operation. Anyway, they also went to Porto Alegre thinking of it as a nice place to raise their babies and this sort of thing. And I went down to visit him shortly after he arrived. We had a wonderful time, we went out to a nice restaurants, I saw what he was going to try and do with the consulate in Porto Alegre. The day after I left, there was a kidnaping attempt on him by the same sort of people who had kidnaped Elbrick up in Rio. Unlike Elbrick they didn't get Curt, in what was a very, very dramatic moment I'm sure in his life. He was coming home with his wife from an event, there was a roadblock put up, he saw that it was something he didn't want to become involved in, and instead of slowing down and stopping, which is what they were trying to get him to do, he accelerated. He happened to be driving a big American station wagon, and it broke through the barricades that the guerillas had set up. He also picked up one of the guerillas as he broke through, and killed him with his car.

He became a hero to the Brazilian military government as well as to the right-wing press up here. There was an editorial I remember reading in one of the right-wing papers up here claiming that he was a great defender of America by taking on these leftists. The irony was that Curt was actually a liberal democrat who probably sympathized with many

of the things they were trying to do. But anyway, he broke through, he got away, he got shot in the shoulder, they fired at him as he broke through the barricade and picked up one of their fellows and essentially killed him.

C. Burke Elbrick flew down the next day and held a press conference with Curt. And it was a huge story, obviously. And in that press conference, someone asked Elbrick about what he thought about all this, and the Ambassador, I don't remember his words, but he said something along the lines that the young fellows who had kidnaped him, he had engaged in conversation. And he found that a number of things they said he could agree with, that he found them to be well intentioned. Although he didn't approve of their methods, he saw that they were fighting for their cause, or something along those lines. When that appeared in the papers in Brazil, the military government turned against Elbrick. So, given that he was not declared persona non grata, but was no longer welcome in government offices, and considering that he had taken quite a shock from what had happened to him, he was pulled out very shortly, he wasn't there for more than, I don't know, three, four, five months.

Q: If I recall, this was the beginning of starting to learn, on the part of the Department of State, you've got to be more pro-active with people who have been kidnaped, or through this trauma. That you can't just say, "Well, you know, just come right back and work." I mean, I know with Diego Asencio was the beginning, when he was kidnaped.

WALKER: That was later, that was a bit later.

Q: It was later, but it was the beginning of, we're going to do everything we can to show our support, because there was the feeling, and it was probable, that if you were kidnaped or got involved in a hostage situation, that somehow or another you were at fault, and people would kind of avoid you and avoid discussing the matter, anyway, this is, it was, Elbrick suffered from this.

WALKER: Elbrick definitely suffered.

Q: He didn't get that support.

WALKER: I don't think he got any support as far as I could see down there at least. I know that the only change that I saw, which was very dramatic, was from one day to the next, the security officer in charge of Rio, Brazil, the regional security officer, a fellow named Garrick, who later became the Assistant Secretary for SY, for security. From one day to the next he closed the building up. From one day to the next, even officers coming into the Embassy, they opened your briefcase, they looked through all your stuff. Which of course created quite a stir among the officers who said, "You know, if you don't even trust me to carry my briefcase into the building without opening it, then I'm not sure I wanna work here anymore." But security became a really big factor in our lives down there. In a way, there was a need for it. I mean as I say, before Elbrick was kidnaped, it was a totally open Embassy. You could walk in and go anywhere in the building. And then we had the Elbrick kidnaping.

I spent a lot of time during my time in Rio dealing with this issue of leftist terrorism and right wing reaction to it, the government's brutal clampdown. Not many people know the name Carlos Marighella. But Carlos Marighella wrote a handbook of urban terrorism. And it came out while I was in Rio, very early when I was in Rio. In fact, very early on, Carlos Marighella was cornered and gunned down in a fusillade of bullets in Sao Paulo. But his little book, this urban terrorist guide, became something of a bible to leftist organizations all around the world. And he is sort of a patron saint of urban terrorism, of how you do some of the things that you do.

Q: It became sort of, also the handbook of the radical chic in colleges. I know in the '70s I had some stupid American kid who arrived with that book on him, when the Colonels were in Greece. And that didn't sit very well.

WALKER: I can imagine.

Q: He was kicked out. I had to sort of escort him.

WALKER: We had a number of these cases, I became, before we had a title for it, I was the Embassy human rights officer. I was seen by the left in Rio at least in political circles as the guy to go to if you had lost a loved one into the military prisons, if you had come out of prison and been tortured, this sort of thing. I became the reporting officer for that sort of stuff. This was a moniker that was to be hung on me for the next couple of tours of my career. But in Brazil it was very, it was very dicey stuff. The military government was extremely rough, they were not gonna tolerate any sort of leftist viewpoints being brought out. A lot of very decent people were dragged into the jails, and bad things happened to them.

I got into a very strange case in which I was pulled in two directions. One day a woman came to see me, she identified herself as the wife of an American citizen, who had since died. But she was a Brazilian, she was the daughter of the Governor of Bahia, which is one of the major states of Brazil. A former Governor, I should say. He was sort of the great political figure of Bahia's recent history. And what she'd come to see me about was that her daughter, who was an American citizen, because she'd been born in the United States, had become involved in this urban terrorist movement. And had in fact been involved in a subsequent kidnaping, not of Elbrick, but a subsequent kidnaping, I think it was of the Japanese consul general in Sao Paulo. And she had been identified by the government as having been involved in that. And in a subsequent firefight with government forces, she had been badly wounded and captured. If I remember her thumb had been shot off or something, but she also received quite a few other bullets. And the mother came in to say, "My daughter is an American citizen. My daughter of course is innocent, She wasn't involved in these things, she was in the wrong place at the wrong time." Turned out not to be true, but nevertheless this was what I was told. "And she's in the hands of the military and is probably being tortured. What can you do for her?" I started looking into this to try and find out where she was being held, etc. Her name was Nancy Mangabeira Unger. Unger being her father's German-American name. So I look

into this and sure enough she had been captured, the government considered her a terrorist. Yes, she had been wounded, and she was facing a long prison term and probably she was also undergoing severe interrogation. As I was trying to get this straightened out, another kidnaping took place, and in return for the release of whoever this was, I can't remember, a German Ambassador maybe it was, or Swiss Ambassador to Sao Paulo, one of the demands of the guerrillas was the release of sixty people who were in prison, one of whom was Nancy Mangabeira Unger. And she was released. And they flew off to Santiago, Chile. I'll never forget, because I was in the States one day, some months later and got a call from Nancy Mangabeira Unger's mother, who told me that, "Have you heard the news from Santiago, Chile, where my daughter went over to work with President Allende? Allende's been killed. Pinochet has taken over. All the foreigners who'd come in to help Allende had been rounded up and they're in the stadium and they're being tortured there, and this is my daughter Nancy, she's an American citizen, do what you can." And my answer was, "Hey, I'm in the United States, I'm on leave of some sort. I have no influence in Chile, I'm going back to Brazil. What do you expect me to do? Your daughter is guilty of whatever she's being accused of in Brazil, and if she wasn't guilty they wouldn't have put her on the list to get her out of there." But it was one of those issues where you sort of tugged in various directions at the same time. Here's an American citizen probably being mistreated, at the same time she's involved in kidnappings and terrorism. Where does the, where does your duty lie in terms of dealing with a situation like that? It became even more complicated because her older brother was a graduate of Harvard Law, but though graduate of Harvard Law, he was not a citizen of the United States, he was here on a student visa, and he wanted to change that over to a green card, because when he graduated from Harvard Law, if I remember his story, he was described one of the most brilliant international lawyers they'd ever graduated. And they wanted him to remain there and get on the faculty. Unfortunately, when he was going for his green card, he was told that to get a green card you'll have to sign up for selective service, you will be, perhaps, drafted, you might go to Vietnam. So he renounced that. And once you renounce that, if you go overseas, you can never get a visa to come back in. At the same time, he was not, he was on a visa that was running out. INS wanted to deport him. State Department didn't want to interfere. Harvard, every great, well-known graduate of Harvard Law signed a petition saying this was totally wrong, he was a brilliant student, he didn't understand what he was doing when he signed away his rights to a green card, you've gotta let him remain in the United States. Again the mother came to see me, it was another hullabaloo. That one I never quite saw what the end was, except kind of recently. I met someone at Harvard Law School, and I asked them if they'd ever heard of someone named Mangabeira Unger, and they said "Oh, yes, he's one of our finest professors of International Law." So somehow he got around the obstruction to his brilliant career. I spent a lot of time talking to the left in Brazil. Not the terrorist left.

Q: Did you ever find out what happened to Nancy?

WALKER: Never did, never did, never did. She was, a lot of people told me during this phase, when I was trying to find out who and what she was, a lot of people told me she had been very close to her father. When the father died she was in her teens, and she took

the loss of her father very serious, at which point the mother decided to move back to Brazil. So she took this young, impressionable, young lady back to Brazil, who all of a sudden discovered what the reality of Brazil was at the time, which was great poverty, injustice, a military regime, and she became radicalized. She became a radical through seeing the poverty and the injustice and became a fanatical member of the left. And somehow was hauled into, tempted into terror. At some point I'm gonna find out what happened to Nancy Mangabeira Unger. But it was a time in which there were a lot of aspects of this. I remember there was another, a woman came to see me, American citizen, wife of a Brazilian. And he was a very famous Brazilian, his name was Inio Silveira. And he was famous because he was the voice of the left, he had a publishing company. And he was always, anytime the government was mad at the left, they would pick Inio Silveira and drag him off to prison and then release him a few days later because he had a lot of influential friends. And there would be an outcry from the journalism societies of the world of freedom of speech, and he was supposedly only being arrested because his publishing house was putting out anti-military literature. So the first time I became involved with him, his wife came to the Embassy, identified herself as an American citizen, and told me that the night before Inio had been dragged off by the military police one more time. And she was afraid he was gonna be tortured, etc. So I used my sources to find out where Inio was, and he was in a military jail, right on the point between Copacabana and Ipanema, a little fort, and they had a jail.

Q: You mentioned sources, how did you find out?

WALKER: I went to some of these people who knew him and knew where he had been held before. And it was common knowledge that this is where they always put Inio, close by. And I remember going to the wife, and saying "You know, I'm not sure we can get him out, you know, everyone's saying they always release him within a few days, but is there anything I can get for him?" And I was much surprised by her request, to get a bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label to him, that's his favorite. Somehow I got a bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label to him. This was not what I thought would be the most important thing that someone who was facing torture. Anyway, a few days later he was released, I went over to see him, to find out how he'd been treated. And Inio lived in this magnificent penthouse apartment, overlooking the Palacio, the palace, in a very exclusive neighborhood of Rio, which was guarded all the time. No one could get in except through those guards. And Inio was sitting there with his cravat and his beautiful summer suit on and again, sitting sipping a glass of Johnny Walker Black Label. Very distinguished fellow. And I discovered that Brazil had what is called the Sheba, the Festive Left. And these were sort of intellectuals who played at the game, and when he was taken down to the pokey, he was treated with total respect, and it was all a facade for him, he enjoyed being the darling of the international human rights groups. He was always going off and being awarded something for his bravery in facing this military regime. When in fact he was an integral part of the system. But an interesting time in Brazil, interesting time.

Q: Well, let me ask this. The job you had of keeping in touch with the left and all, and dealing with, you know, trying to help people and all, this can sometimes get to be, a rather, exposed job. I think of an interview I had dealing with a situation a decade later

with Tex Harris. The Embassy really didn't like, although this is in Argentina, really didn't like some guy going out and finding out about the disappeared ones and all that. Because, you know, they're trying to foster relations. And here you are, Brazil was a major country, and here you are reporting all the nasty stuff. Did you find that this was leaving you kind of exposed, I'm talking about within the Embassy.

WALKER: Well, yes, the Tex Harris case I'm very familiar with, because, you know, in a subsequent incarnation, I was an inspector who went down and inspected the Embassy in Argentina when Tex was head of the political section and was in this position. But a decade earlier, as you say, I was fulfilling the same role in Rio. Maybe because I wasn't as high in the Embassy as Tex was in Buenos Aires. Maybe because they never really focused in on me. Externally, I didn't have a problem.

Q: Who was the Ambassador, by the way?

WALKER: Rountree. Bill Rountree. Who also came out of European affairs. I think he'd been the Assistant Secretary for EUR. And he also was a gentlemen. Different from Elbrick, but nevertheless a gentleman of the old school. Thought that his most important task was to maintain as good a relationship as possible with the government in power, which was this military regime. And here I was, as you say, down below, trying to tell Washington things that [it didn't want to hear.]

Q: Being a muckraker.

WALKER: Being a muckraker. My most difficult problem. I'll never forget. One day we got a cable from the Department. And it said, "Senator Ted Kennedy has just given a speech, I think it was at the University of Montana. Someplace out there in which he has roundly denounced the military regime in Brazil. The Department is very interested in knowing what is the reaction to Kennedy's speech." It wasn't the most earth-shaking assignment, and I was given, you know, "Take care of this Bill." The head of the political section, the political counsel was a guy named Dick Johnson, who also came out of European Affairs.

Q: I served with him in Yugoslavia.

WALKER: That's right. He'd been in Yugoslavia too. He was the head of the political section. He was again a Europeanist.

Q: Been DCM in Bulgaria...

WALKER: Exactly. Didn't really have a flavor of Brazil in terms of, his Portuguese wasn't terribly good. He was more into, this is unfair, but I'm gonna say it anyway. He was more into the social side of being the political counselor. He was in charge. The number two guy had been in Brazil for many, many years, had a serious drinking problem, but was adamant that he was the expert on Brazil. He also was very conservative in his political viewpoint, he thought the military regime was great. These

were my two bosses. The fellow with the alcohol problem was at the point where he was fairly close to retirement, I was supposed to replace him when he left. So I had a funny relationship with him. He saw me as wanting to push him out, get him out of there sooner rather than later, as well as this guy who was dealing mostly with the left. So this cable comes in, find out what the reaction is to Ted Kennedy, and events in Brazil, criticism of events in Brazil. So I went out and did my round of contacts, most of whom were not in the government, a few in the government, but they were, head of the bar association who had been picked up and tortured a couple of times, head of the Catholic University there. And I got a lot, I got a diverse set of viewpoints as to what to make of Ted Kennedy's speech. Many of the people applauded, there was finally somebody in the States who is telling the truth about Brazil. So I wrote a very, what I thought was a very balanced cable, giving some who were critical, some who were positive, and sent it out for clearance. Got clearance back from everyone except the defense attaché. The defense attaché was an Army Colonel. Name is Art Mora. Colonel Mora was the son of someone who was in the shoe business someplace in Massachusetts where there was a big Portuguese colony. Art Mora was a little short fat Colonel, American Colonel. He had replaced Vernon Walters as the attaché in Brazil. Vernon Walters was tall, back then was relatively thin, was handsome. Got a star out of being the attaché in Brazil, Nixon gave him a star. And everybody in Brazil knew Vernon Walters.

Q: He was a legend.

WALKER: He was a legend. Art Mora I think went down there and spent his first months, everyone talking about his predecessor. And here was Art, was short and fat as opposed to thin and tall and handsome, was a speaker of street Portuguese, learned in this community of poor Portuguese immigrants in Massachusetts, whereas Vernon Walters was an elegant Europeanist. Anyway, Art Mora was determined to prove that he was a better attaché than Vernon Walters. Art Mora knew everybody in the Brazilian military. And sent in voluminous reports, he was an incredible reporting officer. But the problem with his reports were, they were totally one-sided, they were the view of the Brazilian military. So I go down to his office, I said, "Art, I'm waiting for your clearance on my cable, that one about Senator Kennedy." He said, "Oh, yeah." He goes into his in-box, he pulls this thing out. He says, "I don't see anything in this cable about Chappaquiddick? How come there's nothing in there about Chappaquiddick?" I said, "I'm sorry? Maybe I'm missing the point, why should there be anything in this about Chappaquiddick?"

Q: You might explain what Chappaquiddick was.

WALKER: Well, Chappaquiddick was where Ted Kennedy had been involved in a very serious event in which a young woman had ended up dead.

Q: She drowned...

WALKER: Drowned, his car went off a bridge of a small island off Cape Cod. It was still an issue. It was still something that people were talking about. But it had very little to do with Brazil, and certainly had nothing to do with people's reaction. No one had

mentioned Chappaquiddick as I went around. Art's point, I guess, was: Who is Ted Kennedy to be talking about other people's sins or acts of violence, when he himself had been involved in one? I said, "Well look Art, I'm sorry, there's nothing I can say about Chappaquiddick. My cable stands on what I've learned and what the Department has asked for. Would you clear it or tell me your objections to it?" He said, "Look. You want to send this in, Walker, go ahead. But if you send that in, I will bury you in a series of cables I will send, and I can go out, you know, you went out and found five people who want to say Kennedy's words were all true, I can go out and find a hundred people in fifteen minutes who can say just the opposite, that he doesn't know what he's talking about, and that sort of stuff is not happening here. So if you want to send that cable, fine, go ahead, but I can retaliate very quickly." Obviously Art and I did not get along too well from there on in. And I don't really hold it against him, because he was, he later outdid Vernon Walters, he also got a star out of being the attaché, became General Mora. He stayed in Brazil for a good number of years as attaché, and when he ended his tour, he retired from the armed forces because he was going nowhere, and settled into Brazil and became a consultant for one of the huge construction firms that did a lot of work with the military.

But I really saw what I thought was the dishonesty that's possible within reporting, if you think that you were there as the advocate of one or another side of the local scene. And I certainly tried from there on in to be even more balanced in my reporting, but there were horrible things happening. I did have sources, you know, people who had been truly brutalized. And I reported it. Always having Art going in with other stuff. Somewhat alleviating my problem with Art Mora and with my bosses in the political section and with Ambassador Rountree, who never really expressed this, but I knew he wasn't crazy about this sort of reporting. Somewhat alleviating this was the fact that the CIA station was in a way on my side. Because they were also reporting some of this bad stuff. The head of the station was an independently wealthy man who was a real advocate of the CIA being apolitical, and just reporting what they found, whether it was good, bad, or indifferent. And he and one or two of the other people in his station, the reports officer became a good friend of mine, and to the extent that they, they were sympathetic, and I could always point to their reporting as backing up some of the things I was saying.

It came to the point, however, where my problems within the political section, with the front office, with the defense attaché, were such that some of the worst stories were not going to go out. And I solved that one, or, didn't solve it exactly, but I got around that issue in a way that maybe... I don't know... ethically, I don't know. I got to know very well a young fellow who was a Time magazine correspondent for the southern cone, stationed in Rio. And he came in one day and said Time magazine was doing a cover piece and a very long article on torture around the world. And they had asked him to put together something on what was going on in Brazil and Argentina, or Uruguay. And he wondered if I had any sources or information that I could share with him that he could send in. Because he had not been in Brazil very long, he didn't have very good contacts, he wasn't much of a Portuguese speaker. And I saw this as a chance to get some things out that maybe weren't going into the regular channels. And I just gave him people to talk to and information and some of the things I heard that had been going on. Some of

the favorite ways the Brazilian military had for taking care of interrogations that they wanted to hurry up. The article appeared, and it was a good article, very strong.

I've got one more anecdote, to tell you about sort of the flavor of how things were going in Brazil at the time. One of my contacts came to me to tell me that some people he knew had been picked up by the Navy, the Brazilian Navy, and taken down to the Navy interrogation center, down in the port area of Rio. Which was one of the infamous places where we'd heard a lot of stories about torture. The Navy was supposedly among the worst. And this fellow told me that somehow he had communicated with these fellows who had been taken in, badly tortured, badly tortured with all the signs of torture on them. And they had told him that the Americans were heavily involved in their torture. And I said, "Well look, you know, I'm willing to believe these guys were tortured, I'm willing to believe that the Brazilian Navy is doing it because we've heard so many stories along these lines, but if you're telling me there were American officials who were participating in this or were somehow involved in this, I'm sorry, I just don't accept that." So, the story though was very strong, it was coming from two or three, I can't remember, three of them were involved. And they said, "Look," they said, I finally got to talk to one, and he said, "Look, I'm not kidding. I happen to speak English, happen to know English, and we were sitting, we were being tortured in the middle of the night, having really bad things done to us. I would hear Americans outside, and I know American English. And I'd hear them talking and laughing, no question in my mind, they were there." I said, "Well, look, I'm sorry, still, I can't believe this. There must be some explanation." So I called in the head of our military assistance group, who was a one-star Admiral, and I told this to him. And somehow he was, he was not a big favor really coming through with much information, but somehow I discovered, I can't remember if it was from him or from someone else, but what had happened was that his mil-group headquarters was in this building where the Navy, the Brazilian Navy was doing these things. And they were right through the wall from where these kidnappings, these tortures were taking place. And yes, there were Americans there, and they were there throughout the night. They had a commo section there of some sort, and it was manned twenty-four hours a day. And yes, they drank coffee all night, they sat around and talked, they joked, they did all as you would expect to do in the twenty-four hour commo operation. And these voices were going through the wall, and these guys were hearing them and assuming that the Americans were somehow sitting with their torturers.

Q: Well they must have been hearing the screams in there...

WALKER: If they were, they didn't report it. And when I told the Admiral, you know, "You've gotta get our people out of there. This is the conclusion the leftists are drawing from hearing these stories about Americans being involved in the torture of their people. They're gonna come after us." The Admiral was completely blind to the implications of what he was hearing. He said, "Well, it's gonna be a hell of a lot of a problem. That's the space the Navy gave us." I said, "Well maybe they gave it to you for the very reason that we are gonna be dragged into some of these things with them." He just didn't see the point. To him, what the Navy was doing, the Brazilian Navy was doing was their business. It was unfortunate that we were somehow being latched onto it, but it was

nevertheless their business, and these were in fact leftist terrorist killer types. There was no sympathy whatsoever for my position, which was: we've got to disassociate ourselves from what's going on in that building. But those were the issues, I mean there were, many of the people in the Embassy, other than the agency types were just not willing to face up to what that government was all about.

Q: It's interesting, it shows a difference between leadership, because I was in Greece at the same time, with the Colonels. And there the Agency, I mean I wasn't getting as much as you, but I was Consul General, and so people were coming in, and you know, you'd hear about nastiness, and so I'd report it and all that. But there the Agency was in bed with the Greeks, and so they were really part of the problem.

WALKER: And as I say, this was not a situation I found in some subsequent assignments, where the station was not very supportive of telling the story as it was rather than from one or another point of view. But I must say that the station chief, his deputy who later left the service and became a tree-hugger, who became involved in environmental protection sort of stuff, and the reports officer. Now there were a couple of officers in the station who were, who were liaison for the security services, they had a different viewpoint. But the leadership of that station was very much in terms of, "Let's tell Washington what is happening here." It might have been that their relationship with the military security services wasn't as good as it was in Greece, perhaps, I don't know, I mean maybe they just felt "Hey, those guys aren't opening with us, we're gonna find out."

Q: Did you have any problems other than the Colonel getting your reports through?

WALKER: Not really, I think, my major concern was this number two officer in the political section, he also would write reports based on his contacts, which were all on the right-wing of the political spectrum, to sort of try and balance the things that I was saying, or he would put comments on them, or he would go in and see Dick Johnson, the political counsel, and say, "Walker's only talking to a few people, so he doesn't have balance." He gave me some problems. There was a more junior officer in the section, a fellow named Dick Schwartz, subsequently left the Foreign Service. Dick Schwartz was perhaps the most talented young political officer I ran into during my long career in the Foreign Service. Dick was out every night, put it in perspective, Dick was in a marriage that maybe wasn't the happiest in the world, they subsequently broke up. Dick didn't like to get up early in the morning, but he certainly liked staying out late at night, drinking with people, and finding out what was going on in a certain segment of Brazilian political society. So Dick quite often missed the early morning political section meeting, which Dick Johnson liked to have every morning at eight o'clock or something. Well, Schwartz seldom was able to get up that early. Hearing from his wife, Schwartz was out drinking most every night, but picking up really good information, coming in late, but sitting down and writing cables based on that information, which were just zingers as far as political reporting was concerned. This did not sit well with Dick Johnson, who sort of ran a traditional political section. "If we have a meeting every morning at eight o'clock, you're supposed to be here. How come you come in at eight thirty, nine o'clock?" "Well, I was

up late last night, you know, I was up until 3 AM digging up this information.” So he had a big problem with Dick, Richard Johnson. Schwartz had an ever bigger problem with this number two guy, who just didn’t approve of this type of political officer who was young and brash, disrespectful of his great knowledge of Brazil. And one day, we all told this young officer, “Don’t worry about the number two guy, he’s not in your chain of command. Johnson will write your efficiency report, or I will write your efficiency report, and you’ll be fine.” Well, one day he was called in and told that the number two guy was gonna write his efficiency report. He had already burned all his bridges with that guy, and he was given a horrendous report. It wasn’t based on his output, which was phenomenal. It wasn’t based on his insights on what was going on in Brazil, which was also phenomenal. It was based on this sort of penny-ante “You’re not coming in on time, you’re not respectful to this fellow who’s gonna write your efficiency report, shape up young man.” Well he didn’t really shape up, and he got a very bad efficiency report, and subsequently left the service. He’s now a lawyer in St. Louis, I believe, who is doing very well for himself. He writes me once every five or six or seven years. But he also had real insights into what was going on in Brazil at the time, and had terrible problems getting it out because of these problems.

Q: What, how about relations with Brasilia and all that?

WALKER: Okay, Brasilia, when I got there, was a special office of the Embassy, and we had an officer up there who was head of the Brasilia office, a fellow named Steve Low, later to become head of FSI, later to become Ambassador a couple of times.

Q: He was the founder, the person who instigated this association which is doing these interviews.

WALKER: Back then anyway, Steve was in Brasilia. Brasilia at that point was pretty far removed from civilization. When Brasilia was launched in late ‘60s sometime, the American office up there was in a trailer. Well by the time I got to Brazil and Steve Low was the principal officer up there, it was much better than that, but it was still quite primitive. And I think Steve was trying to make it into a more traditional Foreign Service post than what it had been. He did a number of things. He put in a dress code. All officers, if they had any chance of coming in contact with the public, i.e. If they’re gonna walk through the lobby, entrance into the thing, which they had to do to go from one place to another, you had a suit and tie on. Well, this might make sense in Europe, it might make sense in the Far East, it made no sense in Brasilia, which was a dusty, windswept...

Q: Construction site.

WALKER: Construction site, exactly. So there were lots of tensions up there, among the officers who wanted to wear open sleeves and be comfortable with Steve and his dress code. There were other similar issues. I went up several times because, one, I like to travel, I like to get around Brasilia, Brazil, and if I traveled to some of the hinterland, it

was best to come back through Brasilia. So I went into Brasilia quite often, but it was definitely not my favorite part of Brazil, to say the least.

While I was in Rio, the Brazilian government, this military government, made some major policy decisions. One of which was that they were gonna show Brazil that they could accomplish things, and they were gonna open up the Amazon, and from one day to the next they announced the trans-Amazonian highway, which was just going to sweep in and open up the Amazon to development and pioneers, like it had never been opened up before. This was a great plan, announced with great fanfare, trans-Amazonian. The other thing was, they were gonna finally make Brasilia the capital. And from one day to the next they announced: everybody in the government, except the military, are moving to Brasilia. All the ministries will be going up there leading off with the Foreign Ministry. And all Foreign Embassies will be up there, and all this will take place within a year. And if you don't move, you're gonna lose your diplomatic privileges, there was some threat, I don't remember what it was. And I remember, at the first country team meeting in which this pronouncement was being discussed, someone around the table raised his hand and said, "Mr. Ambassador, I don't think we really have to worry about this. I lived in, I was in Australia recently, and do you know how long it took for Australia, once they announced Canberra as the capital to actually get there? A hundred years, or some incredibly long period of time. I don't think we have to really worry about moving to Brasilia." Well he was dead wrong. And within that year, which was my second year in Brazil, we made the plans, we went up there and bought the property. FBO came in and designed a suitable building for us, and as you know Brasilia was a planned city, Oscar Niemeyer, a communist, had planned, laid out this city. No one was ever supposed to bring a car to Brasilia, it was gonna be such a beautifully integrated place with public transportation. Well, like with communism, this dream for Brasilia turned out to be totally wrong. But nevertheless, while I was there, the Embassy moved to Brasilia. From my point of view, it was advantageous, because what they did was, the head of each section went to Brasilia, the number two stayed in charge of the section in Rio, which still was the biggest section. So Dick Johnson moved to Brasilia. I by then had moved up to be number two in the political section, so I was left in charge of the political section in Rio, which was four officers. And most of the action was still in Rio. The Ambassador, formally moved to Brasilia, but he kept the residence in Rio which was a magnificent residence. Huge grounds, with peacocks marching around, beautiful place. So we sort of had the best of both worlds, the major bosses spent most of their time in Brasilia, and we, the underlings, were able to continue what we had been doing before, but with some more authority and some more ability to do whatever we wanted to do.

To show you how the local folks felt about moving to Brasilia, I remember when the Minister of Agriculture was supposed to move up to their brand-new building that had been finally finished. A week before they were to move there was a massive fire in the building, which everyone assumed was an act of arson by Agriculture Department employees who didn't want to go to Brasilia, or at least not then. Unfortunately though, as I say, the military ministries remained in Rio, and that meant Art Mora remained in Rio with our military attaché, and so our sort of rivalry continued. But they were interesting days in Brazil.

Q: What was social life like in Brazil at that time, in Rio?

WALKER: Rio is this wonderful, totally alive city, with any kind of social life you want. There's a very formal social life there, for which young officers are expected to bring a tuxedo, I don't think I wore my tux more than twice the whole time I was there. There is obviously this culture of youth and beauty and to the beach all the time. There was also obviously the carnival culture, the Samba schools, Rio is an incredible smorgasbord of whatever suits you in terms of a social life. I got involved with a sort of young girl, though I was now in my late thirties. I got involved with sort of an ex-pat community, many of whom were Europeans who had come to Brazil being sent out by companies, and found the life in Rio much more pleasant than the life in Stockholm or London or wherever. So there was a very joyous, party-giving sort of crowd revolving around these sort of young Europeans who had a lot of money, were paid well, lived well. That was one side of my social life. There was also a good bit of my sort of more representational entertaining with this leftist politically involved community. Rio was probably the post in which I did the least socializing with the people in the building that I worked in every day. Again, because there was so much going on, of infinite more fun than going to representational receptions and such. This young fellow, Bob Cond, who I mentioned earlier, who was the next officer down from me, who was a friend of Harry Winer, who we'd sent down there, is a social animal par excellence, he eventually left the State Department, went over to the commercial service, Foreign Commercial Service. He's still in it, he's still doing very, very well in it. But he was a social animal if there ever was one. He became connected with every lever of social intercourse in Brazil, and if I was involved with people from the Embassy, it was usually at functions he gave, but it was a very small, minimal prescience from the Embassy. It was mostly people from the various social groups that he belonged to. A lot of entertaining was done, however. Whatever your lifestyle is, there was a representative community in Rio that you can join in.

Q: Was there a problem of people going native, I mean was this a problem?

WALKER: In a way, in a way.

Q: Sounds like a very seductive...

WALKER: Yes, seductive is the word for Brazil, especially Rio, especially Rio. I think our officers who served in Sao Paulo, yes, they liked Sao Paulo, but it's a different type of business. Those who were in Porto Alegre became Germanified, the talent files or whatever the words are. The true heart of Brasilia is Rio and Salvador, Bahia, where Alec Watson served for a while. Seductive.

Anecdote. The number two officer in our USIS operation, which was a big operation, was a man in his mid-forties. One day, he gets his orders for home leave. He and his wife and kids. He puts in place all the arrangements, he had the cottage rented, wherever they're gonna go and spend their home leave. I believe it was home leave and return. And days, maybe hours before he's supposed to leave, he tells his wife, "I'm sorry, I've got some

things I haven't been able to take care of, I'm gonna put you on a plane with the kids, send you off, I'll join you later." Puts them on a plane, sends them off, and immediately files for divorce. He comes in and resigns from USIA, because he wants to live in Brazil for the rest of his life. And I remember seeing him very shortly thereafter and saying, "God, that was quite a dramatic exit from the community. And from your wife. Was there some other serious other, or whatever you call it, is there another woman?" He said, "No, no. Brazil. I want to stay, I don't want to leave." I said, "How are you gonna live here? I understand you quit before you were eligible for retirement. That's pretty serious." He said, "Oh, no, I got all sorts of job offers." And I didn't see him for a few months, and the next time I saw him at a function, his job offer, the only one that had come through was essentially selling encyclopedias from door to door, so he was not being as successful on that side, on the career side as he thought he was gonna be, but he was still a happy man. And why he was happy was because, I'll never forget. I said my wife had just left me, this was my first marriage breaking up, she had just left me, and he had heard this, he came up to me at this reception and he said, "Hey Bill." He said, "I understand your wife had left you, have you met any Brazilian gals?" I said, "No, I haven't really gotten around to it, I'm still sort of going through the trauma of this." He said, "Well, where do you live?" I said, "I live in Urca," a little small enclave not very populated by foreigners, a very nice part of Rio. He said "Oh you live in Urca." So he goes into one pocket and he pulls out a little list. And he says "Here's some gals I know in Urca you might give them a call, and tell them you know me, and maybe you can go out with me." I said, "Well Urca's a small part, kind of a closed community, I don't think I'd want to date anyone from Urca." He said, "Well, where do you spend your time when you're not at Urca?" I said, "Well, Ipanema maybe." He goes into another pocket, he pulls out a much longer list. I said, "Geez. I'm impressed. Where do you meet these gals? That's a lot of gals to know." He said, "Well, I've got one for Copacabana, I've got one for Leblon, you tell me which beach you go to and I'll..." And I said, "How have you accumulated these lists? I'm impressed." He said, "Look." He said, "Easiest thing in the world. I learned this while I was still with USIS. I used to go down, I'm a photographer, I'd walk along the beach with my camera. And all you've gotta do is point a camera at a Brazilian girl, and they'll pose for you, they want their picture taken. And then you say, I'll send you a copy, and you get the name, address, you call them up and half of them are more than anxious to go out with a gringo with a good job." So he had gone completely native, totally native.

A similar story, because it also ends up with almost going door to door selling encyclopedias. The AP bureau chief in Rio at the time was a friend of mine, George Harrolishu was his name. And George was a good guy, and one day he came to me and he said, "Bill, I'm going back, I'm taking my leave, I've got a lot of leave saved up, I've been down here for three or four years. I'll be back, but I'm going to go to the Ukraine, because my heritage is from the Ukraine." And he said, "You know, I've always felt uncomfortable in journalism, I know that basically I'm a dirt farmer. My grandparents, my great grandparents were all farmers in the Ukraine, I just know I've got the soil in my hands." So he went to the Ukraine and he came back to Rio, and lo and behold, the first time I saw him he said, "Absolutely. I confirmed that I, I shouldn't be a journalist, I should be a farmer. So I have just gone in and I told AP I'm quitting." I said, "Gee, that's

pretty dramatic.” He said, “Yes. I’m taking my money from my golden parachute” or whatever it was called in those days “And I’m gonna buy a little piece of property up on the coast of Brazil, and I’m gonna go into farming.” I said, “Great George, if that’s what you wanna do.” He said, “That’s what I wanna do, this is Brazil, I love Brazil, and putting it together with farming.” Didn’t see him for six months. Next time I saw him he looked like he was about near death, it looked like he was starving to death, and sure enough, everything he had done in terms of farming had gone wrong. He obviously had not inherited any genes that gave him a natural talent for farming. He didn’t know anything about farming. And what he was living on was, the property he bought had a whole bunch of palm trees, coconut trees, and he was selling coconuts to bars in Rio for one real a coconut or something like that. Well, the price, so many coconut trees in Brazil, you don’t make a fortune selling coconuts to bars. Every corner’s got guys selling coconuts for one real. So he almost starved to death and he ended up going back to AP.

Point of the story is, Brazil is a very seductive place. Rio especially. I ended up marrying a Brazilian girl who I met when I was there, after my wife had left. I didn’t marry her for seven years, and it was after she had come to the states and done her graduate school up here. But I don’t know how many marriages broke up.

Q: I heard that this was a place where there was an awful lot of that. What about race relations? The Brazilians have touted that they are a race-free society, but I’ve heard others.

WALKER: Just the opposite, obviously. I mean, they’re in denial, Brazil, like so many places, the lighter your skin, the better your chances of moving up, rather than not moving up. They put forward Pele as a...

Q: This is a great soccer star.

WALKER: Great soccer star. He only became somewhat acceptable when he became a millionaire from his sport. I had a friend, our marines, our young marines, black marines had a tough time in Brazil. I had a friend who was a young, sort of up and coming officer with Citibank who was sent down to Brazil from their New York office, a black officer. His wife almost left him because she was so badly treated in Brazil. She couldn’t walk down the street, practically every man that would go past assuming she was a maid, but a well-dressed maid, and a very attractive maid, practically every man would come up and say things to her that she didn’t want to hear. He said that any time he went to dinner parties, receptions at business colleagues homes, he didn’t know how many times they’d walked in the front door of an apartment building only to be told to go around the back to the service elevator, because blacks were assumed not to be guests but were to be servants going up to the function. And they only took it for so long, and they ended up leaving Brazil, things were so bad. We had a black officer, the only black officer I remember was sent down to Porto Alegre, down to the whitest part of Brazil. And I remember, it wasn’t me, it was one of the other officers, it might have been the Ambassador, was called over to the Foreign Office, and was told that our consul down in Porto Alegre was gathering what few blacks were down there to his house, he was

bringing in representatives of the black community, and they assumed that he, they essentially told us they didn't want any black panther movements in Brazil, so he should be told to knock this off. Anyone who says that Brazil is a color-free society is not looking at the reality of Brazil, absolutely not.

Q: One last question before we leave Brazil, Brazil has always been touted as having the most professional Foreign Service in international things, did you run into any reflections of this?

WALKER: Yes, I ran into a number of reflections, could we stop there and start with that?

Q: Today is the 12th of July, 2001. Bill, before we leave Brazil, would you talk about your experiences and impressions of the Brazilian Foreign Service at that point?

WALKER: Right. As we were saying previously, the reputation the Brazilian Foreign Service has is far better than that of any other Foreign Service in Latin America. In fact, I think it's got almost world class status. A couple of stories about the Brazilian Foreign Service, because I think it is a, it perhaps is a well-deserved reputation, but in my opinion, as you will see, I don't think it is that high-up status in my own mind, for the following reasons. To get into the Brazilian Foreign Service, you have to one, be a lawyer, number two you have to have two foreign languages at almost the native language level of competency, one of them has to be a world language, either English or French, maybe German or Russian, and the other one can be anything, but you've gotta have at least three languages coming in. This produces, just the fact of those two requirements, it reduces the population of Brazil that are able to compete to get into the Foreign Service. To be admitted to the Foreign Service, besides these requirements, once you are selected, you have to go to their institute Rio Branco, which is their Foreign Affairs Academy, and it's a long program, it's like two or three years. What this has tended to produce is that a very, very large percentage of Brazilian diplomats are in fact the children of diplomats, and this is the reason they speak other languages at the absolute native speaker level. They are lawyers, usually international law has been their focus quite often in law schools outside of Brazil. Again, what this tends to produce is a Foreign Service composed of the children of Foreign Service officers, the children of international businessmen, kids who have, young men, young women been brought up overseas. Most of them know Rio de Janeiro, or they know Sao Paulo, Brazil. What they don't know is the rest of Brazil, which is the real heart of Brazil. In other words, they don't represent Brazil, they represent a very, very small elite within Brazil. They tend to, they tend to be like French diplomats I've met, who also have a fairly rigorous road into the Foreign Service, the product of certain schools, the product of a certain background. I've known Brazilian diplomats, Ambassadors as well. I knew the Brazilian Ambassador in Salvador, my colleague, was an incredible expert on American Jazz. He could tell you anything you ever wanted to know about every American jazz pianist, musician, in the history of the world. He knew absolutely nothing about and was disdainful of Brazilian music, which is one of the real rich, cultural things in Brazil. He knew Chicago, he could talk to you about great jazz places in New Orleans, or where Charlie Byrd gave his first

concert in Washington DC or the nice clubs of San Francisco. He knew nothing about Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, the northeast of Brazil, he knew nothing about anything other than I think he was from Sao Paulo, he really had never traveled around Brazil. When you consider what Brazil is. What a diverse multi-ethnic, multi-everything culture it is, I think it's kind of sad that they don't really represent Brazil. They sort of represent international diplomacy in its most flowery, sort of historic, traditional way, but not Brazil.

One thing that brought this home to me was, while I was still in Brazil, I remember, for some reason the State Department did a survey, they sent out a telegram to all embassies around the world and they said they were rating Foreign Services, give us your opinion of who are the real class acts among the diplomatic corps in your capital. And then who are not the good ones, so we can get sort of a list. And I saw all the replies that came in from the Latin American capitals. And I don't think there was a one of them that did not say that "In my experience in Latin America" usually the Ambassador sent the cable, "In my experience in Latin America, the Brazilian service has always been the highest ranked, it's very professional, they have all the skills of diplomacy, they all know international law, they are very, very highly thought of in the diplomatic community." I think about three quarters of them then said, "This has not turned out to be true in this particular capital, where the Brazilian Ambassador is a drunk or is a womanizer or he never goes to work." For some reason, the generalization did not hold true in the local representative in about three-quarters of embassies that came back with an answer. So if you just saw one of those, you'd say, "Oh, that's the exception, that guy just has something wrong with him." But if you saw the whole panoply of the responses, you came to the conclusion there was something wrong with describing the Brazilian Foreign Service in such high terms. Very good reputation, the reality on the ground is really quite different.

Q: I've also heard people say that the legal background causes, I mean, they look after, you might say Brazilian interests in the most minute way, but it's like lawyers, I mean at a certain point, you almost have to, if you want to get something done you send the lawyers out of the room and you sit down and talk and try to deal and try to do something, but with a legal mind, it can be very inhibiting.

WALKER: The Brazilian Foreign Service, I would say, is almost unequaled, perhaps with the exception of the Mexican Foreign Service in the western hemisphere at least, I don't know the score in most of the rest of the world, but in the Americas, the Brazilian Foreign Service has the most antipathy towards the United States. They are not our friends. Brazilian Foreign Ministers and Foreign Service Officers are usually the ones...

Q: You were saying, the Mexicans were either what...

WALKER: A little behind or a little ahead of the Brazilians. There's a certain similarity in the two Foreign Services, the Mexican Foreign Service I think, if you look at them as a whole, there are very few who represent the vast majority of Mexicans. They are not dark-skinned, they are light-skinned, they've also got the skills of living in the capitals of the world, so I assume most of them are also the children of people who have given them

a very, very, very good education. But I think if you go down to Brazil and talk to Brazilians, the man in the street so to speak, and talk to them about Itamaraty, which is their foreign office, again they have a very poor reputation within Brazil. They have, whether you agree with this or not, their fame is to be snobbish, unrepresentative of Brazil, and in Brazil, what is to this day seen as an insult, they are thought to be all homosexual. And there's a certain degree of truth in all of those charges, but the one I think is particularly a negative quality is the fact that they just don't represent Brazil. I think we've ripped them apart.

Q: I think so too. Apologies to those Brazilians who read this. I assume they have their own oral history program and they can do it to us, and fair enough. Um, 1972, whither?

WALKER: 1972, good question. Whither did I go in 1972? The one part of my service in Brazil that you luckily didn't cover was my personal life, and while I was in Brazil, my wife and a couple other people's wives, decided that they had to find themselves. This was of course the '70s when American women were starting to look for other things to do than being the followers, the camp followers of American husbands who took them to the far corners of the earth. So my wife decided that she was gonna go back and find herself. She left, with one of our two children, taking my brand-new baby daughter back to San Francisco from whence she came, to go back to school. I mean earlier we talked about her and her ice-skating career, the ice-skating career and that sort of thing. She went back to go back to school and then maybe pursue her ice-skating career again leaving me in Rio with my son, who was five or six at the time. So when it came time for a new assignment to come up, I remember getting a call from personnel, perhaps you were at the other end of the phone, probably not, but I thought I'd try that, to show you what a stupid person was at the other end of the line. This person said, "Walker, we've got the perfect assignment for you, it's a perfect opportunity for an FSO-4, I guess I was at the time. You're gonna go and be head of the political section in Managua, Nicaragua. At that point I'd never been in Central America, I'd certainly never been in Managua, Nicaragua. But the image that immediately spun into my mind was of jungles and hot steamy Central American, Panama rainforest sort of thing.

Q: Jaguars.

WALKER: That's right. God knows what else. Everything I didn't like. I had to think very quickly, so I said, "You know what my name is, right? William Walker, and I'm sure you're a student of history, you would never think to send someone named William Walker to Managua, Nicaragua given the original William Walker and his adventures down there.

Q: The gray-eyed man of destiny.

WALKER: Of destiny, from Tennessee. So whoever was on the other end of the phone obviously had never heard of William Walker in Nicaragua, and he said, "Let me get back to you on that." And when he got back to me, that assignment had gone by the boards, thank god. At about the same time, a cable came around to all posts, and it

described a program started by Frank Carlucci. He had been the political counsel in Rio de Janeiro, just before I got there. When he left and came back to the States, in the first days of the Nixon Administration, he went over to OMB I believe, and from there he went to the Office of Economic Opportunity, OEO, at a very high level, a Deputy Secretary level or something like that. But before he left State, or when he was over in one of these other agencies, Carlucci came up with an idea. And this cable was based on Carlucci's idea, and the idea was, the Nixon administration is gonna change government, it's gonna restructure American government. It's gonna try and devolve government down to the people, get it out of Washington, too big a bureaucracy. We're gonna get it down to the state level, to the local level, where people really are concerned with their lives. As a result of this, the Nixon government has established ten federal regions of the United States. They'd broken the country up into ten regions, and in each region they have created a regional council, which would be composed of the heads of all the major federal departments in that region, and this council will sit, and will make the decisions previously made by their secretaries in Washington, so that it will take it down closer to the local government level. And Frank Carlucci had the idea that this would be a great place to put some Foreign Service Officers. So if anyone's interested in going out to any of these regional council capital cities and serving on the secretariat of one of these regional councils, let us know. I looked at the list, and lo and behold San Francisco was on there, as the capital of region nine. And region nine was California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii and Guam. Sent my name in, volunteered. Whether or not there was no similar response of people wanting to go to other parts of the country or whatever, but only two people were picked. I was picked for region nine, San Francisco, and someone else, Bruce Lancaster I believe, went to Atlanta for whatever region that was. So I went to San Francisco, one, thinking it was a chance to get away from the State Department and perhaps re-evaluate whether I wanted to stay in the Foreign Service or whether I preferred to go back and try and recapture my family that had just broken apart. Plus it would give me a chance to have the kids get back together, see my daughter, and at least watch her grow for the first two years of her life. But it was really a chance to get away and say to myself, "Do I really want to pursue a career in the Foreign Service?"

Something else happened in those last weeks I was in Brazil. Another series of interesting anecdotes, or at least interesting to me. We got a cable one day saying that the Governor of Georgia, named James C. Carter was gonna come to Brazil. On a GovDel, I don't know what they call them, Governor visits, anyway, Governor Carter was coming to Brazil with a whole entourage, including his wife, including a guy named Jody Powell who was his press man, including all sorts of people, it was a big mission. And, so you know, name a control officer and start putting together a program. I was named the control officer. Had no idea who Governor Carter was. Luckily he had just appeared on the cover of Time magazine, a feature story describing him as the face of the new south, different from the old south, here was a Governor, a Democrat, certainly liberal in terms of the south, who had just wowed them at some democratic convention someplace. But no thought that he would ever be President. He came down with his entourage. I was his control officer. So I took him around Rio, and then we took him up to Brasilia. We did a number of things with him. I'll never forget, having an exchange of cables with the department, because Governor Carter told us early on that he was a naval officer, retired

naval officer, Annapolis graduate, and when he came to Rio he wanted to visit the Brazilian navy. And we sent back, and said well not many of them were in Rio, it's not really a big navy, except for, you know, we've got other things for you to do. And the cable came back and said no, Governor Carter wants to visit the Brazilian navy. As a matter of fact, he's heard they have an aircraft carrier, and he wants to visit the aircraft carrier. So we wrote back in another cable and said, "The only aircraft carrier in the Brazilian Navy is called the *Minas Gerais*. It goes to sea about once every two years because it's an old British carrier from god knows when, it's a big hunk of rotting, rusting metal, and it sits down in the port area, and we see it a lot but it looks pretty bad. It's not decommissioned, but it's hardly commissioned either." Governor Carter came back and said, "He wants to go and visit that carrier. As a matter of fact, he wants to land on the deck in a helicopter and see the crew and say something to them." So, still trying to discourage him from this folly, we sent back a cable and said, "We're not sure you can land a helicopter on that carrier because there's a lot of cranes and stuff and wires and stuff, you know, we don't think it'd be safe." He came back and said, "Governor Carter wants to land on that carrier." So we landed him on the carrier and he saw the Brazilian navy, of course they had to go out and round up a whole bunch of guys and get him on the ship before he arrived to make it look like there was a crew there. He did a number of other things. And I'm just... do you mind me getting these anecdotes?

Q: No, no, this is great.

WALKER: Before he arrived, it was a Sunday, and we had, the Embassy had decided to have an outing. And USIS and our medical officer, who was a bit of a character, had organized a whole group of us to go out on a big yacht, which I guess we rented, and sail around Guanabara Bay, to see Rio from the bay side, which is a very beautiful thing. So I think forty or fifty of us with our kids, and I took along a young Brazilian girl that got me to recommend her for a university scholarship here in the States, a graduate student. And she and I and my five, six year old son, whatever he was at the time, we joined this party and went out for this sail around Guanabara Bay, because Governor Carter and his party were coming in to Galeao Airport I think at like six o'clock at night. Out we went in the ship, finally when it was time to turn back a gale came up, a really nasty storm came up. And I insisted that we get back really quickly, because I had to get to that car and get to the airport to get Governor Carter. I was responsible for him and I was really getting very worried. So they pulled down the sails, put on the motor, and put-putted us back to the little bay in front of which I had my apartment. This is not Copacabana, this is not even Ipanema, this is a place called Urca, which is a nice little bay, inlet off from the rest of the bay. Anyway, we pulled in about three-hundred yards from shore by the Yacht Club, and I kept saying "I've gotta get off this ship right away, I've got to get to shore really quick, so the first little rowboat that comes out to take passengers ashore, I've gotta be on it." The medical doctor happened to have his two parents down to visit him, who had come along for the day, they were in their seventies, and they had gotten seasick and they were not too happy on board ship, so we decided that the first little rowboat that came out, I, my son, the girl that was with me, and these two people would go in the first rowboat. A little rowboat came out from the Yacht club, and we all jumped into the rowboat. It was now dark, it was pouring rain, there was lightning, it was really a nasty

scene. And we head for shore. At about thirty or forty yards from the boat, I heard someone say, "I feel water on my feet." And before they had finished that sentence, the little rowboat disappeared out from under us. I knew the Brazilian girl didn't swim. I knew my son didn't swim. I had no idea about these seventy-year-olds, but I was very concerned, I mean, I was also concerned for myself, to be dumped into the middle of Guanabara Bay, in dark and a rainstorm with at least two other people, maybe four other people who can't swim. I assumed that Pedro, the little guy who was rowing the boat would do his best to save his passengers. Well, of course, Pedro was the first one up the ladder on the mothership. And I sort of scooted around in the dark trying to find these other people and sort of pushed them towards the ladder. To make a long story short, by hook or by crook or somehow, everybody made it back to the vessel. A second rowboat came out, we all jumped in, we got ashore. I rushed to the airport, got there just before the plane landed. Met the Governor, met his party, went to the baggage conveyor belt waiting for all their bags to come off, and while there, I couldn't resist telling the Governor what I had gone through to be there on time to meet the Governor and his party. So I told him this rather convoluted, emotional story about almost losing, not my life, but my son's life, this girl's life, and the two old people. And he heard the story through to the end, and at the end he turned to me and said, "Mr. Walker, it's Walker, right?" "Yes." "Do you think maybe God was trying to tell you something?" To this day, I don't know what God was trying to tell me, but that was Governor Carter.

Q: Yes.

WALKER: One final story about the Carter visit... two final stories about the Carter visit. We're driving away from the airport into Rio. It's late on a Sunday, it's raining, it's not a nice day. Rio traffic in a rainstorm is horrendous, just horrible. And as we're driving in, Governor Carter turns to me and he says, "Mr. Walker, tell me about religious practice here." So I described Brazil, very Catholic country, the biggest Catholic country in the world, mostly nominal Catholics, they don't take it very seriously, but nevertheless very Catholic country. He said, "Well, are other religions present here?" I said, "Yes, I think there's a synagogue in Ipanema, I think, the others, a couple of churches." He says, "Is there a Baptist church in town?" I said, "Well, I don't know, I think..." So I asked the young fellow who was helping me out, happened to be with the Agency, and I said, "George, you're a Baptist, aren't you?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Is there someplace in town where you worship?" He said, "Oh, yes, there's that church down in Copacabana, right on the main street in Copacabana. So I told the Governor this, he said, "Well, do you think we could stop there on the way to the hotel?" I said, "Stop there?" He said, "Yes, I'd like to see it." I said, "Sure, of course." So I asked George where it was, I told the driver, and our little caravan pulled up in front of this small church in Copacabana, on avenue de ____ senora in Copacabana. And we rolled up, and the Governor insisted on going out and going in and there were some lights on inside. And we got inside, lo and behold, there was a service taking place, with a preacher up front, and there was eight, ten, twelve parishioners sitting in the pews. And so we were sort of looking at it from the back. And Governor Carter turned to me and he said, "Mr. Walker, do you think the minister would let me say a few words to the congregation?" I said, "I can ask him, but you know, they're all Portuguese speakers, I'm not sure they're gonna understand what

you might want to say.” And he said, “Well, why don’t you ask him. Maybe, you know, they’re Baptists, they might know English.” So I went up, and of course the preacher said, “Of course, bring him up.” So he got up and said something to the congregation in English, and God knows what they thought was going on. Got in for a late Sunday service, and some gringo got up there and spoke to them in a language they had no idea what he was saying. It was a very strange visit, it was a very, very strange visit. Notwithstanding that...

My final anecdote, one of the people who was with Carter was a Baptist minister from Atlanta. He was a minister but he was really sort of a pretty slick businessman, sort of a mover and shaker, got things done. He spoke Portuguese for some reason, so he helped the governor with the press and stuff, the stuff that Jody Powell wasn’t as good with. And near the end of the trip, this fellow, who’s name I can’t remember, said, “Listen Walker, Governor Carter is really impressed with you, you’ve really done a great job here. And Governor Carter is gonna make Atlanta the gateway into the United States for Latin America. He’s got this plan that Atlanta is gonna knock Miami out, it’s gonna knock Houston out, it’s gonna knock Los Angeles out, he’s gonna make Atlanta into the gateway for Latin America. And he’s putting together a tremendous team to do this, and one of the things on the drawing board is sort of an international trade center. And it hasn’t started yet, but it’s gonna go up pretty soon. And one of the jobs they’re gonna have there is sort of a diplomat, sort of someone who knows the consular world, the diplomatic world, looking towards Latin America, and he’s looked at your bio, and he’s pretty interested in you. Would you be interested, if he gave you the offer, would you be interested in it?” I said, “Yes. Try me out. Sounds pretty good.” So just before the end of the trip, I kept waiting for Governor Carter to say something to me. And finally, just before we were leaving to the airport on the way out, he brought up the subject. And he told me about Atlanta and his plans for Atlanta, and gateway to Latin America, he wanted someone who was really on top of things in terms of Latin America, blah blah blah blah. And I was preparing my response, and he said, at the end he said, “What do you think about Joe Blow down in Buenos Aires, I was really impressed with him, and I want to offer him the job, do you know about him? Is he a good guy?” So what the Governor was looking at was my recommendation on someone else, and it sort of pulled the wind out of my sails. And I of course told him that my colleague, who I knew pretty well, was really a great guy. Whether or not he ever took the job or not I don’t know, but it was a plan that, one more plan of mine that went absolutely nowhere.

We went to the airport, and we had traveled all over Brazil, every place we went of course people gave him gifts, and at the end of the trip, I had a, my little office in the embassy was full of gifts. Paintings. I remember we went to a function that was for family planning, which is sort of not a very popular subject in Brazil, but it was a very rich man who was the head of family planning in Brazil. We went to his apartment for a very nice dinner, and he had an art collection on the wall. And of course at the end Jimmy Carter was looking at the collection, the host asked him, “Which picture do you like?” And Jimmy picked this big huge picture of something or other, just said, “I really like that, it’s a beautiful painting.” So they guy took it off the wall and gave it to him. So he gave it to me, and that joined the collection of gifts back in the office. When he was about

to leave, I asked the General Services Officer, "What the hell am I gonna do with this stuff, how do I get it back to him?" I was told, "Don't worry about it, we'll crate it. This is what you do for a VIP, we'll crate it, we'll send it to him." So I told the Governor, "I'll get this on a plane the next day, because there's quite a bunch of stuff here." He said, "That's fine Walker, but I really want to get that painting especially, but some of those other things, because I know their valuable." So as soon as I got the Governor and his plane off, the next day I got the General Services Officer to haul all this stuff out, and I think around four crates they put together, big things, wooden crates. And I went out to the airport with it to make sure it got on the plane, and the military attaché arranged to get it on a military plane. Back then we had a big MILGROUP in Brazil, and they had a plane that came in every couple of weeks. So we got it on the MILGROUP plane and it made arrangements to stop in Atlanta to get all this stuff off to go to the Governor very quickly, and I was really pleased with myself. The only problem was, the plane went down in the Amazon.

Q: Oh lord.

WALKER: It was never found, they never found it. And I remember thinking, "Oh my god." So I sent this letter to Governor Carter, explaining that I had put this stuff on an airplane, the plane was missing but presumed it had gone down in the Amazon, and that all the gifts that he had accumulated were lost. I had also had the mother of a Foreign Service Officer, Adrian Basora, who was my good friends, she had come down and stayed with me for a couple of weeks, and before she left, she was worried about her jewel collection, so she left it with me. And said, "Please send it to me." And I had put that on the plane as well. So not only did I lose the Governor's memorabilia and stuff, but I lost Mrs. Basora's family jewels. I got a letter from Governor Carter, and it sort of wiped out all these sort of quirks that I had seen in his personality when I had taken him to a Baptist Church, telling me God was trying to tell me something by the experience I had just had in trying to get to the airport. But he sent me back a letter, and it was a beautiful letter. The thrust of it was, you know, the loss of those trinkets is nothing compared to the loss of that plane and that crew. Please let me know who they are. I'd like to send them some sort of a message to the family, because that is the real tragedy here. But it was put very, very nicely, and I remember thinking that this guy really did have a heart. But anyway, that visit, from start to finish was a total screw-up.

Q: Okay, you went to San Francisco?

WALKER: Correct.

Q: I'd also like to put the time. '72 to '74 and all?

WALKER: '72, I went for, it was a one-year assignment, '72 to '73, but I did re-up for a second year, so I was there from '72 to '74.

Q: Let's talk about it. I didn't even know these things existed.

WALKER: It was, it was, I went out there not knowing what it was like, what it was gonna be. The federal regional council in San Francisco was a collection of I think nine federal agencies, all the big ones: HUD, HEW, OEO. And I was assigned, I know not why, to be on the staff of the Administrator of Environmental Protection Agency, which was just getting started as a major agency, a major grant-giving agency. EPA was, as I say, the council were the major grant organizations of the U.S. government, so that a state government or a city government could go right to San Francisco and talk to the people who were involved in the major grants. So Department of Transportation was there. There was an outfit called Law Enforcement something or other Administration, which has since disappeared, but it was trying to put together grants to local police around the country. I was put on the staff of the Regional Administrator for EPA. He in turn sat on this regional council, and each of the regional council members had a person like me, all of whom were Civil Servants except me, and we were the secretariat of the council. The council met once a week to coordinate their grant programs to the States and to local government. It was just a wonderful, wonderful way to see how state and local government works, and how it interfaces with the federal government. I was able to get to see relatively young people like myself, at that time relatively young, who had gone into the civil service and who were, had made it up fairly far in their various agencies of government.

But the real nice part of the job was traveling a lot. Remember, I'm a semi-bachelor, my wife had separated from me, she lived over in the Oakland side of the bay, I lived in San Francisco. When we got there my young son went over to live with his mother, so I was batching it in San Francisco. I could travel whenever I wanted to, and I spent a lot of time going to the states I had mentioned: Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii and Guam to talk to the governors, to talk to the people who were the counterparts of these federal bureaucrats. That was one very big plus of the job, because I enjoy traveling, and I hadn't been to any of those states before in any serious way. The other real benefit of the job was a very specific one. The regional administrator of EPA in San Francisco in 1972 – '74 was a gentlemen named Paul DeFalco. Paul DeFalco was an Italian American. He was almost as wide as he was tall, very rotund fellow. But he was easily one of the brightest, most bureaucratically astute people I've ever met. And that's saying it in a very positive way. He really knew how to work within a bureaucracy and get people to work with him, and he was also brilliant as far as the subject matter of the issues before this council that I saw him work on. Ninety-five percent of his job was the technical side of air quality control, clean water, that sort of stuff. And he had a brilliant bunch of young EPAers who were dealing with the technology of EPA, who knew all that, but here he knew this other stuff, which was how to work with all the other U.S. agencies and the state governments. He was an incredible person to travel around with and watch work.

Q: I would have thought that you would be, sort of, described as, you know, the experts, this son of a bitch from out of town. Arriving there, I mean, particularly, this was the early days of the EPA, and environmental protection, it wasn't really a word you could conjure with in those days. And you were basically coming over and saying you're doing this wrong, you've got to do something, weren't you?

WALKER: No, not at all. Let me put it this way. One of the big issues obviously for EPA San Francisco was air quality in the Los Angeles basin. I was from Los Angeles. I had done my part in contributing to smog in my earlier days. And things were getting very, very bad in the Los Angeles basin. One of the things that people were starting to pay attention to was that a good bit of this smog, not just in Los Angeles, but more to the south in San Diego was coming out of Mexico, the factories in Tijuana, some of the other contributing factors, the pollution coming out of Baja, California, infecting San Diego, that part of California. Paul DeFalco, my boss, being a man of action, you know, wrote to the mayor of Tijuana, wrote to the Governor of Baja, and suggested let's get together and talk about these issues, because it's a cross-border issue. And the Mayor came back and the governor of Baja came back and I think some federal officials from Mexico City got on board, and said, "Yes, this is a good idea, let's get together in San Diego or in Tijuana and let's talk about this common problem." So we went ahead and tried to put it together. Needless to say, when the State Department heard about it, they came out and said, "The only U.S. Agency that deals in cross-border issues, that deals with foreign governments is the State Department. So back off."

Q: Well that's nonsense, we've had these commissions, a plethora of commissions dealing with Canadian and Mexican borders...

WALKER: But back then, it was not quite as, in concrete that such things existed. So Paul DeFalco was sort of taken to task by the State Department for presuming to conduct foreign relations. And I sort of went to bat with him, he called the Mexican desk, or let me call somebody in ARA and we'll try and figure out how this can go ahead, because it makes total sense that we should be talking to these guys. This is not really foreign relations, this is just dealing with a common problem. So no, if anyone thought of me as an outside interloper who came in, and gonna tell them how to do things, they certainly said it behind my back, not to my face. I never heard anything along those lines.

Q: Well I was just wondering, you know, when the EPA is say, going to Arizona or something and looking at the water quality or something like that, I would think that, I mean you'd be treading, I mean there are a lot of interest problems. You know, the guys who are polluting, the guys who are using water, what have you, and I mean these people have been doing it for a long time, and all of a sudden here is a new Washington agency that may be on the side of the angels, but it's still breaking somebody's rice bowl.

WALKER: Oh, there's no question about it. The EPA at that point in time, in some circles in Arizona for instance, was a dirty word, because of that very reason. I discovered that of the Colorado River flow, what remains after the farmers of the river in the United States, take out of the river for irrigation and what they put into the river in terms of pollution, by the time the trickle reaches Mexico, it is horrendous water, and there's not much of it. But going into Arizona and holding what would be described as town meetings, we did a lot of that. All the town folk really believed in holding open meetings to find out what the local populace thought about some of these restraints were gonna be put on them for polluting rivers or polluting the air or whatever. Yes, we were not seen as a friendly force coming in. I'll never forget going down to LA once to hold

meetings on the Clean Air Act, this was an early version, which was a lot easier on people than the one that was eventually put into place. But going down there we held an open meeting, I think it was in Gardena or someplace, which is sort of a blue-collar part of Los Angeles. We're in this room in the Mayor's office, sort of a conference room in the mayor's office, and sure enough the number of people who showed up to express themselves on the act as proposed. All of a sudden you hear this noise outside, and one of the things that it was really going to cut down on emissions from automobiles, but those emission controls would have been even more stringent on motorcycles, which are, back then as I remember, a motorcycle, one motorcycle was polluting ten times more than one automobile, so these, this proposed legislation was really gonna cut into motorcycles. Well, you hear this drone outside, and you looked out, and the Hell's Angels were circling the sight, with signs up about what they thought about EPA and its' legislation.

Q: You might explain who Hell's Angels were.

WALKER: Okay, well, Hell's Angels was a bunch of motorcycle clubs that was founded in Oakland, California by Sonny Barger, I think it was his name. It was outlaw bicyclists in terms of motorcycles, who liked to dress up in leather with their colors as they called it, and Hell's Angels proudly displayed on the back, and they drove Harleys and they were in fact polluting machines of the first order. But these were not, at least to a bureaucrat coming in from Washington or probably bureaucrats in California, these were not seen as friendlies when they were circulating outside this building. They put the fear of God into all of us before we got out of there that night. But yes, this was typical of going to some of these local places and telling people why they needed to clean up the air or the water or the garbage dumps.

The only place where we usually found a very friendly audience was in Hawaii, where there were a lot of people very concerned, I think that was the first place I ran into people who called themselves "Greens", because they were worried about some of the things that were being done by the overpopulation of Waikiki and Honolulu. But we went out there, and it was usually a very friendly audience for us, if not for my colleagues from the other agencies. From Department of Transportation, everybody was saying Honolulu was already completely cemented over, and you had to come in here and put in freeways and stuff. But that was the lesson of this thing, was you know, to be a fed, within the beltway or in an Embassy overseas is usually a fairly friendly place to be. To be a fed in Carson City, Nevada, it's a different sort of milieu. It's not quite as, they might envy you your salary or your self-importance, but they don't really think of you in the same way as people within the beltway think of you.

Q: Well, I think one of the things about taking an assignment like this is, in a way you're still wearing your Foreign Service hat. I mean, these are the civil service, you know, out there really working in the field is something you never get a feel for in the Foreign Service. And the interests and cares of the personnel of states and all. I mean in a way you carry your Foreign Service experience, it's with you in a way, I mean it's sort of observing a foreign culture.

WALKER: Absolutely. That's exactly right. I learned a tremendous amount about how the U.S. agencies at federal level, how they coordinate, or more importantly don't coordinate their programs, and how that impacts on communities that have these crazy orders coming down, sometimes contradictory ones from Washington. At that time Ronald Reagan was the governor of California. A guy named Ed Meese, later Attorney General, was someone that we dealt with a lot, because of the proximity of Sacramento and the fact that some of the things we were doing had the most impact on California air quality control, water control, that sort of thing. And then I saw a lot about local government. I also learned an awful lot about this rather obscure part of U.S. life, which are the Indian nations, Indian tribes which are a big thing in these districts, in these states. How the Navajo is organized, and how they interact with the federal government, and how they refuse to interact with state and local governments. For someone who thought he was kind of educated in political science and American civics, I certainly found out that I was almost totally ignorant in some subjects I really should have known before I went out and represented the United States abroad .

Q: Well, in a way, were your colleagues, the civil servants who were there, were they also almost in the same learning mode by moving down and out of Washington?

WALKER: Well, most of them, I don't know that many of them came out of Washington. Most of them, all these agencies, with the possible exception of EPA, which was kind of the new kid on the block, along with the law enforcement agency. Most of them had joined HUD or HEW out in that region and had shown themselves to be bright young folks. I was impressed with the quality of my counterparts. I would describe myself as relatively young, they were even younger, and they'd reach the equivalent level in the civil service within their respective agencies, and I found them, they were impressive, they were impressive as a group of people.

Q: Well what, I mean when you were going out there, was this a matter of persuasion, or did you have money, I mean, would you give the initial approval and that would go to Washington to come back, is this, what were you actually doing?

WALKER: The Federal Regional Council, per se, was to try to coordinate the federal response to any request from a state or local government. Each of these agencies had their sort of bi-lateral relationships with the States and with the local governments. If it was strictly an EPA grant to the State of California, that was handled separate from the Regional Council system. The Regional Council was where coordination was supposed to take place on grants that crossed over the divisions between HUD and the Department of Transportation. I mean, you know, a big highway project is gonna involve EPA in terms of air quality, it's gonna involve other things besides the Department of Transportation. Those issues were supposed to come to the Council.

So it's a little difficult to describe what we would do when a state government or a local government had a project that they wanted the U.S. federal government to fund, and it wasn't clearly something that would be strictly within one or another agencies, if it was something that crossed agency borders. Whether they brought it up in Washington or if

they brought it up in San Francisco, it would come to the Council. So that was one thing, we would look at proposals coming from the governor of Nevada who wanted to do X project. What does that involve in terms of the federal government? Is it eligible for federal grants? Which agency should be involved? And we would organize a task force to deal with that. To bring together the coordination necessary to make the project a success. That was a major function of the Council.

The other function was to explain the federal government to state and local governments. Each year when the federal budget came out, the Council as a Council went to the state capitals, to say, "Here's what the budget is this year, here's the implications for State government." The regional administrator for HUD would tell these people what's in the budget and let's see what their reaction is. So that involved a lot of travel too. We'd go for three or four days to each of the capitals. The Secretariat was sort of to keep track of all these things and make sure the Principal on the Council was prepared for whatever the issues were. So there was a lot of writing involved, there was a lot of, you know, dealing within the secretariat to make sure we were all moving in the same direction at the same pace. I have no idea whether it's still in existence or whether it disappeared. But, if Nixon had a good idea, this was a pretty good idea. It exposed feds to state and local concerns to a greater extent than sometimes is the case. It emphasized the need for coordination rather than these things coming in willy-nilly from single agencies, sometimes in conflict. I stayed for a second year.

Q: How did you find, when the group met together, how well, were they in pretty much the same league?

WALKER: The Council was composed of these nine, I think it was, agencies. These were GS-17, 18s. Some of them were political appointees; others were career guys within the respective agencies. They were big egos. They were politically very astute sort of fellows. So, the Council meetings were impressive in terms of the quality of the people on board as well as the fact that they knew their issues well. They knew Washington. They knew their agencies well. I was impressed with them. At my level, the secretariat level, we were all I was an 04, I got promoted to a 03 while out there. The old 04, 03.

Q: The 04 is about the equivalent of a 02.

WALKER: A 02, yes, exactly. My colleagues were GS-14, 15s. The first three or four months I was there I barely said a word because they were talking in acronyms of the domestic agencies. They were talking about various clauses in various pieces of legislation that I had absolutely no idea what they were talking about. So I didn't tend to offer up my opinions. Over time when I became a little more familiar with the language involved and a little more familiar with some of the issues, especially those like this one with Mexico over air quality, with some of the things we've had out in Hawaii with the Pacific countries. Guam obviously was an issue that had a lot of international implications in the Far East. Then my background, my expertise started to kick in. I don't know if I gained the respect or whether it was just sort of a natural coming together with the other folks on this secretariat, but we became essentially very good friends. We

traveled together. We did the things together that you might expect and pretty well bonded. Within three or four months I think we were a group of people that worked very well together.

Q: What was your impression of Guam and how it fit into the American context, the United States context?

WALKER: I only made two trips out there. My impression of course was, gee I'm in Latin America again. A lot of the names are Spanish names because Spain held Guam until 1898 I guess. A lot of the politicians I met including the governor and some of the people around him, I don't remember his name, were carbon copies of politicians and governors in the Mexicos and Central Americas and Latin American countries that I knew. There was a lot of the negatives of that statement. There seemed to be a lot of nepotism involved in the way the government ran. There were indications of corruption and this sort of thing, sort of Latin style way of doing business was quite different from the way that business was done in Sacramento or in Arizona or even up in Carson City. My impression was just generally that. I don't have much more of an impression. But, of course, the U.S. grant making entities were much more welcome in Guam than they perhaps were in the Carson Cities and Phoenixes and Sacramento's just because.

Q: Well, that was the only money they had.

WALKER: That was the only money they had, exactly. I was also very impressed with all the state governments in terms of how adept they were at leading very complicated convoluted legislative language that dealt with grants. As soon as the bill came out they read it and knew exactly what it meant almost down to the penny in terms of what they would be getting from Washington this year. I was impressed.

Q: After this almost foreign assignment in '74 whither?

WALKER: In '74, two things. When I was leaving, the personnel department called me up at first not to talk about me, but to talk about finding a replacement for me on the Regional Council. They asked me what I thought of the job and what sort of person should replace me. I said, this is a great job, wonderful, a big smorgasbord, do as much traveling as you want. Great people to work with, I learned a lot. I learned a lot. Plus it was in San Francisco for heaven's sake, what a town to be in. Who should replace me? Anyone who would value those characteristics. I said if there is anyone back there who expresses any interest in it have them give me a call and I'll talk to them and tell them what a great place it is. A couple of people called and I gave the same pitch. This is a great job. You'd love it out here.

A guy named Jack Binns who later was my ambassador in Honduras called me up. I tried to talk him into it. He ended up getting an offer to go to London, which was even better in his mind than San Francisco, so he went to London. The fellow who called me up and asked me about the job and I gave him the pitch and he took the job came out there. He lasted two months. Two or three months at the most. Hated it. Went to these meetings,

fell asleep in a number of them. He thought it was the worst job he'd ever seen. He couldn't understand how I could possibly like it and he left; demanded to be transferred. So, there was something there that I liked that he obviously didn't like.

The other reason personnel called me was of course to ask me about going to someplace else. Would you believe I went through this same story about Managua, Nicaragua again. Because there was a new personnel officer who had also come up with this brilliant idea that I should go to Managua? Again I remembered my success with the William Walker story, so I went through the same thing with him and sure enough they didn't think to send me to Managua. But they came up with something that in my mind was almost as bad since I had no idea what it was like there. It was to be head of the political section in El Salvador, San Salvador, El Salvador. A two officer, one secretary section. Since there were no other offers on the table, I took it. It was probably the smartest dumb decision I ever made because that led me into what became a real trend in my career from that time. I accepted the assignment to El Salvador and I went to El Salvador.

Q: You were, on the personal side, were any of your family coming with you or how were things working out there?

WALKER: We talked this over, my wife and I at this point had decided to get a divorce. She was still "trying to find herself" and we decided it would be best for the kids to come with me. I went to El Salvador with my six or seven year old boy and a two and a half year old girl. So, I was a single parent.

Q: I assume that if one went to El Salvador one could pretty much be assured that you would find a housekeeper or something like that?

WALKER: I'm glad that's the direction you took the question. Yes, you could find a housekeeper very easily. First I went to Washington for consultations before going down. I was lucky enough in Washington to meet my predecessor, a fellow named Leslie Scott. Also, to meet for the first time the ambassador to El Salvador who was a fellow named James Campbell. James Campbell was an American businessman from the Eastern Shore of Maryland who had been in some way involved with either Standard Oil or Esso and had been in Chile as an American businessman where he had learned some Spanish. Mostly the Spanish he had learned was incorrect Spanish unfortunately. I met this fellow in Washington at a dinner given sort of in my honor to introduce me to the Salvadoran ambassador in Washington, the American ambassador who was in on consultations, my predecessor and one or two other people. It was one of the most uncomfortable nights of my life because the man I was about to go and work for insisted on speaking Spanish and telling stories in Spanish that absolutely no one had a clue as to what the story was about. I thought to myself this is going to be a very, very, long tour. James Campbell also had some sort of a speech impediment. It was really terrible to listen to him especially when he's speaking Spanish. As I say I left that night and got on the plane the next day to go to Salvador with my two kids thinking this could very well have been a very bad decision to go to El Salvador. Of course the irony of that story is that I came to really think of El Salvador as one of the most pleasant spots on the face of the earth.

I arrived in El Salvador and got a house right away, a very nice house. As you say it was very easy to find a housekeeper. I found a housekeeper and her daughter who took care of me and the kids who were just wonderful people. It was a very comfortable life. In San Salvador what I hadn't realized as opposed to Managua, which is at sea level, San Salvador is about 2,800 feet. That again is sort of an internal screen. We talked earlier about Arequipa Peru where I had served which is if you've read the newspapers in the last week have been hit by a couple of earthquakes. It very much reminded me of Arequipa in terms of weather. It is beautiful, eternal spring, just the right temperature. The sun is almost always shining and the rain comes every afternoon to clear out the air. It's absolutely a beautiful Garden of Eden sort of spot.

Q: You were there from '74 was it?

WALKER: Three years, yes.

Q: Describe the political and economic situation in El Salvador and its relations with the United States in '74 if you could.

WALKER: If you have in your mind the cartoons of Herblock when he would be drawing cartoons in the Washington Post of his impression of Latin America, little military officers in charge with huge hats and chests full of medals and big walrus mustaches and a bit rotund.

Q: Yes.

WALKER: This is a perfect description of the president of El Salvador when I got there. The military was in control of the government. It was a military government. They were, many of them looked like that. The president with the big sash over his bulging stomach, not very nice to people who they thought would challenge him in any way. Then on the other hand the oligarchs, the famous 14 families, very much in control of the economy with a peasantry and a middle class and lower class that was not involved in any decision making, not involved in any justice system, strictly there to serve the interests of the oligarchic class and make sure they didn't run afoul of the military class. Life was very pleasant if you got to know people in the oligarchy and you couldn't help but get to know them. The embassy was very friendly towards them. So I had many a lovely day out at the lake where they all had houses to go to. I had lovely times down at the beach where they all had beach homes that were lovely places, really lovely. The social life revolved around this group of people plus the small diplomatic corps. As a single parent, divorced, working at the American Embassy who was out and about all the time, I was in a position vis-à-vis local women that I had never been in before. All of a sudden I was a desirable commodity. It was a very enjoyable life, I must say.

El Salvador at that time I don't know if it had been this way before, but I don't think so. Divorce was becoming more prevalent than it had ever been before. You had a lot of women who had been tossed away by their husbands or had tossed away their husbands.

Many of them had studied in the States. They were the daughters of these families, which were very extensive. There was a class of people that we socialized a lot together and it was very pleasant. Again, I didn't realize how, what a benefit it can be to be a single parent and all the women think of you, oh, you must be such a wonderful man to have taken your children along with you. Anyway, it was a very, very pleasant existence, but I became very involved with the darker side of El Salvador. For what I've already described about my ambassador, he was, someone had obviously given him a couple of lessons as he was going out as a political appointee to El Salvador. I can only say this because I saw him repeatedly apply these lessons.

One. Do not do anything to alienate or insult or affront the local government. Those are the people you have to work with. So he went out of his way so that the government understood that he was their great friend. I thought given the nature of that government that this was a big mistake. That we would end up paying for our association with that government. Next door in Managua, it was even worse. There was a guy named Turner B. Shelton.

He became incredibly close almost like a blood brother to the Somozas and we paid for that as well. Campbell would not hear anything even in country team meetings that was critical of the military government nor of his friends in the economic elites. That was one lesson he obviously had been told. The other was always use Spanish when you can because they're insulted if you don't speak to them in their own language. That might be generally true, but not if your Spanish was as bad as his was. He would give speeches to audiences where I knew most of them spoke English, most of them had been in the States, most of them spoke better English than he or I. He would deliver his comments in this fractured Spanish and no one in the room had a clue as to what we were talking about.

You have probably gathered from this that I was not terribly impressed with how the front office was run. During the time I was there, there were two DCMs, one was Sam Moskowitz who is still around. He retired eight, nine, ten years ago. He was the DCM. I felt very sorry for him because he was caught between the ambassador and I know he shared some of these concerns, but was very loyal to the ambassador, which he had to be and I was sympathetic to the position, he was in. I and some of the other more junior officers were probably not as loyal. I wrote cables. I told as many people as I could what I thought was happening there as a result of which I became known as sort of the liberal, the human rights sympathizer in the embassy and had a tough time at times. I know the ambassador felt that some of my cables were not to his liking.

I remember doing a cable on human rights or some aspect of that. I wrote a long cable, very, very critical of the situation in the government and sent it in to the DCM. It didn't come out for a day, two days, three days. I went to Sam and I said, "Sam, where's my cable?" He said, "Well, the ambassador has got some problems with it." I said, "Well, I knew he would, but either he should change it or tell me it shouldn't go or I'll go to the dissent channel if I have to, but I think that's important." It sat on Campbell's desk for ever so long. When it finally came out, I'll never forget, he had appended an

ambassador's comment. He was so ill adept at sort of the way the Department communicates that his comment made no difference. He obviously didn't know what power he had. He could have demolished my cable, but he put something very, you know, I'm not sure I agree with all of Mr. Walker's points or something, but it didn't subtract from the body of the cable. So, I really didn't have a problem in getting out what I wanted to get out. Again, you might remember in Brazil, I had problems with the defense attaché, General Mora, we talked about him.

Here I had problems with the defense attaché who was the only attaché, but he had the title of defense attaché. He was a Hispanic from Douglas, Arizona, reserve colonel in the army who had served in Vietnam, heading a helicopter gunship unit. His name was Al Rodriguez. He had gotten there ahead of me. He had formed a bond with the ambassador that made it very difficult for me to get things through him because he would always go to the ambassador and try to get the ambassador to soften my language. The ambassador, as I say, was inept in being able to block things. But I did have a lot of problems with Colonel Rodriguez. He was very close to the head of the army who was even worse than the president in terms of his being that caricature of Herblock.

At the end of my three years there that colonel moved up to be president. In fact I was there for his inauguration as president in 1977. By then President Carter had come into the office and President Carter wanted to put a little separation between us and the government of El Salvador run again by another military colonel. One of the ways in which this was signaled was I was put on the official delegation to the inauguration of President Romero. Colonel Rodriguez could not understand how they could do this. It was a slap in the face because Romero and everybody in El Salvador knew that I was not a great friend of the military regime. I went to the inaugural ball as part of the delegation. You can imagine the ball in which most of the Salvadorans were these guys with the sashes and the medals and the big mustaches and the big hats. When I met the president elect who had just been inaugurated, he informed me that I should think about moving on from El Salvador. I still had another year to go, but I took it that I should not stay in El Salvador so I did let the Department know that the new president was expressing the thought that maybe I should move on, so I did.

Q: I mean that shows you in a way what a small place it is if the president elect can talk to the political reporting officer which is at least number three down in the embassy about being disquieted about what you were doing, I mean it's a small town.

WALKER: It is a small town, very small town, but the American Embassy of course is a very large fish in that small pond and what just about every member of the embassy staff does was known to and judged by the government in those days. I was well known in El Salvador, obviously.

Q: Well, let's go now to what was happening on the dark side. How did you go about this because part of this exercise of going through this is to have people understand what you can do? Here you've got this very nice society which one could bask in. In fact I think from what I've gathered an awful lot of our embassies in Latin America for a long period

of time until things really started to turn sour were caught in this society of the leaders, you know, it was very pretty. Everybody was charming and all and they became captives of this. How did you?

WALKER: Well, let me say I had my share of the good life, no question about it. I have to tell you about someone, the fellow I just talked about on the phone out there because I'm going down to Central America for my first time since leaving in '92 and I will be under his auspices. Shortly after I arrived in El Salvador, I did what you're supposed to do when you arrive at a new post. I gave a party for myself and with the junior officer in my section who was one of the best junior officers I ever worked with.

Q: Who was that?

WALKER: His name was Charlie Bloom. He's no longer with us. He resigned shortly after El Salvador, but he gave me a list of all the people I really should get to know right away in this small community. Get to know them and you can start work the next day and do meaningful work. So, I gave a party for myself at a reception at my house in a lovely walled in back yard you have in Latin America and invited all these people. Some of them were military, some of them were oligarchs, but many of them were sort of the political figures, members of the various parties, congressmen, there was a little congress in place at the time, not a very oppositionist congress. Anyway, we had this very nice reception.

I'll never forget because Charlie Bloom, my junior officer, said, "There's someone here you've really got to meet. He's a very unusual character. He's my best friend. I hope he's your best friend. His name is Leonel Gómez. He's the son of coffee growers out in Santa Ana which is the old landed aristocracy of El Salvador going back to Spanish colonial days. But believe me that doesn't tell you all you have to know about Leonel. I want to introduce you." So, he brings over this guy, relatively young, big fellow and we started talking. I was saying, typical political officer approach to someone, well, tell me about yourself. Where did you go to school? What do you do here? He told me that he had gone to school in the States, spoke good English, although we were speaking in Spanish. That he had gone to graduate school in Pennsylvania. That he had become very involved in prison reform and he came back to Salvador and was very involved in prison reform. He told me about he'd been a motorcycle rider at one time and had competed for El Salvador in cross-country motorcycling. That he'd been very involved in the Salvadoran military in getting weapons for their Olympic shooting team. He was also very involved in trying to organize peasants into rural unions. He went on about all these different things that he was involved in. I just stood there and listened and at the end of which I said, "Gee, you're sort of a dilettante. Do you do any of these things seriously? You can't do them all seriously." He looked at me, turned around and walked out, which I guess maybe was understandable. The word dilettante is almost as bad in Spanish as it is in English. He walked out and he didn't talk to me for about a month. But we later got to know each other. What he was, I'd never met anyone like him before, nor since. He's the greatest networker I've ever met. He is more plugged in in Washington, DC. He later came here and was in exile here. When we get down to when I was ambassador to El Salvador, he

became a big part of my story. But he has more friends in more places than anyone I've ever known and he uses those friendships. He doesn't have a job. He's never had a job as far as I know. He lived off the earnings of a very small coffee granja that he and his brother owned so he could in fact dabble in lots of things, but he dabbled in important things.

That leads me to an anecdote that I do want to get on the record. Because a lot of people know about this and a lot of people know the significance of it. If I ever write a book about El Salvador, this will be in there. He's going to write a book and mention me in there, but it's something called the Richardson case and it gives you an idea of what I was involved in while I was there because it represents some other things that I was also involved in. While Ambassador Campbell was still the ambassador so we're talking about a year and a half into my tour there, the CIA station there was two people. The junior officer was a young Mormon kid from Utah, relatively young kid. Very serious young chap. In '76 the CIA decided that nothing was ever going to happen in El Salvador and they had a budget cut and so they closed two of their stations in the hemisphere. One was in El Salvador and the other was in Haiti. You know, two places that within a few years were both going to explode and become huge issues. But the agency decided those were the two places that nothing was going to happen, they didn't need a station, so they closed it.

This number two officer in the station was transferred to Guatemala, but he was designated as circuit rider and he came through El Salvador every once a month or something like that because again nothing is going to happen and you don't have to visit more than once a month. When this fellow came through on one of his circuits, he would always come over to the embassy and sort of give us his impressions. You know, it's always nice to have the impression of someone who knows the country because he'd been serving there, but was now sort of offsite and could give you sort of an outsider view of what was going on there. He would come in and talk to his contacts. One day he came in after having gone around and talked around. He said, "Gee, I just had a very strange conversation with the director of immigration," who was two-hatted, was also the head of their internal security agency. We knew this colonel and this colonel was not really a very nice man, but he was in charge of immigration. The consular section dealt with him a lot and the station had dealt with him when we still had the station and when the circuit rider came in he always went to see him. So, he went to see him this time and he was telling us that in his conversation with the two-hatted colonel, the colonel had mentioned some subversives that they had had to get rid of in the month or so since he had seen our guy. Very matter of factly the colonel was saying, well, you know, there were a certain number of these guerrilla type guys that we took care of. He said, oh, and by the way, that American black that we had so much trouble with, we got rid of him as well. When I heard this it meant nothing to Ambassador Campbell. Oh, well, thank you for your report, that's very good. Thanks. I'm glad you're here, come again. The circuit rider left. This reference to an American who had been "gotten rid of" sort of bothered me so I went down to see our consul and I said, do you know of any Americans that have been in the custody of the government here recently? He said, no, not many Americans get picked up here, they usually just throw them out of the country. He said, do you know

anything more about him? I said, well, the only reference to him is he was an American black, an African American. He said, oh, yes, we did have a guy who got in trouble here a few weeks, months ago. Let me think. His name was Richardson. I said, what was the problem? He said, well, he came in here from Guatemala and one day we got a call from this colonel saying we picked up an American and we're holding him for illegal entry into the country. Every once in a while we call up to see how he was while they decided what to do with him. A couple of weeks later and I guess we visited him. We had consular access to the guy and he was a young, relatively young black male and whoever visited him, the consular officer who visited him, came back and said, there's something this guy is not all there. We recommended to the government of El Salvador that they send him back to the States, deport him back to the States.

The consul told me after about a couple of weeks had gone by he got a call from the colonel again who and when he asked about the American was told, oh, we deported him into Guatemala. We just pushed him back across the border and it's take care of. I said, well, I hate to say this, but maybe that's what was being referred to when they said they got rid of him, but since it was in the context of this conversation about some subversives they had gotten rid of which we read to mean they eliminated them, it might not, it might be that they didn't really push him into Guatemala. It might mean that they killed him. Well, this started an investigation that we tried to put together. The circuit rider from Guatemala when he would come into town, he would ask about it. I asked about it. But more importantly I asked Leonel Gómez this Salvadoran who had contacts within the military and he had it within the police, he had it within all sorts of areas. I said, "Leonel, would you try and find out about an American black who was picked up here? We're trying to find out what happened to him."

Leonel went off and would come back to me every couple of days with bits and pieces of information and we'd check it out and try and put the whole thing together. What we put together was that this young black had come into the country illegally. They did in fact pick him up for illegal entry. When he was in the pokey he started talking about that he was involved in narcotics. He was involved in a big drug deal and the reason he was passing through El Salvador, he was going down to Panama where he was going to make a big deal on cocaine and there were millions of dollars involved. He represented some outfit in the States that was going to put this big drug deal together. The fact that cocaine was passing through El Salvador had just come into the minds of the Salvadoran colonels because a couple of months earlier some DEA guys had come in and busted a couple of Peruvian women with 22 kilos of coke. I had had the privilege of throwing a match on it in front of the local press and that was a front-page story in the local press and the headline was "\$20 million cocaine burned." Well, the local colonel seeing \$20 million and seeing this little pile of cocaine and it was passing through El Salvador at least in the minds of some it clicked. When this colonel this dual-hatted colonel the head of immigration, but also of the secret service, heard that they had an American who was going down to Panama to do a big drug deal, I can see dollar signs rotating through his eyeballs. He went to see the fellow in jail and the American convinced the colonel that that's what he was. He was going down to do a big drug deal. So, the colonel got him out of jail, put him up in the local intercontinental type hotel, the best hotel in town and told

him, cut me in on the deal and you can bring it through El Salvador. I'll be your partner and we'll be able to get it to the States with no problems. Young Richardson convinced the colonel that this was doable.

At the end of a couple of weeks, Richardson had not left to go do his drug deal. He'd given parties at the hotel and put it all on the tab of the colonel. Once the hotel started calling the colonel and said hey this bill for Mr. Richardson is getting rather big, when are you going to settle it? The colonel, I think, realized then that he had been taken and was being taken and Salvadoran colonels don't like that, especially this guy. So he rearrested Richardson and he tried to see if the U.S. government would take him back to the States. A cable went in from our consul to the State Department saying there was an American down here and has no money and is under arrest. Try and find his relatives and see if they will finance his repatriation. Well, while that was taking place in Washington, Richardson was still in custody and for some reason the names of relatives he gave were unfindable. The people were unfindable. The State Department kept coming back and saying we're still looking for the aunt, we're still looking for the brother. We haven't found them yet. It will take another couple of days. Well, this dragged on. The Salvadoran colonel, one ticked off because he was taken advantage of by this guy. Two, the American Embassy doesn't seem to be getting him out of his hair started to clean out his in-box while getting rid of the subversives which he did every week or so, just took Richardson's file and said, take care of him, too. So, what they did, they took him out by helicopter and dropped him into the Pacific Ocean. We discovered all this to a fare thee well.

In the meantime, there was an election in the United States. Jimmy Carter came into office, my old friend Jimmy Carter from Brazil. Jimmy Carter came into office preaching human rights were going to be a solid plank of our foreign policy from now on. When he came in he accepted the resignations of a good number of ambassadors. He certainly accepted the resignation of James Campbell who was a Republican political appointee [See Below] and he started naming his own ambassadors. One who he had named and who was in place during the latter half of this Richardson thing, when he discovered what had happened to Richardson was also a political appointee, a publisher from southern California, a guy named Ignacio Lozano. He was the American ambassador. Ignacio Lozano, Hispanic, runs the biggest Hispanic publishing empire in the United States out of Newport Beach, California, very wealthy. He came down in his own private plane. Obviously he spoke perfect Spanish. The local elites misinterpreted Ignacio Lozano and thought he looked like he was one of them as opposed to an American who happened to speak Spanish fluently. Ambassador Lozano got very interested in the Richardson case and I went with him a couple of times when he went to see the president about Richardson. When they sort of winked and sort of said, yes, we took care of him. We sent him into Guatemala. We told you we sent him into Guatemala, didn't we? Ambassador Lozano said, "Well, prove it to me, show me the border crossing record for that day." They'd show us a border crossing record in which one name had been written in there between two lines and obviously Mr. Richardson's name had been added after the fact. Ignacio Lozano didn't say as Mr. Campbell would have said, oh, you've got his name in the book, so I see you did put him into Guatemala. Lozano said, "Well, this is ridiculous.

That's obviously been added after the fact, now where is Mr. Richardson?" He kept challenging them. He kept pushing them. He kept saying you're going to have to tell us the truth about this and there's going to be a penalty. Someone is going to pay for what happened to Mr. Richardson.

Q: Well, by that time was it fairly well known what had happened?

WALKER: It was known to those who were involved in it and we had certainly told Washington. I gave Mr. Lozano, Ambassador Lozano my best advice on the Richardson case. I said, "Mr. Ambassador, I think you should pursue this case vigorously no matter what, and from what you have already done I can see that is your position as well. But I also think you are going to be thoroughly backed by Washington because 1. President Carter is now the president and human rights is one of his major issues. 2. The assistant secretary in the department of State ARA is an African American, Terry Todman. And 3. The Salvadoran desk officer is an African American woman who I know and I know she is very interested in the human rights aspects.

Q: Who was that?

WALKER: I will have to look up her name. She has left the service. I said, they are going to back you all the way. I could not have been more wrong. Within days of my telling him that, he got his letter saying, "We have accepted your resignation." Be out of there by such and such, we have already named your replacement. So much for my... [NOTE: There seems some confusion here. Ambassador Lozano was a Ford political appointee named to replace Ambassador Campbell. Lozano resigned on Carter's election and departed June 1977.]

Q: Well because it was part of the normal process.

WALKER: The normal process, getting rid of the political appointees and naming your own ambassadors. But we were at a very, very delicate moment in this Richardson case. Ambassador Lozano had convinced President Molina the sitting president and his designated successor Colonel Romero that the United States was deadly serious about this. They had finally come to the conclusion that this Gringo that they thought was just like them because he spoke Spanish was in fact not like them and was serious about the fact that we wanted results from the Richardson case. And he gets this letter from the department saying be out of there in ten days or whatever it was. Those of us who were in the embassy and had been pushing hard on Richardson were kind of appalled by this. I did what I only thought of doing once or twice before but I decided this was the time to do it. I decided I would write a dissent channel cable. I knew this dissent channel cable was supposed to be on substance but this was actually on substance. So, I wrote a fairly long cable in which I said obviously an incoming president, no one is questioning their right to name a new ambassador, but for the following reasons dismissing Lozano at this point is going to totally torpedo our efforts on the Richardson case. And I went around the embassy and I got every officer in the embassy to sign that dissent channel cable. Including Colonel Rodriguez, this army colonel, who must have misread it or something

but he signed it. And off went the cable. We waited and waited and waited and the answer came back, not too long thereafter saying “Brilliant cable. Just what the dissent channel should be used for. Taking into consideration all your arguments and have let the White house know all about this. The White House agrees with your arguments. We therefore extend Lozano by 30 days” or something like that. Some miniscule extension of his tenure.

The word came out very quickly that Lozano was being replaced. That his replacement wouldn't be there for a few months, and as a result of that the Richardson case just disappeared into the history books, never was resolved. A lot of people in El Salvador know about the Richardson case. Leonel Gómez uses the Richardson case every time he wants to tell members of our Congress, he had very good connections up on the Hill here. I will go into later as to why. But there are a lot of Congressmen up there. Joe Moakley who just died, Jim McGovern who was a Boston Congressmen. Senator Harkin, Senator Leahy who know the Richardson case, and in Gómez's opinion his analysis is: the Richardson case is one of the places where we really lost an opportunity to have impressed upon the military governments of El Salvador that we meant business. So, we were telling them you just can't do these things and get away with it. The distinct feeling in the Salvadoran military was they were unable to understand why we pushed the Richardson case as we did. They would come to us and say he was a drifter. He was mentally unbalanced. He was a black. How could the United States government make such a big deal over his disappearance even if you thought that he had been killed. They never understood why you would push on that particular case. There is a postscript to it. I left El Salvador a year later. I came up to the Council on Foreign Relations as my next assignment as a State Department fellow there. Leonel Gómez brought that colonel's successor to New York to meet me and to talk about the Richardson case. This is 18 months after it happened. This colonel was also dual-hatted. Head of immigration and head of the internal security agency. Gómez had worked on him and told him how important Richardson was to the United States and maybe we had dropped the ball back there when Lozano had left and the new ambassador never really picked it up. But the United States was still very, very serious about this case and you had better tell Walker what you have done to try and at least get this guy out of the armed forces, the colonel who was responsible for it. Do something to show them that this was not to be tolerated. The colonel came to see me in New York. We were sitting at the Council on Foreign Relations, this beautiful old mansion up on Park Avenue. Sipping our sherry as you do every afternoon at the Council on Foreign Relations. After the usual pleasantries of meeting someone like this he said, “Are you satisfied with the way we handled the Richardson case, the way it all came out?” I said, “I have been away from El Salvador. I wasn't aware that the Richardson case had been resolved.” “You must have seen it in the papers. It was resolved.” I said, “Well how was it resolved?” He said, “Didn't you read about two or three months ago about that terrorist attack where the colonel who disappeared Richardson was gunned down by terrorists in the streets of El Salvador?” “I said, oh yeah I did read about that. The FLMN, they killed the colonel.” He said, “Oh, you thought the FLMN did it.” I looked at him and I realized what he had told me was they had killed their colonel to get rid of this embarrassment. They thought this was something that we wanted. This was the mindset of the military in El Salvador. They

didn't understand us at all. Because for many years they had gotten these signals that we are your allies. We are your friends. Whatever you do, we are not going to be critical. So the Richardson case was an eye opener for me. There were other similar cases. I got involved with a drug deal that was a strange one. There was another case. Can I put him on the record too?

Q: Yeah, let's I mean while I have got you here, Bill I am delighted to have you talk about these things because these things don't get out otherwise.

WALKER: No, they don't.

Q: Because I want to get to one particularly how one sort of on your own more or less changes the perspective of this government rather than a bunch of thuggish but pleasant living and all that.

WALKER: Fighting the communists.

Q: Anti-communists.

WALKER: The sort of caricature out there of our Latin American policy where we cozy up to the rough guys, the bad guys. In my opinion it was all very true during that phase. Salvador was a pretty good example of it. There was a second anecdote I would like to get on the record which also involves a Colonel Rodriguez. I don't know if we will have time for it today or not.

Q: We can. I have about half an hour or so.

WALKER: OK. Anecdote number two to describe what El Salvador was like in 1974, '75, '76. I am head of the political section. I am asleep one morning. The phone rings very early. I drag myself to the phone. It is my friend Leonel Gómez. He says. "Bill, have you heard about Colonel Rodriguez?" I said, "Our Colonel Rodriguez, our military attaché?" He said, "No not about him, not about your Colonel Rodriguez, our Colonel Rodriguez." I remembered at that time their Colonel Rodriguez was the chief of staff of the army. I said, "No, I haven't heard anything about Colonel Rodriguez, what about him?" He said, "Well there is a rumor going around that he was arrested up in the United States." I said, "Really?" He said, "Yeah. My contacts in the military are calling me up and said the gringos have arrested our Colonel Rodriguez. What is this all about?" I said, "Gee I don't know, I will find out if he is arrested. I am sure we will know something about it." So I went into the embassy and got hold of our Colonel Rodriguez. Our Colonel Rodriguez was a very good friend not only of their Colonel Romero who was about to become the next president but also our Colonel Rodriguez was a good friend of their Colonel Rodriguez. When I said, "Is the chief of staff of the army up in the United States?" He said, "Yes, don't you remember, last week I came to see you with a visa referral form I brought it to you because Colonel Rodriguez, chief of staff of the army had brought it to me and said, get me a visa to go to the States." I said, "Oh that is right he was going to go up on the peace negotiation team."

You might remember El Salvador and Honduras had a war in 1972. The Soccer War. They fought for 72 hours and then they both ran out of steam and had gone into a negotiation process over demarcation of the border. Very hot issue. The border demarcation was they were ready to go to war any time one or the other bumped into each other in these little pockets that were in dispute on the border. I mean it was ridiculous but both their dignities were involved. So we had been pushing very hard for them to reach a negotiated settlement. A negotiation process was underway. There was going to be a meeting in New Orleans of the two sides headed by the two foreign ministers but with considerable numbers of military guys on both sides of the parties. Our Colonel Rodriguez, the defense attaché, had brought me this referral letter to the consulate saying that their Colonel Rodriguez was going up as a member of the peace negotiation delegation. Please give him a visa. I signed it. It went down to the consul. The consul said that he wanted a note from the foreign office before he would issue a diplomatic visa. Normal procedure. Not just a message from our attaché to their chief of staff. Our Colonel Rodriguez goes back to their Colonel Rodriguez and the answer comes back he is leaving on the plane this afternoon. He thought this would be real quick. He needs it right away. So, our consul says I can give him a tourist visa, gave him a tourist visa. So their Colonel Rodriguez went off to the peace talks in New Orleans on a tourist visa.

Q: Which is quite different from a diplomatic visa.

WALKER: Their Colonel Rodriguez arrives in New Orleans, goes to the peace talks. The Peace Talks are Thursday and Friday. Comes the weekend, he has got another reason to go to the United States. He flies to New York City. He goes to Mount Kisco, New York which is on Long Island I think. I am not sure where it is, but it is close to New York.

Q: It is upstate, within sort of the commuting range.

WALKER: He goes to Mount Kisco, New York. He goes to a motel where he, Colonel Rodriguez, chief of staff of the El Salvadoran Army meets two men who he had been introduced to as representatives of the America Mafia. They had been working on this for a few months. He was going to get them a permit to purchase something like a thousand machine guns and it was going to be purchased on the basis that it was going to be exported to the army in El Salvador. He was going to sign it as a representative of the Salvadoran government, which would then be brought to our export control division at the State Department, here is an order for 1000 machine guns going to the army of El Salvador, signed by the chief of staff of the army. All on the up and up only they were going to the American mafia. Their Colonel Rodriguez, and this is known because it was videotaped. their Colonel Rodriguez assuming he was meeting two members of the American Mafia. They said, "Are you really chief of staff of the armed forces of El Salvador? He takes out his identification and holds it up. "Look there, Colonel Rodriguez. This is all on film because they are from the ATF.

Q: Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

WALKER: Two agents, right. As soon as he identifies himself and signs the paper to buy the weapons, they arrest him and haul him off to jail. At which point his one phone call is back to his government to somewhat shamefacedly admit he has been arrested. This became a very funny story from here on in. The front page of the New York Times the following Monday, "The Chief of Staff of the Salvadoran Army arrested in sting operation in Mount Kisco, New York." In El Salvador it hit like a bombshell. This is like the number three guy in the country being arrested in New York. When they drag him before the judge for his arraignment he just, you know Salvadoran colonels are just not used to being dragged into court for anything, up to and including murder. Here he is in front of a U.S. judge. A federal judge on federal charges. He is sent back to the pokey. The Salvadoran Military takes up a collection for his defense. He hires a lawyer. I probably shouldn't say this, but he is a shyster. The lawyer tells him, don't worry, we will get you off in a minute. Number one, you are here on a diplomatic mission so you have diplomatic immunity. Number two, there are a whole bunch of reasons but we will get you off in a flash. But it will cost you \$100,000 dollars. Their colonel their people back home assume that \$100,000 is a lot of money but obviously in the states you have to bribe a few people but we will get our colonel back that way. Plus, the lawyers assured him that there is no real case here. They don't let him out on bail because of the seriousness of the charge. When he finally comes before the judge for his trial he is immediately convicted and sentenced to seven or eight years. The \$100,000 to the lawyer is gone. You pay the lawyer that is it. The Judge reads him the riot act. I will never forget a Salvadoran oligarch that I knew who later became their ambassador to Washington. He said to me at the time of the second trial, the second flurry of news in the New York Times, he said, "You know we always wanted to get a story about El Salvador on the front page of the New York Times, a positive one telling people about how great things are down there. The only time we have ever been on the front page of the New York Times was this disgrace of our colonel being arrested for thinking he was dealing with the Mafia.

Another side bar to the story. There was a young captain in the Salvadoran Military that I had gotten to know because he had spent one semester at UCLA. When he came back from UCLA he came to see me. He had heard about me. I was a UCLA grad. So I got to know him. He was a little firebrand. He later was assassinated. Ten years later he was assassinated as a colonel by the FMLN. But back then he was still a captain. He came to see me when the news of Colonel Rodriguez being sentenced to seven years was in the press. He took me out to lunch. I'll never forget because he was telling me that this was obviously a plot. Why did the U.S. government conceive this plot to humiliate the Salvadoran military? Has this got something to do with the Richardson case? Has this got something to do with, why are you doing this to us? I said, "We are doing it because your colonel went out there and tried to buy weapons for the mafia." "I know that is the story but what is really behind it?" They could not believe that this stupid colonel had gotten them into so much hot water. I remember he told me, "Listen Walker. We read the world press. We know what is going on the world. I have gotten together with some other captains. Maybe the colonels are too old and too fat to do anything about this, but we are not going to take this lying down." "What do you mean, Ricardo? What are you talking

about?” “Well we saw what the Israelis were able to do in Entebbe.” I said, “Wait a minute. Entebbe. You are thinking of going into New York and rescuing your colonel from jail? Are you really thinking of doing that?” “Our dignity is involved here.” These are the mindsets of these guys.

Second sidebar. The colonel in New York and the colonels back in Salvador did not learn from the first lesson about hiring this attorney. Another lawyer went to them and said, “You were screwed Colonel. That first lawyer was a bad guy. You had inadequate representation. Give me the case and we will get you out of there.” They did it again. Another collection down in Salvador. Send the money up. The appeals process went through. The second lawyer tried to convince the judge that he really was there as a diplomat. They asked the State Department for an opinion and the opinion was it was a tourist visa. He did not have the protection of diplomatic status. So again, his appeal was turned down. Again, the judge read him the riot act. “You are chief of staff of your army. You are supposedly a dignified person and you came up here and dealt with our mafia and you thought you were giving 1000 machine guns to the mafia of the United States and you expect leniency in our courts?” Back to the pokey he went. But this was the mindset of the military. The military officer can do anything he wants and doesn’t have to ever be called to account. Even something as heinous as that. The only problem with this case was it happened in the United States. He served four or five years. He got off for good behavior. I am sure he’s got good English now, and was sent back to El Salvador. But the military thought it was some conspiracy.

Q: Well, Bill, maybe why don't you talk about the drug thing and then maybe the next time we might talk about the FMLN and what else you were seeing besides the peasants' side of things because this is very important.

WALKER: I would like to talk about that. I mean the irony of all of this is when I was there for those three years I was known as the liberal who was always, there was a point at which I went to bat for the Jesuits. There were some American Jesuits in El Salvador who were being threatened by a group that called itself the White Hand Organization. “Stop bringing communism to El Salvador, get out of town or we will kill you.” I was the officer in the embassy who did things to try and get them out of there and try and bring to the attention of the State Department this is the sort of system we were dealing with down there. This was the precursor to the death squads that came later.

Q: Maryknoll, were they...

WALKER: Maryknoll was not in El Salvador. I dealt with them in Peru earlier. The irony of my first tour and then when I go back as ambassador ten years later is that then I was part and parcel of the problem as far as the American human rights organizations were concerned and as far as the Jesuit order was concerned because during my ambassadorship six Jesuit priests were gunned down. A lot of people thought I had changed dramatically you know from one assignment to another. It wasn't that at all. The situation in El Salvador had changed dramatically, but we will get into that later. Let me just finish with the drugs, because that also has more than ripples; it was a tidal wave

when I am back there as ambassador. That first drug bust was 22 kilos. When I was there as ambassador ten years later I throw a match on three tons of cocaine going through El Salvador. So, the problem had obviously not been taken care of and grew by a factor of whatever that is. But in 1975, I guess it was, DEA had an office in Guatemala. That was their regional office.

Q: Drug Enforcement Agency.

WALKER: Two-man operation up in Guatemala City with two officers, DEA agents. This was back when DEA was just getting into the business of putting their people out into the field. Latin America was where they put most of them, and many of them were Hispanics. Agents with Hispanic background because they had Spanish and they knew the culture. The office in Guatemala was two guys. A guy named Art Medina was the head of it. He later appears, when I am in Bolivia, as head of the DEA there which was someone I got to know very well. The number two in Guatemala was a guy named Richard Conyas. Richard Conyas also later was involved in my life in El Salvador as ambassador during the Jesuit killings. But back then they were the two agents up in Guatemala.

They came to El Salvador on a circuit rider sort of basis because El Salvador was thought to be relatively free of the drug problem. One day Richard Conyas, the DEA agent, came to the embassy and talked to the ambassador. I sat in. It was to describe the fact that the day before over the weekend at the Camino Real Hotel, the big international hotel there, he had been involved in a drug bust. His boss Art Medina from Guatemala had in an undercover situation had gone to the Camino Real Hotel to meet two Peruvian ladies, a mother and daughter, in a drug deal that had been put together in Peru or in someplace else but they were going to make the pass-over in El Salvador because it was a relatively open place for this sort of thing. Art Medina meets the two ladies in the Camino Real Hotel. He is the undercover agent. As they are passing the drugs back and forth in his room, Dick Conyas and a couple of Salvadoran police break down the door and make the arrest. Caught in flagrante. The two ladies were arrested and taken off to the pokey.

A couple of days later at the invitation of DEA I am invited to go and throw this match on this mountain of cocaine. It was very, very funny. Many of the things that happened to me in Salvador were funny but in this ceremony which DEA put together to show the world that cocaine was moving through El Salvador, we had done it with the cooperation of some guys from the Salvadoran military who ran both the police and the army. They essentially didn't know what they were doing. They just sort of tagged along because DEA was telling them we have got this deal going down. Come with us so we have sort of local official cover. DEA has a press conference but DEA itself doesn't want to throw the match because they might come in again under cover so they want someone from the embassy who is a known quantity. So, I am the guy throwing the match and who gets his picture taken. Before we go out to throw the match on the cocaine before we put it into a 55-gallon drum to throw the match on it, it is stacked on the desk of a local police guy. There is four or five of these plastic packages that cocaine is usually stacked in. And we call the local press to give them a statement. I delivered the little speech with the

cooperation of local government we are pleased to announce that with this wonderful cooperation we are able to make this first bust for cocaine in El Salvador. We hope this will end the traffic through El Salvador because of the vigilance of our Salvadoran police colleagues here, and they are beaming because they are getting credit for this. We finish our little speech and say now we are going to burn it. One of the journalists raises his hand and asks, "Are you sure that is cocaine? You are telling us it has never been here before; are you absolutely sure it is cocaine?" So, we say we gave the local police the kit. So, we say OK, we are going to pick one of these packages and cut it open and test it for cocaine." So, they pick a package, cut it open and stack up some of this cocaine. We tell the local police officer in charge to get out the kit and show that it is cocaine. Well he doesn't know what the hell he is doing. He gets out his kit, this little thing with some liquid in it and you pour it in and the reaction is if it turns blue it is cocaine, right. This guy has no clue. It is obvious that he was not involved with the technical details of this bust. The DEA guy had to do the test and show that it was cocaine. We did prove to the audience that it was cocaine. So the journalist continued to question. It turned that blue, are you absolutely sure? The local policeman says if you don't agree you can come up here and put a little on your finger and sniff it if you want to. I am sure you fellows in the press know what cocaine smells like. So three or four of these guys in the press come up. Instead of just little dab they are trying to get as much as they can. It was really a farce. It was a total farce, but it was also serious in that it was the first bust of cocaine.

The postscript is a couple of days later we asked had charges been brought against the Peruvian mother and daughter team? Oh, we deported them. We realized there wasn't that much evidence against them. What are you talking about? You busted in in the middle of the deal. They guy they were selling to was a DEA agent who would have gone on the stand. Well we took it before a judge and he decided there was no real evidence in the case, and of course the judge makes the decision so obviously money had been paid. Then when we get to my ambassadorship we are talking about three tons of cocaine. In spite of the fact that over that intervening ten or twelve years whatever it was, we thought that they had come up a lot of learning ladders, curves. In spite of my very best effort to have a different outcome to that case, essentially the same thing. The same pattern was repeated. And I learned at the very end of my ambassadorship when we thought that El Salvador had changed dramatically in the intervening years that many of the same practices were still in place. So, when we come to the ambassadorship please remind me of the cocaine case. It is a serious one. One of the threads that goes through all of these things, most of these cases, these anecdotes I am telling you, both as head of the political section and later as ambassador the name Leonel Gómez is a thread that goes through all of them.

Q: I will tell you, we will stop here. The next time we will pick up, we are going to be talking about, we've talked about the cocaine case and you talked about the Richardson case. One thing we didn't mention on the Richardson case who was the new ambassador. Were you there when the new ambassador from the Carter administration arrived.

WALKER: No. Frank Devine was his name. I don't know if you know Frank Devine. They finally sent a career officer down with an interval between Ignacio Lozano going

home to his publishing empire and Frank coming down as ambassador. I left during that period.

Q: OK, we won't move into that.

WALKER: The second DCM whom I worked under after Sam Moskowicz was Earl Lubinsky. Earl was the DCM who became chargé for a period of I think it was weeks if not months. It was during that period that the Richardson case just evaporated on us.

Q: Well we will pick this up the next time let's talk about the opposition movement I guess out in the jungles, but also as political officer what you were seeing about the treatment of those who weren't with the government because El Salvador now we are living probably within there are probably about 5,000 El Salvadorans within a couple of miles of where we are right now.

WALKER: There are well over 100,000 Salvadorans in the Washington community. The figure we used to use, I don't know if it is still true but somewhere between 20 and 25% of the population of El Salvador resides in the United States.

Q: I mean all of this had its roots in what you were able to see. We want to talk about how you were reporting and we want to follow through with the problem of the Jesuits at that time. Would you talk a little more about that and religious things? Also, the name that hasn't come up and I don't know if it will come up Napoleon Duarte.

WALKER: He is a big part of my story from here on in.

Q: This is still while you are in El Salvador this first time around.

WALKER: The first time around Napoleon Duarte was in exile in Venezuela. He had been beaten and thrown out in '72 after the military stole the election from him and beat the crap out of him and Venezuela took him in and gave him political asylum. He had been in Caracas all the time I was there the first time.

Q: Also were there any reverberations about him. So we will pick that up next time.

WALKER: Great.

Q: Today is 24 July 2001. Bill, we are back in El Salvador. You were in El Salvador from when to when?

WALKER: 1974 to 1977.

Q: All right so if you want to talk about Duarte.

WALKER: Yeah, well as I said earlier I never personally met Duarte until some years later because in 1972 there was supposedly an election to see if there were enough votes

for a civilian president. The military stole the election. That is not totally accurate because no one really knows who won the election. It was one of those elections in which there was so much cheating, so much tomfoolery that in the aftermath no one had a clue as to what had happened. But the military guy was proclaimed the president, Arturo Morena, a colonel. He became president. The forces of evil, I would guess you would call them, found Duarte and beat the crap out of him. He had taken refuge in the Venezuelan embassy which because of his Christian Democratic politics and Christian Democrats were a big party in Venezuela, they might even have been in power at the time, that is where he went. The local security forces actually violated the Venezuelan embassy and went in and got him out of there and gave him a rough handling. He went into exile, so I arrived in Salvador two years later.

Duarte was sort of a legend in terms of being the great democrat who had theoretically won the election but had been cheated and sent off to exile. In fact the group I probably associated most with in terms of politics as the chief of the political section was the Christian Democratic Party because they were the biggest political group in the country. His spokesman the person who was always going to Caracas and coming back with the word from our leader so to speak was a fellow named Fidel Chavez Mena who after Duarte died sort of inherited the mantle and ran for president twice. Both times unsuccessfully. But back then Fidel Chavez Mena was a lawyer, well to do, very well spoken. He carried the mantle of Napoleon Duarte this figure off in exile who was not allowed to come back into the country. The politics of the country were essentially military and oligarch dominated. In fact, military and oligarchs ran everything. It has often been said that the military was sort of the handmaiden or the tool of the oligarchs to keep things under control. I came to the conclusion that that was already sort of dividing up. The oligarchs really had no love for the military. The oligarchs thought all the military were corrupt. The military on the other hand from their corruption were becoming a real economic player. Sometimes their interests were diverging from the oligarchs. So, there was a tension there but certainly they both wanted to keep the status quo going.

Q: Well now where were the military, I am talking about the officer corps where was it coming from, from the oligarchs or from the normal populace?

WALKER: Good question. I wrote what I thought was a very thoughtful piece on exactly that question in a cable I sent in. It was sort of who is this officer corps and where do they come from. The reason I got interested in it was I met an interesting young fellow. I think I mentioned it in previous talk. He was a young captain at the time. This was the fellow who tried to set up an Entebbe Raid and go up and rescue their colonel who had been arrested up in New York state. So he was a little firebrand. I remember the first time I was invited to his house, to his quarters where he wanted to have me and my then girlfriend, later wife, over for dinner. We went in to what I would call a lower middle-class barrio where there were a lot of sort of run-down apartment buildings. He lived in there in a very small very crowded apartment building. Because there was this sort of perception that the military officers came from among the wealthy or the well-to-do, the sons who didn't go into the family business went into the military. I was kind of surprised

by seeing this guy's living quarters. I took an interest in finding out where he came from and whether this represented the rest of the officer corps. His name was Ricardo San Fuegos. Ricardo San Fuegos was the son of a small government functionary in one of the provincial towns. His father was the local snitch who kept everybody in line and told the authorities who was who. Being in a small provincial town everybody knew who his father was. So he had a kind of uncomfortable childhood. Due to his father's connections and loyalty to the powers that be, he was offered an appointment to the military academy and obviously jumped at it because this is a chance to certainly better himself. As many of the young military officers he went to the academy, which was a three-year program at the time, a very strenuous program where they were told over and over again you are the elite. You will run this country someday. One among you will be president and when he is president he will take care of the rest of his class, his career, his promotion. Because that is the way it is done.

Ricardo did what many of these fellows did as soon as he graduated he went out and married the girl of his dreams. Most of his fellow officers when they graduated and went to marry the girl of their dreams, it was some girl they had known back in the villages from which they came. So the wives were usually very unsophisticated. Quite often within a few years and after a few babies and as the husband went up in ranks the wife became a bit of a tiresome figure and that is why they would have a mistress or two or sometimes many more. Quite often that first wife was discarded at some point as they were moving up into more prestigious positions. Another factor that would happen with the officers when they came out of the academy they usually were sent to frontier posts, some of these sleepy little backwater places, that were very, very primitive and not very nice places to spend a couple of years, but that is where the junior officers would start their careers. Usually when they were reaching captain level they would come back into San Salvador, the capital, and would sort of get a taste of the high life if you would call it that in the capital. Ricardo, unlike his fellow officers, married a young lady who was from a better social position. She was also very attractive and she sort of climbed with him, unlike most of the other officers' wives. She was sort of a Sophia Loren looking woman. Very, very smart too. She became a pizza queen of San Salvador, so she had a lot of her own ambition and a lot of her own smarts to do that.

When the young officers at a captain level or so came back into San Salvador this is where I picked up on Ricky. He was living in this lower middle class, working class barrio because this was all he could afford on his captain's salary. I remember him telling me about the fact that all his neighbors didn't like him because he was a military officer. In fact, maybe tested him and again this goes back to his childhood when his father was not to be welcomed. So, he didn't know his neighbors. They didn't like him, he didn't like them. He had to take the bus into work at the command general staff area because he couldn't afford a car on his salary. He told me that he went to work in civilian clothes because if he wore a uniform he would get all sorts of cat calls on the bus and that sort of thing. So, the division between civilians and military was very plain to him and it wasn't a pleasant division. What happened was Ricky was early identified as a comer within his promotion cohort. People in the business sector watched the promotions as they were coming up and spotted the ones who might aspire to be the president or a cabinet minister

in a future government and they would come and offer jobs, sort of moonlighting jobs. During my four years there Ricardo Cienfuegos was able to move out of that barrio which he desperately wanted to do because he'd been offered a job by some private company to do essentially nothing for them, but he was put on the payroll.

Q: For insurance.

WALKER: Yes, sort of an insurance, future insurance policy. The promotions coming out of the academy were very small, maybe 15 or 20 people so you could almost give one to every major company and you'd take care of them all and one day you'd hit the load by having that future leader. This was the pattern. By the time an officer became a major perhaps, maybe even earlier, they had been corrupted, they had been bought off in some way or another and, of course, they liked the new life. They were invited to receptions. They were invited to functions. The oligarchs didn't invite them into their homes, but they dealt with them more or less.

Q: I was going to ask, with the oligarchs, there was no intermarriage or anything?

WALKER: One or two. When I was there a colonel, Vides Casanova who later became minister of defense so he obviously was headed for the top. I remember meeting him when he came back in '77 at a lakeside party given not by an oligarch, but a well off person who had a lakeside villa. When Colonel Vides Casanova came in, he was tall, he was handsome, he wasn't the fat little guy that the president was. He also had a wife who had just died in tragic circumstances and two daughters he was raising and he looked good and he sounded good. The money class, he ended up marrying a young lady who was not the prettiest in the world, but worth a lot of money from one of the very good families. As I say he later became the minister of defense, he also later became indicted in the state of Florida about a year ago when they tried him and another former minister of defense for being involved in war crimes. They were acquitted. But he was one of the very few who sort of made it into the real money class. His wife was worth tens of millions of dollars.

But going back to their origins, by the time they were a senior captain, major, they'd come into the big city, they needed money. They wanted to buy a car, they didn't want to travel on the bus, they wanted a house outside of these poorer neighborhoods. The only way they could do it, because the pay scale was ridiculous, was to go on the take. Sometimes it was sort of legitimate by actually having a job for some company even though you didn't work or do anything, you were just on the payroll, and sometimes it went beyond that. If they could get into the immigration business or if they could get into some of the economic activities of the military, customs and that sort of thing. Then they could make real money. Virtually all of them became corrupted just by humble origins, not being paid well, having aspirations to be a great person in the community. They became corrupted. I don't think I ever met a Salvadoran officer who I did not think was on the take either nominally illegally or off into the drugs and thugs sort of stuff.

Q: With the Christian democrats was there sort of a Christian democratic movement throughout Latin America and how did that go and how did El Salvador fit in?

WALKER: Salvador fit in as probably the preeminent Christian Democratic Party in Central America. It tried to run and win the presidency in '72. They had failed. It looked like it had been stolen from them. Duarte was able to call on his brethren Christian Democrats in Venezuela. There was also a very close connection with the Christian Democrats in Chile. Those were the three major countries although there were Christian Democratic parties throughout the area. They also were able to tap into Christian democracy in Germany which is sort of the fatherland of Christian democracy I guess. They got money from these various sources. It was a party that stretched from I guess center right. I knew some people who were Christian Democrats like this lawyer Fidel Chavez Mena. There were others, Habanero el Grigas. There were others who were essentially businessmen or professional men who saw that things were not terribly right in El Salvador. Who were not themselves products of the very upper level, but were very comfortable with their professions. Some of them were among the leadership of Christian Democracy. It was also a more radical, it went from center right through the center, a good number of center left and then a certain number of more radical left who eventually left Christian Democracy when they decided there was no way to win victory by the electoral process. Those included some who later became spokespersons for the FMLN, the guerrilla movement, became the political wing of the guerrilla movement.

Q: What about the peasants? Where did they fit in? Did we have any handle on them at all?

WALKER: That was my specialty within the embassy. This fellow I've mentioned a number of times Leonel Gómez who I spent last week with in Honduras doing some things there. Leonel, as I mentioned, was from a coffee owning family, coffee land owning family and was seen as a traitor to his class and the reason was because he became involved in campesino affairs, peasant affairs. He became involved with a group that was by far the major sort of attempt to organize the peasants. This was called the Salvadoran (Institute for Agrarian Transformation); the Union of Salvadoran Peasants is the best way to say it. This group was put in place or was fostered by Gómez, a Salvadoran with a lot of humanitarian instincts in him, but it was also funded and pushed by the American labor movement, by AIFLD, the American Institute for Free Labor Development. This was a political arm of the AFL-CIO. They had spent a lot of money throughout Latin America trying to stimulate free trade unions and as part of that they not only tried to organize and help fund regular trade unions, but also this campesino, this peasant union movement.

Anyone who knows the history of El Salvador knows that back in 1932 there was a, well, it depends on how you want to describe it. Some people describe it as the first communist uprising in Latin America. Others describe it as a peasant uprising that was colored as a communist uprising. An awful lot of people died in it, the vast majority of whom weren't peasants. It was very bloody and it was in as a matter of fact called la matanza.

Q: Means what?

WALKER: Means the killings. Yes. Massacre. It was bloody and it was what brought in the military. A general who put down the rebellion and launched himself into the presidency and he kept it from '32 to '44. Then when he died other officers came in and sort of went through elections, but they were always the winners. The very thought of organizing the campesinos, organizing the peasants, was truly frightening to those who wanted to preserve the status quo. Everybody remembered '32 or had relatives who remembered '32. It broke out in the western half of the country and the peasants sort of marched on San Salvador. They didn't make it because the army came out and massacred many, many, many of them. From '32 down to the civil war of the 1980s there was this tremendous feeling that the peasantry was going to rise up with their machetes and just come in and hack people to death because there was a certain amount of that back in '32.

The fact is and this was my conclusion and it's not a fact, but it was certainly my conclusion. The peasants of El Salvador, like peasants in most parts of the world, are essentially very conservative. They live on a knife's edge in terms of their very existence and the last thing they feel comfortable with is dramatic change because it just might get worse. They might lose everything or what little they have. So, when city boys come out, when Che Guevara went into Bolivia and tried to convince all the peasants they should rise up and become part of the revolution, it fell on very deaf ears. This was essentially the case in Salvador. The rebellion of '32 was led by four young students, a couple of whom were from pretty good families. At the university they became enamored of Marxism, Leninism, and they wrote things and they wrote poems and they went out and tried to get people to follow them. The government ended up executing these guys although they only killed three of them and one of them dragged himself away from the cemetery and got away. And that was why this was termed a communist uprising. The government that came in, this military government tried to portray these four guys as being the lap dogs of the Kremlin sort of thing. That's really not what stirred things up among the peasants out in the western part of the country. They stood up because of how they were being treated. They stood up because things were very bad in 1932 when people up here were standing on corners selling apples out of boxes; not many people were buying coffee. The price of coffee dropped precipitously and the oligarchs sustained certain losses, but nothing like what they passed on to their work force. The peasants were in desperate, desperate shape in 1932. A couple of sparks led to some of them picking up the machetes and going up to the big house and killing the, not usually the owner who was usually an absentee owner, but they usually killed the major domo. The guy who sort of ran the thing, the overseer who had mistreated them all those years.

Q: Simon Legree.

WALKER: Simon Legree sort of thing. Some of those guys were hacked to pieces and, of course, into the capital came the word, the peasants are on the march and they are just hacking people and they're killing anyone with any money. So, the army was sent out and the army put it down pretty quickly killing tens of thousands. That was sort of the collective psyche. You know, Salvador when in the '70s the AFL-CIO comes in and tries

to organize a work force. Leonel Gómez comes up with the idea of working with the campesinos. When I got there they were sort of feeling their oats. They tried to organize rallies and such and when things would get bad they would come into the capital. The military government of President Molina, this little, fat chubby, big moustache, high hatted Salvadoran colonel who was president, they were looking over their shoulders at the United States and hearing the rhetoric about, they resented being called the handmaidens of the oligarchs. Every once in a while they would try to show that they were in sympathy with the peasants. Molina even tried a land reform program. It was a joke and as soon as the oligarchs came out in opposition it disappeared into the history books. The government liked to portray itself as being sympathetic to the campesinos. Every once in a while they would let a rally take place, but it never amounted to anything in terms of results, in terms of having their demands met.

The peasant class, the rural poor of the country were starting to get organized in a very minimal sort of way. There was quite an exodus from the countryside into the city so that the slums of San Salvador and the other population center were becoming incredibly congested. San Salvador, the capital, it's up at 2,800 feet, so it's a nice temperature. But the city is on a whole series of fault lines and they have a lot of earthquakes. They've had a couple this year. But within that pattern there are a lot of ravines that run through the city, deep gullies where when it rains heavily flash floods go down. The poor people live down in those ravines. I would go down into them every once in a while and it was as bad as I've ever seen in terms of slums. I mean, just horrific. Worse I think even than what I saw in the Amazon basin and in some of the jungle towns of Brazil. People living on top of each other and being in abject poverty and nevertheless paying rent for whatever little piece of space they had because people owned those ravines and would come down and make them pay rent for the land.

During the guerrilla actions of ten years later those ravines were the breeding grounds of FMLN fighters. They were also the places where the FMLN fighters when they came in to attack San Salvador in the final offensive during the day they just disappeared into the ravines and they found comfort. At night they'd come out of the ravines. Some of these ravines wound their way through the very richest parts of San Salvador. As I say the conditions down there were such that if I lived down there I would have come up and taken something from the rich.

Q: Was there a racial divide? I mean were there Indians versus whatever you want to call them?

WALKER: Most of the Indians were wiped out in 1932. Again, the thought back then was that they were the real troublemakers and so Maximiliano Hernández this military leader that went out to put down the rebellion of '32 went into Indian communities and just wiped them out. When I got there, I would be surprised if there were more than 25,000 sort of indigenous Indian folks in El Salvador. This is not Guatemala. This is not Honduras where there's a lot more. The Mayas never really built temples or there's not many archeological sites attesting to their presence. So, the '32 rebellion pretty well wiped them out as a factor. The vast majority of the population is sort of mestizo.

Obviously the vast majority of the oligarchs are not mestizo, they are white. El Salvador has been a fairly racist society. I mean back in '32 they feared the Indians, they feared the poor rural who were darker. To this day they fear them. El Salvador had in its constitution and I tried to find when this was removed from its constitution, but in its constitution certainly into the '60s if not into the '70s, there was a clause that prohibited any visa being issued to anyone who was Chinese, Moorish, African, Turkish. It listed just about everything out there that is not Europe and North America and South America and said visas cannot be issued to these people. I mean they excluded all people of color. That eventually disappeared from the constitution and I've always tried to find out when and with what motive. But that signifies what Salvador was like in terms of letting other people come in to darken their population. There are very few people from... Of course, Honduras has a lot of other types there. Honduras on the north coast has black Caribbean villages. It's got sort of black mestizo combination groups of people; not in El Salvador. You won't see any traces of that at all.

Q: When you left there in '77 what was your impression? Whither El Salvador?

WALKER: You have to understand the circumstances under which I left. I told you about Ambassador Campbell who was the political appointee, Exxon vice president, who spoke fractured Spanish and had a speech impediment. He left and President Ford appointed this Latino American Mexican American publisher from Newport Beach, California who had a big yacht which he left in Newport but he flew down in his Beechcraft twin engine plane. Notwithstanding that sort of affluence, Ignacio Lozano was a terrific ambassador who really went to bat on human rights. He was the one I told you I wrote the dissent channel cable on to keep him on when Carter came in and it upset the Richardson case. This black man who was executed by the security services.

Lozano got there and was there about a year. Carter was elected. Carter came in and Lozano was sent home in spite of my dissent channel message and everybody else saying he should stay. So, he went home and we were left under a chargé, Earl Lubensky, a Foreign Service Officer at the then O1 level. Maybe it was March of 1977, February or March, the beginning of the year. The next election was held. Molina had been elected in '72; it was a five year period in the presidency, so they had an election in '77. The candidates again were Christian Democrats. Duarte was still in exile. Fidel Chavez was not a suitable candidate in that year and the Christian Democrats came up with a brilliant strategy. They would nominate an ex-military man, a colonel who had left the military and this would sort of soften the image of the Christian Democrats. They nominated a guy named Claramount who turned out to be not much of a candidate. The military put up the minister of defense who was as bad if not worse, in fact, worse than the sitting president. His name was Romero, Colonel Romero. They had the election, but during the run up to the election, the Christian Democrats thought that things were, that tricks were being played on them. So, one fine day in protest against these outrageous flagrant fraudulent practices of the government to win the election, the Christian Democrats called for an occupation of the main plaza, the Plaza de Barrios of San Salvador.

Q: This was '77?

WALKER: '77. On one side is the cathedral, it's an unfinished cathedral that's horrible looking, but it's the pride of San Salvador, pride of the Catholic Church. On the other side are the municipal headquarters of San Salvador and they come in and they occupy the plaza. They lie down and they say we're not leaving until the electoral process is corrected. As the head of the political section I went down there every day to see how things were going, listening to the speeches. This became the place where the more radical Christian Democrats got up and screamed horrible things about the government. Screamed horrible things about the United States supporting the government. Then of course they would see me in the audience and they'd come down and say we didn't mean you, we didn't mean the embassy, we're talking about ... That kind of stuff. It was almost playing games.

Q: Was the church involved?

WALKER: The church was backing them up because in the Christian Democrat Party, Christianity is Catholicism, not Southern Baptists or something like that. Anyway, they occupied the plaza for three days I think and it was winding down. They were getting kind of tired of this. And the government at that point I think decided maybe we should clear the plaza, let's get over this foolishness. I'll never forget because there were two journalists down there from AP, Associated Press, that came in. One was a photographer, one was on his first overseas mission as a foreign correspondent. And I'll never forget because on the third night they said they were going to go down to sit in the plaza and write some stories. I took them out to dinner and I sort of explained what was going on. This fellow who was going in on his first foreign assignment was really fascinated and he actually wore a trench coat to go down. Down they went to the plaza. About 2:00 a.m. the phone rang and I got on the phone and it was the journalist. He said, "Mr. Walker, you've got to come down and help us because they moved in with armored personnel carriers and water cannons and a lot of shooting taking place, perhaps you can hear it in the background." He held the phone out and you could hear, pop, pop, pop. I said, "Where are you guys?" They said we're in the church, we took refuge in the church, but we're afraid they might come in here and the church is full of wounded, people who have been shot.

The government went in that night and cleared the plaza in a very rough way and these two journalists were caught in the midst of it and they took very good pictures. The photographer was a very good photographer. He took very good pictures of these people in the church with wounds and bandages and blood. Mostly young men, young kids. I know this because I went in and got the film out and took the film from him because he thought he'd be searched which he was. So, I took the film out, we got it off and got it processed and we had proof that the government could not deny what they had done in the plaza that night. As a result of clearing the plaza and going on with the elections as planned by the government, the government won. Again, no one has a clue as to who got more votes because it was cheating at all levels. President elect was declared to be this Colonel Romero I think he was by now, General Romero. He was going to be the incoming president.

When it came time for the inauguration of General Romero, I was put on the delegation almost as an indicator that the Carter administration felt that they should put the guy who was known for his human rights performance and the guy who had tried to save the people in the plaza and the guy who was out looking and talking to campesinos all the time. I was put on the delegation, the official delegation and the head of the delegation was our chargé because again they wanted to show that it was low level delegation and putting me on it certainly lowered the level. At the inaugural ball or whatever it was, the big reception, I think I told you this before, General Romero actually told me that it would probably be best if I went elsewhere and this was communicated up to Washington. The inauguration I think was in June and sometime in July I was pulled out.

A character that I haven't spoken about and I want to get him on the record just because he was a big part of it. You might remember when I was talking about Brazil and my problems with the defense attaché who was very smart and very clever and was able to foil anyone who was trying to get around him and get reports in. He was a smart defense attaché. In El Salvador the defense attaché was also ethnically connected with El Salvador in that he was Mexican American from Douglas, Arizona. In Douglas he had been the sheriff and then the Vietnam War came along and he went off to Vietnam and came out as a colonel in the reserves. I guess when they were looking around for a defense attaché for El Salvador, someone thought of Al Rodriguez and they sent him down there. Al, I'm afraid was not an intellect. Al was a pretty primitive guy. Al became a good friend of this Colonel Romero, minister of defense, who later became president. Al thought I was a communist. I mean he just thought I was, no question about it.

Al fought me tooth and nail and when I would come in and say, well, Leonel Gómez my friend just told me X, Al would say, well, I've talked to the military and they know Gómez and he's a communist Walker, so your friends are all communists. It was that kind of a relationship. Al was, he was into the good life of defense attaching. He had a very nice house with a big pool. He also had six kids with a Mexican American wife who was the Madonna figure, the mother earth figure to his six children. It was a nice family. I really liked the family and I actually liked Al, but in terms of his political leanings and his reporting capabilities he was a pain in the neck. As I say, he fought me tooth and nail.

One day something very unusual happened. Just before Christmas of 1976, Al's oldest son was up in college in the States and came down for the family reunion at Christmas time. The boys, all of them, plus this oldest son's girlfriend from the States decided to go off and climb a volcano which lies right behind San Salvador. It's a non-active volcano, but it's a real volcano. They decided to climb the mountain the day before Christmas. That night some of the boys came back, but the oldest son, 21 I think he was, and the youngest son who was six or seven did not return with the others. They got separated. Obviously Colonel Rodriguez was very worried about his oldest son and his youngest son and called the embassy and called the ambassador. The ambassador called the armed forces of El Salvador and it was agreed that at first light we would send a helicopter down into the volcano because they had sort of climbed down into the volcano. Sure enough at first light that happened, but before first light Colonel Rodriguez himself

climbed the volcano and went down into it looking for his sons. What he found was his oldest son had fallen in some way and cracked his skull and the youngest son, five or six years old spent this long, cold night in the volcano with his oldest brother dying and dead. Christmas through New Year's was this horrible period for the embassy. They held the typical Latin wake and Al and his wife were on tranquilizers and whatever it took to keep them calm because the emotions were incredible. We sent the boy's body back to Arizona. That greatly affected Al Rodriguez because I remember he called me in one day and as we were sitting talking he said, "You know, Bill, I led a helicopter gunship crew wing in Vietnam. I used to really enjoy it, flying over Viet Cong villages sitting on the gun and blasting down at the Viet Cong down there. But what I just started thinking about was those were people's sons just like my son and I was doing to them what was just done to me by that damn volcano. I'm really thinking back about what I did in Vietnam and whether it was as positive an experience as I thought it was." That sort of changed him a good bit, a good bit.

Now, the postscript is that he stayed on for another year. He was very close to President Romero, his buddy. When he left El Salvador and went back into his reserve commission he went back to Douglas and ran for mayor and was elected. He was also the target of a recall petition and I think the charge was corruption, but the citizens of Douglas kicked him out as mayor a few years after he'd been my nemesis in El Salvador. I think I told you earlier when I sent that dissent channel cable in saying keep Ambassador Lozano on, Al Rodriguez signed it and it was in the aftermath of his son being killed. You never know quite what course events are going to take and what effect it's going to have on the political reporting of the embassy. It was much easier during my last few months to get reports out talking about some of the bad things that were going on.

Q: I don't know if I've asked you, but was there a movement up in the mountains, I'm talking about guerrillas.

WALKER: The grand old man of Salvadoran communism, he's a card carrying Moscow, Stalinist type of communist is a fellow named Schafik Handal. The son of a Palestinian family. They've got branches in Honduras as well. Schafik Handal was always talking about the revolution is coming and we've got people who are ready, etc. I don't remember any real indications that there were people up in the hills although obviously there were people thinking about it because I left in '77 and in '79 is when things really came apart.

Q: Well, you left in '77, whither?

WALKER: One day I saw a cable saying that here were the opportunities to go outside the State Department. One of the paragraphs described a program in which the State Department put a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City. This was separate from sort of interns we put up there. We put five, six, seven young officers into the Council to do sort of research papers in any given year. But this was a senior fellow at the Council. There are four senior fellows at the Council, two military, one from the press Edward R. Murrow Fellow and then the State Department Fellow. It was a competitive

process so before I actually transferred the Department flew me up to New York. I went in and saw a panel, the leader of whom was John Chancellor of NBC, sort of the Walter Cronkite of his day and a group of five or six of the senior types from Council members. I sat and talked to them for a couple of hours and they talked to me about El Salvador and the rest of my background and lo and behold I was the winner.

I went to New York City via home leave in San Francisco. I had gotten married in El Salvador to my Brazilian girlfriend. We got married in the ambassador's residence, which is later where I moved in with my wife as the ambassador, before we built this big fort. We got married there and maybe three months later I was transferred. So, this was bringing my wife here to the States. She had been here for her graduate school so she knew San Francisco, but she didn't know any other part of the States. I decided the Department of State could pay for our rail tickets so we could travel through the heartland of the United States and she could see that and that was a nice pleasant thing. We ended up in New York in September and I showed up to be the State Department Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. I arrived at the same time as Winston Lord arrived as a former Foreign Service Officer who had just become the president of the council of foreign relations.

Q: You were there '77 to '78?

WALKER: Correct.

Q: What did you do? Well, in the first place, could you describe the Council on Foreign Relations at that time as you saw it and what its role was and then what you were doing?

WALKER: Well, two stories about the Council. I told you that I was born in Kearny, New Jersey, this little town across the river from New York City, across the Jersey meadows. When I was looking around for an apartment in New York and quickly realized I couldn't afford an apartment for a man of my distinction and my new wife, I started thinking about maybe moving into New Jersey, my old habitat. So, I went back to Kearny and I'll never forget this, walking down the main street of this mediocre little town in the middle of nowhere in New Jersey. Across the street I noticed there was a bookstore and I didn't remember a book store. It wasn't sort of a book reading type of place, but there was a bookstore there. As I sort of looked at the window just sort of marveling at there being a book store in this little town, I noticed it had the initials CFR, Council Foreign Relations and a big banner across the window. There was a lot of little printing under it so I went over to take a look at it, thinking gee, what a coincidence, I've just joined the CFR and here's something else with the same initials in my hometown in this bookstore. When I went over and looked in the window, it turned out this was a bookstore dedicated to right wing literature. Every book in the window was a denunciation of the Council on Foreign Relations, the trilateral commission, the communist conspiracy to take over the United States. This big banner said something about CFR was the nexus where all the Rockefellers and the Kissingers and the Jews of the world were taking over America and turning it over into a communist paradise. It just astounded me to see that so much had been written about this subject. There was a book

down at the bottom which I went in and looked at and it was proving that all the military fellows that had been in the Council, my two partners in this small group of senior fellows, all the military fellows had gone on to become general officers and they were all in troop commands. Obviously they had been indoctrinated at the Council to help the communists take over the world. It was that screaming stuff from the hard right wing, but here it was in this little town. The thought crossed my mind, my God, what have I become associated with here. I won't be able to go into the heartland of the United States. That's one story.

This was a smorgasbord in which you could nibble and bite at just about anything you wanted. You could hold seminars; you could just listen to famous speakers that came in to talk to the membership. The Council does its business by study groups drawn from the members who want to study a certain subject, by not conferences, but get together in the afternoon where guest speakers, foreign ministers that come into New York, prime ministers, so I know a lot of these people. You gather around and have a little glass of sherry in this beautiful old mansion building at 62nd and Park in New York. It's a very, very cheeky sort of place, but also very serious and they do very good work. They've got some good scholars there. I was not among that category so I did a little bit of this and a little bit of that.

When it came to actually putting together something concrete, I decided to form two study groups. The two subjects I selected because I was interested in both of them, one was on Central America on what I thought was a developing crisis in Central America. This was around '77. The other one was immigration issues because we were just starting to hear about illegal immigration and how big it was especially from Latin America, Central America and Mexico. The Council had never done anything on either one of these two issues, so I thought I would do something. I'll never forget going to the people who were involved in the membership of the Council because that's how they put together a study group. You go and you find out who has expressed any interest in these subjects. I was told, oh, you go up to the fourth floor, which is where our membership people are, and up there is one wall and there is a list I think it was 1,600 members of the Council on Foreign Relations. These are the big wigs of New York, the international business world. These are the movers and shakers, not only in New York, but that whole region, the Northeast. Businessmen who deal internationally. Scholars from the prominent universities around this part of the world. Some government types and they come together for these lectures and such. I went up to look into the membership and the membership was represented on this board by everybody's name. All 1,600 names were up there, some very prominent names. After everybody's name there were colored dots. You look down below and each colored dot represented an area of the world, usually geographic areas, sometimes specific subjects. Red dot represented Soviet issues. Green dot represented Western Europe issues. A blue dot represented Africa. Different dots, all right? So, I went looking for the Latin American dots, Western Hemisphere dots. They said, well, we don't have a dot for that. Well, gees, we're sort of an East-West organization, not much North-South. I said, I've got to find some people for my study group on Central America and the immigration one is going to have a lot to do with Latin America. I've got to find people who have expressed interest in Latin America. Central

America would be even better. They said oh, well, since we don't have a specific dot for that geographic area, you're going to have to go to the book where we have the biographies, the CVs of all our members. I went through this huge book and started going through the pages. Again, running across not all of them, but many prominent people, in government, previous governments, academia, the business world, Rockefellers that sort of stuff. Everybody, one of the questions everybody has to answer in their paper they fill out when they come in is what are your interests in the world. I went through all of this looking for people who had expressed interest in Latin America. I eventually found I think it was about 14 or 15 who had ever expressed any interest in Latin America, the whole hemisphere, not just. Among them, none had ever expressed an interest in Central America as an issue. The ones who had expressed an interest in Latin America were the people from W.R. Grace & Company which was a shipping company that goes down to the west and east coast of Latin America. A few people, Pan Am president, did a lot of flying into that region, but as I say 14 or 15 max and no one who had expressed an interest in Central America.

At the same time in 1977, that same period, it was just before I left El Salvador, the agency closed its station in San Salvador saying not much interest here, not much doing, not much going to happen. That was in late '76, early '77. Two years later El Salvador was the foreign policy issue on all the front pages of the world, but especially here in the United States. It later turned into an El Salvador-Nicaragua thing, but at the beginning it was El Salvador, death squads, military atrocities, thousands dying, bodies all over the place and we were without a station for the beginning of that. Then when I left the Council and came down to Washington it seemed like every week I was getting invited to go up to another meeting on Central America, meeting on El Salvador, where all of a sudden the people up there were focusing on this part of the world that they had never expressed any interest in before.

Q: This, of course, is the way that worldly events have a way of coming up and spitting in your eye.

WALKER: Or biting you in the ass is another way of expressing it.

Q: Yes, it's like Yugoslavia. Who cared about Yugoslavia since 1914? It sort of disappeared and all of a sudden.

WALKER: Whammo. Well, that was El Salvador.

Q: Did you do papers or I mean, what, did you have a feeling, did they have an agenda?

WALKER: No, they really didn't. I met some very impressive people. I was very lucky in that I must have gotten there first and so they gave me the first space that became available which was the office of a scholar who was a permanent member of the staff of the CFR. He had this beautiful, I don't know what it was before, it was just beautiful lined with all of the books of his collection, the Council's collection, big huge fireplace in the corner. I could have gone in there and just sat and read his books and been very

content. But meeting some of the people, some of the staff, they really were impressive people, they really were. They sort of overwhelmed me with their scholarly attitude. I never detected any agenda of the Council. It just wasn't that at all.

Q: In a way I would suspect that and please correct me, would be a creature of what we call the establishment.

WALKER: Oh, absolutely, sure, I mean I've never been more surrounded by the established establishment.

Q: We're talking about the East Coast, international.

WALKER: We're talking about international, yes, I mean, I'm sure most of them I'm sure lean in the direction of the Republican party. But there were others who were sort of less that way, but all the names you can think of who have been involved in foreign relations from the East Coast, from this part of the East Coast were in one way or another associated with the Council. And, a lifestyle that I'm not used to, born in New Jersey, grew up in California and here you're sitting around drinking sherry at 3:00 in the afternoon to go into the very nice lecture room where it's all sitting in very nice seats and listening in a very civilized manner to sometimes people who I met. I sat in meetings, lectures, where interesting people from Africa came with some very radical beliefs and in the aftermath of the lectures they usually gave a very fancy dinner for whoever was the speaker guest. I went to a good number of those and it was all very clubby, there is no question about it, but nevertheless, people really trying to understand what these various viewpoints, these various parts of the world were trying to tell us.

Q: Did you have any feel, you know, so many of these outfits in Washington act as parking places for the administration out of power or flax, people who.

WALKER: A present member of the Council on Foreign Relations sort of academic studies stuff is Richard Holbrooke. Who is certainly in a parking spot at least in his mind, of course, something that comes later. It's a place to be seen and be kept in mind by opinion makers in this East Coast establishment.

Q: Did you get a feel for a difference between the people in New York regarding foreign affairs and the people in Washington regarding foreign affairs? Thinking one was more likely to think about it and the other was kind of, the government's doing things.

WALKER: The shuttle service transported a lot of these people back and forth to Washington. The businessmen to talk to their contacts at State or in the government. The academics back and forth and the government types because they were part of whatever government was in power. If there's a difference I think it would be the New York group were more concerned with, or more in tune with the sort of international trade, international economic matters than I think you find here where most of us would follow the political side of things. That would be the only difference. There was also a

generational thing. The average age of Council members probably up to fairly recently was pretty old.

Q: Still part of the European, George Ball era.

WALKER: Yes, exactly. That I think is what was the Council. But maybe in the last I don't know ten or 15 years, they have made a, as we all have, made a decided effort to bringing in some younger members, sort of a provisional membership and then after a year, they make them a member if they measure up. Women. There were very few women there when I was there. Almost predominantly male, but the Council was aware of this and was trying to identify and bring in as members women from academia, from government, but definitely establishment. I remember when, what was his name? Oh, God. Brown.

Q: Bill Brown? [Carter appointed Carolyn Payton who served Oct 11, 1977-Dec 18, 1978 and Richard Celeste who served April 27, 1979 to Jan 20, 1981; Celeste was ambassador to India 1997-2001]

WALKER: No. Brown. He was named head of the Peace Corps in the Carter administration. In Clinton he was at State as an assistant secretary for one of these things. Anyway, in 1978 he was invited to give a speech on behalf of the Peace Corps. I'll never forget. He showed up looking more like a Peace Corps volunteer than the head of the Peace Corps. Everyone comes to Council meetings for the lectures in their three piece New York business suit sort of thing. Anyway, Brown came and I'll never forget his talk because he got up and the first thing he said was something along the lines, he said, "I don't even know why I'm here. I don't know why I should be sharing with this insider group something that." Oh, it was because before every speaker whoever was chairing the meeting would stand up and say this is all for non-attribution, you can't tell anyone that Mr. Brown was here and says the things he says. So, when Brown gets up he says, "I don't know why I'm here talking in non-attribution. Anything I want to say I want to say to the public. I don't know why you fat cats should hear this inside information. I don't believe in that sort of thing." Everybody in the room sort of went back on their heels. There was very little of that. There was very little of outsiders and insiders, but this was definitely an insiders group. No doubt about it, but I was very impressed.

Q: After a year of that, did it help sort of rejuvenate your intellectual muscles or not?

WALKER: Well, remember when I told you that when I went to EPA one of the reasons I went was to sort of stand back and look at my career with State and say to myself, yes, I want to go back to State and go for the longer haul or had enough. There's a lot of other things to do here and certainly New York would have been a place to get a second career going. But at the end of the year, once again, as I did at EPA decided no, I really enjoy the Foreign Service. I enjoy what you do. I see all these people here or wannabees they'd love to be Foreign Service Officers and half of the people in the Council on Foreign Relations think of themselves as potential ambassadors or assistant secretaries. So, gee if

they all want to get in so bad, why should I give it up? I decided that back I'd go and back I went.

Q: So, you went to what?

WALKER: In '78? I became an inspector.

Q: You were inspecting from when to when?

WALKER: I guess by September of '78 to August of '80.

Q: What was the status of the inspection corps? The inspection corps has undergone several changes.

WALKER: This was still the old inspection corps. This was an inspection corps under an inspector general who was a very senior Foreign Service Officer. When I went in it was a chap named Robert Brewster, Bob Brewster who has been ambassador two or three times. It was an inside the system inspection corps. I thought it was a damn good inspection corps. I was impressed with it. One of the things I quickly learned to do when you go off to an embassy was try to calm everyone down by telling them you're there as their friend. You're looking to see what can be corrected, but not necessarily blaming people for an inadequate way of doing things. I thought that was very good. I thought you identified problems. You tried to help them get around the problems. If you ran into a really outrageous case you sometimes had to take more drastic action, but it was peopled by mostly by Foreign Service Officers accompanied by audit qualified inspectors who were usually not from the Service, but many of them wanted to become Foreign Service Officers and many of them did.

What changed in the inspection corps, of course, is that the congress, certain members of the congress asking for inspection reports on people or issues they wanted to find out what we said about ourselves got very frustrated when they were sometimes denied access to that material. Along about someplace in the '80s I guess a bill was put in for an independent inspector general. So it had to be someone from the outside. My understanding is that although there are still numbers of Foreign Service officers in there it has been greatly watered down and now quite often there's people who really have no idea how an embassy works or what the problems are of running an embassy. They might come in from the business world and think that running an embassy is the same as running a Washington office of some law firm or something. There's a lot of things that are very unique to the Foreign Service that outsiders it takes them a while to figure that out.

Q: Yes, one of the things that I've heard is that they have quite a large audit section which is fine if you're going after organizations that has a lot of money to spend. So here they usually end up finding up who paid for the gas on your trip to the airport or something like that. Because they had a lot of highly qualified people looking at really very minor problems.

WALKER: When I was in the inspection corps, I went out on one, two, three, maybe five overseas inspections and one within the Department. On overseas ones we always brought along two what they called audit qualified inspectors. Because I stayed with the same team for one whole year I got to know a couple of them very, very well. They'd all come in from GAO. We'd sort of been over there and raided them and gotten some young people who wanted to go out and see the world.

Q: That would be the Government Accounting Office?

WALKER: Accounting Office, yes. So, they were accountants. The two I knew best were both very young. They both wanted to see the world. One of them spent a lot more time chasing girls overseas at the embassies than he did chasing malfeasance and misfeasance. But they were very much of the mold you've just spoken. We weren't talking major Price Waterhouse audits of firms that were dealing in millions and they ended up looking at pretty picky sort of things. Not always. It wasn't their choice. That was what was there to look at. Quite often they'd come; God I just discovered so and so gave a reception and there was only 47% foreigners or something and claimed it on a voucher and we've really got to look at it. Things that were not of monumental importance.

I went out with one, two, three different senior inspectors. On all the teams I went out I was the number two man on essentially a six person team. The senior inspector who was usually an ex-ambassador or a career minister, career MC, minister counselor in today's Service, 01 back then. They usually inspected the embassy sort of at the policy level. Was the ambassador, was the DCM looking at the real issues. How were they running the mission? How was the mission getting along with the local community? The big picture. I as the number two on all these teams generally was the one who would do the political section and any other sections that needed coverage. I did a number, depending on the size of the mission; some places where the consular section was huge, like in Santo Domingo I did the consular section and political section, the major sections. Then we usually had two other FSOs who did other agency relations, those sort of things. And then we usually had these two audit types who sort of did the books.

The senior inspectors and I spent a lot of time editing the written product of the audit inspectors because maybe they could add a column of figures, but most of them couldn't put a sentence together. You had to sort of try and figure out from these things they jotted down, what the hell they were trying to say and putting it in sort of State Department-ese. I was impressed, I really was. I thought I don't think we went into any embassy in which we didn't leave it a better, more efficient, functioning embassy. We were never out to get anyone. We were there to help.

Q: One of the things that I think I'm sure you felt and most of us in the field used to feel, I don't know how it is now, but you might have had a septic situation. The DCM and the ambassador don't talk to each other, or you've got a domineering administrative officer, or the head of the consular section is intolerant. You know, all these things, or there is hanky panky going on, it wasn't called sexual discrimination. I guess it was coming in as

a term, but sexual harassment. Were you finding, so we kind of look to the inspectors to kind of fix up the problems. We didn't necessarily want somebody to get put on the gallows, but at least either get rid of the person or do something.

WALKER: I think that's exactly right. I think I ran into that a lot. What I was amazed at in going and visiting 15, 16, 17 embassies around the world, was that we all work from the same Foreign Affairs Manuals. We all come out more or less the same culture with the exception of the political appointees who come in, but we quickly try to accommodate themselves to the culture. Yet every embassy that I visited was very distinct depending in the character, the personalities, the way of doing business of the various players in these various slots. For me, it was, again, a wonderful opportunity to see a broad array of the sort of problems that post management, the ambassador in each mission faces with some of the problems you mentioned and others.

When I finished there and was wondering what my next assignment would be, I was picked to be a DCM by someone I'd known just basically very slightly. He later told me he picked me to be his DCM because of this inspection corps experience and he thought I would know how an embassy should be run. I remember vivid examples of the sort of things you've just said. The first inspection I was only there a week or two. I went through a little course. They told you what you were supposed to be doing and off I went to inspect the posts of North Africa. Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya because Libya during a very short period of time in '78 and '79 we opened an embassy and it was like four people there of whom two were spooks. But while I was there Billy Carter showed up in his famous trip to see Qadhafi.

Q: This is the brother of Jimmy Carter.

WALKER: Jimmy Carter, yes, but there were a couple of things in that series of inspections. One, my father died when I was in Tunisia and I had to fly back to California, but I came right back. So, the Tunisia part I didn't get as far involved in what was going on as I did in the other missions.

I'll tell you about the mission in Algeria. It was under a political appointee. He happened to be an African American ambassador. He was a professor at Harvard University in business management of some sort. They live on a compound, I think they still do. They lived on this compound and people didn't go off the compound because this was during a period when our relations with Algeria were not very good. So, here we're on this big compound with several buildings. The general services officer disappeared while we were there. Why? Because he was totally incompetent. He was married to the ambassador's secretary and that's why they went out as a tandem couple. The ambassador's secretary was very sharp. In fact, what few things the ambassador did right was mostly the secretary did, she showed him how to do things. Because, in spite of being a professor of business management he was the worst manager I'd ever seen. The GSO disappears so we couldn't find him for the first week. Here we are on this property that is two city blocks by dimension and we kept saying, where is the GSO? We asked his wife, where is your husband? Oh, he was here yesterday, but he's out someplace. He

must be in one of the buildings. We kept looking for him and we couldn't find him. It turned out that he was terrified that the inspectors were going to find out how incompetent he was. Which in fact we did, just the fact that he disappeared and hid from us. Who could believe that someone at a post as small as Algeria would hide out from the inspectors during the inspection? I mean you just don't do this, right, especially on a very specific plot of earth.

The ambassador, a very elegant man with a very elegant wife lived very well. They had a nice big mansion next to the compound where he lived. His DCM was a disaster. The DCM, people asked us to go in and find out what had happened to the reports they had sent up weeks before, months before and what happened was the DCM had lost them. He just lost things. People had sent in cables for going out and that was the last they'd heard of them.

Q: Oh, God.

WALKER: It was just incredible. An incredible post. We found out that the majority of the posts I inspected were more or less normal places. But everyone had a distinct character. We showed up in Santo Domingo and the night we got there we asked to see the RSO [regional security officer] and he was off on another island someplace on vacation. When we came in the next day the RSO safe had been opened in the middle of the night and thousands of dollars had been taken out. The RSO came back somewhat shamefacedly and the only conclusion was that he had left the safe open because there was no other way anyone could get into the safe. This is the RSO for God's sake. It turned out it was one of the young Marines who had seen some money in there and decided to make off with it. I mean the Foreign Service community is like every other community it has its good people, bad people, competent, incompetent. I was just surprised that you meet these strange, strange cases.

Q: Well, let's say in Algiers, where you run across a situation that really isn't healthy. It's not serving the United States well. In that period of time could you do anything about it?

WALKER: The inspection corps back then anyway, had a number of sort of axioms that you worked under. One axiom was although you find incompetent ambassadors out there, especially if it's a political appointee, you really hang most of the blame on the DCM. If you're going to ax anyone it is the DCM because if it is a DCM under a political appointee, he's supposed to sort of take care of things and make it work better than it otherwise would. You really look very carefully at the DCM. As I say in Algeria the DCM was extremely weak. No one respected him. No one, they sort of liked him as a person. He was a nice man and had a very nice wife, but in terms of management skills, leadership skills, just plain remembering the papers on his desk skills, he was a disaster. Unfortunately the ambassador was a political appointee who did strange things himself. That was one axiom.

Another sort of thing, tricks of the trade as an inspector, you judged embassies very quickly when you got to them. There was a procedure by which an embassy is notified six weeks in advance the inspectors are coming, prepare the following papers. Have every section do sort of a review answering the following questions of its practices. That goes back to Washington and the inspectors read it before they go down. That tells you something, but not much. One thing you look for when you hit a post was who met you at the airport. Did the DCM come out which showed that he understood the importance of the inspection or did he send some flunky who was just there to show you to the cars? Again, depending on the circumstances of the host country, if it was a country friendly to us where we could expect such things, did they have the airport wired? Were they able to take you right from the plane and say, oh, come on through here? How well were they working with the local authorities? It wasn't you were mad at them because they weren't able to do this but this was just giving you an indication of whether or not they were really plugged in with the local authorities. There were a whole series of these things.

I've got to tell a story. There was a fellow in the inspection corps when I joined. Virgil P. Randolph, III. Virgil is a little tiny guy from Northern Virginia and apparently traces his roots back to the Randolphs of Virginia, a very prominent family I understand. I'm not from Virginia but evidentially they are. Virgil P. Randolph was a Foreign Service Officer and had a particularly distinguished career, but he's in the inspection corps when I got there. While in the inspection corps, I got a call one day from a young lady named Sally Shelton.

Q: Later Sally Shelton Colby.

WALKER: Colby, correct. The same. She had just been nominated. When I was leaving El Salvador when President Carter was coming into office she was nominated to go as ambassador to El Salvador. At the time she was late '20s something like that. She was a very young woman. She was a staffer to Senator Bentsen of Texas and AFSA, American Foreign Service Association, in one of its few dramatic stances, rose up and said this woman is totally unprepared to be our ambassador to El Salvador. So, she lost El Salvador. She was named a DAS for Central America and this ties in because while I was putting this Central American study group together in New York I invited her to be a speaker at our study group. I got to know her as a result.

Later on she was nominated to go as ambassador to Barbados from her DAS-ship and now she was minimally qualified because of her serving as a DAS for Central America. She was nominated to go as ambassador to Barbados by the Carter Administration. She called me up one day and she said, "Bill, I remember our getting together over drinks in New York and at the study group meetings and I know you served in El Salvador and I was wondering if you would be interested in being my DCM in Barbados?" I said, sure, why not. I went and talked to her and we talked a lot about it. A few days later she called me up and said, "Bill, I'm sorry, but I've decided on someone else. I've decided on someone named Virgil P. Randolph, III." I said, "Oh, I know Virgil." She said, "Oh, you do? What do you think of him?" I said, "Well, let me put it this way, I don't think your personalities are going to mesh." Sally was this very young, very dynamic sort of, not a

women's libber, but she was going to show that a woman could do this job. Virgil P. Randolph, III, old mind Virginia family, very conservative, a bit of a racist, it wasn't going to work too well. There had also been a very ugly incident at the end of his inspection career when his wife, mother of his five or six children denounced him for having beaten the crap out of her one night and sending her to the hospital. I remember because the inspector general called him in, it was a police matter and it went to court. But because he was a Randolph of the Randolphs of Virginia apparently the Virginia authorities dropped the case. I told Sally this. I said, "You know, whether it is true or not, whether he is in fact guilty of this, I'm not sure this is what you want as your DCM, but since there might be a conflict of interest in me telling you these things, don't listen to me. Go and talk to other people." Well, she didn't and she took him for her DCM.

When the inspection team, this is now in my second or third inspection circuit went to inspect the islands in the Caribbean, we went to Barbados. Another indicator of how things are going in an embassy is what's the relationship between the ambassador and the DCM. One of the indicators of this that you look for as an inspector was when the ambassador talks to you, when he or she briefs the inspection team on how things are going or problems is the DCM invited to sit in on the meeting? If this is your alter ego you would want the DCM to be there. If the DCM is not there you've got to take a look at it because maybe there's a problem. So, we get to Barbados. Our first meeting with Sally Shelton. This former inspector knows these sort of indicators you look at to see how things are going. Number one he misses us at the airport. He knows he's already in a bad light because he missed us because he was late for some reason or another. As a consequence we didn't get through Barbados customs and immigration very quickly. He knows that we're looking at these things. These are indicators of how well he is doing as a DCM. He knows that inspections focus on the DCM if there's problems. It was a troubled post so he knows we're going to be looking at him.

Our first meeting with Ambassador Shelton was in her office. We all go in and there is a circle of chairs around her desk. We all sit down, all six of us and the DCM walks in and he looks around and there's no chair. Sally says, "Oh, Virg, go bring in another chair." So, a smile crosses his face because now he's going to go out, bring in a chair and he's going to sit in on the meeting. He knows this is an indicator, right? So, he goes out and he brings in a chair and he puts it down and he sits in it. She says, "Oh, no, Virg, no, you leave. I'm going to sit there." I've never seen a guy look so dejected as he sort of crept out of the room because he realized we were seeing a very strong indication that he and she were not getting along very well. But that was the way inspections went. You sort of picked up.

Q: Were you finding, what about, were you running across cases of alcoholism for example? What would you do?

WALKER: Yes. In that, the only thing you can do there is counsel and try to convince whoever the person was who was either accused of alcoholism or showed signs of it that they should seek treatment. I had an experience with alcoholism in El Salvador when I was there as head of the political section. My secretary came in one day and told me that

she lived downstairs from a USIS officer, female. The night before the female USIS officer had given a dinner party for a visiting USIS senior officer. My secretary was invited to the dinner party since she was the next door neighbor. When the senior guest of honor came to the party and the other guests, small dinner party, gathered, they were missing the hostess. A little later they found the hostess in a closet in her underclothes, drunker than a skunk. She had evidently started drinking while preparing dinner, maybe nervousness, whatever, but it was the final proof that she really had a problem with alcohol because there had been previous incidents. But here she was sitting in a closet, drinking, while this dinner party she'd organized was wondering where the hell she was. My secretary said that she had been asked by the head of USIS, you're her neighbor, you're her friend, do something for her. My secretary said, "I don't know what to do. Can you think of anything?" I said, "Well, we just got a cable explaining that if someone at post has this problem you send a message back to the State Department and the medical division gets involved and they come up with a solution."

Between sending that cable off and receiving a reply we had several other incidents that were just outrageous in which this woman, her boss tried to get her to go to the airport and try to get her to go back to Washington. She was too drunk to drive and you couldn't take her to the airport because she was just rolling, dead drunk. Obviously a woman with a very, very serious alcohol problem. The medical division came back and said unless she asks for help there's nothing we can do. The conclusion I came to is sort of don't get involved in those sort of things.

Q: Well, I mean it reaches a point where somebody can't produce, I mean, the Department speaks out of both sides of its mouth.

WALKER: Exactly.

Q: It says you're not supposed to discriminate against somebody if they have a medical problem, but at the same time you're supposed to report on their effectiveness. If their effectiveness is impeded.

WALKER: But how you do that is by counseling them and making a record and in their EER, in their efficiency report, once a year if they haven't met the standards of their performance, then you mark them way down. I thought naively that if you reported someone with a serious problem in which anything could have happened to this woman, that the Department would take some action. Instead they came back and said essentially it is a post problem. See if you can talk her into volunteering for treatment. If she does, then we can bring her back here. But unless she volunteers and unless she asks for help, she wasn't. She was in no shape to do so. I was totally turned off by the process. I mean this woman, she wasn't doing anything. She wasn't performing in any fashion.

Q: I mean the public affairs officer should have. That was his responsibility.

WALKER: If nothing else, the inspectors coming in from the outside can talk about things and can see things and can report things that the people within the embassy

community either don't see or don't want to report because it is a small community. They have to work with these people, with each other. It's very different from working in an organization here in the States. An embassy is a very small, compact, solidified entity and the smaller the embassy the more this is true that if one person takes on another person and it doesn't get resolved or one doesn't leave it can really create very serious problems for the whole mission's performance. That's when inspectors can come in as outsiders and they're not going to stay there for long. It's always been a problem in the Foreign Service. Honesty of evaluations is something that's legendary and it is because you're going to work with this person and do you really want to make it an antagonistic sort of thing. So, the outside inspectors coming in, I was a great fan. When I joined the inspection corps, inspectors went in and wrote an inspectors efficiency report on everybody in the sections they inspected. Later on when I was on promotion panels I found these gave more color to the thing.

Q: Absolutely. I was the same.

WALKER: Right. When I was an inspector they decided that this was a bit of a waste of time. So they then made it that you wrote inspectors efficiency reports on certain ranks, certain people going in and heading for the senior service and on post management people, certain categories of people. I thought that took away from the value of the inspection. As I say, every panel that I've been on we've said this really showed another dimension.

I found the inspection, two years of the inspection corps to be very valuable for me personally. I got to Taiwan, I got to places I'd never seen before. Certainly I never thought I'd see Libya in my life. But it was seeing how different teams, different personalities, reading the same FAMS, Foreign Affairs Manuals came up with different solutions to how to run an embassy, how to make an embassy function properly.

Q: On sort of the dark side, you know, did you run across problems of sexual harassment? Were you particularly alerted to that or was that early days?

WALKER: No, I think that was before sexual harassment became an issue. As I earlier said, one of my audit qualified inspectors spent a good part of his time chasing the girls and it was something that I think would be frowned upon today for someone coming in as an inspector and sort of dating the people he was inspecting.

Q: What was your impression of the junior officers you were seeing?

WALKER: I have always been impressed by our junior officers; again with some notable exceptions. A fellow we found in Paraguay was working under Bob White, the ambassador. This young man, something had definitely gone wrong in his head. He sidled up to me at the reception the first night we were there to tell me he had to speak to me in secret. We had to meet someplace where no one else would see us and he wanted to tell me about the homosexual ring that was running the embassy. The only reason he was not getting good efficiency reports was that he was outside of this ring. Well, I know

of many valid criticisms of Bob White, but one of them was not that. He turned out to be one of the most disruptive people I've ever met. He was in the economic section. He came up with all sorts of crazy ideas. He insisted on reporting that Paraguay was going to be the place where solar energy was going to save mankind and he wrote cables that were totally off the wall. When they didn't go out he started accusing the post leadership of sitting on his great ideas. Near the end of the inspection they sent him down to the consulate to fill in when one of the consular officers was on vacation or someplace else. He ended up putting the make on one of the young local employees and the consul bodily picked him up and threw him out of the consulate after less than 24 hours. The guy was just very disruptive. I counseled him. I looked into the case at great depth because he really was extremely disruptive and made all these accusations about everybody else. Near the end I called him in. I said, "Young fellow your career is going nowhere. I've never seen a file like this." In fact he brought me his file to show me how they said these horrible things about him. Well, it was very consistent. Everyone was saying the same horrible things about him. In fact when he went through FSI here in the basic officers course the director general of the Foreign Service came over and gave a speech on the Foreign Service and this guy stood up and denounced the director general within weeks of joining the corps. So, he didn't get a very nice report out of that either.

Anyway, I called him and I said, "Your career is going nowhere." He said, "Ah, yes, I'm going back to Washington and I'm going to go to law school." I said, "What?" He said, "Yes, I'm going to go to law school." I said, "Well, great, you'll get another career." He said, "No, you may not know this, but if you've got a grievance in they cannot separate you from the Service while you've got a grievance in. So, I've already submitted 10 or 15 grievances and I've got a feeling that's going to carry me through law school. While I'm at law school I can really put in grievances." I said, "Why do you want to do that? You're never going to get promoted." "Well, I'm just going to, this Service is screwing me, I'm going to screw them back." I said, "Let me get this straight, you're going to go to law school while working at the State Department for the sole purpose of putting in grievances?" He said, "Yes, that's what I'm going to do." Before we left the senior inspector who was a very knowledgeable guy and had once worked in a psychologist's office was very worried that this young man was on the brink of either doing damage to someone else in the embassy because he had so many hatreds, or to himself and sent in a back channel message saying, get this guy out of here because either he will do damage to himself or to others or someone is going to do damage to him. I think the Department got him out of there, but a few years later he was still in the Service and going to law school and following his dream which was to do horrible things to the State Department Foreign Service, a very unusual man. But he was not typical of the young officers I met.

Q: Well, that's good to know.

WALKER: To answer your question. I think many of the young officers were very good and when I see the promotion list I see these young folks sort of climbing the ladder. Some of whom are going out as ambassadors these days.

Q: This is a good time to close this session. So in 1980, just to put at the end, where did you go?

WALKER: In 1980 I went as DCM to Honduras.

Q: Okay, we'll have you going to Honduras as DCM. They couldn't get you out of Central America?

Q: Today is the 27th of August, 2001 and Bill you are just back from was it three weeks or something, two weeks out in the Outer Hebrides and all? So, we'll put you back into Central America.

WALKER: Quite a contrast.

Q: So, you went to Honduras in 1980. You were there until when?

WALKER: I was there from the summer of '80 until the late summer of '82.

Q: Now, how did you get the job?

WALKER: The fellow who was the ambassador who was Carter's ambassador to Honduras, Jack Binns was his name. Jack had previously been a DCM in Costa Rica and at some point in my career I passed through Costa Rica. Because he had almost replaced me several years earlier in my San Francisco job he invited me to stay with him at the DCM's residence. I stayed with him for a day or two and we sort of hit it off. He had served a tour in London so he had some sort of British affectation and going with my Scottish affectations we really clicked. I was somewhat surprised when I finished up in the inspection corps wondering what I was going to do next. I got a call from Jack Binns and he asked me if I would be his DCM. When I got down there he told me one of the reasons he had picked me, which was later a reason I was picked for a second DCMship by Ed Corr, was that I had been in the inspection corps. Both these fellows said obviously if you've been in the inspection corps you know how things are supposed to be done so you can sort of keep me out of trouble in terms of future inspections or the way we run this embassy. I thought that was a pretty good plug for doing an inspection tour. In the mid-summer of 1980, I, my wife, our two year old son and a brand new baby went to Honduras as a DCM family.

Q: Now, what was the situation, you know, political, economic, etc. in Honduras in 1980 when you got there?

WALKER: In 1980, sort of typical of my assignments over my career, I went in when Honduras was still under a military government. The president was a fellow named General Paz Garcia who was a former head of the army, a little wisp of a fellow with a big moustache.

Q: Big hat?

WALKER: Yes, big hat and the several times I met General Paz Garcia he was drunker than a skunk. I'll never forget the first time I met him was not long after I got there, Jack Binns went off on a trip somewhere, I can't think of quite where, so I was chargé for a couple of days. In the middle of my chargé-ship we got a call from the palace saying the president wanted to see Ambassador Binns and then we told them Binns wasn't there, well he wants to see the chargé. I called for an appointment because we got a cable from the Department saying go and see the president, it's got to be the chief of state and deliver this the following message. Of course it was the outline of a message. We called the palace and said the chargé has to see the president immediately. It's a matter of some importance that Washington has instructed me to come in and see you. So, with some fumbling around at the other end they said they'd call us back as soon the president was free and three or four hours later I was told I could go over and see him.

I went over with my note and with my oral demarche in mind and this was the first time I was going to represent the U.S. to deliver a demarche to the chief of state. When I got there General Paz Garcia, President Paz Garcia was sitting on the throne completely disheveled as far as his uniform was concerned. He tried to stand up to greet me. He couldn't stand. He was totally, totally inebriated. This was about 11:00 in the morning and I handed him the note and started going through my brief and it was just, I felt like a complete idiot because this guy didn't have a clue to what I was saying. I wasn't even sure what I was saying I was so struck by the state of his being. It was my introduction to Paz Garcia.

Q: In something like that, would you have, I mean was there an aide de camp or somebody you'd go over and say, now, here's what it is.

WALKER: Yes, there were a couple of young aides de camp, lieutenants or captains standing by his side sort of propping him up when he sort of slumped to one side or the other. But I was instructed to deliver this to the chief of state. By God I was going to deliver it to the chief of state whatever shape he was in. He was, as you could imagine from this, a bit of a joke in the local community. There was a story going around. He had a horrible alcohol problem. Shortly before he left office he was at a function at which he got completely inebriated and lost his uniform and was found wandering the streets in his underclothes. This sort of thing. A nice enough man, but absolutely incapable of performing the duties of chief of state.

Anyway, partially because of him, but partially because of our pushing hard for it during the Carter years Honduras decided, the military government decided, to remove itself from office and turn it over to civilians. The first year I was there, which was the last year of Carter's administration and the last year of Jack Binns' ambassadorship, all the pushing was to get them to hold an election to elect a civilian president in which we were to be totally neutral. Honduras like many of the countries of Latin America has a Liberal Party and a Conservative Party. The terms don't mean the same in Latin America that they do in our context, but these were the two traditional parties that sort of over the years had sort of one after the other come in and gone out, come in and gone out. So, we did

everything we could to support the return to a civilian government by helping this process and helping the military sort of gracefully withdraw from office; which they did.

Q: What about the economy at that point?

WALKER: Well, Honduras is the poorest nation in Central America. It relies mostly on bananas, which are under United Fruit and some of the other big companies. It doesn't have a hell of a lot in terms of an economic infrastructure. It's got some mining. It's obviously got agriculture. It's got some tourism. The Bay Islands to the north which have pretty good places for going scuba diving and that sort of thing; so there is some tourism. It's got a very tentative economy I guess I would say. Life is relatively easy there. It's not a country that is particularly crowded. The population is mostly mestizo. There are still a few Indians, pure, sort of.

Q: Mestizo being a mix.

WALKER: Mixture of white, red and black.

Q: Do they have the woodchoppers and all that?

WALKER: Yes. They've also got up on the north coast some very small villages of, what are they called, garizimo and these are sort of black Caribbean folks who speak a language that no one else comprehends and they're very, very poverty stricken. You're going through their villages and you really see Caribbean poverty. They are on the low end of the scale in a country that's at the low end of the economic scale for Central America, which is at the low end of the scale for the hemisphere. They're in pretty bad shape. But, an interesting country, an interesting country.

Q: What about again, when you arrived, were there any sort of repercussions of what was going on in Nicaragua and El Salvador?

WALKER: Nicaragua was just starting to really be a problem for us. The Sandinistas were in power. They were poking their finger in the eye of Uncle Sam every chance they could get. It hadn't been too much before I got there that the Sandinistas had come into power so there had been an outflow of those elements of the Nicaraguan establishment that could not countenance living in a Sandinista far left country. So the remnants of Somoza's government, the remnants of Somoza's national guard, some of those people, the ones that didn't have enough money to get to Miami or didn't have enough English to come to the States, a good number of them came into Honduras. They were already when I got there starting to stir the pond and make it look like they were going to mount a counter offensive, counter revolution and then go back in and bring down the Sandinistas. This was not favorably looked upon by the Carter administration mainly because this group of these precursors of the Contras did in fact look like ex- Somoza types, the bad elements the ones that we were glad to see out of Nicaragua. Jack Binns, Ambassador Binns, both from his own convictions and I believe from this feeling in Washington did

everything we could to sort of keep our distance from these elements that were talking counter revolution and were going to go back in and invade.

Q: Were they sort of coming in and saying, and coming to us and expecting America to give them support and all?

WALKER: I think that was, yes, I think they were, yes, they felt that we had supported Somoza. We had sent ambassadors into Nicaragua when Somoza was there. They became great buddies with him. I think these people had lived the life in which they expected the United States to come to their assistance when they ran into this sort of a problem. I think they thought that especially given some of the things the Sandinistas were doing that we would not countenance this, that we would somehow try to remove them and reinstall this group.

We had some problems with some members of the embassy who sympathized with these people who got in contact with them to the point that Jack Binns, Ambassador Binns, put out an instruction saying no socializing with, no encouraging of these elements that are talking about going back into Nicaragua. You can deal with them on business if someone comes in for a visa and you're a consular officer, you deal with them, but not anything beyond that. It was quite plain that the embassy under Jack Binns, and I certainly agreed with this, we were not going to play footsie with, as I say there were sort of precursors to the Contras. I don't remember if we were calling them Contras at that time or not.

Q: Were the Sandinistas playing games in Honduras at that time?

WALKER: No, but they were threatening to. In Central America there were two big stories at the time. Nicaragua with the Sandinista government in power and El Salvador which was going through the worst two years of its history in which the FMLN was coming out very strong. The death squad movement was in full flourish. The people who were living in El Salvador at that time were really going through very, very rough years. Then Reagan came in.

Q: That would be '81?

WALKER: '81, yes, January '81, you know, our policy shifted and we started seeing what we could do if nothing else to make the Sandinistas stop their support for the FMLN in El Salvador. The thought was we can start making them see that problems can be caused for them similar to what they're doing in Salvador. In other words, if a counter revolutionary group were to develop in Honduras and were to be able to use Honduras as a sanctuary and go in and raid into Nicaragua to try and cause problems for the Sandinistas that would show them the folly of their ways which is what they were doing in El Salvador, providing sanctuary for the FMLN and support, logistical support and intelligence support, every kind of support. That was when Honduras started really getting pulled into it. Honduras, I think, certainly the military in Honduras, sort of saw this trend as something in which they could enrich themselves. They could modernize. They could get equipment for their army. They could take Uncle Sam to the cleaners.

They saw the figures of the sort of pay that was going into El Salvador and I guess the cash registers in their minds started ringing and they decided that sure, they'll play along with Uncle Sam. They'll tell us they're going to do X, Y and Z in return for assistance. So slowly and I think from their side, from a certain set of motives from our side from a different set of motives Honduras was sort of slowly dragged in.

What I've just described was a shift in our policy. But another way they were being dragged into it, totally unwilling in this case, was as things got bad in El Salvador we were giving very serious assistance to the Salvadoran army in terms of helicopter gunships in terms of training their soldiers how to go out into the hills and go after the FMLN. This created a fairly massive refugee exodus from El Salvador. Most of the border with Honduras and El Salvador, it's an unmarked border, it's a very difficult border and it's where the FMLN was its strongest. They quite often used Honduras as a sanctuary. Unlike in Nicaragua not with the acquiescence of the government; they would just come over because there were no Honduran troops up there. Well, this exodus of refugees into Honduras became a serious problem with so many of them. You've got to remember Honduras and El Salvador fought a war over that border just a dozen years before.

There was a lot of sensitivities in Honduras about this massive inflow of Salvadoran refugees especially since they were connected with the FMLN. They were leftists, they were peasants, but thought to be politicized peasants. So, Honduras at the beginning started to drive them back. They received a lot of criticism from international organizations. The network of FMLN support here in the United States was very critical of Honduras doing this. Refugee camps were set up on the border and they became a constant problem for Honduras. Journalists would go up to visit them and come back and write terrible stories about the conditions in the camps. Honduras was not doing what they should for political asylees and that sort of thing. That was one problem. Number two, these people came over and were quickly organized by FMLN cadre who were much sharper and much better organized and better prepared to pull these people together. The Hondurans who don't have the same work ethic as the Salvadorans, especially their army, all of a sudden they saw this as a security threat. A serious security threat. So this was another way Honduras was being pulled into the turmoil in Salvador and Nicaragua.

In Tegucigalpa we had a couple of things happen that took us up to the border. I told you about Bianca Jagger?

Q: You might explain who she was.

WALKER: Bianca Jagger was the ex-wife of Mick Jagger the rock and roll legend from the Rolling Stones. She was also born into a wealthy Nicaraguan family. I don't know when it was, but she was at some point in her youth radicalized. She was a part of the Andy Warhol Club 54 crowd in New York in the swinging '60s, but in the '70s she had become a political figure. Obviously, since she was Central American herself, she was most interested in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras. So, she came down one day,

unbeknownst to the embassy, and held a press conference someplace and said that she was going down to look at these refugee camps up on the border with Honduras and El Salvador. She was going to tell the world what was going on there because there were these stories of massacres and that sort of thing. Helicopter gunships coming over the border and strafing the camps. There was a lot of highly exaggerated stories going about what was going on at the border. Since it was so remote, no one really knew.

Anyway, we heard that Bianca Jagger was going to the camps. She didn't come to the embassy for any support.

Q: Was she an American citizen?

WALKER: She lived in the United States. She went out there and there was a big push by the Salvadoran army during the time when she was up there coming across the border chasing in hot pursuit of some FMLN types from El Salvador. And at this point she disappeared. All contact with her was lost by whoever was keeping in contact with her. We in the embassy started getting these phone falls from congressmen, from all sorts of people saying you've got to do something. Bianca Jagger has been captured by the Salvadoran military. She's being tortured. She's being this; she's being that. The bottom line was, no one knew where she was because she had disappeared. People were coming up with the wildest stories about what might have happened to her. We, of course, were told if you find out what happened to her, let us know right away because the State Department is being inundated by these calls, many of them from congress asking about Bianca Jagger, this international human rights advocate.

Three or four days went past and the pressure was mounting and the phone behind me rings and I pick it up and it's a very soft voice saying, "Is this the American Embassy?" "Yes." "Who am I speaking to?" "You're speaking to the chargé." I was chargé at the time. She says, "Well, this is Bianca Jagger." I said, "Oh, my God, where are you? What's happened? The world is looking for you." She said, "Well, I'm down at the Maya Hotel in Tegucigalpa." I said, "Well, what happened? Everybody wants to know what happened. I want to call the State Department right way. They've had all sorts of inquiries they want to respond to. The world is waiting for your story." She said, "Well, I'm about to give a press conference and I decided that what I saw up there was so horrific, so horrendous, and it wasn't just the Salvadoran army, it was the Honduran army." I said, "Well, you know, Miss Jagger, I really would like to see you before you have a press conference because there are some sensitivities. If you're going to speak out against the Honduran army in Tegucigalpa, maybe you better let me talk to you first to let you know what the situation is." She said, "Okay, fine, come on down. I've got it scheduled for I think 45-minutes from now." So, I got her room number. The Maya Hotel is the nicest hotel in town. I jumped in my car. I got down there and there was this huge traffic jam and I was wondering if I was going to get there before she gave her press conference or not. But I got to the hotel, sure enough five or ten minutes before the appointed time. I rushed through the lobby and up on the elevator to the room number she had given me and pounded on the door. Sure enough the door swings open and there's Bianca Jagger and she's in her little panties and bra. She said, "Yes?" I said, "Hi, I'm Bill

Walker from the embassy. You said you would chat with me before you gave your press conference.” She said, “Oh, yes, but first you’ve got to help me with something. Would you help me please?” I said, “Of course.” So, we walked in and Bianca Jagger at that time, I’ve got to preface this by saying I later got to know Bianca Jagger and we’re now good friends. But at that point in time I walked in, and the famous Bianca Jagger in bra and panties was not a particularly gorgeous female. She looked emaciated; at the Club 54 she had maybe consumed more of whatever they were consuming than she should have. Anyway, she invites me in and she said, “You’ve got to help me.” I said, “I’d be glad to, what can I do?” We go over to the wall and she pulls back the closet and there is this huge line of clothes in the closet and she says, “Will you help me pick out what I should wear at the press conference?” Oh God.

Anyway, she held the press conference. She did not take my advice. She denounced the Honduran military. I explained to her that we are in this period when we’re trying to move them out of power, we’re trying not to make them uneasy, please don’t say anything too bad about them. Well, she did. At the end of the press conference I got a phone call saying that the Salvadoran [sic] military was going to arrest her for defamation of a nation or something like that. I told her this and she said, “Well, would you take me to the airport? I’m supposed to leave on an Eastern Airline flight.” I said, “Of course. Maybe we can talk your way onto the airplane and you’ll be out of here and you’ll be okay.” We drove to the airport and when we got to the airport the colonel who was head of immigration was there and he was furious. But he was someone I knew sort of, kind of knew him, and I asked to speak to him alone. We went off to the side and he was telling me how they were going to arrest her and they were going to charge her with this and charge her with that and they didn’t have to stand this in their own capital city. I sympathized with him and told him I understood why they were upset, but for their own good, given who this woman was, they would be much better off just letting her get on the plane. Yes, it would be a story for a couple of days, but if they arrested Bianca Jagger for those kinds of charges, it was going to be a long-term story. It would be much worse than any bad publicity they got from what she said at the press conference.

I talked to him and I talked to him and I talked to him and Eastern Airlines was out there and they were putting the passengers on. I said, “Really, it’s much better if you just let her get on the plane and get out of here.” To sort of minimize his problem, he said, “Well, look I’ll do that, but at least she has to give us a statement before she leaves. I’m going to have my officer from Interpol, this is an international issue, I want him to talk to her and take her statement.” Sure enough, he introduces me to probably the only other soldier at the airport, he was a little old superannuated, he looked like he was in his 70s, but he was probably only in his 50s. He just looked 70. Corporal, sits down in the office with his beat up old 50-year-old typewriter and he starts taking Bianca Jagger’s story.

What is your name? Jagger. J-A-G-G-E-R. First name, Bianca. Married or single? Where do you live? He goes through this and he’s filling in the paper. She’s getting upset. She finally says, look, I’m the ex-wife of Mick Jagger, that’s who I am. Does that give you enough information to fill in your little blocks? The guy says, who, Mick Jagger, who’s Mick Jagger? Anyway, it was one of those things. All she gave was this information

about herself. He couldn't type fast enough. The plane was leaving. She signs the paper. She says, "Mr. Walker, you've got to escort me to the plane." I said, "Why, it's just 50 yards out there." She said, "Something might happen between here and there. God knows these people might be out to get me. You've got to take me to the plane." I took her to the plane and she said I had to take her onto the plane and put her in her seat. As we were walking out to the plane she says, "Mr. Walker, you've got to call up my ambassador and tell him to meet the plane in Miami." I said, "Your ambassador?" She said, "Yes, I'm not an American citizen." I said, "What are you?" She said, "I'm Nicaraguan. I've got a Nicaraguan passport, but I'm also a British citizen. I have a British passport from my marriage to Mick Jagger." I said, "Okay, you're a dual citizen?" She said, "Yes, and I want you to notify both those embassies and have their ambassadors in Miami meet the plane because I don't want anything funny to happen. They could do anything between here and Miami and I want to make sure my ambassadors are there to get me off the plane safely." I said, "Miss Jagger, number one, the flight from here to Miami is two hours. Those two embassies, those two ambassadors more than likely are in Washington which is where the embassies are. I doubt very much we can impose upon them to fly to Miami when they're probably going to be six, eight, ten, twelve hours too late for their plane to get there."

I came away from this experience thinking again that Miss Jagger had consumed far too much of whatever she had consumed at the Club 54. It was a very strange experience with this woman. People now are putting her up for the Nobel Peace Prize. I got to know her in terms of my later involvement with the Balkans. She is very good on the Albanian situation, on the Albanian question. She thinks of me as a hero. We meet at these Albanian meetings and she always sits next to me and we talk about the good old days in Honduras and she seems to have forgotten the context in which we met in Honduras. But, my introduction to Bianca Jagger was in bra and panties asking me to find her the right dress to wear to her press conference. A great event.

Q: How did you see, in Honduras, the military fitting in because you alluded to the fact that they're probably not as good as the Salvadoran, the Nicaraguan.

WALKER: They were left behind. Guatemala's got a military cast, which is, they're not very nice people, but they're at least professional military in the context of Central American, Latin American militaries. El Salvador, their military class officer corps came up a learning curve. I was there in the mid-'70s, late '70s; they were Herblock caricatures of blank militaries. When I go back in '88 as ambassador the Salvadoran military had become almost a professional military; they'd been fighting for ten years. That tends to bring up a learning curve. The Sandinista military of course was a revolutionary army that defeated the Somoza army therefore it was also relatively professional in terms of Central America. Honduras had come up none of these learning curves. The Honduran army when I was there was still President Garcia, General Garcia, Paz Garcia, this drunk. The head of their intelligence service was a guy who I never saw him in uniform. He went around with gold medallions and gold chains and gold rings. He was obviously heavily on the take. Most of them were. It was a collective leadership. The decisions in the Honduran military were made by the colonels and it was by consensus so it was like

40, 50 colonels had to come to a decision before they could do anything. This was not a military prepared to defend the motherland or fatherland if need be.

People went into the military for what they could get out of it. For very different motives from what people go into our military or some of the other militaries in Europe. Most of them were a joke as far as being military, but that was the Honduran military. They were in power when I got there and they were relinquishing the chief of stateship and a few offices, but they were still going to be a major player in what happened in Honduras.

Q: Did Honduras have the 10 major families or that sort of thing?

WALKER: Not really, no. They had some wealthy families. Something that was developing when I was there and it has since fully blossomed is the so-called Turco community, the Middle East types mostly in Honduran context, Palestinians, Lebanese, Jordanians. A few, but mostly Palestinians had come in there some years before and started out with little cloth shops that sort of thing, selling djelas and fabric and some of them had done very well, thank you. A couple of the wealthier families were Turcos. One of which I think became the wealthiest family in Honduras over the last 10 years, 15 years and a member of that family is now the president of Honduras. The people said would never happen that they'd elect a Turco, but they did. But not the same sort of oligarchy that you had in El Salvador, the famous 14 families. A better distribution of wealth, but at a lower level. A poorer country, but I'd say it was probably better distributed.

Q: What were the connections with the United States? In some places I think you've mentioned and others have who've served there, that all the educated people practically had gone to school in the United States.

WALKER: To a lesser extent again than El Salvador. In El Salvador the famous Catorce family and all the other families who were associated with that ruling oligarchy, economic elite, most of their kids went to school in the States for a university or sometimes the young man went up to military academies. The more problem children of the oligarchy would be sent off to military academies in the States and the girls would be sent to sort of convent Catholic girl schools.

In Honduras not as much, a certain amount, but not as much again because except for a few families that did have a lot of money, the families that sort of equated with the upper middle class in El Salvador didn't have the same sort of resources. Therefore, they would send some of their kids to Mexico City to schools there and some other places, a certain number went to the States.

Q: It wasn't that close a tie.

WALKER: No, it wasn't that close a tie. There's a couple of communities in the United States based on sort of Honduran colonies. The biggest is New Orleans. It's just this hop step and jump across the Caribbean to get to New Orleans. That's the major focal point of

Honduran immigration into the United States. There's some in other places, but that was the traditional one. You meet people in El Salvador who have any sort of money and one, their kids go to school in the States especially at the universities and two, when they have medical problems they go to the States. In Honduras not as prevalent.

Q: You got there in 1980 and you had the election in 1980 of Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan when he came in, my impression is that the one place where Ronald Reagan came from a very conservative thing and sort of particularly Central America was kind of the playground of the American right wing. Did you get the feeling, I mean were aides from Senator Helms' office coming down? Did you feel the hot breath of?

WALKER: Does the word 'immediately'? Yes. We felt the hot breath very, very quickly. As you say Central America, especially the sort of Nicaragua situation, apparently was the thorn under the saddle of President Reagan. The people he brought in to be his advisors and his players on Latin America were particularly taken with the Central American equation that they found and they thought they could do something about this to show that America still had the ability to change history. There were a number of people who were of this mold. I believe his first advisor for Latin American affairs at the National Security Council was a guy named Constantine Menges whose background I don't know, who is an academic, but who is an intellectual anti-communist and right winger.

Q: You were talking about the people in the CIA.

WALKER: Yes, the people in the CIA who were put in charge of the Latin American stuff were also a number of them Cuban Americans who were known for their anti-communism. Literally within days of the Reagan victory in November of '80, we were told that certain people were going to come down and going to make exploratory trips through Central America. One was a fellow named John Carbo who I'm not quite sure what his relationship with Helms was, but he was seen as someone who was coming down with the imprimatur of Helms. Another was a fellow named Chris Manion. Chris Manion is the son of the dean of the Notre Dame law school, which apparently is a very conservative law school. His father apparently thought he had suffered through the '60s and '70s because he was not part of the new way the legal profession was pushing civil rights and human rights and pushing the envelope on the left. Chris Manion's father apparently was seen to have suffered for being a conservative dean of a law school. Chris Manion, the son, a very strange young man. He came down as a Helms staffer. A number of other people came down. Richard McCormack later became Reagan's ambassador to the OAS, but at that time was working for Helms as a staffer. He came down. General Vernon Walters who I didn't know what his politics were, but they were fairly conservative. He came down to speak to the militaries in Central America. During that visit to Honduras he essentially accused Ambassador Jack Binns and me of being communists. He did this in front of the country team much to our surprise because we were saying that maybe he, General Walters, in his 24 hours in El Salvador had not really grasped the reality of the Salvadoran military which at that point were very much involved with death squads and such. He came over and told us that they were real

professional military and he had talked to them and they had said that they were democrats, etc. Binns and I had both served in El Salvador and we said, General, we're not sure you've got a total picture of what the Salvadoran military was like. He just didn't take that well at all and essentially he said we were leftists idiots at best and maybe communists at worst. So, these were the kinds of people who came down to Honduras during those first, between the November election and the January 20th inauguration.

Q: Well, let's talk a little about this.

WALKER: Sure.

Q: I mean, for example you have the people under sort of the sponsorship of Jesse Helms who is a senator and essentially sort of, well not ex cathedra, but coming down outside the administration to come on down and how did they act? I mean I get almost the feeling.

WALKER: Does the word 'arrogant'?

Q: I get a feeling that in a way this is almost a replication of the very famous trip during the '50s of Cohn and Schine going through Europe, going to USIA places. This was under Senator McCarthy and screaming about leftist books in USIA libraries.

WALKER: I totally agree with that. It was very similar. They came in with much the same. I used to be a student of the McCarthy years, Cohn and Schine. I remember at the time reading about their arrogance when they went into embassies and talked about what they would do to anyone who was ideologically on the opposite side of the scale from what they were. That was the flavor that came with some of these visitors. We're coming in. Ronald Reagan is a very conservative president. Jesse Helms is going to be very important in terms of Latin America. He's interested in it. We're his staffers that deal with this. We're looking for people who aren't with us and our coming crusade sort of thing. Very much that way.

Jack Binns was obviously the first victim of this. He's just come out with a book about six months ago that describes what he was trying to do and continue as a professional Foreign Service Officer, but in came these people who had no real authority to act the way they were acting. We want to see the president. We want to go and tell the leadership here what Reagan is going to be doing in terms of policy. We're not going to be like the Carter administration. What do you do? Do you try and reason with these sort of ideologues? It was a very tough couple of months, no question about it. Then, of course, the names started coming out as to who might replace Binns and the name that finally landed was John Negroponte. A career Foreign Service Officer. The transition from Binns to Negroponte was a very difficult one.

Q: Before we move to that, you've got these guys running around and here you have a government, you're dealing with the Honduran government, you hadn't been there very long, but I mean were people from the government saying who the hell are these people,

how serious? In other words, trying to put these people into context and that put you in a difficult situation.

WALKER: As I say it was a difficult situation to be in. Not too many of them came to ask us who they were. We would call up and say so and so, young senate staffer is in town and he is a staffer for Jesse Helms. The Honduran government, even this sort of ineffectual occasionally drunken government realized the U.S. was very important to them and followed events in the U.S. with some interest. Obviously the Honduran military is a conservative military and I think they thought they weren't very happy with any sounds that came out of the Carter administration about human rights in Honduras. So, they obviously were pleased that the conservative administration was coming in. I think they thought this was going to be good for them. They were more than pleased to receive people who claimed they were emissaries from the incoming White House. We just sort of stood back.

Another fellow who came down was Ambassador William Middendorf who later became I think it was the Reagan administration's first ambassador to the OAS.

Q: He had been ambassador to the Netherlands.

WALKER: He had been ambassador I think to the Netherlands, but what he really was, he apparently.

Q: The Secretary of the Navy?

WALKER: Something like that, yes, he had been something in the defense department. What he really was was a Wall Street insider guy who made tens of millions of dollars and was thought to be sort of a financial genius in some very small part of Wall Street trading. He was the recognized expert in whatever this slice of New York finance is and he made a lot of money there. I am not going to take away from him his abilities in that slice of Wall Street. But in terms of American diplomacy he was an utter and utter disaster who in his couple of years at the OAS made America look like a laughing stock. He had no Spanish. He came on a couple of trips to Honduras while I was there. He carried a little camera around with him and every place you went he would take out his little camera and insist on taking pictures for the historic record. Let us have a picture for the historic record. We'd go to see the foreign minister. Well, let's take a little picture, you know, Bill take our picture. You're driving down the street and he yells stop. The car has to stop and he jumps out and says he wants a picture for the historic record of me in front of that church. You'd say, sir, we're already 15 minutes to see the president. Oh, that's okay, he can wait. I mean it was very difficult to deal with this man.

The day before he left on the first trip I'll never forget we're driving to the airport, he said, "What's the art scene like here?" I said, "The art scene? Well, there's not much of an art scene." He said, "Well, I collect paintings. Is there anyone here who is an artist?" I said, "Well, down in the Maya Hotel there's a sort of a gallery and they've got a lot of pictures on the wall. I'm not quite sure who they are. I've heard that some of them,

they're all, the most famous artist that I've heard of this man and his name is Rodriguez, he's just died. But his son and they all paint the same little picture of a little village with the same little dog in the corner with a little tail." He says, "Oh, I'd like to see those." So, we turn around, we go back to the Maya Hotel. We go into this gallery which is also a tobacco stand and they sell candy there and sure enough there's a wall of these pictures and Ambassador Middendorf looks at the wall and the woman comes over and he says, "How much is that painting up there?" She gives him a figure, which is way over priced in my mind. He said, "Well, I'll take them all." I said, "What?" He said, "Yes, I give them to my secretaries and stuff. Yes, I'll take them all." This guy was Looney tunes. Anyway, he was our ambassador to the OAS.

Q: Tell me about the changeover. I mean, how did, I know that when the Reagan administration came in that our assistant secretary for Latin America, what's his name, he was immediately kicked out. He was given 12 hours.

WALKER: Oh, I know who you mean, Bill Bowdler.

Q: Yes.

WALKER: When the Reagan people came in and in fact even before they came in, he was essentially told that he had lost Nicaragua. And Jim Cheek, who was a career officer serving under him as Central American DAS, he was thought to have lost Nicaragua because he went down and talked to the Sandinista leadership and came back and said they're not as bad as they've been painted. Well, the Reagan people got rid of these guys immediately. Bowdler left the Service, was forced into retirement. Jim Cheek was sent as DCM to Nepal and was in exile for the next 12 years. It was a tough transition. It was a very tough transition in which career officers who were more than prepared to shift their emphasis and move in a new direction if that was the policy guidance from the White House were nevertheless suspect because they had served under Carter.

Q: How bad when you arrived there in 1980 were human rights because this was the major emphasis of the Carter administration. How bad were they?

WALKER: In Honduras, again, in comparison to what was going on in El Salvador, you're talking about Mount Everest versus an ant hill. Honduras, a very sleepy, backward, third world, impoverished, mostly peasant country. You didn't want to fall into the hands of the police. They were not nice people. They did not do nice things to you. But they were also terribly incompetent and usually you'd fall into their hands even though you'd done bad things. The human rights situation was not great, but it was mostly the problem of the country's poverty, the country's backwardness, the country's third worldness if you will. I don't think during the time we were there there was much in the way of bad things happening to people in terms of their politics. It started to happen. Some of the things that were going on in El Salvador spilled over. One, political kidnappings. Kidnappings of wealthy people for money to finance the revolution. When things got tough for those who were doing it in El Salvador, they saw an opportunity to come over into Honduras and pick off some of the richer folks; so we had a couple of

those. Those resulted in the police and the military doing things that they otherwise were not doing. Panicking, we've got Salvadoran terrorists over here, we're going to have to do something about it. Again, nothing on the scale of what was going on in El Salvador.

Were peasants treated well by authorities? No. Were people who were arrested and treated well or were they given their rights or did they go to a fair trial, etc.? No. But this had been Honduras for hundreds of years. It really wasn't that big of an issue. Our main focus was let's get this civilian government in place. Let's get the military out of power. This will diminish the likelihood of bad things continuing to happen. Maybe we can get the rule of law started here. Maybe we can have some good things happen. That was what we were trying to do under the Carter years. Comes the Reagan years, because I was there a second year under Reagan, it became much more of: Honduras is the place where we can work to try and turn things around in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Q: Well, how did the, you were saying the transition, did Binns, was he pulled out immediately?

WALKER: Yes. He was, I'm not very good on the dates, but he was told he'd be leaving. He was told right away he'd be leaving by the transition team that was in Washington and that his replacement was a fellow named John Dimitri Negroponte. Jack Binns had good connections in the Foreign Service informal information network. So, he was calling people up to find out what was going to happen to him, what would he get as an onward assignment and also who was this guy Negroponte who was coming down. What he heard and passed on was not encouraging. He thought it was going in a very dark direction. This was brought home to him by some of these visitors who were coming down and they were telling him in no uncertain terms that he was on his way out and they were going to bring someone down who was a real American. Jack was a very serious career officer and I know he offered his successor whatever facilitative advice and help he could give, but it was clear from the first couple of encounters that the incoming ambassador wanted no advice from Jack Binns, wanted no help from Jack Binns, get out of there as soon as I can, I'm on my way sort of thing.

Q: You must have felt sort of uneasy to say the least because the DCM was just picked by an ambassador, but particularly under these circumstances.

WALKER: Correct.

Q: We're talking about people are coming with a state of mind rather than just another job.

WALKER: Correct and not too long after we heard that Jack was going and that someone named Negroponte was coming down, I received a call from John Negroponte. It was a totally professional call. He said, "Mr. Walker, I wanted to call you and tell you in person that I will be bringing my own DCM down. I don't know you, but I wanted to call you and tell you before I arrived. I didn't want to arrive and tell you after meeting you when you might think it was because of the way you looked or something else. I want to have

my own DCM.” I said, “I thoroughly understand. When do you want me to leave?” He said, “Well, the fellow I picked as DCM is someone who was with me in Southeast Asia. I’ve known him for many years, but he’s never served in Latin America and he’s never been a DCM and he’s a consular officer. I believe he’s done mostly refugee affairs. He’s going to have to go to the DCM course. He’s going to have to go to Spanish. He’s going to have to go and take the political course so it might be a few months that we’ll overlap. Do you mind staying until Shep gets there?” I said, “No, you tell me when you want me out of there and that’s when I’ll leave.” Negroponte came down and I guess in the first couple months of 1982.

Q: So, he took quite a while?

WALKER: I’m not sure on that date. I felt like I was there with him for a full year, but it was probably less than that which is an indication that it wasn’t the most comfortable six or eight months of my career. It turned out that Shep Lowman who was the fellow who replaced me is a Southeast Asia expert. He’s married to a Vietnamese woman. His fame is of having gone into Vietnam after we had pulled out and rescuing the family of his wife and he brought out hundreds if I understand it.

Q: Also, he was dealing with refugees for a long time.

WALKER: Yes, that was his specialty.

Q: He had a long history of that.

WALKER: Yes. Anyway, Shep went to Spanish class, but he had a bad hearing problem. He wore a hearing aid and he never really captured much Spanish. Then he took the DCM course and as I say he took the political course or something like that because he wasn’t a political officer. It took him seven, eight months to get there so I was there during that time with John Negroponte.

The way the embassy did business dramatically shifted. We continued to push for a democratic election for a civilian to come in as president. John Negroponte did a good bit on that side. He got to know the candidates. He got to know their staffers and lo and behold a fellow named Roberto Suazo Cordova of the liberal party was elected and he was the better candidate. The fellow from the more Conservative Party was a real scalawag. But during that seven or eight months whatever it was, the policy of contact with the Contras was reversed or was dropped I should say. Ambassador Negroponte certainly at the beginning and maybe this is natural, he was not sure what he was dealing with here. He came in and I, his DCM, was a product of the Binns time. Another very strong performer in the country team who later became ambassador to Honduras and is probably the best known American ambassador in the history of Honduras was Chris Arcos. Chris was the PAO at the time. Chris had been there for a couple of years already. He’s a Mexican American, bilingual in Spanish. So he was very knowledgeable about what was going on in Honduras. The military attaché had been there for a year or so.

Ambassador Negroponte I'm not sure totally took us into his confidence at the beginning. I think he was a bit wary of us in terms of thinking maybe we represented the old order and were not willing to move in this new direction. So there were some uncomfortable days, weeks, months, in terms of that transition. We also had some events that put a lot of pressure on the embassy. We had a couple of airplane hijackings. This was back when planes were still being taken over by armed people. We had a couple of those.

Q: Who was hijacking whom?

WALKER: The one I best remember was a Tan-Sahsa, which was the national airline of Honduras. One of their 707s was taken over by some young revolutionaries, Honduran revolutionaries I guess who were emulating what was going on in other parts of the world. This plane sat on the tarmac out at Toncontin airport, the Tegucigalpa airport, for three or four days in the broiling sun. At the end the passengers escaped, they broke open the doors and all jumped out in the middle of the night and ran for their lives. A couple of them broke their legs jumping out of the plane and they all came off the plane terribly dehydrated from being in the hot sun in this plane for I think it was four days. There were 20 some Americans onboard. There was an NBC TV crew onboard. We were very involved in trying to resolve the standoff. We had Delta team come down.

Q: These would be highly trained military.

WALKER: Anti-terrorist swat teams sort of types. My office was taken over. I was the coordinator of everything we were trying to do because Ambassador Negroponte was, it's hard to explain how he was, kept himself above the fray. We set up a TacSat, tactical communication satellite operation in my office. We were in constant contact with all the players in Washington and elsewhere. As I say the issue was resolved at the end of four days in the middle of the night when somehow the bad guys went to sleep or went off their guard. It was mostly the Americans broke open the door and everybody jumped out of the plane and ran for their lives, those who could run. As I say a couple of them broke their legs, including one of the guys from the NBC TV crew. It was an interesting night. I was in the embassy at the time and I remember, I think it was like 2:00 AM, 2:30 AM and as soon as we heard that they'd all escaped and they were all in good shape and the Hondurans had taken over the airplane and captured the bad guys. As soon as I heard that flashed in from the airport and that the 22, 23 or 24 Americans were safe I got on the horn and called Ambassador Negroponte at the residence. I woke him up. I said, "Mr. Ambassador. Great news. The Americans are freed, they're safe. We're bringing them into the embassy. We've got a doctor here. We've got a CIA psychiatrist here. We've got some people who want to talk to them and find out what went on during those four days." Negroponte said, "Okay, Bill, I'll be in the morning and keep the lid on until I get there." I said, "Sir, I think you should come in now. This is, the embassy is surrounded by press. NBC has sent down a vice president. They're very anxious to get their people back. There's TV cameras all over the place." He said, "Bill, it's 2:00 AM, I'm going back to sleep, see you in the morning." I said, "Great, okay." What do you do? You hang up. I started organizing things and sure enough a couple of minutes later the phone rang and it was John and he said, "Well, Bill I thought it over and I think I will come in." So,

obviously he'd been lying there weighing the pros and cons of going back to sleep and decided maybe he should take my advice and come in.

I went down there and we had a big wall around the embassy and a security gate that was pretty tough to get through. I remember going outside the gate and there was all the press with all their lights set up. They were asking me where were the hostages. I said they're coming into the embassy, but these are people who have been suffering for four days and God knows what their health is. We want to bring them into the embassy. They said, well, can we just shoot their entry? I said, sure. Where's the ambassador? Is he at the embassy? I said, no, he'll be in here momentarily. He's coming right down, as soon as I told him he was ready to come down. I stood out there outside the wall waiting for the ambassador to come and finally a car approached and I was hoping it was the rescued victims of this hijacking, but it turned out it was the ambassador. So, all the TV lights went on at once and they filmed the car coming in and they opened the gate and all the TV people came pouring into the embassy lot there. As I say we weren't sure if it was the hostages or the ambassador, but I knew it was the ambassador. The door opens and John Negroponte gets out and behind him is Lady Diana who is his wife, an English lady and I swear to God she looked like she was going to the ascot races. She had on a big summer hat and she had a huge picnic basket over her arm and there were some wine bottles sticking out of this. This is at 3:00 AM.

Q: Well, these guys were dehydrated.

WALKER: This was all on camera. John said a few words to the assembled press and told them he would come out and tell them how things were with the hostages as soon as they got there. Sure enough a few minutes later the bus came up and 20 some hostages got out and you can imagine they were a sorry looking lot. They were also extremely thankful in that first blush of being free. They had gotten free, they thought by their own devices, and we took them into the embassy and we put them into a room with all the people there who had been working on their problem. Mrs. Negroponte immediately started passing out glasses of wine, breaking open the wine and little cheeses and stuff. The CIA psychiatrist who happened to be someone I'd known from the previous incarnation came over to me to say, Bill, Mr. Ambassador I don't think these people should be drinking. They've been dehydrated for four days and alcohol. Well, before he even got the words out of his mouth, these people were going through all sorts of emotional outbursts including a couple who as soon as they had a couple of sips of wine began denouncing the United States because they felt we had not done enough for them, etc. They were going through all these emotional jags that you do when you come out of a scary experience like that. I mean it was sheer bedlam and I was thinking oh my God, I've got to take these people out and introduce them to the press? I don't think that's wise, Mr. Ambassador. It was really a strange evening, a very strange evening. I don't know what the NBC vice president and his entourage thought about the way the embassy handled this. Anyway. It worked. We got them home safe.

We had a number of things like that. Things were starting to happen in Honduras. The major banker in the country's car was cut off, his driver and bodyguard were killed and

he was dragged off and held for ransom. He happened to be an American citizen as well as an Italian citizen, as well as a Honduran citizen. So we jumped in and his family paid a lot of money and they got him freed. I went over and interviewed him and found out what had been happening to him. He was convinced and we were convinced that it was a Salvadoran gang that had run out of victims in El Salvador. So Honduras was being dragged into what was going on in the rest of Central America during this period of transition.

Q: Was the embassy under a terrorist threat and all that?

WALKER: Yes. We had several incidents in which it was evident that there were people who were prepared to blame the embassy for anything that was happening and then come and demonstrate or do other things. We had a drive-by shooting of our AID building. The chancery, the embassy proper, was on one side of the main street in Tegucigalpa or one of the main streets and directly opposite was our AID building where the consulate was also. So, that was the public access building. Not particularly well secured. A fairly flimsy building in comparison to the embassy which was solid stone. One night again I was called and told that there had been a drive-by shooting at the embassy, at the AID building and I went down and surveyed the damage and again called and told the ambassador what was happening. We never got to the bottom of who had done it. There were a couple of groups going around saying they were the revolutionary army of this or the other thing, usually named after some obscure Honduran who had died 100 years earlier. No one knew who he was until his name was brought up in the context of something like that. There were a couple of things like that. There was a bomb that went off.

There was an empty lot next to the embassy to the main wall going around the main embassy and it was put up for sale by the owners. It was just an empty lot. We decided to buy it and we were going to put up a club there, put up a restaurant and a club so we didn't have to go off campus to find food. When the old owners of the property left, but before we got in in any sort of serious way, one day a marine guard patrolling the outside of our wall discovered what appeared to be a tunnel, the beginning of a tunnel. Everybody of course immediately jumped to the conclusion that sappers were going under us and were about to either blow us up or do something along those lines. We brought in the regional security officer who was out of Panama, a friend of mine. We brought in all sorts of people, anti-terrorist experts, to determine what to do. We decided we would pretend we hadn't found it and we'd suck them in so they'd come back to dig more of the tunnel and we'd discover who was trying to undermine and blow up the American Embassy. We watched the tunnel for days and weeks and nothing ever happened. So maybe it was just a big rabbit or something. There was the perception that things were starting to happen and if they did happen, the U.S. Embassy would obviously be a target.

Q: Well, Negroponte had come out of, he had been very much involved in the Vietnam business.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: Did he sort of bring this, you know, Vietnam, the big boys were playing there. And sometimes when you come to a smaller place, you kind of bring, you're ready for the big time and it's a little hard to adjust to the fact that it's a sandlot.

WALKER: Yes, I think you've captured some of the flavor of what was happening. I don't know the full story of John Negroponte's career trajectory. I know he came to fame in the early '70s in the context of Henry Kissinger's involvement with trying to bring peace to Southeast Asia. He was involved I think in the Paris peace talks. He along with Winston Lord were young career officers with Kissinger. I am told and I just know this by scuttlebutt that at some point he and Kissinger came to a parting of the ways if you can say that about a Nobel Peace laureate and a lowly Foreign Service Officer. But something happened and John was sent off to exile. He went off to Quito, Ecuador, I know, as like number two or three in the political section. But, you're right, he played in the very big leagues, which was the Vietnam peace talks. When he came to Honduras, I think what you're describing is right. But I think, this is projecting myself into John's mind, I think he felt if they're sending someone as important as me to here, this must be the Vietnam of today or they wouldn't send me. Some of the things that happened made Central America the Vietnam of the earlier decade. It was the number one foreign policy debate in the United States throughout the '80s. God knows I know that because later on I was the DAS for Central America during the days when it became truly the number one issue.

So, yes, I think when he got there most people saw it as the sandlot as compared to the Yankee Stadium that he had played in earlier, but he and others were determined to make that into the Yankee Stadium of the '80s and did so.

Q: He's presently nominated to be?

WALKER: Ambassador to the United Nations, to be the permanent representative of the United States to the United Nations. Someone sent me an editorial from I believe the New York Times saying that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee should take a very hard look at what he did while ambassador to Honduras because bad things really started happening in Honduras during the three years he was there. It's a problem for him and I know because he's called me up several times in the last month to discuss, you know, Bill, you should know because you served as ambassador to El Salvador. What's your definition of the word death squad? Bill, did you ever think Honduras had the same sort of human rights situation as El Salvador did? He tells me this because he says you know, I'm going up for the confirmation hearing and these are the sort of questions that I'm told that are going to be asked. So, I'm trying to help him.

Q: Well, of course, yes. We're not just talking about John Negroponte; we're talking about the thrust of the Reagan. I mean we are the tools of an administration and so we have an administration that came in that was not going to put up with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

WALKER: Correct.

Q: When you start messing around in other countries you're asking for trouble as we've discovered. It's easy in Washington to think that these are easy to manipulate, but all hell happens if you start messing around. Did you begin to feel any disquiet while you were there? In the time you were there until you left, about things that were happening? You know, sort of a thrust?

WALKER: Absolutely. I mean as I've described my service in El Salvador four or five years earlier I was sort of the champion of human rights in our embassy in El Salvador. I was the one who sent the dissent channel cable in to say to Mr. Carter, if you're coming in on a human rights platform, relieving this ambassador at this time is going to send the wrong signal in El Salvador. I think it did. I saw myself as coming out of that sort of context and here I'm now the DCM in an embassy in which we're starting to say nice things about the local military. We're starting to say, we're going to have to do some things here to make this ludicrous military become a more professional military and I just saw no hope of that happening. Still, 20 years later I don't think there's any hope of that happening.

Yes, I felt a great deal of disquiet. The fact was that I and Chris Arcos and some of the other officers in the embassy were starting to see things going in the wrong direction. We would go to the ambassador or we would go to Washington when we were in Washington and say, hey there are some things happening here that might, that we might pay a price for later on and having it dismissed. Well, that's old think. New think is we've got to build up Honduras as a fortress of democracy. They've just had this election, right? They've just returned to a civilian government, right? So, obviously they're on the right track. We can defend them and we can use them to show the Sandinistas that there's a price to pay for what they're doing in El Salvador. Yes, a great deal of disquiet. These folks that came down claiming to represent the Reagan administration and I don't know if the White House really knew what these people were doing, what they were about. But they were certainly trying to portray themselves as not only coming from the Jesse Helms wing of the Republican Party, but we're the wave that's coming in. Ronald Reagan, we're on the same wavelength with him and he's not going to tolerate this. As I say, some of them were kind of wacky characters. I mean people that you really wondered about their mental state in some of the things that they were saying. So, yes, disquiet is a mild form of the discomfort.

Q: During the time you were there, did you see an increase in our putting military equipment into... Well, you were saying it was just starting.

WALKER: Yes, even under Binns we were sending in MTT's, military training teams, to help the Honduran military become a little more aware of what an army does and how they should do it. Under Binns the rules were very clear. They don't come in carrying weapons. They are very, very careful about where they wear their uniforms. They don't come into Tegucigalpa wearing uniforms. If they are out on the borders, fine, but no

weapons, no uniforms in town, that sort of thing. He put a bunch of rules in place to stay on top of our military and what we might be doing.

The next period with the Reagan administration, of course this stepped up considerably; I think the place where I noticed it happening to a greater extent than on the military side was on the intelligence side. Our station in Honduras started building up very quickly with the Reagan people coming in. They sent down people who had been in Southeast Asia, who had been in Vietnam. I think the station well at least doubled if not tripled within that seven, eight months I was there. Then I went away for three years and when I came back in '85ish as the DAS and went down to Salvador, of course, the station had become an enormous operation with satellite agents out all over the place.

Q: Were you able to get any flavor of the people there? I mean were they talking differently?

WALKER: You mean the agency people?

Q: The agency people.

WALKER: Absolutely. As I say the people that came in later were veterans of the Southeast Asia conflict; were counterinsurgency experts. One or two of them were real hardheaded anti-communist types. Now, this was a reflection of what was happening up here in headquarters, up in Langley. The people that were in charge of the Central American task force which I don't know if it was called that at the beginning, but it became the Central American task force, the leadership were all these Southeast Asia veterans and terrorist counterinsurgency types. The people they sent to the field in Central America were those types, too. Some of them were very good. Some of them were very professional. But a couple of them were kind of off the wall types.

Q: But their operation? I mean they were operators, obviously in Vietnam, I mean they were part of the military effort.

WALKER: Yes. Well, going back I mentioned this colonel who was the head of the Honduran intelligence.

Q: The guy with the gold.

WALKER: With the gold medallions, big round gold things hanging around his neck and the beautiful silken shirts, open buttons down to his navel sort of thing, driving around. We found out that he had imported I think it was three Ferraris through Puerto Cortes in X number of months. Honduras is not the place where you see Ferraris on the road, but he drove one. So, he was Mr. Sporty. He was in a bitter conflict with another colonel who was vying to become the number one replacement to General Paz Garcia as the head of the Honduran military. They were in a real nasty struggle for leadership. This is what Honduran military officers did with their time. They competed among themselves and formed alliances with each other to take over. Colonel Leonidas Torres, the guy with the

gold chain, was in charge of intelligence so he was supposedly in the know about lots of things. He was up against Gustavo Alvarez who was a less flamboyant colonel, but this tough guy colonel. I guess we, the U.S., the station, Negroponte, looked at these two guys and decided that of the two Gustavo Alvarez was the guy we should put our money on.

Q: Mr. Tough Guy.

WALKER: Mr. Tough Guy, he said all the right things to us anyway and before I left Negroponte had established a pretty good relationship with this Colonel Alvarez. Colonel Alvarez did in fact overcome his opposition, did in fact become leader of the Honduran army and did in fact become the strong man of Honduras during the days of the Contras. He was the guy that we went to to get things done in Honduras. He is also the guy who supposedly put together a special battalion within the military that went out and eliminated political enemies. This is the place where I think John Negroponte right now has the greatest difficulty in explaining that yes, he dealt a lot with Colonel Alvarez, General Alvarez by now, but knew nothing about this side of him which was Mr. Tough Guy eliminating political enemies by extrajudicial means.

We sometimes involve ourselves in another nation's affairs in thinking that we can make things happen the way we want them to happen and usually it doesn't come out the way we think it can happen. I was the ambassador to El Salvador when we were giving them more than 50% of their national budget. We were involved in everything they were doing. If our assistance ever stopped they were in deep deep kimchi. If ever there was an American pro consul in a position to make a local government do something the United States wanted to be done, it was me in El Salvador in 1985, '86, '87. The very survival of their government depended on U.S. assistance. That having been said, maybe because I was just not very good at it, but I found severe limitations on our ability to get any foreign government to do anything we want when it sees that its best interests lie elsewhere. This was over and over the case in El Salvador. The most exciting example was the killing of the Jesuits, you know, that could have brought our policy crashing down around us unless and until the government started cooperating and they never did right to the very bitter end. So, with all the tools we had in our possession at that point in time we were unable to get them to do what we thought they had to do.

Q: What about, before we leave Honduras, what about the embryonic Contras, the residue, the people who fled from Nicaragua? We were talking about the military types, not just the refugees, but the military.

WALKER: The civilians that came out of Nicaragua when the Sandinistas took over, the first wave were followers of Somoza. Those who had money, those who had talents that could be converted into a new life, a new profession for the most part went to New Orleans. They went to Miami, they went to the U.S. Those who didn't have English or didn't think they could make it in the U.S. went to Mexico. What remained were those without the resources or without the talents or in the case of cigar makers they were, a whole bunch went into Honduras and started making cigars there which now are very

good cigars. Cigar lovers around the world praise Honduran cigars, but they're really mostly made by Nicaraguans who were pushed into Honduras by the Sandinistas.

The Contras at the beginning for most of the time I was there were pretty scurrilous folks especially the ones who had come to the embassy to try and enlist our support. Give us the arms, give us the resources, we'll go back there. These were not people who were going to risk their lives to bring down the Sandinistas. Over time the Contras became a real fighting army fighting force. Unfortunately by the time they became that the world had lost patience with them. The U.S. had lost patience with them in '85, '86, '87. Iran Contra broke over our heads. But I could see the transition that some real leaders were coming up and were in fact going into Nicaragua and trying to do things against the Sandinistas, but that initial wave were not among them. The ex-Somoza officers were not Contra leaders.

Q: What were you getting, I mean, here you are a professional Foreign Service Officer, and somewhat at least insulated from these political winds that are blowing around in the United States. Were you seeing, what were you getting from what was happening in Nicaragua and the Sandinistas at this time, we're talking '80, '82.

WALKER: In the last months of the Carter administration, assistant secretary Bowdler, deputy assistant secretary Jim Cheek, other people, went down and tried to talk sense into the Sandinistas, especially in terms of exporting the revolution to El Salvador. That is something we can't tolerate. They thought they had gotten across to the Sandinistas. In comes the Reagan administration and disowns this previous attempt which was seen as much too soft. We're not going to let the Sandinistas just back out of El Salvador; we want to bring them down in Nicaragua. We want the Sandinistas out of our hair in Central America. The fellow who came in to be the assistant secretary in replacing Bowdler was Tom Enders who was not a Latin Americanist, who came out of Europe and elsewhere.

Q: He had also been DCM in Cambodia and he was an economist.

WALKER: Cambodia, bits in Southeast Asia and he was an economist, yes, extremely intelligent and six foot five, six seven something like that.

Q: Too tall.

WALKER: Too tall Tom. Enders, a career officer, I'm not sure how to put it, was in a difficult position. He certainly didn't follow the sort of Helms staffer sort of approach to Central America. He was trying to take a more centrist course, a more rational course. We were getting more sort of reasonable instructions, but it was plain to see what you were reading in the papers and what we were getting from other sources the Reagan administration was really out to get the Sandinistas one way or another. We were obviously going to build up Honduran capabilities and within that context Contra capabilities. I don't know, maybe we thought that just putting together a sort of a Contra threat to the Sandinistas would bring them to their senses in terms of what they were

doing in El Salvador. It didn't work if we thought it was going to happen without actually unleashing the Contras. I don't know if I was naive or if I was being cut out of something. John Negroponte didn't share a lot with his DCM. John Negroponte did his own thing and I'm not quite sure I know exactly what all those things were. At first it might have been just this sort of feeling that he didn't know who we were who had served under Binns or maybe it was just the way he was going to run the embassy, but he didn't share a lot.

Q: Were you getting reports from any of the other people saying the Sandinistas are really a pretty nasty crew or is it it's just another one of these Latin American.

WALKER: No, they were seen as being quite different from anything other than you know, Fidel Castro and the boys that took over in Cuba. They were seen as a serious threat to Central America in terms of El Salvador, Honduras, weak, timid countries that did have a lot of internal problems in terms of poverty and militaries in control and that sort of thing. So, yes, the Sandinistas were seen as really very disruptive to the way we wanted Central America to develop. I think we were sincere in wanting it to get out from under these military regimes and elect centrist democratic regimes and alternation of power between one party and another. Instead the Sandinistas came in and tried to set up a one party state that was going to be in control of the army and be in control of just about everything. That was very worrisome.

Q: While you were there what was the role of Cuba? Looking at the map you see Honduras is probably the next to the Yucatan Peninsula, the closest of the Latin American places to Cuba. Were they playing a part in that?

WALKER: I'm sure they were playing a part. I'm sure they were sending modest checks to the local communist party, the local revolutionary parties. There were some incipient groups that claimed to be ready to die for the revolution, but during my time there they were pretty ludicrous and we didn't pay much attention to them. There were always stories about Cubans landing on the north coast and caching weapons and this sort of stuff. We never really ran into any real hard evidence that any of this was taking place. You were told that the Sandinistas were coming in in columns out in the wild space that was the border between Honduras and Nicaragua. It's a very desolate part of Central America. We never saw any real evidence of that certainly during my time. There were these groups. I mean this one group, PRTC was it? Anyway, some initials and they were the revolutionary group and there was one instance when they kidnapped an American doctor and this doctor ended up in a hospital up in the hills around Tegucigalpa. It was the most Keystone Kop operation I've ever encountered. I mean truly Keystone Kop. These were not groups ready to play in even the minor leagues of the revolution. Later on I think again there was this overflow from El Salvador. I think the Salvadorans came in and gave them some advice and maybe gave them some assistance, maybe gave them some encouragement and I think probably in the later '80s they became a little more serious. But during the time I was there about all they could do was if something horrendous happened they could get a mob together. They could get speakers up on a stand in downtown Tegucigalpa and raise hell, let's march on the embassy and get a

crowd of a few thousand and come up and chant in front of the embassy, but that was about it. The shooting of our AID mission was about the most serious thing that happened while I was there.

I spent most of my time especially during the months that I was there with Negroponte dealing in great part with internal to the embassy problems and issues, personnel problems. We had an outbreak of, this happened just before Jack Bins left, claims that some of our AID officers were growing marijuana, were passing out white powders at their parties and Binns took a very tough stand on it. He sent a couple of them home and alienated the AID mission from thereon in. We had a big AID mission. Most of them had come almost as a group from AID Bolivia. Apparently AID Bolivia had been a bit of a swinging AID mission. When they came to Honduras they continued their swinging ways and this led to some very serious problems. *Didn't I tell you about our AID mission director?*

Q: No.

WALKER: The day John Negroponte arrived to take over, his first day in the office, so it was a Monday morning I guess. I was sitting at my desk and we're all nervous waiting for the new boss to come in and plant his mark on the embassy. About 8:00 in the morning I'm sitting there and the phone rings behind me and I pick it up. It's the AID mission director and he's calling and saying, "Hey, Bill, listen I won't be able to make the country team meeting this morning." I said, "Well, why not John, it's the ambassador's first country team meeting and you're a big part of it. I would hope you would be here unless it's really a serious reason as to why you can't be here. Is it a serious reason?" He said, "Well, yes, it's kind of serious, but I'm not in Tegucigalpa. I'm down in San Pedro Sula." I said, "Oh, my God. Okay." He said, "Yes, I was kidnapped last night." I said, "You were kidnapped?" He said, "Yes, I was taken prisoner and kidnapped." I said, "Jesus, that's serious. When were you kidnapped?" He said, "Well, I don't know what it was. I don't know whether it was criminal or political, but two guys grabbed me and took me in my car and we drove down to San Pedro Sula, but I'm okay. I got away from them." I said, "You got away from them?" He said, "Yes, we were rushing through town an hour or so ago and we had a car crash and when the police started to the car crash these two guys ran away. So, I'm okay. I'm in the police station down here." I said, "Jesus, John you better get back here right away. We've got to find out if it was political. The AID mission director kidnapped. I'm going to be calling the State Department operations center right away to tell them you're okay, but to tell them that this has happened. Look, I'm going to send down the defense attaché's plane to pick you up. You get back here as soon as possible." He said, "Well, you know, I've got to give a statement." I said, "Look, forget the statement. As soon as that plane gets there, you get on it and you get back here because this is going to be a big deal John." This was right at the point where ambassadors were being kidnapped.

Q: Oh, yes.

WALKER: It was a real big deal. So, I say, "I'm sending the plane down." He says, "No, don't bother, I'll drive back in my car." I said, "No, John you're coming back right away." I hung up. I called the defense attaché and I said, "Get in your plane and fly down to San Pedro Sula and pick up John. He was kidnapped last night." I immediately get on the phone and call the operations center and tell them what happened. They say, oh my God, we'll send out a team. We want to find out what happened. We've got to get to the bottom of this. We hope it's criminal, but it doesn't sound like it. It might be. I said, "Well, we'll have Olson back here in an hour or so and we'll find out what he knows and what he can tell us and send somebody down here to interview him and debrief him."

I'm sitting there and Negroponte walks in at this moment with his briefcase ready to start his first day. I say, "Mr. Ambassador, you're not going to believe this, but our AID mission director was kidnapped last night. He's down in San Pedro." John just looks at me and says, "Oh, really, well you take care of it Bill," and he goes into his office. A couple of hours later the attaché comes in, the assistant attaché actually, the pilot, comes into my office and he says, "Okay, well, I got the mission director." I say, "Where is he?" He says, "Well, he went up to his house first. He wanted to change clothes." I said, "He wanted to change clothes?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Well, God damn it, I told him to get in here right away. I mean Washington; I've got 20 calls already. They pushed the button in Washington and all the agencies involved and there's the FBI, CIA, military, everybody is calling down and sending people down. This is a big deal. We've got to find out what his story is right away." He said, "Well, it was probably better to let him go home. He's probably tired."

An hour or so later John arrives at the embassy. John is a Harvard graduate law school, Harvard law, Mr. button down. The most button down guy I've ever seen. A very serious guy. Previously AID mission director in Bolivia. All the people that work under him came with him from Bolivia. John comes in and we sit him down and we start asking him questions about what happened. Well, he's got this story. The night before last he had given a party at his house, his wife was in the States. He had given a party at his house for his senior staff and a visitor from the mission in Guatemala. The party broke up at about 1:00 AM and at the end of the party he had had a couple of drinks and he decided that gee, he's still wide awake, he didn't want to go to bed. He sort of thought to himself, gee, I don't know what Tegucigalpa looks like at night. I've never been out at night before in Tegucigalpa. He decided to get in his car and drive down and look around Tegucigalpa about 1:00 AM. He said he invited some of the others to go with him. No one wanted to go. They all wanted to go home so he did this by himself. All of a sudden he realized he was lost, didn't know Tegucigalpa since he was usually driven by his chauffeur so he stopped at a gas station to see if they could tell him how to get back up the hill to his residence. While he was sitting in his car at the gas station trying to figure out what to do two guys came up on either side of his car and stuck a gun in the window and told him he was going to take them to San Pedro Sula. They drove all through the night and there were a couple of chances even in his description where he had a chance to escape, but didn't. He ended up the next morning in San Pedro Sula screaming through town at 7:00 in the morning had an accident. The two guys ran away.

Okay. We took all this down. I put it into a cable. I called up the Ops Center and told them what had happened. It was still not clear in his mind whether these guys were political types or if they were out for money. He said he had conversations with them, but he wasn't sure, he couldn't say what was the motive. By this time our post RSO and admin officer are out scurrying about trying to prepare for Washington descending upon us with all the people who were going to come down. My admin counselor, an old potbellied guy from 35 years in the Foreign Service came to see me. He said, "Bill, I think we've got a problem here with this one." I said, "Why, what's the problem?" He said, "Well, remember how John was very upset because he lives right across the street from the ambassador and the ambassador has all the security on him and he doesn't have any security on him and was complaining and complaining and complaining?" I said, "Yes, I remember that." He said, "Well, we put some security on him." I said, "Well, what did you do?" He said, "We put a guy at the front gate so that at least he would have someone out front who could determine who was coming in and going out, keeping a record." I said, "Great." He said, "Well, I've got some bad news for you." I said, "What?" He said, "Well, as soon as I heard about this I ran up there to talk to the guard at the gate to find out when the exact time when John had left the night before and so I saw the log book that was kept out at the gate. He left at 1:08 or something like that and he didn't come back that night. But, I've got some bad news for you." I said, "What's the bad news?" He said, "Well, I was looking through the previous pages and discovered that every night that John's wife has been gone, he's gone out at about 1:00 AM and usually comes back about 3:00 AM." I said, "Oh, that is bad news. That's not good." It did sort of indicate that he wasn't telling us the complete truth when he said that he had just gone out this one night because he hadn't seen Tegucigalpa. He said, "Yes, that's right. But the news is even worse." I said, "Oh, God. Everybody likes Mary, his wife, and if this comes out that he's been out cavorting around, that's not good, but okay, what's the worst news?" He said, "The worst news is that when he comes back at 3:00 AM he's had someone with him." I said, "Oh, Jesus. He brought her back to the residence. That's not good." He said, "Oh, no, it's even worse than that." I said, "Oh, Jesus. What's worse than that?" He said, "Well, from the indications there's no names given, but from all the log entries he's come back every night with a man." I said, "Oh, Jesus. Oh Christ."

To make a long story short, if I'd taken the trouble to find out where this gas station was that he said he'd pulled into I would have discovered and asked a few questions about that location because it was in a part of town that is not really very nice. It's the part of town where the gay bars are of Tegucigalpa. The RSO went over to the bar, which was next to the station and sure enough found out that a gringo had been in the night before. Sure enough he had struck up a conversation with two young guys and sure enough he'd come out to his car with the two young guys and this was who had taken him off to San Pedro Sula for whatever Goddamn reason. This became a very tricky issue to deal with.

Q: All the machinery had started.

WALKER: All the machinery. People were coming down. I called up and tried to let AID Washington know that maybe they should just send down one of their people. The administrator of AID whose name I don't remember, the head of AID called up to say

that John is one of my best people. Do everything for him. This is horrendous. It's obviously a political kidnapping. They tried, the shooting of the mission a couple of months ago so it's obviously the bad guys are after our mission people. I said, well, no, it's not quite what it seems. Just send someone down. They sent someone down and John did go home immediately. He never went out again, it didn't destroy his career, but it was a big embarrassment all the way around.

Q: Oh, yes.

WALKER: It also became, there was a theory going around that this was why some of the other people at AID, we had all sorts of horrible problems with our AID mission people. One young officer he got married one day. We all went to the wedding. It was a big success story. This debonair young bachelor had finally been captured by the love of his life and about three weeks later one of the AID char woman came in with child and declared that he was the father of her child. It turned out that during his courtship and right up to his wedding every night he'd been involving himself with this very plain looking char woman and got her pregnant.

Q: Well, but she was there.

WALKER: Yes, she was there, yes. We had just one after another personnel issue of this sort with the AID mission. We sort of came to the conclusion that this had been brought to Honduras from the Bolivia mission where the mission director had his own personal lifestyle and some of the other people around him either knew about it or used this so that when they got into trouble he protected them from some of the things, some of the punishments they might otherwise receive including the ones growing marijuana and passing out white powder at parties and other things.

It wasn't confined to the AID mission. Going back to the Contra connection. One day the station chief came to see me. He said, "Bill, you've got a problem." I said, "What is it?" He said, "Well, the Honduran intelligence people have come to me and told me that they've been following a well to do Honduran who they think is involved in arms trafficking. They don't know if he's involved with the Contras or with revolutionary groups here, but they're pretty sure he's selling arms to bad guys and so they've been following him for quite a while." I said, "What's that got to do with us?" He said, "Well, they've been following him and a couple of times a week he goes up to this mountain place where you can overlook the lights of the city. Every night he goes up there, a car comes in and pulls in alongside of him and someone gets out of the one car and gets into his car. At first they thought he was making arms deals and every once in a while they'd come out and open up the trunk of his car and they'd move something to the other car." I said, "Well, okay. They're on to him. What's that got to do with us?" He said, "Well, they have finally decided to look carefully at the other car and they discovered it's got CD plates on it, it's got diplomatic plates on it. They looked up the plates and it belongs to one of our young consular officers." I said, "Oh, Jesus." "They said they've now looked at this very carefully and done night vision or something and they've checked it out and it's not a man going from the other car it's a woman. So, it's the wife of one of your

consular officers going out there or four times a week jumping into the car with this other guy.” I said, “Oh, great.”

In the meantime, the young consular officer, we have discovered is in fact himself a gun nut and so it's starting to come together. There's something going on here. So, I as the DCM, hearing that the wife of one of my consular officers is jumping into a car up on sort of lover's leap up on top of the city looking out over the city lights three or four times a week, you know, I come to the conclusion, it's probably not an arms deal going on. It's probably something more personal and possibly romantic. I decide rather than going to the officer and asking him what his wife was doing at night I decided to call in the wife and say, hey, you're being observed by Honduran intelligence because they think the guy you're sitting and looking at the city with a couple of times a week is maybe an arms dealer, so maybe you should be a little more careful. I'm not trying to judge you. I'm just saying this is what's happening and they've brought it to our attention. I'd never met his wife and I had the secretary call her up and say, please come in and see the DCM. In comes this very young, very sweet, very naive, very pretty, young woman. She doesn't know what I'm calling her in for. All of a sudden I'm stumbling around trying to get into this subject. I don't want, there's no moral judgment here, I'm not involved in your personal life, but something in your personal life has now become an issue between us and the Honduran authorities and something's got to be done about it. Anyway, as I'm talking to her I'm really stumbling through this because I'm a bit nervous myself about bringing such a subject to this lovely young lady. She gets a smile on her face and it freezes on her face. She's just sitting there with this silly looking grin on her face. At the end of my pitch I say, do you have any comments or do you want to give me your side of the story. She just says no, stands up and walks out. Two days later she leaves for the States. Three days later her husband comes to see me to ask what in the hell did I say to his wife that made her depart the country. I didn't want to really tell him. I said, well, I talked to her about something. I don't know how she took it, but obviously she took it fairly seriously, but you'll have to ask her what it was about.

She left for good. He stayed on. He later became involved in again a question of whether there was an arms trafficking taking place to the Contras. We called him in and found out that not only was he violating Jack Binns' original order of not having anything to do with Contras other than business, the conflict business, but it turned out he had taken one of them in to be his roommate after his wife left. So, living in U.S. government quarters was a Contra leader and unfortunately he was a Contra leader who was an ex-Somoza National Guard type. He was wanted for child molestation charges in Nicaragua and he had done a number of things in Honduras that weren't very nice. When we called in the young consular officer and said you have really violated what was the ambassador's instructions. Maybe it would be better if you went home. We asked for him to be relieved. He was relieved, but before he left we discovered he had an arms supply. He had all sorts of weapons that he was going to try and ship home because he was a gun collector and these were weapons that the Contras had picked up off dead Sandinista officers when they engaged in battle. It was really a screwed up thing. The young consular officer was a civil servant consular officer, not an FSO and were told he would never go overseas again. But, of course, a few years later when I'm in another post and

visiting the post who do I run into but the same guy who is now overseas on another assignment?

I'm telling these stories because this was my life as DCM. It was one sort of strange personnel problem after another. Some in AID, some in State, some in the agency. All of them sort of difficult to deal with.

Q: Well, it reminds me of the stories of O. Henry, a much different thing, but these were Central America were sort of the castaways and castaway vice consuls ended up stranded in Central American somewhere.

WALKER: What we had, there was a lot of pressure, I mean, you're absolutely right. Our AID missions were expanding rapidly and not everybody in AID wanted to go to Central America, so some of the people that came were not their best and their brightest. Consular operations throughout Central America were expanding dramatically.

Q: People trying to get the hell out.

WALKER: Get the hell out. Come to the States. Visa pressures were pretty high. Yes. The Consular Bureau was sending down, consular affairs was sending down people who might otherwise not have gone out. Some of them like this fellow he was not a career Foreign Service Officer. This was his first overseas assignment. He sort of got swept away. His wife obviously got swept away. I think probably to this day he thinks I for some malicious reason broke up his marriage, but it wasn't that at all. I was just telling her to be more careful in whatever it is you're doing. I don't want to know what you're doing in that car. Those were interesting days.

Q: Where did you go after?

WALKER: La Paz, Bolivia, as DCM.

Q: Then you could find out what the AID director had been doing in La Paz.

WALKER: And I found out, yes.

Q: Today is the 6th of September, 2001. Bill, you're off to La Paz, Bolivia. You were there from when to when, I mean, year, dates.

WALKER: I was there late summer of '82 to the summer of '85, three years.

Q: And you were the DCM?

WALKER: DCM.

Q: Okay, how would you, tell me a bit about when you arrived about the government of Bolivia, its economic situation and relations with the United States as you saw it at that time.

WALKER: It's going to sound like a broken record. It's almost identical to the situation I faced going into Tegucigalpa, Honduras two years earlier. Bolivia, when I went down there was in the last couple of week of the government of Garcia Meza, a general who had created what was called the cocaine cartel government. Totally and completely under the control of and corrupted by the cocaine trade. The minister of interior was another Bolivian colonel who was totally, totally corrupt and violent. So, when I got there they had already had the election after much pressure by the international community with us being the principal player, but the other Latin American countries surrounding Bolivia to get away from this Garcia Meza government. They allowed an election and Hernan Siles Zuazo, I guess that's his name had been elected president. The amazing thing in Bolivia was when I first heard about Bolivia in 1952, 30 years earlier when they had the revolution, there were three prominent figures that came out of that revolution. Paz Estenssoro who was the first civilian president in Bolivia after the revolution and he's been president two or three times again. This fellow, Siles Zuazo, who was also sort of his side kick and came in once or twice as president and the third of the revolutionary triumphant was Juan Lechin who was a real nationalistic xenophobic labor leader who ran the miners' union which often resorted to violence.

Q: I was thinking of a bunch of guys running around with dynamite in their belt.

WALKER: That's exactly right. Those were the ones that represented Juan Lechin when he was running for office or whenever he wanted to get his troops out in the street. We saw them a good number of times during my three years in Bolivia. These three guys 30 years later were still running against each other and bitter enemies and rotating the presidency among them and Siles Zuazo was coming in for the second or third time. Juan Lechin still had his miners and Paz Estenssoro had become a very conservative man and was the opponent of Siles Zuazo for political power. Well, Siles Zuazo came in with all the baggage of the revolution of '52, with all the leftist baggage. He brought in with him a bunch of anti-American Marxist Leninists who could barely spell the words, but used the rhetoric to generate street crowds and this sort of thing, many of them very corrupt. At the beginning it looked like it was going to be better than Garcia Meza. It was a civilian government. We praised them. We gave them a lot of assistance and we tried to help them settle in.

At the beginning when they were still getting their feet on the ground we had a number of things happen that showed me sort of what life as the DCM in Bolivia was going to be like. During the days when this government transition was going to take place, we encountered a very dramatic series of events. One of the hallmarks of the outgoing Garcia Meza government was what he had brought into Bolivia from Argentina. He worked very closely with an Argentine military intelligence unit, which was right up near the border with Bolivia, and they were the classical military strong arm guys of Argentina. They collaborated closely with Garcia Meza and supplied him with a number of international

terrorists who came in and did dirty work for Garcia Meza. When it was evident that Garcia Meza was out, we heard in the last days of the Garcia Meza government that a lot of his ministers, a lot of the people who were his followers were loading up their Mercedes and their BMWs and their trucks with their ill-gotten goods, their monies and they were heading for Argentina. We heard about this and while we might have tried to do something to recapture the loot they were taking with them, the more prevalent thought was well, good riddance, they're leaving the country. This will give the civilians the chance to settle in without interference from these bad guys. So, Garcia Meza, his minister of interior, most of his ministers and their families and followers left into northern Argentina. We discovered just a few days before the turnover that at least two of these international terrorists were two Italians who were wanted in badly in Italy, that had been responsible for the Bologna train station bombing which had killed a good number of people.

Q: This was a rightist thing.

WALKER: These were rightist terrorists.

Q: I was consul general in Naples when that happened and unlike so many this was a rightist rather than a leftist.

WALKER: These were rightist. These were right wing terrorists, I mean just mercenary terrorists, really bad guys. We were told that there were two of them still staying behind in Santa Cruz de Bolivia. The second city of Bolivia down in the lowlands heading towards Argentina and sort of the center of the drug trade where most of the drug money had been invested in hotels and such. When we heard that these two guys were in Santa Cruz, somehow the international Interpol network got this news to Italy and back came word from Italy that they were going to send over a team of police to try and capture these guys because they were extraditable. They were wanted in Italy for the train station blow up and I guess the Italian government figured the new Bolivian government would cooperate in turning them over. One fine day we were told that an Air Italia plane was coming which actually was the Pope's plane that he always used when he traveled so it was a big one. It was a 747. We heard about it when it was in the air. We were told it was going to land in Santa Cruz and all these Italian police were going to scurry out and go and capture these two guys and put them on the plane and take them back to Italy.

The Bolivians, outgoing types, somehow must have heard about this or knew something was afoot. The plane was coming over and the subterfuge the Italians used was they called in and said they were running out of fuel. They had mechanical problems and they were going to have to land in Santa Cruz because it was going to be a nonscheduled stop obviously. The Bolivian authorities, at least the corrupt ones knowing what was afoot told them they couldn't land in Santa Cruz and they would have to come into La Paz and that was a longer strip or something like that. So, they didn't allow it to land in Santa Cruz. When it got into La Paz, I went up to the airport to meet this huge plane from the Air Italia and off piled something like 40 Italian policemen. The major problem I discovered on greeting them at the bottom of the steps was none of them were from the

same outfit. They were all from different police units in Italy. Some of them were from secret Intel units. Some were from the CIA of Italy. Some were from local police, some were from national carabinieri and I guess on the plane no one had talked to anyone else because when they got off the plane they reluctantly gave me their names in whispers and told me who they were.

Q: Well, why were you there?

WALKER: We got word from Washington that we were to do everything we could to assist this because this was international terrorism and we of course are big fighters for it and this is a NATO ally, etc., etc., etc. I piled all these guys into whatever vehicles we had and took them down to the embassy. I was the chargé and tried to make some sense out of this gaggle of Italian policemen who they thought they were going to get off in Santa Cruz and go off on this raid and here they were in La Paz and they didn't know what to do. They weren't going to talk to each other because they didn't want to share whatever they knew with their fellow Italian policemen. We ended up putting a group together of a couple of these guys with our station chief who was a veteran of Southeast Asia so he knew his way around counterinsurgency and this sort of thing. He came in with information that these two Italian terrorists were surrounded by gunmen and were not going to be taken. They were forewarned that something was afoot and they were living in a compound that was heavily guarded and weaponed. Our station chief plus my administrative officer who was a very gutsy Peruvian American so he was well versed in the ways of Bolivia and three or four of these Italians plus a special police unit that our CIA station had trained up in anti-terrorist activities. We put together a group I think of about 20 or 30 of these guys, put them on a plane, sent them down to Santa Cruz on a domestic airliner so they could all land. We didn't tell the government we were doing it. They went down there. They went out to wherever this house was and raided it. It was a big firefight in which one of the Italian terrorists got away and the second one a fellow named Pagliai was wounded and captured. That afternoon, late that afternoon, we were told they were bringing him back up to La Paz. They were going to put him on the Pope's plane and fly him out of there as soon as they could.

Between their coming up from Santa Cruz with their captive I had to gather the other Italian policemen together, tell them what was afoot. We discovered through the station that friends of Mr. Pagliai, the friends of Garcia Meza had heard about the fire fight and knew there was going to be an attempt to get him out of the country. They obviously didn't want him to go back to Italy and spill his guts about what he knew about Garcia Meza and the things that they had been doing, much less did the Argentines want him to get out of the country. When the plane came into La Paz, up at El alto, it must have been about 9:00 at night I went up there and we encountered all sorts of problems. The head of the airport was a Bolivian colonel and we were told again by our station that he had called for help from some of his people down in the capital to come up to the airport and stop this plane from taking off. They were to claim this was an illegal seizure and kidnapping and we had to go through the Bolivian courts to extradite this guy. I guess he had a legal point, but it was obvious what he was up to. I'll never forget the three hours I spent at the airport waiting for the plane to come in, arguing with this colonel, pulling

rank, telling him I was going to call the incoming government types that we knew and we were going to make sure he was told to let this Pope's plane take off with Pagliai. In the meantime, I had recruited a Bolivian doctor and said you've got to go to Italy on this plane with no documents, without baggage, just get on the plane tonight and fly off to take care of this guy in the air. Sure enough the doctor said he would. I spent those three hours which culminated in actually having people come in and telling me that they saw people climbing up into the wheel wells of the Pope's plane and obviously putting things in there that were going to dismantle the plane. We knew the colonel's friends were coming up the highway to try and stop us. With minutes to spare, literally minutes to spare at about midnight we transferred this guy on a stretcher from the small plane from Santa Cruz onto the big plane, got all the Italian policemen on board. It was literally, myself, the station chief and my admin officer who had just been through this firefight. We walked this plane out to the takeoff spot on the runway.

Q: Did you check the wells?

WALKER: To make sure nothing fell out of the wells or there weren't people up there, this sort of thing. It was a very scary and fascinating adventure. The plane took off. Unfortunately Pagliai got back to Italy and was arrested and put in a hospital and died three or four days later from his wounds. He was a sick puppy when I saw him. Anyway, we captured him.

In the same period, in that same first week before the new government actually took office and Garcia Meza left, there was another very highly publicized and important case, which revolved around a fellow named Klaus Barbie. Klaus Barbie was also living in Bolivia, immune from being seized and sent back to France to Lyon, France where he was wanted as a Nazi war criminal. Klaus Barbie had been the Butcher of Lyon, during the war had killed many French and Jewish people in Lyon and was one of the remaining war criminals where people knew where he was, knew he was alive, but they were unable to get him. He was protected by the Garcia Meza government to the point that I was told that every morning he came downtown and went to his favorite little German coffee shop and had a cup of coffee and whatever Germans eat in their coffee shops in the morning. Everybody knew who he was and he had another name, but it was a joke. In that turnover period, again the French came in and said they wanted Barbie and again we went to the government and told them that in no uncertain circumstances, the incoming government, that this would really set them straight with the international community if they would turn over Barbie in one of their first acts. It would sort of show that they were totally breaking with Garcia Meza and what he stood for. It took some doing.

I'll never forget because I had to go to a reception, again I was chargé. So, I had to go to a reception and grab this incoming minister of interior who would be head of the police function and tell him in no uncertain terms that we fully expected him to turn Barbie over as one of his first acts. We would misunderstand if he didn't turn him over and that would put them off on a very bad first track with us and we had brought his government literally into office. He made all sorts of promises, but he also hit me with all sorts of legal impediments, etc., etc., etc. Klaus Barbie was now probably a Bolivian citizen. They'd

have to check his citizenship, etc., and they'd have to check the treaty. He wasn't familiar with the extradition treaty. To make a long story short, within days this minister signed the papers and we put Barbie on a French plane and he went back and was prosecuted and he was convicted. This was sort of indicative of what had to be cleaned out of Bolivia, remnants not just of Garcia Meza, but of many, many years of strange and exotic types showing up in Bolivia and of being immune for responsibility for what they had done elsewhere.

Q: What happened to the terrorist who escaped? He got down to Argentina probably?

WALKER: He got to Argentina, exactly, he escaped. For the next year or so stations around the world would run over traces of this guy. His name was Stefano Delle Chiaie and Delle Chiaie was apparently the Carlos the Jackal of Italy. He was much better known probably than Pagliai, the guy we captured and we would hear about him in various countries. I think the last thing we got was from Mexico if I'm not mistaken. Delle Chiaie was there and the station came up with the information that he was still telling his friends that he was going to come back to Bolivia and get the people who had been responsible for the death of his friend Pagliai. Not only that they came up with the curious detail that the Delle Chiaie was "a master of disguises" and was often known to be traveling around Latin America dressed as a Catholic priest. Being Italian he could probably pull that off better than some. He was never captured. To my knowledge he's still out there some place, but he was supposed the really bad guy, where Pagliai was just a very bad guy.

Q: What hold did we have over the new government, you say we helped them get in? How did that happen?

WALKER: Well, we helped them get in by rallying international support, I mean, drugs in '82 was a big issue for us in the United States and Bolivia was the center of at least the coca producing part of the cocaine trade. We had put a great deal of pressure wherever we could to force Garcia Meza into holding elections and then leaving office when he was defeated when his candidate was defeated. I have no doubt in my mind that we were principally responsible for the new government coming in. Did they repay us with gratitude and thanks and bowing to our wishes? Hell, no. As I say, they were, many of them were holdovers from the '52 revolution. They were populist nationalists. They loved to get their crowd whether they were miners of Lechin or the leftist of Siles Zuazo or the new conservative crowd that followed Paz Estenssoro through the years, they loved to get them out in the streets and bombarded the embassy with rotten eggs and tomatoes and the miners with their dynamite sticks by the side. There were a whole bunch of people.

Siles Zuazo was now in his late '70s. Mostly not exactly a figurehead, but more involved in working on his legacy I guess having been president a couple of times before. His principal advisors were two very strange people. One was a fellow named Felix Rospigliosi who was this Machiavellian intellectual Marxist Leninist creep. Felix Rospigliosi was known as the Richelieu of Bolivia or the Machiavelli of Bolivia, a very

mysterious character. He wrote poetry, but he was always at Siles Zuazo's side. He was maybe 20 years his junior. He was in his '50s, late '50s. He in turn had a young woman by his side who was another 20 or 30 years Felix's junior. This lady was from a family that had also been very active in the revolution of '52, her father had been a fierce populist leftist in '52 but over the years had acquired a great deal of wealth. He had acquired four children all of whom were rapacious in their efforts to accumulate even more money. This young lady was named Tamara Sanchez Pena and she, well the common wisdom was and I think it's probably true, she was the mistress of Felix Rospigliosi who was the Richelieu behind the president. The two of them had a very powerful and most people thought unholy influence on the new president. They were in their rhetoric incredibly nationalist, incredibly leftist. Felix Rospigliosi probably genuinely so. Tamara Sanchez Pena I think just using it as a vehicle to enrich herself and her family. She dealt with the president almost as his granddaughter would, took care of him, etc. I got to know her very well. I got to know her two brothers very well; both of whom were young, aggressive, U.S. educated businessmen, corrupt to the core. Corrupt and violent. Her youngest brother, Jorge, I'll never forget. I got to know him because he was running the family businesses and he considered himself quite a tennis player. I hadn't played tennis in 20 years, and I never thought I'd play tennis at 12,000 feet, but he invited me to join the tennis club and I went down and played with him on the clay courts. I'll never forget one day we were playing singles and next to us were a couple of old men who must have been in their '70s and they weren't very good tennis players. Their ball kept coming over to our court as a mishit and they'd always sort of expect us to return it and I would always return it and Jorge was getting madder and madder and finally he just exploded. He went over there and he cracked one of them over the head with his tennis racket and started pounding on him. This is a 30 year old man beating up on a 60 or a 65 year old man with his tennis racket for God's sake and just in explosive anger. I was horrified. Even though his father was a founding member of this tennis club the board of directors tried to punish him and expel him for his outrageous behavior on the court. Apparently this was only the final act of a series of similar acts, but of course he wasn't expelled. He was an influential young person. His sister was big in the government so of course they did nothing to him. That's how Bolivia works.

Over the term of that government it became increasingly corrupt. It was not helpful to any great extent on the drug problem, which was expanding dramatically all the time I was there. There were regions of Bolivia that the government forces could not go into down in the Chapare which was then the new coca growing area where coca was being grown specifically for export to Colombia to process into cocaine as opposed to the Yungas which was the old coca growing region where they grew coca for domestic consumption by the indigenous population. But in the Chapare where no matter what we did to control every year it expanded, expanded, expanded. It was an area in which no one could go into. If anyone from the government tried to go in, they had to go in with an army unit. If we tried to go in we had to go in loaded for bear. There were open air drug markets on the highway going into the Chapare. There were open air weapons markets. You could go down there and buy Kalashnikovs or M16s, or bazookas, whatever you wanted just on the roadside. Sort of like firecracker stands in the United States just before the 4th of July.

I traveled around a great deal in Bolivia when I was there. We had an attaché plane and the attaché was the type of person who enjoyed flying. So we flew all over Bolivia. He would drop me off in places and I would stay a couple of days in parts of that vast country. In parts of that country where people just didn't go there would be little landing strips. We'd land and he would drop me off and as I would stay overnight or a couple of days. So, I went out to some of the regions where the coca barons had their fortresses. There's a vast region of Bolivia called the Beni. It's a high lowland which is a bit of a contradiction. It's a very high elevation, but it's a flat plane that stretches for miles and miles and miles. At a certain time of the year it floods. The runoff from the Andes comes down and fills it with water. Out there in the Beni was where a couple of the really big cocaine barons had their enclaves. Literally in the middle of nowhere a fabulous hacienda surrounded by a wall quite often built up on higher ground so that when the rains came, the floods came, they weren't touched. I know our station and others spent a lot of time trying to figure out how we could hit some of these places and capture some of these bad guys. The kingpin when I was there was a guy named Roberto Suarez who was thought to be the sort of the baron of the coca cartel in Bolivia. He lived in splendor out in the middle of nowhere.

I'll never forget one day flying on the attaché plane with the ambassador into Santa Cruz. We were going down and he was giving a speech or something like that. Unbeknownst to us it was the day when Roberto Suarez, his daughter was going to be married in Santa Cruz. Sort of like American mafia dons, the coca barons try to outdo their rivals in terms of ceremonies, funerals, weddings, birthday parties. So, Roberto Suarez had come into Santa Cruz to have this mammoth wedding party for his daughter. The airport in Santa Cruz which back then was not the new international, but the old one had all sorts of little private planes all over the place, much like mafia funerals attract Cadillac limos type of thing. We flew in in our little C12 and while we were pulling up to park, another little private aircraft came in and parked next to us. When we got out of our plane, who got out of the other plane but Roberto Suarez and his bodyguards. We were with our bodyguards and we sort of looked at each other. Roberto Suarez, who the government said they were trying diligently to capture, but never quite seemed to do so, obviously knew he was coming in for this wedding, obviously knew what plane he was coming in on, but of course did nothing to impede his enjoying his daughter's wedding. That showed us that they were not really serious about picking these guys off or really fighting the cocaine business. These were hairy sort of cowboy days, shoot 'em ups in Santa Cruz against Italian terrorists getting war criminals back to France, getting this damn government to understand that this was not 1952, that a lot of things had changed.

Of course, the other incredibly prevalent memory I have of my entire three years in La Paz, one because I had never experienced this before and two because it caused me so many problems, was the state of the economy. There were points in time when I was there when the inflation rate was between 15,000 and 20,000 percent. There were times there when everybody in the embassy was changing the minimum amount of dollars into pesos in the morning because in the afternoon they could get more. There were times literally when you went to a restaurant, credit cards were almost unknown in Bolivia.

When you went to a restaurant you did in fact as in the Weimar Republic take a valise full of money to pay for your \$30, \$40 meal. Banks gave you bricks of money tightly wrapped so you couldn't extract any from even though they were always counting 'em. You would have a stack of bills maybe two inches high tightly wrapped and these were thousand peso notes or ten thousand peso notes and it was worth nothing.

At the end of my tour when I sold my Ford Bronco the biggest currency bill in the country was worth less than ten cents and those were few and far between. Most of the bills were worth less than a penny. I had a stack of money because it was in cash that was almost as big as the Goddamn Bronco. Huge. I took it to the bank in the back of the Bronco in bunches and it took them two days to count the money. Needless to say this greatly impeded the buying and selling of goods and services in Bolivia. It was just an incredible situation.

What I also discovered, much to my disappointment, was the amount of time that a certain number of people in the embassy spent trying to maximize their profits from this situation.

Q: Oh, yes.

WALKER: Just incredible. Just incredible. You couldn't get into a discussion with anyone in the embassy, but somehow they would start talking about a new way to maximize their financial situation. This was in a place where if you were playing the game straight you were still living incredibly cheaply. You were still saving most of whatever your salary was and your allowances. Nevertheless, this was not good enough for an awful lot of people. We got into things in which I swear to God, if I really looked into it a lot of people would have been in trouble, and some people did get into trouble. Every time you gave a little to show that you were trying to help people live better the next person would come in with a little further demand and a further demand until pretty soon the demands were so out of line. An example of this would be the commissary. The commissary was dealing in both pesos and dollars. Because it was an official U.S. function, the commissary had to be at the official rate of exchange, which had absolutely no relationship to the real rate of exchange. You could go out to the street with a dollar and get 15,000 or whatever it was pesos, whereas the official rate maybe was 50 or something like that. Anyone who had a dollar account at the commissary could probably buy the commissary for next to nothing. I mean it was that skewed.

I remember first a group of people coming from our little association and saying the commissary, it's a small commissary, it doesn't really have everything we want. We do have a special order provision, could we expand that a little bit maybe and not just get groceries, but maybe get something else that sounded reasonable. Yes, why not. In the following week when that worked, in they'd come and say, could we get little appliances maybe if we found a distributor who would send us the appliances? Well, before I knew it people were coming in and trying to buy cars through the commissary in which they could buy an entire vehicle for a few hundred dollars. I mean it was that sort of a thing. Then they'd get it and they'd try and figure out how they could sell it and triple and

quadruple. It was incredible. I spent a lot of time talking to an accountant and a lawyer who worked at AID. He'd been involved in other posts he'd been in in commissaries. I kept trying to check the legality of some of these things. I became very nervous and we checked with Washington and asked for guidance. It was never quite solid enough so we could say, okay, we've got to stop this practice. We ended up having a special inspection come down and it should have come down a lot earlier. No one really got in trouble. But it was obvious that things had gotten out of hand and mostly because people spent inordinate amounts of time looking for even further ways to make money. I was appalled. I was truly appalled.

Q: Did we have an AID mission there?

WALKER: Oh, God, yes. Of course we had an AID thing.

Q: What were they doing?

WALKER: We had a large AID mission. They were doing an awful lot in terms of trying to talk the government into alternative crops, alternative sources of income for the peasants who had previously been growing coca either for their own consumption and later for export to Colombia. We did a lot in that trying to get especially the farmers and the Chapare to understand that they were in an illegal business and if they just started growing oranges, or pineapples, or sesame seeds or something, they wouldn't make quite as much money, but they'd be able to sleep at night. This is a futile effort.

Q: This is coming from an embassy where half the people are trying to.

WALKER: Exactly, maximize their own profits.

Q: Yes.

WALKER: The AID mission, it was a good AID mission. The mission director was someone that we had elevated from being deputy director to being director. He later on became a star of AID. He went and headed up their mission in Cairo from Bolivia, so he was one of their best. They had a very big staff. One of the major problems we had with them, which is something I've encountered elsewhere, but not quite to this degree, was that they were off campus. We had three top floors of a bank building downtown, very vulnerable, no security protection to speak of and therefore we were planning a new embassy compound elsewhere. But the AID people had come in and gone out and rented an entire building as far removed from the embassy as they could be. A big for La Paz modern building. I think the feeling settled in at AID that they were a totally independent actor. The ambassador and I, luckily the ambassador, Ed Corr, tough guy, former marine captain, Oklahoma state wrestling champ in his college days, not someone you pushed around, and he and I and Henry Bassford, the AID director, had a very good relationship in terms of personal relationships. But we had to go to AID a lot, the ambassador, the embassy, in pursuit of our anti-drug policy; they were a big player. They had the resources. Given this feeling of independence, it was sometimes difficult to get them to

do things the way we thought they should be done. It wasn't a tragic situation, but it was difficult. It went so far as to, we had a softball league and I got involved in it. I played first baseman on the embassy team. The embassy team was mostly old duffs like myself and a couple of young marines, right? The AID mission with a heck of a lot more younger officers and lots of them. They had a fairly spiffy team. We had a very competitive relationship with this AID team on the softball diamond. Again, we were playing at 10,000, 11,000 feet. I mean, competitive to the point of physical hits when you were going around the bases and tripping you and that sort of thing. Not a nice relationship at all among what should have been real sportsmen.

The AID mission was big. It was important. It did some good things, but I think much of its attention went into trying to stem the coca trade. While I was there it was not very successful. I don't think it was later either. A lot went into trying to get the economy into better shape obviously, working with the World Bank, working with the American Development Bank, putting in place economic reform packages, none of which appeal to the government, which was this populist keep the printing presses rolling, you know. We're used to 10,000 percent inflation, don't worry about it gringos. Plus, their sort of leftist attitude towards our MBA types from Harvard who were the AID types who saw what was wrong with the economy, but all the remedies they would suggest were turned down by the Marxist Leninists and the ministry of economy, that sort of thing.

Q: At this point, Chile had gotten its economy under Pinochet in pretty good shape, hadn't it, I mean they were, but what about Brazil and Argentina?

WALKER: So, the incoming government, many people in the government felt that they had been victimized by the Argentine Intel connections with Garcia Meza and the Italian terrorists. All these people had been around doing bad things to leftists under Garcia Meza, so there was no love lost between Siles Zuazo and Argentina. With Brazil the relationship was essentially a distant one. The vast majority of the elites of Brazil are on the Atlantic coast. A few of them are as far inland as Brasilia, but that's about as far as it goes. There was another 1,500 miles of Amazon basin and other impediments to travel, not much back and forth. During my travels in Bolivia, I used to like to go out to these various parts of the country, remote parts. I particularly enjoyed going out to the frontier with Brazil which in many parts of the frontier is almost indeterminate, but it usually flows with the river. I'd go up to the northern part of the frontier, my particular favorite, and on one side of the river would be a Bolivian town. On the other side would be a Brazilian equivalent town, little jungle villages, mostly living on contraband moving back and forth, cigarettes, later cocaine. They usually had the same name with the Bolivian being Guayaramerin and the Brazilian being Guajara-Mirim and in spite of their similarities being in the exactly the same location just separated by a 500 yard river they were two entirely different places. On the Brazil side music out of all the stores, smiling Brazilians. On the Bolivian side, these depressed end of the earth people living so far removed from where they really wanted to be which was up in La Paz or in Santa Cruz or in Cochabamba. Most of them were military guys, you who obviously had not great careers going and were having these little riverine posts. I used to like to go out there.

But, what I did notice was, and you would hear it on the Bolivian side, that if there was an invasion, it was a cultural invasion and it was coming from Brazil into Bolivia. The Bolivian villages and towns did not have the facilities of a radio station for instance. Whereas on the Brazilian side, they'd have a radio station pumping news in Portuguese, music in Portuguese. So, if there was a flow of influence it was from Brazil into Bolivia, but it was minimal. It was really minimal. Those two countries really didn't have a hell of a lot in common.

Chile was a little different. Bolivia was, of course, a country where when Garcia Meza was in power he was a rightist general. You have mentioned Pinochet in Chile, a rightist general.

Q: Yes.

WALKER: So, they had that in common. Chile was at that point in time, although this later changed, was minimally effected by the cocaine trade. Another thing they had in common was both Bolivia and Chile had a contentious relationship with Peru. Chile having had a war with Peru back in the 1860s, which they were still fighting.

Q: The War of the Pacific.

WALKER: The War of the Pacific. If you go to the border between Peru and Chile, which I have done several times, there are tank mines and tank traps and tanks looking at each other. It really is quite a contentious, tense, border situation. On the other hand, Bolivia has a problem with Peru because it lost its access to the sea back at the same time. It's been trying to gain access to the sea ever since and they consider Peru to be the impediment. I wouldn't want to exaggerate it, but there was a commonality of interest between Bolivia and Chile. There the similarity ends because as you say Pinochet was doing everything he could to turn the economy of Chile around to recover from the Allende days, the inflation, the wrecking of the economy under Allende. So, he was doing the right things. He was a favorite of the IMF and the World Bank and AID and all those people who like economic reform. On the other hand, Garcia Meza and his government were idiots and then when the civilian government came in even more so. Then the commonality of interest broke down even further because this was not a right wing general in power, but a leftist from the 1952 revolution.

Bolivia, as always, is by itself up there in the mountains. The neighbors don't spend a lot of time thinking about it. The one real cross border issue if you discount the transnational aspects of the cocaine trade, was a feeling in Bolivia that what was happening in Peru with the Sendero Luminoso with this Maoist, leftist, xenophobic, peasant based organization, was somehow going to spill over into Bolivia where an indigenous population, the Quechua speaking, the Aymara speaking portion of the population was much greater than it is in Peru. The haves in Bolivia, all ten of them, were always worried that somehow Sendero Luminoso was going to infect the indigenous population of the Altiplano of Bolivia and that this in fact would really be a revolution if it came to pass. The revolution of '52 after all was led as so many of these revolutions are, by members of

the middle class, educated folks, who really had little in common with the peasants with the indigenous, the Indian part of the population. I think those folks recognized that if the indigenous population of Bolivia ever stood up and really became agitated, all hell would break loose. That was one thing they were worried about in Peru. We were always hearing stories that there had been sightings of boats coming over Lake Titicaca or there had been sightings of units coming over in the border and it must be Sendero Luminoso coming in to agitate among the impoverished lower classes. I think we saw very little hard evidence that this was happening. It was nevertheless; these were the years when Sendero Luminoso was really ripping Peru to pieces.

Q: Sendero Luminoso is also called the Shining Path.

WALKER: Shining Path, yes.

Q: How about dealing with the government with the foreign ministry and all that? You're shaking your head.

WALKER: The American Embassy in La Paz, Bolivia was so important in almost everything that was happening in Bolivia, things that had nothing to do with our traditional diplomacy. The AID mission was dealing with the ministry of economy, dealing with the central bank, dealing with the ministry of health, dealing with all the ministries because we were supplying so much assistance that we were in their knickers on just about everything. If we had done what traditional diplomacy requires which is anytime you go to talk to a minister, you go through the foreign ministry, etc., we'd have never gotten anywhere. So, that all goes by the board in countries such as Bolivia, El Salvador, Honduras. So you deal directly with whoever you're interested in and you have very little real dealings with the foreign ministry. The vice minister later became the minister and the few times I went to the ministry it was to deal with him. One, because he lived next to me in Obrajés in the suburb that I lived in and number two he was married to a Brazilian woman, so our wives knew each other. The few times I went to the foreign ministry I would deal with Jorge.

Q: You're answering my question there. This was the time of the Reagan administration had come in and did the Central American thing, I mean you were out of it, I mean did this play at all down there?

WALKER: No. In a word, no. I saw no interest out of Washington having to do with Bolivia other than a tip of the hat to democracy and civilian government and let's help them if we can, but they seem to be a bunch of unrepentant revolutionaries from '52. Do what you can with them, etc., but of course, drugs is important. We've got a war on drugs going on, so do everything you can on that side. Other than that interest I didn't. I had just come out of Honduras where Washington was on top of us all the time. In Bolivia it was very pleasant to be away from that and not to be bothered.

Once you serve in Central America, it's very difficult to get away from it. I had a number of calls from friends in the Central American quagmire thinking that I was still totally up

to date on what was going on. I have a number of friends who no matter how long it had been since I saw them they assumed maybe because they think that I, all American diplomats, are omnipotent because they have CIA stations to tell them what's happening all around the world and you read it all and you know everything that's going on. They assume that even though I'm gone from Honduras for ten years I know all the players. I would get calls. One in particular which comes back later when I'm ambassador, a call from this very close Salvadoran friend telling me that the two young teenage daughters of a woman that I had known had just been picked up by the Salvadoran military in the context of the civil war that was going on and if they were in police custody for more than a few hours they would be raped. This would happen to them, and that would happen. They would be tortured. These were two girls 12 and 14 or something like that. Bill, you've got to do something. My answer is, remember where I am? I'm in Bolivia, 6,000 miles and 12,000 feet high and away from you. I know nothing about what's going on there. All my contacts from the '70s are I assume elsewhere. I have no idea what to do. Well, Bill, you've got to do something. So, I called a friend in DEA who was still in El Salvador and we got the girls released. To this day they still think I saved one of them from rape, but the older sister unfortunately was raped. It was that sort of thing; it kept coming back into my scope. The situation in La Paz was a fun one to deal with. Everyone who has ever served in La Paz that I know talks about it as almost as though they've been stationed in Oz or someplace like that. It's Never Neverland where the strangest things happen. They did happen. They did happen with considerable consistency.

Q: I don't have another question except, how did you find our CIA, the station worked? I mean it's different in each country and in some countries it's more important than in others. Your impression of it there at that time.

WALKER: I thought we had a very good station. As I say the station chief was a veteran from Southeast Asia, but he was not a crackpot or a fanatic, he was a serious professional. The deputy was also a very serious professional, also married to a Brazilian, so we had that in common. They ran what I thought at first was a tight station. Both of them were most interested in sort of keeping track on the leftist elements in the government as well as the rightist elements that were still running around remnants from Garcia Meza's day. I thought they had some good case officers, but they also had a couple of turkeys.

One day, again, remembering what I just said about the economy and people trying to maximize their earnings. One day my post management and budget officer or fiscal officer or whatever he was, came to see me and he said, Mr. DCM, most of our people use the little money exchange downstairs in the bank and they're very good. They always give us a good rate. Blah, blah, blah. They trust us; they take our personal checks. We've got a good relationship with them. They're obviously making money off the deal, but they seem to deal with us honestly. Well, they've got a bit of a problem with one of our officers. They've received a couple of fairly sizeable checks from him and they bounced. They've gone to him and he's explained that he's having trouble getting his paycheck deposited and he's got all sorts of excuses. But the fact is that these checks continue to bounce. They're now sitting on \$3,000, \$4,000 worth of checks that aren't any good and

he hasn't really come through for them. I said, well who is this? I was surprised when it turned out to be a young CIA case officer. This was a case officer in his mid-thirties. He had arrived at post a few months before with a brand new bride who was much younger than he was, maybe 22, 23, 24. I had seen him in some of the nicer watering spots of La Paz, if you can give that name to the local restaurants and bars. He was always dressed. He looked like James Bond in appearance in terms of his clothes and his Rolex and his nice car. I took him to be the wealthy young fellow who had gone to Andover and Yale and then joined the agency as sort of a gentleman spy. I was surprised when his name came up as someone who was having trouble with his finances. I decided to look into it because the money exchange guy obviously wanted to have these checks made good.

I went to the station chief rather than to the young officer and I explained this. He said, oh, God, we've had a couple of problems with this young fellow. Well, I'll talk to him and see what's going on. In the meantime, Eastern Airlines came to me and they said an embassy officer in his last trip back from the States put in a claim for lost luggage. They asked him to fill out the usual papers and they were obviously wanting to process it because again the embassy business was a big deal for Eastern Airlines. We were doing good things for them in terms of getting their foreign exchange out of the government, etc. So, they wanted to keep us happy, but this young guy had put in claim in which it really looked like it was padded out of all proportions to what he could have had in his luggage. He claimed he had three suits. Each suit was a couple of thousand dollars. He claimed he had a couple of cameras in there and they were worth all sorts of money.

Anyway, I was working through the station chief and his deputy, who was much more interested in substance rather than dealing on personnel matters. We ended up discovering this young guy was essentially a crook. To the point that the station chief decided to get rid of him. A problem the agency always has is firing people, getting rid of people who are bad apples. Because by the time they discover it they know too much and they always worry about this being revealed. So, they just wanted to quietly send him back to Washington. The agency in Washington wasn't too happy with all this. Give him another chance, etc. It all turned out that this young man, I later heard his story because he became involved in a big spy case here in the United States and books have been written about it. He's appeared in them. He joined the agency not as a case officer, but as sort of an admin type. He kept telling them that he really wanted to be a case officer. He spent like 15 years in the agency trying to become a case officer trying to go overseas and he ended up getting a guru, a godfather, who he impressed and the godfather kept saying that this young man should become a case officer. He obviously is dedicated and wants to do it. So, they end up making him a case officer. He then went out and married this young gal. He went out and bought all sorts of things on credit and came to Bolivia as his first overseas assignment. He was obviously into seeing himself as I said, as James Bond, when in fact he was not terribly bright and he was greedy.

When they eventually were able to get rid of him, he came in with a list for his final sale of property, which you were entitled to do. Now, usually you did this at the end of a three year tour. He was doing it like at the end of nine months or something. Again, the list was incredible of what he had. Two Rolex watches which he was going to sell. His BMW I

think was the vehicle. These were all things we had taken to be signs of his personal wealth. It turned out that he bought them all on credit. He was way over his head in debt and when he came in with his final accommodation exchange with what he had gotten in pesos for the sale of those things, it added up to a couple of hundred thousand dollars. This was partly because of official versus black market exchange rates. It was partly because of what these things were and how valuable they were in a place like Bolivia, gold Rolex watches. But this was outrageous. He had invested a couple of thousand dollars in down payments for these things nine months before and he was going to walk away with over \$200,000. We called in the station chief. We had a meeting with the ambassador in which the ambassador and I told this young man, number one; we're not going to approve this list. Number two you're going to get the official rate. Number three, which you're still going to make a profit on. He broke down in tears. It was a really horrendous scene, but again, it all came about because of this atmosphere of people trying to maximize what they could get out of this system and this guy being a particular onerous example of this. It was horrible. It was truly horrible.

The station, because of the way they work, and because of the inbred quality of what a station is like in an embassy, it was difficult to get a handle on this case. If he hadn't been so egregious in his greed, we might never have heard about it. If he hadn't been trying to take this exchange house and they didn't know he was in the station and just came to us and say it's one of your embassy officers. If they had gone to the station instead we would have probably never heard about it. But other than that it was a fairly good station. We had another case with them. The head of the COMO section.

Q: That means communications?

WALKER: Yes, excuse me. The head of the communications section was a little guy who couldn't have been more than five foot tall who had a thing about tall women. He brought down his tall wife with him, but then bless his soul, the other communications person, no she was a reports officer, was a tall willowy gal and he ended up as a trio. They went everywhere together. They romanced together. It was the scandal of the American community. This little short guy with these two big gals on his arms, one of whom was his wife and one of whom wasn't. Again, going to the station chief and saying hey, you've got a potential problem here. He said, look, I'd like to get rid of them, but getting rid of three people, after I just tried to get rid of one person. It took six months to do so. Let them do whatever they want to do as long as they do it behind doors.

Q: Don't upset the horses.

WALKER: Yes, right. It was an interesting place.

Q: What about our military? It sounds like it would have been a difficult place to make an entree, or maybe it was?

WALKER: During the Garcia Meza days we had closed up our MILGROUP, our military assistance group. That was one of the pressures we put on them. With the new

civilian government coming in, there was an immediate clamor, let's reopen our military assistance group. After all the military are going to be helping us in terms of this fight against the cocaine business. So, Ambassador Corr who certainly with my approval, with my recommendation, with my endorsement, whatever you want to call it, we sent in a cable and said we believe we should reopen the MILGROUP. It should be headed by a lieutenant colonel or colonel. It should be small at the beginning, etc. Down came the word that DOD agreed with this and wanted to reopen and they were looking for a candidate to be the MILGROUP commander. We kept saying, when are we going to open the MILGROUP? Who's the commander going to be? Of course we want to have a say in who's picked, etc.

One day we are told that there's a U.S. army colonel outside who'd like to see the ambassador and wants to be a candidate to be the commander, so we ask him to come in. His name was John Tudela. Colonel Tudela came in and he appeared to be a Latino himself, and he was. He explained to us that he had been born in Bolivia but had gone to the States at an early age, had joined the army, had been commissioned and become a colonel over the years. The dream of his life was to come back to Bolivia and be the head of our MILGROUP and he would be very pleased if Ed Corr would look favorably on his nomination. We were impressed. Here was a guy who spoke Spanish, which a number of MILGROUP commanders don't in Latin America. Here was a guy who told us that he knew a number of the military officers already. Here was a guy who had become a colonel in the U.S. army and coming from that particular background was not easy. We asked around and everything we heard was favorable. So, Ed Corr went in and said, look, you're taking so long on this thing, I have found a guy that I will accept as my MILGROUP commander. His name is John Tudela. So, we got John Tudela as our MILGROUP commander. What we didn't know was that John Tudela considered himself a future president of Bolivia.

Q: Oh my God.

WALKER: John Tudela came down and what we hadn't really focused in on was that he still had family in Bolivia. His brother was in business in Bolivia and yes, he knew a good number of people in the Bolivian military, but they were the wrong people to know. He came down and was a totally unguided missile the whole time he was there. We started seeing interviews in the local papers with Colonel Tudela, big pictures of him in which he was saying things that were way off base. Just way off base in terms of U.S. policy. You know, at first you call him in and say, "John, how come you're appearing in the paper today?" "Well, this guy caught me and he asked me these questions. It's totally garbled and he got all my answers wrong." You say, "oh, we understand, we've had that happen." Then the second time and third time. Finally the ambassador calls him in and says, John, look I'm putting a clamp on you. I don't want you talking to the press unless you tell us about it and we have someone there to listen in to what's going on. USIS, public affairs, they're the people who are supposed to handle these sort of things, not you on your own. "Oh, yes sir, I understand sir, absolutely sir, right-oh sir." Off he goes. It continued.

I remember one day the ambassador just blowing up and saying, “John; this is my last warning. I do not want to see your picture in the paper. I do not want to see your words in the paper. Knock it off.” “Yes, sir, absolutely. I’m trying my best sir.” Well, the next week there is a picture of his daughter who has been crowned Miss Third Brigade or something like that and she’s interviewed and her words about policy matters are his words. It was this sort of thing, always playing little games in the most transparent fashion. It was just incredible.

We then got word from the government. This was one of the times I went to see the foreign ministry, but saw that vice foreign minister. We got a complaint from the government, from the president himself saying some of my people who have contacts in the military are seeing that your Colonel Tudela is sitting around with my military guys who I, the civilian president, don’t trust because we pushed them out of office X number of months ago. Your colonel is sitting around encouraging my colonels to blow me away, get rid of me, and they’re always looking for signals from the U.S. supporting such things and you better do something about your colonel. Again you call him in, again he denies it categorically, misunderstood, you know how rumors are here in Bolivia.

Well, again, John coming from his background, U.S. army colonel was certainly in the right wing of the political scale. Here’s a leftist government, incompetent, corrupt. He did want to bring them down and he did want to further his own ambitions in Bolivia. It got to the point where Ed Corr sent me up to SOUTHCOM, southern command in Panama, the U.S. military command in Panama where the commander in chief, southern command resided at that time. General Galvin was his name with a list of all the complaints against John Tudela and saying get him out of here. Again, it’s difficult to relieve a full colonel of his command. It’s really something you do with great caution, but General Galvin had heard other things about John Tudela and called him in Panama and read him the riot act and told him he was being pulled.

John Tudela, in the succeeding years did try to reinsert himself into the politics of Bolivia. He had told people in Bolivia that he was a future president someday, that he was just what they needed. A young local boy who had gone off and learned all that the gringos could teach him. He had all these contacts in the Pentagon and in Washington and in the U.S. military and that he could come back and he was still a Bolivian citizen apparently and run for the presidency you know and have military support. John Tudela luckily, or unluckily for him, dropped dead of a heart attack I was told not too many years after he retired from the army and never got to go back and become president of Bolivia. He was a real pain in the backside.

There were a couple of occasions, I remember at least two of when I was in with Ambassador Corr in his office and we got a call from the president, Siles Suazo, saying there’s a coup developing. I know about it and they’re going to come and capture me down here in the palace. The military is turning against me and you’ve got to stop it. Bless his soul, Ed Corr stopped it. Ed Corr called in our attaché; our defense attaché was a U.S. air force colonel, full colonel, who was just the opposite from Tudela. His Spanish was horrendous. He was more a pilot than an intelligence officer, but he was a damn

good guy. He was bright and he and Tudela obviously clashed. But, when we ran into situations in which we really had to send tough messages to the Bolivian military, we did it via our air force colonel defense attaché because they never took him to be one of them as they certainly did with John Tudela. As I say, I give Ed Corr full credit for putting down a couple of coup attempts just by picking up the phone and calling some people and unleashing our defense attaché and getting the word to the military that this was not something we were going to countenance.

Q: Was our hold there military supplies and that sort of thing or was it more just realizing if you get off on the wrong foot with the Americans you are going to have problems?

WALKER: I'd say more of the latter. Their military certainly wanted our assistance. They wanted us to have a MILGROUP there. They had seen under Garcia Meza that when we pulled out the MILGROUP and started to put them in the doghouse that it worked. They ended up losing power, giving it up. So during my time there they were still looking over their shoulders at what the American Embassy and government said to them. The MILGROUP after Tudela left became a much more professional operation. Tudela not only had this horrendous load on his back as to who he was and what his background was and what his attitude was, he also had a horrendous relationship with the few people in his MILGROUP in his own office. He treated them like dirt. There was a senior NCO in there who would come to me and describe how he was being treated by Tudela and it was the way a Bolivian colonel would treat an NCO rather than the way an American colonel should treat his NCO. The NCO didn't know what to do. His career was on the line if he went against the colonel. This was one of the things on the list that I took up to the general in Panama was that he is not creating a harmonious office environment. Of course he was always trying to expand it and make it bigger and bring in more people to work for him. The Bolivian military, as I say, during my time there, was in fact paying attention to what we said to them. That's why it was particularly harmful when he would go and say, well, you know: we would look oddly on your moving against this leftist president.

Q: Very dangerous.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: This is the 14th of September, 2001. You say there's a story about how you became a DAS. In '85, where had you left?

WALKER: I was in La Paz, Bolivia. I was the DCM and I was awaiting a new assignment having no idea of where I was to go and that leads me to the story. You know, La Paz is a long way from home and you always feel no one remembers you when you're up there. But one day the phone rang and it was to tell me that I had been selected to be the new country director for Andean affairs, that is for Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. They asked me if I was interested in this and I

said, yes, I was. I knew I was coming back to Washington. I had been almost six years out. So, I said, sure. I said there are some of those countries that I don't know anything about. I served in Peru 25 years ago. I'm in Bolivia now, but I don't know anything about Venezuela, Colombia or Ecuador. They said, well, why don't you do an orientation tour? I said, great. You know, anything to get out of La Paz. Shortly thereafter got orders to do an orientation tour and I did the orientation tour around the horn and spent about three or four days in each of the capitals to get to know the people, etc.

When I got back to Bolivia at the end of that trip we heard who the new assistant secretary for InterAmerican affairs was going to be. It was going to be a fellow named Elliott Abrams who at that particular point was a Reagan appointee, Schedule C, assistant secretary for human rights. Elliott had taken a lot of flak for being from the Republican Party, so he took a lot of heat for being not as committed to the human rights cause perhaps as a Democrat might have been. Anyway, I got a call from the State Department saying we want you to come to Washington and get oriented up here about your new job, head of Andean Affairs, so I said, sure, great. So went up to Washington and when I was in Washington on my first day or so I was told that Elliott Abrams wanted to see me. I'd never met this fellow. All I had was this sort of vague impression that he was a right wing Republican appointee doing human rights. I went to see him in the Bureau of Human Rights one afternoon, late in the afternoon. He said, look, Walker, I understand you're coming back to be head of Andean Affairs. I know you've accepted that job, but I'm wondering if you would be interested in another job. I said, well, I just prepared myself to take over Andean Affairs, what did you have in mind? He said, well, I'm looking at naming my DASs for the various parts of my little empire to come and I was wondering if you would be interested in being the DAS for Central America. You've got to remember this is 1985, Central America has been on the front pages of the press for five years. Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala. I said, well, let me think about it. He said, fine, no I haven't picked you; I just asked you if you'd be interested. I said, let me think about it and we'll get back together. I went back to Bolivia and started thinking about it. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that I was very interested in the job for a number of reasons. One, I had very much liked my stay in El Salvador when I'd been there before. Two, I was interested in the issues that were involved. I'd been in Honduras a couple of years before as DCM, so it was intriguing. I packed up and got my family out of Bolivia and went back for home leave.

When I finished home leave and went to Washington Elliott Abrams asked to see me again. By now I was sort of hoping that I would get this DASship, but not really holding out much optimism because I knew there were a lot of other people who would be interested in it. I thought maybe Elliott would have heard that I was considered to be a bit of a liberal and that this would maybe sour him on me. I went in to see him. By now he was in ARA in the front office and he said Walker I've done a lot of research on you. I've gone to everybody I know in ARA at least and some not in ARA to ask them what they think about you. I've done this not only on you, but on some of the other candidates. He said, no doubt about it, you've got a good reputation, a good number of people said all the right things. You knew the area, liked to work, good Spanish, all the things that I was looking for, he said, but I've got to tell you Bill, not everyone was 100% behind you. I said, oh, really. He said, without going into names, I ran into three or four of your

colleagues who know you well, who all said positive things, but they all also said there was a downside and out of the ones that mentioned a downside four of them used the same word. In what I took to be a negative manner they used the word flip, that you were at times flip. The first time I heard it I was a little concerned because I take that to be pejorative, but after I'd heard it three or four times he said I decided that I wanted to find out what career Foreign Service Officers were thinking when they used that word. So, I went back to all four of them. I said, look, could you be specific and define flip by telling me some of the things Walker does. Anecdotes as to why you come to the conclusion he's flip at times. All of them gave me one or two stories. He said, do you know what I discovered Walker? Foreign Service Officers think it pejorative if someone has a sense of humor because what they described was you at times breaking tension by telling a joke or trying to be funny or using a sense of humor and obviously at least those four people think there's something wrong with that. I on the other hand, like a sense of humor, so, would you be my DAS? I said, you're my man.

Q: Tell me in considering this, let me just get the dates down. You were DAS from '85 to when?

WALKER: '85 to August of '88. Three years.

Q: I need to be put into the picture a little bit. What was the situation, I'm not talking about, well, a little in the field, but also both in the field, in Washington when you went there because lines were really getting really drawn. Anyway, would you talk about this?

WALKER: I came in not totally ignorant of the scene in Washington. I never played the level I was about to play at, the DAS level, and I had never dealt with this sort of ideologically contentious issues that were now wrapped up into Central American affairs. I'd been in Bolivia, so I'd been worried about drugs, I'd been worried about thugs. I hadn't been worried about Central America except for reading the papers and occasionally getting phone calls from people. When I came back I discovered that during this five years that the war in El Salvador had been going on six years almost, during the first four years, five years of the Reagan administration, as you say the lines had been drawn, the ideological lines, the political lines. It had become extremely bitter, extremely almost personal in terms of liberals and Democrats for the most part in congress being totally against what was being done in Central America by the Reagan administration. Ideologues on the Republican side, on the other side being totally committed to seeing their side prevail. By prevail I mean they were going to help the Salvadoran military defeat the guerrillas. They were going to take the war to the Sandinistas. They were going to turn Honduras into a Contra camp, etc. All of these things obviously were producing very bitter, very partisan, very contentious debates not just in Washington, but all around the country. The Salvadoran FMLN, I was to discover, much to my chagrin, had a very well organized network in the United States. It could get people out on campuses and such. Almost remnants of the Vietnam protests. A group called CISPES which was the committee for solidarity for Salvador or something like that. The peoples of El Salvador. They were raising money at churches and university campuses, getting demonstrations out whenever anything happened in Central America that could be tied to the

administration. So I blissfully came back with my good intentions to strike a middle road, to obviously carry out the policy, but to do so in the most humane way and never really got a chance to show that this was my intention because that takes me into day one of my DASship in when I started learning the lessons of how bitter the fight was going to be.

Q: Here you'd been, you'd spent most of your professional career in the corridors one way or the other of ARA and you, people must have been coming to La Paz or other people coming back and saying, oh my God, you have no idea what's going on. You know, it's professional gossip. Hadn't you been hearing some of that?

WALKER: Oh, sure, you read the newspapers. You talk to people who come in from Washington. You have spent your career in the bureau so you sort of know that things are tough back there, but you don't really know how tough they are until you are a player at dead center.

Q: Now, did Elliott Abrams look you in the eye and say are you a true believer or do you think he was looking for something else?

WALKER: It never came up. Elliott Abrams is one of the most, in my opinion, one of the most misjudged people that I've ever dealt with in terms of the person I got to know, the person I got to watch day to day in operation, working the issues, making decisions, taking sides, working with the other people involved in the issues, some of whom were crazies. I found him to be one of the most humane people I've ever met. One of the most sensitive people to the issues we were dealing with. Is he an ideologue? Yes, he's an ideologue in a certain sense. He felt the Sandinistas were destroying Nicaragua. He felt they were not the young, freedom loving revolutionaries they portrayed themselves to be, that they were violently anti-American and would do anything they could to harm us in our causes in the hemisphere.

Elliott Abrams who in TV appearances and the public persona that he eventually achieved of being this humorless, ideologic, hardliner was nothing like that. He had one of the finest senses of humor I've ever run across. His intellect, his ability to grab issues and go right to the core of them was beyond anything I'd ever seen before or probably since. To put it mildly for the first six months I worked with him I was in awe of his capabilities. I was almost intimidated by how much faster he was at grasping issues and being able to see through the brush and get to whatever the core issue was and decide what to do about it. He was the political appointee that I worked with who had greater respect for the career service of anyone I've encountered. He tried to protect career officers from some of these ideologues that were around the issues. He recognized the capacities that the career Service offered and used them in ways that many political appointees never do. He has the most incredible photographic memory I've ever encountered in a person. I wrote papers to him and sent them in when I first got there, three years later he could still recall with total accuracy things I had written, word for word that I had forgotten I even wrote. He was like JFK in terms of speed reading. He would take a book and just thumb and he would have it. Incredible, incredible

photographic memory and ability to absorb information. I've never seen anything like it before or since.

We should get into some talk about some of the issues we were working on and how he kept the whole thing as close to the center as he could as opposed to some of these others who wanted to go off in really weird directions.

Q: All right, I don't know how to approach this. I mean basically I think it's probably a good idea to start on day one with what you got hit with and then start looking at the countries and the issues of the politics.

WALKER: Sure. Well, let me break down my three years as DAS into two different phases. The first two years I was consumed by Nicaragua, the Sandinistas and its implications on the neighborhood, El Salvador and Honduras primarily, but also Costa Rica. A lot of interesting historic sort of events going on in that part of the equation. That was the first two years. The third year, one, because I think Elliott was trying to shield me from some of the real crap that came down on everybody's head in 1986 with the Conragate stuff starting to break on us. So, my third year I spent almost all my time on the Panama issue with Noriega. Now, there's some overlap. Obviously I was dealing with Panama the first two years and obviously I was dealing with the rest of Central America in the last year, but in terms of the vast majority of my time in the first two years it was Central America, per se. In the last year it was working day and night on Panama.

Going back to that first day and I'm using first day as maybe it wasn't exactly the first day, maybe I came in and found the paper clips and stacked my desk with papers and pictures of my family and that sort of stuff, the usual hanging up of your superior honor awards on the walls to impress everyone with what a star you are. But certainly within a couple of days of my being there, let me go back to saying how incredibly uninformed I felt I was about what was going on. People were talking about the Boland Amendment one, Boland Amendment two, this article of this act of congress that prohibited us from doing this or allowed us to do that, interpretations, I didn't know what anyone was talking about. I didn't know what the Boland Amendment was. I was to learn much to my chagrin.

About the third or fourth day I was there and I was with Elliott and he said, oh, there's a meeting taking place in Jim Michel's office. Jim was the principal deputy assistant secretary and Jim was a civil servant, rather than a Foreign Service Officer. Jim is an incredible lawyer. He'd come out of L, the legal division. I think Elliott inherited him, but was very impressed with his intellect. A very, very smart legal mind. I was told to go into Jim Michel's office. He speaks and spoke at the time this Washington legalese and again, articles and congressional acts that I didn't know anything about. I had no idea. So, I went into Jim's office and there was introduced to two other people who I was to get to know over the ensuing three years. One was the director of the Central American task force in Langley at the agency. A fellow named Alan Fiers and I guess you're not supposed to reveal names and titles in the agency, but this became well known when he

was hauled into court three years later. The other fellow was a marine lieutenant colonel, Oliver North, from the White House from the NSC.

Q: His name is familiar somehow.

WALKER: Especially here in Virginia. I met these two chaps and again I sat there in total silence because Jim Michel, Oliver North, Alan Fiers were going through their sort of daily what happened yesterday. Where are we today? What's happening up on the Hill? How are we doing in terms of getting aid for the Contras? How are we doing in terms of what's going on in El Salvador? Where's so and so and who's doing what and what's going on at the agency and what did the latest Intel report show? Again, I have no idea really what was being discussed. Obviously I picked up bits and pieces, but I just sat there dumbfounded. They discussed the military situation on the ground in these various countries. They discussed what we were trying to do. They discussed prohibition; we've got to watch out for the Boland Amendment, all this kind of stuff. Of course, North and Fiers were the experts on the military side of what was going on, the counterinsurgency side of what was going on in El Salvador and the insurgency side of what was going on in Nicaragua. They were saying the State Department is responsible for the diplomatic effort. How are we doing in Costa Rica? How are we doing with Guatemala? Are we getting, blah, blah, blah. Every once in a while they'd turn to me and here I am with two days under my belt. I saw at the time that this Oliver North is dropping the president's name. Fiers is talking about Director Casey being so incredibly interested and involved in everything that was going on in Central America.

I realized from the git go that I was dealing in a ball game that was definitely big leagues if not World Series. My inner reaction was oh my God, what am I doing here? What have I gotten into? I quickly discovered that to read the daily Intel and to be ready to start the day on time I had to get into the office about 6:30 and that I was going to be there until 8:00, 9:00, 10:00 every night and that the phone was going to ring in the middle of the night with some consistency as things happened in the region and the embassies were calling in or the operations center wanted to make sure that I knew that X, Y and Z had happened. That first couple of days was my introduction to Elliott Abrams and to what I'd gotten myself into and how it was going to go. Of course, in the summer of '85 there was still a great deal of optimism, certainly as espoused by Oliver North and Alan Fiers that we were really getting on top of this whole thing and that with continued effort building up the Contras, getting political support from Costa Rica and Honduras and wearing down the FMLN in El Salvador that we're on the right track. It was only this damn congress that was throwing obstacles in our path with things such as the Boland Amendment.

Q: You better explain.

WALKER: Yes. There's a couple of Boland Amendments and sometimes they get confused, but in general they were putting very severe limitations on the type of assistance and who could deliver the assistance to the Contras. Such prohibitions as no officer of the U.S. government can be within I can't remember if it was 10 or 15

kilometers of the border with Nicaragua, that sort of thing. We were always being told by Oliver North in particular, sometimes by Fiers, well we've had our legal people check this out and this particular plan is fine with the Boland Amendment.

When I arrived another reason for optimism was that they had just achieved a victory of sorts in the congress and had gotten congress to appropriate I can't remember the exact figure, X millions of dollars that was going to be assistance to the Contras. In the congress this coalition held together almost to the end until '88 when things really started falling apart in terms of Contragate. At the beginning in '85 there was a coalition in the congress of the Republicans plus conservative Democrats who really didn't like what was happening in Central America with the Sandinistas and wanted to get rid of them. Every vote in the congress was razor thin. A couple of votes either way, but we always won when it came down to it. I can describe some later votes on issues, but just before I got there they had achieved this victory. They'd gotten X millions of dollars. They were going to be able to supply certain things to the Contras and at this first meeting, Mr. Fiers and Mr. North turned to Jim and to me and said, well, you know, State Department, this is overt, this has been approved by congress, so you guys are going to administer it. Of course, Jim Michel turned to me and said, well, Bill, this will be a major part of your portfolio. Again, I was thinking oh my God. What do I know about getting assistance to guys working in military operations as Contras and people in El Salvador? Anyway, I could see from the first day that this was a very, very different level of involvement in the issues of Central America.

Q: Did you ask or get any impression about Oliver North? There's the old story about somebody who could be a clerk in the White House and say this is the White House calling and you really want to know who's who.

WALKER: Let me tell you a couple of Ollie North stories, just to give you my flavor for the guy. Ollie North is I'm not sure the word charismatic is the right word, but he's forceful. He's overwhelming when he's on to something and wants to move something. He comes in; he's a lieutenant colonel in the marines. I've got a great admiration for marine officers and he comes out of the NSC and he's working very closely with the leadership of the NSC. When he says I was in to see the old man today i.e President Reagan and he told me Ollie, this is where we want to go. You tend not to question that. You tend not to think this is a call from a clerk. He could make things happen.

During my first year I don't know I made four or five trips to Central America. If Ollie was around, if he wasn't off traveling, you'd get a hold of him and say Ollie, Elliott and I are going down to so and so, we need a plane. He'd say, I'll call Andrews and get you a plane. We'd go out to Andrews and there'd be a Gulf Stream waiting to take us to Central America. Obviously this guy was not a nobody, he was somebody. One of the problems was he was always traveling because he didn't just have Central America, he had the world. He was sort of Mr. Counter Revolutionary, Counter Insurgency, Insurgency Broker for the NSC. At that time he was working under, who proceeded Poindexter?

Q: McFarlane?

WALKER: Bud McFarlane. Yes, he was working under McFarlane, another marine, a colonel. You assumed, everyone assumed, that anything he said was valid. The first time I traveled with Oliver North here we get into the interagency process. We have I guess it was almost like a weekly meeting with something called the IG, Intergovernmental Group, and there was an IG on major issues and there was an IG on Central America, obviously. This IG was more active than most IGs. The IG consisted of Oliver North from the NSC, a guy named Ray Burkhardt from the NSC, a career Foreign Service Officer who was ostensibly Mr. Latin America over there but was totally overshadowed by North. Alan Fiers attended the IG, some of his deputies. Someone from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, usually a one or two star general. Someone from DIA would be there.

Q: DIA is?

WALKER: Defense Intelligence Agency. Usually someone from the army staff. We're talking about fairly high-level decision making body, the IG. Within the IG there was something called the RIG the R stood for something that meant smaller IG and this was the more key players, the people who really were making decisions almost on a daily basis. The RIG met with consistent regularity when you didn't want to call a bigger group together; because the bigger group had people from Justice, from all sorts of agencies. When you really were worried about leaks and this sort of thing it would go down to the RIG. Within the RIG, which was five, or six or seven people, I was a member of that on Central America. There was an even smaller group, which was essentially Oliver North, Alan Fiers and Elliott. Every once in a while at the RIG Oliver North would say, well, I've got something very sensitive to speak to, so they would go into Elliott's office and chat.

At one of the RIGs, or IGs, or at one of the big meetings it was decided that someone had to go down and talk to the Salvadoran army, military, because something was happening at the time. I don't remember what, to make sure they were ready to support whatever we were going to do. I think it had to do with using Ilopango Air Base, one of the military bases for getting some of the supplies to the Contras. There was also, we were going to go to Honduras. Maybe Costa Rica. Anyway, we were going to take a trip. For some reason it was decided that Ollie was the guy to go because he knew the players down there. Elliott, as he often did, said we want to have someone with you. You're going to go down talking to the military in El Salvador. You might be talking to higher ups in the government. You go to Costa Rica; you might be talking to people in the civilian side of the government. We want to have someone there from State; Walker is going to go with you. Hey, great, why not? Oliver North and I were directed to go and make this trip to Central America. It was imperative that we make it right away, whatever was breaking. About I think it was about 3:00 in the afternoon as we were leaving the meeting, someplace in the early afternoon, Ollie said, "Look Walker, we have to go by commercial aircraft this time because there's not enough time to get a plane out of Andrews. Plus it's better we can leave from National Airport and fly to Miami and fly down, good connections." He said, "My secretary Fawn Hall will make the reservations. Give me your passport number." So I did. He said, "I'll meet you at National Airport tomorrow

morning. I think the plane leaves about 9:00 for Miami.” I said, “Great.” I continued on the day and worked late, went home that night, packed my little bag, went out to the airport the following morning about 9:00 and Fawn Hall had called me and said it’s an electronic ticket. The ticket will be ready for you, just go up to the desk and ask for it. I got to the airport as I always do, an hour or so early and I went up to the desk and presented my diplomatic passport feeling quite important. I said, “You should have a ticket here for me to go to El Salvador, no to go to Honduras.” I think we were going to go to Honduras first. I said to go to Honduras. And, I said, “Oh, by the way, we actually want to go to El Salvador first, so it’s all been arranged by phone by the State Department or by the White House so if you could just make sure you’ve got me on the right plane going to El Salvador first rather than to Honduras.” The guy was very nice and spent some time working up my ticket, maybe it took 10 minutes or so. As I was finishing, I said, “Oh, by the way, go into your computer, because you should have a Colonel North in there, but he’s not here yet, we’re traveling together. We’d like to sit together and make sure that he’s not going to Honduras that he’s on this same flight to El Salvador with me.” The guy said, “Sure of course.” He went into his computer and he came back and said, “You say his name is North?” “Yes.” “How do you spell it because I don’t find anyone named North in here.” I said, “Oh, no, he’s in there, believe me. It was his secretary who made the reservations.” He went back in and he said, “I’m sorry. I can’t find him.” I said, “Well, gee, you better make sure there’s room on the plane.” He said, “Don’t worry about it, as soon as North gets here we can straighten this out, but believe me he’s not in the computer.” I said, “Okay.” I start looking at my watch waiting for Oliver North to show up thinking my God, I hope he knows we’ve got this problem we’ve got to straighten out to get on the plane. I’m getting more and more nervous and I’m looking at the door coming into the airport, where you come in from the parking lot waiting to see Oliver North. God almighty, we’re right up to almost the plane time, they’re starting to post, go to the boarding gate sort of thing and there’s no Oliver North. All of a sudden behind me this voice says, “Hi, Bill. You got your ticket?” I turn around and it’s Oliver North and he has come out of the exit from the side of the airport where you’re getting off airplanes and I said, “Gee Ollie, you’re coming in from some place?” He said, “Yes, I just got off the plane from New York.” I said, “Oh, you were in New York?” He said, “No, I was in London.” I said, “You were in London?” He said, “Yes, I had to go to London.” It turned out I think it was the Achille Lauro.

Q: Oh, yes, he got very much involved in that.

WALKER: He was very much involved in that. This was in the aftermath and it had something to do where they were capturing the guys or something.

Q: Oh, yes, very much so. It took a couple of years to restore relations with Israel after that.

WALKER: Yes. Between 3:00 the previous afternoon and 9:00 in the morning he had flown to London, done 10 minutes’ worth of work at Heathrow I guess jumped on a plane and flown back. All I had done was gone to Rockville and come in the next morning. Anyway, there he is and he’s just been to London. I’m absorbing this. I said, “Ollie by

the way they don't have the reservation for you." He goes up to the counter and he says, "Got me in there, North?" The guys says, "Sorry, colonel, but you're not in the thing." He said, "Well, how about under Jones?" The guy says, "No Jones." He said, "Try Smith." "Yes, we've got Smith." What's your first name? He comes up with the right name. "Yes, sir, we've got you here." The guy behind the counter says, "Can I see your passport please?" Ollie opens his briefcase and pulls out a diplomatic passport, looks at it puts it back in, goes through a couple of more passports to find the one under the name Smith and gives it to the guy. I was impressed. Here's this guy off combating terrorism in London overnight, has three or four different types of passports in different names, doesn't even remember what name he's supposed to be on this particular passenger list. This is Ollie North.

We then go on the plane. Over the next, I think it was a couple of days we were together, mostly on planes. Oliver North has this capacity of catching catnaps whenever the opportunity presents itself so he doesn't have to sleep through the night. So, you'll be talking to him and all of a sudden he'd go, "Bill, excuse me I've got to go to sleep." He's asleep. Fifteen minutes later he wakes up and he's back into whatever issues you'd been discussing. I remember he also had with him a book, which was The Hunt for Red October, and this was when it had just come out. He had the book and he was reading it between catnaps I remember he told me this is really good. This is really how it is. This is what we're doing out there. You should read it Walker; this will give you the flavor of our cat and mouse games with the Soviets and the subs under the ice.

He also told me stories about his family. Two that I remember, one that his father was an army man and a very strict disciplinarian and had almost cut him off without a further word when he went to Annapolis and became a marine officer. I remember that story. Another story I remember was he told me that he had just bought a house in Great Falls, Virginia. I said, wow, Great Falls, my wife and I looked out there when we were looking for housing and we just couldn't afford it. He said, oh, no, I was just driving along on the road out there one day and I looked over and I saw this burned down house, it was totally destroyed. I said, I bet I can get that for a song. I went in and even on my marine pay I was able to afford that house because it was destroyed and I'm slowly building it back together. I'm doing this because I want my kids and my wife to have a safe and tranquil, not in the middle of the city, sort of existence. Three years later when Contragate broke on us and people were really looking at Oliver North and stories were appearing about him in the press, these stories and other stories that he subsequently told in various settings turned out to be exaggerations if not wholly untrue.

A conclusion I came to but well in the aftermath of actually working with Oliver North was that he's believable when he's facing you and telling you a story, but obviously he's not very careful with the truth. But as I say when you're hearing these stories, he told me stories on the plane about Vietnam. He told me about a guy we were going to see in Costa Rica if we went to Costa Rica who was like a sergeant, no in El Salvador, some NCO in his platoon when they were fighting in Vietnam who had been one of the best NCOs he'd ever worked with. Then he comes back to the States and he's recently discovered he has terminal cancer, so he's down there and going to spend his last days

helping America fight the FMLN in El Salvador. All these stories that just grabbed you and made you feel like God damn, this guy really is a Teddy Roosevelt, really is a can do sort of American and here he is in the White House, very impressive. But then you later learn that there's a screw missing. There's something really wrong there. He's a scallywag, I guess is the way to put it.

He obviously pulled these same things, not just with us over at the State Department and at the agency and elsewhere, he obviously did it within the National Security Council itself. He obviously had John Poindexter, a three star admiral, hoodwinked because Poindexter, his career was ruined as a result of relying on Oliver North for information about and advice on Central America about which Poindexter knew nothing when he came into the NSC as director. I have a feeling that he had McFarlane in somewhat the same status. McFarlane was a different sort of marine officer who when he became national security advisor and probably as national security advisor was more interested in more global issues and left Central America to Ollie. That was later determined to have been a mistake, but nevertheless. So I have a feeling Ollie also hoodwinked and was able to make everybody think he was something he really wasn't.

Q: Did you get any feel for what was at least portrayed as being at a distance, but the president, we're talking about Ronald Reagan's concern of seeing that this was a cause which he felt deeply. I mean it was sort of the one place where he could fight communism and we could do something?

WALKER: Yes, I think that's exactly what, that might have been the extent of the President's innermost thoughts about Central America. I don't think he knew the region. I don't think he had been there that I know of. Yes, so it was, if you can use this word with Ronald Reagan, is intellectual capture of what was going on, was this was a challenge to America. This was these punks down there were poking their fingers in our eye and by God we're going to show them and pick some place where we can show them.

Q: North would be his kind of guy.

WALKER: Yes, now later Ronald Reagan denied that he saw North that much. North, every time North burst into a RIG meeting or an IG meeting, it was always well, I just saw the old man and he tells me do this or hey you're on the right track doing that. Again, everybody in the RIG thinks hey, that's coming from the President himself. He's our commander in chief. We all work for him. If that's what he thinks should be done, if it's not illegal, let's do it.

Oliver, he did get to know some of the people down there. But he knew them from the perspective of hey, I'm Oliver North from the National Security Council of the United States of America. I'm down here to tell you Oscar Arias or Napoleon Duarte or General Alvarez, here's what we want you to do and these guys were just overwhelmed. We're flying in most of the time in United States of America planes. He was able to do his act and he did it extremely well at many levels and in many fora.

Let me then go over and give you my impression of the CIA and what it was doing at this time. The director is Casey, William Casey from the OSS during the war, but has become a mover and shaker in financial circles I guess and makes a lot of money and joins the Reagan crusade and takes over the agency. He is, as I understand it, a bright man, a strange man, but he sits over in Langley and directs his minions to win the war in Central America for the boss. Shortly before I came on board so we're talking again '85, the director of their Central American task force was a guy named Dewey Clarridge, again, later revealed and out in the open. I think he wrote a book as a matter of fact [A Spy for All Seasons, 1999]. Dewey Clarridge was an Oliver North sort of a guy. Mister "Let's stand toe to toe with these guys. I've got all sorts of things I can do to bring these guys down." So Dewey Clarridge was a kick down the door sort of director of the Central American task force, perhaps getting us into some of the fixes we got into, but that was Dewey Clarridge. I only met him a couple of times in airports after he'd left Central American Affairs.

Anyway, in '85 Bill Casey had to pick a new director for the Central American task force. I guess he must have felt that the people that were doing Latin American Affairs were not, had not been involved in the sort of worldwide events that would have trained someone properly to deal with really front burner issues. Where did Bill Casey go to pick his new Central American task force director? He had a station chief in Saudi Arabia who appealed to him for some reason. I guess he heard good things about Alan Fiers. Alan Fiers was out there holding the Saudis in line and getting Intel cooperation with the Saudis. He must have done a very good job in Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia no one speaks the language. We have very few Arabic speakers especially at the level of Alan Fiers, so I guess it wasn't noticed that Alan Fiers didn't have any foreign languages. I traveled and got to know Alan Fiers pretty well on these flights to Central America. You'd sit around in the executive jet from Andrews and you'd talk about yourselves and tell stories, etc. Alan Fiers sort of stories about what it was like in Saudi Arabia I formed a very distinct impression of Alan Fiers.

Alan Fiers was born and grew up in what was, I think, the coal mining regions of either Pennsylvania or Ohio. I can't remember. One of them in Sandusky [Ohio] or something like this. He evidently came out of a tough background. As a young man he had considerable success in high school football as a result of which he won a football scholarship to Ohio State University when Woody Hayes was the coach. Nationally famous, won the Rose Bowl several times, etc. Alan Fiers on these plane trips would tell stories about one of the greatest men he ever knew and that was Woody Hayes. Woody Hayes was his idol. Woody Hayes was known for when you face a tough opposition you just put your head down and you just voom into the line. Alan Fiers apparently was a very lightweight linebacker, a defensive linebacker. Alan liked to say with considerable pride that Woody Hayes would come up to him and say, "Alan, you're the lightest, toughest linebacker I've ever seen. For a man of your weight you do more damage to the opposition than anyone I know." So, Alan was very much put your head down and charge that line, whatever the consequences. That was what got him a scholarship out of his lower middle class upbringing, got him to Ohio State, got him a college degree, and then

somehow or other he joined the agency and somehow or other he rose to be station chief in Saudi Arabia.

Now, in Saudi Arabia he was dealing with the Saudi princes, and every major position in the Saudi government is held by a Saudi prince. So, everybody he was dealing with was a Saudi prince. This was back when Saudi wealth was really something to be admired. Alan would tell stories about what it was like to travel around with the Saudi prince who was the head of Intel or the Saudi prince who was head of the army, flying in these massive executive jets with gold plated bathroom fixtures and stewardesses from all over the world who were at your beckon call. The prince would say, "Alan, you want to step to the bedroom at the back?" Alan never admitted he took him up on this, but he was obviously impressed with this sort of a life.

Casey picks him to be the head of the Central American task force which when it happened was obviously a great vote of confidence in Alan Fiers. He was going into probably the key position at the agency under the director and deputy director level. He was going to be doing things that would be on the front pages of the paper. He would be going to see Casey almost every day, etc. and he was now seen as a Casey protégée. Well, only one major problem with this equation. Alan Fiers had never been to Latin America. Alan Fiers neither spoke a word of Spanish, nor understood a word of Spanish, but was, as I guess he should be, quite confident of his abilities and quite confident that he had the backing of his patron, Bill Casey. He would do things again with a flair, not the same flair that Oliver North had, but with this flair of I'm speaking for the old man in this case Casey. We've got counter insurgency experts. We've got insurgency experts. I'm going to bring in some of the people from Southeast Asia who have been frustrated for the last 10 years, 15 years. But they know how to start an insurgency or they know how to put down an insurgency.

I went to Central America a couple of times with Alan Fiers. I remember very well one time going in to see the collective leadership of the Honduran military. We're talking about 30 some colonels. They make collective decisions in the Honduran military. They don't follow a supreme minister of defense or chief of staff in the army, but collectively they made all the decisions. So, we had to see this room full of these guys. I went along and I said, "We should bring an interpreter Alan from the embassy. We've got some guys who are cleared." "No, no, no, I don't want any more people in the room than have to be there, just you and me, Bill. If I need it you can interpret for me." We go in there, sitting in this big auditorium where we're in front and the conversation starts. We're talking about serious, serious issues. At the beginning I start in my bumbling, stumbling way trying to interpret as these guys are speaking very, very fast. I'm not an interpreter. Alan within minutes, says, "No, Bill, I'm getting most of this. I know what they're saying." Then he would respond and it was obvious that he didn't have a clue as to what they were saying. His answers made no sense to them.

Q: Oh God.

WALKER: At the end of the meeting decisions had somehow been made by two sides that were not speaking the same language. I came out of there just appalled that this was the level of expertise that was producing what we were doing. Elliott, on the other hand, is a master of languages. He's one of these people with this incredible gift for languages. A very good ear. I've never heard anyone who could mimic other people as well as Elliott Abrams. He would keep us in stitches at times, but he also had a gift for languages. He was already in command of French and was able to use that to pick up pretty damn good Spanish within just months. But, when it was serious stuff he used an interpreter. But Alan had this confidence and ability to understand by gestures I guess. It was, in my personal interpretation of what was going on, it was amateur night.

Q: Here you're saying, Ollie North comes bouncing in saying I've just seen the old man, i.e., Ronald Reagan, and obviously he's doing this everywhere. Alan Fiers was known to be very close to Casey so he could talk about his old man. Now, technically your old man would be George Shultz, but you're a triumvirate going out there. I mean did you get a feel for the relationship between Elliott Abrams and George Shultz and then how did this play out?

WALKER: Yes, I met George Shultz maybe three or four times. It was always Elliott who went up to the seventh floor to see Shultz. I came to the conclusion based on what I saw of them together, but also as well as how Elliott's recommendations were taken by the seventh floor that Shultz admired Elliott Abrams and Shultz saw in Elliott the qualities that I saw in him which was a real analyst and a real ability to see the core issues and come up with recommendations as to what should be done with a specific recommendation, not saying, well, you can do this, or this or this and gee, it's up to you, Mr. Shultz, Mr. Secretary. But Elliott would give recommendations that this is what we should do. I am absolutely convinced that George Shultz respected Elliott, took his advice, etc.

There was another thing, which I only vaguely sort of can recall. George Shultz had a chief of staff or a principal gateway into.

Q: Charlie Hill?

WALKER: Charlie Hill, right. Charlie and Elliot had a very good relationship and that was who Elliott used on a day to day basis. I only went to see Charlie Hill twice that I remember that both times I thought I was meeting someone out of a Dickens novel.

Q: Uriah Heep or something?

WALKER: No, he was in a darkened room and it wasn't right next to the Secretary. Sort of off where the executive secretariat sits. He was in this room and you'd go in and he'd take notes down; asked a good question. Obviously he was a key to George Shultz's operation. It was obvious as Elliott often said, that if you get it to Charlie it's going to Shultz. Charlie knows what to take to our old man. But I remember one of the several times I saw Shultz in person. Elliott and I went up to see him about something and I can't

remember the issue that we were deciding on. A three person conversation, the Secretary, Elliott and myself, Elliott mentioned Oliver North. Something like well, Ollie suggests that we do this, or Ollie, whatever. But he just mentioned Oliver North. George P. Shultz said, "Elliott, watch out for Oliver North. Be very, very careful in your dealings with North." Coming from another former marine, and my experience has been marines, former marines they are all together, stick together. For George P. Shultz to be saying that about Oliver North I took it seriously and I know Elliott did. It was obvious from what he said and the way he said it that George P. Shultz did not trust Oliver North. That he saw through him. For at that point we did not, or at least I did not.

George Shultz met, I think it was once a week with Cap Weinberger, Secretary of Defense, Casey, Director of the CIA. I guess the head of the NSC was there. It was three or four of them that met and chatted about whatever was going on. Central America was an issue. It was almost every week we'd get an action paper from the executive secretariat saying here's what was decided at the breakfast or the lunch whenever they met. I'm a great admirer of George P. Shultz. He often was the sole voice of sanity at some of these of what you could pick up from what was coming out of these meetings. He would go toe to toe with Cap Weinberger on some of these stupid things that were being offered up from our military. And he'd go toe to toe with Casey over some of the stupid things that were coming out of Casey.

Q: These were action oriented organizations which the idea often is don't stand there, do something. In fact we're going through this procedure right now. We've just had these terrorists attacks in the United States and those are the sort of professionals. Okay, it's fine we've got to do something, but let's be very careful because the crazies begin to take over.

WALKER: Well, Oliver North was action oriented. The good side of a marine which is charge the hill when you have to, but maybe not in some of these issues. Alan Fiers: put down your head and hit that line. There's nothing better than getting a couple of bumps on your head which show that you're been doing what you're supposed to do. This is not what we needed in these very complex, delicate things, where again, for all of Oliver's involvement with some of the leaders and the shakers in Central America he knew very, very little about how these countries worked. Alan didn't know anything about it.

Q: Well, did you find yourself trying to explain? And did it go anywhere if you did?

WALKER: My avenue of explanation was to put ideas, papers, thoughts before Elliott because these fellows were his level and were fairly dismissive of anyone below him. They were coming in with: the old man told me to do this. I mean, who are you Walker to say we shouldn't do this? So, I let Elliott do most of that sort of work and he did it well. He talked them out of an awful lot of stupid ideas.

Q: Did you feel that sort of you backstopping, but Abrams was trying to do the same thing that Shultz was doing and that was to keep things from getting out of hand?

WALKER: Absolutely. Absolutely. I admired about Elliott many things. He did not surround himself with people who only said yes to him. The deputy assistant secretary for South America who was in the office next to mine and we had known each other for years was Bob Gelbard. Bob Gelbard and Elliott had a lot in common. They were both Jewish. They were both very, very bright. They both could be seen by some as abrasive. But Bob would go in and say “Elliott, I just heard from Walker that some of these crazies are suggesting you do X, Y and Z. You can’t do that.” Elliott took that advice. He also took advice from Jim Michel who was his principal deputy, this legal mind who didn’t know much about life overseas or Central America on the ground, but certainly knew the Hill and knew the legal basis under which we were operating, knew what L thought of them, what our legal people would think of certain things.

Q: There was an awful lot of legal constraints put deliberately on there. This was part of the political process showing a complete lack of trust on the part of Congress as to what was going on.

WALKER: Exactly. Exactly. Every one of these bills that came down that authorized \$20 million had all sorts of conditions on them. I’m not a lawyer and I hate reading acts of congress. I can never figure out what they’re saying. Hey, Jim give me five points here in a single sentence to tell me what I can and can’t do was sort of my approach. But Jim Michel he read these things like a book and could tell you what was the intent, what was the real definition of this word or that word, so it was a good team. I had on the ground experience in two of those countries in my region. I had traveled a lot to other parts of the region, so I came in with that in the field experience. Gelbard was and is an expert in the corridors of power in the State Department. He could tell Elliott how the rest of the Department felt about his being asked to do certain things. What was the H bureau, the Human Rights Bureau going to say about X, Y, Z? All these questions. But it was a very, very complex set of issues magnified in intensity by this contentiousness, by this partisanship that surrounded each and every one of them.

I think I’ve said this in terms of other assignments, but even here and later I feel very, very strongly that what the State Department does, except for the highly classified stuff, we should be willing to share with anyone who is involved in the process. I felt very strongly that when we would get requests from the Hill to come up and give a brief on what we were doing or what we thought we were doing or how we were going to do something. I was always willing to go up and talk to congressmen, senators, staffers, whoever wanted to hear the story.

Our congressional people were timid about this, but I went up there as often as I could. Sometimes I was getting battered by staffers usually from the left wing of the Democratic Party, but you know, fine. I still felt that you give them as much as you can. With journalists the same way. But this was not the way some of the people in the game were playing the game. These were extremely, extremely difficult days for me. Not only the length of the day and the fact that there were no days off, but at the two year mark I thought I was getting out, and we’ll get to this later on. At the two year mark, Elliott bless his soul, put my name forward to go to Honduras as ambassador. Issues I’d been working

on, a country I knew and had been there three, four, five years before as DCM. So, I was his candidate to go to Honduras. It fell through in a story I will go into later. I remember Elliott calling me and saying, "Bill, I'd be very appreciative if you would stay on for a third year and then next summer for sure we'll get you something. Salvador is coming open, there are some other places coming open. So, I've asked them to extend you for a year." I said, "Sure Elliott." I went home that night and I sat on the side of the bed. I don't remember if I cried, but I just couldn't believe I was going to make it through another year. I was that worn.

Q: Let me ask you about your wife and children. That's part of the equation here.

WALKER: Well, my wife has always thought anyone working for the State Department is kind of nuts. She was not seeing much of me, but what she was seeing about what I was dealing with was on the news or in the papers in which we were getting slam dunked almost every day. It looked like I was helping people go into Nicaragua and shoot up convents or the usual stuff that one does in insurgencies that the Contras were.... [fighting]. So, she just, I don't think she had any great either appreciation for, or sympathy for, the issues I was involved in. I remember one night, I can't remember how far into this it was, but the fellow who is up right now up for nomination to be assistant secretary for Inter-American Affairs, Otto Reich, back then he was in charge of our public diplomacy office which later came into some disrepute. But Otto gave a function at his house for all the people involved in Central America. Sort of a happy get together. I think it was the only social event we had during my three years. Anyway, he threw his house open our here in Virginia someplace. I took my wife. I was introducing her to some of these people that she'd be reading about in the papers or that I'd been talking about. This is Alan Fiers and he's the guy who's head of the Central American task force. I'll never forget we were in the kitchen and in came Oliver North, Alan Fiers was not in the papers at this time really, but Ollie already was. He was being attacked by Mary McGrory and other columnists and everybody was in full pursuit of Oliver. I called Ollie over and I said, "I want you to meet my wife. Daisy, this is my colleague, Colonel North." He went into a bit of his usual act. I remember on the way home my wife said, "What a scalawag. Do you trust him?" "He's a marine lieutenant colonel." She saw much quicker than I did and I was seeing him every day. She just saw him for two minutes or so. It was tough on the family. I didn't see much of my two boys who were both in their 7-8, 9-10 years of age. When I heard I was going to do a third year I almost collapsed, I was so down.

Q: Well, why don't we go back to '85? What was the situation? How did you see the situation? Let's talk about the key countries, some of the countries at that time. Central America's got what, I guess Belize is kind of out of there.

WALKER: I'd forgotten about Belize. It was there.

Q: What are there five other countries or something like that? Six.

WALKER: Yes, it all depends if you count Panama as part of Central America. Panama is not part of Central America, but it was part of the Central American Office.

Q: Panama was not considered Central America?

WALKER: No, it is not considered. It is the isthmus between North America and South America. Central America is part of North America and this is the isthmus that connects it.

Q: Okay, but in your bailiwick, you had Panama?

WALKER: I had Panama.

Q: So, why don't we talk about, I mean as you saw the situation when you came there and will be coming back to it.

WALKER: In the summer of '85 El Salvador was in the sixth year of fighting the FMLN. '81, '82, '83 had been horrible years, death squads, thousands of people killed indiscriminately, civilians.

Q: This is on both sides?

WALKER: Both sides. But by '85 the first brunt of the FMLN offensive had slowed down. Remember I said that John Negroponte in '82 had come in and Reagan had come in saying we're going to regionalize this war. We're going to take the fight to the Sandinistas. We're going to show them that they can't do what they're doing in El Salvador. We're going to do the same thing to them in their homeland and they'll see the error of their ways and they'll withdraw their support. Well, this was in process of happening. So, in El Salvador the war was still a very, very serious war, but we now had civilian juntas in place later to be transformed into Napoleon Duarte being elected president and therefore being a civilian president in El Salvador, but this was all just beginning to happen in mid '85.

In Honduras we had three years in which John Negroponte was ambassador and the agency and DOD had been trying to get them to really allow the Contras to work up into a real fighting force and to go into Nicaragua and take on the Sandinistas. So, Honduras was relatively tranquil internally, but these things were going on. We were pressuring what was a civilian government, but looking over its shoulder all the time at its military. We were pressuring them to be as cooperative as possible in terms of getting this Contra movement up and running and taking on the Sandinistas.

In Guatemala, it was what Guatemala has always been, somewhat removed from the Sandinista question because it had a country, El Salvador, between it and Nicaragua. It also had a civilian president. When I came in he had not been elected yet, but a few months later he was elected. They were in a transition to a civilian president from a military government. It was obviously going to be a left-of-center government, but we

were also trying to get their support for what we were trying to do in Central America. So, we were trying to build a coalition of the willing, or semi-willing, among that northern tier of countries, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. Belize never entered into any of these equations. We were doing so with what were essentially civilian governments in all three countries. But in all three countries the civilian government was heavily dependent on the military. El Salvador just to fight the war for them and defend them against the FMLN. In Guatemala because the military has always been very strong there and was just about to leave power. In Honduras it had left power a few years before, but it was still the dominant institution in the country. So all three of them we were trying to tempt, force, pressure, argue into being as supportive as they could possibly be vis-à-vis what we were trying to do. Now, in counterbalance to this there is Mexico to the north of Guatemala, which is still PRI, left of center, revolutionary-rooted government which is certainly in their foreign affairs doing everything they can to tweak us.

Q: Well, how did this tweaking play out?

WALKER: The political leadership of the FMLN from El Salvador was in Mexico City. That was where they sat, fully protected by the government and did their thing which was mostly giving us heartburn in El Salvador. The Mexican government was always adamantly against anything being done against the Sandinistas. The Mexican government at that point in time its foreign ministry was full of a bunch of anti-American.

Q: It's been sort of traditional.

WALKER: It's been traditional.

Q: That was their playpen.

WALKER: That was their playpen. The government in the Palacio, the government that was running Mexico, the president, the cabinet, the interior minister. They were only concerned with internal affairs and they let the guys over at the SRE, Secretary of Exterior Relations, play their games and the guys over there were all very, very difficult to deal with, to put it mildly. George P. Shultz when we sat him down to Bernardo Sepulveda, the foreign minister of Mexico up at Latin American Day at the General Assembly in New York came back and said, "You don't ever put me next to that son of a bitch again." Bernardo Sepulveda, a very tall, elegant, handsome, debonair, speaks perfect English but with this rhetoric about the poor people of the world and the downtrodden and what Mexico was trying to do for them. He personally, BS. Not the sort of person to be lecturing George P. Shultz on what we should be doing. So, this was Mexico. They were counterbalancing a lot of what we were trying to do.

Q: I mean I would think particularly seeing Guatemala, Mexico would be the colossus to the north.

WALKER: Mexico is the colossus to the north and like the colossus to the north of Mexico, i.e., the United States, Mexico is not universally loved in Guatemala. They are

seen to be the ones putting pressure on Guatemala to do X, Y or Z or not do X, Y or Z. So there is no great love lost between.

Q: So, we had room to maneuver?

WALKER: Oh, yes, sure. We did have assistance programs in all these countries. We had leverage in all these countries certainly in El Salvador and Honduras, not as much in Guatemala because during the military regimes we had of course cut back, almost to the point of zero, our assistance there. When the civilian governments came in we were just starting to think about putting in assistance. So, we really didn't have that tool to use to the extent we had in El Salvador and Honduras.

The other player that we were dealing with was Costa Rica. Costa Rica, different kettle of fish, no insurgency there. It was about to go through one more normal transition of one civilian government to another. It prides itself on being the Switzerland, the little democracy in Central America. It doesn't like, unless it sees to its own advantage, to be included in Central America or certainly not in the dirty problems of an El Salvador or a Nicaragua. Costa Rica likes to stand apart from that, aloof from that and was very concerned because it has this border with Nicaragua and with the Sandinistas and there were things going on with that border. So, Costa Rica was a different set of issues to deal with to try and get them also to be as supportive as they can so that we could isolate Nicaragua and deal with the issues by having them isolated.

During my first months as a DAS, Guatemala had an inauguration of a new president, Vinicio Cerezo.

Q: Who was a civilian?

WALKER: Who was a civilian, a Christian democrat. He was coming in as the first civilian president after years of military regimes. He was a Christian democrat and had the support of the European Christian democratic movement and the Chilean Christian democratic movement and was seen to be a fellow Christian democrat with Napoleon Duarte in El Salvador. So we assumed he would be helpful in shoring up a Christian democracy regime in El Salvador. That's Vinicio Cerezo in Guatemala.

In Honduras we had a president, Azcona, who was the second iteration of a civilian government. He took over from Suazo Cordova, the guy who had been elected when I was DCM in Honduras three and a half years earlier. Pepe Azcona was coming into power in Honduras, someone I knew. And in El Salvador we had Napoleon Duarte who had been in power a bit, but the other election had just taken place and we went for the inauguration was in Costa Rica where Oscar Arias had just been elected president. We didn't know much about Oscar Arias. I met the new presidents of Guatemala and Costa Rica by being put on the official delegation to their inaugurations. First, to Guatemala and then a little later to Costa Rica.

The head of delegation to those inaugurations was the vice president, George Bush. We had a lot of discussion about what was the right level, normally, to an inauguration in Central America. I think I told you about the inauguration when I was in El Salvador seven, eight years earlier, the head of the delegation was fairly low level. But, here we were Central America the vice president is picked to head the delegation. When he did it in Guatemala he had to do the same in Costa Rica.

The celebration, the inauguration in Guatemala City was truly something that we were applauding. Here was a civilian coming in. He was a Christian democrat. Vinicio Cerezo, a very personable man, very young, looked like sort of a John F. Kennedy of Guatemala, good on the stump could give a real good speech about working on poverty in Guatemala, working on justice, working on all the issues that we thought had to be worked on. Vinicio Cerezo turned out to be less than what he looked like. A lot of anecdotes about him, but even that first night at his inauguration where we of course went, there was a huge massive popular celebration in the Plaza de Armas, the main plaza of Guatemala City in front of the palace. Outside tens of thousands of Guatemalan citizens celebrating civilian rule. Inside the movers and shakers who had come to the inauguration and those of Guatemala celebrating. Cerezo himself was just, this was a guy with a real twinkle in his eye. Sort of a Bill Clinton twinkle in his eye, very much the same as Bill Clinton's twinkle. A twinkle in his eye for a good looking lady. Vinicio turned out to spend most of his time living the life of the president of Guatemala. He had a wife who was much more serious than he was and much more an ideologue and much further to the left than he was. He didn't pay any attention to her in terms of husband and wife, but unfortunately he did in terms of her ideology and advice on where he should move in terms of policy.

Shortly after he was elected president he was invited to Washington. We wanted to give him an official visit to Washington to work on him. I was very involved in that visit. Maybe the highlight of the visit beside the ceremonial stuff was an evening on the presidential yacht, Sequoia, floating up and down the Potomac. The host that evening was going to be Ed Meese, Attorney General of the United States and very close to the president. The president himself was doing something else, so Ed Meese was the host. I was the official representative from the State Department. For some reason George W. wasn't available and Elliott must have been someplace else. Anyway, an evening of splendor on the good ship Sequoia. My wife and I got there ten minutes early, which was from my habit as a career officer and were piped aboard. The next to arrive was a caravan of cars that pulled up and a whole bunch of women got out of it. Of course the security service types, the secret service types and the captain of the ship and host, Ed Meese, were wondering who the hell these women are. Luckily I recognized the wife of the president of Guatemala, but she arrived without him. Shortly thereafter another caravan of cars came up and out popped Vinicio Cerezo with two very, very attractive young ladies. When he came on board, he introduced them. One was his private secretary and the other was a minister without portfolio. It was a very strange evening because Ed Meese, Cap Weinberger, their wives, the official American contingent didn't quite know what to make of this guest of honor, this president who spent no time with his wife. She spent time off in a corner with her girlfriends and people would go and engage in conversation, but they spoke mostly Spanish so that didn't work too well. Vinicio who

spoke very good English was flitting around from place to place usually with his minister without portfolio or with his private secretary or with both. I swear to God the only the person in the room who really understood what was going on was my wife, a Brazilian. She knew immediately, whereas the other Americans, maybe even myself, were saying, what the hell is going on here? It was a very strange evening.

I'm going to tell you another story, which goes back to his inauguration. Two stories. Again, we are Americans. The invitation to the inauguration ceremony, which is in the National Theater, says 1:00 PM. Well, we have to fight our way through a crowd of people outside the hall, but we finally make it into the hall; it's empty at 1:00 PM. Everybody inside: the ushers and the people and the protocol types are shocked that here are a lot of big delegations there right on time, but the rest of the auditorium was empty. They show George Bush, head of the delegation, up to the front row of this big theater, amphitheater. George Bush of course, everybody knows who he is and protocol types, bowing and scraping, taking him down there. The rest of the delegation including me, were put up in the front row of the section reserved for other members of delegations. So George Bush is taken down 25 rows or so and sat right in the center of the front row. Nobody else in the place. We're back there a little nervous. We were told we've got to be there on time, but we're not worried because he understands that Americans are always on time.

The second delegation to arrive is Daniel Ortega and the Nicaraguans. The protocol guys do the same damn thing and take Daniel Ortega down and sit him down next to George Bush and they're the only two people sitting up in front. Now, we are really nervous because at this point in time Daniel Ortega was much as bin Laden is today. He was the quintessence of everything we were against and here he is sitting up in isolation with the vice president of the United States. From way in the back we could see that Ortega is trying to engage the vice president in conversation, but the vice president isn't having anything to do with it even though they are the only two people up front. By now people are starting to come in by bits and pieces. They start filling in and George Bush, bless his soul, was able not to recognize this guy to his left and turned to whoever was seated next to him on his right and engaged him in conversation and we got through that. But it was a very spooky, uneasy feeling when we recognized the situation we had put him in, in total ignorance of what was happening.

The ceremony itself was a typical Latin American, playing an endless national anthem, ruffles and flourishes, putting the big sash on him, the usual speeches. But before they put the sash on him there was the ceremony of filling up the chairs up on the stage with the dignitaries like we have at our inauguration, the representatives of the Supreme Court, representatives of the military, representatives of the ministries, representatives of blah, blah, blah, blah. I'll never forget, I was sitting next to a fellow from our embassy who was very knowledgeable, later I became very close to him and he came to work for me in El Salvador. He was totally knowledgeable about Guatemala. The ruffles and flourishes started beating from the orchestra down in the pit. The procession started coming in with those who were going to fill these seats. The person who was in front of this large group of people who were coming in to fill the stage was a woman carrying the Guatemalan

flag. It was a fairly sizeable flag on a fairly sizeable pole. This woman was, I swear to God, nine and a half months pregnant. She's holding this big flagpole on top of her belly with the flag down. When the music starts and the processional starts, she starts coming down these steps. Everybody in the place was sure she was going to fall. She had the flag and she was pregnant and the steps were steep and there were people going along with her ready to catch her if she slipped. By God, she made it to the bottom, made it up on the stage, planted the flag and went over and sat down. I turned to my colleague from the embassy and I said, "My God, who is that? Why did they make that poor woman go through all of that?" He said, "Well, she is the minister of labor." "Well, it's appropriate at least. It's the right title." "But, that's also the president's child." At this point I and just about everybody else in the place was watching Mrs. Cerezo who at least was up on the stage for the presentation, the new first lady of the land. There was a look on her face as this woman was [seated]. I have no idea if the story was true or not about the child, but it was that sort of an inauguration. At that point we all knew that Vinicio was, yes he was going to be a civilian president, but we might be dealing with someone who had a weakness or two, and he sure as hell did. He totally wasted his whatever it was four years, five years in the presidency. The country did not. We all thought he was going to move in the right direction on all these issues, all these problems, but he didn't. That was Guatemala.

Q: Today is November 1st, 2001. We've had a little hiatus here. Bill, you were making sort of a run through of the various places. I can't remember what were you doing?

WALKER: I described the inauguration of Vinicio Cerezo who was the first elected civilian president in Guatemala after many years of military rule.

Q: Who blew it.

WALKER: Who blew it. Who came in and turned out to be a fun loving young playboy who essentially let the military continue to call the important shots while he enjoyed the life of being president and having girlfriends and making money. His brother, we accused his brother of being involved in the drug trade and that spoiled our relations with the Cerezo government for a while. Vinicio was a very pleasant guy to be around, an enjoyable character, but not really serious. He served his time living the life of being a president, but not really doing much for the country.

Q: After that, let's see it's sort of a tour of the horizon. You went to Costa Rica.

WALKER: I got to know Costa Rica and President Oscar Arias in the context of going down there for his inauguration and again the head of the delegation was Vice President George Bush. I was put on the delegation representing ARA. Again a planeload of folks flew down on Air Force 2 to the inauguration of President Arias. This of course was a very different situation in that as we all know Costa Rica is the little model democracy, the little Switzerland of Central America in the middle of a Central America at that point which was consumed with all sorts of problems. There was a civil war in El Salvador going on. The Sandinistas were in control of Nicaragua. Honduras was the basket case it

always has been in Central America. Panama was still under Noriega. So, again, Costa Rica was this little Garden of Eden in the middle of Central America, in the middle of turmoil.

I've always had my reservations about whether or not Costa Rica deserved this particular reputation. They're very proud of the fact that they don't have a military, but they've got a very large and very well armed police, national police, which for all intents and purposes is just as tough on people, I think, as some of the militaries in the neighbors. Anyway, in '88 I guess it was, they had another election, a typical Costa Rican election and lo and behold a fellow named Oscar Arias won and I was put on the delegation to go down there for his inauguration with Vice President Bush as the head of the delegation.

Q: Did we have any particular reading on him before he came in?

WALKER: Well, that's an interesting point. On the plane flying down, on Air Force 2 flying down, we were given all the biographic material that State Department and other agencies in the U.S. government had compiled on Oscar Arias. I remember because they were quite colorful and we passed them around and we spoke to George Bush about them, the vice president, as we briefed him on what to expect. I remember the CIA bio of Oscar was really quite interesting. It said a number of things about him that described his youth and he apparently was brought up as the only son in a family essentially of sisters, of girls, of women. Apparently he was the pet of his family. He was the only son in an essentially macho society where the son is the one who receives all the attention, but being from this particular type of family he received more than a fair share. His mother was really taken with him. I remember him saying how he was always told as a young boy that someday you're going to be president of the republic, Oscarito. He grew up with this rather large picture of what he was going to be when he became a man to such an extent that he was very unpopular with his peers because he got all this attention from his family. He was spoiled. He went around telling everyone that his family was sure he was going to be president someday.

Q: Sort of boyhood friends.

WALKER: Unfortunately, or depending on how you look at it, he is small of stature, so this little guy telling that he is going to be such a big man someday he got a lot of razzing from his peer group. The profile went on to say that he also has a difficult time sticking to the truth about his background. That he likes to tell people that he got a graduate degree from Oxford when in fact he had gone to the UK and had gone to one of the red brick universities rather than Oxford. But, when he came back he liked to tell everyone he had an Oxford degree. There were other sort of things like that in his background that he exaggerated to put it mildly, stretched the truth considerably when describing to people.

We got off the plane and we all commented on this rather vivid living biography of the fellow we were about to meet. When we got into San Jose we went directly from the airport to Oscar Arias's home where he had decided to receive the head of the delegation from the United States in what he thought was a great gesture of hospitality and a special

relationship with our country which I'm sure it was. So, we went to his home and I'll never forget, we spent the better part of the morning there. We met him. We met his wife. His wife, a beautiful woman, extremely well educated, a graduate of Smith College in the United States. I came to a conclusion very quickly that she should have been the president rather than Don Oscar because he was exactly what this living bio had shown him to be. He launched into conversation by telling the vice president and our party about who he was and of course he described himself as a graduate of Oxford and all the things that we knew to be untrue.

Q: Were you glaring at the party not to titter?

WALKER: Yes, we looked at each other and said, oh my God. I remember later hearing that he told people who knew he had gone to this red brick university, well it was because no one in Costa Rica knows where the University of Manchester is or whichever it was, but everybody knows Oxford, so I just wanted to, that was the generic UK university. But, damn it, he knew that Oxford had a certain ring to it. It was true of the other things that he said about himself. Anyway, he also told us at this meeting at his house, "You know, I'm looking forward to your comments about my speech because I've gone back and I've found all the best speeches, inaugural addresses, that I could find, and, of course, the model for me was the speech of John F. Kennedy when he was inaugurated. It was short and it was inspiring, so I worked very, very hard to produce a speech of the same genre." We all thought, great, a short speech. Well, we went to the stadium, and it was the entire national stadium full of people who cheered. I'll never forget, the ceremony was one of the longest ceremonies I've ever sat through, partially because his speech was so damn long and, of course, it was given in both Spanish and translated into English so it was twice as long. It was the most boring pedantic recitation, of well, we're going to fix up the so and so sewer plant, and I'm going to put 500,000 colons or whatever, pesos into the fisheries hatchery and then I'm going to... and the ministry of interior. I'm going to do this and that and he went on and on and on and on with statistics and promises. There wasn't a word in it that in any way resembled anything that I had ever heard out of a speech of John F. Kennedy or anyone else who was a good speechmaker. I came away from that with the notion that Oscar Arias had a very big image of himself. Out of all relation to what reality was and this was pretty well played out during the time that I was dealing with Central America and Oscar Arias was a real thorn in our side. Every time we would talk to him either the embassy down there or we would meet him in various places or he would call for meetings of the Central American presidents. He finally came up with the Arias Plan, which was his view of how we were going to solve the various crises in Central America. To our way of thinking it was a very naive plan. It really didn't deal with some of the underlying causes of the Sandinistas in one country exporting their revolution into Salvador. We fighting back. But Oscar was such a, as I say you just couldn't hold him down. He was always out there going to Europe.

In Europe everybody loved Oscar Arias because our policy in Central America was badly criticized in Europe by people who didn't know what the hell they were talking about. But when Don Oscar would come to Europe and talk about his plan and his vision of how we could bring peace to Central America, he was treated like a God to the extent that not

too long before I left the position he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize which must have been in 1987. I've often said this somewhat in jest, but almost not in jest, when I heard that he had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to bring peace to Central America, it was just when our policy was really under attack from all sides. I can't remember if it was just before or just after Iran Contra broke over our heads, but it was in that period when things were very, very tough indeed and Don Oscar is nominated to go and pick up his Nobel Peace Prize in Scandinavia. When he flew back as the Nobel laureate, Elliott Abrams didn't want to go to New York to welcome him back. No one else in the Department wanted to do that and so what flows downhill you know and all of a sudden I was at the bottom of the hill. I was sent up to New York to officially welcome him back to the United States on behalf of the U.S. government. I went on the plane at JFK and I told people I wasn't sure I was going to be able to get his head through the doorway to get him off the plane because he was so full of himself. The Nobel laureate. Did you hear I won the Nobel Prize, Walker? Why else do you think I'm here, Don Oscar? He was, and I think remains, an insufferable bore as far as I'm concerned. But, as I say the darling of Europe, the darling of the left up here. He was the one who "discovered" that there was a secret CIA air base in northern Costa Rica that we were using to drop supplies into the Contras. A big secret as though no one else knew about it. He was difficult to deal with, very difficult to deal with.

As I say I do not think Costa Rica deserves this reputation it has outside of the region where people read about Costa Rica every so often and they always see: democratic, longstanding democracy, Costa Rica, the Switzerland of Central America. What it essentially is is a country that doesn't have an Indian population and certainly doesn't have a black population. It's mostly white European immigration that filled it up whenever it was filled up and they have this superior attitude towards their neighbors who tend to be darker complexions and not as well off as Costa Ricans are. I've obviously known many Costa Ricans that I have a great deal of admiration for, but the general tone of how Costa Rica sees itself and its role in Central America, I find a little hard to take.

Q: Were they at that time and before it sounds like they must have had some sort of policy of keeping the lesser breeds out of the country?

WALKER: Well, I'm not quite sure how they've done it. But you know, a fair percentage of Costa Ricans don't see that they have much in common with Nicaragua nor with Honduras nor with Panama, these countries that are pretty much around it. They talk about the violence in these other countries as though they were immune from violence and they're peace loving, rule of law sorts. But Costa Rica has the same amount of corruption, the same amount of shoddiness in many aspects that the others have. They tend to see themselves as really quite superior to the rest of Central America. Which I found quite offensive. Their role in terms of bringing the other countries to seeing the wisdom of the Arias Plan, for instance, I didn't think was very well done.

Q: Was anything done with the Arias Plan?

WALKER: One of Oscar Arias's many points was to hold meetings with the Central American heads of state that he would convene and would exclude the United States from participation or even from attendance on the margins. This irked us, obviously, because at least three of these countries were very large recipients of our assistance and were helping us in terms of the effort against the Sandinistas in one way or another. Oscar was trying to undercut, undermine what we were doing, and present himself as the voice of reason and wisdom. I can't remember where the meeting was. It was in Guatemala or it was in Mexico or someplace, and we finally were given permission to send down a very low level observation team and they went down. When they came back they said, you know who was there and who was sitting next to Oscar and was obviously advising? I said, I have no idea. Two of Senator Dodd's staffers who were there presumably giving an anti-administration view from Washington saying you're right to not let the Reagan administration tell you what to do or how to go about bringing peace to Central America. We're talking on behalf of the Hill. We've really got the power to cut off aid to you countries if you don't go along with Oscar Arias's plan. So, there was that sort of countervailing pressure because these were days when the Central American policy here in Washington was very contentious.

Chris Dodd who I think at the time was chair of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was certainly antagonistic towards the Reagan policy which had been the Carter policy and this was just a continuation of that policy. But Senator Dodd and especially his two staffers, Bob Dockery and Janice O'Connell, saw their role as sort of telling the Central American heads of state, you know, we don't care what you get told by the administration, the Reagan administration. We're going to tell you the real scoop as to how Washington wants this to come out and we up on the Hill have the power to cut off aid or put conditions on aid so you better listen to us. Needless to say the administration found that quite offensive. This was not the congress; this was one senator and not only the senator, but his staffers, sort of playing foreign secretary of the United States. So, it was very, very difficult, very difficult. Oscar sort of liked to play that game, telling people in Central America that he had the ear of The Senate when it was actually one senator and one senator's staffers.

I have any number of sort of stories. Let me tell you one of my favorite stories. It will tell you something about Oscar Arias. Another thing in this profile of him which I remembered throughout my time as the DAS and I liked it because it fit in with my impression of Oscar Arias, but in there someplace there was a description of when he would get upset or get nervous. It described him as sort of picking on his clothes almost as though he was picking off imaginary lint. Okay? That's a nervous mannerism the man has. Okay. So, when things were getting particularly tight in terms of what things were going on in Central America, Oscar Arias came to the United States for some sort of official visit. He brought with him a fellow who was also we thought a bit of a nemesis, a Chilean who later became Chile's ambassador to Washington, but a lot later.

But back then he was someone who had gone to the same red brick university with Oscar Arias in the UK and he had arrived in Costa Rica in the aftermath of the Pinochet takeover in Chile and he was a leftist so he didn't fit in Chile at that particular time. So he

went to Costa Rica and looked up his old friend Oscar who was then running for the presidency and he became an advisor to him. He became a great eminence behind Oscar Arias and we always thought he was pushing a leftist agenda. Oscar came to town, to Washington with this fellow.

We decided that maybe something we should do would be to get Oscar together with some people from Langley who could give him a brief as to where we saw some things that he might not know about the Sandinistas that maybe would be of interest to him. Things they were doing in his country that maybe he wouldn't approve of. We might be able to get to him a little through giving him inside scoop. When we thought about it, we decided that Oscar Arias, Nobel laureate, one is not going to want to meet with an underling. If he sees anyone, he's going to have to see Casey himself and two, he's probably not going to want to be seen going through the gates of Langley. We worked out a deal by which Oscar Arias, his Chilean Richelieu who was with him, would go to a hotel in downtown Washington and Casey would come to him and they'd meet in a bedroom someplace; made a lot of sense. This was put together, the arrangements were made by Alan Fiers who I mentioned earlier was head of the Central American task force at the time at the agency. I remember Elliott Abrams, my boss, the assistant secretary saying, Bill, I'm going to tell Alan that you've got to be at the meeting because we don't want the president of a country meeting with the head of the CIA in which we don't know what's going on. So, we'll get you into the meeting, Bill. I said, great.

So one afternoon I go to some hotel in Washington and I'm standing in the lobby waiting for 3:00 or whatever it is when these two parties are going to come. Sure enough a couple of minutes before the hour in comes the president of Costa Rica and his sidekick and they go up to the room and I'm standing there waiting for Casey to show up. I wait and I wait and I wait, and finally Alan Fiers comes in and says, Bill why aren't you upstairs at the meeting? I said, well, we're waiting for Casey. He said, oh, no, he came in through the kitchen. He's already upstairs. He doesn't come through the front door. I said, on my God. So I ran upstairs. I went into this room and I forget the other persons there and there was another close advisor of Arias was with them, so there were three of them. There was Casey, there was Alan Fiers and there were one or two sidekicks of the director of central intelligence. They were sitting in sort of a semi-circle and they had just been introduced and they all sat down and I sat down. We sat there waiting for someone to say something. Now, it wasn't for any of the underlings to say anything. It was either the president or the director to say something. Evidently, either I don't know for protocol reasons or whatever, neither one of them knew which one was to speak first. So, neither one of them spoke. We just sat there in dead silence. As we all recognized that this was an awkward moment, all of a sudden Oscar Arias started doing this lint business on his suit. We're all watching the president picking lint off the various part of his pants, his shirt, his jacket, which of course made us a bit nervous. Casey was sitting there and he made an effort to say something, but nothing came out. Here we're sitting there with one guy bubbling and one guy picking imaginary lint off his jacket and we're all getting more and more nervous, the underlings, but no one has the courage to say anything to break the ice. Finally, finally, finally, it seemed like an eternity, but maybe it was just three, or four or five minutes, I can't remember, but finally the president of Costa Rica finally speaks out.

He turned to the director of central intelligence and he said, Mr. Director, you must have an interesting inbox. We all were digesting that and again Casey in an almost unintelligible response.

Q: He's renowned for mumbling.

WALKER: Mumbling, yes, mumbling and mumbling and bubbling at the same time and he mulled over and yes, interesting. We took the answer to be yes, I've got an interesting inbox and then we went into another silence and after about three or four minutes the two of them stood up and shook hands and thanks for seeing me sort of thing and we left. Absolutely nothing was discussed. It was probably the most bizarre meeting I've ever been in. Now, it was only a month or six weeks later that it was revealed that Bill Casey had a brain tumor, so this I'm sure contributed to his side of the equation, but Oscar Arias was, he was a nervous little twit. As I say, one of the more bizarre meetings I've ever attended. Never have I been in a meeting where the tension just kept rising as nothing was happening.

Q: Nothing worse.

WALKER: Nothing worse, yes. As I said, we had problems with Costa Rica, one because Oscar was sort of holier than thou, sort of the Casablanca line, oh, I've discovered gambling going on in the back room sort of thing. I've discovered this secret air base. Oh my God. I've discovered the United States is doing things in my country against the Sandinistas. Oh my God. All of which had been discussed with, approved by his predecessor, but all of a sudden he was discovering it. Every time he would discover it he would do something that would annoy us. We had prompted this.

Q: How did you find our embassy was dealing with that?

WALKER: Our ambassador at the time to Costa Rica was an ambassador we probably should have sent to Managua rather than to Costa Rica. His name was Lewis Tambs. Lou Tambs was a white haired elder statesman of the conservative academic type. He was a professor from the University of Arizona, I believe. Known for his very conservative view of Latin America. In other words he was a true Reaganaut. We sent him down there and he went in with the idea that he could get Costa Rica to join up in the fight against the Sandinistas. It might have worked with Oscar Arias's predecessor. It did not work with Oscar Arias. I'll never forget flying into Costa Rica, early on in my DASship and we flew into Costa Rica in an airplane out of Howard and I was onboard, Oliver North was onboard and we flew into San Jose.

The ambassador obviously had been notified of our coming and sure enough he was out on the tarmac with his limo and he invited Colonel North to get in the limo with him and they sped off before I could even get in the second car. I was the senior rep on the thing. I was the head of the delegation actually, but Lou Tambs knew where the power was and he knew who Oliver was. They jumped in his limo and as I said, they sped off. In fact it was before Oscar Arias had become president. It was with his predecessor, it was the last

days of his predecessor's presidency who had been very cooperative with us. So, Lou and Oliver sped off to go and see the president and I was left to get into some secondary vehicle in the back of the line and we tried to catch up with them and we never caught up with them because they went so damn fast. I wasn't sure my driver even knew where the president was going to receive us. So, we got there a bit late. Lou obviously saw Oliver as the voice from the White House and someone he was ideologically akin with. We had a lot of that sort of going on. The political appointees that Reagan put in who were known for their very, very conservative views. Lou Tambs was a problem.

Q: He later went to Colombia, didn't he?

WALKER: He went to Colombia, right which was perhaps a better place for him, a more conservative elite with fighting guerrillas back then a fairly incipient guerrilla movement, but nevertheless fighting a guerrilla movement. I think he was more at home in Colombia than he was in Costa Rica.

Q: How was Tambs dealing when Arias was there? Was he just sitting back?

WALKER: He was a bull in the china shop. He'd go in and see 'em and give them the pitch. They had decided that pitch was not to their liking well before he came to see them. So, I don't think they listened to him at all. This Chilean fellow I think had nothing but contempt for Tambs. That's my reading.

Q: Moving down to Panama in your area, how much involved were you there?

WALKER: For the first two years it was just another of my six countries. My last year as DAS we're talking '87 to '88 it consumed me. A lot of interesting things happened in Panama as my time as DAS going back to when I first became DAS. One of the first trips I made was a trip that subsequently became fairly famous. I mentioned earlier that we had a lot of interagency meetings. The IG was a huge group. Everyone was involved, all the agencies that were involved in Central America: JCS, the Pentagon, the CIA, the DIA, everybody participated in the big one. Then there was the RIG, the reduced interagency group, which was maybe DOD, State, NSC and CIA and then there was the core group within that which was Elliott, Alan Fiers and Ollie North.

Early on as I say we're talking now '85, late '85. A few months after I took over the DASship, we sat around as we were to sit around a number of times after this, but this was the first one I sat in on in which we were getting worried about what Noriega was doing in Panama. He was "our friend" in terms of Central America. He told us he was helping us with the Sandinista problem. He reminded us that he had gone to the military academy in El Salvador so he had very good connections in the Salvadoran military and he could talk to them and get them to listen more carefully to what we were trying to advise them. In other words he claimed he could really help us in Central America. And at times he did. Now at other times he was doing things that were diametrically opposed to some of the things we were trying to accomplish in Central America, but we tended to see the glass half full rather than half empty.

In late '85 there was a very horrific murder that took place in Panama. A fellow named Hugo Spadafora was the principal opposition figure to Noriega. He was a young guy who was pretty well educated. He was a hero in that he had gone in and fought with the Sandinistas when they were taking on Somoza. He had earned sort of a popular following in Central America and in Panama for his bravery, for his idealism. But at home he was a pain in the neck to Noriega. He was very critical of Noriega and of what Noriega was doing. I remember one day reading this report that came in from the embassy which was that Hugo Spadafora had gone up to Costa Rica because he had a lot of friends in Costa Rica. The democratic left, that was his milieu. So he went up to see some of these people and when he came back and entered Panama up in the north, he was on a bus heading for Panama City just south of the border and the bus was stopped. He was taken off the bus by some national guardsmen and was not seen alive again. Sometime later they found parts of him in Costa Rica if I'm not mistaken. Like his head was in Costa Rica or his body was in Costa Rica, parts of him were in both countries. He'd been brutally murdered and cut apart.

It was obvious who had killed Hugo Spadafora, taken off a bus in Panama by national guardsman and not too many hours later discovered brutally killed. With his death there was a lot of international outcry about what was going on in Panama. How could the United States have this guy Noriega as its ally and why were we so supportive of Noriega and his thugs? A lot of that kind of stuff. Editorials in the New York Times, editorials all over the place, in Europe. So at our IG meeting, one of the first I went to it, it was decided that we "had to send a message" to Noriega. We had to go down there and tell him he had to knock off some of this real brutal stuff. The question was who can best deliver the message? As I had gone through several times before with other message delivery systems, and as I was to go through the same discussion several times later, everybody threw out the best idea. Some said, well, the vice president should go down, George Bush; he's known in Latin America. He's the guy who went to El Salvador and told the colonels to knock it off. Who should we send? The vice president is too high a level. It gives Noriega the feeling that we're kowtowing to him at a high level, no that's too high a level. Well, maybe it should be someone, Vernon Walters. Everybody always thinks of Vernon Walters, military guy, speaks Spanish, well thought of in Brazil, Argentina. Yes, but he might not be known in Panama. Well, we went around and around and around. The final decision was that it would be who had just come in as head of the NSC?

Navy admiral, John Poindexter. We'll send down Poindexter. The consensus was this was fine. He's a military man. He can go in uniform. He can really make this. He can take Noriega to the wood shed and blah, blah, blah. So, we all flew down. I was on the plane and we all flew down to Panama and Noriega was at the plane to meet us with his retinue and sure enough Poindexter went off. It was just Poindexter, Oliver North and Noriega. Was the message delivered? I don't think so. Poindexter, I think, was too much of a gentleman to really bore in as tough as he should. Ollie was there and Ollie had some things going in Panama having to do with the Sandinista problem. For whatever reason, if the message was delivered, it wasn't taken.

Not too long after this, well, maybe six months, maybe a year. We had another meeting, another message to deliver to Noriega. The first one obviously didn't take. Got to deliver the message again. Maybe we should bring him to the States? No, no, no, no, let's send someone down there. Let's get him on his own turf and this time let's make sure there are some other people in the room who will hear the message coming from the United States. Noriega was famous for insisting on one-on-one meetings and he would go and tell his people what had happened at the meeting and the story would usually bear very little relationship to what had in fact been in fact. Maybe this was what was wrong with the Noriega-Poindexter meeting. That he maybe went back and said oh Poindexter came down here to give me a medal and increase my salary, whatever the hell he wanted to tell his boys. This time we decided, that no we better not send a military guy. Military to military might have been a bad idea. We shouldn't have sent Poindexter because he was too high ranking. Let's send someone a little lower than that. This time the deliverer of the message was someone who has come back into public notice right now. It is someone who I consider a friend and who I consider a very good delivery boy of tough messages and that's Rich Armitage who is now the deputy secretary of state. Again, we all flew down to Panama and Rich Armitage went off. I do remember who went with him. Our ambassador to Panama at the time, Ellis Briggs, Ted Briggs as he is known to his friends. But I am not his friend so I will call him Ellis Briggs. We got off the plane and Ted Briggs the American ambassador; again we didn't want it to be just the principal and Oliver North. We wanted State Department, the official representative of the U.S. government, the ambassador to be there. We wanted Noriega to have some of his cronies with him so they would hear the message undiluted and we thought this would be the best way to get the message across. That meeting became famous because a day or two later in the New York Times was a story coverage of the meeting. They obviously had their sources in Panama. The description the New York Times had of this meeting was that Deputy Assistant Secretary for InterAmerican Affairs at the Pentagon Richard Armitage went to Panama yesterday to deliver a blunt message to General Noriega about human rights abuses in Panama, but, unfortunately, they broke open a bottle of Black Label scotch and by the time they finished toasting each other no one remembered what the purpose of the meeting was. That was sort of the tone of this article, which as you can imagine infuriated Rich Armitage. He claimed that he did deliver the message and that yes, he had brought a bottle of Black Label or someone had brought a bottle of Black Label as a gift. They had broken it open and yes they'd had a drink, but by no means was everybody in this alcohol state the New York Times made it appear. Again we felt that the message had not really been delivered.

This led to a third attempt, considerably later when things were really going to hell in a hand basket in Panama. During this period, they had an election in Panama. A young fellow named Nicky Barletta who was a graduate of MIT or some very, very good university here in the States, he had a master or maybe a PhD in economics from a very good school up here, was put up as the candidate of the government party and won. There was some question as to whether he had won fairly or not, but we never really looked behind that. He seemed to be a good guy and he won. He certainly was a modern man, well educated, spoke perfect English, we liked him. We thought he was a perfect sort of

face of Panama. Unfortunately he ran afoul of General Noriega. I can't even remember what it was that made Noriega decide that Nicky Barletta was forgetting his place. So one fine day Nicky Barletta was removed from office. [September 27, 1985] It was very peaceful. He just showed up one day and the executive bathroom was locked or something like that. They wouldn't give him the key. He immediately understood what was happening and he wasn't going to cause any problems, so he just left. They installed his vice president as the new president of Panama. I can't at this moment actually remember the vice president's name, [Eric Delvalle] but he was a wimp. He was certainly not going to challenge Noriega. He saw what had just happened to Nicky Barletta. So he became a very figurehead president. This was when Panama was really starting to pull apart. At some point that acting president also ran afoul of Noriega. Number one he was from a wealthy family and Noriega started casting his troubles as the rich white people who are out to get me and they're trying to oppress me because I'm doing so much for the poor brown people. This vice president came to symbolize the rich white upper class, the economic elite and so Noriega let it be known that this guy was no longer really calling the shots. He disappeared and went into hiding, because he was not only a wimp he was also a bit of a coward. So he went into hiding.

At some point in this process things really started to disintegrate in Panama. Noriega started doing things against U.S. interests there, started playing off some of his other cards and benefactors. I used to get asked all the time by journalists who would come and interview me about Panama, they'd always say, "Well, isn't it true that Noriega is on our payroll? Isn't he getting paid by the U.S. government, the agency or someone?" My answer to that question was, "I don't know for sure, but it wouldn't surprise me because I'm sure he's on everybody's payroll. I'm sure he's on Cuba's payroll. I'm sure he's on the Soviet Union's payroll. I'm sure he's on the French payroll. This guy makes money from all sides and tells everybody everybody else's secret, so whatever he thinks you want to hear, that's General Noriega. He knows how to play the game." So, at some point it was decided we're going to send the message a third time. He obviously didn't get it with the Poindexter visit; he didn't get it with the Armitage visit. Now he's starting to play even rougher so now we've really got to sock it to him. It didn't work sending down a military guy, Poindexter. It didn't work sending down a civilian, Armitage. Maybe we should bring him to Washington and really read him the riot act. Okay, that was the decision. Who should he see when he's up here? Well, let's just fly him up here and let's get him in to see Casey. Casey will read him the riot act. He'll see no one else. There will be no other pleasantries. We'll bring him up secretly, take him over to the agency, take him to the shed, put him back on the plane, send him back, he'll get the message. Terrific. It was all arranged. No one from State was involved.

The weekend after it happened we all got together to find out was the message delivered and somewhat red faced the agency fellow said it didn't go quite according to plan. They went and they told Noriega that Casey wanted to see him. They put him on this special plane. He was the only passenger. They flew him up here. They landed at some airbase. They drove him directly to the agency. They took him in and he sat around with Casey's underlings waiting to see the director. They felt that he was going in to get his whipping so they treated him very nicely. Got him coffee, got him snacks, showed him the

hospitality of the agency and then they took him in to meet the director. The director thought that they had taken him to the shed in the previous meeting, so he wanted to show him that they were hospitable and it was between friends. So, he treated him to coffee and snacks and said nice things about him and he left. They put him back on the plane and sent him back to Panama.

Q: Oh, God.

WALKER: So, here is the guy who comes up in a special plane just to see the director. All he gets is little pleasantries both from the underlings and especially from the director. They put him on the plane and they send him back. The message that he received was boy, these guys love me. In other words, the exact opposite message was delivered by that meeting or meetings.

Q: I'm surprised in a way that you found out what happened because I would have thought that the agency folks would have been so embarrassed about how this thing went that they would have dug the ultimate of cover up.

WALKER: I can't remember how we found out. Yes. A good friend of mine once said, I'm often quoting him. I think I've quoted him several times before and he said, "You know, when you're dealing with the agency types," and one of his relatives is in the agency, "if you call him a liar, if you call him two faced, they never get upset because they believe that hey, that's our job, we must be good at it if you think that's what we're doing. The only thing they really get upset at is if you call them stupid. That gets them mad." This was stupid; I'm not quite sure why we heard it. But we did hear it. We did get the story because he obviously did not get the message and things got worse instead of better. But Panama, I became very, very involved and this is what consumed my last year on the job and I was glad to get involved in Panama because it got me out of the Nicaragua stuff. It got me off to the side when Iran Contra broke over our heads. That broke over our heads late '86, I can't remember the exact date, but it was about a year before I left the DASship.

Q: Well, this Iran Contra in the first place, I think you better explain what it was for people who are researching this. Then, your, how this came to your attention.

WALKER: I know exactly how it came to my attention.

When we were talking about my tour in Honduras, I was DCM '80 to '82, I talked about the Contras being there, mostly ex-Somoza types who had not had the money or the ambition or the intelligence to go elsewhere so they stayed in Honduras when they came out of Nicaragua. They started talking about they were going to reinvade Nicaragua and they were the Contras, counter revolutionaries. During my time in Honduras we paid no attention to them. They weren't our type of people. They were in fact ex- Somoza bullies. By the time I went to the DASship the Contras had become something we were nurturing to try and bring pressure against the Sandinistas to knock off what they were doing in El

Salvador. We thought that if we could get a counter force, a counter balance in terms of a group that was going to essentially invade Nicaragua from Honduras, much as we felt El Salvador was being invaded by Salvadorans who had sanctuary in Nicaragua, that we would show the Sandinistas that this is something they should knock off in El Salvador. Then we would call off the Contra dogs in terms of what they were doing in Nicaragua. Well, by 1985 this had become a major policy and we had been helping the Contras against the Sandinistas.

Q: Had this moved from being an irritant to tell them to knock it off to being a real push to knock the Sandinistas out?

WALKER: Yes, correct. We, Oliver North, Alan Fiers felt that over time the Contras would become strong enough with our heartfelt assistance, with our encouragement, with our technical assistance, with our giving them arms, with our giving them various types of support that they would become much more than an irritant for the Sandinistas, but actually a threat to the Sandinistas. It would certainly consume the Sandinistas to the point that they would not be able to continue to help the FMLN in El Salvador. The policy never came to full blown operation because it generated so much opposition in the congress. We won votes by a vote or two. We lost votes by a vote or two.

Q: This was not a secret policy.

WALKER: It was not a secret policy. It was an overt policy in which, certainly from the State Department perspective, we were doing what the congress permitted us to do. So, when the congress cut off assistance, we _____, when they reinstated it. I think I mentioned earlier that within my first month on the job we got a bill through congress by just a couple of votes in the house. A little better support in the senate that allowed us to fund non-lethal assistance to the Contras. Later on we got another vote passed by a very, very slim margin in which we got \$100,000,000 in which we could give some lethal support, but a majority of non-lethal support to the Contras. The Contras over time were changing into a real fighting force that was more a peasant army than it had ever been back in the early days when it was mostly these ex-Somoza types. Over time the Sandinistas, especially in the first years of the Contras, when it really wasn't much of a threat to them, they went in and did pretty horrific things in parts of the country where they thought these guys were being spawned. What they did was they became the best recruiting sergeants for the Contras. They went to villages of Mestizo Indians and burned down the village and chased the men out and the men would go off and join the Contras. They chased an awful lot of exiles into horrible camps in Honduras where again the Contras could go in and recruit. So the army started building up, but our support one day was on, one day was off, and every vote was so close we were never able to sustain the policy long enough to really get it to achieve what we thought it could achieve. That having been said, the Contras were becoming a much more serious threat to the Sandinistas to the point where the Sandinistas were getting extremely worried and they brought in a lot of helicopter gunships from the Soviet Union. They brought in Cuban advisors; they brought in all sorts of things to help them fight the Contras. So, they took it to be a serious threat.

Late '86, early '87, the story about the NSC cutting a deal with the government in Iran, in Tehran, hit the papers, big time. This is when Oliver North's name really came out. That he had made trips to Tehran. That he bought a birthday cake or something like that for the people that just a few years before in '79 had captured our embassy and held hostages for 444 days. Obviously this was something that the Reagan administration had used against Carter to win the White House, but here they were five years later playing footsie with the government in Tehran. So there was this tremendous call for congressional investigations. The papers were in a feeding frenzy over who could come up with the worst story about how this Colonel North and the NSC were making policy unbeknownst to George Shultz in the State Department and it was all becoming very nasty.

You might remember that Poindexter's predecessor McFarlane, resigned. There was talk that he tried to commit suicide. There was all sorts of things, but he left in disgrace. Poindexter came in. Oliver North survived the transition because he was the guy that knew what had been done in all these various things. Let me tell you that, at least at the State Department, at least within ARA, there was a certain, I don't want to say glee, but there was a certain satisfaction. There was a certain feeling of oh my God, thank God; this has driven Central American policy off the front pages. Now all the stories were about Iran, what happened with the hostages, who is doing what to whom in terms of this Ollie North caper.

Q: Put all the focus on the Middle East.

WALKER: All on the Middle East. We were all, oh boy, gee, we're finally off the front pages. Thank God for that.

I'm sitting in my office one day with a former colleague, a young man who had worked with me who was now over at the Justice Department as a lawyer, a guy named Bob Higgins. We were talking about this. I was telling him how thank God the pressure is off. It will come back, but at least for now we're not on McNeil Lehrer every night. We're not being called to defend ourselves in congressional hearings. We've got a little breathing space here. Bob said, "Oh, yes, by the way, Ed Meese is going to give a press briefing here at 3:00 or something, so why don't we turn it on and see what he's got to say? We'll find out what's going on with Ollie and the gang." I'll never forget it. So, we turned on the TV and we're sitting there watching it. The attorney general came on and said, well, here's what happened in terms of Iran and Colonel North. We've asked for his resignation and there were things going on that we're going to have to look into. It looks like a usurpation of power by this lieutenant colonel at the NSC. We have just discovered today that some of the money that was generated by this Iran deal was going to the Contras in Nicaragua. I got up from my chair and I walked to the window. I said, "I'm only on the fourth floor, but I'm going out the window."

Oh, God. I immediately saw that this was going to cause all sorts of problems. Little did I suspect that it was going to cost me time, it was going to cost me part of my reputation, it was going to cost me grand jury testimony time, it was going to cost me thousands and

thousands of dollars to hire a lawyer. It turned out to be a nightmare, but it took a while for that nightmare to fully descend on me. As I say that announcement was sometime late '86, early '87. I remained as a DAS until mid '88 when I went to El Salvador as ambassador. In that period maybe a year or so I, like everybody else, wanted to get out of dealing with Nicaragua, dealing with the Contras. It was just falling apart. It was crumbling. It was becoming almost a joke with every new revelation about what Ollie had been doing, about what others had been doing, what the agency had been doing.

Elliott Abrams bless his soul, I've said other things very complimentary about Elliott, but he saw that this would be very bad for me as a career officer. So, he let me drift over and do Panama, not exclusively, but I dealt with Panama because it was becoming an increasingly big problem for us. Let me describe a couple other things. General Noriega was the kingmaker. He was the power behind anyone on any throne in Panama going back well behind Nicky Barletta. He was just the guy who called the shots in Panama. Then there was Nicky Barletta. He's ousted. They bring in this fellow who shortly thereafter goes into hiding. Not a particular serious hiding. I'm sure Noriega knew where he was because I went down and met with him a couple of times. I went to his house and he was at his house, but he was no threat to anybody. So Noriega really left him alone. But the pretense was that he was in hiding.

WALKER: Ted Briggs was the ambassador there for the Poindexter visit. He was there for the Armitage visit and then he left. The last year and a half or so that I was DAS, the Reagan administration sent down a fellow named Art Davis. Art Davis I've mentioned previously in our discussions, when I was up in Bolivia, he was our ambassador, a political ambassador to Paraguay and his wife was killed in the plane crash. So, I knew Art Davis vaguely from when the plane crashed in La Paz and I became involved with the family because the wife had been killed there. Now a few years later he is named as ambassador to Panama. By this time Art was in his early '70s. Art was a fairly wealthy man from someplace out west, Colorado or someplace like that. A very nice man, I really liked Art Davis, but not a career officer. The embassy in Panama was run by Art for sure as the ambassador, but he had a very strong deputy John Maisto who is now the ARA guy over in the NSC. John was a very feisty, combative, deputy chief of mission. The two of them were really offended by the Noriega regime and what it was doing to people. It was doing some very nasty things.

Q: Could you give us an example?

WALKER: Yes, well, as our relationship with Noriega became more and more tense usually because of something outrageous that Noriega did like the killing of Spadafora at the beginning, but over time something would happen in Panama. We would react saying don't let this happen again or this is something bad. Or we would say at the noon press briefing we thought what happened in Panama yesterday was something to be deplored and we would hope the authorities there would, you know... There was also the irritant of their not having a civilian president in view. One had been removed and one was in hiding. So, there were all these occasions when we would say something critical of Panama and Noriega would do something to show us that he was still the boss down

there. This coincided with an opposition that started growing in Panama. Noriega tried to paint this opposition as the rich white folks who didn't like what he was doing in a popular vein. Therefore they were worried about their futures and therefore that's why they were getting out in the streets. But it became something much more than that. The more they came out in the streets waving their white handkerchiefs which was their sign of defiance, the more repressive things became to the point that Noriega would send out first the water cannon, and then the tear gas and then started beating the crap out of people. The more that that happened the more we would criticize openly and then he started doing things to our bases and to our personnel.

Some of these things were not very nice. We had a Status of Forces Agreement or something similar to that. They would violate it. They would pick up guys and say oh, we arrested someone last night, he was drunk and disorderly and yes he's been bashed up a bit today, but it was because he resisted arrest. There were a couple of cases in which wives of officers were rough handled. There were a number of things and the scale kept going up. What was condemned yesterday became not condemned today because it was more common. Now it was something else to be condemned. It would escalate. The more that happened the more we would come out and publicly denounce it.

Q: Noriega in a way was like poking a tiger.

WALKER: It was a tiger in which a number of the paws of the tiger liked to hug Mr. Noriega. What astounded me, absolutely astounded me, was when we got to the point where we were really seriously thinking that maybe the only solution was to try and precipitate his removal, or getting him out of here somehow we tried to figure out who was who in Panama, which officers might not like Noriega, which officers might be totally corrupted by him, who might be this, who might be that. I found out that we knew nothing about what was going on in Panama, which astounded me because we've been there for 100 years or 70 years, whatever it was. Number two we were across the board joined with various agencies and entities and institutions in Panama and yet we didn't have a clue as to what was going on. One of the reasons was as part of our deal there we must have told them maybe not starting with Noriega, maybe going back a ways, that we would not "spy on them". We would not covertly try to find out what was going on in Panama if they wouldn't do it to us. So, in spite of all our contacts, in spite of all this, we had very little knowledge about what was going on in Panama. Very little.

I remember I made a couple of trips to Panama during that last year to meet with the opposition. To meet with some of these, white tails they were called. That was his derogatory term for the opposition. While I was there I would talk to our people at SOUTHCOM. I would say, well, who here really knows what is going on here? They'd say, oh, Jose over there, he's Puerto Rican American, but he speaks perfect Spanish. He's been here 12 years. He's the institutional memory. I'd go over and talk to Jose and Jose didn't have a clue. He knew the Guardia very superficially, socially. I was appalled at how little we knew about Panama and we had a huge station, which dealt with Noriega and his people. One of the things was, what I didn't learn until later, was that Noriega insisted on handling the Gringos almost exclusively by himself. He didn't want our

people to deal with his underlings. Now of course this was not possible to keep perfectly, but most of the important stuff he dealt with directly with the Gringos. We never got beyond that. We really never dug deeply into what was going on. When we were trying to find an officer in the Guardia who would be willing to stand up to Noriega, we almost had to start from scratch to find someone and it's only by luck that we did find someone who would like to discuss it. It became a real game that we played with Noriega.

There was a famous incident as the relationship was getting worse and worse and the incidents were escalating in terms of nasty things happening to our people. Right across the street from the embassy. Here's the bay, here's the Bridge of the Americas over the canal up here and our embassy is right on the waterfront of the bay. It's a beautiful view. It's an old Spanish colonial almost stucco building, with a little tiny wall around it, hardly protected at all. As the relationship deteriorated, Noriega kept trying to say that my friends in the Pentagon tell me that the United States is not mad at us, it's Art Davis and John Maisto, they're the troublemakers here. So, one day right across from the embassy, right in front of their view, blocking their view of the bay, he put up a huge billboard. The head of Art Davis, the head of John Maisto, and down below in Spanish it said something like these are the traitors to our country, or something like that. Very provocative, right in front of the embassy. What do you do? Our people were getting very nervous. The people, the staff, the morale in the embassy just plummeted. I often say that embassies in tight spots, embassies where things are really tough, my embassy in El Salvador, the embassy in El Salvador for well before I got there, morale was very high.

Q: Usually that's what happens, people rally.

WALKER: Rally. That was not what happened in Panama. The rougher things got, the worse morale got. My interpretation, two cents worth. The people who went to Panama in '85, '86 went there thinking it's really just like the United States. There are all these nice base schools, base hospitals, base facilities, nothing's ever happened in Panama. Most of the people who went there went there looking for a very nice life and very nice tropical setting.

Q: You didn't even have to learn Spanish.

WALKER: You didn't even have to learn Spanish. You didn't have to learn how to trade money because the dollar was the local currency. These were not people looking for an adventuresome country where civil war was breaking out. When that happened at least that wave of people their morale plummeted. Now, the ones who came in knowing that those were the conditions, morale went back up again. At least for that period it was very dicey. One day we had a very tense situation in Howard Air Force Base.

Q: Howard Air Force Base is where?

WALKER: Howard Air Force Base is an enormous American air force base on the other side of the canal from Panama City. It's off in the countryside even though it is just across the Bridge of the Americas which crosses the canal and divides North America

from South America. Howard Air Base was, according to our military if World War III ever breaks out in Latin American by God, Howard Air Base is going to be the key to winning that one. It's very high in all American Pentagon thinking about we have to maintain Howard. A very big facility. Longest runways in the Western Hemisphere, sort of thing. Very well maintained. Beautiful golf course, lovely stables for officers who wanted to keep horses. A very nice place.

One night the marine guard, or MPs from the air force, thought they saw guys in black pajamas coming across one of the outer fences and heading for the tank farm where we kept our petroleum stuff, our gas, nav gas. These were guards who were getting more and more tense as the situation was going. You're the front line against what's happening in Panama. All of a sudden they see these black shadowy figures out there and they describe them as being in black pajamas. They fired off some warning shots and the people disappeared. We were never able to prove that there had actually been this sort of intrusion. Noriega's flaks started saying oh, those Gringos are a bunch a wimps. They see shadows and they think they're being invaded. No one is invading Howard Air Base and this is ridiculous. It was a psychological war that was going on and we were frankly not doing very well at it. But there was this constant escalation. A lot of our people getting stopped at night to check their papers on the excuse of well, there are a lot of people running around here with false IDs and false U.S. plates on their cars, so we've just got to check. It was never serious enough to really take it on frontally, but it was nevertheless Noriega showing who was Mr. Tough.

I went down several times to meet with this hidden president and try to give him some backbone to come out and declare himself. He had been sworn in as the president when Nicky Barletta was ousted, so he still was the president. Stand up to Noriega. We'll back you up. Well he didn't have the courage to do so. I also went down and met with the opposition a couple of times at the ambassador's residence, at Art's residence. It was an amalgam of different types representing different groups, but all of whom hated Noriega and were insisting that the U.S. had to do something like invade. This was a whole year and a half before the invasion, but I remember sitting there listening to young student firebrands and old businessmen telling me how businesses were being ruined and wives who were telling me how frightened they were to go out when they saw national guardsmen in the street, this sort of thing. Demonstrations were being broken up, heads were being broken, that sort of thing.

I remember a couple of them saying, you created Noriega. The United States created this guy, so it's your responsibility to come down here and get him out, get him off our back. My answer to that was something along the lines of you know, maybe we helped in the creation of Mr. Noriega, but Mr. Noriega is a perfectly homebred product. We didn't teach him his corruption.

We didn't teach him his viciousness. We didn't teach him how to use his guns and bullies to terrorize people. Those are all characteristics you find in a number of Latin American militaries. I think he's a homegrown product. Did we perhaps help foster or nurture this little guy and make him think he's even bigger than he is? Yes, we probably have. But

it's not for the United States to get rid of this guy. It's for you people to think of a way to get rid of him by yourselves. That was not what they wanted to hear. I spent an awful lot of my time in Washington during that last year, in fact almost every day five and six days a week. At the end of my day I spent a couple of hours in my office talking to opposition figures. One of the principal opposition figures to Noriega was a businessman who had made a lot of money under Torrijos who was Noriega's Godfather within the military. Torrijos in some circles is thought to have been a clean Noriega, just as power hungry, just as dictatorial, but with a soft hand. Nevertheless he spawned Noriega and when he was killed in a plane crash which many people think Noriega cut the lines or did something to participate the crash Noriega, really came into full power.

But, a businessman who had become quite wealthy during the Torrijos years and I think served in Torrijos government in the cabinet or something like that. He was also one of the people who bought a little island off the coast of Panama called Contadora and developed it. This later became the island where the Shah of Iran went and took refuge when he left Tehran. This Panamanian's name was Gabriel Lewis and obviously from his last name he's not from an old Spanish family, but he is from some English family.

Q: L-e-w-i-s?

WALKER: L-e-w-i-s. Gabriel Lewis by this time by '86 was in exile here in Washington. He had left Panama. He had gone into opposition to Noriega claiming that he wanted to bring a civilian democratic government to Panama. Gabriel Lewis had a whole bunch of sons some of whom were here with him and some were down there. He had incredible connections in Panama, in Washington. He was very, very close to some American senators. As U.S.-Panama relations got worse and worse he came to meet with me and saw me as the person he could bring ideas to, ask for assistance, tell me what was happening in Panama that maybe the embassy wasn't reporting. So, I spent almost every afternoon for the better part of a year talking to Gabriel Lewis or people that he sent to talk to me. It was in the context of my meetings with Gabriel Lewis and the other people, he brought, God everyone who later became a figure in Panama in the post-Noriega period, to meet me. At one point he told me about someone who wanted to defect from the Noriega circle. I said, who's that. He said, well, he happens to be the consul general in New York. His name is José Blandón. Up until very recently he was like this with Noriega, right in there, very close, but then something happened and Noriega sent him into exile, golden exile. He's up in New York and living the good life, but he might be willing to talk to you.

We arranged for me to make a secret trip to New York where I met with José Blandón. José Blandón told me about the Blandón Plan which was going to eventually remove Noriega at the end of the plan. He spoke no English, so this was all in Spanish. He gave me this very intricate description of a multifaceted plan in which Noriega would be gently removed from office. He claimed he was not betraying Noriega. He was actually avoiding Noriega having an even worse fate, but it would get him to gradually be removed from power and office. It had to do with changes in the national guard and blah, blah, blah. So, I bought back the Blandón Plan to Washington. We discussed it. It made a

lot of sense in some respects, in other respects it didn't, but this was the beginning of where we really started talking about getting rid of Noriega.

Not too long after that, I went to [Lewis] in one of these meetings and I said, "Gabriel, do you know of any officer in the Guardia who might come over to our side and might actually present himself as a rival candidate to Noriega for the leadership of the Guardia?" He said, "Oh, yes, I've got just the man for you." I said, "Really?" He said, "Yes, he's a fellow who right now is their ambassador in Israel. He's a colonel, but he's been on the outs with Noriega ever since Torrijos was killed because he was also very close to Torrijos and Torrijos probably wanted him to be the successor. He was cleaner, he's not as ugly as Noriega, he's not as vicious as Noriega, yes, yes, he's a colonel in the Guardia, but he's a more modern man and he probably has support within the officer corps if you can get him to declare openly his opposition." I said, "Well, would he go in opposition?" The answer was, "I don't know, but if you approached him correctly, he might." I said, "You tell me he's in Israel?" He says, "Yes, he's in Israel." At the next RIG meeting we had I said, "I don't know what this is worth, but I'm told that there is a colonel in the Guardia who might join forces with the civilian opposition. I don't know if he will or not, but the possibility is there." So the decision was made to send Bill Walker on a top secret mission to Israel to approach this guy. From one day to the next I was on a plane flying over to Israel. The U.S. ambassador was Tom Pickering and we had these conversations on the secure phone. I'm coming over to do this; I don't want to put it in cables, because no one is to know what I'm coming for. By the way, Tom, do you know your Panamanian counterpart because that's the guy I want to see? Tom comes back and says, of course I know him, he lives down the block from me. We've gotten together many times. We speak Spanish together, etc. He seems like a nice chap.

I made my one and only visit to Israel. I planned to be there like three or four days. I accomplished my business in the first two or three hours I was there because as soon as I got there Tom took me down the street, introduced me to Colonel Diaz H, his name. I barely got it out of my mouth what I was there for. Ambassador Diaz said, yes, of course, I'll join you. He said, I'm going to need help. I said, well, I'm flying back to Washington in two days. Is there any chance you could accompany me? He said, I'll be on the plane with you. I had two days of sightseeing in Israel because everything had been taken care of in the first couple of hours. This guy was very anxious to do what we suggested. Sure enough we got him on the plane back to Washington under an assumed name. One thing that was very interesting and it shows how complicated this sort of dealing with Panama was. There was a fellow in Panama who was the "intelligence advisor" to General Noriega and his name was Mike Harari. Mike Harari was an ex-Mossad agent. He had been very high up in the Mossad.

Q: Israeli intelligence.

WALKER: Israeli intelligence service. He had been involved, I think he was the architect of or he was the operational officer who carried off the Entebbe raid. Very highly thought of in Israeli Intel circles. But, at retirement or what was presumed to be his retirement, he went to Panama and hired on as an Intel advisor to Noriega. There are people who claim

that much of what was done by Noriega to keep himself in power were actually ideas of Mike Harari's because these people thought Noriega was too stupid to think of some of these things. Mike Harari was this foreign entity that was a very close advisor to Noriega.

Q: Tell me while you were dealing with this and moving towards getting Noriega out, did you completely trust the CIA? Not so much at the top, but I'm talking about in the field, you know people get involved with people and they're used to playing their own little games. I'm talking about in Panama City. What did you feel?

WALKER: I never really got to know the station people in Panama. We certainly had our reservations that the agency was telling us everything they knew about Noriega or their dealings with him or were really enthusiastic about helping remove him. The thought always was that he probably knew as much about them as they knew about him and that this would not be helpful if it got out. This carried over. The effort by Casey to carry the message to Noriega had been such a slapstick event that we were seriously asking whether or not it had been serious or was it in fact based on this misunderstanding by the two parties and each thought the other was telling him off. There were a number of occasions when we really doubted, and we had the same reservation about the Pentagon which had big bases down there, was always worried about its people down there. Not only were there 20,000 troops or whatever the figure was, but there were another 50,000 family members all living on bases. A lot of them scattered all over Panama City, a very vulnerable situation if the Guardia ever really did turn on us or the crowds turned on the Americans. We had our doubts. I mean it was easier for the State Department to be leading the charge as we were. Elliott Abrams was absolutely infuriated. He had been a former assistant secretary for human rights for God's sake. And here these things were happening in his geographic area and we weren't doing as much as maybe he thought we should, or as I thought we should, or as the embassy thought it should. We were leading the charge. Much as later in my career in the Kosovo crisis, it was Madeleine Albright and the State Department that was saying we've got to do something about Milosevic. Back then it was the State Department saying we cannot tolerate some of this stuff, but when we went to our sister agencies to get their support, yes, we had some reservations as to whether they were as enthusiastic about it as we were.

The sort of capstone of my involvement with Panama came sometime I think around April of '88. I think it was sometime in that spring of '88 when it was decided that so many bad things are now happening. It was really an intolerable situation and we were almost, almost, not exactly at war with Panama, but we were certainly in a very bad relationship. The decision was made that we would try and find an easy way out for Noriega. Here was this little pipsqueak Central American Panamanian dictator poking us in the side every time he could and we could not look powerless and we certainly had interests down there in terms of the bases. Senator Helms was in one way on our side in that he was very critical of Noriega but at the same time he was very much, we've got to hold onto these bases.

It was determined at one of these interagency meetings that we should look to ways to get Mr. Noriega out of there. Peacefully if at all possible. At about this time because there

was so much in the press about Noriega. Is he the devil? Is he on our payroll? Are we protecting him? Is he involved in drugs? You might remember this is during the period when the administration was going down the path of say no to drugs and drugs are as big a danger to the country as anything else and most of the drugs, cocaine and crack was coming in from South America. There was a lot of talk about Panama being very involved in this, i.e., Noriega being very involved in this and he was.

At this point, the Department of Justice got very involved. It got involved because two U.S. attorneys, one in Tampa and one in Miami, Florida, both of whom were highly political U.S. attorneys called together grand juries and almost unbeknownst to the Justice Department up here, said this, that U.S. attorneys in the field are very autonomous people and these guys were investigating to see whether they could bring indictments against Noriega. I remember going over to Justice a number of times and sitting in meetings and saying, look our relationship with Panama is really bad. There are a lot of issues involved here. Base rights, human rights. All sorts of things. An indictment of Noriega, who might be considered a head of state, would be a very, very tricky thing to add to this mixture. So, could you please keep us informed? Well, grand jury testimony is secret and guys in the field don't tell us if they're coming close to an indictment or not. But we'll try to keep you informed.

The head of the team from Justice was Bill Weld who later became governor of Massachusetts and later nominated to go as ambassador to Mexico, but got shot down by Senator Helms, Weld at that time was a deputy attorney general or something like that. He chaired this meeting. I remember him announcing right at the beginning of the meeting to this huge room full of people from all sorts of agencies that they had just gotten word from I think it was from Miami that an indictment was coming down within the next 48 hours. This was not going to be an indictment only of Noriega. It was going to be an indictment of the officer corps of the Guardia, all officers. It was going to be a RICO conspiracy.

Q: RICO being?

WALKER: Racketeering. (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act).

Q: Conspiracy.

WALKER: Yes. They were going to indict the entire officer corps. I sat there dumb struck and I finally got my words together and I raised my hand and I said, "Listen, number one, this is coming as a bit of a surprise. I think 48 hours from now you're going to issue these indictments because you told us you were going to try to keep us informed." "Oh, well, we also explained that U.S. attorneys in the field, they don't have to get approval from Washington. I said, "Okay, that's one issue. But the other issue is this question of indicting the entire officer corps. Our policy right now is to try and cause divisions within the officer corps, trying to get some officers to tell Mr. Noriega that his presence is no longer welcome. We're trying to create splits. We're trying to get them to argue among themselves. If you indict the entire officer corps, it's just going to drive

them all together.” “Oh, okay, that’s a point, Walker. I’ll call the attorney down in Miami.” Sure enough a few days later indictments were handed down both in Miami and in Tampa against Noriega. I’m not sure we were in agreement that this was the smartest thing to do at that point because now we were saying if Noriega ever loses his present position we’re going to go after him and try to get him extradited to the States, etc. So this just might make him dig his heels in even further as well as those who were involved in some of these enterprises with him. We tried to get around these indictments.

We tried to figure out what to do with those indictments and we eventually came to a plan. The plan was in agreement with the two U.S. attorneys, the one in Miami and the one in Tampa. We couldn’t get them to withdraw the indictments. They claimed this was impossible. It was handed down by a grand jury. But they said they didn’t have to enforce the indictments if we could strike a deal with Noriega. The deal would be if he would leave Panama and go off someplace else and live and never try to come to the States and never try to go back to Panama again, that we would hold the indictments in suspension. So, the trick that we pursued over the next couple of weeks was trying to find a country that would accept Noriega's presence and that of his family and his followers. But would agree not to hand him over to a U.S. extradition request should that ever come down. The country we got to accept this deal was Spain. As soon as we had the deal worked out, Mike Kozak the principal deputy assistant secretary in ARA, who had worked with the Panamanians before the turnover of the canal back in Jimmy Carter’s day, and I were designated hitters to go down and present this proposal to Noriega and get him to leave Panama, go to Spain. He could take his family. He could take as many people as he could pile on planes with him. He could take his ill-gotten gains with him if he would go to Spain peacefully and leave Panama alone for the rest of his natural life.

So Mike and I got on a plane. I took along with me Jerry Clarke, a U.S. air force colonel I had known from Honduras. At the last minute the Department of State psychiatrist who was an advisor to George P. Shultz on psychological matters, was put on the plane with us. He was an interesting character because he not only is a psychiatrist who was advising the Secretary of State, but he writes spy novels with a psychological twist. He is famous for those spy novels you can buy in most airports. He was coming along to give us psychological advice, reading Noriega as we negotiated with him to tell us what that was all about. We flew down. On the way down we were asked by Noriega if we would pick up his lawyers in Miami if we had room on the plane so we could all come down together. We agreed to do that.

Q: He knew what this mission was about?

WALKER: Yes, well, he knew we were coming down to talk to him. As we were flying down to Miami, we stopped in Miami and picked up three lawyers. One of whom was, looked like a legitimate lawyer. He was a former U.S. attorney in Miami, very well presented, very reputable guy, but he was now on the Noriega payroll. But he was a reasonable, rational, serious attorney who was earning his keep. The other two were among the most scurrilous sort of drug lawyers you’d ever want to meet. One of them got on the plane with a huge gold medallion and a gold chain, a silk shirt. The other guy was

murdered four or five years later I heard. These were the three lawyers we picked up. They got on the plane and as we were flying on to Panama, I was told that Noriega had let them know that he wasn't going to let Walker get off the plane. Why not? Well, Walker, according to Manual Noriega is the guy who had been organizing the opposition up in Washington in his office for the last year or so. General Noriega sees him as an enemy, so he's not going to let him land. So Mike and I talked about this. We said, okay, well then we're turning the plane around because either the designated delegation gets off as a delegation or we go home. So somehow this was communicated to Noriega and the answer came back, well, okay, if you're going to play ball that way, fine.

We got there, spent the night. We also brought along a TacSat, a little tactical communication satellite station.

Q: These were early days of satellite communication.

WALKER: Yes, right.

Q: But it meant that you could call.

WALKER: Yes, we could call and it was fairly secure. It wasn't a LAN line so that someone could listen into you. Noriega was known to be very good at listening in. The delegation spent the night in a hotel and the next day we were told that the General was going to meet us. He kept changing the location of where we were going to meet. But it was finally decided we were going to meet at what had been one of the houses right on the edge of the canal that had been turned over. These were the houses of the canal officials, Americans had occupied them and we were slowly turning these over under the treaty. This row of very nice bungalows along the canal were now the property of the National Guard and he designated which one we would meet in. We assumed this was one that was totally wired for sound and had all the accoutrements of Noriega's Panama installed. I'll never forget, Mike and I and the psychiatrist and Jerry Clarke and our interpreter arrived at this house and we got there a couple of minutes early. We were wondering when the general was going to come, etc., and all of a sudden down the stairs from upstairs came Manual Noriega dressed in casual civilian Panamanian clothes with a guayabera. A little short guy as ugly as his pictures portray him and I think he didn't know we were downstairs and it was kind of an awkward moment. If Oscar Arias had been there he would have been started picking his lint, but it was not terribly tense. He introduced himself in sort of broken English and we waited around for his folks to run out and scurry up the rest of his delegation who were going to be there for the talks. We waited a few minutes until his lawyers came in. They were a bit late and then his doctor showed up who was an army doctor and our psychiatrist went off with their doctor and started chatting things up at which we learned the prescription drugs that Noriega was taking.

We sat down at the kitchen table in this bungalow. Across a kitchen table about the size of this. His three lawyers. He down here at the end and at this end a civilian political figure who was his mouthpiece in the civilian political circles. On our side of the table

was myself, Mike Kozak, the interpreter, and Jerry Clarke our colonel. We spent that whole morning presenting to him our proposal. Mike did the presentation. It was given in a very matter of fact, no accusations, sort of manner. Just, sir, you're in a difficult position and here is what we're offering. We've gone to Spain and they're willing to accept you. You can go with you family. The indictments will not be quashed because they can't be, but we will suspend them, the enforcement of them, as long as you stay in Spain and never come back to Panama or never go to the United States.

He sat there almost in a stupor. He didn't say a word. His mouthpieces and his political civilian came in occasionally and said, this is outrageous. This is a chief of state you're talking to. You have no proof that he's involved in any of these things you say he's involved in. But as we presented it, it was obvious that he was nervous. He just sat there with his eyes about half closed. At the end of the morning, or was it the end of the day? I think it was the end of the day, he said, well, you've given me some interesting suggestions here. I of course do not speak only for Manual Noriega, I represent the Guardia Nacional, I am the comandante. I also have to think of Panama, I have to think about this overnight and I'll talk to you tomorrow.

We left thinking he heard it seriously. Certainly his lawyers heard it. We went back and by TacSat we told Washington what had happened. Our psychiatrist came in and said that Noriega was essentially obviously under great strain from what he'd heard from the doctor. He was taking a lot of valiums and other kinds of prescription medicine that indicated he was under a lot of tension. We said we weren't sure how it had gone, but at least he'd heard the pitch. When we came back together again it was a very different Noriega. He had lost the calmness. He had lost the nervous tranquility or whatever it was we saw the first time and he came back and said, not only, heck no, but hell no. Who are you coming in here and insult me and Walker, I know what Walker is like. He's been fomenting revolution against me and this is the thanks I get and tell George Bush that I've never done anything to the United States. They've always been my great fan, my favorite country and I have lots of relationships. Anyway, he went on and on in a very aggressive response to us. The answer was no way. So, we left the next day and had to come back and say he's not buying it.

Q: But you were delivering a message that was going to be going out to the rest of the guard?

WALKER: Well, we didn't know. He controlled communication with the rest of his officers. Of course we heard some things about what he was telling them and it was all poppycock. These guys get down here and they insulted me, they insulted Panama, they insulted the guard. A very, very strange man. I thought at that point I had met the quintessence of evil. That I had met the most evil person I was ever going to meet. It turns out I was wrong, but at the time I certainly felt that way.

In the meantime, I had recruited this colonel in Israel to come back and lead an opposition. He flew back with me to Washington and when he got off the plane in Washington he was picked up by the agency and they took him off to prepare him for

leading the banner, carrying the banner against Noriega. He had some ideas of what we could do. He suggested that we fly him immediately down to Panama and set him up on one of our bases with a radio station that could beam out a radio message to the people of Panama to give them the truth about what was happening. Now remember there were crowds in the street every afternoon. This opposition was gathering force. Noriega was becoming ever more repressive and we at State thought that if Colonel Harari could get on the radio that maybe some of the other officers would join him and then all of a sudden the ball would be rolling. DOD refused to let this happen. They said, oh, well, you know, if we set up a radio station at one of our bases this is going to look like interference in the internal relations of Panama and Noriega would be within his rights to invade our base to get rid of this station. We thought this was ridiculous, but nevertheless we were not able to give Harari what he wanted. He had all sorts of other requests that we thought made a lot of sense, but either DOD or the agency or someone would say, no that's not a good idea. We can't do that right now. The bottom line is that Harari never really took off. It would be like trying to win the war in Afghanistan by having the king come to Washington and do his thing from here rather than put him in to Afghanistan.

Although Iran Contra was on the front pages almost every day, the Panama thing was also on the front pages because it was becoming very, very nasty indeed.

Q: What were the indictments? In substance, what were the indictments?

WALKER: The one in Miami was: involvement in a conspiracy to import cocaine into the United States. The one in Tampa, if I remember correctly, was of a lesser nature having to do with marijuana I believe, but they were both drug related.

Q: Both of these were well substantiated?

WALKER: Yes. They had pilots who had flown this stuff, etc. Noriega double-crossed the Medellin Cartel. There was some point in which they thought they had an agreement with Noriega as to how much they would pay for each load that went through Panama on its way north. At some point he double-crossed them. He raised the price on them or something, tried to shake them down. They nevertheless sent a plane in. He captured it and demanded the higher payment or he wouldn't let it go. They paid it, but he was on their shit list as a result. Later on when things started getting rough he sent a minion down to Colombia to talk to the Medellin folks and, if I remember right, they killed the guy. That was their response. I mean, so, his relationship with the bad guys in Colombia was close, but it became very nasty at some point. There were a couple of pilots who had been flying these loads from Colombia to Panama and then on who testified in Miami. There was all sorts of collateral evidence that there was a lot of drugs going through Panama and he was in charge of Panama and therefore, I'm sure they were good indictments. But it was nasty business.

Q: Okay, you had this, did you reach a point, I'm not sure when you left and we finally invaded. I think you had left before we invaded.

WALKER: Yes, I left and I went to El Salvador in mid '88, August '88. The invasion came about a year later in '89.

Q: Was it pretty much, at least in your thinking and maybe some people around you, that this is how you're going to have to do this?

WALKER: Well, some place in '89 after I had left, the Pentagon came around to the conclusion that the only way we're going to get him out of there was in fact by an invasion. The Pentagon looked to SOUTHCOM, which had been steadily building up its defenses, and we'd been sending military policemen to guard the bases and the 182nd Airborne went down. We were building up our presence there at first thinking that that might be enough to intimidate Noriega, but it wasn't. The four star general who was in command of SOUTHCOM at the time was a guy named Fred Warner. Fred Warner is an academic general. He is now a professor I think at Boston University in political science, Latin American political science. Fred Warner was married to a woman from Bolivia, so his background in Latin America was very strong. I guess when they sent him to Panama in '85, '86, '87 whenever it was, it was well, he speaks Spanish, his wife is Latina. He's not sort of a guy you're going to send in to the Fulda Gap in Europe, let's send him to Panama. Fred would come up here during these successive crises in Panama to brief us on the view from SOUTHCOM. You know, I'll never forget he always brought little 3x5 cards. He always had an academic presentation talking about the psychology of Latinos and on the one hand this, but on the other hand that. There's no question about it, he had no respect for Manuel Noriega, but he never came to the point in my presence, at least, of saying we've got to get rid of him.

So when the Pentagon decided that Noriega would have to be removed or it would look like the Bush administration was not gutsy enough to take him on, that they would have to take him out of there because things had gotten so bad. The Pentagon decided that Fred Warner was not the guy to be the commander of SOUTHCOM at the time of the invasion. They relieved Warner of his command in not a very nice way and brought in a successor who was in fact not knowledgeable about Latin America, didn't speak a word of Spanish, but was obviously a leader of troops into battle sort of thing. A no nonsense guy. Max Thurman was his name. Max Thurman had just been about to retire as a four star, head of army personnel, but at one point had been a hero of various wars and stuff. He was a no nonsense, tough military guy, as opposed to Fred who was this academic fellow. There was a relief of the one and an installation of the other and sure enough three or four months later the invasion happened in November of '89 I think was the time of it.

Q: But you had left more or less after presenting Noriega with a way out and then you had this ambassador/general who, but you really couldn't find any solid support for him within our, within our military or the CIA? I'm talking about the Panamanian ambassador. I mean, after the Noriega.

WALKER: The leader of our opposition. Yes. When I left he was still in the United States. He was increasingly frustrated with his relationship with the agency. They took him over. As I say when I left to go to El Salvador he was very frustrated with his

position here and he just thought that we weren't doing anything really seriously to help him get rid of Noriega. In Panama there had been one or two, a number of attempts, to start a move against Noriega. The most famous was one that a colonel in the guard stepped out one night with a few troops and went to arrest Noriega. It was a Keystone Kop operation of the first degree. The colonel went to whatever the military operational command center was.

Q: You were saying the colonel had gone into the command center.

WALKER: The colonel went into the command center with a couple of guys with guns and said, I'm taking over. We're taking out Noriega. He's no longer in command. I'm in command now, etc.. etc., etc. The young officer who was in charge of the command center that night being quicker witted than the colonel essentially said, well, step into this room here where all the weapons are and you can take charge of the weapons and you'll be in command. The general stepped into this safe and they closed the door on him. They had him locked up in the arms room. The guys outside of course immediately put down their weapons and the colonel was captured then within minutes of starting his coup. We later heard what happened to that colonel and it wasn't very, very nice. Noriega made a very dramatic example of him to show other officers that maybe pulling off a coup or attempting a coup was not the right thing to do. Noriega ruled by fear, almost all the officers in the Guardia were as corrupt as he, but he had everybody in Panama on his payroll on his side with very, very few exceptions.

I remember being told by someone, I guess by Gabriel Lewis that one of his specialties was getting to know within days of their arrival any new military attaché who came in from any country. An awful lot of countries had embassies in Panama and within days Noriega would figure how to corrupt them and how to have them on his side, usually by women, sometimes by other methods of corruption. There were very few military officers sent to Panama that were supposed to get to know what was going on in Panama and didn't end up telling Noriega's story because he had gotten to them. The way he took care of this farcical coup by the colonel was, as soon as it was over, he just took the guy to jail and sliced him up in little pieces and made sure everybody knew exactly what had happened to him. Noriega was a master of those sort of things. One of his specialties was in the opposition. A subgroup within the opposition formed and it was the women, what did they call themselves? It was some title; the women's auxiliary of the opposition or something and it was mostly society ladies, the wives of businessmen and such who had decided that their fortunes were in jeopardy with this corrupt Noriega in power. He delighted in hauling off some of these women and putting them in jail and then sending in young men of very disreputable appearance and condition to rape them and make sure other women of high society heard about what had happened to their colleagues. He was that kind of a guy. He is that kind of guy. Now that I hear that while he's in jail he's found Jesus and he's become a real good prisoner and all that kind of stuff. Bullshit. A nasty, nasty son of a gun.

Q: Okay, well, then we'll pick this up the next time. We've talked about most of the countries. We've talked rather in considerable detail your dealings in Panama. We've not

talked about the Iran Contra affair. I mean that's the next thing we'll do and you've mentioned your relationship with Ted Briggs, too, at that time. So, we'll pick this up again, we're still in the '80s.

WALKER: I'm 25% through my story.

Q: About the Reagan administration and all. Great.

Today is the 21st of November, 2001, the day before Thanksgiving. Bill, you heard where we are, okay, you're on stage.

WALKER: After I left the Panama situation I went as ambassador to El Salvador and in the following year '88 into '89, Panama continued to heat up until there was the invasion whenever it was in mid to late '89. In the interim in my first months as ambassador to El Salvador I paid two visits to Panama, one of which was with taking down president elect Cristiani, his wife and my wife and we went down as the guests of General Fred Warner, the CINC, in Panama. This was about I guess six months or so before the invasion. I was very curious to see how things had gone after my serious involvement with Panama as the DAS. It was an interesting trip. Noriega was still in power. We went down and we stayed on the base. We stayed at the CINC's house. Obviously president elect Cristiani was an important visitor for the CINC. We went fishing in Lake Gatun. One of the reasons I was able to tempt Cristiani into going down there is he likes to fish. Not everybody knows this, but Lake Gatun which is one of the major waterways is in the middle of the canal is just chalk full of fish. Fred Warner, General Warner hearing that Cristiani liked to fish put on a fishing trip one of the mornings. It's kind of funny. It's funny enough to go around in a long caravan of lead car, follow car, etc., but to do that in motor boats. The general's bodyguard is off on our flanks in their motor boats. It was quite amusing actually. It was a tremendous trip for catching fish. You just had to throw your line in there. There's some sort of bass they stock the lake with, a Venezuelan bass or something that just bites at anything that drops in the water. So, we got dozens if not hundreds of fish.

Coming back to Panama City and getting in a caravan of cars, with a lead car, with bodyguards, with the limousines in which Fred Warner, President Cristiani, or President Elect Cristiani and his wife. I and my wife were in the second car being in the limo, and then a trail of people who always follows the general wherever he goes with his commo gear and that sort of stuff. We were heading for Howard Air Force Base which is on the other side of the canal going across the Bridge of the Americas which connects North and South America. As we were coming across the Bridge of the Americas, when we came down the north side of the canal, the side on which Howard Air Base is, there was a roadblock out and it was the national guard, the Panamanian National Guard. A young lieutenant and a couple of guys with weapons stood at the barricade and stopped us. Now this was against our Status of Forces Treaty and all this kind of stuff where there's supposed to be unlimited access for the U.S. military wherever they wanted to go and here is the four star general who is in command of all this, obviously it was his caravan that was coming across the bridge. This young lieutenant steps out and demands to not

only for us to stop but that he can look into each car to make sure there is no one suspicious in there or whatever the hell. He wanted to look in each car. The general's driver and bodyguard were asking and the guys in the front car were asking the general do you want us to stop or do you want us to plow right through here? The general said, no, stop and let's let them look in if they want to look in. Considering at this point in time we were trying to not show any deference to the guard or to Noriega I was kind of surprised that we let him stop us and that we let him look in the cars, etc., especially a young lieutenant stopping a four star general, and in front of President Cristiani. I think it sent exactly the wrong signal that we were trying to show that we were as strong as ever in the canal. I think he was really quite surprised that this American four star general had let himself be treated that way as his guest. It passed without incident and we carried on. It was just a couple of months later that Fred Warner was replaced and they sent down a fighting general to be ready for an invasion.

Q: Did you have any feeling from the time you were the DAS dealing with this on that we were beginning to cock the pistol? Was it more or less expected that with this we will not off put or whatever it is?

WALKER: Yes. I think it was a move toward our doing something very forceful because the situation in Panama was getting worse and worse. The chaos, the chances are people were going to get hurt in a big way. They were increasing with every passing day. People were getting hurt. There were a couple of incidents of officers being pulled out of their cars at roadblocks and being roughed up. There were a couple of incidents of military wives. Don't forget we had an awful lot of dependents down there. It was a bad situation because we had so many, not just our military on the bases which we were seeing was something we had to keep those bases, but it was a number of dependents we had down there, the number of Americans, the business community. We had an awful lot of American citizens at risk as things continued to deteriorate. Noriega was constantly playing the nationalist card. We drown Latins, we've got to take on our own white aristocracy who are allied with or backed by or supported by, defended by, American soldiers. He was playing that card and getting his mobs out in the street. The mobs were getting nastier and nastier. There was a lot of picking up opposition figures and just beating the crap out of them in front of the crowds just to show that they could get away with it. He seemed to see no limits on what he and his people could do to intimidate their opposition in front of us. So, yes, I think, I felt that we couldn't let this little pipsqueak of a Latin dictator get away with this because we were looking increasingly without power, without any certitude in what we were trying to accomplish in Panama. At the beginning I think our military was hesitant about doing anything. But once he started attacking their people and their dependents and doing things like stopping a four star general, once they saw that they were going to be a target of some of his misadventures, then I think the mood changed and the Pentagon was ready to take him on. It was very slow, but nevertheless a slide to where we had to do something forceful.

Q: Let's go back to the DAS time again and talk about Iran Contra.

WALKER: I was in my office as Ed Meese the attorney general announced that they had discovered that North had made an arms deal with Iran and that part of the profits had been used to help the Contras. I never thought in my wildest dreams that what had been in the press for days if not weeks about Colonel North and Iran was going to impact on my little domain, Central America. But as soon as Meese made that announcement, of course, all hell broke loose in terms of Central America especially Nicaragua.

From that moment on there was also what I tended to see as an exorable march towards the ever increasing likelihood that I was going to be sucked into this thing which at first focused on North and McFarlane and the NSC. Then it expanded to include CIA. Then we started looking at this interagency group that was handling the Contra program and since I was involved in that I could just see it slowly approaching me. Most of the political appointees in this process and some of the people like Oliver North and the head of the Central American task force, Alan Fiers, quickly got legal representation. I was of the opinion that if you're innocent, you haven't done anything, you haven't been involved in this stuff you don't get a lawyer. Various people told me it is when you're not guilty that's the best time to get a lawyer. There were any number of different investigations. There was a senate inquiry into it. That one I never got to meet the committee. I got to meet their lawyers. There were various investigations culminating of course in three years later when I was ambassador or four years later of having to come back and testify before a grand jury here in Washington. By that time I did in fact have a lawyer. By that time, in fact, I learned that I was going to have to pay for that lawyer since the Department of State essentially does nothing for you in such circumstances. It was obviously a black cloud over my head throughout those three or four years. Some days you think it's going away. Some days you're reading the newspapers and this committee or that committee is wrapping it up. A few days later you find out there is another avenue coming around. That was just a constant sort of menacing black cloud over my head.

Q: I assume that everyone, I mean yourself included was going back through the files trying to figure out what the hell went on and should I have known or did I know or that sort of thing.

WALKER: The way it comes out is did you know X, Y, and Z. If your answer is truthfully no, I didn't know X, Y and Z. Then the response is why didn't you know? You should have known. It was in the paper that blah, blah, blah. The Contras were receiving funds from somewhere and when your answer is yes, but I was administrating the legally congressionally approved hundred million dollar assistance and there were enough times when the two things got mixed up. One day a plane made an emergency landing in El Salvador on a road and it was obviously part of the illegal supply to the Contras. Well, our embassy in San Salvador figured that out and made it sound as though this was part of something they didn't know anything about which made it sound kind of illegal, but it didn't go beyond that. Later when you ask about whether the plane went down, yes. Was it involved in the Contra illegal supply? Well, I don't know. Did the embassy tell you it was the legal supply? Well, no, they didn't. Well then you must have known it was illegal. It was that sort of thing. You were always getting tangled up in things.

Now the embassy in San Salvador at that time under my good friend Ed Corr knew a good deal about the fact that Ilopango Air Base for instance was being used both by the legal stuff going in and by the illegal. A fellow named, well, he has various names, Max Gomez, Felix Rodriguez, he's a Cuban American. He had something to do with the Bay of Pigs invasion. He was the CIA operative who was with the Bolivian army when they chased Che Guevara down in the backcountry of Bolivia, captured him and killed him. Felix Rodriguez, I don't know which is his real name; I have never seen him myself. I'm not a great friend of his, Felix Rodriguez reportedly has and has shown to a number of reporters Che Guevara's thumb in a bottle of formaldehyde which he cut off so he could always prove that this was in fact Che Guevara. He's got it in his house in Florida I understand.

Q: How nice.

WALKER: How nice. Felix Rodriguez purportedly did he or did he not, I don't know, retire from the CIA after the Bolivian adventure with Che. Along ten, eleven years later he appears in El Salvador when we're gearing up to try and repress the FMLN guerrilla activities there. He becomes good friends with General Bustillo who is the head of the Salvadoran Air Force who is the General MacArthur of Salvadoran military affairs. General Bustillo, I don't know if he, he was a General MacArthur/J. Edgar Hoover. He was in office forever, refused to quit, refused to leave, was a legend to some people and the Satan figure to others. I found him more in the latter category than in the former. Well, Felix Rodriguez got down there and was his American advisor in terms of building up the Salvadoran air force. Well once the Contra campaign started, obviously Oliver North went down and convinced General Bustillo and the Salvadoran government to allow this illegal flow of weapons to go in to the Contras in El Salvador via Ilopango Air Base which was General Bustillo's center of operations. Our embassy there, knowing that we were trying to support the Contras and we were doing so with legal assistance, evidently saw Felix Rodriguez as someone who was helping the Contras. I don't think they looked too carefully as to how he was helping or with what sort of funding. Maybe they thought he was actually still with the CIA and this was a black operation. But our embassy did such things as gave Felix Rodriguez APO privileges, gave him a card for the PX, for the embassy commissary. So it looked like he was a U.S. government employee when in fact he was ostensibly anyway, a retired CIA guy who was doing this sort of on his own and with his friendship for General Bustillo and with his desire to take on communists wherever he found them. But the fact that the embassy gave him a PX card and let him use the APO and gave him access to the embassy where most non-embassy folks weren't allowed. Later I was asked many a time, well, obviously Felix Rodriguez was well known to the embassy. They must have known what he was doing. He wasn't doing things for them, so he must have been doing things on the illegal side of the operation. A lot of mistakes like that were committed.

I mentioned earlier about being a DAS and flying down to Central America a couple of times with Alan Fiers, with Elliott Abrams. Once I flew down there with Ollie North. When we got there we went out to Ilopango Air Base and Oliver North was surrounded

by a whole bunch of Salvadoran military guys. Okay? Now, apparently among them was Felix Rodriguez. Felix Rodriguez always wore a Salvadoran air force uniform, fatigues, camouflage fatigues. I am told he had on his stripe that said Gomez or Rodriguez, I can't remember which he was supposed to be going under that day. I'm sure I met all those people. I'm sure I met him, but four years later I was asked did you ever meet Felix Rodriguez in El Salvador. My answer was, no, I don't think so. I don't remember meeting him. What about the time you went to the base with Oliver North and he was part of the greeting party. My answer to that was, wait a minute, if I met a whole bunch of Salvadoran officers and I met one whose name was Gomez or Rodriguez and who looks exactly as all the other officers in the Salvadoran air force look, how the hell was I to know that this was an American who was dressed up and happened to have a Latin name? Oh, well, you must have known who you were meeting Walker. Well, I didn't. Certainly four years later I had no memory of it whatsoever. But there were all sorts of things like that that sort of led some people, for instance in Senator Dodd's office, to conclude that I was being less than honest when I said no, I had never met Max Gomez or Felix Rodriguez in Salvador. No, I didn't know he was out. I didn't know the embassy had given him a semi-official status on their own without asking anyone. They cobbled together all these little indicators and came to the conclusion that I must have known what was going on all along, when in fact I didn't.

Q: Was there an atmosphere, I'm talking about the time you were the DAS, that things were going on and it was best not to ask questions too much.

WALKER: Absolutely, sure. I think I said earlier, Oliver North would come over from the White House and talk about he'd just seen the old man and he'd been given this information or this mission and he'd always say that he'd checked it with the lawyers and everything was on the up and up. One, you didn't know enough about it to question him and you wouldn't question him anyway because he was a fellow officer of the U.S. government in the NSC of all places. He and obviously Alan Fiers and the guys from the agency had an aura about them well, we're only letting you know, Walker, what you need to know and there are other things that you don't need to know and therefore we're not going to tell you about it. It wasn't quite as explicit as that, but yes, you always felt that there were other things going on, but I didn't hear about many of the major players in what was the illegal trafficking of supplies to the Contras until they came out in the papers after the investigations rolled along. General Secord, never heard his name before his name appeared in the papers as this head of the enterprise that Oliver North had set up to funnel stuff.

John Singlaub, the retired four star [sic, two star] general from Korea. He is still active today in 2001. I heard him talking the other day about Afghanistan. Oliver North said there was a group of patriotic Americans who were collecting money and there was nothing wrong for a group of patriotic Americans if they wanted to help the Contras you know, fine. What was not said was that he was intimately involved with this group. He had set it up. He was getting money out of Iran arms deals or wherever else he could get it, which was the illegal part of what he was doing. He never shared that with me and I wouldn't be surprised if he didn't share much of it with Elliott or anyone at the State

Department. You've got to remember that Oliver North is the cloak and dagger type of military guy. Didn't have much trust in the State Department. I know he thought we were the weak ones who always argued against some of the tougher things that he was suggesting we do with the Contras. So he and Alan Fiers were the two strong guys that you knew were doing other things and you didn't care to know about them or you weren't brought into knowing about it. Certainly your description is exactly right. You knew there were other things going on, but.

Q: We do this in the government all the time. There is a bit about need to know and this is a part of the way we operate. I mean, most of these things are legitimate, but you're not supposed to go running around and saying, it's like maybe picking up information that Kissinger is opening up ties with China. Well, you know, something like that is going on and you don't even talk about it.

WALKER: There are people doing things to make it happen without their knowing what it is that's going to happen. I mean they're just involved. But they don't know. So, four or five years later if someone asked them about their activities and how did that help contribute to Kissinger's trip to China, an outsider might assume well they must have known that was what they were working on when in fact at the time they didn't know. Well, this is exactly what happened on my watch as DAS.

Q: How did this, I mean we might as well follow this through. Did anything happen to you or were you just sort of tossed around in this thing?

WALKER: I was tossed around. I was certainly tossed around. I testified before I think it was the Tower Committee. I think it was Senator Tower in charge of the first go around. He came out and I think his conclusion was that this sort of off the ranch lieutenant colonel at the White House and a few people at the agency and this private enterprise group had done some things they shouldn't have been doing, but that no one else was particularly involved in illegal activities. I mean you've got to remember at this time the critics were baying trying to prove that Reagan himself knew all about this and that this was something that anybody who had worked for Reagan had been involved with. So I testified at that first round of hearings. Then there was a second round of hearings. I can't remember what that one was.

Then in 1991, three years later, four years later almost, near the end of my tour as ambassador I was called by the lawyers for the Independent Council Walsh Investigation who were into their second or third year of their investigation and they were ready to go before a grand jury. They had read all my testimony to these other groups and they called me up and said they wanted me to come up and testify before the grand jury for one day. I said, fine, I'll be up there. Much to my surprise and much to the Department's surprise, they subpoenaed me. The Department questioned this. Because they said Walker is willing to come up. It's not like he's going to duck it. We'll bring him up here and make him available for as much as you need. But the special prosecutor's office decided that they had to subpoena me. So, I came up under a court order, which doesn't look good. It makes it look like you're reluctant to show up. At that point in time I decided I did need a

lawyer. I called around several of my friends, democrats, people who knew me and knew that I wasn't involved in the illegal side of all this. Several of them told me about a pro bono lawyer and all this sort of stuff. But in the final analysis they got me a lawyer. I came into town and went to see him the day I arrived, the day before I was supposed to testify. I had to sit and tell him and his boss, a more senior partner in the firm, sort of my side of the story. Well, my side of the story took a couple of hours talking to him, about three hours up in a very posh Georgetown law firm. My lawyer was charging at that point \$400 an hour. His senior hour partner was getting \$450 an hour. So, it was costing \$950 an hour. In three hours of conversation I had expended almost \$3,000. Then that led to a number of other appearances before the grand jury and later returns before the grand jury. All in all I think I spent about \$18,000 or \$19,000 on this lawyer.

At first when I went to L to see if they could help in terms of providing me with a lawyer I was told, well, no this is even though you were doing official business, we can only supply lawyers to defend the Secretary so you have to get your own lawyer, but don't worry you'll get paid for it, we'll reimburse you. That was comforting until later they came back and said, we don't reimburse you, but you can take it off your income tax as a deduction. Later they came back and said well, we were mistaken, it's also not a deduction. It wasn't until three years after the whole business was over I ran into Rich Armitage one day. He had shared the same lawyer as me and he mentioned that he had gotten his funds or much of it back via a very circuitous route through the Justice Department. It's one of these things if you're not indicted in one of these things you do have recourse to apply to be reimbursed. You don't get it all back by any means. Anyway, I got some of it back. It was a very discouraging process all the way through.

Q: Did you feel this was not getting information, this was basically unfriendly?

WALKER: It was unfriendly. In that first meeting if I learned anything from my \$1,800 or whatever it was, \$3,000 that I spent on this first meeting with these two lawyers. Both of them were former U.S. attorneys or deputy U.S. attorneys who had now turned to private practice and were making good money. I remember them telling me, look, if you go before a grand jury, I didn't know anything about grand juries. A grand jury is a prosecutor's toy. He can do anything he wants with it. Virtually anything the prosecutor wants a grand jury to do they will do. Tell the truth and don't fudge, but just give the shortest answers you can. They tried to prep me for my appearance before the grand jury. You can't have your lawyer with you when you're in front of the grand jury. You can have your lawyer sit in a chair outside which I did the first day at \$400 an hour a pop and I never went out to see him, so it was a waste of money. I remember him telling me that grand juries are only as good as the prosecutor who brings them together and only as good as they make it.

So when I appeared before the grand jury, I'll never forget, downtown D.C. I walked in and there's an auditorium. The grand jurors, maybe 30 of them or so were scattered around. I was before them for two whole days. The two prosecutors, one was a guy who normally did anti-drug trials some place in the South, I think New Orleans. He was a Mr. Tough Guy. He had a young guy with him who was a good cop, sort of bad cop. The

young guy was the good cop, but not really. The grand jurors were supposedly listening to every word. Three or four of them were asleep through most of my testimony. You could hear them snoring. Others were eating bags of pretzels and popcorn and stuff. And you're sitting down there undergoing a fairly tension filled experience and you're looking up there and these people could care less. I mean it looked like half of them had no interest whatsoever in what you were saying. Obviously the prosecutors did, they're getting it down on the record.

An awful lot of stuff was did you make a phone call on January 3rd to the White House? I can't remember if I did or not. I have no idea. It's very hard to remember what you did when your days were from 7:00 in the morning until 7:00, 8:00 or 9:00 at night every day of the week. You were making calls and attending meetings and meeting people and all these writing papers, reading papers, etc. Maybe some people keep beautiful records of all this, but I certainly didn't. To the grand jurors and probably to the prosecutors themselves, it looks like you're obfuscating; you're not really playing ball with them when you don't remember things that they have discovered are really important dates in this whole equation. There were three or four events that the prosecutors took to be very critical moments in the Iran Contra affair. There were three or four of them in which I had a peripheral role to play in them. There was a meeting at the White House I went to and I remember after the meeting I came out and another guy who was at the meeting came out and said, what the hell was that all about? I said, I have no idea. I don't know what these guys were talking about. Well, that meeting was one of the pivotal events when they said, well, were you at the meeting Walker? Yes, I was at the meeting. I discovered that I'm in the minutes of the meeting so obviously I was there. What did you think was happening at the meeting? Frankly as I remember it a couple of us had no idea what we were doing at the meeting. Oh, come on Walker, you're a smart guy. How can you be at a meeting and not know what was going on? Well, believe me, I did not know what was going on. They were talking about things and people, etc. that I had no idea who they were or what they were.

There were a lot of little events like that that again in the mind of a prosecutor who is very suspicious of everything and who wants to think the worst of anyone before him who is saying quite often, well, I just don't remember if I got a telephone call. Yes, I guess I got a call from Ambassador so and so. I don't know if it was that day or a week later or a month later. I remember a call generally. It was a very funny experience. The bottom line was I was a footnote in the Walsh report, which is two big volumes. Each volume about four inches thick. I'm referred to three or four times in the overall discourse. I was not in the section of either indictable or near indictable. I was just a figure that was mentioned three or four times. If you just read those references, one or two of them make it sound as though the prosecutors when writing that report felt that maybe I should have been able to tell them more about some of these events. That I either couldn't remember or I remembered incorrectly. Last year when there was an effort underway to get me nominated to go as an ambassador again, Madeleine Albright went to see Chris Dodd. Then they got me to go and see Chris Dodd to try and straighten out the problem with Dodd. His staffer, Janice O'Connell, had mentioned to some people well, she had gone back to these prosecutors that had dealt with me. They had told her that they

were sure that I was lying. They were sure that I was really indictable. That I became very close to being indicted for not telling the whole truth. This was Janice O'Connell saying that. A colleague of hers, a senate staffer in Patrick Leahy's office who was a liberal democrat as well who I know is a very serious guy. When he heard this he decided to go to the prosecutors. So he went to all the prosecutors involved and asked them what do you remember about Walker? What do you think of Walker? Did you tell Dodd's staffer that I was near indictment? The answer was far from it. They all thought I'd been very forthcoming. Yes, I had some memory lapses, but that was natural given there had been three or four years passage of time. They essentially told Leahy's staffer that I was a willing and positive witness for them as far as they could remember. No one had ever thought anything remotely approaching indictment. It was not a pleasant experience.

Q: This shows the power and sometimes the pernicious influence of somebody on the staff whose got an agenda.

WALKER: She certainly has an agenda and she had a bitter animosity towards Elliott Abrams and part of that passed onto me because the few times she saw me up on the Hill I was with Elliott Abrams. She's a nasty piece of work. What bothered me about the whole thing mostly was the lack of support, backing, assistance, even saying good luck from the Department of State. They just put you out there, you're on your own, hire your own lawyer. No support whatsoever, no backing whatsoever and here you were doing this as a Department of State employee fulfilling the duties on your work requirement statement for heaven's sake. All of a sudden someone is coming at you with some fairly serious consequences that if you take a misstep and there was no help there. There was no help. They were obviously watching for George Shultz and I'm glad they were because I know he was innocent or as innocent as you can be at that level. It was not a pleasant experience.

Q: It shows that almost 50 years before I've talked to people who were involved in the McCarthy period, the same thing. They tossed people up there and let them hang out to dry. The State Department did not stand behind its people.

WALKER: No and in my particular case I actually have written a paper in which I describe similarities between that era in which in that particular case it was a Republican senator. He used a couple of staffers, Cohn and Schine to go after the Foreign Service Officers who had served under Roosevelt and Truman dealing with China. This Republican senator, Joe McCarthy, ran roughshod over those he rather cavalierly described as communists or communist sympathizers or sometimes worse. I think it is to President Eisenhower's and John Foster Dulles's discredit that they didn't do anything to protect their people. Maybe it was because these were people who had served under the other party's administration. This time it was a Democratic senator using again two staffers. It was not just this Janice O'Connell, but another fellow named Bob Dockery who were the Schine and Cohn of the event. They went after career Foreign Service Officers, not just me, but Mike Kozak, Joe Sullivan, two others and again it was an incoming Democratic administration of Bill Clinton that really didn't care to do anything that made this Democratic senator look bad. So, they let him run wild over career Foreign

Service Officers. Yes, it was a lesson to me. I had thought the days of Cohn and Schine were done, but I found they were still alive and well.

Q: Before we leave this, while you were DAS, you mentioned your relationship with Ted Briggs.

WALKER: Correct.

Q: Who was he?

WALKER: Ted Briggs I believe his name is Ellis Briggs and goes by the name of Ted. Ted is a child of the Foreign Service. His father was a four or five time ambassador. Ellis Briggs was the father's name and Ellis Briggs I guess was a giant of his time during pre-war and World War II days. Young Ted is a very bright fellow. He rose through the ranks and I encountered him. I might have met him once or twice before, but I started working with him when I was the DAS and he was our ambassador to Panama. I well remember the fact that when I flew down to Panama with John Poindexter, we'd gone through the various times the U.S. government tried to send a message to Noriega. Well, the first time that I was involved was when John Poindexter was the newly designed national security advisor went down and I was on the plane with him and North and others.

When we got down there we were met by the American Ambassador and that was Ted Briggs. Ted took Poindexter off and introduced him to Noriega and off they went to have their discussion. Briggs was a fairly strong individual in terms of being ambassador to Panama. I know he detested Noriega. He was big on the fact that a fellow named Nicky Barletta was elected president of Panama and he was very much in favor of Nicky Barletta being the president, but shortly thereafter Noriega deposed Barletta. Briggs was fine as ambassador to Panama.

As DAS I got involved in something that again perceptions are more important than reality. We had to relieve after just a few months in office our ambassador to Honduras, a fellow named John Ferch. John Ferch had been head of our mission in Havana, Cuba so he was a Latin Americanist. He had also dealt with the communists in Cuba and when he finished up there they named him ambassador to Honduras. He lasted just a matter of months. George Shultz, the Secretary, at some point decided that Ferch was the wrong person to have in Honduras at a time when we were obviously going to be in a much more, tougher relationship with Honduras than we'd ever had before. A couple of incidents happened. George Shultz got the idea that Ferch was the wrong person so Ferch was relieved. He didn't take it very well and when I say perceptions are more important than reality he seemed to think that Elliott Abrams and Bill Walker were the cause of his dismissal when in fact it had been George Shultz saying get him out of there.

Another reason that he came to the conclusion that I was involved in his dismissal was that Elliott put me forward to replace him. This was at the end of my second year as DAS. Ferch added one and one and came up with three, but his perception was that I had

somehow led to his dismissal or fostered his dismissal. Elliott got my name put before the D committee.

Q: That committee?

WALKER: The committee that selects ambassadors under the chairmanship of the deputy secretary. At this point in time Ted Briggs came out of Panama and came back to the Department without an onward assignment, no, excuse me. He had an onward assignment, but it was one not to his liking. He came back and there was a general feeling within ARA at least that Ted was a bit arrogant and a bit maybe he had not handled the Panama situation as well as he thought he had. He had put all his eggs in the Nicky Barletta basket and that had collapsed when Barletta was run out of office by Noriega. He came to Washington with the assignment, one that I was later to accept with gratitude, but he came back and was named as Vice President of the National Defense University. He did not think this was suitable for him. It wasn't a big enough job.

I'll never forget Ted went to see Elliott one day in a formal call, his farewell to ARA. Since he was from one of my embassies I was invited to sit in on the meeting as we said goodbye to Ted, and we had the normal chat you have in which Ted expressed himself not terribly happy with the fact that he was not given another mission and blah, blah, blah. We talked a bit of the substance of the Panama relationship. Then he mentioned that he just heard that his friend John Ferch was being let go in Tegucigalpa and he asked who was going to replace him at which point Elliott said, well, you happen to be sitting next to him. Bill Walker is going to replace him. I saw a look in Ted's eye at that point and I thought to myself. I wish Elliott hadn't said that. I wish he had kept it to himself, because Ted went off and talked to some of his friends. Ted was known to be a fairly hard right winger sort in the mold of the Reagan administration types. He went off and must have talked to somebody and within days the decision came down that Walker was not going to be the candidate to go to Honduras, but Ted Briggs was. So Ted sailed through the confirmation process, he could point to the fact that he had taken on Noriega, etc. and he went to Honduras. That became the embassy I had the greatest problems with as DAS supposedly doing the Washington end of taking care of the five embassies of Central America plus the embassy in Panama. I never really felt any animosity towards Ted for having taken the mission away from me, but I think he felt I did. I think he felt I was out to get him in some fashion.

Q: Well, he was sort of figuring out what he would have done.

WALKER: Well, I think that's exactly right. I think in a similar circumstance he would have been very upset with me. He seemed to figure that I was out to get him. I made a couple of trips to Honduras on business while he was ambassador there and I was really treated badly. The first time I went down the young junior officer sent to pick me up and take me to the hotel got completely lost in the city. I finally said, well, how long have you been here and he said I've been here about a week. I, having served in Honduras prior to this, I was able to guide us to the hotel, but the young officer had no idea. I was told I was invited to some function that night and that a car would pick me up at a certain time at the

hotel. After all, I was the visiting DAS, certain perks are supposed to descend upon you. The car never showed up. So, I was left at the hotel wondering how the hell do I get to this function? Do I take a cab or what?

At the embassy I got into a couple of discussions with section chiefs and found out that they were very antagonistic to me and to what I was there to do. I couldn't figure any of this out until I was leaving when a young officer who had worked with me in the Department took me aside and told me that Ambassador Briggs had essentially sent out the word, Walker is not a friend of this embassy and if you do anything for him, make sure it doesn't work. I found that kind of astounding. The story that this young officer who had worked for me told me was confirmed by one of our attachés who I had known from when I had served there. I mean, I just found it extraordinary that a fellow officer, a career officer would work at such a petty level.

Q: And it's stupid, too.

WALKER: Yes, really. Anyway, I had this relationship with one of my ambassadors which was obviously a negative relationship even though I wanted him to do a good job. It was an important job, the Contra program was in full swing at this point. I had to go there a few times, but from then on when I went in I had very little to do with the embassy. I'd go in and a chopper would pick me up at the airport and we'd go out to the Contra camps and whatever we were doing. I spent as little time with Ted Briggs as I possibly could.

Q: Well, it shows so much the oil that works and doesn't work in the foreign affairs process. I'm sure our relations with Honduras in the long run suffered because there wasn't the intimate give and take of information about what to do.

WALKER: Yes. My impression was that Ted had this network of friends and ideological compatriots that were in other parts of the government that he would deal with. I don't think he really liked or admired or respected or was particularly or was completely open with Elliott Abrams. I think after a while Elliott pretty much saw through Ted and didn't have great respect for him either. Yes and as you say, this just interferes. I guess you can never pull the interpersonal relations out of the chemistry between people out of the equation, but when sand gets in the machinery, little things that are just stupid little annoyances. It's really not very good for the pursuit of U.S. policy. No doubt about it.

Q: Yes because much of the work is really the free exchange between the people in Washington and the field. The advice and if you don't get it all of a sudden it depends on official communications which are of course a way to convey things.

WALKER: I know like one of these two officers who told me that my name was crap in the embassy under Ambassador Briggs also told me that because this officer had worked with me in Washington she also was on the outside. They gave her very little to do and they didn't include her in important things. She was a very talented officer and she was being wasted. It was because the ambassador must have seen her somehow as my little

spy down there. She went there under a normal reassignment from the Department. She'd been working on Central American affairs. She had Spanish. She was a very good officer and down she went and they just gave her practically nothing to do and the only thing she could figure was it had something to do with her connection with me and I was obviously persona non grata in the embassy. It came as a bit of a shock to me that those little games were being played.

Q: While you were doing that a name that's come up now because he's nominated to be the head of ARA or whatever they call it now.

WALKER: WHA, I believe, WHA, Western Hemisphere Affairs.

Q: Western Hemisphere Affairs, which is the same as the old ARA. Otto Reich. Now did he come across your, could you talk about him?

WALKER: Otto Reich.

Q: He's right now being, he's been nominated, but there is a great deal of resistance and it sort of looks like he's not going to be, well, who knows.

WALKER: Who knows, but his nomination is in a lot of trouble. [Note: Given a recesses appointment after the Senate Foreign Relations Committee did not act on his nomination.]

Q: Whatever you say now I might add isn't going to come out. It will be more than a year or two.

WALKER: Otto Reich, when I got to the Department, he was head of an office that was unusual within the Department. It was called the Office of Public Diplomacy within ARA and it was seen by public affairs, the central entity, which deals with the media and this sort of thing. It was seen as I don't know if it was not as a threat exactly, but it was seen as somehow imposing on their territory. Here a regional bureau had its own sort of public affairs department and was thought to be not as lily pure in terms of delivering statements on what we were doing and how we were doing it to the public. Otto Reich was head of that office of public diplomacy. He was in it I don't know maybe my first year as DAS, something like that, I can't remember the timing when he was nominated to go as ambassador to Venezuela. So I didn't see that much of him. I saw a bit of him. I saw him at daily staff meetings, etc., but I really never got involved in his office that much. What surprised me was when he was nominated to go to Venezuela as ambassador, I guess it was when he was finally confirmed or something like that, there were a number of lunches and things to celebrate the fact that he was going off as our ambassador to Venezuela. I remember at the first one I went to it was an interesting crowd of people that were the other guests at this luncheon. The one I remember most was a fellow who was head of American Institute of Free Labor Development, an AFL-CIO organization I've mentioned earlier. This organization an adjunct of the American labor movement which in my mind equated with liberal causes was at this luncheon for a fellow who I didn't

know much about his ideology, but I knew Otto was probably conservative to say the least. I was surprised that he had a broad range of people at this lunch from not just from the conservative side of the house, but much wider.

The other thing that surprised me, which now I'm embarrassed that I was surprised at the time, was the fact that he got up and said a part of his speech or whatever it was in Spanish. I didn't know he spoke Spanish. I didn't know he was a Cuban American. I didn't know he was the son of a German Jewish family that had migrated to Cuba rather than to the United States and then re-migrated to Florida when Castro came in. Here's a guy named Otto Reich, not exactly a Latin name. In the Department he only used English which is impeccable. It never occurred to me that he was Cuban American and now the reason his nomination is in trouble is that some people, Senator Dodd being among them, and his staffer, are painting him as a radical right wing Cuban American puppet of the Cuban American community in Miami. I found Otto to be a very pleasant fellow, likes to laugh, likes to joke. As I say I'd known him for about a year without ever thinking of him as a Cuban American, far less a puppet of Cuban Americans, far less someone whose opinions reflected the fact that he was a Cuban American. I have been surprised by the brouhaha over his nomination because as far as I was concerned, he was a very competent fellow. From what I understand he did a good job in Venezuela. Again, you never know. Perceptions are more important than the reality I guess.

Q: Before we leave this DAS time I know it wasn't your bailiwick, but could you talk about your observations of how during your DAS period, Cuba was treated, Cuban affairs?

WALKER: Everybody in ARA who had any sense whatsoever stayed as far away from the Office of Cuban Affairs as possible, me included. The people who were in that office were generally officers who were not real Western Hemisphere types who came out of Soviet affairs or something like that. The head of Cuban Affairs when I was DAS for most of the time was a fellow who had been ambassador in Yemen of all places. Earlier on he had served in Brazil or some place. He had a little attachment to Latin America, but then he went off and did other things and became ambassador to Yemen. When they couldn't find an onward assignment for him he came back and took the country directorship for Cuban affairs. Either he didn't know that there were political risks involved or he did and he thought he could overcome them or something. I knew a number of officers, good officers, Western Hemisphere officers, who had thought they were smart enough and cool enough that they could go into Cuban affairs and Castro would die during their tenure and they'd all of a sudden be elevated to front page Washington Post status. Fidel didn't die during their tours and in fact they did or said things that got them sideways with the Cuban American community in Miami and their careers were badly damaged as a result.

Q: We might add that in 2001 Castro is still going strong.

WALKER: Still going strong and he has seen a lot of country directors for Cuban affairs come and go and most of them had a negative experience as a result of taking on that job.

Q: Sort of the third rail of the American Republic Affairs.

WALKER: Exactly. We had enough information that Castro was supporting the FMLN in Salvador and was supporting the Sandinistas. We could say very critical things about Cuban involvement in the affairs of these Central American republics. There was never any occasion to say anything favorable about him, so no one who hated Fidel or no one in the Cuban American community would criticize Bill Walker for anything he'd done or said about Cuba in Central America because we were very critical. The simple answer to your question is that I stayed away from anything having to do with Cuba. I don't think I ever visited the office of Cuban affairs even though the islands were just off my little bailiwick. Because I might not be the smartest officer, but I had seen a number of officers really get burned by getting involved in Cuban affairs.

Q: Well, then we move to your time you were, with all of your problems, how did you get an assignment to El Salvador? That came next, didn't it?

WALKER: That came next after the DASship. In '87 as I said, I completed two years as a DAS. This was a body and mind killing assignment. I went home so many nights just absolutely drained of all energy. So I was looking forward to going to Honduras. Briggs got it instead. Elliott said, well, stay around another year, Bill, and come summer of '88 we'll send you out. A couple of the embassies are opening up. Would you be interested in El Salvador. I said obviously I would. I served there before. It's a place I know and like. He said, well, let's think about that for next summer.

Elliott just kept his word. He put me up before the D committee for going to El Salvador. The Iran Contra investigations, the first one or two had run their course and I, along with almost all the other career people, had come out smelling like a rose, so there was really no impediment to my going out. The confirmation process went as smoothly as these things go. With one person, I was expected to answer his questions in a certain way, was the senator from Washington State. One of his constituents had been assassinated in El Salvador in a triple assassination at the Sheraton Hotel. This constituent of his was a labor organizer for the AFL-CIO who was an officer in this AIFLD, American Institute for Free Labor Development and he and another one and the Salvadoran president of the organization was gunned down one night. This senator from Washington State, whose name I don't even remember now [Dan Evans or Brock Adams], made me promise that I was going to do X, Y and Z to get to the bottom of this case and those who had been convicted would not get out of prison during my tenure as ambassador. I made all sorts of similar promises to the senator that I would make damn sure that those convicted would stay in jail and we would continue to investigate the matter. But that was about it.

I gave the usual statement to the hearing about how delighted I was to go out as ambassador. El Salvador was certainly an important embassy. At that point it was the second biggest embassy in the hemisphere; second only to Mexico City. It was bigger than Brasilia. Our aid package to El Salvador at that time was the third largest in the world behind only Egypt and Israel. It was a huge post and it was a place where I thought

I knew what was going on and thought I knew that I was the right person to go to El Salvador. I probably got it because not too many other people wanted to go there, I don't think. It was still a danger post. Still a 25% danger post, so it was a natural fit. I guess that's how I got it.

Q: What about, Catholic organization particularly the Maryknoll people and all were quite active down in that area and were opposed to our policy. Did they play any role at that time?

WALKER: In my nomination?

Q: Yes.

WALKER: I don't think so. I had known Maryknoll priests in Bolivia, in Peru. The ones I had known in the Andes anyway had not been particularly politicized. In '81 or so a bunch of nuns were killed in El Salvador. I'm not sure if the female side of the Maryknoll church are called Maryknolls, but they were affiliated with the Maryknoll church. It was a pretty horrendous event. Ambassador Bob White was the one who went when they opened the grave and identified them and vowed that their killers would be brought to justice. They never really were. A couple of low-level soldiers went to jail for raping and killing. But it was never quite determined who above them might also have been involved. The Catholic Church paid a lot of attention to El Salvador, there's no question about it. But I don't think they saw me as a problem or as something to oppose. So, in terms of my nomination, in terms of my hearings, it really didn't come up. I, of course, made reference to these various events. As I said, I told the committee in my statement that I had some very close friends who had been killed, had been assassinated in El Salvador during the six or seven years of the war at that time. Some on the left, some on the right and named maybe ten of them who had been blown away under various circumstances. Dodd and his staffers, I don't think they liked the fact that this fellow who they saw as an acolyte of Elliott Abrams was going down there. But they didn't have anything to hang it on. I went through with virtually no sweat.

Later on with the killing of the Jesuits, with some other things, there were elements within the Catholic Church that probably would have come after me in subsequent hearings if my nominations had gone forward, beyond Senator Dodd.

Q: Going to El Salvador. You were there from when to when?

WALKER: I went down in August of '88 and lasted through I think it was like March of '92.

Today is the 29th of November, 2001. Bill, what did you see as your task when you went out there? Did you have a file or two in your mental attaché case or something like that?

WALKER: Maybe it would be easier to explain what the situation was and then what I saw as my task. The situation, 1988, the civil war in El Salvador had been going on for

nine years. It had become greatly complicated with the Sandinistas' victory next-door in Nicaragua so that the Salvadoran guerrillas had become a fairly potent guerrilla operation. I remember James LeMoyné of the New York Times who had been the correspondent in the early '80s in Salvador coming to see me to tell me that in his opinion the FMLN was the best guerrilla army that had ever been mounted in Latin America. It made Fidel Castro's forces pale by comparison. He told me that he knew a lot of the leadership and they were very dedicated. They had gained a lot of experience over those eight years so that I should be very, very careful when I got down there. Never underestimate them.

That having been said, the general situation on the ground was that Napoleon Duarte was the president and had been president for three and a half years. So we were claiming that we had a democrat in office and he was a democrat that we were supporting very, very heavily with our assistance, both military and economic development assistance. At that point we were putting in about \$450 million a year in assistance and we thought it was paying off. We thought that the violence in El Salvador had been steadily going down, that the army, mostly due to our assistance, but also from fighting a war for eight or nine years, had come up a learning curve and was now carrying the fight to the FMLN. The days when they were sitting back and playing the old military role in El Salvador was behind them. That this was a new generation of officers and they had finally learned how to fight a guerrilla war by taking the action to the FMLN. They had vastly superior equipment, helicopter gunships, C47 gun platforms. They had a lot of intelligence gathering wherewithal. We essentially believed and the government in El Salvador believed that the war was being incrementally won. That each month was better than the month before. And we were looking for the time when the FMLN would cry uncle either call it quits or somehow disappear.

We also felt that some of the abuses that had been committed by the government and by the military back in the early '80s was more or less a thing of the past with occasional exceptions. The days when American nuns were raped and killed by national guardsmen, the days when archbishops could be killed like Romero was in '81, that this was all behind us.

Q: Were any of these cases pending?

WALKER: They were all pending and the reason they were all pending was we had early discovered that the police capabilities, the justice system in El Salvador were almost totally absent in the early '80s. We had put in a certain number of measures to try and improve things. We were convinced that if these abuses popped up again that the investigative services that we had helped build, the forensic lab that we had financed and trained people to use, the various instruments that you need to solve a crime were in place and would be used should someone try and kill an archbishop again. We could point to a statistic in which unaccounted for deaths in 1981, 1982, 1983 which were in the hundreds and hundreds a month, some months, thousands, people just found dead in the street sort of thing, that that figure had come way, way, way down to the point that it was now in the

low double digits. We pointed to this and told congress that obviously the policy was working.

When I got to El Salvador I remember right in the first couple of weeks, the defense attaché, who was a very good American army colonel, Spanish speaker, good man. He came to me because he had been asked by the Pentagon to analyze this sort of military situation. The issue was is the war at a stalemate? Have the two sides fought each other to a tie? Or, is in fact the Salvadoran military slowly getting better and slowly taking the fight to the guerrillas and slowly achieving what would eventually be victory on the battlefield. Colonel Wheeler wrote a very, very good cable, very long, very detailed, describing how this was not a stalemate. That for all these different factors, the situation was improving in El Salvador. A democratic regime, i.e., Napoleon Duarte, the George Washington of El Salvador in power. The military situation getting better, the level of violence dropping dramatically from the early bad days to when I was going to go down there. It looked like things were certainly getting better.

Q: Where was criticism coming from?

WALKER: It was coming from a number of sources. It was coming from academia. It was coming from the support group for the FMLN within the United States, leftists as well as people up here who had sought political asylum from El Salvador, who were talking about how bad things were. It came from the media because many of the media who had been in Salvador in the early '80s who had been young journalists who went out on their first or second assignment to El Salvador to cover the war and saw these hundreds if not thousands of bodies lying around. By 1988 many of them were foreign news editors. They had moved up on the ladder and they were in Washington and Chicago and New York and San Francisco and they refused to believe that things were getting better. So, criticism also came from those places. Mary McGrory, not someone who had been in Salvador, but sort of the conventional leftist columnist up here.

Q: From the Washington Post.

WALKER: Anthony Lewis from the New York Times. They were constantly writing articles about how bad things were in El Salvador. It was very difficult to convince. Oh, another group was sort of the NGO community, the human rights NGO community, America's Watch, this sort of thing. None of whom subscribed to the theory that the Reagan administration was describing, which was the situation is getting better. Maybe it's not getting better as fast as we'd like, but it's getting better and a military victory is inevitable.

Q: Were there any groups you might say that dedicated right in the United States were more susceptible of the broad spectrum of public opinion who were taking a fresh look at this.

WALKER: We were having some luck in the congress. If you put aside the sort of hard left and the hard right in the congress if that's the right way you describe them, let's say

the knee-jerk left, the knee-jerk right. The people in the middle were willing to see that things were better. You could come up with statistics that were pretty convincing that violence was way down.

If that in fact was the situation that things were getting incrementally better, obviously I was going to go down there to try and make sure that process continued. If in fact we were winning militarily, I was certainly to talk about the need for a negotiated settlement, but absent the guerrillas begging for one or pushing for one, hey the situation was getting better, let's continue to do what we're doing. I was obviously going down to support the civilian government of Napoleon Duarte. I got there in August and there was an election. There was an election I believe in March of '89, but by the time I got there pre-electoral process politics had started up very, very vigorously. In fact before I went down I met the candidate of the ARENA party (Allanza Republicana Nacionalista, Nationalist Republican Alliance, NRA), Freddy Cristiani, in Washington, in my office. I took him to lunch on the 8th floor of the State Department.

Q: He's a graduate of Georgetown.

WALKER: Georgetown.

Q: Same class as Bill Clinton I think.

WALKER: Something like that, yes. When I met him in Washington before going down there he was already the pre-candidate of the ARENA party. No one knew much about him other than he was U.S. educated. A very personable fellow.

Q: Hadn't they tied him though to the rightist, as I recall when he first came up saying he's sort of a facade for these death squad types.

WALKER: Yes. The ARENA party that he was the candidate of was, is, a right of center party founded by Roberto D'Aubuisson and some of his friends who were right wing populists. Roberto D'Aubuisson was very good out in the campo, out in the countryside, getting up and getting the peasant class to respond to his brand of nationalism. Those were people he and his followers, his close followers, were thought to be involved in death squad activities, and I'm sure they were. There were some crazies around him. When he founded the party in the late '70s sometime, it was seen as a right of center, if not hard right of center party. When they put forward a candidate to run against Duarte the first time and they didn't win, they claimed it was the United States that had bought the election for Mr. Duarte, he was our boy. Duarte of course suffered as a result of this particular stigma. It's true that I think when he was elected which would have been in '82 or '83, whenever it was, we were in fact not very favorably inclined toward this party that seemed to have a lot of death squad types in it. So, we did want Duarte to win. Now, what we did to make that come about I don't know. The fact is he won. The fact is the ARENA party claimed fraud. We had a rough relationship with the ARENA party. They were naturally suspicious of the United States and what we were doing.

Freddie Cristiani, when he was selected to be the candidate for the second election, was seen to be the pretty face that they put forward. A young businessman who had never been very involved in right wing politics, a graduate of a U.S. university, speaks as good English as he speaks Spanish. The impression up here, certainly in liberal circles was that he was just a facade. He was a pretty boy they put in front of the crowds, but that he was really controlled hook, line and sinker by D'Aubuisson and those fellows.

Q: D'Aubuisson was still around?

WALKER: D'Aubuisson was still around.

The Christian Democrat party, Duarte could not succeed himself, plus he had terminal cancer by the time I was going down there. Had diagnosed as terminal. He was coming up here for chemotherapy and that sort of stuff at Walter Reed Hospital.

Duarte had a very dark picture of the scene. When I got down there he was in very bad shape physically. The first couple of meetings I had with him which I expected to be not a love feast, but I thought hey, everybody else thinks we're very close to you and we are close to you. We've given you all this assistance over the years, but Duarte was in a very bitter mood by the time I got there. He was bitter to the extent that he said, Walker, if ARENA wins the upcoming election I will die in prison. They will put me; they will put everyone in my government in prison. All these charges you hear about corruption in my government, that's just a facade that they're going to use and they're going to prove that by dubious evidence that some of my people have been involved in corruption. Well, the truth is his government was very corrupt. The truth is that for the last couple of years of his administration his government had been almost paralyzed in terms of doing anything.

In 1986 I believe it was, late '85, early '86, when he had been in office not very long, the FMLN kidnapped his daughter, his oldest daughter. I can say many things negative about Napoleon Duarte, but one thing you could not say is that he was not a good family man. When his daughter was kidnapped it affected him very deeply, as a result of which the only people he could turn to to try and rescue his daughter was the army. This was an army that he had always criticized and fought against throughout his whole career and now he had to turn to them to try and get his daughter back. He got his daughter back, but it was at the price of not being able to really continue to take on the army as a result of which they went off in their own direction. The army there, even at this late date, had not truly learned the meaning of civilian control of the army. So, even though he was the president and theoretically commander in chief, they only did for him what they thought they should do. Anything they didn't agree with they really didn't do.

So when I got there we had Duarte's illness, this black mood that if ARENA wins Armageddon will descend on El Salvador. It made for a very difficult last year of the Duarte administration. I've mentioned the corruption. Duarte came in as this sort of center left, Christian Democrat, we're going to get rid of the military government. We're going to try and bring peace with the FMLN. We're going to do all these good things for El Salvador. We're going to have a land reform program. We're going to nationalize the

banks. We're not going to let the oligarchs run everything on the economic side. Okay, certain logic to that. The land reform program that was taken over was put in the hands of some very untrained people sort of like during the Mexican revolution when the Zapatistas were put in charge of land reform, you know. They knew what it was to be a campesino, to be a peasant and not have any land. They didn't know anything about the technicalities of putting in place land reform. So, there was a lot of misadventure, corruption, stupidity in that initial land reform program. They took a lot of land away from the big guys which of course totally alienated the haves against the Duarte regime, but the way they distributed the land, the way they took care of the land, was pretty sad.

Nationalizing the banks was another area. They nationalized the banks and he put his political friends, political cronies, guys like that in charge of banks and they had no knowledge of how you run a bank. They ended up stealing a lot or just losing a lot. They were very bad bankers. Those ideas and some other ideas that sort of made sense turned very bad and it was obvious to everyone, one, that this was a corrupt government, and two that Duarte was not in charge anymore. That he'd lost any image of being in charge as the president and the reformer. When I got there the election campaign was already well underway. Duarte was very upset with the United States because just before I got there the New York Times, the Washington Post did a number of long think pieces on how bad his government had become, what a disappointment it was, how corrupt it was. I think it was Seymour Hersch. If it wasn't him it was someone very like him, but I think it was him, who had a number of articles in the New York Times describing the corruption within the Duarte government and specifically mentioned Napoleon Duarte's son who was the mayor of San Salvador as being among the very corrupt. Duarte again, a good family man, was very upset by this and in spite of his U.S. education at Notre Dame and in spite of the assistance that we had given through the years, he was convinced in this black mood he was in that the U.S. government had turned on him. That we were responsible for what appeared in the New York Times pages which many foreigners accept as God's truth. No matter how much they have been exposed to the United States, they still think the U.S. government controls things like that. He was very bitter that we had somehow turned on him. Now, if you connect that with my arrival. I arrived and in my first press conferences and in my first exposures to the media I'm asked questions about the electoral process. Maybe in my naiveté, maybe I don't know if I was expressing U.S. policy or not, I hope I was, but I was saying the United States is neutral. We are not here to impose one or the other party on Salvador. We want a clean election and whoever wins, wins and we will continue to support El Salvador in its fight against the FMLN. We do not believe that people should shoot their way into power.

I kept saying neutrality, neutrality, neutrality, evenhandedness. The candidate of the government, Duarte's party, the Christian Democrats was Fidel Chavez Mena. I think I mentioned when we were talking about my earlier time in El Salvador that Fidel Chavez Mena was a friend, that Fidel Chavez Mena was my lawyer in terms of getting me married and he cut through the red tape in the mayor's office. I considered Fidel Chavez Mena my friend. He considered me not only his friend, but I was here as the new American ambassador and I was there to assure that he would win the election. No matter how often I talked about neutrality and fairness and not taking sides, Fidel Chavez Mena,

I think, thought I was winking at him and that this was just for public consumption when in reality I would do whatever it took to make sure he won. That I would not let the ARENA party come to power. The ARENA party at the same time was also suspicious of my proclamations about neutrality. They thought we've been screwed by the U.S. government before, we were screwed the last time, they thought they had been screwed the last time. They thought that Roberto D'Aubuisson had beaten Napoleon Duarte for the presidency. They were also extremely wary of my remarks about neutrality; but I meant it. I really did mean it. I made sure that everyone in the embassy understood that our policy was in fact neutrality.

We had a couple of people in the embassy who had pretty much come to the conclusion that the Duarte government was a failure. That if this was our legacy for all the assistance that we had given El Salvador, this corrupt, incompetent, inefficient, ineffective government that was no longer interested in reform, then the policy was a failure and that better to go with the new guys who at least we had some leverage over. Others, of course, felt that Duarte was doing the best he could. It was a divided embassy, but not seriously and everybody I think took to heart my comment, we're not here to take sides, we're here to see that there's a good election.

Q: How about the CIA station there because it's always been, it's always had quite a role in Latin America. In a place like El Salvador, it must have had ties going way back. I would think that some of these ties would have an influence on our operators.

WALKER: I have to disagree. I left El Salvador in '77 the first time I was there. About six months, eight months before I left in 1977 the CIA closed its station in El Salvador. It was down to a two person station and they decided that El Salvador and Haiti were both places where nothing ever happened, so we can close. They shut it down and they started handling El Salvador by a rotation.

Roving type out of Guatemala. They kept an eye on it. But any relationships we had between the agency and the Salvadoran intelligence people pretty well fell apart during that closure. I don't know when they reopened, but I think it was probably '79 or '80 when El Salvador burst on the stage as a place where pretty nasty things were happening. I get there eight years later. The station was of course quite a bit bigger than anything that had been there before. I'll never forget, you've got to remember there was an earthquake and our embassy had fallen to the ground. We had recaptured about two floors of the old embassy. I was in a bunker in the cellar. We were way overstaffed in terms of the number of people in that particular facility. The station with all its people were in a couple of closets almost, very, very packed tight. What were they doing? They were following the war. They were not really interested in the politics of the place. They were not really interested in much of the sort of criticism that was being leveled, only in as far as it might threaten the war effort. The people in the station when I was there were for the most part veterans of Southeast Asia. The station chief was a guy who had served in Southeast Asia. I remember his little wall in his little cubbyhole, it had Kalashnikovs and daggers taken off of North Vietnamese soldiers in the field and pictures of him with various

warlords he had known in Vietnam. He was a cold war warrior and he was sent there to help the Salvadoran military defeat the FMLN. That was what the station was about.

Luckily he left shortly after I got there because I did not get along with him. He must have thought I was not paying as much attention to the war as I was to some of these other things. That's not true. But he thought I wasn't quite as much a cold war warrior as he was. The station, yes it had relations with the government, mostly with the military, mostly with military intelligence, but it wasn't what you were describing as old cozy relationship between the agency and Noriega or the agency and some of these others. This was actually a relationship based on let's defeat these communist FMLN surrogates for Fidel Castro and whoever was in charge of the Soviet Union at the time. It was not to perpetuate any particular regime in power or get them out.

Q: How about our military?

WALKER: Well, we had a hell of a lot of, you know. There was the image of a congressionally imposed ceiling on the number of U.S. active duty military we could have in the country at any given time. I say it was an image because when I checked to see where this restriction had been imposed, no one could find it. It was in the debates back during congressional discussion of continued assistance to El Salvador. One of the extensible reasons given by congressional critics of our policy was we've got to watch out for mission creep. The Johnson White House told us we were only sending a few advisors into Vietnam, the next time we turned around there were half a million men there. Left wing critics of what the Reagan administration was doing in El Salvador were always saying, this is just the first step. If we send a few advisors down there, next week it will be a few more and a few more and a few more and pretty soon we'll be dealing with another Vietnam. So somewhere along that path of debate, someone suggested, and I don't know if it was written into legislation or not, but I don't think it was, that the congress was not going to allow any more than 55 U.S. active duty military to be in El Salvador at any one time. Now we had to go back. Every day, every day I was there for three and a half years, we counted, boom, boom, boom, how many active duty military guys were in the country and damn it, any time it went to 56 or 57 we got worried. We would try and figure out how we could send someone home. It took a while for us to get the MILGROUP members and the defense attaché members exempted. We finally decided that the 55 was for people coming in with MTT, military training teams, people coming in on TDY, temporary duty assignments. As I say, we kept a very careful tab so as to not to violate what we thought was this congressional mandate.

I am glad we had that 55 man limit because that meant we didn't send people in to do the actual fighting. We didn't send people in to lead platoons. We sent people in to train the trainers sort of thing. As I say when I got there we thought this had been a successful policy that we had in fact brought the Salvadoran military way up the learning curve in terms of how to fight a war. At some point I'm going to tell you why we came to the conclusion that this was a mirage that the military was actually winning the war. It was yes, they've gotten better and better but so had the FMLN and our description of an ever

improving situation was a mirage. Actually stalemate was a better way to describe what was occurring.

Q: We always fight the last war and the last war was Vietnam. Was anybody saying repeating the mantra Tet, Tet, Tet? In other words was there at all a feeling of my God all of a sudden they might, the FMLN might burst out and do a Tet? Which essentially was a disaster for the Viet Cong, but it tipped the balance in public opinion in the United States. Was that in your thinking?

WALKER: No, the simple answer is no. The best analysis on our side DIA, CIA, State Department, INR, was that the FMLN had been weakened to the point that they could not pull a Tet. That they might be able to hang on for a short or a longer period, but that they did not have the capability to pull a Tet. It's when they pull a Tet in November of '89 that we have to rethink the whole analysis of where we're at and how badly they've been weakened and how strong is the military. In some ways it had much the same outcome as the Tet events in Vietnam, but the answer is no. We did not see that coming in any serious way.

Excuse me, the other lesson of Vietnam, the mantra I thought you were going to refer to was when you're dealing with an insurgency like this, you've got to win the hearts and minds of the people. You've got to make it so those guerrillas are swimming in a sea that's not favorable. That mantra we heard a lot. It was almost equally inapplicable.

Q: I used to hear the mantra when I was in Vietnam, that say well, if you grab them by the balls their hearts and minds will follow.

WALKER: Yes someone is famous for having said that. There was a lot of lessons learned in Vietnam that were being applied in what was again another insurgency, another guerrilla insurgency. There were some similarities. They did have sanctuary next door in Nicaragua. There was this constant seemingly unstoppable flow of materiel coming in. In the entire history of the war in El Salvador, ten years, we knew that the FMLN's major military equipment: rifles, grenades, rocket propelled grenades to eventually a few missiles, anti-aircraft missiles were coming in from Nicaragua. This is a small region of the world. We never in the whole history of the war interdicted a single transporting of materiel coming in from next door. We were never able to prove. We kept saying Nicaragua is responsible, they're sending in the stuff. Our critics up here were saying, where's the proof. In spite of all the technical means we put to try and prove that, in spite of the Salvadoran government putting people on the beaches, night vision equipment, some of our defense attaché guys going down and looking to see if they could find a little canoe or something coming in with a couple of rifles. We never interdicted anything.

We had some very serious misadventures in trying to detect stuff coming in. I will mention just one of them because it is vivid in my mind. When I got to El Salvador, I was told about a very special project called Operation Granite Eagle, I believe, or something like that. When I asked what this was, I was told, oh, this is the cat's meow. There is a

U.S. ship out there just over the horizon so you can't see it from shore and it tows behind it up in the air an aerostat, a blimp like vehicle which has down looking radar on it. So, we're going to have this eye up in the sky sailing back and forth along the coast just over the horizon. No one will be aware it's there. This spy platform will be able in real time to spot canoes or speedboats or whatever the hell is bringing in material from Nicaragua. They will patrol the Gulf of Fonseca, which is the boundary between the two, Nicaragua and El Salvador. It's only a matter of time before they will be able to say here comes something. Tell the Salvadorans, they'll go down to the beach when it lands. They'll capture them and we'll have this evidence that we've been looking for. Terrific, great idea, sounds terrific. In a few weeks as arriving as ambassador and hearing about this, I said, gee I'd really like to go out and take a look at this platform and tell the guys what a great job they're doing. So, I helicopter out and landed on this U.S. navy ship and told them what a great job I thought they were doing. I asked them how much success they'd had and they said, well, nothing so far, sir, but it's only a matter of time. I went back to San Salvador. A week or so later I was informed much to everyone's chagrin that the cable up to this balloon had snapped and the balloon had disappeared out over the Pacific. But not to worry Mr. Ambassador, they're going to go into Guatemala I think it was and get refitted. They'll put up a new hydrostat, aerostat and they'll be out there and they'll be looking again. How long are they going to be down? Well, they'll be down for three, four or five months, it depends. This is very technical, very tricky stuff. During that time I came up to Washington and I met for the first time Colin Powell who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He wanted to know how the war was going. I talked to him in general terms and I mentioned this Granite Eagle and he told me he had heard all about it. It was too bad it was gone astray, but they were going to put it back up again, it was the best we had. I went back to El Salvador damned if the second aerostat didn't drift out over the Pacific. They lost that one too at which point they decided, maybe we ought to go back to the drawing boards on this particular platform. It never accomplished anything. Never found a single canoe with rifles in it, far less anything bigger. As I say we were never able to prove that the stuff was coming in. The only thing that was proving it was that they would have run out of ammunition and weaponry because they did lose a good bit of it. We did capture a number of caches, but well after they had gotten into the country.

Our military I thought, this is not like today, this was not when our military is a bunch of heroes to the American public. This was back when our military was getting criticized for all sorts of things. They were certainly criticized for what they were doing in El Salvador to the point that I can't remember how many of our military served in El Salvador during the ten years of war, many of them in harm's way. Many of them even though they were not supposed to be involved in combat, they would get caught in one way or another in dangerous situations and face bullets flying overhead. A number of them died. Notwithstanding that, our military was so terrified of our congress jumping on them for putting our fellows in harm's way and doing so when they were instructed not to have our soldiers, sailors, marines involve themselves in the combat. Our military was so shy of that that they issued no medals for anyone who served in El Salvador. A good number of our guys got into very tricky situations, showed considerable bravery, did some very good things, but DOD decided no military medals for anyone serving in El Salvador. It

wasn't until 1996, seven years after the war was over that a couple of congressmen, Bob Dornan if you know who he is, the very right wing congressman from Orange County, California. B-1 Bob they called him because he was in the air force. He also felt that the way to win the war in Vietnam was to send them back to the stone age with nuclear weapons sort of thing. Dornan, interested in Central America, got very upset that American servicemen who had served in El Salvador did not get medals as they did in Vietnam and as they did in some other police actions. He passed a law saying that DOD should give them medals. So, in 1996 I went and gave a speech.

Q: Fort Myer?

WALKER: No, at the cemetery.

Q: Arlington Cemetery?

WALKER: Arlington Cemetery, in which we announced that there would be service medals given to those who served in Salvador. We discovered that there were over 5,000 American soldiers, sailors, marines who were eligible for those medals because over the ten years that's how many people we had sent in. We also interred a few people that day who had been killed in the war, including a couple that were killed during my time who crashed in a helicopter. Most of the army types who served in Salvador were Special Forces types. I don't know if it was a career-enhancing move to serve in El Salvador, but those who did were mostly ones who joined the military to actually be military rather than sit back in Washington. We had high morale among our military even though they couldn't get medals and were not highly thought about by their hometown papers for being there. I was very proud of the American military we had there. For the most part, very, very good guys.

Q: We're coming up to this election.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: Were you getting together with the major candidates, Cristiani and the other one.

WALKER: Fidel Chavez Mena.

Q: You know, sort of saying, look, there can't be any return to the death squads and that sort of thing. What kind of a reception were you getting?

WALKER: Oh, absolutely, sure I mean, going back to what I said, you know, Fidel Chavez Mena thought I was there to anoint him and Freddie Cristiani and the ARENA party thought I was there to steal another election from them. Nevertheless I went around and saw as many of the people involved in the election as I possibly could, but especially the two candidates. I don't think I ever had a talk with either of them that I did not talk about that subject. That we were skating on very thin ice back here in congressional debates about the assistance and that if violence were to break out again or if the death

squads were to return or whatever, that this would be very damaging to our ability to continue supporting them. I of course stressed that message to Cristiani more than I did to the others because I, like everybody else, felt that the major death squad perpetrators were people within his party and were around him.

I learned very, very early on that Freddie Cristiani was no puppet, was no front man for D'Aubuisson and his crowd. He never openly criticized D'Aubuisson and his crowd. At the same time he quite often did things that were probably not to their liking. Over time, once he became elected, once he served as president, he found out it's one thing to be outside criticizing government, it's another thing to be the president and trying to run a country at war. He came up the learning curve very, very quickly and he came to Washington often. He made an awful lot of congressional visits. As other people came to El Salvador we always got them in to see Freddie Cristiani. He saw everyone who we asked him to see. Everybody talked to him about violence; death squads, how damaging this would be and that came to him from friend and foe alike. So, yes, I spent an awful lot of time on that subject to the extent that when I returned to El Salvador for the first time after leaving which was just two months ago, I specifically wanted to see Cristiani who is now president retired, and he and his best friend who was also a friend of mine gave a dinner for me. When I met Freddie Cristiani that night the first thing I said was, look I'm delighted to meet you again under somewhat different circumstances. One of the reasons I want to meet you was to apologize because just about every time I saw you during those three very difficult years I must have been a pain in the ass telling you about don't do this and don't do that and you better do this and you better do that. I was the pro-consul and there's no question about it. I was always threatening him with aid cut-offs. I was always telling you about conditions on the aid, that different senators or congressmen had put on the aid. Luckily he said, well, Bill, I knew it wasn't a personal thing. I knew it was you were telling me what had been your instructions. I said, I'm glad you understood that, but I wasn't always sure your wife understood it because when she was in the room and I was telling you what to do, she obviously resented it. My husband's the president who are you to come in here and tell him what to do?

As I say, I don't think I ever had a meeting with Cristiani or with any of the people around him or with the military leaders who I saw very often or with the Christian Democrats in which the subject of human rights did not come up. There were any number of old cases: the assassination of Archbishop Romero, the murder of the nuns, the gunning down in '85 of our marine guards, five of whom were killed sitting in an outdoor cafe when the FMLN went past and sprayed them with bullets. Some of them were on one side, some of them were on the other. There were people in jail. There were also kidnappings and assassinations of various prominent people including people who had been friends of mine over the years. Some of the kidnappings had been "solved" and people were in jail. The killing of our marines had been "solved." There were some FMLN types who were in jail. The killing of the nuns by a couple of national guardsmen, were in jail. But there were legal processes moving forward on many of these cases and they were still active issues all the time I was there. Those who had been involved in kidnappings. If they were right wing kidnappings sometimes there was an effort made to get them out of jail, to release them. I would go in and say you can't do this. If you

release so and so congress is going to be outraged that you've let this right winger go. Other times it was, well it was similar things. I was always involved in all those cases. None of them were ever solved to everyone's satisfaction. Not one of them. It was always the question, in the killing of Archbishop Romero was it a death squad sent in by D'Aubuisson? Was it the military? Who was ultimately responsible for killing Archbishop Romero? We thought, the United States thought, that if there had been another killing like the killing of Romero, or the killing of the nuns, or the killing of our marines, that we had given the Salvadoran government enough investigative capabilities that they would solve it. And that it would then go to the courts that we had helped the courts improve to the point that they would then be able to prosecute and that justice would be done. It wasn't until November of '89, when the Jesuit priests were killed during the final offensive, the Tet offensive of El Salvador, and we tried to put in place these investigate techniques and solve that crime, and then once we solved it put it into the justice system and have people sent to jail, that we discovered that all our effort had been in vain. The justice system didn't work any better in the Jesuit case than it had ten years earlier in the Archbishop Romero case. This was something I was working on, thinking we were making progress throughout my time there.

Q: Did you find the military leaders in El Salvador sort of a distinct class and how did they fit into the situation?

WALKER: As a result of my first tour in El Salvador, '74 to '77, it was a military government at that time and as head of the political section I did a certain amount of getting to know and analyzing the military officer corps. When I described the president back then and some of the people around him I talked about, they were almost out of a Herblock cartoon of Latin American, Central American military officers. Most of them overweight, most of them didn't cut a very military figure, most. So, I remember doing a long cable analysis of who made up the Salvadoran officer corps? Who were these people that everybody thought were the supreme leaders of El Salvador? I described an officer corps of essentially middle class, lower middle class origins; very few people from the cities, from the upper middle class, certainly not from the aristocratic class joined the military. It was seen as a breed apart. Most of them were obviously ambitious. Most of them joined thinking that they were going to get the privileges and rewards that one got as a military officer in El Salvador. The military system produced mostly officers coming from provincial towns. They joined for ambitious purposes, not for love of country, not for anything. And once they joined they went to the military academy for a couple of years. Each graduation from the military academy, each year's class, that was the strongest bond for a military officer, it was with his class. The classes were very competitive one against the other and what you tried to do was get one member of your class president and then he would pull the rest of you along and make you ministers and this and that and the other thing. Chief of staff of the army and your class would dominate the country for X number of years.

Another phenomena was a system called the tanda system, the tanda is each year's graduation from the military academy. The tandas, the classes, were generally pretty small, ranging from a dozen to maybe a couple of dozen so that they bonded with each

other during their time at the military academy and that was their strongest loyalty was to their class. The politics within the military, they weren't the politics of a fighting war machine, they were the politics of people now trying to project themselves into positions of power and riches. It always worked the same way. Each class from the academy had an antagonistic relationship with the class just ahead and just behind and they would form alliances with the group two ahead and two behind to squeeze the guys in the middle. The politics within the military were very rough. They did nasty things to each other for their class to be the one that would get the president and all these good positions and then they would give more junior positions to that group two years behind. It was an interesting system. The officers generally, I only know of one exception, I'm sure there were others, but the officers generally ended up marrying their village sweetheart. These are young men who would go off to go to the academy, two years later they'd come back, three years later, some classes were shorter or longer. They would come back two or three years later and be assigned to the provinces, to the frontier duty on the Honduras frontier, the Nicaragua frontier, the Guatemala frontier. They'd go to the crap assignments. Quite often in those assignments or even before from their home village they would have Miss Va Va Va Boom who they'd dreamt all their time at the academy and they quite often got married very early to one of these gals from the provinces. The women, the wives of the officers, were usually not very well educated, usually pretty unused to moving in the capitals, let's put it that way, moving with the higher class people.

After a couple of assignments they would usually be brought back say at the senior captain, major level. They would come back from the provincial assignments to do something in the ministry in the _____ in San Salvador. That was where the brightest or the ones that looked more promising would be eased into jobs by their fellow class types who would try to get them into jobs that would lead up, so that eventually one of them would become president. All very good except for a couple of problems. One the oligarch class, the business class, the hams, the people of San Salvador who run the country or Santana, some of the secondary cities, were always on the lookout for these relatively young officers. They realized that the young officers coming in from the provinces can't earn much money, were now expected to live at a higher level, were expected to buy a car, were expected to be able to appear in a civilian suit, so they had a lot of expenses, but they didn't earn enough as a military officer to meet those expenses. What would often happen would be business X would form a relationship with captain so and so and give him a stipend, give him some semblance of a little job and you know, you don't really have to work at it, but we'll pay you so much a week. We realize you've got expenses and you don't earn enough in the military, so we'll give you a salary, etc. They would try to identify the up and coming types so that one day with luck and good analysis you might have on your payroll the guy who is becoming president.

There was a lot of that.

I came to the conclusion that it was virtually impossible for someone to rise through the ranks of the Salvadoran military officer corps in the '70s at least, who was not corrupted by the system. Not necessarily their fault. They weren't any weaker than anyone else, but they had expenses to meet. They had obligations to make, and the salary of the military

just wasn't sufficient. So, by the time a guy was a captain or especially by the time he was a major, he was in someone's pocket. This did not mean that they were the handmaidens of the oligarchs. They were not really bought by this. In fact they resented it. There was no great love loss between either side. The oligarchs thought the military was guerrillas and the guerrillas thought the oligarchs were spoiled stealers of the national patrimony. The army officers, all through their time in the academy, all through their military careers, they didn't mix with many other people. They were a pretty closed little society. They didn't mix because their wives weren't good mixers. They didn't mix because they weren't particularly good mixers. They realized that the civilians pretty much shunned them so they pretty much stuck to themselves. In that context especially at the military academy, they were told over and over again, and over again, you are the saviors of this country, you are the people who are making the sacrifices, you are blah, blah, blah. You are the elite. It's not the oligarchs, it's not this, it's not that, you are the people who are saving this country from communism or from whatever. They believed this. They really believed that they could do anything, that they were above the law, because they were in fact saving the country from whatever evil.

Q: By '88 to '92, let's say '88 when you got there, had this changed? I mean was it a different breed of cat or not?

WALKER: It had changed on the surface. It had changed in that physically the officer corps, senior officers, I mean the junior officers were always pretty fit and thin and young. But by the time guys got to be colonel, back when I was there in the '70s, as I say, they were corpulent, big mustaches, lots of medals they didn't deserve. By the time I got there in '88 the war had been on for eight, nine years. Some of these guys as lieutenants, and captains and majors had been out fighting, had been in the field, had actually learned what war was about, had found out there were dangers involved, had actually earned some medals. Yes, it was still a heavy dose of politics involved in who rose through the ranks and became the colonel and the general, but many of the colonels and even the generals, although there weren't that many generals, physically were different. Were not fat, were not the caricature of an army officer here in Latin America. That was certainly one difference. In the '70s if you talked to an officer about human rights he would tell you you were full of God knows what. By the time I got there in '88 they had learned that you had to have, you had to be able to speak the language of human rights and talk about the need for justice, etc. Was it truly internalized, did they really believe this? I'm afraid not as we learned, but their rhetoric, their words were different.

Some of them actually knew quite a bit about fighting a war because they'd been out fighting a war for those nine years. It was a different officer corps. What I would insist was the officer corps I saw '88 to '92 was a transitional officer corps. They had entered in the '60s. I'm talking about someone who was a colonel when I got there in '88 had entered as a junior officer in the '60s so they knew the old system. They knew how to get ahead. They knew about the benefits of becoming a senior officer in the military. They knew about repression if you had to do it to maintain yourself in power in office. But they were learning that maybe this was not as appreciated as it once had been. There were some officers, some colonels who were looking back to the old days, God we used to

really have it made and maybe we should try and go back to that after we get this God damned war over with. There were others who had learned the lessons of those ten years and realized they could never go back and they were going to have to adapt to a newer, a different system. I would argue that the young officers who came into the military during the war they were getting a totally different sort of education. They were internalizing some of this stuff about human rights, etc. The group I dealt with were a transition group. Some looking backwards, some looking forwards and it wasn't until after the war that the new generation came in who is what I hope is in the military now. They were out of politics now essentially. You don't hear about the bad old days anymore. The group I had was the transition.

Q: What about the oligarchs? I mean in many ways particularly wasn't it part of this, this is really I mean was this a peasant insurrection to a certain extent or the landowners and the peasants trying to get land or what was it?

WALKER: No, the FMLN for all its talk about land reforms, etc., peasant causes, was like so many revolutionary movements around the world, the leadership was essentially middle class. The leadership was essentially from San Salvador. There were exceptions. There were a few peasants who became military leaders because they proved themselves in the battlefield that they were smart military types. But for the most part the theoreticians, the people who put out the word as to what this revolution was all about were people like Schafik Handal who was the leader of the communist party, relatively well educated from San Salvador. Joaquin Villalobos who was the leader of one faction of the FMLN was the son of a guy who owned the big garage, auto repair place in San Salvador. Most of the leaders, I think the top of each of their five factions, were all middle class from San Salvador most of whom had gotten their philosophy from attending the Catholic university there, getting involved with the liberation theologians of the Jesuits. The fighting men, the guys who did the actual fighting, the guys who lived up in the hills, most of them, many of them were peasants. Their leadership was I would say middle class, city-oriented folks.

Q: What about the oligarchs, were these people who sort of like the old bourbons and didn't learn anything or was this a changing group?

WALKER: Well, that's a good question because I'm not sure I have the answer. I went to Salvador twice in the last two months after being away for nine years and met some of the oligarchs who I thought had learned. You listen to them and it sounds like it was back in 1975. Hard to say, obviously there are young oligarchs, younger oligarchs who have gone to school in the United States who have learned, especially if they've gone to good universities here or there's been a tradition not only in Salvador, but in a lot of Latin America that the right wing family wants their kid to get a U.S. education, but certainly doesn't want them exposed to UC Berkeley, or something like this. So they send them up here to military academies or to Texas A&M where they wear uniforms and parade up and down. Some of those guys go back even worse than when they came. They're oblivious. I mean Freddie Cristiani himself is a relatively modern fellow who understands that death squads are not the way to promote yourself politically or any other way.

To have been an oligarch in pre-1979 El Salvador was to lead a truly beautiful life. One, you to a lesser or greater extent had lots of money. Two, you were the master of your domain whether it was a factory or a piece of land or you were growing coffee. You had lots of servants to do just about everything that required work. You spent a lot of time socializing with others of your class at the beach, at your beach house, at your house at the lake, all of which was very delightful. I spent numbers of weekends going out to people's houses at the beach both in the '70s as well as during the war. They still led this life. As Ambassador in the '80s, the property you were on was quite often surrounded by armed guards walking the perimeter, which wasn't true in the '70s, but it was and can still be if you have money in El Salvador a very pleasant place to live. Climate beautiful. If you get bored with the limited pleasures of El Salvador, you can always fly to Miami. If you had health problems, you flew to Houston. The life of an oligarch was very nice. It is not surprising that many of them didn't want to give that up and a number of them look back with great nostalgia to what that life was even though today it's not much worse for people with money. The oligarchs now have to worry about crime. The great subject on everybody's mind who is known to have money is kidnapping. This is the real bugaboo of the money class in El Salvador as it is in Honduras and elsewhere, Guatemala, that there are now gangs maybe the result of the war years, unemployed people who fought for 10 or 12 years and can't find honest employment so they figure out how to capture someone and hold them for ransom. There's a lot of that going around. That's a fear that the oligarchs have which they didn't have back in the good old days or bad old days depending on how you look at it.

Have they learned their lesson? I think in general El Salvador learned a lesson. With a few exceptions, Schafik Handal from the left has never learned a lesson. He's still playing his stupid games and there are people on the right who never learned a lesson, but I think the vast majority of Salvadorans realize that the decade of the '80s was a very, very horrible bitter experience in which tens of thousands of people lost their lives. It produced some reforms. Depending on where you are in the pecking order, you either like some reforms or you don't like some reforms. For the most part I think most Salvadorans learned some lessons.

Going back again a couple of weeks ago I ran into a good number of people who were with the FMLN when I was there. Some of them were out to kill me and I guess I was out to kill them. I am amazed at how rational they have become about their experiences during the war and how many of them have moved from there. The FMLN is now a very legitimate and fairly strong political party, but a good number of former FMLNers want nothing to do with it, saying we learned our lesson. We're pursuing careers or pursuing family things or pursuing an education or whatever. Lots of people learned lessons, thank God.

Q: What about, again, I'm concentrating on the '88 to '92 period. How did you find the church? What was the role the church was playing at that particular point?

WALKER: Well, if you say THE church, you're talking about the Catholic.

Q: That's what we're talking about. I take it the Protestants are becoming more and more powerful.

WALKER: Moving forward with great rapidity. The church, was not a monolithic institution by any means. The church in the '70s had been fairly conservative in the main with the possible exception of the Jesuits involved at Catholic University. I think I told you when I was talking about my first tour there I was involved in trying to protect Jesuits from death threats from right wing death squad types. By the time I returned in '88 many more Catholic priests had been radicalized—might be too strong a word. There were certainly more priests who were talking about the need for reform, the need for structural reform, the need for some of the things that the FMLN was in favor of. The murder of the archbishop, the killing of the nuns in '81 had also made a good number of church people aware of the risks involved in speaking out, but nevertheless they were certainly not in favor of the status quo. Those priests, those nuns, those bishops, etc. who would probably be counted to left of center in favor of reform sympathetic to what the FMLN was trying to accomplish were a minority. Probably a fairly small minority in terms of numbers and most of them were confined to San Salvador.

The bishop's conference which was composed of I don't remember how many, half a dozen bishops of the Catholic Church was headed during I think most of the time I was there by the archbishop of Zacatecoluca which was maybe the third or fourth largest city in the country who was very conservative. I remember when I went to pay a call on him when I first got there as we were walking around Zacatecoluca he was showing me some places where the FMLN had attacked the city earlier in the war. I remember he told me that what El Salvador needed was a General Francisco Franco, a strong man at the helm who didn't abide by any foolishness. Well, he was the elected head of the bishop's conference, which gives you some idea that most of the bishops were certainly not lepis. Nevertheless, to the outside world, to journalists, to readers of the New York Times, the Washington Post, the L.A. Times, the image of the Catholic Church was dictated by the Archbishop in San Salvador, the Jesuit priests at the Catholic university who were in fact as I say more or less sympathetic to the FMLN. So, the image of the Catholic Church, when someone would say, well what is THE church doing in El Salvador? Most outsiders felt that it was fully supportive of the FMLN when in fact the vast majority of the priests, nuns, bishops, the hierarchy were relatively conservative. El Salvador, like many countries in Latin America has always had a shortage of priests. They've always had problems recruiting young men to go into the priesthood, so a good number of the priests were foreign priests. The ones who were most radical were Spanish priests, many of whom were Jesuits. Catholic university was _____. The ones who were killed in '89 I think four or five of them were Spanish Jesuits and they were thought to be the most radical. The Salvadoran priests were for the most part quite conservative. Now, that's one church.

What had happened to an extraordinary degree during my absence from El Salvador or maybe I just didn't notice it when I was there in the '70s because we didn't pay that much attention to church affairs, was the fact that Protestant denominations especially the

evangelical missionary religious groups from the United States had made great inroads in El Salvador and throughout the region. The president in Guatemala when I arrived was a military officer who was a born again Christian and who tried to impose on Guatemala, the officer corps, his beliefs that the Catholic Church was evil and that the Protestant evangelical faiths were the wave of the future. I remember speaking to a bishop in El Salvador. He was the Archbishop of San Salvador and here was a man whose fame in the United States was for speaking out against the military, speaking out against the oligarchs, a real reform minded archbishop much in the mode of Archbishop Romero. I went to see him to talk about some attacks he had made on the United States and on U.S. policy in the region. In our conversation, I'll never forget this, he started talking about threats to the church. He started talking about how we have to do everything to quell these threats to the church. I assumed he was talking about the right wing. I assumed he was talking about U.S. policy, I didn't know what the hell he was talking about, but I assumed he was talking about that. It was only well into his conversation that I realized he was talking about Protestant religions that were making inroads and were taking the faithful away from the true path.

The other thing was that the going back in '88 and driving around seeing the number of store front the tabernacle of this, that or the other thing, different evangelical store front bible waving table thumping, music singing brand of Protestantism which is sweeping through the region and as I say the Catholic Church sees this as a threat. Priests from the left, Catholic priests from the left use this to say why they have to start taking up peasant themes and peasant demands. The voice of the poor must be heard because those Protestant evangelical inroads are being made among the downtrodden. If you drive through downtown San Salvador at night when the streets are empty, no one's out, you quite often hear singing and the noises of these store front little churches. Those churches for the most part tend to be conservative.

Q: I was going to say, one doesn't think that this one, it's obviously not a unified thing, but it doesn't seem to have an awful lot of political agenda. It sort of lives within itself. I'm transposing how it is here in the United States. I mean they get out and vote very conservative, but they're not really a radical body unless it's imposing their religious will.

WALKER: That's exactly right. That sums it up. In Salvador they tended to try to stay away from politics. Anytime you heard them express views on political subjects, they were conservative, as you say. Their radicalism was in spreading their faith, their religion. That was a part of "religion" in El Salvador that not many people outside of El Salvador understood. One, there was the misunderstanding that the Catholic Church was all dominant and two, that the Catholic Church was left of center and was fighting for all the right causes. That was the perception here in the United States and in Europe. When in fact the Catholic Church was for the most part not radical, not leftist, but more or less conservative and second, that the Catholic Church was not alone in El Salvador, that the inroads by the evangelical Christian faith was really quite strong.

Q: Now it was an earlier period, I've interviewed Tony Quainton when he was ambassador to Nicaragua from '82 to '84 and he, what about sort of where you getting at that time delegations from the United States, Catholic delegations or particularly left wing Catholic delegations or the glitterati from Hollywood or the New York thing because he talks about being coerced practically into getting in prayer circles with nuns and the next thing you know they're praying against the President, our President.

WALKER: I never went that far, believe me, I am not a religious person myself and feel very awkward even when I got to a wedding or to a funeral and everybody else is praying or crossing themselves or kneeling. I never know who to do. So I never got into that side of it, but did we get visits from religious types from the United States and Europe? Absolutely. Constantly. Catholics from the left. Catholics from the right. Protestants from the left. Protestants from the right. It tended to break down into Catholic groups coming down, tended to want to talk about the killing of Archbishop Romero and the murder of the nuns. What are we doing about it? The Protestant groups broke down into two groups. The ones that came to see me would be generally leaderships of Episcopal churches in the United States. The storefront evangelical types didn't bother to come to the American Embassy; they would just go to their sites. My Deputy Chief of Mission, Jeff Dieterich, who I know you know is the son of a minister, has two brothers who are ministers, grew up in that environment.

Q: He talked ministers.

WALKER: He talked minister and he himself is not so inclined, but he knows what he knows when he sees it. He was my interpreter of and reaching out to these visitors of religious types. I'd usually let him handle it just because I was uncomfortable. He had some real insight into what was going on and one anecdote.

Robert White who had been in El Salvador during the early days and was there when the nuns were killed, had since left the Foreign Service was a strong critic of our policy, support for the military, support for the government. I got word one day that he was coming down. He sent me a letter saying I'm bringing down a group of religious leaders from various denominations, various dioceses or whatever you call them. They were coming in on a certain day on a certain plane. I drove down to Comalapa Airport down on the coast; a 45 minute drive to meet the airplane. We brought a bus or something down off the causeway from the plane to the airport. I was going to bring all these religious tycoons, put them on the bus and take them up to Salvador. I was right at the door when they opened the door and people started coming out and guys with collars, guys with different dress on, that identified them as religious types. One after another came off and they all introduced themselves to me. Most of them were distinguished, white haired, looking something like you, Stu, very distinguished looking. Obviously this was partly responsible for their high position in whatever church they were with.

Q: And booming voices.

WALKER: Booming voices, but very mellow, very pastoral. Oh, it's so nice of you to come and meet us Mr. Ambassador. Really looking forward to hearing what's going on here. A dozen of these guys went past and I'm waiting for where is Bob White, is he still on the plane? One of the last people said, oh, no, Ambassador White decided not to come. He never did come during the time I was there. He threatened several times, but never came. But with this group I remember they had come down because a local religious leader, Bishop Medrano or something was under terrible pressure from the government, was being threatened and intimidated for his sermons. Bob White had put this group together or they had come together and asked Bob White to come with them and show solidarity of the American religious community, the World Council of Churches. All denominations to come down and show that they were very critical of how the government was treating this local religious factor.

That particular religious bishop was, how can I put it? I can't remember what denomination. He was with a Protestant denomination, but he was almost the quintessence of the smooth talking, politically astute, religious leader. A day or so later they came to the Embassy with him so that in front of me, in front of them, he could tell me what was being done to him by the government. It was Jeff Dieterich who said, Walker, what you're not seeing here is these are people who joined the ministry to do good deeds. They want to show their humanity. Along comes this little guy who they think is their type of religious bishop. He plays the I'm just a little brown skinned fellow from Central America and I don't know much about politics, but let me tell you about how I'm being mistreated. They just want to believe him. Anything he says they're going to believe because they're good people, he's obviously good people, and he's got this tale of woe. We knew how he lived. We knew the type of religious leader he was, but he played the I'm just a little third world fellow who has made it as far as I have by my righteousness and my goodness. Thank you, you big white brothers coming down to help me. Jeff described this for me, probably not in those terms, but he gave me this picture of how desperate our religious leaders of a certain type are to get a cause like this and come down and tell the government that you're not doing enough for this poor benighted man, a man of the cloth. It was almost the way journalists deal with you when one of theirs comes under pressure and they believe anything the person says and feel that the embassy is not doing enough. I saw that phenomenon. This particular local guy was a pain in the ass.

Q: What was he doing? Was there any justification of what he was saying?

WALKER: Was the government rough on the Jesuit priests at the Catholic university? Yes they were. They suspect they were all Communists, FMLN supporters, yes they did. You know, culminating in the assassination of the priest during the offensive. This guy was not taken very seriously. He had the huge gold cross on the gold chain around his neck. He played this game of just the poor little brown fellow from Central America. He enjoyed going to the United States and being treated like a martyr and going around and receiving contributions from these different church groups in the United States that wanted to help this. I think he was a total fake, but, you know.

Q: Did you, I know they for some time, what I call the glitterati, the talking head, the Hollywood types and others they were hitting Nicaragua quite a bit because they were one with the Sandinistas, this was a different era. If the American government was opposed to the Sandinistas, you had to be for the Sandinistas. Did you run across any of that?

WALKER: In El Salvador, yes. Of course, we had Bianca Jagger. We had Richard Gere, Jane Fonda, all these people. You've reminded me of a story I've got to tell, just because I've got to tell it. It's got nothing to do with El Salvador other than what you've just said. The one and only time I went to Managua as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, I went in with a congressional delegation to help the Cardinal there who was under a lot of pressure and B-1 Bob Dornan was on the delegation. The head of the delegation was a conservative Republican from the Midwest someplace, also named Walker, and I went in with this delegation as the State Department accompanying officer. I'll never forget. We arrived. The Sandinista press was all over me because my name is William Walker, etc., but we then went to the only hotel in Managua back in '87, '88 that was halfway decent for staying in. I think it's still the only hotel that's halfway decent for staying called the International.

We walked into this hotel lobby and all sorts of folks hanging around the lobby and as we were registering we heard a loud drunken voice in English saying, "A bunch of U.S. congressmen, a bunch of sons of bitches from Washington." I turned around and looked over at the bar and there was an older gentleman sitting well in his cups. So, I walked up to the bar to get a closer look at this guy to see if he resembled who I thought he was. You might not remember Gary Merrill. Gary Merrill was a second level Hollywood star.

Q: He was married to Bette Davis?

WALKER: Bette Davis. He was married to Bette Davis.

Q: He was in the big movie with Bette Davis.

WALKER: That's him, All About Eve.

Q: All About Eve.

WALKER: There he is sitting there, drunker than a skunk, sandals on, Banana Republic. This is how you go to the tropics clothes on surrounded by young people all in sandals, all at the knees of this great man from Hollywood. I was kind of intrigued and went up and said, "Aren't you Gary Merrill?" "Ah, you recognized me." I said, "Well, my sister was involved in the movies. I grew up in the Hollywood region. What are you doing down here?" He went into this diatribe about the Sandinista cause and he was down here to help these people. I felt like saying the only way you're helping them is by consuming large quantities of their booze and I assume paying for it unless these other jokers are paying for it. The point of that story is we saw similar sorts of people come into Salvador totally clueless about the real politics of El Salvador, but with a name and with an ability

to go back to wherever they came from and tell the local press about how horrible things were in El Salvador. It happened over and over and over again.

Q: Did you have a phenomenon which we were still seeing, it's getting worse, if you want to call it that, of the American reporter who goes out to cover the war or what have you, often quite young and really not knowing much, being pretty clueless, but going down there and getting their first glimpse of something. Going out and trying to find a massacre or something like that?

WALKER: Over and over again. The best example, unfortunately, was the correspondent for the New York Times. I, like most people I guess, have a great deal of respect for the New York Times, all the news that's fit to print. I told you that James LeMoyne came to see me and gave me a very good brief on what the FMLN was all about before I went down there. I went down and was pleased to know there was a New York Times correspondent there. The New York Times correspondent when I got there and through most of my time there was a fellow named Lindsey Grusun. Lindsey Grusun was on his first overseas assignment for the New York Times. Lindsey Grusun had handled some local reporting in the New York area before being assigned to come to El Salvador. Lindsey Grusun was the son of Flora Lewis who is a constant contributor to the editorial pages of the New York Times out of her haunt in Paris where she's been since World War II when she went in with Ernest Hemingway to liberate Paris. Well, during my time in Salvador, she continued to live in Paris, but report on the world because she's one of the op-ed people who write for the New York Times. That's his mother. His father was also on the editorial page, the editorial board of the New York Times. So Lindsey Grusun was the child of the New York Times. He never graduated from college. I don't think he ever went to college, but as a young man they took him on board and sent him to various local assignments. He's got a gift with words and he must have made a name for himself in New York Times circles, but mostly because of his parentage. I guess he wanted to go overseas and he was sent to El Salvador. I think this shows that the New York Times felt that the Salvador story was winding down because this was not one of the ace reporters. As I say, this was his first crack at an overseas assignment.

Lindsey is a very, very special character. Just before he came he married a woman who was an anchorwoman for a local TV station in Philadelphia and down they came with their pet dog, with their furnishings. They rented a house up in the better, higher class neighborhood, proceeded to entertain as much as they possibly could. Another journalist in an article he wrote without naming names, talked about a fellow journalist whose wife was very unhappy in El Salvador because as she said, she had not been able to find any pine nuts in the local grocery stores for some of her special recipes which required pine nuts. During the offensive of '89, November of '89, Lindsey did some things that truly alienated him from his fellow journalists. He plagiarized material. He bought material. He never left the hotel grounds to cover the offensive, but bought the material from Salvadoran journalists who went out to pick up the stuff. He got into a big fight with the hotel owner, the hotel management, because he insisted that his dog be allowed to stay in the room with him when they said there was a no dog policy. He told them you don't

know who I am; I'm with the New York Times. That sort of attitude. So, they let him have the dog.

There were a number of times when he showed up at press conferences late, under the influence of something, and asked stupid questions, and indicated a lack of professionalism that really offended his fellow journalists. I often asked his fellow journalists some of whom were very good, some of whom were very professional, you know, look you're awful prone to criticize the U.S. government, you're prone to criticize the Salvadoran military, the Salvadoran government, anyone you think is not doing things the way you think they should do it. Here's a fellow journalist who is obviously not playing by your code of ethics, you know, outright plagiarism. Do you do anything about it? The answer I got in a few words, was no journalists never criticize other journalists. You just don't do it. That kind of offended me.

Anyway, Lindsey was quite a case, but the New York Times, given its reputation, given the respect most people give it, took his articles, took his analysis as the gospel truth when in fact it was far less than that. There were other journalists there who were out there for the first time, some of them not for the first time. The fellow who handled the region from the Los Angeles Times, Kam Freed is his name, a very good journalists, a real old timer, a real pro, been in a lot of trouble spots of the world. He felt that the L.A. Times had sent him there because they were trying to force him out, that they didn't think there was much of a story there, so he wasn't very happy there which led to a certain cynicism in his stories.

The Washington Post had a pretty good person there, Doug Farah, who is still with the Post. He was a stringer at the time. There were some good journalists, there were some not so good journalists and then there were some out and out fakes. There was a fellow whose name I don't remember at the present time, but who covered El Salvador for the Christian Science Monitor who in the analysis of most people was totally sold out to the FMLN and to that cause. I remember when a bomb exploded fairly close to the Embassy at a union hall, the offices of a federation, a very left wing, pro-FMLN federation of labor. A bomb went off and it turned out this guy was in there. He claimed he was looking for a story, but everyone else assumed it was because these were his closest friends. I remember his car took a lot of damage in the bombing and most everybody was happy that his car had been damaged. If everyone else with the FMLN was under fire, he should at least have his car under fire. He wrote some truly vitriolic stuff about U.S. policy there.

There was another guy. He was a very hard left-of-center, cynical, bitter guy who would do anything to condemn U.S. policy. He never gave you the benefit of the doubt. He always thought you were lying when he asked you a question, you gave him your best answer. The press corps was a problem when I got there because from a couple of these examples many of the major news gatherers were sending first timers, second stringers, not their best reporters because they thought the story was winding down. It wasn't like in the early '80s when every day there was some outrage or something they could report

on. Now it was a different type of reporting and they didn't always have their best people there.

Q: There are a couple of other points I'd like to bring up. I mean obviously we want to talk about the election.

WALKER: Good.

Q: I mean, now we've talked about sort of background mainly. Now, let's talk about events and talk about the '89 offensive and any day-to-day operations and also what you were getting from developments from the Bush team. Your impression of, you'd been under different groups, your impression of the Bush team in Washington, the support or lack thereof, whatever it was you were getting and the reflections from what was happening in Nicaragua. Obviously we'll talk about connections with the FMLN, you know, what they were up to and your dealing with them and all that. Great.

Today is the 4th of December, 2001. When was the election held?

WALKER: The election was in March I believe of '89 because President Cristiani was inaugurated on June 1 of '89.

Q: Which happened first the election or the offensive?

WALKER: The offensive happened later.

Q: Okay, so let's do the election first.

WALKER: Let me, can I put one anecdote in here?

Q: Yes, you may put an anecdote in here.

WALKER: You mentioned my infirmity. One of the things I'm most famous for in Central America, especially in El Salvador has to do something that happened shortly after I got there as Ambassador. Since this is what everybody in Central America asks me about when I return there, even nine years later, one of the first questions they ask me is aren't you the ambassador that broke his leg jumping out of an airplane? So, with your permission I will tell you that story just so I have it for my own record, but also for the history books which I'm sure will be interested in the foolish things ambassadors do.

Q: Yes, okay.

WALKER: When I arrived in El Salvador I inherited from Chris Arcos who later became my colleague next door in Tegucigalpa as Ambassador, but back then he replaced me as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in Washington for Central America. He told me

about a secretary he thought I would be really pleased to have. A young lady, or a middle aged lady I should say, named Sue Nelson. When I got to El Salvador, Sue Nelson showed up a few days later and was delighted to return to the field to be working with me. Sue Nelson was a very nice lady, but somewhat formidable in appearance in that she was stocky, as well as relatively short, and she wore her hair in a beehive and she had a very deep voice. I tend to be intimidated by women, by women in general, but by women like this in particular.

After I'd been there working with Sue oh, three or four weeks, I don't think it was much longer than that, she came in to see me one morning. Looking at me she said, "Mr. Ambassador, how would you like the thrill of your life?" Somewhat taken aback, I said, "What did you have in mind, Sue?" really quite worried about what the answer might be. She told me that the night before she had gone to the Marine House and she said, "You know, I'm much older than the marines, so I don't really have too much to say to the young marines, but every once in a while I like to get together. This is a very tight security situation and the Marine House is about the only place we can go, so I decided last night to go to the Marine House. I was sitting at the bar having a drink and watching the young fellows and their girls dance and do what young people do when these two very mature gentlemen came up and sat down next to me and bought me a drink and we started talking. Over the course of the night I found out that they were senior master sergeants out of Panama. They were up on a military training team to teach the Salvadoran airborne troops how to jump out of airplanes. They're both jump masters." I said, "Gee, that's interesting." She said, "Well, they were telling me it's really easy and it's really fun to jump out of airplanes and that as a matter of fact, they invited me, Sue Nelson, to go up with them and they would teach me how to jump out of an airplane." I looked at Sue and I was thinking, good luck, getting through the door sort of thing. She said, no, she wasn't very interested in doing it, but she had suggested to them, although she didn't know me very well, she thought that I might be interested in learning how to jump out of an airplane. Now, I quickly assured Sue that the thought had never entered my mind and I was just settling in to being an ambassador and I had lots of things to learn and jumping out of an airplane wasn't very high on my list. She said, "Well, oh, I'm sorry, I understand. I told these fellows that I could introduce them to you and they've never met an ambassador before and they were very excited about meeting you, so, even though you don't want to jump out of an airplane, would you please say hello to them? They're outside in the waiting room." So, I of course, said, sure, bring them in. They came in, two big huge; special forces guys who were jump qualified. They were introduced to me and they started talking to me telling me how great it was to learn how to jump out of an airplane. I said, "Well, I'm really not interested." They said, "Look, we brought along a film that shows you how it goes. Can we at least show it to you? Maybe it would catch your fancy?" I said, sure. They put it on my VCR and they played this little film by the company that makes the equipment that lets you jump tandem out of airplanes. I watched a little film and the only part I remember of the film is that in the seven or eight years since they had introduced this equipment no one had ever been hurt and jumping this way and landing was the equivalent to stepping off a nine inch high coffee table. Okay, this was at least an interesting fact, but I still begged off and said, I'm not really that interested. They said, look we have our equipment outside, can we bring it

in and just show you. They brought in the equipment and they're folding and unfolding their parachutes and telling me about the different straps on it. Finally I said, my final way of getting out of this whole thing was to say, "Look, my wife is a very strong person and we've got a couple of young boys and she would never permit me to jump out of an airplane." That was the end of the conversation. They said, oh, we understand, we've both got wives, etc.

I took them to the door to show them out and when I opened the door to my office, standing in front of my door was my wife. I thought I better introduce them and I introduced them and I said, "Honey, these two gentlemen here are trying to get me to jump out of an airplane and I've told them you would never let me do it, would you?" Of course, she said, "If you want to jump out of an airplane, Bill, go right ahead, be my guest." I lost my last argument and the following Saturday we went out to Ilopango Air Base which is the former civilian air terminal near San Salvador, but now a military base where our gunships and helicopters were all parked. Practically the entire Embassy went out to watch the Ambassador jump out of an airplane. In fact, many of them were saying, Mr. Ambassador you go first and then they promised to take us up and we can jump as well. I said, great, all the time I'm trying to figure out how to get the hell out of this. So he put me in a funny little costume. They put a crazy little pink hat on my head. They gave me no instructions other than the following: you will jump out of the airplane. You will be attached with someone on your back on these harnesses and when you get down to the ground, the last thing you have to do is just lift both your feet up and let the fellow behind you take the impact of hitting the ground even though it's no different than jumping off a nine inch coffee table. I said, great. At this point they sent off for the C47 which was going to take us up. Lo and behold they came over from the military side and said, I'm sorry, but that plane is a gunship and it was just called up to the volcano because there's a mission to be performed by the gunship so we've lost the airplane. I said, oh, too bad, well, get me out of this silly costume and let's go back to the Embassy. Someone, I can't remember who, said, look over at the civilian side of the airport there's some people there with the civil aviation people maybe one of them has a plane that they'd be, I'm sure they'd be happy to take the American Ambassador up. Off someone went and came back a few minutes later and said, oh, Jose is going to lend us his plane. They brought over a little one engine Cessna.

Now, I was going to go up, these two jump masters from Panama were going to go up with me obviously. I had three, four bodyguards, two of whom were Delta team guys, each of whom had several thousand jumps under their belts so they were all hot to go. They kept telling me well, you can't go without us because you might come down someplace where the special forces guys are not equipped to protect you, so we've all got to go with you. It was me plus six individuals all of whom were big, strong, healthy, Delta team, Special Forces sort of guys. To get us into this little one engine Cessna, we had to pull out various seats except for the pilot seat. I was put in the bottom. I was put in the floor in the back and then these six guys piled in with all their gear, weapons, cameras, the parachutes themselves, all this stuff that goes with jumping tandem. I was on the bottom of this pile of six big hulky guys, plus all their equipment. It must have been at least 1,000 pounds above me and we took off. We had to get up to 12,000 feet,

which was the jump altitude. The plane was way overloaded so it took us 30 minutes of circling, slowly, slowly, climbing, 30 minutes to get up to 12,000 feet. When we got up to 12,000 feet I was ready to jump out of the airplane, parachute, no parachute, tandem, no tandem, I was just in agony because I was under all this weight. When we got to 12,000 they finally said, okay, we're going Mr.. Ambassador, everybody jumped and waited for me in the sky somehow or however they do these things. I jumped and spent the next four minutes twirling doing all sorts of crazy things, smiling, laughing, giggling, screaming, for four minutes until we got down to where we were supposed to land. Sure enough there was an X down on the runway at the airport. We came within inches of this because everything was being guided by the guy that I was attached to.

Q: When you say attached to, how?

WALKER: They harness, you're harnessed right into him. He's got his front to your back. He's above you and you've got this one big canopy. When we hit the ground I must have given my command to my two legs to pull up, but either there was no circulation involved or my reflexes weren't working the way they should or something went wrong because one of my legs didn't come up. So I hit on my left leg and it went out from under me because it was not only my weight, but the weight of the guy behind me. This story about a nine-inch coffee table is absolute B.S. I'm on the ground, I'm looking up and everybody's looking down at me. They unhooked me from the guy I'm tandem with, the other special forces guys come over, the Delta team guys come over, they look down at me and they say, "Mr. Ambassador we think you've broken your leg." I said, "Oh, no, I must have sprained it." I stood up and tried to stand up and I couldn't stand up. The bottom line was I had in fact broken my leg in about a thousand places, my left fibula tibiae, the bottom of my left leg.

That began a series of things in which I was transported to the local hospital where before I got there the word was already out that I had been assassinated so there were TV crews there to film, I guess, my body going in and instead it was Bill Walker being carried in. The reporters came up to ask me the circumstances of my assassination and I had to tell them, well, no, it was just my stupidity that got me into this thing. They took an x-ray and saw that it was a very bad break. The minister of health who was an army surgeon as well told me that he would operate and I'd be better and new in a day or two. Wiser heads prevailed. The CINC down in Panama when he heard about this was absolutely flabbergasted that his men had caused the American Ambassador to break his leg. He sent a big ambulance plane up to fly me to Walter Reed and I spent that night being ferried in a hammock in the middle of this big ambulance plane surrounded by four nurses and two doctors from his command. They got me to Walter Reed by helicopter the next day from Andrews and I immediately went to the operating room and some orthopedic surgeons put my leg back together again. They told me it was a damn good thing I didn't get operated on down there because I could have lost my foot; it was that bad a break. That's the end of the story except that I was at Walter Reed for 12 days. During those 12 days, every day a man came in and the first day it took me aback because he had on a uniform with two stars on his shoulders. He looked down at me and he said, "Are you Walker?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Are you the ambassador that jumped

out of an airplane?" I said, "Yes." He said, "How old are you?" I said, "51." He said, "How many times have you jumped before?" I said, "Never." He said, "Mr. Ambassador you've got to be the dumbest son of a bitch I've ever had in my hospital." After he said this a couple of times I said, "Excuse me, but who are you?" He said, "Well, I'm the Commandant of Walter Reed Hospital and I'm also a psychiatrist. As I say, you've got to be the dumbest son of a bitch I've ever met." He did this to me every day until I was released. Now, you've got to remember I was in the VIP Tower, which is a wonderful place to go to the hospital.

Q: Where Forrestal jumped.

WALKER: That's right, I don't know why he jumped because they treat you like God and they didn't know exactly what an ambassador was so they treated me better than a four star general. The only other patient at the time was Napoleon Duarte the president of El Salvador who I had just presented my credentials to and he was up for chemotherapy. We were the only two patients in the Walter Reed VIP Tower for at least three or four days until he went back. Here I was, I couldn't move out of the bed, but I could at least talk to Napoleon Duarte. The postscript to this story is, after 12 days I went back to El Salvador on crutches and I remained on crutches for another three or four months.

When I got back to Salvador, a few weeks after I got back there I was reading the New York Times and on the back page of the New York Times there was a little tiny article and the headline was, commander at Walter Reed Hospital dies in parachute jump. I read the story, I didn't remember the guy's name that had come to see me, but I called up the commander down in Panama who had been so perturbed by my accident and I said, "Fred, I just saw this article about the commandant of Walter Reed Hospital dying in a parachute jump. Do you know anything about it?" He said, "Know anything about it! I was with him when he died." He had gone up to Honduras next door with some special forces guys to train the Honduran airborne to jump and this doctor, same guy who had come in and seen me every day and called me an idiot, was in the plane with them. At the last minute he decided he wanted to jump with the troops and he also had never jumped out of an airplane before. He wasn't 51, but he was pretty close to it. He jumped and he landed even harder than I did. They sent up the same ambulance plane to transport him the same way as I had been transported a few weeks earlier back to Walter Reed. On the airplane flying to Washington he got up out of the hammock and he said, I don't feel so good and he keeled over dead. Something had ruptured inside and he bled to death. I didn't feel half as bad as I had listening to this psychiatrist when he was telling me what an idiot I was because evidently he succumbed to exactly the same temptation. [Note: Army Maj. Gen. James H. Rumbaugh.]

That is my story, every time I go into Central America these days, the first thing anyone asks me is how is your leg? Does your leg give you any problems? Have you recovered from your leg? So, that's what I'm famous for. I made Time Magazine, again, they didn't quite describe me as the stupidest person they'd ever heard of, but it was pretty derogatory what they said about this idiot who jumped out of an airplane and broke his leg as an ambassador. End of story.

Q: Incidentally, Bill Brown when he was Ambassador to Thailand. He was an ex-marine and they got him to jump, but not out of a plane, out of a balloon. You know, this is how they train them. He survived.

WALKER: See, I thought, the night before I did this I was at a party or some function I think it was at the Marine House and everybody was talking about the fact that we were all going to the airport tomorrow to see the Ambassador jump out of an airplane. There was only one person in the room who said, Mr. Ambassador, don't do it. I said, why not. He said, well, you could get hurt. I said, Phil, I think, as far as I know when you do these sort of things, you end up dead or without injuries, so I didn't realize there was something in between. Well, I found out what was in between. The stupid things you do.

Q: Well, going from stupid things that you did to the election. I'm talking about the election of '89. Could you explain what the issues were and how it went?

WALKER: Yes, well, I've already explained in some detail that the Duarte administration had run out of steam. Duarte himself was terminally ill. The economy was in very bad shape. The opposition party was this right wing party that most people in one way or another associated with death squads and right wing violence.

Q: Cristiani's?

WALKER: Cristiani's party, the ARENA party. The ARENA acronym comes from the Spanish words for renovation and it was the rich guys and right wing populists that had banded together a few years earlier for the elections of five years before. They felt they had been cheated out of those elections. So, as we came up to this election the ARENA party really was very confident they were going to win as long as the United States stayed out of it. As I've also said earlier I went in saying we were going to be neutral.

What were the issues? The issues were one, could we pursue this war militarily and bring about a victory for the government? I think most everybody agreed yes, that was possible, but the question was how long would it take. When I got there as Ambassador a few months before the election, we thought that the military, the Salvadoran military was slowly, but surely getting the wherewithal to carry the battle to the guerrillas and defeat them militarily, but without any idea of how long that process might take.

The ARENA party was telling the country we know how to end this war much quicker. We're not going to listen to all these conditions that the U.S. government is putting on the way we fight the war. This was taken by some as an affirmation that they were going to go back to the sort of dirty tricks of the early years, death squads, a much more militaristic approach to try and achieve victory. Whereas Duarte in one of the things he had done during his term in office had tried to start a negotiation process with the guerrillas but it never really went any place. One, because he was tied in. He was unable to really concede much because a lot of people thought he was soft on the communists, that he was really a crypto communist himself which is what the right wing accused him

of. So, he was not able to, he would never have been able to negotiate a peace with the FMLN. Anything he had done in the way of concessions would have been seen as a sellout. So, the issue was primarily that. How can we best bring about the peace that the country needs to get the economy moving again, etc. with the ARENA party saying, we know how to do it. We can do it in a much swifter way than Duarte can. He's already shown that he can't negotiate with the guerrillas. They made a fool of him. The military doesn't trust him. He's dying, etc.

Corruption was another big issue. The Duarte government, because of its general incompetence did in fact turn out to be a very corrupt government. So, in spite of all the sort of positive things that we were saying about Duarte during his term in office, we considered him the George Washington of the first civilian president, someone who had been in exile from the military, he came back and was elected president. We were supporting him at that time. So we were portraying him as the first democratically elected president of El Salvador. The reality on the ground was much less than that. It really was of an incompetent, inefficient, ineffective, corrupt government. As we headed toward the election, I think it was March of '89.

Q: Was Duarte running?

WALKER: No, he could not succeed himself. The question was would he survive till the end of his term, which was June 1.

Q: The man who was running, how did we evaluate him? Was he a different breed of cat?

WALKER: Yes, we evaluated him very highly. Fidel Chavez Mena is his name. He was a lawyer. He was not a natural politician. He was more a behind the scenes sort of fellow. He was a friend of mine when I was there in the '70s. He was a lawyer for some of the big wealthy families, the more modern wealthy families. He had made a lot of money at that. He was recognized as probably one of the most respected lawyers in the country. He had hitched his wagon with the Duarte government and during Duarte's regime he had been a Foreign Minister. He had held a couple of other posts in the regime. So even though he wasn't a natural politician, he wasn't very comfortable on the stump, they put him up as the candidate, because they knew that he was well respected by the United States, as he was. The problem turned out that he wasn't a very good campaigner. He had this chain around him which was connected to the Duarte record which wasn't very good. He also went through a very bitter primary fight, what we would call a primary fight with another member of the Duarte gang who was his opposite, a fellow named Alfredo Rey Prendes, was the exact opposite of Fidel Chavez Mena. He looked corrupt. He probably was corrupt, but he was a natural politician. He could get up and give a speech and everybody would be cheering at the end of it. He was married to a woman who looked corrupt, was corrupt and so in that battle Alfredo Rey Prendes had much more power within the party than Fidel did. Fidel was a marginal party guy. You would say in U.S. terms it was the old party hack who nevertheless is a very skillful political infighter, very good on the stump, etc. battling for the nomination with this younger, more modern, more vain, less politically gifted type. The United States much preferred Fidel Chavez Mena,

Mr. Clean, Mr. Intelligent, Mr. Spoken Well-of by everyone who knows him as opposed to Alfredo who we all saw as a bit of a scumbag.

When Fidel Chavez won the nomination, Alfredo Rey Prendes did not take it easily. As a matter of fact he split off and formed a new party and took with him the political corps of the Christian Democratic Party and they went off and formed a Rogue Christian Democratic Party which almost guaranteed that the Christian Democrats were going to lose. They had the Duarte record to run on which was very bad, they had a campaign candidate who was not much of a campaigner, they had a split within the party and they had a very strong opposition in the ARENA party, which had picked a very good candidate.

Q: Was the FMLN playing any role in this?

WALKER: Yes, they had a political front in place headed by a fellow named Ruben Zamora. Ruben Zamora, trained by the Jesuits at the Catholic University, taught at Catholic University, had been a Christian Democrat himself in the '70s, had a brother who was a Christian Democrat who was assassinated by a death squad, the brother in the early '80s. Some place in there Ruben Zamora went to the left and all through the war Ruben Zamora was the political front in El Salvador for the FMLN. No one ever quite figured out how close the relationship was, but anyone who would have normally voted for the FMLN if they had been allow to run, knew that they could vote for Ruben Zamora and was more or less the same thing. As we came to the election of '89, we had essentially four parties. The ARENA party, which was a solid right of center, party. The Christian Democrats, Napoleon Duarte, his party, which was running Fidel Chavez Mena, which was sort of center right to slightly center left. The NCP party, don't ask me what it stands for, but this was the splinter group from the Christian Democrats that had gone off because they had lost the nomination. God knows where it was on the political spectrum. It was just sort of a political entity that had come out of the Christian Democratic movement. Then there was this well left of center party headed by Ruben Zamora, which represented a virtual FMLN party.

The election was held. An awful lot of electoral observation teams came down to watch it including a good number of U.S. congressmen. The Embassy was very involved in getting all these people out and about to watch the election. It was essentially a clean election. The places I visited. It was amazing. The lines went for miles, literally for miles with peasants stretching as far as you can see just waiting patiently in the sun. Some of them were waiting three, four hours to vote, but everyone wanted to vote. Lo and behold at the end of the day the Christian Democrats had lost and lost badly. ARENA had won and won quite handily. I think ARENA was shocked to find it won and that we had not interfered in some way to steal the election from them because they really thought the United States would not permit them to win, but we did. That meant that we then had three months of interim before the inauguration in June, June 1st of '89.

Q: Was there, I mean after the election was there sort of confidence building meetings between you and Cristiani and all? Was there, or what happened?

WALKER: Yes, sure, between the election and inauguration I'm sure I saw Cristiani a number of times, not a whole lot. I think we were still in that period which the ARENA party and Freddie Cristiani representing that party were hesitant to embrace the United States, were still thinking that we were going to try and somehow contain them or not let them do some of these things they had promised to do to win the war. I wanted to make sure I got together with Cristiani and some of the people that were around him to tell him you know; we're going to work with you. Our policy is dedicated to helping El Salvador, defeat this military threat, but you know, there are conditions on our assistance and you've got to be aware of them. It was getting to know each other.

In the meantime, I was still seeing Duarte. They were still in power and Napoleon Duarte was at his darkest. I was here he was talking about he was going to end his years in jail. He was going to, that all his followers were going to be prosecuted, that all this story about corruption, his regime was just an excuse ARENA was putting out so that as soon as they'd get power they would arrest all the Christian Democrats and put them in jail on trumped up charges of corruption. It was a very, very bleak. We didn't have a very good idea of where the ARENA party was going to go, which direction it was going to take. During this period we started hearing about appointments that were going to be made. Who was in this cabinet post, who was going to be in that cabinet post? I must say it worried us because the names we were hearing were either unknowns to us and this is a small country where you know who the good people are. Others that we heard were people from the right wing of the ARENA party, and so we were not too confident that this was going to be a regime that was going to be very easy for us to deal with. But again, you wait until they become a government and see if things turn out better than you had hoped.

They named a fellow to be the Foreign Minister, Manuel Pacas, we had never heard of him, didn't know who the hell he was. I must say this was confirmed over the next two and a half years because while he was foreign minister I think I went to see him once as U.S. Ambassador. I'd meet him at receptions and such, but as far as the real issues that we were dealing with, the war, the military, the assistance, I never had any need to go and see Manuel Pacas, a non-entity as Foreign Minister.

The Minister to the Government, the Minister to the President, I guess was his title, was an old line, very conservative lawyer for the rich folks. He was later assassinated early on in the regime; as were a couple of other of the early ministers. But as I say, as we heard these names and they started filling in the blocks with who were going to hold the various ministries, it didn't look too good.

Now, probably the most interesting thing we were watching because it had so much to do with how things were going in El Salvador. We were very cognizant of the importance of who Cristiani was going to name as his Minister of Defense. There were a number of names that were out there. The one that was most worrisome to us, the fellow who was Minister of Defense in the last years of the Duarte regime was Vides Casanova. Vides Casanova in our terms looked like sort of a more modern officer. I talked the last time

about how the military was in a transitional phase. There were some who were looking backwards to the good old days when being a colonel was being God. There were some who were looking forward saying well those days are gone, now we've got to adapt to this newer system. The newer guys had fought, etc., but while I was there for the most part it was these transitional types. Vides Casanova was a transitional type. When I'd been there in the '70s he was already a colonel, a light colonel I guess, so he had a lot of years under his belt under the old system. He later became famous because he was the commander of the National Guard when the nuns were murdered. As a matter of fact just a few months ago there was a trial in Florida in which he and another Minister, his predecessor's Minister of Defense were being threatened with deportation if they had been proven to have been involved in the terrorist attack that killed the nuns. They were acquitted so he's okay. He was one of these transitional types.

Under Duarte he at least spoke about human rights. He said all the right things as far as we were concerned. With the Cristiani government coming in we were very worried that he was going to fall back to one of the old type of military officers. The person that we were most worried about was the commander of the Air Force; a fellow named General Bustillo who had been commander of the Air Force for many many years. He was a throwback to the old right wing types. He was thought to be the General Douglas MacArthur of the Salvadoran armed forces. He ran the Air Force much like MacArthur ran his army and ran Japan when he was the Supreme Allied Commander in Japan. Or you might compare him to J. Edgar Hoover; he'd been around so long. He was just Mr. Air Force, but he was also thought of as a tough right wing almost fanatic. He was very close to the ARENA party so we all thought that he was going to be named Minister of Defense which would have been a natural elevation from commander of the Air Force. That worried us greatly.

We were watching that as the key nomination within the Cristiani government. As it turned out he did not name a Minister of Defense for three or four months because he was getting all sorts of advice from all sorts of different people. He knew how important that nomination was so he held off until he was actually inaugurated. Then he waited another couple of months before he actually named an officer to be Minister of Defense and that's a whole different story.

Q: While this election was going on, how was the war?

WALKER: The war was just moving along. Freddie Cristiani, as I say, was talking about how; almost like Nixon, I've got a secret plan to end the war in Vietnam. Freddie Cristiani was talking about we know how to end this war. We know how to bring peace to El Salvador. It's not the way Duarte was aiming for peace. It's probably not the way the gringos are looking for peace, but we know how to end this war. We took this to mean stepping up the military campaign and perhaps doing other things that we did not think were the way it should go. The FMLN, they spent an awful lot of time after Cristiani's victory denouncing the ARENA party, saying see, this is all these right wing nuts are going to come in and these are the people who are involved in the death squads. They were going around not only in El Salvador, but also in the United States and going

around Europe saying this government is going to come in and it is going to go back to the bad old days of the early '80s. We're going to see blood in the streets. We're going to see all these horrible things. They were very antagonistic towards the results of the election other than to say, this is probably best for us because this will starkly show that this so-called democracy that the United States is talking about, that they've brought about, this is what the result is. A right wing government that is going to do horrible things.

The war itself, the fighting, I don't have much of a memory that there was anything that was particularly different. The army was still out and about. The guerrillas were still out and about. By the time I was there in fact going back several years before I got there the FMLN's principal mode of attack was not so much military engagements taking on the army, although they did some of that, but it was mostly economic sabotage. If you got up in a helicopter and overflew El Salvador which I did all the time you would see the power poles down, every place you looked, all over the country the power poles had been blown up. Very easy to do. An awful lot of our economic assistance went into putting the power poles back up again and then they'd blow them down again. That was still going on at a feverish clip during this period between the election and the inauguration. The next major event is the inauguration itself.

Q: Okay.

WALKER: June 1st, 1989. Coincidentally my birthday. The ARENA party is, it's a funny combination, it's this right of center, conservative, talking about the traditional values of El Salvador, etc. party combined with some pretty slick people who know how to put together a campaign, or election or propaganda. They're good on the balloons and the flags and the confetti and the bugles and that sort of stuff. We were expecting and we were not frustrated in our expectations that they were going to put on a real great inaugural day. Sure enough the inauguration of President Cristiani took place in the national fairgrounds in a huge auditorium there. It was full to the gunnels with ARENA party fanatics with ARENA flags and balloons and hats and all the things you used to see at our national conventions. This was for the inauguration. They were really out to celebrate. I as well as the diplomatic corps were in the reserved VIP place right up front. Looking around you could see the habaneros, as they are called, really whipping it up. I was a little uncomfortable because that part of the party was the part that thought the United States had screwed them out of the election five years before and that we weren't their friends.

Everybody was a little worried about the ceremony in which Napoleon Duarte, the outgoing president would come in because much to everyone's surprise, maybe even his own he had survived to the end of his term. It was quite a moment because when he came in I remember looking at him and seeing his face and he was looking around. Here he is a very sick man, he can barely walk, his suit is about eight sizes too big for him, in the advanced stages of terminal cancer. He's looking around at this huge hall where everybody is screaming and waving flags and screaming ARENA slogans and such. In he walks and he was like the Satan of this party. This is like Bill Clinton walking into the

Republican National Convention. What would be the reception? All of a sudden a silence took over and someone started clapping and pretty soon everybody was clapping. Welcoming the outgoing president. It was a nice touch. They applauded him as he walked down the long row to take his place on the stage, to take off the sash of office and to put it on his successor. It was so unlike the ARENA party. We all thought of them as sore winners and here they were showing a touch of grace. It was a nice touch. I later talked to Duarte and he had to admit he thought they were going to put him in jail perhaps at the end of his walk down the aisle and here in fact they honored him.

The other thing I most remember about the inauguration was Cristiani's inaugural address, which was really quite good. He is a good public speaker and what he was essentially saying is 1989 is the year of peace. We are going to, starting today, devote to ourselves to what remains of this year to bring peace to El Salvador and we are going to engage in the negotiation process with the FMLN. We're going to tell them this is it. This is your last chance to negotiate and bring an end to this war for which El Salvador is suffering, etc.. etc., etc. He promised peace within, before the end of the year.

It took everybody a bit by surprise because he actually talked about negotiating with the FMLN as opposed to telling them he was going to destroy them on the battlefield. Sure enough within a few days after the inauguration he named a team, a negotiating team to go off and start to try and open negotiations with the FMLN. I think it was watching the inaugural ceremony that I got the first inkling that maybe this ARENA government was going to be not as difficult to deal with as I originally thought.

Between June 1 the inauguration when Freddie Cristiani came into office and November 11/12 which is what, four or five months, was a honeymoon period for the Cristiani administration. During this time I saw him quite often. There was a trip to Washington. He was invited up to Washington so Washington could get a look at him. That was a very enjoyable visit to Washington. It certainly was a honeymoon period in which he did put together a negotiating team. They did start negotiations with the FMLN and there was a lot of confidence that this process was actually going to go somewhere. It was going to be difficult, but it was going to go somewhere. Cristiani, I think, was committed to ending the war as quickly as possible because Freddie Cristiani is essentially a businessman. Freddie Cristiani realized that if he was going to make good on some of his promises in terms of the economic side of things, he was going to get the country moving again, he was going to bring in development, he was going to bring in foreign investment, none of that would be possible if the war was going on. So, he was committed to ending the war for various reasons obviously, but one of the most important was this, bringing about the conditions in which business would be good again for El Salvador. This certainly appealed to his backers in the ARENA party. This was a businessman's party. They wanted to get the war behind them and get on with business.

Going back to the Ministry of Defense. Once he became President he already had named most of his cabinet. So we knew more or less who was coming in although we didn't know many of them. We kept watching this question of the Ministry of Defense. He hesitated and I think he hesitated because he was getting advice from different quarters

that he had to listen to. I think the right wing of the ARENA party was pushing General Bustillo the Air Force commander thinking he was the type who could do what they had said they were going to do which was end the war quickly military. That he was a no holds barred sort of military guy. The candidate of the moderate side of those that Cristiani listened to was the head of the most prominent military academy promotion that called the Tandon. The Tandon was a big class that went to the military academy. They had some very aggressive bright officers in the group and they knew that one of them was going to become President someday. So, when it became a civilian government the most they could aspire to was to get one of their members made Minister of Defense and all the others would get the right kinds of commands. The Tandon was not very impressed with the fact that General Bustillo might be the Minister of Defense because he was older than they were, they were worried that he would put in some of his cronies and that they would be blocked for another couple of years from getting the positions they were aspiring to. They were the Tandon; this promotion from the military academy was pushing their leader, Emilio Ponce. At the time yes he was already a general, so they were pushing very hard that he be named the Minister of Defense.

We were worried about Bustillo becoming the Minister because we thought he was a throwback to the old days. We were impressed with Ponce. We'd seen him in his various commands. Our military advisors all said he was an upstanding young fellow, so we were saying we would support Ponce rather than Bustillo. Poor old President Cristiani was caught between these two important sectors, the right wing of his party as seeing the guy named Bustillo, don't listen to the Gringos. We don't trust the Tandon, they're going to try and assert control over your entire government if you let them get the ministry. On the other hand the Tandon which already was already very powerful and had a lot of the major commands under its people and the United States was saying, no, you've got to name Ponce. So, he hemmed, he hawed, he didn't know what to do and he finally named neither of those two. He pulled a guy out who was from a small promotion from the military academy, he didn't have too many backers, didn't have anyone really thinking that he was controversial, he was someone that Cristiani could dominate and he named a General Larios to be his Minister of Defense. Larios was his Minister of Defense for about a year. We again saw in this Cristiani's willingness to listen to advice and then make up his own mind and go for a compromise. He didn't take the right wing, he didn't take the U.S., he didn't take the Tandon's word for who it should be, he put in an intro guy so that he could have some time to look it over himself.

What else should I tell you about those first days of the Cristiani Administration? Let me go back. When was President Bush put in office?

Q: This would be '89. January 20th, 1989.

WALKER: '89, that's what I was thinking.

Q: So, he would have been in it in August by the time the inaugural came about?

WALKER: Yes. If my memory serves me it took the Bush administration, as it takes every administration, a number of months to pick the Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs; back then it was called ARA. It's always a controversial appointment. It's always something that they can't decide between a political type or a career type. I don't remember how long it took, but it took three or four months, maybe even longer before the Bush administration named its Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs. The selection was a surprise. A fellow named Bernie Aronson was named. Bernard Aronson was a lifelong Democrat, had come out of the labor movement. His father was apparently famous in the labor movement and Bernie had also been very involved with the mineworkers, I think, in Pennsylvania or Ohio or someplace like that as a young man. I had gotten to know him ever so slightly when I was DAS because even though he was a Democrat, he came in and was supportive of what we were doing in terms of the Contra War against Nicaragua. He was one of the gang of four advisors to Elliott Abrams in terms of helping Elliott Abrams keeping a constituency going in the Congress in terms of support for the Contra movement. I'd heard of Bernie, I knew him, I'd met him a few times, but as I say he was coming in as a Democrat and no one quite knew what to make of this.

Bernie must have come in in March or April, sometime during that time frame, during the period when the elections were either just coming together or just after they had been held because Bernie Aronson knew two of the players in El Salvador. One, he knew Fidel Chavez Mena and even though he did not speak Spanish and Fidel doesn't speak much English, they had gotten to know each other somehow and Bernie admired him and respected Fidel Chavez Mena. More to the point he knew Rubén Zamora, the FMLN candidate and he'd known him up here in Washington when Rubén Zamora came to Washington a lot to talk about the evils of the Salvadoran military, the evils of the ARENA party. Bernie had gotten to know him and felt comfortable with him. Since we knew that these were his two Salvadoran friends I think we were a little worried about how he was going to deal with Freddie Cristiani and this ARENA government. It turned out that he dealt very well with them, very well indeed.

Q: With the new Administration coming in, did you feel under any jeopardy of having to leave?

WALKER: I'm sure I sent in my resignation and it wasn't picked up. There was never any question but what I was going to stay on that I can remember. Maybe up here it was, but it certainly never reached me.

Q: When Aronson got onboard did he call together a meeting of the Central American players like yourself and others to say, where are we going with this?

WALKER: Yes, I'm sure we had a chiefs of mission meeting someplace. I don't remember much about it, but yes, there was certainly that. I was told very early on by Bernie Aronson that as far as he was concerned El Salvador was a key ingredient in what he was going to spend a lot of his time working on. He wanted the war to end. He was going to spend time in El Salvador, he was going to really work on the issues up here. He

knew Zamora, he knew a lot of the people in the Washington area who were partisans in terms of the war down there. He had certainly heard a lot about the opposition to what we were doing in El Salvador. I was told very early on by Bernie that he was going to be looking over my shoulder and was going to be calling the shots in terms of whither we went in El Salvador.

Q: Well, then, after the election and the initial appointments, what was happening?

WALKER: We are just barely skimming the surface of all the things that were going on in El Salvador. The major thing that we were watching and were hoping that would be crowned a success was this negotiation process. The FMLN was insisting that Freddie Cristiani head the team and he refused to do so. He was smart. He is a smart fellow and he said, "Look, Walker, I'm the President. They don't have anyone who has got the same stature as I do. I'm the President of a legitimate country. I am going to save myself so at the very end if there is some last little thing that has to be negotiated and only I can negotiate, I will show up, but until we get to that point, it's going to be my team that is going to negotiate for the government of El Salvador. Don't worry I will be totally involved in the process." He was. He's a high tech man. He was into cell phones, computers and e-mail and all that well before most other people. So, he was saying, I am going to save myself for the very last moment and I'm not going to get involved in the details that lead up to that moment. God knows how long this is going to go on. God knows I've got many other things to do as President. I can't go off to Mexico and sit for two weeks negotiating with the FMLN, I've got to stay here and run the country. He was absolutely right on that, but the FMLN was saying no, we don't want to deal with the clowns, we want to deal with the ringmaster. It took a while for them to put together the outline on negotiation process, but they did.

Between the inauguration and mid-November, there were I think two major sessions where the two teams went off to locations outside of El Salvador. I think one was in Mexico and the other was Costa Rica or someplace like that. They held weeklong sessions. We always sent someone to observe, not in the room during the negotiation, but someone to be in the corridors to pick up so that we could write meaningful reports on what was going on. Not only was Bernie Aronson interested in this, but everybody who had anything to do with Latin America was interested in bringing to an end this cancerous sore in the middle of Central America. There was a lot of hope riding on these negotiations. They didn't make much progress. The government negotiating team I must say and I think most everybody that looked at it said the same thing, was not a very high powered team. It was a combination of ARENA party insiders who were there to make sure no one sold out. There was one military colonel on it who was a member of the Tandonia, but a fairly gifted one. He was probably the best of the team, much to everyone's surprise. It had one or two ministers on it, but it wasn't, it was too big a team and it was too impoverished in terms of talent. The person who became the intellectual leader of the team was an academic poet, sort of fellow who at least had a strategic vision of where they were going, but some of the others were involved in the nitty gritty and weren't going to give an inch on some of these issues that were really of no importance

whatsoever. It's a strange, strange group. The FMLN had really no respect for the team and kept insisting we've got to see Cristiani, he's the one we want to negotiate with.

Q: What about the FMLN?

WALKER: It was composed of the leadership of the five groups that made up the FMLN, don't forget the FMLN was five distinct ideologic groupings and they each had their leadership. They didn't trust each other too much. The leader of each of those five groups was part of their team plus two or three other people. On both teams the players on both teams spent as much time watching each other on their own team as much as they did watching the people across the table from them. Not much progress was made. The first session was really just the formality of setting this up, how are we going to arrange it. Our argument was of course when journalists would come and say, we heard not much progress was made, they were still talking about the shape of the table or they were talking about who sits where. My answer to that was, but, ah, that's the beginning of the negotiating process. I mean that shows they're really getting serious. When Duarte's people were trying to negotiate, they never even got that far. This is going to take a while, they're going to have to discuss the shape of the table and who sits where and etc. and they're going to have to yell at each other a bit before they sit down for the serious stuff. Well, before November they really never got to anything that was serious. They were still talking about shapes of the table.

The second of the two meetings, it must have been sometime in October of '89. Again, nothing concrete in the way of results, but as the first meeting, the most concrete thing from the second round was agreement to hold a third round. At least there was that promise and they agreed to break for three or four weeks, whatever it was and meet again in Caracas, Venezuela. Carlos Andrés Pérez, the President of Venezuela, offered. Other people, neighbors of El Salvador, the President of Mexico, the President of Venezuela were interested in getting involved. Oscar Arias from Costa Rica, everyone was interested in getting involved seeing that this might be a negotiation process that was going to lead to peace, whoever sort of sponsors it or hosts it, might get a share of the Nobel Peace Prize or something like that. Lots of people were trying to nudge into the process and Venezuela, Carlos Andrés Pérez, came forward and said he would offer Caracas as the sight for the third round. They agreed to meet in Caracas sometime in mid-November but there was a definite day on the calendar when they were going to meet in Caracas.

Today is the 15th of January, the ides of January, 2002. Bill, you mentioned the third meeting?

WALKER: Right. President Cristiani came in on June 1; he promised the country that he was going to devote himself to bringing peace to the country. No one quite knew whether he meant that by negotiation or by winning on the battlefield. I think he came in relatively confident that they could win on the battlefield. I think his military people were

telling him that the FMLN was on the run. I think maybe our military people, my MILGROUP, were probably telling him the same thing because over time the FMLN's ability to take on the army was diminishing. We were looking very carefully when I first got there and through this time to see if it was a stalemated war or if actually the government was incrementally winning. So, in June of '89, President Cristiani was inaugurated and he was promising to bring peace to the country, primarily I believe because he wanted the economy to turn around. He's a businessman himself. Most of his chief supporters were businessmen. The ARENA party was partly the party of the business class and I think they just wanted to be able to start making more money. So, he promised peace.

When he came in his principal military advisors were two people. I've mentioned them both before. One was Roberto D'Aubuisson who had left the military as a major some years before and he went into politics. He was the firebrand, the guy who had the common touch but was still far to the right. He was the guy that everyone thought was behind the death squads in the early '80s. But I'm sure he was giving the president some military advice as well since he was an army man. The other one was the general that I've mentioned several times, the commander of the Air Force, General Bustillo. A very conservative, very much in the J. Edgar Hoover, Douglas MacArthur, I'm the commander of the Air Force and I'm going to be commander of the Air Force until I decide to leave, very connected to the ARENA party. He, Bustillo, very much wanted to be the Minister of Defense in the Cristiani government. I think from these two military types, Cristiani was being told the army can win this thing militarily if we can just get rid of some of these restriction that the Americans have put on us, the Gringos have put on us, the human rights restrictions, things like that. If we can just sort of loosen ourselves from some of those ties, the army could go out there and get rid of these guerrillas pretty quickly. This was very poor advice, but I'm sure that was what Cristiani was being told.

What happened was he opened negotiations with the guerrillas right away, which we all took to be a good sign. They held a couple of these meetings where not much was accomplished. They were still talking about the shape of the table, or who sat at which place; it was sort of the process rather than the substance of the negotiation process. From June 1 when he was inaugurated until mid-November, President Cristiani was coming up on a lot of learning curves. He'd never been in political office. All of a sudden he was a president of a country that was at war. He was having to work out his relationship with the U.S. government, specifically with the embassy because we were supporting El Salvador to the tune of \$300 million or \$400 million dollars a year in economic and military assistance. The guerrillas were still out there. One of the first curves he came up on was this question of naming a new Minister of Defense. His party certainly the right wing of the ARENA party was telling him you've got to name General Bustillo, he's our hero. He's the man that has held the military together all through this war, the commander of the Air Force, tough guy. You've got to name him as Minister of Defense. Other people, more liberal types within his party and there were some of that persuasion, were coming to Cristiani and saying, for God's sake, don't name General Bustillo. The person you should name is Colonel Ponce who was the up and coming colonel who was head of the one year's promotion from the military academy that was really moving into

all the positions of the field commands in the army, this sort of thing. A lot of people said, you've got to give that promotion, its due, so take Colonel Ponce and make him a general and make him Minister of Defense. We, the Embassy, I specifically, was going to see President Cristiani with some regularity, although at first he was a bit cautious and suspicious of me. I was going and saying for God's sake, don't name General Bustillo. General Bustillo's got a very bad reputation in the United States. He looks like a tough guy. He looks like someone who will bomb the guerrillas back into the Stone Age sort of approach to the war. So Cristiani was in this betwixt and between situation.

Q: What were you getting from your military attachés? I mean, were they at this point.

WALKER: At this point, I'd say they pretty well agreed that we were slowly, but surely, winning the war. I think the military assistance group, the MILGROUP, of course, had been training, had been supplying the systems to the Salvadoran military for neigh on ten years at this point and they had to say that the military was improving, right? If not, it would look like they'd wasted their time and money. The attachés who were taking a more objective look at the thing since they weren't really involved in the training, but nevertheless I think they also could see progress in terms of the military. They could see that some things had improved.

My Defense Attaché when I got there, an army colonel, good guy, spoke good Spanish, very well mixing it up with the local military, he was asked just after I got there to do an analysis of where was the war? Was it slowly going towards victory, a military victory, was it stalemated, what was the situation? Because in Washington I think in DOD and DIA, maybe in CIA there were voices saying this war is stalemating. The military, the Salvadoran military, no matter how much assistance we get them, are never going to get over a couple of real handicaps they have. One is that it's a nine to five army. They don't go out at night. They don't do really serious things at night. Number two in spite of our advice over ten years, they've never developed an NCO corps, so there is a constant turnover with not the heart of an army I understand is your sergeant, your senior guys in rank who really know what's going on after years of experience. The Salvadoran army did not have that and no matter how much we tried to train NCOs they just maybe it was an economy move, they would bring in a recruit and have them for a year and then toss them out. They didn't have to give them bonuses, or higher salaries, this sort of thing. So we never got them to develop an NCO corps. There were people in the Pentagon and up here in Washington looking at that and saying, this army, this air force, this navy and they did have a small navy, is really not taking the battle to the guerrillas. Maybe a little more so than before, but still, not in the way it's going to win this war. My military attaché, when he wrote this report, went to great lengths to disprove this theory, that it was stalemated. He wanted to show that there was progress in a number of areas and that over time the army would beat the guerrillas militarily.

The problem that we all could see was that that phrase over time because it was becoming increasingly difficult to get the Congress to continue passing the assistance package. Every year the vote was extremely close. Sometimes by just a couple of votes. Sometimes there would be amendments put forward that really gutted the program or put

such onerous conditions on it that the Salvadorans couldn't accept and those amendments and those fights were always very, very close in terms of votes. To think that we could sustain this \$300 million or \$400 million dollar assistance ad infinitum was pretty hard to be very optimistic about. Whether it was a stalemated situation or whether the government forces really were incrementally getting better, they were getting better at such a slow pace that everybody was worried that they were going to run out of time. In consideration for our assistance and my advice about naming General Bustillo the Minister of Defense and also hearing from the other side that he had to name Bustillo that he certainly couldn't name Ponce because Ponce represented this all too powerful promotion that was getting all the commands in the army and they were going to perhaps totally dominate the military scene so a lot of people said he couldn't name Colonel Ponce and Cristiani delayed his decision. He picked all the rest of the cabinet except the Minister of Defense position and it was because of this tug of war between the various factions for some on Ponce's side and some on Bustillo's side that he finally came down with a compromise which is he picked a nonentity, a colonel, maybe he had just become a general. General Larios was his name. He was not from an important promotion from the military academy, so he didn't have too many friends to pack into important positions. He wasn't known as a particularly bright guy. He was a desk jockey within the Salvadoran military, but he was obviously picked to be an interim Minister of Defense.

I will never forget the ceremony at which they had the changeover from the outgoing Minister of Defense who had held on for these couple of months, General Vides Casanova and this incoming Minister of Defense, General Larios. They had the usual big ceremony at the military academy with the march by of the troops and military units and displays of their weaponry sort of like May Day in Moscow but on a much lower scale. When the outgoing Minister of Defense got up to speak, lo and behold coincidence or not, General Bustillo staged a fly by across the top of the stadium whooshing in about 50 yards above the rim of the stadium with these jets and just blasting the noise so that you couldn't hear the outgoing Minister of Defense. Then they went around and did it again. They did it two or three times. Now, I guess some people in the stadium thought that this was a display of the air force, that they were contributing to the parade. Those in the stadium who knew the situation, knew that General Bustillo was showing his anger and perhaps contempt for his not having been named the Minister of Defense himself. He just drowned out the speeches. That's the way games were played in the El Salvadoran military.

Okay, so President Cristiani spends a couple of months sort of coming up the learning curve as far as his military is concerned. In the meantime a number of nasty things happen. One, the Minister of the Presidency, which is one of the more important slots in the cabinet, an old man who everyone respects, whose done some diplomatic missions, who has been a success in business, who has been a success as a lawyer, everybody admires and he's the serious senior face of the ARENA party. He is named Minister of the Presidency and not too long into the government, he's assassinated; someone blows him away. The President of the Supreme Court, an old line politician, been Foreign Minister once, a bit of a rascal, more than a bit of a rascal, a real rascal, he gets assassinated one day. The Minister of Justice? Anyway, there was another minister who

driving through town in his armored Suburban. But someone came up and put a charge on top, on the roof of the thing, right above his head, detonated it and it blew his head off right in the center of town. A Jesuit priest, an Italian I believe he was, but unlike all the other Jesuits in the country, he was a very conservative Jesuit, and he wrote columns in the local right wing newspaper, giving a totally different face to the Jesuit order, known to be, as I say, a very conservative Italian Jesuit. One day he gets assassinated in front of our AID building.

Q: Was it accepted who had done the assassination?

WALKER: You never know in El Salvador who does these things. The first thing is you assume is who was the likely assassin. A conservative is killed, it must be the left wing killer. Ministers of the government get killed; it must be the left wing, the FMLN that's done it. But within hours someone comes in and says, oh, no, that was the right wing who wanted to get rid of this guy anyway and they saw a chance to put the blame on the left wing, on the FMLN, so they blew him away. Then usually within a few hours someone else would come in and say, well, old Charlie, it wasn't a political act at all. Don't you know that he's involved with somebody else's wife? Since no one was really able to investigate these things with any seriousness, if the perpetrator didn't come out and announce that they had done it and give some evidence that it was true, you never really knew who did it. I would assume that all of these were in fact done by either the FMLN or some variation thereof.

Anyway, the president loses two Cabinet Ministers and the President of the Supreme Court. Things were getting dicey, but we are still maintaining that this negotiation process for peace is going forward. They met in October and at that last meeting they decided that the next meeting would be held in Caracas, I think it was going to be under the office of Carlos Andrés Pérez, the President of Venezuela, who wanted to enter into the peacekeeping mode and so he was going to and Venezuela had some sort of third world leftist connections. But Carlos Andrés Pérez was also one of the biggest thieves in Latin America, so he certainly understood rich folks. I think he thought he could get in-between these two sides and somehow help bring them together. An agreement was that there would be another meeting. The next meeting for the process would be in Venezuela and it was going to take place in mid-November.

Q: Which would be in what?

WALKER: '89, November of '89. As we roll into November there was a certain optimism that was breaking out. Most people saw the peace process looking like it had legs, looking like Cristiani was serious about it. The FMLN had shown up for the two meetings. There was a promise of a third meeting to take place in November. Washington was doing as much as it could to move this thing along. Then on the 11th of November, everything changed. You might remember that November is the perennial time for the Marine Corps Ball.

Q: 10th of November, something like that, I'm not sure.

WALKER: Yes, it can be on a couple of dates. We had a fairly large marine detachment, security attachment. I think 15 or 16 watch standers, which was fairly good size and we also had marines in the MILGROUP. We had marines, we had a marine in the Attaché's Office, the Naval Attaché was a marine. You don't need more than one marine to have a Marine Corps Ball, we had a whole bunch of them. It was a big event in Salvador. Most of them had girlfriends. We were planning the Marine Corps Ball and I think at first we decided it was going to be on the 11th, which I think was a Saturday night if I remember correctly. We were going to hold it at the Sheraton Hotel. For some reason I cannot remember what it was, fairly close to the last minute we decided to move it from the night of the 11th to the night of the 10th, to a Friday night I believe. It was very lucky that we did this because the night of the 11th is when the final offensive of the FMLN was launched and it was launched in San Salvador. If we had all been at that hotel drinking and making merry and the usual things that go on in the Marine Corps Ball I just have a feeling that we would have been in a lot more trouble than we were in. We were in enough trouble since the guerrillas really attacked San Salvador big time, but it was not what it would have been if two thirds of our marines had been dancing and drinking and having fun and the Ambassador and everybody from the Embassy had been joining them.

Serendipitously at least the following night we were all back to sobriety and ready to react, but no one, no one in San Salvador or in the country expected what came on the night of the 11th. As I say, the guerrillas launched their final offensive, which they so called. They launched it thinking that, I guess, that they would take everyone by surprise, which they did. They launched it thinking that if they came into the capital this would be really the first time they'd come in en masse into the capital and tried to actually take the capital, that the popular classes of the capital which is by far the vast majority of those living in San Salvador would rise up with them. Would welcome them. Would show support for them. Would hide them if they had to be hidden. Would be at their side in this fight for the capital. I must say in the first week of the offensive a lot of people thought this was going to happen, not just the guerrillas. What the guerrillas did their first strategic vision of taking San Salvador was essentially to take the popular areas of the city. Take the poorer districts of the city, barricade themselves in there, get this popular support that they thought would be there and then just take on the army and pitch battles. At the same time during the night send urban commandos up into the richer neighborhoods, the better neighborhoods. I mentioned the city has this honeycomb of ravines that wrap all the way through the city and they were in control down there because that's also where very, very poor people lived.

The first week or so what you saw was one, during the day, the guerrillas would come out and Mejicanos in some of the poorer barrios of the city and just establish themselves and thumb their noses at the military. Put up barricades. Kill anyone they saw from the army or from the police and wait for the popular support they fully expected and take on the army in sort of frontal battles. At night up from these ravines would come the urban commandos and they would do such things as mortar rounds fired into the estate mejora, the command center of the army. Attack the presidential palace. Attack police posts under cover of darkness and then come daylight they'd disappear back down in these

ravines and no one could find them. It was this two-pronged thing. They also and I'm not quite sure why this happened, but the first attack was on the night of the 11th-12th. On the night of the 12th-13th there was practically no activity and a lot of people were thinking, oh, they've only had the resources to do this once. Now, they're gone. Everybody relaxed a little bit and then on the night of the 13th-14th back out they came again and did it again. The night of the 14th-15th most activities halted. Again it was this episodic, one day of activity, the next day a little activity, the next day a lot of activity and again each time the activity slackened people thought well, maybe they have just run out of ammunition or they've run out of whatever.

One of the first victims in the whole affair was President Cristiani, another learning curve. He told everyone that he was not going to follow President Duarte by moving into the big presidential residence, which was a very large and spacious property with a very large and spacious house. He was just going to stay in his own house where he was comfortable, he and his wife. A rich man's house, but nevertheless fairly small compared to the presidential residence. He was going to show that he wasn't taking on the trappings of power. The night of the 11th when the FMLN unleashed this offensive, one of their first targets was his private home. We, the embassy, had our own roving patrol police force. We probably had the best police force in El Salvador.

Q: Of what did it consist?

WALKER: It was under the auspices of our Regional Security Officer and he must have had five or six assistant RSOs. So one of them would be in charge of I guess what they call residential security. We didn't have people in compounds; we had people living only in certain parts of the city, but nevertheless fairly spread out. We had a roving patrol of a number of people in Jeeps and Suburbans and vehicles like that and they would roam all night long, going past everybody's house to make sure nothing untoward was happening. It was as much against common crime as it was against anything else, but it was to make our people feel a little more secure. They were well connected by radios and had good vehicles and had three or four people in the vehicle at a time unlike the local police which had rattle traps of old broken down vehicles, no communications to speak of and no weapons to speak of. Ours was by far the most efficient and effective of the security forces in the city. The night of the 11th was when the first firing and shooting was held. Some people have always thought it was firecrackers going off, but one of our patrol cars with one of our local supervisors in the car over the radio was told that there was shooting going on up at the presidential residence. We had some people living up there so he rushed up there and when they got up there to where the presidential residence was, the supervisor jumped out of the car and he saw some people in fatigue uniforms, camouflage fatigue uniforms, he assumed they were army, he assumed they were responding to the thing, so he jumped out and went up and say, hey, fellows, I'm from the American Embassy and they gunned him down because these were the guerrillas. I think he was probably the first, if not among the first of the casualties of the offensive.

The reaction on the government's side, there was no other word for it but panic and chaos. They were not expecting this. All of a sudden instead of incrementally winning the

war, all of a sudden their headquarters was being bombarded every other night by mortar fire, by a type of homemade bombs that were launched by a catapult arrangement, plus these popular sectors of the city were being taken over during the day and they weren't able to dislodge these guys behind the barricades. General Bustillo with his air force sent up gun ships and they were going in. The world press that descended upon us en masse were accusing the air force of some of indiscriminately using their gunships to shoot into these poor barrios where there were an awful lot of civilian livings, innocent civilians. So the air force was getting a hard knock from the world press as to what way they were trying to win the battle. But there really was a battle for San Salvador and not just San Salvador, but other population centers were also under attack. It was a very well-coordinated, very well carried out final offensive.

The offensive lasted weeks, it just slowly petered out, but it went on for a number of weeks. In the midst of it, the ambassador's residence took some shots. We never knew whether it was intentional, or whether it was stray bullets whistling overhead that happened to hit some of the things on our roof. We were obviously on very high alert. I and my family as well as most of the families of the Embassy who were still there spent many an hour in our safe havens. I was on the radio in the safe haven trying to find out what was going on. There were a couple of times when I was told that the street in front of my house in front of the wall in front of my house were guerrillas running up and down going up to the estate mejora, the command center of the army which was just a couple of blocks away so there were guerrillas in the neighborhood. I had marines there. I had a couple of assistant RSOs on the property all the time. It was a very strange thing because at least in the good neighborhoods where I was, the guerrillas disappeared during the day. We weren't sure if our people should go down to the Embassy which might become a target, so we usually held our country team meetings at my residence in the morning and we'd decide. We'd get field reports as to what happened overnight and try to figure out whether we could go down and open the embassy. It was a very strange time.

Q: I would imagine the press, an awful lot of the rural community would be likening this to the Tet offensive in South Vietnam.

WALKER: Absolutely.

Q: To the detriment of the Salvadoran government.

WALKER: Absolutely. I mean, you know, but at the same time it acted to the detriment of the guerrillas because they were in a peace process. They were in a negotiating process. There was a meeting scheduled to come about four or five days after this offensive and even some of their friends, their friends in Europe, the Swedes, the Scandinavian countries, some in France, the Regis Debray types, were critical of them launching this massive violent attack when a process was underway to negotiate an end to the war. So, they took some hits, too. But, more of the hits, I think, were directed at the government. Here the army was in a state of panic, here it was being attacked in its own headquarters, here they were doing the gunship things. Did this show a lie to U.S. policy

there where we were telling the world that the army was getting better, etc.? The guerrillas also took a hit in that this popular support it expected to come to them did not materialize. So, there were pluses and minuses on both sides. What really turned the whole thing around was what happened on the night of the 15th. It broke out on the 11th, the 12th was kind of quiet, the 13th again a lot of violence, the 14th quite quiet. We weren't quite sure what was going to happen on the 15th.

I was in my office at about 5:30. There was a 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. curfew in the city imposed by the government. I pretty much wanted people to make sure they obeyed the curfew and that most of our people were at home and in their safe havens if they had to be during the violence. That particular day since we had already noticed this pattern of one day on and one day off, about 5:30, someplace in there, I was starting to get ready to go home and prepare everybody for the evening. I got a call from my MILGROUP. My MILGROUP commander told me that the intelligence showed that the guerrillas were going to do their usual and break out that night and really start doing some very specific targeting and that Intel sources had discovered that the ambassador's residence was going to be a target that night. Since as I was there with my wife and my two boys and we'd already spent some nights in the safe haven. We'd also taken some shots.

Q: You say safe haven, was this a room?

WALKER: Yes, it was a closet actually with a very heavy door that had been put on it. It was very uncomfortable. It's where we had the safes and the secure telephone in there. It was locked during the day and you could go in there and shut the safes. It was crowded with these safes and stuff and it was really not the place to spend the night. The air became very bad and there wasn't much in the way of ventilation. It wasn't a very pleasant place. The boys of course were able to sleep on the floor, but the wife and I would usually stay awake and I was usually on the radio most of the night, talking to people, wives. One woman I remember, an AID senior officer was up in the States and she was home alone and she heard guerrillas coming over the walls and climbing over the roof of her house and she was really in a panic. You had to talk her through it, are you in the safe haven? We're getting people up there. We've called the army and they're coming up there to chase them away sort of thing. There was a lot of that going on during the night. This particular night for as we prepared for the night I asked my MILGROUP commander when he told me that my house was going to be a particular target, was there anything that we could do to maybe avoid this. He said, well, don't worry sir, I've already told Colonel Ponce and the chief of staff of the army, he's going to put one of his best units up there. I drove home and sure enough when I got to my home, to my residence, and pulled into the driveway, through the big gate, there was a platoon of Salvadoran soldiers. The young lieutenant leading them came out and smartly saluted and identified himself as Lieutenant Espinosa if my memory serves me telling me that his was a crack unit of the Atlacatl Battalion and that they had been told of the danger to me that I was not to worry, that they would take care of it. I certainly thanked the young lieutenant and he saluted me or I saluted him and off he and his 15 men or whatever it was went, I assumed to protect me.

There was a good bit of fighting that night, you could hear guns and bombs and mortar rounds going off. The house was not attacked. The following morning I went into the Embassy again to get an after battle report as to what had happened the night before to see where we were. To see if the government was responding in any better fashion. I'll never forget holding the Country Team meeting in the Embassy. I guess I forgot to say that we were in the earthquake remains of our old embassy. We had recovered two floors in the cellar and that was our embassy. But it did have a big wall around it downtown. Anyway, we were in the Country Team meeting. About halfway through someone came through the door and announced to us that over the radio they were announcing that there had been a slaughter up at the Catholic University, that a number of Jesuit priests had been gunned down, including Father Ellacuria, who was the rector of the university. I said something to the effect that I'm not sure that's an accurate report. We better find out more about this before we start saying that this has actually happened. The reason I was somewhat doubtful was because a week earlier I had gone to see Father Ellacuria. The Jesuits in El Salvador, most of them were Spanish Jesuits, most of them were very liberal Jesuits. Many of them were constantly attacking U.S. policy in El Salvador. The Catholic University that he was the rector of was thought to be a hotbed of producing FMLN leadership because many of the known leaders had gone to the UCA (José Simeón Cañas Central American University) and gotten their political spurs up. So, the relationship between the Embassy and UCA had always been a bit dicey. A MILGROUP officer, a Navy Lieutenant Commander, two or three years earlier I think in '85 maybe or '86, he was in charge of security for the MILGROUP which makes it an even stranger story went out to pick up his girlfriend at UCA and while sitting in his car waiting for her someone came up, FMLN came up, and blew him away. He was another name on our plaque of people who had been killed in El Salvador in the line of duty. So, UCA, the Catholic University was not some place that we had very good relations with. In early November I think about a week before the offensive I paid a visit to UCA specifically to see Father Ellacuria who was undoubtedly the leading intellectual in the church in El Salvador and had a very pleasant meeting with him. I brought up some books; I brought up some offers of assistance. We had a very good talk in which he said, the peace process does seem to be underway. They've held two meetings. Not only that, but I, Father Ellacuria, I know Freddie Cristiani, the president, and I know he's a good man. He went to Georgetown. He's been trained by Jesuits. He's not a man of the hard right. He's a businessman and I have seen him a number of times and I know he wants to negotiate a peace here.

He also said something that knocked me over. He said, I don't consider Roberto D'Aubuisson to be the devil. I consider that yes, he was a terrible person in the early '80s, that he was behind horrible things being done to people, but I think he is now a part of the solution, rather than part of the problem. I think he also wants peace. This was a very positive meeting with Father Ellacuria. At the end of the meeting he told me that he was heading for Spain and he was going to be in Spain for two or three weeks. So he left. When this person runs into my country team meeting and says there's a bunch of Jesuits been killed including Father Ellacuria I thought he was in Spain and therefore he couldn't have been killed, therefore this story might or might not be accurate. So I said that. I said, look Father Ellacuria is still in Spain. I'd be very surprised if all the points of your story are accurate, but let's find out. Well, what I didn't know was that Father Ellacuria when

the final offensive broke out four days earlier he immediately got on a plane to fly back and he was at the UCA. What had happened was some time after midnight I believe a unit of people dressed in camouflage fatigues looking very much like army, but also looking very much like guerrillas attacked. He was killed because he mistook the guerrillas for regular army.

Anyway, a bunch of people in camouflage fatigues got on the campus as the battle was going on that night and went up to where the priests slept, went into their little motel, dragged out six or seven, six Jesuit priests who were on the faculty, plus Ellacuria and just blew them away. Just riddled them full of hundreds of bullets. There was also a housekeeper and her husband and daughter who were there at the time. The daughter being just a little tot, but we didn't know about her until a little later. I went up that day once we had it confirmed exactly what had happened and it was a pretty God awful sight. They had just taken the bodies away but there was still blood all over the place, bullet holes in all the walls. And, of course, people talking about a contaminated crime scene. There were people all over the place from the university, from the military, from the police, from the Embassy, from other embassies tramping over everything. Anyway, it was a truly horrendous thing and it totally changed the dynamics of what was going on there because as you might expect there was tremendous worldwide outcry in the aftermath of this.

I took some real hits on the Jesuit case; I probably do down to this day by some people who have never reconciled themselves to the fact that we were trying to bring peace to El Salvador. Starting I think on the second day of the offensive, the local journalists, the New York Times, Washington Post, a couple of the TV stations, the networks, the Christian Science Monitor all resident American correspondents there throughout this period. So, the second day of the offensive those were the people that were there. They asked if they could come in and get my opinion as to what was going on.

Q: How did you find them because I would have thought that being resident there they would have been pretty far down the food chain.

WALKER: In terms of which food chain?

Q: Well, the newspapers. Were they, trying to make a name for themselves but, you know, they really hadn't made a name for themselves yet.

WALKER: The fellow from the Washington Post was a stringer, but he was very, very good. I talked to Catherine Graham about him when I was up here once and probably set his career back a few years, but he nevertheless was hired on as a regular. He's now one of their best foreign correspondents. He was just chased out of Africa under the threat of death. A very, very capable guy, Doug Farah is his name. The AP guy was they usually have people who've bummed around and done assignments in many places. The AP guy was someone who had worked in Argentina and written a book about Argentina. He was an old pro as far as a young guy, but nevertheless, an old pro as far as war corresponding was going on. The Christian Science Monitor had a young ideologue there who was a

leftist and who never had anything good to say about U.S. policy or the U.S. Embassy or anything along those lines. The New York Times had a rank beginner who had never done anything outside the United States before and was in their local bureau in Philadelphia or someplace like that before. All of them would fit your description of hungry for front page bylines in their respective journals and most of them got it for the first few weeks of this offensive. If you look at the New York Times, Washington Post for November 11 for about three or four weeks there is a story about El Salvador and the offensive on page one every single time. Usually quite often the top story about what was going on. It was a big story.

As a result of that of course in came people from all over the place. So, the first time I held a little impromptu session with the local press, there were maybe 15 or 20 people, we maybe did 20 minutes or half an hour. The government press section or public affairs section, whatever you want to call it, was incredibly bad, incredibly weak. The army press section was incredibly weak and of course they were just putting out stories about how military victories all over the place when the journalists knew this wasn't true. The FMLN on the other hand was putting out stories in Mexico City and in Managua as well as up in the hills, which the press picked up and covered because it was kind of sexy. What developed was the American Embassy specifically, I in particular, became the voice saying that what the guerrillas are saying isn't all true. Maybe what the government is saying isn't all true either, but here's what we know about what's going on. What started out as just a few people coming to see me expanded, expanded, expanded. The time expanded and as new journalists came in from outside they usually came in with the more cynical, more aggressive questions. It became quite a chore, but I wanted to hold these things just so that we could get something out that was not totally favoring the guerrillas. In the context of those press conferences which ended up being two hours long, everybody taking down my every word I'm just playing it by ear because much of what I know I don't know for a fact. I'm filtering out Intel, I'm filtering out rumors, I'm filtering out from various sources of information, but trying to give it an accurate picture of what we know. Because every day there was another rumor of the day. Gunships last night killed 5,000 people, Mejicanos or something like that. The air force has started dropping 1,000 pound bombs. "I'll have the answer for you later." My guys would go out and come back and say absolutely not true or yes, it was true, but it wasn't 5,000, it was five, that sort of stuff.

Of course, after the night of 15th-16th an awful lot of questions were about the Jesuit killing. Everybody in the room, probably including myself, assumed that it was the right wing, it was the military, it was because in their panic, in the chaos that hit in the first days of the offensive, an awful lot of rumors flew around town that the campus of UCA, which was a big stretch of campus, was in fact a safe haven for the guerrillas during the day. That, yes, some were going down into the ravines, but others were going on to the campus and hiding out in the university buildings and were being protected by the Jesuits or were being protected by the leftists on campus. I think this rumor really took hold in the Salvadoran military. They really believed it. Was it true? I don't know. Their Intel was telling them that UCA was being used as a safe haven during the night because in Latin America, the sanctity of a university campus is supposed to be non-violable,

governments are not supposed to go onto university campuses. They're supposed to have total autonomy. Well, here's the government thinking that there are guerrillas on that campus. I think everyone assumed that what had happened was a unit got in there to clean them out and took out the Jesuits they found instead. That having been said, I did not know that because we didn't know who had done it. No one had taken responsibility for it and rumors were flying that it was a unit of the FMLN that was wanting to do this to embarrass the army. There were other rumors; other motives that were being put forward as to who had done this. For a number of days these questions kept coming at me. Well, Walker are you ready to denounce the military for having killed the Jesuits? Which unit of the military was it? With all your knowledge here you must know Walker, blah, blah, blah. For several weeks my response had to be we don't know who did it. As soon as I know I will tell you, but whoever did this, committed a horrendous crime and whoever did it has to be brought to justice from wherever they come and whoever did this has caused incredible damage to their cause whichever cause they're fighting for. This is going to be to the infamy to the discredit, to the shame of whoever did it and we will find out who did it because there's so much ballistic evidence here.

It was what you might expect. Here was a guy who was in the hot seat in a town where, in a country where some really horrible things were happening. His army was in those first days anyway, in some disarray. Later when we get to the solution of the Jesuit case I think part of it was the sort of panicky mood they were in flailing out trying to do something to turn it around. They certainly had not expected the offensive. They were equally worried about the popular uprising. Cristiani over the course of the offensive discovered that the military was not as good as they had been telling him. His military advisors, General Bustillo, the head of the air force he discovered was playing games with the war. In other words, he discovered a couple of days into the offensive that General Bustillo was holding back his helicopters. He wasn't giving them to the army so they could go out and do some of the things they had to do using an air platform. He was telling the army that most of his helicopters were down for repair, etc., when in fact our MILGROUP knew that most of them were flyable. He was playing some game I don't know what it was, but Cristiani learned this. Cristiani learned that his Minister of Defense, this General Larios was the wrong person to have in command when they were fighting a real war. He started learning who the good guys were in the army and the not so good. He, President Cristiani, became the commander in chief. He started involving himself in the military stuff. He started going down to the command center during the day, at night. This was something the presidents had never done. I think I mentioned earlier that President Duarte had lost the confidence of the army back when his daughter was kidnapped. Cristiani gained the confidence of the army because he actually went to be with them during the battle. He started giving orders, that sort of thing. He turned into someone they respected as a result of the offensive. They needed him because in those first days they were in a bit of a panic.

Q: Before I interrupted you, you were saying that the massacre of the Jesuits had changed things and started a process.

WALKER: Yes, and it wasn't just the massacre of the Jesuits. The whole question of the final offensive had pluses and minuses for each side internally. On the government side they found out that their belief that the army was slowly winning the war, their belief that the FMLN was on its last legs shattered by the offensive because all of a sudden it was just the opposite. They came into the city. They were well organized. They had lots of resources. They took on the army in the capital for the first time and certainly didn't lose.

The government also learned with the killing of the Jesuits and the worldwide outcry against this in which they were given the blame fairly or unfairly. They realized that these votes in the U.S. Congress were probably going to start slipping away from them and that the time line had been considerably shortened by what was revealed by the offensive. But at the same time over the course of the offensive the government finally got its act together, the military finally got its act together. They started chasing them out of the popular barrios. The FMLN did not capture the city. They didn't capture any of the important population centers. The government could see that yes, they had lost a lot, but they also had denied the FMLN the chance to take over. The FMLN on the other hand showed its prowess as a guerrilla operation. They showed strengths that most people thought they no longer had, but at the same time they very quickly learned that the popular support they thought they had just wasn't there. Most of the people, especially in San Salvador the capital, were tired of the war. The people in the poor barrios lived on the margins to begin with. The last thing they wanted was have their house shelled. The popular uprising that the guerrillas thought was going to occur did not occur. So both sides won some and lost some. Perhaps more importantly, other things were happening in the world in 1989. I'm not sure I have the sequence right, but the wall came down.

Q: The Berlin Wall?

WALKER: The Berlin Wall. The Soviet empire starting coming apart at the seams. It was obvious that the Soviet Union was going to be much more preoccupied with what was happening to it in Europe internally than being able to support via Fidel Castro what was going on in Salvador. That was one thing that was happening.

As I said externally in the United States there was a renewal of opposition to the policy, popular opposition in California, New York, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Tacoma Park, Washington. All the liberal centers in the United States there were again demonstrations, marches, that sort of thing, against the policy. It was obvious that some of the people we'd held onto in the Congress in terms of holding their vote, things are getting better, we're going to win this. The offensive revealed to them that it wasn't as rosy as had been pictured. We really thought that the next time around the vote would probably go against us. So, that was an external factor.

Nicaragua, it looked like the days of the Sandinistas were coming to a close, which they did in 1989. So there was a sanctuary for the FMLN that was up for grabs. The rest of Central America was getting very tired of what was going on in El Salvador. There were all sorts of external factors that were making it look like the only way out of this was a negotiated settlement, a serious negotiated settlement. Freddie Cristiani if he ever wanted

to get his economy turned around, if he ever wanted to be a president who achieved something, was going to have to end the war. The guerrillas saw by the final offensive that yes, they might have thought the army was a bit of a joke and yes they could beat them on a one-to-one thing, but they weren't sure American assistance was going to collapse. They certainly saw by the offense of the popular support they would have needed to really topple the government wasn't there. I think they became serious about a negotiated settlement.

That began the rounds right after the offensive somehow and I don't quite know how, it might have been stimulated in part by our pushing it, but the two sides agreed to meet again and start back into that negotiation process. From there on in the negotiation was a serious process. There were obviously arguments of the FMLN. They held all of the meetings outside of El Salvador in Mexico, in Venezuela I believe, where else? Costa Rica? Anyway, they held meetings. They had a process in which they'd hold a meeting and everyone would go home for a month, hold another meeting, everyone go home for another month, recoup, look over the respective position papers. Both sides came up since the FMLN was an amalgam of five different factions. They of course had to have at least five, but I think they usually ended up with about 10 people on their side of the table. The government put together a team of eight, nine, 10 people. The FMLN insisted that Freddie Cristiani lead the government side. They were going to put their five leaders of the five factions at the table. Cristiani said, hell no, I'm not going to be there. I've got to run the country. I can't go off to Mexico for two weeks and go off to Venezuela for two weeks, but my team is going to be very high level and it's going to be people that I trust. I will be in constant communication with them and that's what he did. He put together a team with a minister of the presidency, minister of interior, a general officer who was thought to be the brightest of the officer corps, a university rector from one of the more conservative universities. It was a team with some, it looked like it had some weight.

The guerrillas always complained that the government team had no power of decision making. They always had to go back to San Salvador and talk to Cristiani. We sent someone from the embassy to sit in nearby each of these meetings so we knew what was going on. Now another thing that happened was that the United Nations stepped in and because of what had happened with the offensive they said they would be a mediator. They would help the negotiation process. So, Perez de Cuellar, who was the Secretary General at the time, an aristocratic Peruvian, picked as his special envoy to this peace process a deputy secretary general or something like that up in New York, who was also a Peruvian aristocrat by the name of Alvaro de Soto. I guess the theory was a fellow Peruvian would have the ear of the Secretary General. Peruvians speak Spanish. He's going to be good because he's got those two characteristics. In my opinion he turned out to be a disaster. He was an elitist and who, I don't know if he was pretending or really was, a bit of a leftist so the government didn't trust him. He didn't know much about Central America as most South Americans don't and I think he assumed he was going in among a bunch of lesser people. President Cristiani, very well educated man, Georgetown University, Master's, is a very sophisticated and well-educated person. Alvaro de Soto treated him in such a way that Cristiani could not stand. The only time I

ever saw Cristiani red in the face and madder than hell was when I would go in to see him after Alvaro de Soto had just been there to see him for a half an hour or an hour. The irony of this whole thing was just about everyone on the government side of the table thought Alvaro de Soto was in the pockets of the guerrillas. I don't think he was because our intelligence from the guerrilla side of the table was that they didn't have a much higher opinion of him either, but at least they saw that he was more or less on their side. So they buttered him up and dealt with him as though he was a brilliant mediator. The people I sent up to these meetings who would sit around after the meetings broke up and talked to both sides and get a flavor of what was going on usually came back to say that Alvaro was just a pain in the neck. That whatever progress had been achieved at this round of talks it was achieved when the two sides got together without Alvaro being there.

Alvaro de Soto is something else. I'd run into him later in my career when I'm with the United Nations going off to Croatia. He's up there. But by now the Secretary General is no longer from Peru and therefore, his star has fallen a bit. But back then he was one arrogant son of a bitch. But anyway, the peace process, the negotiation process took hold in the aftermath of the offensive.

Q: You were mentioning that the Embassy was sending someone up there really more as a reporting function than as a facilitator. In other words, this was a Salvadoran process?

WALKER: Absolutely. It was a Salvadoran process under the auspices of the United Nations, but of course we were a major player in the equation. I think neither side of the table, nor Alvaro de Soto himself, felt that an agreement could come about if the United States was not in favor of it. For instance when they went to talk in Mexico, President Carlos Salinas got them out of Mexico City and put them out in some, I think it was, a worker's rest facility someplace out in the boondocks. Well, our Embassy in Mexico was more than happy that we would send someone up there to cover the talks rather than they send out one of their Political Officers who might not know the ins and outs of the process. I tried to vary it. I sent one or two times female Political Officers, one or two times male Political Officers, but they were as you say reporting officers. They weren't in the talks, they were just on the sidelines.

Q: You were saying that there were no restrictions? I mean they were talking to the FMLN?

WALKER: FMLN.

Q: FMLN people, too?

WALKER: Yes, sure. Actually some friendships developed as a result of this.

Q: I was just wondering how relations. When do you start to take these off, I mean were things coming together?

WALKER: It was slow. There's no question about it, it was slow because the offensive was in November '89. The negotiating process took two years. I don't want to make it sound like the offensive took place and all of a sudden peace broke out. There were a lot of very tough issues to be hammered out. I spent a lot of time with Freddie Cristiani, two or three times a week. Usually when his negotiating team would come back from the talks, two or three people would come down from Washington, two of our DASs, Deputy Assistant Secretaries in the front office of ARA. One because he was a lawyer and was a negotiator, the other because he was the substantive DAS for Central America. They would come down. We'd have a big round robin round table with the negotiating team, Cristiani sitting there usually at his residence, to talk about what had happened at the last round and what offers they might make at the next round, what should be the negotiating strategy, what should be their tactics. So, that process took a long time, two years. We were in the middle of it, all the way. We were talking. I mean we had, the U.S. government had, a certain number of connections to the FMLN. The FMLN after all had a diplomatic political office in Washington. There were a couple of Salvadoran leftists who were not identified as the FMLN, but were known to be very close to the FMLN. We never could really figure out whether they were speaking for the FMLN or themselves at any given time. Some of these had access to people at the State Department. Bernie Aronson who was the Assistant Secretary through most of this process, had two or three people of this type who would come to him and give him messages, supposedly from the FMLN. We had met that kind of channel up here in Washington. I now have my questions about how good those channels were because subsequently after the conclusion of the war and the peace accords I've gotten to know some of the fighters down there, some of the guys who were out there. I've gotten to know some of the guys down there really mixing it up. They don't put much store in what their diplomatic, political types in Mexico City or in Washington were doing and saying. Until you convince those guys that the war had to end by negotiation, those were the guys who were running the war. Not these fellows out on the periphery. We had contacts.

Q: I mean after the people withdrawing from Salvador, what happened?

WALKER: You mean after the offensive?

Q: Yes.

WALKER: Well, let me tell you about a couple of other incidents that happened during the war. Again I can never remember if I told you this before, but in the first days I think it was before, when was it? All these events are running together, it's kind of hard to put them on a time line. In those first days of the offensive there was an incident that would have almost been comic except that it had the potential for really bad things happening. You might remember I mentioned the Marine Corps Ball was held at the Sheraton Hotel. The Sheraton Hotel is a big hotel. I was in it last week. It has been turned into a Radisson. It's probably the biggest hotel in San Salvador. Even back then it was a sizable hotel with an annex building on the other side of the swimming pool. A first class hotel we're talking about, a classy hotel. In the first days of the offensive, I can't remember exactly when it was in relation to the killing of the Jesuits, but it was in there someplace. Go to

the office first thing in the morning and the first piece of information that comes to me is the guerrillas have attacked and taken over the Sheraton Hotel. Wow! Because the Sheraton Hotel is up right in the middle of one of the wealthiest neighborhoods in San Salvador. It's also next to some of these ravines I've talked about. Evidently the guerrillas came out of the ravine during the day or just at dawn, went into the hotel, didn't take over the main building, but took over the annex, which was pretty sizable to begin with. This was of considerable concern to us because we knew there were a lot of Americans in there. It was where we put our temporary people who had come in and were going out. We quickly discovered that within that annex building there was a military training team of ours, around 14 or 15 Special Forces guys. The day the offensive broke out we had decided the military wasn't going to be doing much training and that these guys were going to be sitting around with nothing to do and that they would be vulnerable if they were just sitting around. So we decided to pull them out of their training mission and send them home immediately. We put them up in the hotel for the night and the next morning lo and behold the hotel annex they were in was taken over by the guerrillas. We also discovered we had some AID employees were in the hotel. But what grabbed everyone's attention and was the headlines of the day was that the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, the regional UN, a Brazilian, a very senior Brazilian diplomat named Baena Soares, had come to El Salvador in anticipation of the next round of peace talks. When the offensive broke out he realized that this was not going to take place, so he was in the hotel ready to go home when all of a sudden lo and behold the guerrillas had taken over the hotel. He was in the main building of the hotel, but when the story went out the Sheraton Hotel has been attacked and taken over by the guerrillas. The first everyone thought was my God, Baena Soares, the Kofi Annan of the Western Hemisphere has been captured by the guerrillas. This is horrendous. We've got to do something to get him out of there, to save him. Everybody's first effort was to get Baena Soares out of there, plus his delegation. Obviously the guerrillas did not want to go down in the history books as someone who had brought harm to the Secretary General of the OAS not the least of which because he was a Brazilian, he wasn't an American. Very quickly he was extricated along with his delegation, but very dramatic pictures in the New York Times, Washington Post of Baena Soares fleeing the hotel surrounded by his people and bodyguards. I can't remember who got him out. It might have been the local Papal Nuncio or something like that. In the meantime we learned that the guerrillas that were occupying the annex, in taking over the annex, running down one hallway noticed that at the end of the hallway there were these American special forces guys pointing big weapons at them as they were pointing their weapons at the special forces guys. We ended up with a Mexican standoff. We on our hand were telling our guys for God's sake, don't start a fight. We'll get you out of there. On the other hand, these were macho special forces guys who had been trained that Salvadoran were a bunch of real bad guys and we were terrified that someone was going to pull the trigger when they shouldn't.

On the other side we were worried that the guerrillas coming face to face with people who were training their enemy and who were representatives of the devil the United States that someone on their side might pull the trigger. In this case we did get help from these contacts in Washington and in Mexico City. We got through to them and said you

tell your guys to hold their fire, our guys will hold their fire and let's see if we can't work something out so that our guys can get out of there or your guys can get out of there. It worked. They were in a standoff for 24 hours. They were both heavily barricaded in their respective ends of this corridor. We had radio contact with our guys and it was obviously the FMLN had good radio contact with their superiors in Mexico City and wherever they were. We talked both sides into cooling it. The FMLN also captured a couple of AID employees and their wives and treated them very, very nicely. The government of course hearing that this hotel had been taken over and seeing it as a big dark spot on their reputation, this international hotel in the middle of the richest neighborhood had been taken over by the guerrillas in broad daylight. They told us they were going to surround the hotel and they were going to attack. We told them that would not be very smart because we had some people in there who would be killed. There were a lot of innocent people, just hotel guests, that would be killed. We tried to talk the government into being cool. They surrounded the hotel. We also got some assistance from U.S. special ops types who came down and we stationed our people in various places where they could watch what was going on to make sure no one misbehaved. But if necessary and if someone attacked someone else these guys were prepared to go in and get our people out as expeditiously and as safely as possible.

These special ops people, they like to go out quietly with no one knowing they're going, no one knowing they'd been there. They'd just disappear at the end of the operation. This is what we tried to do in El Salvador. Unfortunately George Bush, the President of the United States, let the cat out of the bag at some press conference. Someone asked him what about the Americans in the Sheraton Hotel? He said don't worry we've got Delta team down there or something like that and that blew their cover. They were never used in any shooting situation, but they were there in terms of observation of what was going on.

The takeover of the Sheraton ended 24 hours later, the following morning, at dawn. Our guys decided to make a run for it and they all got out. Not a shot was fired. We subsequently discovered that the guerrillas had also taken a period to make a run for it. In spite of the fact that the government "had the hotel surrounded" these guys disappeared into the ravines without a single casualty. They were later caught in one of the ravines and a battle took place and some of them were killed as was the captain heading the army side. Everybody assumed the army had let them get away just because they didn't want a firefight to take place in front of the cameras of the world. Our guys got out and I went to visit them immediately. They told some pretty harrowing stories about sitting there in their rooms with their weapons ready for 24 hours thinking that they were going to be attacked by these bad guys. That was how the offensive ended. It just drifted off.

I told you earlier about the DEA guy who came to visit me. He didn't want to stay with me during the firefight so he went to stay with his friend the Station Chief and the house was taken over by the guerrillas that night. He and the Station Chief and the Station Chief's wife were in their safe haven. They heard the guerrillas ransacking and putting the torch to part of the house and were all three scared out of their skins but they got out okay the next morning. We had a lot of incidents. We had one guy and his Salvadoran

girlfriend. They decided just before curfew to go out and get some beer and soft drinks to see them through the night, see them through the curfew hours. They came out of the little 7-11 type store where they bought the soft drinks and a couple of guerrillas took them prisoner and drove them to their house, locked them in the back room. All through the night, all through the hours of curfew they were in the back room. The guy didn't speak much Spanish. The gal was a Salvadoran. She spoke good Spanish. She said she heard Spanish that didn't sound Salvadoran. It sounded like it was either Cuban or Mexican. The next day the door was unlocked, they came out and discovered that the house had been used as a hospital, a field hospital during the night. They found all sorts of bloody stuff. The people that let them out apologized to them for having taken over the house. The guerrillas were very gentle with people they captured during the night, including the Americans. We learned from that that the guerrillas were no longer targeting us as people they wanted to bring harm to, recognizing that this would probably reverberate to their detriment. The final offensive was quite an adventure on many fronts. Many things happened, many things that we didn't find out the truth behind them until later until people started talking about what they'd been doing.

Q: What about while the peace negotiations, did the war in the countryside sort of peter out, too?

WALKER: Well, it was a war that was difficult to follow. For most of the war, except for that offensive, the war wasn't in the capital. Life in the capital was more or less normal. Lots of economic activity going on. The central market open all the time. The Salvadoran people have a tremendous work ethic, they really do. You can imagine the economy wasn't in very good shape during the war. Therefore, jobs were hard to get. If a person had a job they really didn't want to lose it. So their natural work ethic plus the unavailability of alternative sources of employment if you lost a job was such that throughout the offensive, throughout the worst days of the offensive, everybody went to work during the day. We closed a couple of days, three or four days at the very beginning when we weren't sure what was happening. During the remaining days the Embassy was open, and this was while the battles were still going on. You still heard shooting all through the night and during the day you knew that out in some of the barrios the fighting was going on full force. During this period public transportation, which is never too good to begin with, was severely interrupted because many of the buses parked overnight in these barrios and their drivers were guys from the barrios. They couldn't get them out through barricades and this sort of stuff. So, public transportation was badly interrupted. Nevertheless, we had a higher incidence of people coming to work than we did during normal times. On any given day during normal times 85% of the people came, 15% of the people were home sick or on leave. During the offensive, those figures went out the window. We had 95% of the people coming in and 5% couldn't get in, but were trying to.

Even during the days when we closed the Embassy and we told the employees one night before they all went home, look, the offensive has just broken out. It was probably the day following, the Embassy might be a target so we're going to close the Embassy and we'll notify you somehow as to when we're opening up again. There was a man who worked for the Embassy I think for almost 40 years or something like that. He was in his

80s and he went around and cleaned the coffee pots, washed the dishes, came around with hot coffee usually to the locals who liked a cup of hot coffee in the morning. A little old man and he lived in a barrio that was, he earned practically nothing, he lived way out in the sticks. He walked into work every day the Embassy was closed and insisted that he was there reporting for work. He was told to go home. He just turned around and walked home. The next morning he walked in again. We were so impressed with this guy. The hot sun, bullets flying and he wants to come to work even though he's been told, hey, don't worry about it. Your job will be here when we reopen. The morale of the people at the Embassy after the initial shock of the offensive went way up.

I forgot to mention an important factor during the offensive. We did an involuntary departure. Larry Eagleburger, Sheldon Krys the head of SY at the time, everybody in Washington was very concerned that the guerrillas might take on the Embassy or might capture people and kill them or whatever. A lot of concern for the safety of our people and every day they were calling me, Bill, whenever you make the decision they've got to come out, you just tell us and we'll have a couple of planes down there right away. How many would you take out? Would you take out foreign nationals from other embassies? It took us a couple of days to determine all of this and it was sometime in the aftermath of the killing of the Jesuits when it really looked like things were getting extremely nasty that I finally sent in the cable saying that I recommend that involuntary departure of all unnecessary personnel plus dependents. On one of those days, I can't remember, maybe the 20th of the month, something like this, the offensive was going on for eight, nine days, we rounded up 262 or something like this wives, children, unnecessary personnel. We took them all down by five or six big buses down to Comalapa Airport, which is about a 45 minute drive down on the coast. It was like five or six buses full of people going to a football game. People cheering and we don't want to go. Ho, ho, we won't go, sort of stuff.

One of the things that set off this raucousness was that when the buses were loading up at the AID building which is where we gathered everyone and put them on the buses, a CNN crew showed up to film this. The Americans retreat, like leaving Saigon sort of thing. The woman correspondent for CNN at that time was a woman who I considered the dumbest journalist I had ever met. We later learned or maybe we even knew at that time, that she had a romantic attachment to some Sandinista comandante next door. That was where she was stationed most of the time because things were starting to heat up there in terms of elections coming up that the Sandinistas lost. At that point she was sent over to cover the war in El Salvador and her reporting was terrible. It was biased. I remember in the middle of the night one night I had to go down to another hotel where the journalists thought they were being attacked by the police. It turned out it was a rumor that had gotten out of hand. But in the middle of the night I go to the hotel and when I showed up all the TV cameras came out and everyone said oh, here's the Ambassador, let's do an impromptu press conference. I was on live on a bunch of these channels. Luckily it was in the middle of the night so not too many people were watching it. She poked her microphone in front of me and I don't remember what it was, but she asked me a really off the wall question. I looked straight into this camera and I said that has got to be simply the stupidest question I have ever received and I'm just not going to

answer it, it's so stupid. She was sort of taken aback. Anyway, when our buses were pulling away to head to the airport with my dependents and others they saw Lonnie out there with her camera talking to a microphone and the camera shooting. Everybody on the bus started booing as loudly as they could and yelling things at her. They were so mad because it was one of those wars in which you're in the middle of it, but you're watching it on CNN every night. You're watching it on ABC. We all had cable TV. We all had satellite TV. We all knew what was going on in terms of the coverage of this offensive and everybody knew that CNN's coverage was really terrible and they really let her have it. I hope she was broadcasting live. But anyway, that generated the spirit of the crowd.

We got down to the airport and I took down the correspondent for the Washington Post who had just arrived; his first overseas assignment. He's now one of their superstars in the Middle East. But back then Lee Hockstader and I put him in my car and took him down to the airport. He wrote a very nice piece about how I jumped up on the bar in the VIP lounge to talk to this herd of people telling them they'd be back as soon as we could make it. I knew they didn't want to leave, they were screaming and cheering. It was a very emotional moment. Then I went out and shook hands with every single person getting on the two planes. They brought in two charters, Continental Airways planes. I don't think a single person who was over the age of two or three that got on the plane did not say some variation of "Mr. Ambassador I don't want to go. I want to stay." Some had different reasons. I don't want to leave my husband. I feel too strongly about helping the Salvadoran people and this sort of thing. It was almost the same as I had when 10 years later or 11 years later I left Kosovo with all these international observers; no one wanted to leave even though the conditions had become very, very dangerous and bad. I was really proud of those people.

Q: Did you have any problems with I mean say later on people kind of chickening out?

WALKER: No, in the aftermath, after the offensive was over, I had two requests for a transfer. One was from a first tour Political Officer who had been caught behind enemy lines. His house was up behind one of the FMLN barricades. For a day or two he was hunkered down, very concerned that they were going to discover that an American Embassy Officer was in this house. One of my best performers during the offensive was my Administrative Counselor, a Peruvian American, fluent in Spanish. He was able to go up and talk his way through this FMLN barricade. I don't know what he said. He got through got our guy and got him out. That young officer once things had calmed down put in for an immediate transfer. He wanted out of there; he'd been frightened. The Department in its wisdom sent him to Paris I think, some posh post in Europe. He was okay.

The other person who came in and said he had to get out was my Marine Gunnery Sergeant, which really took me by surprise. He had arrived also just a couple of weeks before the offensive and I'll never forget because he and his wife came in. His wife was a former Marine herself and I said, well, you know it's pretty dangerous, there's still a lot of fighting going on. They both said, oh, we're Marines and we're used to this kind of stuff. Well, their house was up by the Sheraton Hotel when it was taken over so they also

had to hunker down during that day. Again in the aftermath, they came and I think he said his wife and the kids had been shocked by the level of violence and wanted out. I sent him to talk to the Marine Naval Attaché because this was obviously not going to look good on his record in the aftermath of violence for the Gunnery Sergeant especially. Not for one of the watch standers.

Q: You might explain in Foreign Service terms what the Gunnery Sergeant is.

WALKER: Yes, well, every place that we have a marine detachment of security guards for the Embassy. In this case, the Embassy the Residence and the AID building. The NCO in charge is usually a very seasoned Gunnery Sergeant or higher. These are usually the best of the best. They're usually guys who are picked very, very carefully. The Marine Corps take great pride in their MSG programs.

He would probably have been the last person I would have predicted would have come in and said send me home, but he was insistent so we sent him home. We had not the best of record with our NCOs in charge of the marine detachment. We had three or four in a very short period. If I remember correctly and I might have the sequence wrong, but I think this is right. In the aftermath they sent this fellow out the Marine Corps. There's an officer in charge of the program for Latin America and he came down to see me and said they were looking for a replacement. The fellow they sent down was sort of the opposite of what had been the case. Because it was a war zone most of the gunnies there had been relatively relaxed with their troops in terms of spit and polish side of the Marine Corps. These guys were facing danger almost every day. The Marine Corps then sent down the sort of arch disciplinary sort of NCO. Within days the detachment's morale plummeted because this guy was into the spit and polish and running four miles a day, whatever it is that strict disciplinary NCOs do in the Marine Corps. So this guy lasted a very short time and we brought in another one who was the opposite. That having been said, the Marine Security Detachment, the watch standers, the young guys. I went through 40 or so, 50 maybe during my three and a half years there with no exceptions that I can remember, were just outstanding young Marines. I mean they were really good. You might recall that I think I mentioned earlier about the time in '85 or '86 whenever it was that I think it was five Marine Guards were gunned down in an FMLN attack in a restaurant they were sitting in. So, our Marines were alert, they were gutsy, they were ready to do whatever it took to fulfill their tasks, but at the same time as I said, they maybe were not quite as spit and polish as Marines are who are who are guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier or something like that. It was a delight to be with these guys, they were really very, very good. But at the Gunnery Sergeant level, they had some problems.

Anyway, that's pretty much the offensive. Oh, no I've got to tell you the Jennifer Casolo story. About a week into the offensive, a week or ten days, battles still going on, fighting all over the city, a Consular Officer comes to see me when I show up at the Embassy. I guess I had been told during the night but the firsthand account I got was from this consular officer, a guy named David Ramos. He comes to see me to tell me that the night before during curfew he had been called by the army or the police, I'm not sure which, by one of the security services and had been told that they were about to raid an FMLN arms

cache. They believed there was an American woman that was involved in this and it was her house that they were going to raid and that because they had become sensitized to the human rights dimension of dealing with an American especially, they wanted the American Consulate to know about this. If need be they would come and escort this Consular Officer to watch the raid take place and see that if there was an American citizen there she was going to be treated with all due respect for her nationality and her sex. Sure enough, the security forces picked up David and this was late at night, midnight or something like that. They take him to a house and the police have just raided the house and inside was this little timid, thin, mousy little woman by the name of Jennifer Casolo. Mr. Ramos gets there in time to see that she's not been mistreated. She's obviously crying, she's obviously all shook up because the police had stormed her house and they're out in the back yard, little tiny back yard no bigger than this room and they're digging. Sure enough within minutes they hit boxes and dig further and start hauling out boxes of weapons, ammunition, dynamite, a regular treasure trove of arms. David is there. He talks to her and tries to calm her down. He certainly identifies himself and she is getting increasingly hysterical and while David is there he witnesses this, a Salvadoran man shows up, he is arrested, she is hysterically telling the police, no, he had nothing to do with it, he was just coming to see me. He doesn't know anything about it, but they arrested him as well. At this point of course she's saying, I don't know where that stuff came from. I don't know anything about it, but they're hauling it away.

I get told this story the next day and I say, "who is this American woman?" "Jennifer Casolo." I say, "Jennifer Casolo, never heard of her." They said, "oh, no, you know her Mr. Ambassador." I said, "I do?" They said, "yes, you know these church groups that come down from the States." There's always some church in Tacoma Park or Washington State or Wisconsin? There's always these groups of American churchmen coming down from all sorts of denominations. Well, when they come down here they usually come down under the auspices of some umbrella church organization, the World Council of Churches, but that wasn't it, but something like that. This is a fairly liberal segment of the U.S. churches, but when they come here the local representative of that group is Jennifer Casolo. You should remember, Mr. Ambassador, because every time one of these groups comes down here, we hear about it. The State Department calls up and says, the Bishop of Detroit and a whole bunch of ministers are coming down from Detroit to find out what is happening. They're coming down under the auspices of this organization and we would call up Jennifer Casolo and say we offer our support, if you need any help. Her answer was always, "no, no, no; I don't want the Embassy to have anything to do with this. This is totally independent of the Embassy. I don't want you mucking around and setting up appointments with President Cristiani. I'm going to set up the appointments. I don't want any identification with the Embassy."

Then usually about 24 hours before the group would arrive she'd come rushing into the Embassy and say, well, I thought I was going to be able to get so and so and so and so and none of them have answered me yet, so will you please get all these appointments for me? We came to the conclusion that Jennifer was just not up to the job. Okay, she's arrested and taken off to jail. Big headlines not only in Salvador, but in the United States. American church worker arrested in Salvador by that horrible army, horrible police.

Local journalists, those in Salvador, jump all over the story. Everybody goes out to find out who is Jennifer Casolo? Well, Jennifer Casolo and we're hearing the press goes to see her parents in Connecticut. The story that emerges, the image that emerges is of this sweet little girl who is a Quaker against violence in all forms. She comes from a poor Quaker family in Connecticut. Her father, if I remember right, is very old and blind. The mother is anything that would make your tears flow pertains to Jennifer Casolo. Of course the church group that sent her down here says this is impossible. She's being framed. There is no way on earth this meek, mild, little Quaker girl could possibly, possible, possible be involved with what she's been accused of.

Now, in the meantime of course she is in communication with lawyers. Ramsey Clark comes down to take up her cause. The story is she didn't know those were out in the back yard. That's version number one, her version; or number two, actually when the police moved in they came in with boxes of ammunition, they dug a hole they put them in and then they lo and behold discovered them. David Ramos our Consul, said this was ridiculous. Number one, this backyard was a little tiny thing. There's no way people could have brought that stuff through the house and it's surrounded by a big high wall. There's no way someone could have brought that stuff in except through the house. There's no way they could have brought it through the house that Jennifer wouldn't know it was being brought in. As far as they were bringing it in and then pulling it out scenario David Ramos was there when they dug into the hard earth and went down a few inches and started finding the stuff. David said there was absolutely no way. This was in her back yard. A tremendous international clamor for free Jennifer Casolo. Pictures of this little mousy woman, a Quaker. It was just horrible. Interviews with her parents on TV, her blind father sitting there saying my daughter could never be involved in this. Pretty bad stuff.

Ramsey Clark came to see me and asked me if I could get him a meeting with President Cristiani, I did. I went with him and he actually gave Cristiani very good advice which was get rid of her. Send her home. As long as you keep her there's going to be accusations, horrible accusations, whether true or not about you, your government, your soldiers, your police. Hard though it might be, get rid of her, just put her on a plane and send her out of here. Cristiani on the other hand said, look, there's a war going on here. The city's, there's fighting going on every night and here's a woman with a back yard of weaponry for the bad guys. My army, my police, my right wing and my party are going to crucify me if I let her go. I'm supposed to be bringing the violence to an end. How do I excuse someone who was bringing violence to my country? Clark just kept saying, look, I understand your point, maybe it's a valid one. I'm telling you for your own good, for the good of El Salvador, get rid of her. So it took a couple of days, but he eventually called me in and said, look Bill, I've decided to. Then they got into the legal system. We were always talking about the independence of the judiciary and now we go in and say, we don't care anything about the judiciary, you just throw this girl out of the country. He called me in and said, Bill, I've weighed all the possibilities here and I've decided to let her go.

One of the players from Washington was Senator Chris Dodd who was calling up Cristiani and saying, you know, I voted against the assistance, etc., but I still think what the guerrillas have done here is wrong, but you really should let this girl go. Her parents are my constituents in Connecticut. She's from this good family, a very humble family, her father's blind, you know, blah, blah, blah. Chris Dodd jumps into this big thing. So, Cristiani said he had reached a deal with Chris Dodd and the deal was that she would be released into my custody. I, the American Embassy Ambassador would take her down and put her on a plane, the first available plane out of Salvador and she would agree never to return. The deal with Chris Dodd was that he would let Freddie Cristiani make the announcement of her release so that Cristiani could phrase it in any way he wanted to so that he would avoid some of this kickback from those who didn't want to let her go.

Cristiani said fine, she'll be ready at 10:00 tomorrow, go out to the prison, get her, take her straight to the airport and put her on the 12:00 Eastern Airlines flight to Miami. Make sure she understands the deal. Make sure she understands that Chris Dodd has agreed that she will not go around saying terrible things about the government of El Salvador because we have treated her well and blah, blah. Plus make sure Chris Dodd's office understands that I will hold a press conference at 10:15 or whenever just after you've taken custody and I will announce that we're letting her go out of humanitarian concerns. I said, fine, sounds great. So, the next day I went out to the women's prison. You can imagine what a women's prison is like in El Salvador. It looked like a chicken ranch or something. It wasn't a big stone building jail. It was a big open thing surrounded by barbed wire. Lots of press out there who had heard about it and we're going to put this on the air. I go out there and meet the Warden of the prison, a woman and explain that I'm out there to pick her up. She must have heard from Cristiani, from the President, and of course there's papers to fill out, right. Typical Latin American, you've got to sign this document which leads you to another document and there's this document and this one's got to be notarized. We're going through all this paperwork. I'm saying, well, bring Jennifer out so when we finish the paperwork we can get in the car because we've got to catch that 12:00 plane down at the airport. I'm getting increasingly nervous about making that plane and the next plane isn't until the next day and I'm going to have this woman on my hands for 24 hours. What the hell am I going to do with her? Finally the papers were done and the warden sends someone to bring Miss Casolo out. That person comes back after five or ten minutes and says, she doesn't want to come. She doesn't want to leave her companeros. I said, oh, God. Send someone else in and say this has been worked out with the President and with her parents and Senator Dodd and it's a done deal and she's going to go home. We wait another ten or 15 minutes. We finally sent in some, who the hell was it? A priest or someone who would be more inclined to convince her. This person went in and when we were really running out of time we started hearing singing. What in the name of God is that? This singing gets louder and louder and louder. Then we see coming out from behind one of the buildings, this crowd of women, poor women, women prisoners, political prisoners, mostly, but some not political prisoners, criminal prisoners. God knows, destitute prisoners. Women with babies with them. Ragged clothes, marching out and they're all singing, they're singing the FMLN fight songs and there's Jennifer among them smiling. She comes to the gate and tearfully tells these women I won't forget you. I'll be back and you'll get your freedom, too. All this jazz.

Now FMLN women don't sing FMLN fight songs for someone they don't consider a buddy.

Anyway, I took her to the airport, told her what the conditions were, put her on the airplane and the deal was broken by two of the three participants in the deal. Jennifer Casolo as soon as she reached Miami held a press conference at the airport and denounced the government of El Salvador. Said she'd been tortured. Said the fellow that had been picked up was innocent and she knew he was being tortured, it was horror stuff. Chris Dodd on the other hand, he held his press conference before Cristiani held his press conference to get out the word that his office and he personally had intervened and they had gotten Jennifer freed. It was really bad. It was really bad. Then of course Jennifer went on a university tour of the United States to describe the horrors that had been done to her while she was in detention. The horrors she had seen. The plight of the poor people of El Salvador. It only lasted a couple of weeks. She had a whole schedule around the United States planned, but somebody, I don't know who decided to mount a campaign and follow her into some of these places that she gave the speeches and described what had really happened. Her story was so bizarre. It was so obviously done with malice aforethought trying to really damage El Salvador and U.S. policy that she bombed. Her story did not hold water.

Ten years later a couple of months ago I was in El Salvador and I was with some friends from the FMLN. Near the end of my conversation that night I said, just one thing I will not go to my grave until I know. They said, what's that. I said, give me the story about Jennifer Casolo? What's the truth there because she was so adamant that she couldn't possibly have been involved. What's the story? They said, you know the story. Of course she was with us. I said, really? They said, yes. That guy who came to the house that she went into hysterics about that the police shouldn't arrest him because he had nothing to do with it he was the fellow we set out to attract her. She wasn't very good looking. She was kind of a sad little thing and he was one of our better looking men and we got her. Of course that was our stuff in the back yard. At some point the next time I see Chris Dodd I'm going to have to tell him. That whole thing, Chris Dodd later became my nemesis in the U.S. Senate. I often thought I busted my tail to get her out to do what you asked me to do, to set up Freddie Cristiani so that you could torpedo him with your press conference. If anyone here tells fibs, don't point the finger at me, sir. Long story, but that's Jennifer Casolo. She has gone into the history books. Do you know who Lori Berenson is?

Q: Yes she's down in Peru.

WALKER: She's down in Peru. She's the one that was captured by Sendero Luminoso, by the government and they claimed she worked for Sendero.

Q: The Shining Path.

WALKER: The Shining Path. Yes. She, again, I heard this from my FMLN buddies a couple of months ago. She was in Salvador. She was a roommate of Jennifer Casolo. They were buddies, so again, when you look at Lori's claims that she's totally innocent,

etc., etc., etc. These are people who somehow are turned into believers. It's like John Walker, parents can't believe what they're doing and defend them vigorously. Jennifer there was more there than met the eye.

We've pretty well done the final offensive, maybe afterwards we can finish the peace negotiations process.

Q: Okay, we've talked about how you had embassy observers at the various peace negotiations which are taking off in other parts of Latin America. We can talk then about how the peace negotiations went on. This is after the final offensive and also how during this time you felt you were being supported by Washington.

WALKER: Another thing that happened around that same time, this '89 year was a real interesting year. We invaded Panama that year, too. That was also something going on in the neighborhood and it also showed the guerrillas that hey, this Bush administration was willing to do some pretty tough things here. All these things were happening at the same time. The Sandinistas were falling apart. Cuba having troubles. The Soviet Union falling apart. Our congressional support on the other side.

Q: As we move farther on, we've got our response to the invasion of Kuwait which showed the United States military force was really a force to be recognized. All of which changed the equation. All right, so we'll pick this up then.

WALKER: Okay.

Q: Today is the 22nd of January, 2002. Bill, you heard where we are. Where would you like to talk begin?

WALKER: Yes, why don't we talk about the peace process a little bit. That's the main thread that carried through from the inauguration of President Cristiani all the way through to the end of my tour three years later. As I said the offensive of '89 was a defining moment in that it sparked everybody's real interest in bringing this war to a negotiated settlement. This is not however to say that the negotiation process was an easy one because it lasted until '91. It lasted more than another two years. The process was difficult for a number of reasons. One because the war had been so bitter, things were so polarized. You might remember that up until that point very, very few people either outside or inside of El Salvador thought that this was going to be solved by a negotiation. This was extreme left against extreme right with everybody else caught in between. People I think felt that the ARENA government representing the extreme right at least in part, the FMLN representing communism, extreme leftism that these two sides could never come to an agreement on how to resolve their differences. Nevertheless the process, especially after the offensive, started to move in the right direction. The process was essentially a series of talks outside of El Salvador between the two negotiating teams. I mentioned earlier that the guerrillas which was a group made up of five separate

groups put forward a negotiating team in which the leaders of each of those five factions plus a military commander and a couple of other people, that was their negotiating team. At the beginning they expected and demanded that Freddie Cristiani, the President of the Republic, lead the government negotiating team. But he said, very forcefully, and very definitely, I am not going to leave the country every month or two to go off to a negotiating session, I've got a country to run. Plus, I am at a different level than the five leaders of the FMLN. I will put together a high power team, which will have my confidence. They will go off and negotiate. I will only step in at the very end of the process if there are minor points that remain to be discussed, but I am not going to lead the negotiating team and he held to that.

Q: This was his personal decision?

WALKER: Yes, he could have easily accepted.

Q: I mean were we telling him or doing anything?

WALKER: We didn't tell him one way or the other. I think once he presented this as his position we saw the wisdom of it and we certainly never questioned that. This process was a series of meetings, usually three or four days in length interspersed by a month or two months when the two sides would go back and talk among themselves and try to decide where to go for the next meeting, and then the next meeting would be held. Each of the meetings, if I remember correctly, was held in a different place. Sometimes in Mexico, sometimes in Venezuela, sometimes in various other locales. Never in the United States.

At this point of course there were a lot of people seeing the prospects of perhaps a successful negotiating process who wanted to get into the act. I would mention Carlos Andrés Pérez of Venezuela, Carlos Salinas of Mexico, people like that, Oscar Arias of Costa Rica who was out of office, but was a Nobel laureate in bringing peace to Central America supposedly. Most importantly of course it was the United Nations that really saw this process moving forward I think because Perez de Cuellar was the Secretary General of the United Nations at the time, a Peruvian. As I mentioned earlier he appointed Alvaro de Soto another Peruvian to be his chief negotiator, his chief mediator at these talks. The fact that there were two Latin Americas this high in the United Nations, I think they wanted to involve themselves in what was the major problem in the hemisphere to show that they could do something in Latin America. The curious thing in my opinion is that up until this point the United Nations had pretty well stayed out of the Central America morasses other than to criticize us occasionally. Once the UN in the person of the Secretary General and people like Alvaro de Soto saw that maybe there was a chance to bring these two sides together, maybe there was a Nobel Peace Prize here, maybe there were laurels to be won, they jumped in quite forcefully. At the beginning they came to us for advice, assistance, this sort of thing because we were, in rough terms, the big gorilla on the block and they knew that we had a huge Embassy. We had people all over the country. We were a big contributor to the government, so I think they came to us to talk. Over time as they became more immersed in the negotiation process, they

talked to us less and less. They started thinking, I guess, that they were in control of the situation and that we could be not pushed out of it, but pushed more to the side. I think they saw us as, correctly I guess, as being much more on the government's side than we were on the guerrillas' side, but I think they also underestimated our commitment to a negotiated settlement. I think they thought we were perhaps part of the problem rather than part of the solution. I've been critical of the United Nations' involvement in Salvador for a number of reasons, not in the least in which was the person of Alvaro de Soto who I mentioned earlier was somewhat difficult to deal with.

The process had its fits and starts, issues that you didn't think were going to be problems, were problems. Issues that you thought were going to be problems sometimes were settled more quickly than expected. The major issue, the major stumbling block I think that everybody saw right from the beginning was how would you tame this military that had grown even more important than it ever was and it was always very important in Salvador. It had grown both in size as well as in capabilities. The guerrillas of course one of their principal demands was the demobilization of the military, breaking it up and creating an entirely new military structure, perhaps not even having a military and of course the government resisted this totally. The military had a couple of people on the government's negotiating team. One was an active duty colonel, Colonel Vargas who was thought to be among the smartest of the colonels, a bright guy. He wasn't quite as much a part of the military hierarchy as most other colonels. He was a little different. He was thought to be a Christian Democrat. He was thought to be more intelligent than the rest, but he was put on the negotiating team. One of the cabinet ministers who was on the team was a retired colonel, so he was thought to speak more for the traditional military mindset.

The government team was led by the Minister of the Presidency who was purely a political figure, civilian, had a big ego. On the government's side, the chief negotiator even though he wasn't at the table for the meetings was the President. Each time there was a meeting for the two sides to get together under the auspices of the United Nations, we sent someone from the embassy to be a reporting officer at these meetings. So we had a pretty good idea of what was going on as it was going on. But at the same time I was getting instructions from Washington to go to see the President, to talk about this issue or that issue, to get a flavor for what or how he thought things were going. I was always impressed when I went over to see him. This would be oh God almost daily when the negotiations were taking place, I was always impressed with the fact that he was right up to the minute in terms of news about what was going on at the meetings. In other words his fax machine, his Internet connections, his communication with his team was constant. If decisions were being made about anything that was remotely important, the decision was being made by Freddie Cristiani the President, not by the team on the spot. This was not a President who was letting his team go off and negotiate and then come back and tell him about it. This was a team that was obviously under instructions to keep him totally informed, that he would make the critical decisions. I was impressed with his involvement in the process.

We also did something else which was usually in the aftermath once the team from the government side came back to El Salvador. We would get together with them as a team to get their flavor, to get their description of what had taken place. At a few of those meetings, two or three if I remember correctly, a team came down from Washington in the person of Joe Sullivan who was the DAS at the time for Central America and Mike Kozak who was the principal DAS and a lawyer and known for his participation in negotiation processes. Mike Kozak who was later chosen to replace me, but it was an unsuccessful nomination, was very involved in the negotiations with Panama to get the Panama Canal treaty signed. He had done a lot of negotiation in the context of Central America, Latin America. Although he doesn't speak Spanish, he nevertheless, had a good flavor for how negotiations went in that part of the world. So, Mike Kozak the Principal DAS and Joe Sullivan the DAS for Central America would often come down and sit around and try to work up strategies for the next session. You might offer this, you might withdraw this from the table, you might do that. It was obvious that we wanted this process to succeed, not at the expense of the government losing the ball game, but certainly we wanted obstacles to be talked about and see if we couldn't get them out of the way. The principal issue that was obviously a big stumbling block because President Cristiani wasn't totally sure of how far he could go on this had to do with reform of the military side of things. Reform of the security services. The guerrillas wanted the army to be eliminated. They wanted the police to be pulled together. At that point in time there were at least three major police forces in the country one was the national guard, one was the minister of interior police and one was the traffic cop police, the municipal police I guess you would call them. The guerrillas wanted the first two to be eliminated. For a whole new civilian police to be set up with their participation in it if not control of it. These were two very tough issues to work their way through. In the end, however, they were negotiated to a point that was acceptable to all and turned out to be a very successful resolution.

Q: Was there a disquiet on the part of the American side either in Washington or within your circle, Salvador, about the United Nations running this because we've always had this certain reserve about the United Nations.

WALKER: I can put it in personal terms. Watching that negotiation process not really from the sidelines, but from being quite involved in it, my former philosophical belief in the United Nations and admiration for the United Nations and confidence that the United Nations was the right vehicle in something like negotiating or mediating this negotiation process, my opinion went downhill. I've mentioned the person of Alvaro de Soto from a third world country always trying to show that he had third world tendencies himself even though he was a Peruvian aristocrat who spoke better English probably than his Spanish who was the son of a diplomat I believe so he was educated in France and the UK and the U.S. I think he at least gave the impression to people like Freddie Cristiani, to a negotiating team for the government, that he was leaning over backwards that he understood the third world and the FMLN was an equal with the government in this negotiation process. I found the politics of the UN at that point somewhat disturbing.

Later when we get to my later career and we get to talking about me when I headed a UN peacekeeping operation in Croatia, my opinion dropped even further. That having been said, once the United Nations jumps into something, once they decide the Secretary General the people around the Secretary General, once they decide to put the UN stamp on an issue, it's very, very difficult to move them aside. It's very, very difficult to criticize them and in this case that was particularly true because we were seen to be totally on the government's side. If we criticized Alvaro de Soto or the United Nations for appearing to be too much on the guerrillas' side, this would look like we were just taking a cheap shot. But Alvaro de Soto was a problem. He was a real problem. I think I mentioned earlier that the guerrillas themselves thought that it was better to negotiate when he was out of the room or in the corridors after the meeting because he almost seemed to make problems for the negotiators on both sides rather than solve them.

At some place in this negotiation process the situations changed when George Bush, Sr. was inaugurated as our President and that meant that the ARA bureau changed hands. The person who came in to replace Elliott Abrams was a fellow named Bernie Aronson. Bernie was a renegade democrat. Bernie and his family had been known up to that point as part of the Democratic Party although centrist Democrats. Bernie, if I am correct, his background was in the labor movement. He had something to do with mining disputes on the miners' side in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, earlier. So, Bernie came to dealing with the Salvador issue in Central America certainly to the left of where Elliott Abrams had come at it. I think Bernie was much more comfortable with the United Nations than perhaps some of the other people at State. I think more so perhaps than his predecessor. Everybody, I think, at State was concerned with; I'm not sure how to put it. The United Nations, the general assembly dominated by the third world, by the non-allied movement, with which of course the FMLN had excellent relations. They had "diplomatic" representatives in Europe, in other parts of the world and were always going around presenting themselves as being oppressed by this right wing military government supported by the United Nations and that certainly had residence within the United Nations, within the Secretariat, within the General Assembly. That's the long answer to your question. The short answer is yes, I think we had some disquiet at times that the United Nations was a principal player in this.

Q: During this time how were your relations with ARA during the negotiations and maybe elsewhere in the government including congress, NSC (National Security Council)?

WALKER: It was only when I would come to Washington on consultations which was relatively frequent that I would go to the NSC, that I would go to DOD, that I would talk to the other players involved. At that time Colin Powell was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. I always felt that I was being supported. I wouldn't say totally. There were times when my judgments or my analyses or my reporting was questioned, was asked about, but I always felt that I had almost total support. Bernie had his own way of looking at things. Bernie had contacts with the diplomatic representatives of the FMLN in Washington but they were very, very, very different from the FMLN types I was meeting

down there who were combatants rather than Washington reception goers. Support, yes, I had good support.

Now, with the Congress of course it was a mixed bag. There were Congressmen who would come to Salvador because it was close by. You could fly down there in three hours from Washington or four hours from Washington, spend a weekend and then come home. Every weekend almost we had a CODEL or two. This was during a very partisan time in the U.S. congress. Iran Contra was still breaking over people's heads, mine included, making for some bitter feuds among Congressmen. We would have right wing CODELs come down. We would have left wing CODELs come down and occasionally we would have centrist CODELs come down. Seldom did any of the three groups mix. Seldom did a group come down that had both Democrats and Republicans on it. The Senate side I think mostly centrists came down to take a look for themselves. There weren't that many Senators that were that involved in the issues in Central America except for Chris Dodd from Connecticut who was chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations. So, he took an active role. In my opinion often a negative role. Senator Lugar who represented the center and who was among the ranking Republicans on the Senate Foreign Relations; this was a period when he and Jesse Helms were trying to decide who was the ranking member. Helms took an interest in Central America, but not personally coming down himself, he would send one or two of his staffers to come and see us every once in a while, most notably Debra DeMoss who later married a Honduran colonel and became a Central American herself, but at that point she was someone who knew the leadership of the ARENA party. So she would come down and talk to them bringing I would assume a message from the right in the United States.

On the House side there were three, four, five liberal Democrats who were difficult to deal with, very vociferous in being anti the U.S. policy in Central America, but on the other end of the spectrum there were several Republican right wingers who were almost too supportive because they came up with some pretty crazy ideas about how we should bring even greater support to the Salvadoran government. I would come up and give briefings on the Hill when I was in town usually to a packed house because a lot of staffers especially were most interested in being able to brief their Congressman or their Senator on what was happening in El Salvador because it was something that was coming up for a vote with considerable frequency. Even Congressmen who didn't have a hell of a lot of interest in this subject nevertheless would send their staffer to get an update from the Ambassador. It was usually SRO (standing room only) crowd when I would give these briefings. Usually there were one or two staffers who would show their knowledge of the issue by asking me tough questions. I would also make a round of the newspapers wherever I was so I could talk to editorial boards about the conflict.

In terms of support from the administration, from the State Department, from the NSC, from DOD, I think I had quite good support.

Q: Do you think Cristiani as you were having these frequent meetings after, during the negotiation period, was he watching you as a thermometer to figure out was American support going to go away or not or were we beginning to waiver?

WALKER: I'm sure he must have. I mean, there were two or three issues that I never went to see him but what I didn't have to bring these up under an instruction from someone at State or someplace and the major subject was definitely the killing of the Jesuits. What is happening in the legal process? What is happening in the investigation? What does he need in terms of support to enable him to be firmer and to try and get the court system to work better, that sort of stuff? He must have thought I was a real pain in the backside when I would come in and figuratively if not literally pound the table and demand that something further be done. There were two or three other issues, not of the same emotional content of that, but nevertheless things that I had to bring to him. No question about it, he must have been looking at my words and looking at what I was saying. Even though I was bringing him sometimes very tough messages, very specific demands that he do X, Y, Z whether on the Jesuit case or on something else. I always made sure he understood that we were continuing our support for him. That we were bringing this demand or advice to him as a friend. As recently as four or five months ago when I last saw him, when I first saw him after leaving Salvador a decade ago and apologized to him for having been such a frequent pest and demander, he said, oh, I understood, no hard feelings. I understood that you were bringing me messages from Washington. Those were messages I had to receive, but unquestionably he was looking to see what the latest signal was.

Early on, I mean when he first came into office, the ARENA party that he represented was very, very suspicious of the United States. They felt we had stolen the election from them in '84. They felt that we were in bed with Napoleon Duarte and the Christian Democratic party and that we were out to get them. They felt that we were behind the charges, that they were the death squad party. Even though Freddie was from the center wing of that party, I think he harbored some of these questions about how the United States was going to deal with them and certainly at the beginning we were suspicious of him. We were suspicious of what his government was going to be like. We were suspicious of his commitment to a negotiated settlement. So, for the first few months, my meetings with him were considerably more formal and more correct, I guess, than they later became. When you go and see a president a couple of times a week it's not that you end up calling him Freddie, but you end up in a much more relaxed give and take in a mutually respectful way of dealing with each other.

I think I mentioned there were two people that were very close to Freddie Cristiani. One was his chief of staff I guess you would call him, a fellow named Arturo Tona. Arturo Tona was a businessman. He came in to be Freddie's chief of staff just to keep things organized, but he became the door you had to go through to see Cristiani. When you wanted to see the President, you didn't call up Cristiani, you called up Tona. And Tona would always sit in on the meetings and contribute to them. You could see his blood rising in his head when I would say tough things to the president. He thought this was maybe further than the American Ambassador should be able to go. Every once in a while he would burst forward with his anger at me. But he was very protective of Cristiani, as he should have been. The other person who was sometimes in the room, only occasionally, but when there maybe even more difficult for me was Mrs. Cristiani.

Freddie Cristiani had a very classy, aristocratic wife from a well to do family. I'm sure she was very uncomfortable sometimes when she'd see me pressing her husband and wondering why I didn't understand better some of the pressures he was under. I was much better off with Freddie Cristiani when it was just one-on-one, when either of these or both of these people were not sitting there because I knew they were looking at different things than he was.

Q: Were you getting any feedback from well, Salvadorian society, I'm not using the term in a social sense, but the business people, others about the way things were going. I mean you'd mentioned before that a lot of people just wanted to get this damn thing over with.

WALKER: In the aftermath of the offensive that included the wealthier classes, the business community. I told you the story earlier about the fellow, the owner of TACA Airlines who was very wealthy and was among the wealthiest in the country and he had the experience of his house being taken over by the guerrillas during the offensive. He ended up saying, gee they treated us better than the army did when they took over my house because they didn't steal anything, they apologized, etc., they treated the maids nicely. Whereas, when the army came in, they stripped us clean. His vision of what was going on changed slightly during the offensive and I think in the aftermath a lot of the business community, some because they had been frightened to death by the guerrillas coming in to San Salvador when they thought the guerrillas were being militarily defeated out in the back woods. The business class I think recognized the reality that unless this war was ended the economy was never really going to go back to being a normal economy rather than a wartime economy. So, there were very few people that I met or had anything to do with that were not supportive of the peace process.

Now obviously some wanted the peace accords to come out differently than others. I think almost everyone in the country wanted the military to be reformed dramatically, except those who were in the military. I think if you'd talk about it much most people wanted the police to be, not this collection of three different police forces each more corrupt and violence prone than the other. I think most people wanted the police to become a real police. Those were things I think almost everyone agreed on. One, we're going to have to negotiate this. Two, we don't want the guerrillas to come into power. I don't think others than the guerrillas themselves wanted that, but almost everyone was in favor of a settlement taking place.

Q: Well, how did things fall out on this?

WALKER: The process, although a serious one, was not a fast one. It took another two years partly because there were these intervals between meetings and it wasn't a continuous negotiating process. How did things fall out? Things fell out in that on the last, not even the last minute of 1991 actually well into the first day of 1992, a peace treaty was signed in New York under the auspices of the United Nations and it was a peace treaty that has worked. It is recognized by just about everybody as having been a very, very successful negotiation process. Maybe because no decisions were made in haste or under real pressure. Everyone was able to go back and talk about it. The accords

have not been violated in any serious way from the day they were signed. It was fairly dramatic though how the negotiating process ended.

Finally and I'm not sure exactly when, but at some point near the end near, within the last months or so, the UN decided that they were close enough to working out a deal that the talks should be moved to New York. This was so that they could be more continuous. This was so that Perez de Cuellar himself could become involved and use the power of his office, the bully pulpit of his office as you were to bring the two sides together for that final gap that was separating them. We had some problems with that. We weren't sure that right under the shadow of the Secretary General of the United Nations and right by the General Assembly that the government side was going to be able to hold its own. But the UN insisted. We threw out problems like visa problems for people who were on our lookout list, that is known terrorists and this sort of thing, but we finally worked that all out and the talks were moved to New York.

December 31st of 1991 was for many people the drop dead date, that this negotiation process had to be concluded because that was the end of Perez de Cuellar's term as Secretary General of the United Nations. He had already announced that he was retiring or maybe not of his own choice he was leaving. Boutros Boutros-Ghali had been elected as his successor. I think everybody felt that it would be better to have this thing settled, out of the way if only because Perez de Cuellar, Alvaro de Soto, others, Latinos had become very knowledgeable and knew the system. If a new Secretary General came in especially one from Egypt who was going to pay more attention to the Middle East or whatever Egyptian Secretary Generals would pay attention to, that the process would lose the momentum. So we were all pushing very, very hard for a conclusion of a peace accord before the end of Perez de Cuellar's term. Well, it really came down to the wire. In about oh golly, it must have been about a week or ten days before the end of the year we decided to converge en masse in New York and get this thing hammered out. I was called up from El Salvador. Bernie Aronson ensconced himself in New York. Joe Sullivan came up. Mike Kozak came up. Freddie Cristiani at first said he was not going to come up until it was ready to sign, but he came up as we all tried to push towards that last, that wire. What happened was we essentially, I don't even remember if we took off for Christmas, but we negotiated, or they negotiated with us on the sidelines doing things behind the scenes; a very, very heavy push went in to getting this thing concluded.

On the last day of the year we were told that Perez de Cuellar had essentially given up on the process. There were one or two remaining sticking points that neither side would budge on. Perez de Cuellar told everyone that he was leaving for a vacation that he had planned post-secretary generalship vacation with his wife and they were going to leave for LaGuardia or JFK to fly to the Caribbean I believe it was at something like 3:00 in the afternoon. Someone, and I believe it was Bernie Aronson, went and told people in the Secretary General's office that if he would just stay around we could almost guarantee that this would be concluded before his term in office was up. My memory, and it might be a little shaky on details, is that Mrs. Perez de Cuellar was sitting down in a limo waiting for her husband to come down to go to the airport and take off into the sunset and

sat there for quite a while and they missed the plane because Perez de Cuellar actually ended up staying up until just before midnight.

We had already come to the conclusion that they were so close on these last remaining issues that one side or the other would look at the clock and say, oh my God, we've got to do it now. We decided I think again, Bernie Aronson's idea was we'll stop the clock. We won't let it go past midnight, which is the end of Perez de Cuellar's term. We will stop the clock and we'll be able to tell people that it was actually signed before midnight. So Perez de Cuellar stayed there. I think the Secretary General was on the 37th floor. We were on the 36th floor and this was New Year's Eve and just before midnight, just before midnight the word came down that the two sides had agreed on a final text and had signed it in front of Perez de Cuellar. At about 15 or 10 minutes to midnight, Freddie Cristiani and his team came down from the Secretary General's office where they had just signed the peace accords. We of course were all congratulating and shaking hands and giving abrazos and telling the government side what a good job they had done and I remembered saying, look fellows, let's go over to the window here and look out the window into midtown Manhattan because in just a few minutes, midnight, the sky is going to be alive with fireworks and it might not be completely true, but it will look like a celebration of what you have just signed upstairs when actually it was New York celebrating New Year's Eve. I went around and got everyone from the government side and we all went over and stood there and looked out of the windows and midnight came and nothing happened. So I guess my knowledge of New York was exposed at that point. But, it was a joyful moment.

Q: Had you noticed as this went on that a bond was developing with the guerrilla leaders and the government? I mean were these people getting together more or not?

WALKER: I wasn't in any of the negotiating sessions watching them across the table. The reporting officers we sent to these meetings told us that they met in the halls and talked in normal terms with each other. There was certainly a difference among the players on both sides. On the FMLN side there were types like Schafik Handal who was the representative of the Orthodox communist faction of the FMLN. Back then and to this day he was still the most difficult one to deal with. Sort of the philosophical communist. Always spewing out Marxist rhetoric. He of course did not form any social bond with anyone on the other side.

Going across the spectrum one or two of the leaders were military commander types of their factions. They weren't particularly sociable with the other side, but there were one or two who were. Similarly on the government side, there were some hardliners. There were some who really didn't want anything to do with the FMLN and there were others at different levels with less resistance to being more or less friendly. It took the signing of the peace accords. On the 15th of January of '92 Carlos Salinas, the President of Mexico, decided to have a formal signing of the accords in Mexico City at the Chapultepec Palace and this of course was a big international hoop de do. I flew up and attended with John Negroponte who was the American Ambassador in Mexico City. Bernie was there with a delegation from Washington and there were delegations from just about every diplomatic

representative in Mexico City plus all the players from the two sides. Very, very formal signing ceremony in the palace and then afterwards a reception, a very elegant reception that Carlos Salinas gave. I went to the reception with one thought in mind perhaps a bit impish, but I decided that I was going to make sure I got a hardliner from the FMLN together with a hardliner from the government and introduced them to see what sparks would fly. The first ones I did was General Ponce the Minister of Defense. I introduced him to Joaquin Villalobos who was the most effective military commander of the FMLN, got them together and Joaquin, whom I had met in New York and said a few words to and got to know a little bit, I wanted him to meet Emilio Ponce and for five or ten seconds there was a little tenseness, but within ten seconds they were talking about the sort of social things any two people who haven't met each other for a while would talk about, whose relatives were whose and where you had gone to school and where were you during the war sort of thing. It was interesting and I did that with several people. I came away from that reception saying to myself this damn thing is going to work. Salvadorans have much more in common than the differences that separate them and that's the way it seems to have worked.

Q: Back in Salvador, what, they signed, this was signed in the beginning of '92, how much longer were you there?

WALKER: I was there into March if I remember correctly. I was down there for a three year tour obviously at the end of three I sent my family back to Washington, we thought I'd be following them shortly, but this was right when the peace process was becoming a critical one so Washington said, please stay until the end. I stayed through the signing and then for another couple of months. As I said Mike Kozak was nominated to replace me, but Senator Dodd put a hold on his nomination, which lasted a long time.

Q: Do you know why?

WALKER: It was the same thing that Dodd had against me, involvement in the Nicaragua equation back when I was a DAS. Mike was the principal DAS at the time. Senator Dodd claimed that Mike Kozak and Joe Sullivan, these two guys who were very involved in the negotiation process, had both "not been totally forthcoming in some testimony they'd given about the Nicaragua situation" so Dodd put a hold on the two of them. That hold lasted for well over a year in fact. Both of them are now out as ambassadors, but it was a long time before they were able to go through a nomination process, confirmation process. So, I stayed on until March. Sometime in February, I think, there was another ceremony this time in Salvador for the accords to be presented to the Salvadoran people in a celebration of the peace accords. So at the Fairier, the international fairgrounds they had a very big get together, well attended, maybe not at quite the level of Mexico City, but nevertheless well attended by the international press, etc. The key to this celebration was not only the accords themselves, but the fact that the FMLN leadership was allowed to come back into the country openly and get on with the peace process. They had a celebration in which the five leaders of the FMLN were up on the stage, plus three or four government spokesmen, plus representatives of the major political parties, all of whom gave speeches, some better than others, most of them pretty

... Schafik Handal, the communist, was boring and full of communist jargon. Some of the others were just as bad from the government side, but there were a couple of good speeches. Joaquin Villalobos gave a very good speech on behalf of the FMLN mostly saying, okay, that's behind us, now we're heading into the future. What do we do from here is the big question. It was a day when Salvador, the country as a whole realized that the war was really over. Here were the FMLN leaders in San Salvador on a stage giving speeches, something that six months before would have been just absolutely unbelievable.

Q: Did your Embassy get involved in the process of bringing the troops in from the field, reorganizing the army, doing whatever needed to be done?

WALKER: Yes, sure, we were involved in it. This was more or less after I left, but lots of planning was taking place. Our MILGROUP was obviously still a large MILGROUP and was still responsible for working with the Salvadoran army. One of the big questions in a war like this is how much does a country have to look backwards? How much does a country have to uncover horrors that were committed and somehow pin responsibility on someone and bring people to justice, deal with this war criminal issue? There was a great deal of debate on this. Are we going to go back and point fingers? Are we going to have an investigation? Another thing was taking place during this part of my tour was that in January of 1990 the killing of the Jesuits was solved in that we knew that a unit of the army had killed the Jesuits. From there down through almost the same two year period that the peace negotiation process was taking place there was this legal process taking place in which some of the soldiers who were actually involved in killing the priests, some of the junior officers who led that group and then one colonel who had sent them into the field to do this were put in jail and were being processed.

There was a trial. That legal process was in a way intimately connected with the peace negotiation because it obviously greatly weakened the government that they had a unit of the army that had killed the Jesuit priests and the legal system seemed incapable of producing justice. There were also voices saying that this was not just a colonel who had sent a unit out to kill the Jesuits, this was something that had been decided at the very highest levels of the government and therefore, not only that colonel, but his superior and his superior and their superiors and the President himself should be brought to justice. Getting the court system to go through the motions of having a trial occupied an extreme amount of my time. I had two legal officers, plus their staff working almost full time on the Jesuit case for two years. This, before the peace accords were signed when we didn't know if they ever would be signed. This was seen as a factor in the peace process that might push it right off the tracks. For instance, if we had tried to push for not just that colonel to be processed, but his superior and his superior and the President, that would have weakened the government to the point that they would never have signed the peace accord. You don't sign a peace accord unless you've been militarily defeated from a weak position. We were always pushing for the shooters, the officers on the scene, whoever had sent them into the field with the order to kill that they be processed legally. We looked to see if anyone above them were involved, but not being able to find anything and we didn't, we were never able to say well that colonel's superior officer

should also be processed because we found evidence that he was involved. Once you start getting to the point where you were saying as the guerrillas were saying as their friends were saying, well, you know, once this peace accord is signed, we're going to find out everyone who was involved in that and we're going to throw them out of the army and we're going to send them to jail for life, etc. That made it more difficult for the army to accept the peace agreement. I guess this is always the case. I'm sure in the Japanese army at the end of World War II there were many who were ready to fight to the last man because they didn't want the horrors to be discovered and their responsibility for them to be pointed to.

The peace accords put together a mechanism which I'm not sure I totally agree with because it was looking backwards and this was something called the peace commission. The peace commission was supposed to look into some of these human rights, war crimes things, and determine who was responsible, and at least set it out on a piece of paper. That truth commission became highly politicized. It did what I consider an inadequate job of really looking at some things. They came to me and said hey, we're going to give you a list of all the officers in the army and you tell us who the bad guys are. I said, gee, I'm not sure I know who the bad guys are. Oh, you must know who has the worst reputations. I said, yes, but that's all based really on hearsay, that's a very unscientific way to go about it. They said, well, you just put a mark beside the ones that you think should be thrown out of the army and we'll get rid of them. I didn't think that was a very scientific way of going about finding out who had really caused major human rights abuses.

Not much was looked at in terms of the rebel side. They had also killed and assassinated a lot of people. They had also killed some Americans. We never got to the bottom of who had killed them and no great effort except on our part went into that. The truth commission did come up with names of people. One of the guerrilla leaders who was truthful with the truth commission was Joaquin Villalobos. He said, yes, we killed people, we did this, we did that. So, they named him. They put his name down as someone who had committed atrocities. Under the terms of the agreement anyone who was named by the truth commission was ineligible to run for political office for five or ten years or something like that. So Villalobos is ineligible to participate in politics for a certain period of time. The guys who just weren't truthful, who just said, oh, I don't anything about any of those things, they were not named even though everybody knew they were probably worse offenders than Joaquin Villalobos. So, people who told the truth to the truth commission were most often the ones who paid a penalty whereas those who just kept their mouth shut stayed under the fence.

Anyway, the Jesuit case. Every move forward on that to bring the military unit involved, the officers of that unit, and the guy who sent them out. Every move along that path required incredible pressure, incredible talking to the President to convince him that yes, he had to do X, Y and Z. I received a phone call one night from Bernie Aronson and Larry Eagleburger who was the Deputy Secretary of State at the time. They called me and something had just happened in the Jesuit case. There was always something bad happening with the judge throwing out this motion or entertaining that motion or delaying or not delaying. There was always something being done on the judicial side

that was not to our liking. I remember getting this call late at night and Bernie was on the phone and Larry was also on the phone and Bernie was really hot under the collar. He was telling me, you guys go in there and tell Cristiani this and tell him that and God damn it; he was really getting upset. I was saying, you know, hey, this is difficult, it's going to be hard for him to do that. Bernie finally said, Bill, you go in there and tell Cristiani tomorrow morning that if he doesn't do this and does it right away, the aid is gone, we're going to cut off the assistance. You let him know in no uncertain terms. I said, Bernie, are you sure you want me to deliver that message? You're damn right I do. I said, well, if the assistance is cut off, let's not threaten that unless we're going to do it. If the assistance is cut off to this government the effort over the last ten years goes down the drain. While Bernie was listening to that, Larry came in and said, okay, Bill, Bernie is a little hot on this. I would suggest you not deliver that sort of a message. You go in one more time and try to convince them. Bernie had this very strong feeling about what was going on there. He really wanted this damn war to end as we all did, but that particular outburst if it had been followed I think would have been very dangerous to the peace process going forward or the Jesuit case going forward for that matter. But there's no question about it, the government hunkered down. The military hunkered down. They only let, come out into the light whatever was the absolute minimum in terms of who was responsible for the Jesuit case.

What was finally determined by the court to have happened was the offensive that broke out the night of 11-12. I've already described the panic, the chaos, the fact that the guerrillas came into the city, the fact that a lot of people thought that the guerrillas were taking sanctuary during the day on the campus of the Catholic University. On the night of 15-16 so that's four days later which was a night of violence, the military high command, was meeting at the Sata Major, the command center headquarters which had been mortared several times over the preceding three or four days. At a very late meeting that night they were all sitting around trying to decide what to do and trying to decide how bad things were. There were various descriptions of sub-meetings that took place, that the big meeting broke up of the commanders of various units of the various divisions, the battalions and a smaller group met and then a smaller group. What was proven to have happened at least was that the commander of the military academy who was a colonel from the important promotion that was in charge of most of the battalions, Colonel Benavides, called in two young lieutenants from the Atlacatl Battalion and told them that they had to go up on the campus of the UCA to take care of things because they had information the campus was a sanctuary for the guerrillas and so this unit went up.

We heard there was going to be violence that night. We heard that the American Ambassador was going to be a target in his residence. I went home, the Salvadoran military had sent a unit over to protect my residence. I met a young lieutenant who told me that they were there to protect me. I didn't learn until four or five, six weeks after the event, but that unit was the unit that was going to kill the Jesuits later that night, 2:00 AM or 3:00 AM. That lieutenant was one of the two lieutenants who was arrested and put in the pokey and tried for the killing of the Jesuits. There are people involved in the conspiracy theories that abound in El Salvador who upon hearing that this unit came to my house at about 6:00 in the afternoon preceding the killing of the Jesuits and all stood

there and the lieutenant came and reported to me. There are serious people who think that that was the time that I gave the instructions to go up there and kill the Jesuits. That this shows the United States was involved in this because this was the unit that went up and killed them.

There are all sorts of conspiracy theories abounding. There are theories that the decision to send this unit onto the campus was not the decision of this colonel, but it was a decision of the collective hierarchy of the military. There are theories that this was a decision made by Freddie Cristiani himself. None of that has been proven. What has been proven is the two lieutenants got the order from Colonel Benavides, the head of the military academy. Now, why would the head of the military academy send a unit up there when he was just a scholastic colonel? The answer to that is the head of the military academy had a command role as far as San Salvador, the capital city. The commander of the academy being more an academic than a military commander was thought to be seen by his colleagues as not a fighting military man and I think he might have. The theory is that he might have wanted to show his machismo or his command authority by sending this group in; saying go in there and take care of the problem up on the UCA campus. Where the truth lies I don't think anyone knows except whoever was involved. The shooters, two lieutenants, and Colonel Benavides in a two year process were convicted and were sent to prison. It was the first time that any colonel had ever been prosecuted for any crime whatsoever as far as anyone could remember. A lot of people thought that his fellow colonels or other people that were involved in the decision paid him off in some way or promise that he'd be out as soon as they could get him out. Sure enough, he was pardoned not too long after that, but it was a very serious quest for the truth. It just didn't lead as far as it could have if we had had greater information.

Let me now tell the story of Colonel Caceres who I mentioned earlier.

Q: Could you spell that for us?

WALKER: C-A-C-E-R-E-S. This goes back to an earlier time. It was before the offensive, but I want to tell this because it describes, it illustrates the way the old colonel of the Salvadoran military behaved. I was in El Salvador maybe six, seven or eight months and I decided to visit the third largest city in the country, a place called Sonsonate which happens to be the center of the railroad buffs interest because it used to be a hub for railroads. It's a city out in the western part of the country on the way to Guatemala. I was going out to meet an American priest who back then had set himself up and was building an empire almost. I have been back as recently as a couple of months ago and his empire continues to grow. He is one of these priests, I don't even know his order, but he's one of these American can do priests, isn't interested really in theology, isn't interested in politics. He just wants to get together projects to get people to work and get people to take care of themselves. He's a great fundraiser so he comes to the States and raises money for his little orphanage, for his little old folks' home, for his cloth factory, he makes uniforms for doctors and that sort of stuff. He's got a bilingual school that he's got started. He's an entrepreneur who happens to be a priest and he's an American. So, I went out visit him, to see these good works that he was doing. I finished the day in

Sonsonate at maybe 3:00 in the afternoon, got into my Cadillac limo, and as usual I had an advance car waiting out front checking out the road. I had a lead car full of guys with guns. I had the limo in which I was seated with an assistant RSO, up in the front seat who was in command of this convoy with his radio. I was in the back seat with the Consul General who had gone out because he knew this priest and was a good Catholic himself. Then there was a follow car, full of guns and bodyguards. So, we took off from Sonsonate 3:00 in the afternoon or so and headed back toward San Salvador. The road from Sonsonate to San Salvador is a road that goes from along the coast of Guatemala through the major port of El Salvador called Acajutla and then up into Sonsonate and then straight to San Salvador. This is part of the Pan American Highway. It is, however, not a massive freeway, it is a two lane road. As a result of being on the path from Acajutla, the port, to San Salvador, it has a lot of trucks, has a lot of traffic, very, very heavy traffic. So, my caravan pulls into this traffic and we head for San Salvador. My caravan perhaps the most experienced and skillful in getting around traffic jams and moving smartly around traffic problems always trying to go as fast as you could go consistent with the traffic and with safety, we start whizzing along down this highway. As we whiz along the follow car behind me apparently in regional security officer bible that they must go by, the follow car is never supposed to let someone come alongside of the principal's car. So, if anyone would try to pass, my follow car would move over and cut them off and not let them come past me. But this is all going on behind me, right, so I'm not paying any attention to it.

We're whizzing down the highway and we're going in and out of this two lane highway whenever we saw oncoming traffic with a break, we'd go out and push our way back into the single lane of traffic going in the same direction as we were, passing trucks, passing cars, passing all this traffic. Finally we're hearing some crackling over the radio system and I'm listening to my RSO up in the front seat who happened to be a very, very capable young assistant RSO named Bill Lee, a Chinese American. Bill is up there and he's talking on the radio and giving instructions to all our vehicles, when to pass, when to take a chance on passing, etc. and all of a sudden he's in a discussion with the follow car. The message is coming across that behind the follow car there is another caravan with several vehicles with obviously a principal's vehicle in the middle and he's trying to pass and honking and making noise. Bill is asking our follow car, you know, what's in this caravan that's trying to pass and don't let them pass. We're told that the caravan behind us, two of the vehicles are opened flatbed pickup trucks with guys in military uniforms and automatic weapons sticking out every side. Bill Lee correctly is saying, oh, and they've got scarves around their heads, etc. and our follow car is saying we don't know who these guys are. They look like they're military, but they could very easily be guerrillas because that's the way they dress, too. We don't know who the hell these guys are, but they're making such a bunch of noise trying to pass, going off on the dirt trying to come around the outside and our follow car continues to try blocking them.

It becomes evident to Bill Lee that if this goes on much longer somebody is going to get hurt. We've got these four or five cars; we've got the trucks on the side we're trying to pass. They're trying to pass on the dirt. Someone is going to get hurt. Bill finally says, "Mr. Ambassador I know maybe this isn't what we should do, but I'm going to let those

guys go past. Do you mind?" I said, "no, let them go past." The order goes back the next time they make a move to go past, just let them pass. Sure enough down the road there's a space where we pull in, these guys honk, they see we're not cutting them off, they roar past us. As they roar past us as we look up at these guys in uniform with all these weapons. There must have been two pickup trucks maybe five or six guys in each one of them and they really did, there was no way you could tell whether they were army or guerrillas. They had all sorts of pieces of uniforms on. Anyway, they zoomed past and in the middle was a little Toyota, whatever the top model of the Corolla is, with blackened windows, so you couldn't see who was in it, but they shoot past us.

Another couple of miles up the road traffic comes to a complete stop. We again, not willing to stop we pull around into the left hand lane and go shooting forward and we discover what has stopped the traffic and that is this little convoy of cars has blocked the road completely. They just pulled across the road and all these guys with guns are out with the guns aiming down the road at us. We pull up somewhat behind it again having no idea whether this is military or guerrillas setting up a roadblock. We pull up a couple of hundred yards from the blockade ready to take evasive action if necessary and we sit in the car as some of my Salvadoran guards go out to try and find out what's going on. The word comes back that this is Colonel Caceres who is the commander of the Sonsonate military zone and Colonel Caceres demands that we open up all our vehicles and we all get out so that he can see who we are. Bill Lee, myself, my Consul General, all my guards, say Colonel Caceres knows fairly well that this is your convoy Mr. Ambassador. There's no one who else who drives a big long Cadillac and goes around this way so there's no question that he knows who's in your car. Colonel Caceres continues to demand.

Well, in the meantime all his troops come forward and probably the scariest part of this was a couple of young guys with rocket propelled grenades on their shoulders at the ready aimed at my car. Colonel Caceres is demanding that everybody in the Cadillac get out. Bill Lee is saying sir; you don't get out of this vehicle. That is the sine qua non of our bible. The principal never gets out of an armored vehicle especially when there are people with guns hanging around. I'm saying, "well, those fellows have rocket propelled grenades and maybe we should rethink that part of the bible." Bill says, "well, you stay here, I'll get out." He gets out and goes up and tries to talk to Colonel Caceres. Bill spoke very good Spanish and the Colonel continues to demand that everybody get out of the car. He doesn't believe that this is the American Ambassador. Why would the American Ambassador have a Chinese bodyguard? This must be the Chinese ambassador. This went on. We were at a standstill. In the meantime traffic is piling up in both directions for miles and miles and miles. We're at what is a Mexican standoff.

Finally I said, "Bill, I'm getting out. I want to talk to this Colonel." Are we sure this is a Salvadoran colonel? It's obviously someone on our side, I'm going to get out and talk to him. I get out of the car and walk up and these rocket propelled grenades are now pointed at me. Now, what really pissed me off was the fact that all these weapons that were pointing at us were U.S. supplied weapons to the military of El Salvador and here they were pointing them at us. What pissed me off even more was being told that while

Caceres was bullying and ordering Bill Lee around, he told his guys to lock and load their weapons. There was no hint of a threat from our side. But this is what he did. I went to talk to him. I said, Colonel, what is the problem? He said, well, I've come to the conclusion that you and your security detail are a security problem yourselves. You wouldn't let my guys go past, you were creating all sorts of problems and I have to go down this road. I said, well, Colonel, when we decided that you weren't guerrillas that you were actually who you are I immediately told my guys to let you go past. I'm sorry you weren't able to go past earlier, but some of your guys look kind of rag tag and looked like they might be guerrillas. He went huffed and puffed and told me how important he was, etc. That this was a disgrace, that his ability to go down any road in El Salvador was being impeded by an ambassador. Anyway, I said, well, look, we're causing a traffic jam of monumental proportions, either we pull off to the side or why don't we go into San Salvador and we can discuss this there at our leisure. You can tell me all the objections you have and we'll see if we can't resolve the problem. He jumped into his car, they sped off.

As we were continuing on the road I said to my Consul General Nick Ricciuti. Nick, between here and San Salvador that Colonel's temperature is going to come down and he's going to realize he made a really stupid mistake here. I really resented that those were weapons that we had given them and they were pointing rocket propelled grenades for heavens sakes pointed at a windshield of a car. I said, when we get back to town I bet the first phone call that I get is from the colonel to explain, to apologize or do something. I don't know what his reaction is going to be, but it's going to be something to set this aside. I'm not going to take that phone call because I am really ticked off at that guy. The aura of impunity that this guy had, the aura of arrogance that this guy had, the aura of what an important man I Colonel Caceres am, really annoyed me. Sure enough when we got back to the office, I went back in my office and sure enough within minutes the phone rang and it was Colonel Caceres on the phone and I sent it over to one of my Spanish speaking American officers who told the good Colonel that I had other things to do. This story hit the papers the next day and everybody including the Colonel was coming to me to try and apologize to say that they all thought I was going to demand the Colonel's head. They all thought that if I wanted to I could and all I said, was hey, here's what happened. If the army thinks that he misbehaved or didn't act properly, the army can decide what to do. And I was waiting to see what they did do. It took a while, but they ended up assigning him to some remote region to get him out of my sight. The poor guy went around and it wouldn't have stuck with me except in the aftermath various people came to me to tell me about Colonel Caceres who was the most arrogant colonel in a club of many arrogant colonels.

For instance one person came and I heard this from several people, not too long before this Colonel Caceres had heard that a village in his military district was going to hold a saint's day for their saint, the patron saint of their village. Colonel Caceres is a born again Christian, non-Catholic. He sent the word to his village; no saint's days are going to be observed in my district. Well, the villagers had been doing this for hundreds of years, I guess, and decided that they would take the saint out and carry the saint through this little dirty village on the day which they had traditionally done. Well, when they did this

Colonel Caceres sent in a unit and they arrested all the guys carrying the saint, put them in jail and prosecuted them for idolatry. This was the type of story, story after story about Colonel Caceres, his arrogance and his thinking he was the king of the walk. When I heard all these stories I decided I want to play games with this guy. I want to see what the military will in fact do if they think I'm really mad at him. As I say, what they did they eventually sent him off to some remote location hoping that I would forget about him and then they could bring him back. He on the other hand tried to get his side of the story across. He went on talk shows. He did all sorts of things to make it sound like he was just a simple colonel trying to keep everybody safe. He told some people that the reason I didn't want to get out of the car was that I had a girl in the back seat with me. Then we revealed the story, the truth, which was that the consul general was in the back seat with me who was not a girl, but a man. Then the story was that I was involved romantically with the Consul General. All these strange stories were going out there.

The colonel changed the story I don't know how many times. It was one of the times when I really saw the ugly face of the Salvadoran military leader who thought he was God, who literally thought he was God. Since I knew that in the scheme of things I was probably one of the few people who could slap him and get away with it I decided to slap him. I decided to let people know that he had behaved in a boorish arrogant fashion which I didn't appreciate and then I let them sort of decide what that meant in terms of my relations with the army from thereon in. I don't know how many army officers came to me to tell me that oh, Caceres really was a nice guy, yeah, he had a bit of arrogance, he was a bit of this, but really a nice guy and gee, you know. Maybe they expected me to ask for the death penalty or something, they were so afraid that I was going to react in some different way. The issue with Colonel Caceres. It made it into was it Newsweek or Time or the Washington Post. Somehow it made it in that I had had this confrontation with this colonel on the road. Some of the letters that came into the editor were really quite amusing. One wondering how arrogant could the American Ambassador be that he was in a foreign country and chose to get into a confrontation with a foreign official. All sorts of strange letters coming from people who knew nothing about the circumstances. But Colonel Caceres was in fact a typical officer of the old style colonel, pre-war colonels. A war lord within his area of responsibility and someone who thought he could get away with absolutely anything.

That's a very long story, but I had to tell it.

Q: No, no it's interesting, which brings up a question, before you left was anything being put in place or something to change the culture of the military?

WALKER: Before I left not much, but over time the culture was evolving. I was there when the officer corps was going through this transition and they were going through a transition because they had been fighting a war for ten years. There were still remnants of the old type of colonel, this is Colonel Caceres. The old type of colonel tended to be heavier in weight, tended to have more arrogance, tended to have more corrupt practices associated with them. Then we come into my period there when the war had changed considerably and there were officers who had become prominent as a result of their

fighting ability, as a result of their organizational abilities. So, the whole officer corps was going through this transition, but what sped it up tremendously was the end of the war. Going back there now everybody admits including former members of the FMLN that the officer corps is nothing as it once was. They actually have to worry about getting arrested if they rape.

When I was there in the '70s, there was, a young man was brought to me who, and he was from a wealthy family, engaged to a lovely young girl from an equally wealthy family. One night they were sitting in his car outside her home when a car pulled up and a colonel got out in uniform, came over, put his gun to the head of the young man and said, I'm taking your girl. He took her away, raped her. There was no question as to who the colonel was. Because these two young people were from prominent families the father of whose son had been pistol whipped and his fiancé had been taken off and raped, the father felt that with his influence, with his prestige, with his importance, that he could bring a process against this colonel. Very stupid miscalculation. They went to the Minister of Defense, described this, nothing was done. Well maybe something was done, the colonel shortly thereafter was reassigned. He was made Ambassador to Israel. He went off as Ambassador to Israel. The relationship between Salvador and Israel had always been a fairly close one. They bought weapons from Israel and there was a considerable amount of money to be made as the Salvadoran Ambassador in Tel Aviv from this arms trade. This colonel not only was not punished, but he was sent off to some place where he could make a lot of money. I remember when I heard this I was so appalled that I sent a cable to our Embassy in Tel Aviv. I said I just want you to know who your colleague in the diplomatic corps is representing El Salvador. He's a colonel who went around raping with impunity. This woman was not by any means the first woman that he had so raped, there were all sorts of other women, but they were all not from quite as prominent a family and that's the only reason this one came to anyone's attention. They were a rogue lot. The officer corps now is more or less a military officer corps that devotes itself to strictly military affairs and there's not much in the way of military affairs anymore. It's a very different army.

Q: Well, you left there in what March of '92?

WALKER: I think it was March of '92, correct.

Q: Whither?

WALKER: Whither? I came back having been told that I was going to be nominated as Ambassador to Argentina. As a result of my service in El Salvador I received two rewards, one was nomination to go to Argentina as Ambassador and the other was promotion to Career Minister by the panels that November. I was the nominee to go to Argentina from before I left El Salvador my nomination was put forward until February or March of the following year. Almost for a year.

Q: You had an election of course.

WALKER: We had an election in November in which President Clinton was elected. Throughout that period I was awaiting a confirmation hearing up in the Senate by the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of senate foreign relations which was under the chairmanship of Chris Dodd, the senator from Connecticut. No hearing took place. At the end of, by the summer the first three or four months you're putting the papers together. Papers going to the White House. The White House is sending them to the Senate. Background checks, etc., etc., etc. By the summertime time was starting to run low for a hearing and I was not the only one who was caught in this process. There were seven, eight or nine other nominations that were pending not the least of which was Mike Kozak to replace me in El Salvador. Alex Watson was supposed to go to Brazil I believe. There were four or five from ARA. The majority that had not gone through were ARA nominations, Western Hemisphere, all of which were being held up by Chris Dodd. Chris Dodd of course was not saying he had put a hold on anyone, it was just well, I'm having trouble arranging my schedule, we're coming to the end, but on the side he was admitting to people, why should we put these nominations through when there's an election coming up in November and Democrats might win and we might want some of these places, Argentina being one, Brazil being another? In my case it was a little stronger than that. In Mike Kozak's place it was stronger because Janice O'Connell his major staffer on Latin America really was down on Kozak and Bill Walker. Any number of people went up to the Hill to talk about our nominations and were always given the same story. Well, it's just a question of when we can hold the hearing, etc.

Actually, two hearings were set. For the first one, I don't remember the date, but it was sometime during the summer, we were all told there was going to be a hearing at least for those going to Latin America. Bill Price was going to Honduras, I was going to Argentina, Alex was going to Brazil and we all trooped up there for the hearing. It looked like this was going to be it, so I had my daughter fly in from the West Coast to come and see the hearing to see democracy in action, etc. to see the advice and consent process of the Senate in action. My daughter came in from the West Coast and my family and I trooped up for the hearing and we all sat around at the table, it was crowded. The other Senator who was going to be there was Brock (Adams) from Washington state. Other Senators came in and went out. The hearing didn't get going because Chris Dodd, the Chairman, was not there. We heard he was on the floor, we heard he was in his office, we heard he was there and Janice O'Connell kept coming in and saying oh, he's got a phone call from so and so in the White House or something. Finally about 45 minutes after we were supposed to start the hearing, Janice O'Connell came in and announced that Senator Dodd's got other things he's got to do now and he doesn't have time to hold the hearing so we'll reschedule. We all left disappointed, but thinking that we had come pretty close.

A few weeks later another hearing was set up and this time I didn't invite my daughter to come in from the West Coast. I went up alone with one or two of the other nominees and this time we got to the hearing and this time there was just a note tacked on the door saying "the hearing has been cancelled" Senator Dodd. It became obvious to us that he was just going through the motions of pretending that we were going to have hearings and we didn't have a hearing. The elections were held and of course the outgoing Administration was not involved in getting people nominated or confirmed. Everybody

was waiting for the new group to come in. That took a couple of months before we had an Assistant Secretary for Latin America. They ended up naming Alex Watson and I'm trying to remember it was March or April someplace around there.

Q: This would be in '93?

WALKER: '93 now and I'm still planning to go to Argentina. I've been in contact with the embassy. They've asked what color curtains do you want in the bedroom, all the stupid things you go through. The Art in Embassy program had been selected. All these things had gone forward. You just can't not do something. I'd paid several calls and gotten to know the Argentine Ambassador here quite well. I'd done as much reading over that year period as I could on Argentina and was really looking forward to it, but the new Administration came in. One day I was walking through the halls waiting to find out what was going to happen with Argentina and I ran into a buddy of mine. My buddy was a guy named Jim Cheek. Jim Cheek and I had been in the same A-100 class. Jim had gone to Chile on his first assignment and I'd gone to Peru. Sometime later when I was assigned to Rio de Janeiro, Jim was head of the Economic Section when I was head of the Political Section. So, we knew each other for three years in Rio. I knew him quite well. Jim was my predecessor one removed as DAS for Central America back in '79 when Nicaragua fell and when Jesse Helms and the right wing up on the Hill was looking for who lost Nicaragua to the Sandinistas. The Assistant Secretary Bill Bowdler took the hit and the DAS for Central America Jim Cheek took the hit. Jim was sent to places like Katmandu. He was DCM in Katmandu for God knows how long and then he was Chargé. They couldn't get him through the Senate because of Helms' opposition so he was sent as Chargé to Addis Ababa where he spent two or three years. These are not the most choicest assignments, so he was out in the cold all through the Reagan-Bush years. So, I meet him, the Clinton Administration has just come in. Jim is from Little Rock, Arkansas. Jim is a committed Democrat and I meet him in the hall of the Department in the Spring of '93. I meet his wife; I met his two adopted Nepalese children. We were catching up on each other. He's asking me what I'm doing. I say, well, I'm still waiting to go to Argentina. I asked him what he's doing. He said, I'm retiring. I said, you're retiring? He said, yes, I decided to turn it in. I said, Jim you've waited 12 years for your reward. This is a hell of a time to turn it in. You've got a president from Little Rock, Arkansas. You say you know him. You say you worked on his campaign. You were on the transition team. For God's sake, why are you retiring now? He said, oh, I've had enough of this. I said, well, gee, sorry to hear that, good luck. He said, well, good luck with you.

I think within 48 hours of that conversation I got a call from someone in Warren Christopher's office to tell me that they were pulling my nomination to Argentina and I said, gee. I said, who's going down there? Jim Cheek. I said, wow! Okay. He had told them he was only interested in two countries, Argentina and Spain. Spain went to some political appointee and so he went to Argentina. So, I lost it. Such are the vagaries of the ambassadorial nomination process. So, I wasted a year. I wasted a year. It was somewhat ironic since I had just been promoted to Career Minister. I thought wow!

Q: So, what happened then? You're back?

WALKER: No, then they told me it was going to take a little time, but we'll come up with another nomination and the second thought was Panama. I had spent considerable time before going to El Salvador as DAS working on the Noriega question, working on the Panama question, a lot of Panamanians knew me. The Foreign Minister who was someone I had in my office when he was in the opposition to Noriega almost every day for six months. A lot of people said, here's a natural, Walker goes to Panama. I wasn't, that was really no substitute for Argentina, but at least it was a sizable embassy and an interesting place to say the least. I went through putting in the papers again, the whole process again. Deane Hinton who was the Ambassador in Panama came to see me a couple of times. Again, we had this problem with a White House that having heard my name in conjunction with the problem with Chris Dodd over Argentina put on the brakes and I got all sorts of funny requests for further information. This process went on for three or four months. No, it must have been longer than that, maybe six months. I was the Department's nominee to go to Panama, but the White House had not put my papers forward to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. No one seemed to know what the problem was.

When we heard that Janice O'Connell was telling people at the White House that she and her member Chris Dodd had problems with Walker the White House didn't quite know what to do. A number of Congressmen, Democrats, went to the White House, sent a letter to Secretary of State Warren Christopher. One of the most important was Joe Moakley who was chairman of the House Rules Committee at the time and who had been head of the committee looking into the Jesuit case. He knew what I had done to try and solve the Jesuit case, so he was very high on me. He had gone with me to Santa Marta this rebel camp in the middle of nowhere in the middle of the night before the peace accord was signed, so he had a very high opinion of me. So he got all sorts of other Congressmen to sign off on a dear colleague letter and sent it over to Warren Christopher saying, you know, Walker's a good guy, get his nomination up here and we'll pass it. But the White House didn't quite know what to do.

I'll never forget getting a phone call from someone in Presidential Appointments Office at the White House, a young lady. This was about two or three months into the Clinton administration. This lady sounded like she was about 19 years of age although I'm sure she was older than that. She explained to me that she was in Presidential Appointments and they were going over my papers and she had some questions for me. One of the questions revolved around my answer to the question about do you see any problems that might come up in your hearing that might be controversial or could be a problem and I truthfully said, yes. Chris Dodd. Senator Dodd, has raised issues before, but I think I can answer all those issues if he'll just give me a hearing. This is what Joe Moakley was asking for, saying that he went and saw Chris Dodd several times and said, look, if you've got problems with Walker, let him at least come up and give you his answers and let him at least have a fair hearing. Let him at least have his day in court so to speak. Chris Dodd always said, sure I was going to do that, but it never quite happened.

This young lady from the White House called me up and said, I've come to this question where you say there might be problems on the Senate side. Would you care to describe the problems that Senator Dodd might have with you? I said, well, no one has ever quite gotten an answer to that question. It might have to do with Iran Contra where he seemed to associate me with Elliott Abrams and the Reagan White House, but I was just a career officer doing his job, that might be the problem. But I think more specifically it has to do with the Jesuit case in El Salvador and with the way the Peace Accords came about because his staffer really wanted to be involved in that peace process and she wasn't. She didn't like the way it came out. This White House person said, oh, the war in El Salvador and Iran Contra, I've heard of those. I heard about those in college. But what's this about the Jesuits? So, I gave her a little bit about the Jesuits. I said, look, I don't think the Jesuits question would really a problem for me because most people feel it came out very well. A colonel was convicted. But if I had any problems on the Jesuit case, Joe Moakley has promised that he would go up and sit with me during my hearing and he would answer any questions on the Jesuit case and tell the Senators, Chris Dodd or whoever, exactly what I had done on the Jesuit case and how forceful I had been and how I had contributed to the outcome. The little White House staffer said, oh, who was that who would go up with you? I said Joe Moakley. She said, how do you spell it? I spelled Joe Moakley's name. She said, who is Mr. Moakley? I said, well, he's the Chairman of the House Rules Committee. She said, oh, Chairman of the House Rules Committee. Is that important? I said, well, it's very important to the House. I said he's a liberal Democrat from Massachusetts. He's very well respected. He's the expert on the Jesuit case in the Congress and he would go up and speak on my behalf. I think she asked me to spell his name again. I spelled it again. She said, now what is he again? I said Chairman of the House Rules Committee. She said, well, now is he a Republican or is he a Democrat. I said, look, the Democrats are in control of the House of Representatives as they are in control of the Senate. I went through this basic civics lesson for this woman who was making judgments about whose name should go forward. She didn't have a clue.

Anyway, shortly thereafter Warren Christopher himself called me to say Bill we're going to pull your nomination. We've got to get someone down to Panama very quickly. There's all sorts of issues down there. I'm sorry about this, but we're going to have to send someone down there very quickly. I said, okay, sir, obviously Mr. Secretary if that's your decision that's your decision, I'm disappointed, but I understand. Do you mind telling me who you're nominating? He said, well, it's going to be a political appointee. I said, okay, can you share with me who it is? He said, yes, we're having Jimmy Carter's man, Bob Pastor, go down there who is quite an expert on Latin America. What I said was good luck on his nomination because I knew that if anyone would have a more difficult time going through the confirmation process than Bill Walker, it would be Bob Pastor. Bob Pastor was Jimmy Carter's man at the NSC handling Latin America during Jimmy Carter's years and was thoroughly detested by most of the people at State, but also in the field in the countries involved. The Panamanians objected vociferously to his nomination. His nomination hung in balance for about a year and finally he had to withdraw his nomination recognizing that it was never going to go anyplace. He was thought by people, in the right wing of the Republican Party as the person who had almost personally given the Panama Canal back to Panama. So he had less luck than I

did, but he was also an abrasive sort of fellow and Panama went without an ambassador for well over a year as a result of these two failed nominations. So I was now batting zero for two.

Q: You may have mentioned this before, but Janice O'Connell, could you talk a little about her?

WALKER: Yes. Well, back when this saga started, the nomination to go to Argentina, Chris Dodd had two staffers who handled Western Hemisphere stuff and I'm sure they handled other things, but they were the ones. One was Janice O'Connell. The other was a fellow who I think was her boss, Bob Dockery, and they were both very conversant with the issues certainly in Central America. Both are also, or were also, I should say highly partisan, I mean really hard-left Democrats. Ideologically very strong. They both had connections with the more militant side of the FMLN. The part of the FMLN that they had the best connections with was the group that was involved in some of the toughest fighting. It was the entity within the FMLN that was most opposed to a negotiated settlement. They wanted to continue the war. They believed in the perpetual military struggle sort of thing. For some reason or other Janice and Bob had contacts there.

They were both very, very difficult to deal with. They never understood this thing about a career officer serving under the Republican Administrations. They just didn't get it. Since they saw everything in black and white and very partisan ideological grounds they couldn't seem to conceive that other people had a different way of looking at things. They were both very involved in this question of my nomination to go to Argentina. Bob Dockery was phasing out by this point though. He and Janice had been most active during the '80s. They both went to Nicaragua a lot. They both thought the Sandinistas were peaches and cream. These were times when we were trying to work the Central American wars of the mid '80s when I was a DAS for Central America. Quite often when the Central American presidents would get together to talk about the Nicaragua question or the Salvador war, and the Administration, the Reagan Administration was told to stay away, we don't want any outsiders to come in, we want to talk about this as Central Americans. We would discover that Bob Dockery and Janice O'Connell went down and would carry messages from Chris Dodd to tell the participants that if they didn't act against what the Reagan Administration was trying to do in Central America their aid would be cut off or the Senate would look negatively at what they were doing. So Dockery and Janice O'Connell thoroughly confused Central American leadership. They were hearing one thing from the Administration and that was where they were getting their assistance, but they were getting a totally different message from Chris Dodd who was Chairman of the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of the Senate which was in a very powerful position to do negative things to them if he so desired. I think this not only complicated, but put obstacles in the way of Central America working its way out of the problems of the mid '80s because of the interventions of these two staffers.

As a result of that Janice O'Connell and Bob Dockery thought of themselves as major players in what went on in Central America. I can't remember quite when, but at some point during those first years in the '90s Bob Dockery retired and went to live in Florida

and Janice O'Connell was left in charge of Latin American affairs with Chris Dodd. She continued down this path of a total partisan view of how to deal with Latin America. At the time when I met her she was a very dry, you have to look at her to know she has very intense feelings about whatever she feels about.

During the time when I was a nominee to go to Argentina, my best friend up on the Senate was a fellow Democratic staffer named Dick McCall. Dick McCall was a Senate staffer for John Kerry of Massachusetts. Before that he'd been with Sarbanes so he was also from the middle to left of center wing in the Democratic Party. He and Janice shared a room, an office, up in the Senate. I used to go up to see Dick and he was very enthusiastic about my nomination to go to Argentina. He had also gone to Santa Marta with me. He was very interested in El Salvador. We had shared a good number of days in El Salvador together. He knew the type of Ambassador I was. He was very enthusiastic about my nomination. When Janice and Dodd became the obvious problem he used to tell me, oh, Bill, you don't understand Janice. Yes, she can be tough, she can be partisan, but I'm talking to her and I'm convincing her that you're not what she thinks you are. Oh, great, Dick, that's great. Over time she turned against Dick McCall to the point that people now think that she dislikes him or distrusts him or hates him as much as she hates me or Mike Kozak or some of the other people on her enemies list.

I have always looked at what happened to me in those two nominations very much in the same context as Senator Joe McCarthy and his two staffers, Cohn and Schine interfering with nominations and promotions of the old China hands because they thought those guys were somehow too far to the left and had lost China, etc. Janice O'Connell and Bob Dockery were today's Democratic Party equivalent of Cohn and Schine. Nasty, willing to use whatever dirty tricks it took to get their way with nominations or to show how important they were in terms of the process with a Senator who was backing them up. I put together a little theory that Senator McCarthy and his two acolytes were able to get away with what they got away with because it was a new Republican Administration under Dwight Eisenhower who didn't want to take on this powerful Senator who didn't give much of a hoot about a couple of Foreign Service Officers who were having a tough time of it. The Eisenhower Administration in the first months were still wondering who lost China, etc. There were a lot of people in the Republican Party looking at that. In the case of Chris Dodd he was looking back at the '80s, the policies of Reagan and Bush and thinking they weren't to his liking so career Foreign Service Officers who had been involved in that were somehow on his enemies list. He was a powerful Democratic Senator with a new President who had come in after 12 years of Republican Administration, that being Bill Clinton, and they just weren't concerned about treatment being afforded to, accorded to, Foreign Service Officers.

Q: I also had the feeling that the Clinton administration was terribly inept, maybe inept is one word, and the other is not terribly focused on foreign affairs. To me the most blatant thing was Bill Harrop who went to Israel and made a comment about that we were going to a belt tightening period and I think he made the comment to the effect that when he got to Israel you couldn't expect the same largesse as before. Everybody was going to take a cut. Well, this caused quite a flurry, but it was echoing what they were saying, but they

pulled him immediately which struck me as being very amateurish. I mean rather than stick by their ambassador over a minor, basically a minor thing, which was really in key with what the administration was saying, they panicked.

WALKER: Yes. No, there's no question in my mind. It was certainly in the beginning months if not beyond that it was an amateurish operation. I'm sure Warren Christopher was a gentleman. I was always told about how polite he was. He held doors open for his secretaries when they were going through doorways. He thanked people when they had done something for him. He was very personable that way. Always dressed to the nines, but he was essentially a corporate lawyer from Northern California who felt that you could talk your way through to a result, so he was never going to take on a Chris Dodd or those people. The Clinton administration came in obviously wanting to get Central America off the burner. They realized that this was a very controversial partisan debate throughout the '80s. Peace had come to El Salvador. Nicaragua was now out of the hands of the Sandinistas, so they came in saying, don't bring us any problems from Central America. We don't want to hear about it. We're going to reduce our assistance there. We're going back to just five little small countries that we deal with because they're close to us. This continued throughout the Clinton years, all eight of them. Latin America was relegated to a place that hardly was ever brought up in terms of the Secretary's attention.

Peter Tarnoff was the Under Secretary for Political Affairs during that first Clinton Administration, again a veteran of my A-100 class, someone I had known 25 or 30 years before. I remember going to see Peter to say well congratulations, you've done very well. He was someone who was Executive Officer in the Department under Cyrus Vance so he had also come under some attack when the Republicans came in when the Reagan people came in in '82. So I thought he would understand the problem of a career officer being blamed for something that took place just because he was working in a previous administration. Peter Tarnoff showed absolutely no sympathy for me. Peter Tarnoff was about as dry and as dismissive as any person I've ever gone to to say, hey, I've got this problem, can you help? He obviously agreed with Senator Dodd that people who had been involved in Central America should be shunted to the side. I was very, very disappointed in Peter. I later talked to some people who knew him even better than I did who told me that Peter Tarnoff of 1961 A-100 class was not the Peter Tarnoff who arrived to be Undersecretary for Political Affairs in 1993.

Q: Okay, well, we'll pick this up. You have been rudely dismissed from your appointments as Ambassador to Argentina and then going down the scale to Panama. We're into 1994 and then we'll pick it up.

Q: Okay, today is the 28th of March, 2002. Bill we've been away from this for a while, we're to 1994 and what are you up to?

WALKER: If I remember where we left off I had told you how I was thwarted in my dream of going to Argentina as Ambassador. The Clinton administration came in. Senator Dodd put his finger in the pie and Jim Cheek, my friend of 30 some years coming from Little Rock, Arkansas was able to do me in, so he got to Argentina. I went back and sat around for a while trying to figure out what was coming next when I was told they were nominating me to go to Panama which was not as good as Argentina, but it was nevertheless an interesting part of the world. I went so far as to have exchanges with the fellow who was coming out of Panama who was Deane Hinton and talked to the DCM and told him that I would like to keep him on. All those sort of things you do as you are preparing to go out. Then lo and behold one day I received another call from someone at State to say that they had to get someone down to Panama real quickly because, what was happening in Panama? Something was happening and they wanted to get someone down there right away. They thought because of the Dodd issue I might take a little while to get confirmed. Therefore, they told me they were pulling my nomination to Panama and I asked, oh, excuse me, this was Warren Christopher who called. I asked him if they wanted to get someone down there quickly I assumed they were sending a career officer. He said, no, they were sending a political type. I said, do you mind telling me who it is. The answer was that it was a fellow named Bob Pastor. Bob Pastor was involved in the negotiations for the Canal Treaty back in the Carter administration. Bob Pastor was Carter's NSC man on Latin America. Bob Pastor made an awful lot of enemies back then and I knew almost for a fact that the Panamanians would not be too appreciative of Bob Pastor coming there. Lo and behold this is what happened. Bob's nomination went up to the Senate and it languished there for a year. Senator Helms and others were against it claiming that he had essentially sold out, sold the Canal.

A year later Panama was still waiting for a replacement for Deane Hinton. I thought it somewhat ironic that they had pulled my nomination to get someone down there quickly and they couldn't get the person they named down in over a year.

Q: Was this really, was this a political payoff or was there a real thought of getting someone there in a hurry?

WALKER: Well, I don't know. I'm not sure. I don't have the answer to that question. I certainly feel that the Clinton administration at that point in time one, they didn't know me and if they did know me it was that I had been a servant of the Reagan Administration and the Bush Administration, that I'd been involved in Central America which was just sort of a pair of dirty words to the Clinton people when they came in. That might have been part of it. Then hearing about the Dodd issue made them a little nervous probably. Plus I think they did want to reward Bob Pastor with something. Showing some continuity with the Carter people, but I don't know what the combination was, I was not involved in the decision. I was just kind of pissed off by it, that's all.

So, here I had spent a good part of '92, most of '93 preparing myself for two ambassadorships in which neither one of them came through. At this point I was going around asking people did they need someone to hold their coat for them or carry their briefcase for them? I thought it was a bit demeaning for a Career Minister, but what the

hell. Then I got an idea and in early '94 I got talking to a friend of mine who I have mentioned earlier in connection with the Salvador issues. I'd gotten to know a fellow up on the senate staff who by '94 had come over for the Clinton people and was the Chief of Staff of AID, Dick McCall. Dick and I were getting into conversation about what had caused the war in El Salvador, what were really the root causes and we got into a discussion about justice, the administration of justice. I thought about that for a while and I told Dick that I thought there was something there that we could maybe learn from the Salvador case and maybe some other cases and this eventually led to my going to Dick with a proposal that I spend as much as six months under AID financing going to a number of countries that were in one way or another emerging from trauma and seeing first what was the status, what was the nature of the administration of justice in that country and then relating that to whether or not the country was going to recover from that trauma or whether it was going to fall into a battle ways again.

Dick liked the idea so I put together a proposal. I suggested that I go to four, five or six countries emerging from different types of traumatic experiences and maybe some with a little distance between the traumas and take a look at the administration of justice and then relate that to the sustainability of what the world or that country hoped it gained by the trauma. I decided not to go to El Salvador even though I thought that would have been a perfect case. One, because the war had just ended a year or so before. So I went to Chile, which had come out a few years earlier from under Pinochet. I went to Brazil a country that I know fairly well which had come out a decade earlier from a military regime of some hardness. I went to Guatemala, which was still trying to come out from under military rule. I thought at first I would just do Latin American countries where I at least spoke the languages. But, at AID they asked me if I would go to an African country and if I would go to an Eastern European country coming out from under the Soviet Empire. In Africa I picked Kenya and in Eastern Europe I picked Poland.

What I did was I got \$50,000 out of AID. I used that to transport me to and per diem me in each of those five countries spending about a month in each, talking to everyone I could in the justice system, judges, Supreme Court types, prosecutors, police chiefs, lawyers, Bar Association types, law school deans and NGOs that were involved in matters of justice. The trick was to find out first what was the status of the administration of justice in each of the countries and I must say I was disappointed in all five. Two of the countries I went to, Chile and Kenya were thought to be or at least in my mind I thought them to be far better off than their neighbors. I thought of Chile as essentially a European country and I was quite surprised at how badly the Pinochet years had damaged the administration of justice in Chile. Then in Kenya I went there expecting to find remnants of the British justice system that had been in place when they were in control of Kenya as a colony. When I was going to get my visa to go to Kenya the Consul who gave me the visa talked to me for a half an hour or so and asked me what I was going to Kenya for and I told him. He said, oh, you've picked the right country. We have a beautiful system of justice in Kenya. I'm a lawyer myself he said and our system is based on the British system. It's almost picked up in its entirety from the British system and we have lots of lawyers who have studied in the UK. That sounded very good so I was looking forward to Kenya. When I got there I discovered that what he had told me was, or maybe

he wasn't even aware of it, that the British system of law that is used in Kenya is not domestic law as practiced in the UK, its British colonial law which put almost all authority in the person of the Governor General in the Executive. So, when Jomo Kenyatta came in and decided he wanted to put in a system of law, he just picked it up almost in its entirety because it gave him, the Chief Executive, almost total power to control the courts, to control the legislature. What was in place was a badly skewed version of British law. It was a fascinating six months going to those five countries and then spending a month writing it up.

Q: Tell me about the others, Brazil.

WALKER: Brazil was kind of a sad case. It's a very uneven part of the world in terms of justice. The justice that pertains in Santa Catarina, the German Italian parts to the south, is a very different system of law or justice than pertains in the Amazon basin where the military commander is the guy who dispenses justice. The judicial system is very corrupt. One of the side products of my study of justice systems, I came to the conclusion that the few judges I ran into in Brazil and in Guatemala probably the two most corrupt judicial systems I was dealing with, but also true in Poland, that were doing the best job under very difficult circumstances were all women. That led me to do another study, which had to do with how can women do these certain things in these societies that men cannot?

But Brazil, one of the reasons I wanted to look to Brazil was back when I was stationed in Brazil we had a big public safety program there under AID. I remember when I was studying Portuguese at FSI there was a class next to us in which retired chiefs of police from around the United States were being taught minimum Portuguese so they could go down and teach Brazilian chiefs of police how to be professional policemen. That all came to a halt also while I was in Brazil because of claims that under this police training program AID was involving itself with the wrong characters in some of the countries it was dealing with including Brazil. So AID got out of the business of police training and did so for 30 years. I wanted to see if there were any remnants of that police professionalization due to AID training. I came to the conclusion, no, there was no sign of it whatsoever. It had all washed away with the tide.

I looked very hard at what the United States does in terms of helping the administration of justice in a whole bunch of countries where we do things and I came to a very specific conclusion which was yes, we have very good projects. The FBI goes out and it helps foreign police departments set up forensic labs, teaches them how to do evidence gathering, all this kind of stuff. They did this in El Salvador and put together a very, very good forensic lab. DEA goes in and tries to teach the rudiments of anti-narcotics policing and they usually train up an anti-narcotic unit. AID goes in and tries to train judges, puts together judicial training centers for judges and that sort of thing. A lot of programs like that. The CIA goes in and helps put together protective details for chief executives, puts together SWAT teams sort of thing. So, there's all these bits and pieces, but they don't come together anywhere and they go in with different funding, they go in with different personnel, they go in at a different pace. I came to the obvious conclusion that a justice system, if the FBI goes in and were to turn the foreign police department into the perfect

little FBI, but the judges were still untrained or the prosecutors didn't know how to present evidence that was gathered by this little FBI, the system would still be just as weak as it is now. This happened sometimes. The police learn how to gather evidence, but they take it to a court and the judge is corrupt or he doesn't know what he is doing and they become very frustrated and quickly they revert to being corrupt. It was an interesting study. In fact I've passed around copies of it over the years to other people because the administration of justice as an issue has lately become a sexy one. Nevertheless, I think we're still scrambling, doing things piecemeal. The United Nations going into Kosovo seven years later was just as bumbling and fumbling in terms of trying to put together a justice system that would produce justice. I came to the conclusion that having an administrative justice system that produces justice or seemed to produce justice is probably the most important ingredient in keeping a country on the path to a democratic system. If you don't have it you have no chance at all of reaching sustainable democracy.

I did that the first six, seven months of '94. Some place along about August of '94 I received a call from personnel. They asked me if I would be interested in interviewing for the job of Vice President of National Defense University at Fort McNair. I didn't know much about Fort McNair. I hadn't gone to the war colleges there. I thought I'd go over and chat with the people and see if it appealed to me. I called up the President an Air Force three star Herb Rocky is his name and I was invited to go over and talk to him. He asked me to bring my wife since his wife would sit in and we had a very nice afternoon tea with the Rockys at the end of which he offered me the job. He told me I was just what he was looking for. One of the reasons was he said that I had this Western Hemisphere experience. He had Eastern Europe experience as well as China experience. He'd been the Defense Attaché both in London and in Moscow, but he'd also spent a lot of time in China. He felt that I complemented him in terms of geographic spread. We became a team. He was the President; I was the Vice President. I did that for three years.

Q: This would be from?

WALKER: '94 to '98.

Q: '98.

WALKER: It was a wonderful three, three and a half years, whatever it was.

Q: What are your impressions of how the system works and then the student body.

WALKER: I was extremely impressed with the resources that the DOD puts into the facility. The quality of the professors both at the War College and at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, ICAF, as well as in something that was being developed while I was there which was an information management school which information resources management I guess it's called. Very impressed with the quality of the people. The students were even more impressive. Each year while I was there the State Department had an infusion of anywhere between 40, 50, one year almost 60 FSOs went

over there as students to the two war colleges. It was interesting to watch our students, the sort of people that I recognized coming over there. At the beginning they were all, not all, many of them were wondering why they had taken this year off. It was maybe going to interfere with promotions, they were going to be away from State. They weren't sure they really wanted to sit in academic discussions with a bunch of military guys, that sort of thing. All three years I was there, the evolution of the thinking of the State students was really something to see in terms of quickly coming to the conclusion that the other students in the class who were lieutenant colonels and colonels or equivalent from the four services were not only their equals, but in many cases were ahead of them. Almost to a person, all the military students had graduate degrees and quite often ours did not. By the time they had reached lieutenant colonel, many of them had been in situations that were productive of great anecdotes as to what they'd been doing during their careers. I was impressed with the fact that our students being exposed, most of them for the very first time to military officers, universally came away impressed with what they had found and recognized that they were dealing with people equally as smart, equally as involved. I think for our people it was very good and I think it was also very good for the war colleges that they had some outsiders, State Department types.

While I was there we undertook a couple of experiments. One was for the first time non-government civilians were invited to send students to the war college, not in great numbers, just a couple in each of the two schools. The first year we got a very prominent journalist, a media type who came in and happened to be a woman. She was wondering what the hell she was doing in this, surrounded by government types. I think the military students especially were a little wary whether or not she was going to abide by the non-attribution rule that is in place at NDU. It turned out to be again a great addition to the student body to have a couple of people from outside the government participating.

What else did we do? I got very involved with the International Fellows Program which by my third year it was up to 36, lieutenant colonels, colonels and a couple of general officers from the Armies, Navies and Marine Corps of the world including from China, from Russia, from the Stans and all those other places. We spent a lot of time traveling with them, taking them around the country, showing them bases, showing them the small towns, showing them Las Vegas, taking them out for rides in the police cars of the Los Angeles PD in the middle of the night to show them what that's like. I also got very involved with the Capstone Program which is a program in which, by law, all new one stars in any of our military services have to go to NDU for a six week course. That is a fascinating program. They take these new generals and admirals all over the world. They take them to CINCs to show them what a CINC is all about. They take them to military bases all around the world, but they also take them to places like Beijing and Moscow and have them intermix with their counterparts from other countries.

I went on trips with them every chance I got. I must have gone out five or six times. I was just absolutely fascinated by this. The guy who is now the four star Marine who is the Deputy Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, he's the vice chairman, four star marine, General Pace. He was on my first visit when we went to China and I got to know him pretty well. Anyway, the thing, the most frustrating thing about being at NDU was that 95% of the

State Department people don't even know it exists. The State Department contributes a little funding to the university to take our students, but we don't use it as a resource. It's a tremendous resource.

Q: How did you find, I imagine you monitored the assignments of State people who came there. How did the State Department treat them?

WALKER: I tried, not the first year because I wasn't in tune with this yet but the second and third years I met the State students when they got there. I'd sit around and talk to them, have lunch with them, chatted up what they could expect to see over the year they were there. Told them some of the things they should try and dig into. Then periodically during the year I got together with them again as groups. The subject always came up especially as they got closer to the end of the year as to how this was going to play into their onward assignments and their ongoing careers. For some of them they would express earlier in the year, but sometimes even toward the end of the year there, they would express the fact that when they were picked for this they were told they were the cream of the cream of the FSO corps, that they should look on this as a stepping stone to greater things, but then when they said, what greater things. The answer was always, well, we'll get around to that when you're finished with your year there.

Some of them, I think, were pleased with their onward assignments and thought that their year there had contributed to it, but those were mostly people who wanted to go to NATO or wanted to go and be a POLAD or wanted to go to some POLMIL job in Europe. They could use their assignment to NDU to further whatever that ambition was. But the ones who thought it was going to lead to a choice of assignments, a choice of choice assignments, usually were disappointed. Our personnel system doesn't seem to correlate telling people how great they are when they're getting this to further their career.

Q: When I came out of the senior seminar.

WALKER: Another perfect example.

Q: They sort of looked at me and said, oh, there was a blank look, it took quite a while to get a job and it really wasn't much of a job.

WALKER: Yes. Well, I am told, I don't know how true it is, I am told that the Senior Seminar in particular, they're trying to make it much more relevant to an onward assignment that you have been selected for well in advance of coming out of the Seminar. I have a friend who just came out of the Senior Seminar a year ago [2001] and he told me about at the end of the term when they were announcing where people were going, he for one was not impressed. Some of the better people in the class, some of the really brightest students, seemed to be getting assignments that were not worthy of them. I remember he told me that the person who was the real laggard in the group, who slept through most of the classes, did seem to get something good out of it. So, he didn't see much of a correlation between being in the Senior Seminar, performance in the Senior Seminar, and what you went on to.

Q: Also, you were dealing by this time with the State contingent, very few of them had military experience.

WALKER: Yes. Almost none. Almost none. One there was a fairly solid mixture of women officers in the groups. I remember asking at the beginning with the two groups I got to know the best, the last two, how many here have had any military experience and in terms of service in the military it was almost zero. There might have been one or two. A couple had done something in Germany where they were near a base or something, so they had a certain flavor of military life. But it was almost total ignorance.

Q: Let me just turn this.

WALKER: Sure.

Q: Bill, we're talking about a generation by this time that is coming out of there many of them replicating the Clinton experience of trying to avoid Vietnam and all.

WALKER: I didn't say that.

Q: Well, we've got a president who avoided Vietnam right now.

WALKER: I didn't say that either.

Q: I did and a significant number of women in there. How did you find this mix? Did this play into the chemistry there at least in the beginning?

WALKER: At the beginning of each year there was a certain I don't know if it would be called tension or lack of mutual understanding between our people and the military guys who were there. I mean the military also came in with no experience whatsoever ever having dealt with Foreign Service Officers, most of them having been in air bases around the world or in army camps or on ships. You know, they kind of thought that all State Department types were button down pin stripe types so it took a while in each class that I watched for those barriers to come down. I think what was a very, very definite positive outcome is the fact that most of the issues were discussed in the classrooms at NDU. This is a place that doesn't just discuss military issues. It discusses economics, politics, social issues, the whole range of things. What I think came out of many, many discussions because almost all the State students mentioned this in one way or another at the end of the year, was the realization that so many of the issues the United States faces in foreign affairs these days have both a military and a civilian component to them. I thought maybe it was just me that I'd been in places like Salvador and such that I had gotten involved with MILGROUPS almost every place that I'd been, but I think we all sort of collectively came to the opinion that the more we got to know each other the better because so many of the issues now had the two component parts very well mixed up together. Knowing how Foreign Service Officers react to issues and talk about issues and that sort of thing I think would be very helpful for military officers who were going on to become general

officers. Similarly, I think for State Department officers, who I would think most of the people going to the war colleges would be, maybe they don't get the perfect assignment right away, but most of them are on their way up. I think it's good for those who do go up to learn what military officers are all about too.

Q: Were you getting any feedback while you were there about the new role that was beginning to develop particularly talking about Bosnia at the time, but its peacekeeping and with the demise of the Soviet Union, the big tank battles across the Volga Plain are kind of gone. Was there much ferment in talking about what is the role of the military?

WALKER: Sure, this was a big subject and I was very involved in it. Among my many duties I was in charge of strategic planning for the university. Obviously if you're going to plan whether goest War Colleges and National Defense University you have to know whether goest war and whether goest the military. No, there was tremendous, tremendous discussion of and fermentation of the issues of what is the military going to look like a few years from now? How do we prepare for that? I remember on my first trip with the Capstone group we went to China. Each Capstone group not only usually takes along the Vice President of the University or a senior State Department ambassador type. They also always take along a retired four star and NDU has a list of retired four stars who are available to go along as mentors to these new generals and admirals. When I went to China, the mentor on the trip was a four star that I had known when he was the CINC down in Panama 20 years earlier Wally Nutting is his name. A really fine gentleman, I mean really, all of these guys that I met were fine gentlemen, but he'd been out of the army for 15 years or so. Talking to him, he was an armor officer and 90% of his career he had spent facing the Fulda Gap with his tanks arrayed, all pointing in the same direction. He had a difficult time conceptualizing that future wars might be the Bosnias, the Kosovos, the Panamas, the Grenadas, all these other crazy little places, the peacekeeping operations. He really did have a tough time grasping that the days of the Fulda Gap standoff were behind us.

One thing that I remember we talked about because I had known him when he was the CINC down in Panama which was his only out of Europe experience. The CINC in Panama, you know, you're involved in diplomacy, you're involved in military assistance programs to a bunch of countries that probably shouldn't have militaries. He claimed that had opened his eyes to the fact that there were other things for our military to do besides face down the Soviet Union. The officers that were reaching general officer rank, this was most of the officers I met who were in the Capstone program, were in a transition, many of them were trained in the traditional military disciplines. Most of their experience was standing on the DMZ in Korea or worried about Taiwan or patrolling the straits. The smarter ones were thinking about the new missions of the military. When you got down to the students at the War College, the light colonels and colonels, they were even more in tune with well, maybe some of the things we had to learn in the past are no longer of much use. So looking at roles and missions of the military was a big deal at NDU during my three years there. I assume it still is.

I learned a lot about the individual cultures of the four services and how very different the navy is from the army is, from the air force. The thing that NDU was trying to produce is what they call a purple officer. He doesn't wear a green uniform of the army, he doesn't wear a blue uniform of the air force, he doesn't wear the dark blue uniform of the navy, he wears a purple uniform. He's above service affiliation. Great in theory, but almost all the officers I knew, their first loyalty was still to their service.

Q: I would think the hardest group to assimilate into this would be the navy and then after that the air force.

WALKER: Absolutely.

Q: They drive things.

WALKER: Yes. The group that is given the greatest credit by almost everybody for really thinking about what role it is going to play in the future and how best to prepare to take on those roles is the Marine Corps.

Q: I've heard this. At the top level, the real intellectuals.

WALKER: Yes. Intellectuals, very, very clever, smart guys and gals, but they also like to talk about how in the Marine Corps a lot of initiative goes down to lower levels than it does in the other services. That the Marines' first loyalty essentially is to his platoon, that they form this group and they make decisions. They're out on their own when they're doing their thing in battle. I was surprised at how many other service types agreed that the Marine Corps probably had their own ethos. I got into things that I never thought the military looked at. One example being chaos theory. I don't even know what it means. There's a course given at NDU in chaos theory. All the commandants of the war colleges and the service schools I came in contact with could sit down and legitimately and interestingly converse about chaos theory and what this means in terms of a battlefield situation where there's all sorts of ingredients and complexities and its chaotic. How do you best manage this situation? Again, it was the Marine Corps; they've got several courses at their Marine Corps University down here at Quantico on chaos theory. I was so impressed with the intellectual level at NDU that even when I was asked to give a lecture about experiences in El Salvador, peacekeeping operations, how we brought about peace there, I was always extremely nervous before getting up in front of one of these groups because they ask penetrating questions. They really followed what you were talking about and would point out internal contradictions in whatever you were presenting. I was always, I always tried to be as best prepared as I could be and that's not usually the case when I get up in front of an audience and just BSing about.

Another activity I got involved in. If there's a weakness in the NDU's approach to geographic issues, it is Latin America. There were only one or two people at NDU who you would really consider a Latin Americanist. I got together with one of them, a retired colonel I had known before and we cooked up an idea that it took off and it is now a fully

flourishing center at NDU. I made a trip to Garmisch; well I made two trips to Garmisch and saw the George Marshall Center.

Q: This is the training Russian experts.

WALKER: Well, yes, the Marshall Center has a couple of missions. One is they bring in Russians and Eastern European officers.

Q: You might point out that Garmisch is in Germany.

WALKER: In Germany, yes, it is in the Bavarian Alps or someplace down there, a beautiful, beautiful place. Anyway, the Marshall Center was put together, as Russian studies trying to get beyond the Cold War and that sort of thing. Later I passed through Honolulu and the CINCPAC has an Asia Pacific Center, which is similar. It brings in students from all the Pacific rim countries and gives them a very, very good program of studies. When I got back to NDU I was wondering would it not be wise if we tried to put together a Latin American center. It turned out to be a two year effort. I got to know just about everyone over at the Defense Department up to and including Secretary Perry because he became interested in the idea. I traveled throughout Latin America trying to convince Latin American governments that this was a good idea, that we put together a center in which not for military officers, but for civilians because one of the major problems, one of the reasons the military comes in and takes over in Latin American countries is that when things go wrong, the economy fails, or they have an insurgency, or whatever, the military steps up and says the civilians don't know how to run this, we know how to do it. We, the United States, have been pushing for years for Latin American countries to put together civilian ministries of defense, like our Pentagon. Most of the countries rejected the idea. The military thinking there were no civilians that really understood what the military was all about.

So my idea was if we put together a Center and got the governments of Latin America to send up civilians who were going to be involved in national security affairs and give them a broad based feeling for how we deal with the civilian military relationship. They would go back at least more cognizant than they were when they got here about how we do it and how civilian-military relations can and should work in a democracy. It took some selling down in Latin America, especially with Brazil and Argentina. It took even more convincing over at the Pentagon that they should be funding this. But because Secretary Perry was behind it we finally got it going. Just when I was leaving in early '98 from NDU, the first class was arriving. I've since been back twice and visited the Center and it's a going concern. Unlike the Center in Hawaii, it's totally under the control of the CINC out there, which I think is a bad idea. Garmisch has other problems, but this Center is quite successful to the extent that NDU now has a Near East Studies Center and they're trying to get an African Studies Center going. That was another contribution I made at NDU. I was quite proud of that one.

What else did I do while I was there? Well, as General Rocky told me when I went over to interview with him and have tea with his wife and him, as he described what it would

be like to be at NDU, he said, this place is a smorgasbord. You can come in and you can do a little lecturing if you want, you can do a little research if you want, you can spend all your time in the library if you want. They've got a fabulous library, very modern, digital library. Or you can travel with Capstone or you can mentor the State students or you can mentor the International Fellows, it would be up to you, whatever you want to do. I found out that's exactly what he let me do and I partook of the smorgasbord as much as I could. I found it fascinating. I really did. It's a very valuable asset that I don't think is as appreciated as it should be either by State or by DOD.

Q: What about, well, in '97 you, what happened?

WALKER: In mid '97, I had been following the Bosnia crisis, but from an academic standpoint rather than from anything else. I noted that a friend of mine, Bob Gelbard, had been named the Special Envoy to the Balkans and I went to see Bob every once in a while. He was very upset when I lost Argentina. He was always trying to help. Bob did well under both republican and democratic administrations. He had no real coloration and so he also had been an Ambassador under Reagan-Bush. He went to Bolivia. When he came out of there he looked around and the next thing I heard he was going to be the Special Envoy to the Balkans.

One day he called me up and he said, "Bill, I've got a great idea. Come on I want to talk to you about something." I went over to see Bob. He said, "Look, Bill, I have discovered in this job in the time I've been here that recruiting people to fill slots in Bosnia and in the Balkans who are Europeanists, we haven't had very much luck there. Our colleagues who have served in London, Paris, Rome and know the languages over there are just not prepared to go into a Sarajevo in the winter and live in a bombed out house and this sort of thing. I've talked this over with the Secretary and the people we've picked to go out there more recently have been Latin Americanists or people from Africa, some Southeast Asia types and we've had a lot better success." I said, "That's all very interesting. What do you want to see me about?" He said, "Well, the number two person in the overall administration of Bosnia and Sarajevo is a German named Michael Steiner. He is the Deputy High Representative" I think was the title; "the High Representative is a Spaniard who doesn't really do much except take trips outside of Bosnia whenever he can. It has fallen on this German deputy to run Bosnia.

Bob Gelbard had suggested to the Secretary that when Steiner left that summer, "we should get an American into that position so that we can really run things. I'm wondering if you would be interested in going to Sarajevo." I said, "Gee, Bob, I've never been there, I don't know the language, don't know a hell of a lot about it." He said, "Bill, let's go back. What I said was the experience you have had in wars in some of these places you've served is much more applicable than just about anyone else I can think of. We need someone with your sort of reputation. So, would you go?" I said, "If you put it that way, yes, I'll go. I do have a condition, however." He said, "What's that all about?" I said, "I'll only go if Madeleine Albright herself asks me to go." He said, "Well, what's that all about?" I said, "Look, I've been over in NDU for the last three years and before that I was the guy who was dumped out of two ambassadorial nominations and every

time I ask someone near the Secretary as to what's going on, friends up on the seventh floor they tell me, well, the Secretary doesn't know you Bill, the front office doesn't know you. They'd have to get to know you before they put you up for something good again. So, for that reason alone, only if the Secretary asks me will I go to Sarajevo." Bob said, "A piece of cake. I'll talk to Madeleine this afternoon and you can expect a call from her tomorrow." By God, as promised it worked. I was called the next day and asked to come and see the Secretary. I came over and this was my first meeting with Secretary Albright. We did it back in the second room, back where she has a nice fireplace. I remember she was sitting there in midsummer with a sweater on in front of the fireplace. She said that she'd heard about it and that Bob had praised me to the skies and she said that she knew that I was being asked by Bob to go to Sarajevo, but she was wondering if instead I would go to Vukovar. I told her that I would be totally honest with her, she said, "Yes, please be honest." I said, "I don't know what you're talking about. What is a Vukovar?" So, she told me and at the end of that conversation I said, "Yes, that sounds right, I'll go to Vukovar if for no other reason than the job in Sarajevo was the number two job whereas the job in Vukovar was the head of mission, was the Special Representative of the Secretary General. It just sounded like more independence, sounded like a more fun type of place to be and it was not burdened by what I had heard about Sarajevo which was this incredible, speaking of chaos theory, this incredible mishmash of players, and institutes and governments, geographic zones of interests by the various countries that were involved. It didn't sound like something I wanted to get involved in.

I told the Secretary that I would go to Vukovar, but that I did have this problem and I would hope she would try to solve it for me before I came back which was Chris Dodd. She said she had heard about that, she couldn't understand it, she knew Chris very well, that they were fellow professors at Georgetown at some point. She knew his brother very well who was in Costa Rica as Ambassador and she couldn't understand why Chris would have anything against a nice fellow like me and that she would take care of it. She said, she would pretty well guarantee me that if I do this job and do it well, when you came back she'd have something for me. It sounded fine, so off I went to Vukovar.

Q: You were in Vukovar from when to when?

WALKER: I think I arrived in July of '97 and I was there, I was on that assignment through about March of '98, but the mission in Vukovar itself ended on January 15th, 1998.

Q: Could you explain what Vukovar was, is? I've been there by the way, way back when I was a consular officer in Belgrade.

WALKER: Okay, well, Vukovar was supposedly an ideal little provincial capital sitting on a river that divided Serbia from Croatia, but back then they were both parts of Yugoslavia. In the intervening years, specifically the '89 to '91 period, Yugoslavia started falling apart. In '89 Slobodan Milosevic went down to Kosovo and gave a very inflammatory Serb nationalist pitch to the Serbs that were down there. He then went back to Belgrade. There's a great book written about this, "The Death of Yugoslavia," which

describes how he betrayed his mentor who was the President of Yugoslavia at the time, the successor of Tito. He betrayed this old time Communist mentor who had brought him up through the ranks and catapulted himself into the dominant position within the ruling elite in Belgrade. When it became evident that Slobodan Milosevic had done this, I think it was in '91 one part of Yugoslavia decided to split off, Slovenia, and they announced that they were going their own way. Because Slovenia is up in the northwest corner, mountainous and more Germanic than it is Yugoslav, Milosevic and the government of Belgrade decided to let it go. They didn't do anything about that. When Slovenia broke off in '91 the next to go was Croatia, the nationalists in Croatia were very ticked off at the way Milosevic and the Serbs were dominating the central government in Belgrade and seeing what Slovenia had done, they also announced their independence. At this point Milosevic and the army decided they could not tolerate another succession so they sent in the Yugoslav army. The Yugoslav army poured into Croatia at Vukovar because it's right on the other side of the river from Serbia. They surrounded it and for, I can't remember how many weeks, they just bombarded it with artillery. They essentially demolished it. There were very, very few buildings left standing in what had been this lovely little provincial capital. About the only thing you see from the horizon if you look at Vukovar now is an old water tower but it is absolutely covered with bullet holes and shell holes from the shelling. The Croatians in Vukovar held out for again, I can't remember weeks and months under this tremendous shelling, but finally the Yugoslav army conquered what was left of Vukovar and went in and did some very nasty things.

For example, the first war crimes tribunal in The Hague that resulted in a guilty plea was the Serb mayor of Vukovar. When he came back in with the Yugoslav army he and a bunch of Arkan's men, the famous tigers, the famous paramilitary nuts, went to the hospital, the Vukovar hospital, took out while the International Red Cross literally was at the front door trying to get into the hospital to see who was in there because this was like after the Soviet army had taken Berlin, it was total confusion. Anyway the Mayor and these Arkan Tigers as they were called, went to the back door, took out 250 Croatian wounded and took them out and executed them. Just before I got to Vukovar my predecessor was able to tempt this Mayor back from where he was in hiding in Serbia. He came back to look at his apartment, to look at his property to see if it was still there and we nabbed him and sent him to The Hague and he was convicted.

Anyway, so in '91 the Yugoslav army came in. During the early years of the '90s, Bosnia became the battleground and you might remember in the initial days, in the initial year or so of Bosnia, the Serb forces were the dominant forces and the Croatian forces were untrained and didn't know quite what they were doing. By '94 or '95 the Croatian army had come up the learning curve and they were pretty good. In the meantime someplace during that period in the '91, '92 time frame with Milosevic's encouragement Serb enclaves in Croatia stood up and said if Slovenia can claim independence and Croatia can claim independence, we're going to claim independence for our Serb entities here in what used to be Croatia. Milosevic promised that if they stood up he would somehow protect them. Four different enclaves stood up and made this announcement that these were going to be a little Republika Srpskas in Croatia. By the time this happened the Croatia army had become a much better army and they decided to go in and clean these out. In

'95 I believe it was, the Croatia army went into the three westernmost enclaves and just overran them with no real great opposition and again did some nasty things. The Serbs in those three enclaves had thought they were under UN protection which turned out to be a false assumption. The Serbs who could fled to get away from the Croat army and most of them headed east trying to get to Serbia. When they got into eastern Slovenia, which was the fourth enclave, the one right on the border with Serbia across the river, this became a swollen Serb enclave. The Croatian army approached it looking to push them out as well. By this time the United Nations Security Council had gotten very, very concerned with what might happen if this big accumulation of Serbs were attacked by the Croatian army, what might happen with human rights, humanitarian issues. So, the United Nations in '96 convinced Tudjman, the President in Zagreb the capital of Croatia, and Milosevic to let the United Nations which had set up a protectorate in Eastern Slovenia, this enclave where there was I think like 150,000 Serbs, many of them refugees from the other enclaves that had been overrun,. The United Nations would administer this enclave for one year renewable for a second year. After the second year it could only be extended if both sides agreed to an extension. If there was no extension then Eastern Slovenia would revert to being an integral part of Croatia,. Hopefully by the end of two years the United Nations would have put in place the rules of the game that would protect those Serbs that wanted to stay as citizens of Croatia; would give them enough protection so they'd be comfortable.

The UN set up what it called UNTAES, the United Nations Transition Administration of Eastern Slovenia. They put in place 5,000 troops, peacekeepers, blue helmets. They put in place about just shy of 1,000 international civil servants to administer the place and heading this up was someone called the Transitional Administrator. The first Transitional Administrator was an American Foreign Service Officer, Jacques Klein. He liked to call himself General Klein because he was an air force reserve one star. He liked to wear a general's uniform occasionally to show that he was a general, but Jacques went in and did a wonderful job of setting up this structure that was UNTAES. He was there for the better part of a year and a third at the end of which Madeleine Albright and Bob Gelbard wanting to replace the German in Sarajevo with an American, but also wanting to hold onto this UN slot, decided that Jacques Klein and I would, one of us would be in Sarajevo and one of us would be in Vukovar. Madeleine Albright decided that it was time to get Jacques out of Vukovar and send me in there. He went Sarajevo and I went to Vukovar. I inherited his 5,000 troops. I inherited his 900 or so civilians. The Transition Administrator was the end all and be all of, was the chief executive, but was also the legislature and could almost pass at times as the administrator of justice in the province. It was a fascinating experience.

Q: What was the role of the American Ambassador in the Embassy in Zagreb?

WALKER: It was basically just to report on what was going on in Eastern Slovenia as it related to the rest of Croatia. The ambassador when I got there was a chap named Peter Galbraith.

Q: I'm interviewing him now.

WALKER: Oh, are you? An interesting fellow. Son of John Kenneth Galbraith. Very interesting man.

Q: An operator.

WALKER: An operator. How can I say this? I don't think I've ever known anyone about whom knew with such a uniformity of opinion by everyone I ever talked to in which the subject of Peter Galbraith came up. Peter is very, very bright. Peter is very, very serious. Peter in Zagreb when he first got there did a lot of very good things. He was the first American Ambassador to Croatia when it became independent. He tried very hard to lead them down the democratic path. He was very involved in setting up this; it was called the Erdut Agreement, which was what set up this transitional administration, by the United Nations for Eastern Slovenia. So he had some real accomplishments. Unfortunately in doing all these things he pissed everybody off. When I met him he was at the end of his tour. He'd been there three or four years. He thought he had earned the love and respect of Tadjman's government as well as the people of Croatia. The Tadjman government detested him. They felt he was always lecturing them. They felt he was always looking down at them. I saw him give a couple of talks. I was there for the second anniversary of the Erdut Agreement. The government of Croatia did not want Peter Galbraith to attend because they knew he would get up and give a pedantic lecture on democracy. Sure enough he wangled his way into coming then got up and gave a lecture that really pissed everybody off. When he finally left, he spent a month going around saying goodbye to all the cities in Croatia, none of which wanted him to come, but he didn't see that they didn't want him. Blind spot. That having been said, he did some very positive things. He put together some things that must have been very difficult to stitch together, but the people in the Embassy were not happy. It was a demoralized Embassy. They were very glad to see him go.

Q: Well, when you arrived there, you spent a year there.

WALKER: Less than a year, but almost.

Q: You were there to see the finishing touches, weren't you?

WALKER: I was there to see the finishing touches. The overall strategic plan of the United Nations was to get the government in Zagreb to sign its name to what could be described as international treaties. Sign its name to papers in a whole bunch of areas with the United Nations. Signing a paper about what the health system is going to be. Signing a paper on what the social security system is going to be for retirees. Signing a paper on how the courts are going to work. Signing a paper on all sorts of things and totally tie them down so that when they eventually resumed sovereignty over Eastern Slovenia they would have signed all sorts of agreements that they couldn't violate absent getting the United Nations Security Council very mad at them.

So when I got there most of these agreements were in the works. I had a legal staff of six or seven UN lawyers who were taking the ideas and putting them onto paper and then going and trying to sell them to the ministries. This was not easy. The government in Croatia saw that the mission was coming to an end. They kind of thought they could wait us out. The only thing we had as a tool to get around that was to make them think that maybe we were going to try to extend the mandate beyond the two years. That worried them. My job was to get all these different agreements signed. Under Jacques Klein most of them, many of them, had gone 50% down the path, 75% down the path, but the real tough issues were the last issues. The easy issues are what you take care of the first few days, but we were putting together a police force that was going to be not all Croats. There was going to be room for a lot of Serbs in it. We were training policemen. We were putting together what the judicial system was going to be. Were there going to be Serb judges or how can we assure that a certain percentage of the judges would be non-Croats? This was sort of the effort that we were involved in.

The government in Zagreb, I went up there every couple of weeks to see Tudjman. We had some tough sessions. It was a nationalist government. They'd come into being by saying, hey, we're Croats, this is Croatia, we don't want to be part of Yugoslavia. They'd have this invasion by the essentially Serb army. They had war crimes committed. They had Bosnia going on. They were not terribly amenable to giving Serbs a fair share of the pie in Eastern Slovenia. But at the same time we had the UN behind the Security Council, etc. While I was there we knocked the 5,000 troops down to 2,500. The Jordanian battalion went home and the Pakistan battalion went home, leaving me with a Russian battalion and a Belgian battalion. As we approached the end of the mission, I had a hell of a time convincing my UN senior staff that the mission should end at the end of two years. My argument was essentially we will have all these agreements in place. Yes, a process of reconciliation certainly hasn't begun and yes, the Croats are probably not going to be very, they're not going to go out of their way to be nice to the Serbs. But I was saying if the UN is here for another year is that going to make any difference? It's a very costly mission. It was very expensive. Would the resources that would be consumed by another year of our being here show the sort of progress that you're all talking about? I came to the conclusion the real reason behind their saying we've got to extend the mission. I was saying look an extra year is not going to make that much difference and two we're going to have to get the Croatian government to agree to our being here. That's part of the Erdut Agreement. That's not going to be easy. We're really going to have to twist arms. I finally came to the conclusion that was really what you just described, this was a nice mission to be on. The money was very, very good.

Q: You could pop off to ...

WALKER: You could pop off to some even nicer places. You didn't spend much money in taking care of yourself in Vukovar. You were, in whatever your field was, a little god. It was addictive almost. It was also a period in which the number of UN missions, peacekeeping missions was going down. And they were they were tightening the ones that were remaining. So a lot of these people see the mission coming to an end were worried if they could find another vision to go on. The way the UN does their recruitment

to go in a mission is, it's interesting to say the least, they pick their people mostly from UN organs: from the Secretariat in New York, from ILO in Geneva or wherever the ILO is, Rome wherever it is. The UN does not have a peacekeeping body of people. They take them off the shelves of other parts of the UN. So I had people on my staff who were from UNESCO, and that was great if they were dealing with the educational system we're going to put in place, but with the mission coming to an end those people really weren't interested in going back to UNESCO. They like this out of the field, making good money, feeling important etc. So my conclusion was exactly that. That most of the people who are coming to me and saying we've got to keep the mission going, were not really talking about we were going to be able to really put together a Croat serve love feast it was more than they don't want this mission end because we don't know what comes next for us. I've given that lecture a lot, that's when I talk about what I think is wrong with the UN.

Q: Well, there must have been hovering over the whole thing that if this doesn't work correctly an awful lot of Serbs are going to go across the river.

WALKER: Yes.

Q: And Was this considered awful?

WALKER: Well, I can tell you that one person considered awful buying that was Slobodan Milosevic. I think I went to see him three times while I was in Eastern Slovenia and all three times he was extremely nice to me, told me that whatever I needed from him he would produce because we were working on the same side of this one. That he thought that the Serbs in Croatia had to be permitted to live like Serbs and follow their culture, their religion, their language, etc. and he knew that that's what the United Nations was doing. I think the subplot in what he was saying was, the last thing I, Slobodan Milosevic need is an influx of over a hundred thousand Serbs being pushed or of their own free will coming into western Serbia, one because there's tremendous unemployment in what we now call the former Republic of Yugoslavia, the FRY. Where would these people work? Most of them are peasants, most of them are farmers. We don't need them. But even more basic is most of them are incredibly ticked off at Slobodan Milosevic because he told them to stand up and he'd take care of them and the next thing they knew they were fleeing eastward. So he certainly didn't want an exodus of the Serbs. The Croatian government had a different attitude. They wanted to show that they were a Western European country. That they understood that Western European countries did not mistreat minorities even the minorities that had done horrible things a few years earlier. And they realized that if they wanted to show the world that they were ready for membership in the EU or membership in whatever else they wanted to join in terms of Europe, or if they want to get off the UN's blacklist, if they want to get off the US's blacklist, if they wanted to get Peter Galbraith not to lecture them over and over again about dealing with minorities in a democratic system, they would have to tolerate, officially tolerate, as many Serbs as wanted to stay in Eastern Slovenia and that it would look bad for them if the day they took over all the Serbs left.

Q: Also, this in a way was sort of a controllable area, wasn't it?

WALKER: Right, let me let me give you an anecdote or two. At one point we were trying to decide how best to integrate Eastern Slovenia back into Croatia as the day came when it was going to be officially administered by Zagreb. Throughout its recent history Eastern Slovenia had looked eastward. The telephone system went through Belgrade. What links of communication there were had for ten years, more or less, gone to Belgrade rather than gone to Zagreb because this was essentially a Serb community. And with the war the railroads had been blown up and stuff. There had been a total separation. Mines had been laid along the divider between Eastern Slovenia and the rest of Croatia. So we were trying to figure out what would be better? Would it be better to integrate some of those systems before reversion? Or, would be better to have it all happen on day one the UN moves out. We decide that we would do it gradually. So one of the first things we did which I guess was technically the easiest was to re-hook the telephone system so that it when it was turned over to back to the Zagreb the telephone system would be integrated with the Croatian telephone system. Now, of course, the day that we integrated the system Croatia and disconnected it from Serbia what happened? Everybody in Eastern Slovenia who had a telephone started receiving threatening phone calls from Croats saying you're in my house, I know you're there, I'm coming back, I'm gonna... So we had all these complaints about threatened telephone calls. The day we opened the border and started letting Croats come in almost on visitors visas, they came in on some document that let them come in for 24 hours, and, of course, what they do? They went to the old house that they had owned 20 years ago that had been taken over by some Serb family, not gonna go, and said if you're not out of here come January 15 we're coming to get you. So all these angers and hatreds that we thought we were putting to bed just blossom, just blossomed. You can understand it.

Q: Oh yeah.

WALKER: It was not that difficult to comprehend but it came as a shock. It was such a, almost all of the initial phone calls were threatening phone calls. Almost all of the initial visits were people who came in wanted to go back and reclaim their old house. Terrible stuff. The Serbs didn't make it any easier. I remember there was a woman very close to Tudjman. I got to know her, she was a fireball, and she was his special envoy to entice UNTAES, my operation. I used to see her every time I go to see Tudjman, she'd be in the meeting. Unlike the meetings with Milosevic where no one else in the room spoke except Milosevic. In the meetings with Tudjman, he called in various people to speak. He was the chief executive but he was also willing to listen to other people so she used to talk quite often. She was a real nationalist and she was from Eastern Slovenia so she knew the region and she told me that she'd be coming down. So one day I said well, why don't you come down? So she came down. And her car was mobbed by Serbs. They chased her into Vukovar. I had to get this stupid police force we were trying to build up which at that point wasn't very strong and send them out to try and rescue her. I mean, it was a real nasty scene. There was a lot of that, there was a lot of that. These are not two peoples that really want to live together, to work together, and make the future a joint future.

Q: Well speaking of, how did you find your, did have a UN master somewhere?

WALKER: I found I reported to Kofi Annan. When I'd go to New York I'd always go and see him three or four times.

Q: He was the Secretary General of the UN.

WALKER: He is the Secretary General. I had his number two. The Chief of Staff to the Secretary General is a very important position, it's the gatekeeper to the Secretary General and in my case it was lucky he was someone I had known from El Salvador. He been sent down there to run the UN mission in El Salvador when I was Ambassador, a fella named Iqbal Riza, from Pakistan. So we had a good relationship. I had helped him in El Salvador. He was always kind to me, always wanted to see me, get me in to see Kofi Annan. Who else would call me? The head of the peacekeeping operations in New York would call occasionally and came out to see me several times, a Frenchman, and his deputy an Algerian both of them came out. But if you run a mission like that you're pretty much on your own. You really do have a great deal of authority.

Q: Well, how about you had a Russian and Belgium battalion there. How did they work within the system?

WALKER: Not only did I have a Russian battalion, 1200 man or whatever, my home, the home I took over from Jacques Klein was guarded by a platoon of Russian soldiers. My personal bodyguards were a team of Poles from the GROM it's called which is their special forces, their Delta team guys, really good. I went to Warsaw twice and saw them in training; supposedly among the best in the world. The US, the Brits, SAS, the Israelis and the GROM were the four preeminent Delta type forces. Anyway, I was I was guarded, my personal security detail were from the GROM. They, of course, every time they'd bring me home late at night and we'd have to bang on the door because the Russian troops were asleep or were drinking vodka or playing ping pong whatever the hell they were doing my Poles loved to show me that the Russians didn't know what the hell they were doing. But the Russians were all young kids. But to answer your basic question, the Russian battalion, like everybody else on the mission, was fat and sassy. They were making very, very good money, much more than they would ever have made at home. This was the period when the Russian army was not paying their people for months if not longer. And so these guys were getting cash on the barrelhead at the end of every month. They loved it. The Russian commander was someone I got to know pretty well, he was the Deputy Force Commander, which is the number two military guy, a one-star general, good guy. You know, he wanted to keep me happy.

Q: Well, did you have to use the troops?

WALKER. No. They guarded our facilities they were very good. One of the big efforts we made was collecting weapons. There was a buyback program. Trying to wean some of the people off their weapons. And this was done by our military guys. We collected thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands of weapons, mostly old weapons. I assume the new weapons were, are still buried someplace in the backyards of some of

these people. I'm just dealing with it now because the head of the group is someone who I hope to see in the dock at The Hague in the not-too-distant future.

When I got to Vukovar I was told there were remnants of the Yugoslav army still there. It turned out it was a fairly big remnant of the Yugoslav army. There was a general, named General Dušan Lončar. General Lončar had I think if I'm not mistaken 450 Yugoslav officers scattered in all the villages of Eastern Slovenia. They wear uniforms. They pretend they were Serb farmers and such. But they were there to keep the population calm and also keep Milosevic informed about what was going on in Eastern Slovenia. When I first went, I met Lončar within a week or so of arrival. A big, Mussolini looking guy, very tough looking, very serious guy. He ended up asking me to ask Milosevic on his behalf without telling Milosevic that he had asked me to ask him such things as would you tell my President to pay my men, we haven't been paid in three four or five months. You know, would you tell the President to, you know, rotate some of my people out here, they've been here for all too long. And then when I would go and see Milosevic and I'd pass on these messages from Lončar he would always tell me look Lončar works for you. I know, Walker, that you're doing our work there so Lončar works for you and I'd given him instructions whatever you command him to do he will do and all his men will work for you. I never took him up on this, but that was Milosevic's attitude towards UNTAES. We were helping him by keeping Eastern Slovenia quiet and calming the Serbs there and not letting them move en masse back into Serbia. But the military, I spent, it seems like every other day I was going to what they called the medal ceremony, pinning medals, UN medals on row after row after row of Indonesian policeman, Bangladeshi policeman, Russian soldiers heading home, French soldiers, Belgian soldiers, it was I don't have medals I pinned on people but I pinned them on awful lot of people.

What else did we have there? We had UNHCR. The refugee people were very active in Eastern Slovenia. One of the things we were trying to stimulate was a return of some of the Serbs who had fled these enclaves in Western Croatia, who were civilians, who had not participated in war crimes, or, had not stood up and declared their independence. Were just pushed out when the Croat army moved in and they'd come with nothing to Eastern Slovenia. They had no roots in Serbia. Their families had lived in Plissa, some of those places, for hundreds of years and we were telling Zagreb that there had to be a return. Those people had to be allowed to go back to their houses. This was all put under the auspices of the UNHCR. I got to know the two guys who were with the UNHCR. They were organizing this return. Once a week they would tempt, at first there was great fear among the Serbs to go back to Croatia, understandably. But once a week they would load up three or four or five buses with Serbs who had decided they were going to risk it and go back, mostly old people, mostly people who had no future in Serbia or in Eastern Slovenia who just want to go back and die where they had come from. A few young couples, who for one reason or another decided to go back, but they would fill up these buses and taken them back. Before the first bus went, I remember deciding that I was going to take my first visit, and I said it would be symbolically very interesting if we could find some Serb who wants to go back, move back into their house, take up where they left off when they had fled. And the UNHCR said, "Oh, we've got someone for you.

We've got this little old woman, and she's 72 years of age, and she's ill and she's telling us that she just wants to go back and she left a sister behind was even older, and she hasn't any contact with her for five, six, seven years, whatever it is. And she wants to go back to her little village and die there eventually." I said. "Great, see if she's interested in coming, and we'll get her picture in the paper, etc." So, a couple of days later, I went to my helipad and got on my Ukrainian helicopter and was introduced to this little 72 year old woman who was absolutely scared out of her skull about going up in a helicopter. But we held her down and comforted her, and a couple of women that were traveling with me on each side of her. Anyway, we flew over to her hometown, we went out into the countryside we found her sister who was pushing 90 and it was it was it was very emotional because her house had been blown up by the Croats. Out in the middle of nowhere. And her sister was living in her house which had been blown up, but she was living in the cellar or someplace. She had carved out a little place to hang on. And this old woman almost had a heart attack when she saw her house. She had to sit down and gasp for breath. It was very, very dramatic. We had some journalist there taking pictures of her looking at her house, etc. I went off with a couple of journalists to talk to the old sister and chat with her for a few minutes. When we came back out on the road by this bombed out house where this 72 year old woman was sitting on a stone crying, and trying to breathe, out on the road about 15-20 feet from her a couple of cars pulled up and a whole bunch of young Croat toughs got out and my interpreter was telling me, they're telling that old lady as soon as you leave Walker, they're going to kill her. And I thought, Jesus, who would come up and threaten a little 70-something, what threat is she to them and what kind of bravado is it that would bring them here. You know, it looked like the Ku Klux Klan coming up in a bunch of cars. And I went over and said a few words that told them you know that lady is under my protection the protection of the United Nations and if anything happens to her. They just laughed and drove away. I mean it was a very sad little vignette of what was going to happen to all these Serbs going back to their various places. I went back on one of the buses with a busload and had some kids on, little babies and such. and again most of them returned to find their houses had been blown to pieces. Some of them find their houses were booby-trapped, that sort of stuff. Really, really nasty sort of things. Nasty, nasty.

Q: I was an election observer in Durbentar which is near Bosanski Park. And there Croatian houses were blown up.

WALKER: I mean the whole the whole city of Vukovar was blown up, I mean, so no, it wasn't it wasn't just the Serbs that lost house.

Q: Both sides. They deliberately went around and blew things up.

WALKER: Yeah. Anyway, no, I look back on my eight or nine, ten months, whatever it was. Extremely interesting, every time I turned around I was told by my deputy a Syrian French in the Syrian army. Was a lieutenant in the Syrian army, he went to school at a university in France, he's now very high up in the UN, administration, a fella named Sarah Darren (phonetic spelling) strange man but his mission in life was to convince me that I just didn't understand the UN culture. He was always saying, oh that's not the way

we do in the United Nations. And I got that from a lot of these sort of old-timer UN types. I actually did him a favor because he got into a tremendous personality conflict with the chief administrative officer of the mission who was an idiot, who was really probably the worst employee I've ever had work for me. But UN headquarters thought it was a personality conflict between these two guys and so when I tried to get rid of the administrative officer, UN headquarters put all sorts of obstacles in my path. I eventually had to take it to Kofi Annan himself. But watching the way the UN personnel system works or doesn't work -- it's even worse than the State Department which is, between you and me saying quite a bit -- incredible little mafias every, every, every nation has its mafia it works to put its own people in place. The Brazilian mafia is particularly effective, especially in the personnel side of things. There's an Algerian mafia that has a lot to do with peacekeeping operations. Very, very strange place. Very difficult to swim in that sea if you're not accustomed to it.

Q: Well, with the end game, by the time you left did you get all these treaties locked in? Agreements locked in?

WALKER: Yeah. we got we got most of them locked in as treaties. And the mission ended. I insisted that the mission was going to end on January 15, as planned. I made the proposal that -- first to Kofi Annan and then I went out and everybody told me I wouldn't be able to sell it but I got I got Tudjman to buy it -- which was that when we departed, when the UN departed, we would be allowed to leave behind a civilian police force that would continue to train the police and try and turn into an effective administration of the police function. The first couple of times I took it up with Tudjman, no, no, no, no way, this is not gonna fly. But I eventually went to his Minister of Defense. The Minister of Defense in Croatia was a very interesting man, he had left Croatia 20-25 years earlier. Gone to Canada had opened a whole bunch of pizza restaurants in Canada, made a lot of money. When Croatia got its independence he was a Croat nationalist, he went back. No, I guess was before it was when Croatia was fighting the Serbs, trying to achieve its independence. And he went back and became a general and did all sorts of good things, and he was a guy who could explain to Tudjman what the Yankees and the Canadians were like. What Western Europe was like. He was very involved in the Croatian effort in Bosnia. In the halls in the State Department this guy was the equivalent of Milosevic and Karadzic and those guys in terms of thought to be a real human rights violator. Probably he was. But I found him to be a man of his word. I found a man who would listen to you and if you could convince him that you were not screwing around with him, he would try and come half-way. By the time I got there to try and talk to Tudjman and him about leaving behind a UN police presence he was dying of cancer and he was in really bad shape. But he was such a serious guy that even, I mean, the last couple of meetings I had with this guy, the Minister of Defense, he was just grimacing in pain; he was in horrible pain all through the talk. And I was trying to say, let me tell you why I think it's in Croatian interest to keep this police presence there. Because if the UN pulls out entirely, and something bad happens, and some bad things are going to happen for sure when your people move back in and want to take over their houses and, you know, you're going to get blamed for it. Croatia is going to get blames for it. Whereas if you let the UN police presence continue, at least you can say hey, we've shown that we're not trying to get all

international eyes out of there. So, at the end of a two hour discussion with this guy, as I say dying of cancer almost before my eyes, he said okay Walker, not convinced, let me talk to the old man and we'll agree to it. And sure enough, within a couple of days I got the word that they were going to agree to it.

So the mission ended beautifully. It was, it was thought, and I think still is thought to be one of the more successful UN peacekeeping operations. It ended on time. At the end there was no major violation of what had been agreed to. Sure, at the end, a good number of Serbs left Eastern Slovenia to go to Serbia or go to Bosnia or wherever, but we always said you know there are going to be Serbs who under no circumstances will want to live under a situation in which they are Croats of Serb ethnicity. There are going to be a lot of Serbs who will never look to Zagreb as their government. They will always look to Belgrade. And those people should leave. Those people are not, are not prepared to be Croats, which is what you are if you live in Croatia. So, yeah, there was a certain exodus but not overwhelming. I mean, I'm using the same argument in Kosovo now I'm saying you know if there are Serbs in Kosovo now who will live as Kosovars, fine. And, I think the Albanians in Kosovo agree to this. But if they continue to think of themselves as Serbs first and look to Belgrade for instructions or protection or whatever, that's not going to work. So the UN mission in Croatia ended on January 15th. The ceremony I wanted to have, which was to lower the UN flag and raise the Croatian flag, I was told the UN flag never comes down. It always flies. So, under UN culture you can't do that Walker. And I argued about it for hours with my team but they never, they never gave an inch. But no I thoroughly enjoyed my time with the UN. I came to the conclusion I that it has lots and lots of systemic problems that people should be looking at. But at the same time I personally had a great time.

Q: Probably we should pick up next time. Just to put at the end what happened next?

WALKER: I came back. Where was I offered to go to? Pakistan. They called me up just before I left, no, about a month before I was to leave Croatia and they said "Bill the Panel met, D Committee met, and we paneled you for Pakistan." I said, "What! Pakistan! Don't know the language, never been there, never had any real desire to go there. Why would you want to send me to Pakistan?" "Well we decided you were perfect. You know, it's got ethnic strife. It's got civil war is going on in its borders, it's got troubles with India and Kashmir, it's got the fundamentalist, it's got the Afghan problems. This is just your sort of place." And I said, "Well, okay." And so they said fine. Okay we'll send your name over the White House. That one came to naught because two weeks after they called me that Paks exploded their nuclear device. And again I got the call saying we got to get someone over there right away. And you've got another month or two with the UN so, so I lost that one too. Thank God!

Q: Yes.

WALKER: That's the end of my story about Croatia.

Q: And we'll pick this up next time. You didn't go to Pakistan, and you're...?

WALKER: I'm on my way to Kosovo.

Q: You're on your way to Kosovo. We'll pick this up then.

Today is D-day, June 6th, 2002. Bill we have you going to Kosovo. What's the timing?

WALKER: I came out of Croatia in February of 1998 and came back here waiting for my reward. Somehow the rewards process system is not quite as highly tuned, as finely tuned, as the assignment system. So I came back. I had told you how in Croatia they called and offered me Pakistan. But then I still had two months to go and Pakistan exploded its nuclear device and Madeleine Albright wanted to get someone out there quicker than two months. So I lost Pakistan.

So I came back expecting something comparable to Pakistan and instead I essentially went home and started cutting the lawn and cleaning out the garage, and arranging my Croatia papers in case some historian ever wanted to know what had happened in Croatia. I also did a good bit of being invited up to the UN where they do a lot of lessons learned.

Q: What do they do with those lessons learned?

WALKER: Well, I don't know what they do with them, I know how they collect.

Q: How do they collect?

WALKER: There is an office at the UN which is headed up by a very able gentleman from Gabon, I believe. He's an African diplomat. And he heads up an office it's called Lessons Learned. When people come back from missions they get together with it. Since I was the head of mission and it was considered a very successful mission I was invited up there two or three times. They also held conferences on trying to determine lessons learned from the UN experience in Croatia. They brought in just about every leader that had been on my mission with me. It's a very rigorous systematic process. Two separate two day conferences just on that at one place. I contrast that with the State Department which does nothing in the way of lessons learned. I came out of Croatia, no one ever spoke to me about Croatia. I came out of Kosovo, no one ever spoke to me about Kosovo. Anyway that office then puts together a very extensive volume trying to describe the situation and what the mission was like, and what, if any, lessons we learned from it. What they actually do with that, I don't know.

Q: Is that made available anywhere?

WALKER: I assume, I assume. I mean, you know, UN documents are.

Q: Yeah.

WALKER: And I assume they give them to mission ...

Q: But their office is called Lessons Learned.

WALKER: And I don't know how many are in it. But, I mean it they put together pretty good conferences. Usually at the retreat places out of Long Island and you get a couple of days of just going over what you and the rest of the people in the room feel were interesting and perhaps helpful lessons. Every mission is, of course, different.

Q: Did they transcribe it and all that.

WALKER: Yeah, I assume they did, I assume they did.

Q: It's very interesting to know and for researchers, you know.

WALKER: I spent a good bit of time reliving the Croatia experience. I did a good bit of lecturing around the country, out to the RAND Corporation, my old hometown of Santa Monica, universities that wanted to hear about the Balkans because this was this was a Balkan story and the Balkans were still front-page. So I went home and was home from about March of '98 through mid-October of '98.

Q: As far as the State Department was concerned, they were paying your salary but were they calling you in, or anybody interested?

WALKER: I'm telling you, Stu, not one person called me to say hey you were just in Croatia, that was a peacekeeping operation, it's judged a success, why was it a success, or what was the American role there? Or you were, you had five thousand blue helmets under your command, how did you get along with the Russians? So, I had a Russian battalion. But no one asked one single question in those six months.

Anyway, so I was home as you say being paid handsomely by the State Department, every time I went out on a lecture I made sure the State Department approved of my going off to it. Go and speak to a Foreign Affairs Council in Tucson or RAND Corporation or things like that. No one ever objected, everyone thought it was great idea. It was not busy work, but it was it was not something I expected. I was expecting to come back and go off again.

I'm out mowing my lawn on October 16, 1998 and the phone rings and one of my boys calls me inside. This is in Bethesda and I go inside and on the phone is Tom Pickering, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, and he said, "Bill, I don't know if you have heard it on the news but there's just been an agreement reached in in Serbia. You know, Dick Holbrooke's out there." I said, "Yeah I saw something about that. I have been paying some attention to what's going on in the Balkans." He said, "Yeah, well Dick Holbrooke has just come out of a press conference with Milosevic and apparently Slobodan Milosevic has agreed for the first time to let an international presence go into, go in to Kosovo." As I say, this was October of 98. The papers were full of the potential humanitarian disaster in Kosovo because there was still a lot of fighting going on

between the Serb army and police and the Kosovo Liberation Army. A lot of fighting. No one seemed to know what to do about it. And a lot of civilians were fleeing their villages, both Serbs as well as Albanians. And the papers were already picking up the story that if something isn't done there's going to be a humanitarian disaster here. There's going to be tens if not hundreds of thousands of peasants up in the hills, up in the mountains actually, in with winter fast approaching and the Balkans are known for their winters. And these are people who have fled their villages without adequate clothing or food or anything, shelter. So Holbrooke, who at that point was our number one private sector negotiator on Balkan affairs. He had put together the Dayton Accords that ended the Bosnian war. He had been sent out by the President to Belgrade and what he claimed was long grueling discussions with Slobodan Milosevic and had emerged on the 16th of October to tell the world that an agreement had been reached. And that Slobodan Milosevic had finally agreed to letting a European-North American peacekeeping verification, I guess it was the word they used, a verification mission go in to Kosovo to verify who the bad guys were, who the good guys were, who was who was initiating violence, and that sort of thing. And Pickering explained to me that it was going to be up to 2,000 people. It was going to be under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the OSCE. That they had agreed that an American would head it up. And that we see the unanimous agreement which is necessary within the OSCE for as many countries as wanted to participate in this as possible. The OSCE has fifty three or four members, depending on whether you consider Yugoslavia a full-fledged member, they were in suspension at that time. We eventually got 34 countries to sign up. Pickering said, will you be interested in going out and heading this up? That when you're faced with the judgment between mowing the lawn one more time and going off on a mission, hey it was a no-brainer. So I said sure Tom, of course. That started a well would. He said, well there's a couple of problems I have to tell you about. One is it's an unarmed mission. This is almost a completely novel idea to send in verifiers into a war zone where both sides are armed and shooting at each other and an international sort of peacekeeping operation or peacemaking operations is going to go in without any means to defend themselves. But Slobodan Milosevic takes total responsibility for your safety. Terrific. Second point he made was that you are going to have to get out there immediately. You know, the world is not going to wait for us to set this thing up and take a month or two to put it together. As a matter of fact, we want you to fly to Oslo tomorrow where there's a meeting of the OSCE leadership. We will introduce you to them, they will take a quick look at you and decide whether you suit their needs or not.

At that time the Chairman in Office of the OSCE was the Polish Foreign Minister, Geremek. His term was coming to an end; they rotate every year and the incoming Chairman in Office was the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Vollebaek. This was a meeting of the, what they call the Trifa, the outgoing Chairman in Office, the incoming Chairman in Office and the one who will come in the following year, who was a Hungarian if I remember correctly. So I flew off to Oslo the next day. And it was impressive. This was Europe, the leaders of Europe gathering, you know, Robin Cook, the German Foreign Ministry, Fischer, all the big names in Europe all gathering to say, we've got to bring peace to Kosovo. Because the Balkans look like it's gonna explode again and here's this guy Walker that they have sent over. Who is Walker?

Q: Well, did anybody hand you a briefcase full of information about what this was?

WALKER: No. I went to this meeting cold. When I came back and had, I guess, maybe three, four, five days to pack and buy some good boots and that kind of stuff. Anyway, I was invited to go to the NSC, to the White House situation room where the Secretaries of the various departments and the Undersecretaries were gathered to figure out what was the Kosovo verification mission going to be up to, what was my mandate. Everybody of course offering all support. Then I went back to the State Department and there I was thrown into a whole bunch of meetings where the Balkans experts and the EUR types, the European leadership was trying to tell me in very, very short sentences, since that's the only kind I understand, what was the background, what we were trying to get out of it. At that point in time there was very little sympathy for the KLA.

Q: That's the Kosovo Liberation army?

WALKER: Yes, no one really quite knew what they were. There were people who thought they were a bunch of thugs, people who said, well, you'll recognize these guys, they're very similar to the Salvadoran death squads, that sort of stuff. I discovered there was no one in the Department who spoke to me who would even listen to the thought that maybe Kosovo should in fact be led towards independence. It was, oh, this is going to be a part of Serbia forever, we've just got to bring this thing together. We've got to make sure that it doesn't spread to the rest of the region and if Kosovo were to proclaim itself independent that would have repercussions in Macedonia and would have repercussion in Montenegro. We'd have repercussions in Albania and therefore, you know, be very careful what you say.

Q: Well, before we do, let's go back to the Oslo time.

WALKER: Oh, Oslo. Okay. Never been to Norway, get to Oslo. The meeting is typical European formal, foreign minister level meeting, big square table around the room with the ministers up in the seats and other people behind them. Pickering was there representing Madeleine Albright. At the last minute she wasn't going to make it and of course I sat and listened to them discuss preliminary issues. How was Europe? How we were going to pay for this because the OSC doesn't have much in the way of money. Who was most likely to come up with the biggest contribution in terms both of money as well as in terms of people. Norway, graciously said since they were coming in as the Chairman in Office they saw it as their responsibility to make sure this mission got up and running well before they came into office. So they immediately put \$20 million on the table and said we will send some real good administrative people down to Pristina. None of us really knew what was in Pristina to support a mission of this size. Two thousand people going into the middle of nowhere and doing so in a week or two. So, Norway was very gracious. They were nice hosts for the whole operation and at some point Pickering introduced me to the crowd. What I learned was although I'd seen evidence of this in the Croatia situation and certainly up at the UN, the European sort of summitry, no one ever, ever, ever speaks ill of anyone else around the table. It's all

extremely polite and very florid introductions of everyone and of course Pickering, the professional that he is, introduced me and I was almost impressed with my own self. I guess he impressed them, wow, I'm that good. They all had been rehearsed in what they were going to say, I guess some of them had sent for my bio or some of them knew about me in Croatia. Everyone came in to say this was just wonderful, this very senior State Department fellow. Anyway, it went without a hitch and I learned a lot just listening, I didn't know what the OSC was all about.

Q: Hadn't you run into them somewhere?

WALKER: I had run into them in Croatia because when we handed off from the UN we turned it over to the OSCE. I can't say I knew what they were about. I went to Vienna once to meet the Secretariat and the Secretary General, at that time it was a Dane. Again, seeing that its very European, in Vienna, lovely headquarters right on one of the main drags, lovely restaurants around that you'd go to and have good meals with these guys. I had no idea how they functioned putting a field operation, putting a mission out there. In Oslo, it was reassuring. They were talking serious subjects and I was certainly told that this was an incredibly important mission. It was, I think I have said this before. It was ten times bigger than the next biggest OSC mission. They had never fielded anything even like this.

Q: Did they mention anything about the unarmed?

WALKER: Yes, they discussed that and some people thought that maybe we should have tried harder to get a few people armed. Other people said no, we don't want to give the wrong impression. We were going in there to be neutral, not to get in the way of the fighting. We're just going in there to verify. We're all different views, but there was some discussion about the unarmed part of it. At the end I was unanimously confirmed and as I say the OSC only moves by total consensus. I was told that there was going to be a meeting that I probably should attend which was of the OSCE's Human Rights Democracy Building Office, which is in Warsaw, Poland. I was told they were having a conference there next week and it would be very good for you to go out there and tell them what you're going to do in terms of the human rights side of things since this is to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe. So I was invited to go out and the Polish Foreign Minister said, this is good, we can talk and I can give you your official letter that proves you have been appointed Head of Mission.

Now, a sidebar to all of this was that I had two interesting conversations in the aftermath of the formal session. The first was the Norwegian Foreign Minister asked to talk to me privately. I later got to know him, Knut Vollebaek, very distinguished, very typical northern European diplomat, Foreign Minister, quite young, very dapper, very well spoken in English. He took me aside and he said look, "Mr. Walker, I'm so delighted that you're going to head the mission, but I would be very interested to know have you thought about a deputy yet?" I said, "I'm sorry I haven't. A few days ago I had no idea I was going to be doing this. No, I haven't thought about it at all." He said, "Well, are you thinking of having one deputy, or are you thinking of having several deputies?" I said,

“Well, if it came to that, if you gave me my choice, I would prefer just a single deputy. At American Embassies they have an Ambassador, then they have a Deputy Chief of Mission and the DCM is the alter-ego to the Ambassador and when the Ambassador leaves town this person takes over in his place, his or her place. For an American Embassy to work properly the Ambassador and his deputy have to have a very good chemistry, they have to trust each other, but that personal chemistry is very, very important. My preference would be for a single deputy, but it’s obviously not up to me.” He said, “Well, you know, if you get a single deputy, or you could get more than one deputy, but if you get a single deputy, would you consider having a Norwegian as your deputy?” Now, I just heard that Norway was putting up \$20 million right up front. I just heard that the Norwegian Foreign Minister was going to be my boss for the incoming year. I was pleased with Norway, I mean, who isn't, so I said, “Of course, I would accept a Norwegian.” He said, “Oh, great, fine, thanks. I appreciate that.” I left.

The second conversation I had in the aftermath of that same meeting was I was told the Foreign Minister from Luxembourg wanted to see me. I don't think I've ever met a person from Luxembourg before, but hey, if the Foreign Minister wants to see you, of course, let's do it. I sat down with the Foreign Minister from Luxembourg. He said, “Oh, Walker, we're so glad to have you an American leading the mission and this is an incredibly important mission for Europe. That's why we're all here and I'm sure you will have support from everybody who is around the table this afternoon. Of course Luxembourg is a very small country, but we want to do our part. We think this is important for all of Europe. As a matter of fact even though it's just been two or three days since the mission was announced our parliament has already approved contributing people to your mission.” I said, “That's great. That's terrific. Thanks.” He said, “Well, you know, we're a small country we're only going to be able to send three people.” I said, “Look, everyone understands Luxembourg is a small country and whatever contribution, the important thing is that you're signing up and participating. This is great.” He said, “Yes, but we do have one request of you.” I said, “Okay, fine, what's the request?” He said, “Well, these three people, can you put them in safe locations?” I said, “Well, this is Kosovo and we've just had discussions about how dangerous it is and there's a lot of fighting going on. I'm not sure where the safe locations might be.” He said, “If you could just take care of my people because if any of our people were hurt we'd have a political crisis in Luxembourg and the government might fall, etc., etc.” I didn't know quite what to say to this request and the only answer that came to mind, was I said, “Let me just say that I hope you can get those three people there as quickly as possible because I would assume the safe spots are going to go fast.” He said, “Oh, we'll get them down right away.” I was a little taken aback by the meeting. I didn't quite know what to make of it. Then later on in my travels around Europe going in and trying to talk to some Foreign Ministers about their contribution, I got exactly the same message in Belgium. I got the same message in the Netherlands. All of these countries, I don't know about Luxembourg, but Belgium and the Netherlands have both contributed large numbers of their soldiers and others to peacekeeping operations and they've gotten burned a couple of times. In Belgium they had, their army was badly scorned when I think it was in Somalia when the Belgian troops were accused of human rights violations against the local people. There was a very nasty incident in which there were pictures in

the Belgian papers of Belgian paratroopers essentially roasting a young boy on a spit in Somalia and it damned near brought down the government in Belgium. In the Netherlands it was the same there was a big interface.

Q: They had what's the name, _____, they were caught in the middle in Bosnia.

WALKER: Yes, well, the Netherlands was caught in Bosnia. They were caught in the Srebrenica.

Q: Srebrenica, yes.

WALKER: Massacre where they were the UN troops that were in there when the UN guaranteed people safety, everybody moved into the city and the Serbs shelled the bejeebers out of them and killed an awful lot of people. So, again that was a big political crisis in Holland over what was wrong with our troops. Who were the commanders? Officers lost their careers as a result. In both of those countries there was great sensitivity to their people going out again and perhaps doing something, getting hurt that would be a political problem for the government. Both countries also had, I can't remember the details, but they said, oh in our parliament, you know, the opposition is very strong, they want to bring down the government and any ammunition they can. So, the politics of Europe were involved in this. Anyway, but it still came to me as a kind of no one wants their people to get hurt, but the spectrum runs from the Luxembourg saying please put my three guys in the safest place possible all the way over to I think the Russian and the Ukrainian part of the spectrum where if their guys come back or don't come back I'm not sure they care that much. That's probably an exaggeration, but they never mentioned that at all. What I took away from the meeting was this question of don't let anyone get hurt. That the OSC looked like a good outfit to work with. I liked both the Polish and the Norwegian foreign ministers. They treated me very well. I was offered all possible assistance.

I think it was at that meeting they asked me is there anything you need. I don't have much time to think about what I might need. I have no idea what's available in Kosovo or in Pristina. I said, "Well, one thing I might need because I certainly needed it in Croatia was air transportation. I've got a feeling from the looks of this job, 34 countries are going to contribute. I've got a feeling I'm going to be flying around Europe a lot. I was told in the State Department I might have to do a lot of travel to keep everybody on board." I made a pitch for an aircraft. In Croatia the Belgian air force had given me a nice little King air twin prop aircraft that took me all over the place including to Moscow. Some young Belgian air force officers who loved to do this for me. So, I made the pitch for an aircraft. Since everyone wanted to respond to me in a positive fashion, they all promised me the world and sure enough although I never got a dedicated plane, I had permission to rent a Gulf Stream or whatever kind of aircraft I needed to fly me around Europe. Slobodan Milosevic would not let it land in Kosovo, but I could always go down to Skopje and pick it up there. But I had an aircraft dedicated to me and that was very nice to have, very handy to have. Because there were, every meeting in Europe for all the time

I was in Kosovo, the Kosovo issue came up. They wanted Walker to be there to brief whoever it was, the European Council, all sorts of places I had to go, as well as to talk to foreign ministers.

Q: To put it at this point, you were in Kosovo, you were dealing with Kosovo from when to when?

WALKER: From mid-October 1998 through June of '99. The mission left Kosovo in late March of '99, but then we went into exile in Macedonia where I spent three months waiting for the NATO bombing campaign to finish and fully expecting and being told as soon as the bombing is over you will go back in heading the next mission and that got all garbled as the bombing campaign went on. We'll get to that.

Q: When you came back to Washington, you're talking about they're seeing, how did you feel about this mindset and I'm not using this necessarily in a pejorative tone, it could be or it could not be, but this idea that Yugoslavia can't break up anymore. I mean this dominated our thinking when.

WALKER: Eagleburger was....

Q: Yes, and right from the beginning and this mindset opens up the parameters were getting smaller and smaller as it continues to break up, was still there, would you say?

WALKER: Yes.

Q: Did you get the feeling you were up against almost a theology or not or?

WALKER: I think I was up against, I later learned I was up against a pro-Serb mafia. Or maybe a pro-Yugoslav mafia, I'm not quite sure which it was. By now Yugoslavia and Serbia were almost synonymous. Croatia had broken off, Bosnia had broken off, Slovenia had broken off. All that was left was Serbia proper of which Kosovo was a province and they were in an arrangement with Montenegro, which had its own president, but was nevertheless a part of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia consisted solely of those three component parts.

There were a lot of people, the predominant feeling in the Department was, we can't have Yugoslavia come even further apart. Number one the people who tried to present rational arguments would say, well, you know, Kosovo is not economically viable. It's landlocked. How could it possibly survive? That was almost a cover story for those who felt that at some point Serbia was going to resist violently any further break offs. At this point of course there were certainly differences of opinion, no one really admired or spoke well of Slobodan Milosevic, but there were still a lot of people who thought he was part of the solution, that he could be rationally dealt with. If he only came to understand that he shouldn't do bad things in Kosovo, that the international community would let him keep Kosovo. Of course the issue of Kosovo succeeding from Yugoslavia was even a bigger no in Europe. NATO allies, Greece and Italy both did not want that to happen and

still don't want it to happen. Obviously Russia and the former Soviet republics that are now independent and members of the OSCE did not want Serbia to crack apart and let this non-Slavic group called Kosovar break off. There was a lot of attention being paid to what Russia thought, a lot of attention being paid to what Italy and Greece thought. NATO had threatened Milosevic that he had to clean up his act in Kosovo, but it wasn't having much of an effect. We were not sure that if it came to a use of force, that NATO would go along or at least Greeks, Turks and Italy at a minimum and maybe even France.

Q: Were the Turks since in a way they were as one of the I don't know what you want to call it, but historically they would be the protecting power.

WALKER: Yes, well, they, I didn't mean to imply that the Turks would be in the same position as the Greeks and the Italians. This is an orthodox Catholic country and our brothers and sisters are out there and Serbia and we don't want them to lose this part of their diminishing empire. Turkey was a problem on the other side of the coin that if Greece didn't want it to happen, then obviously Turkey would want it to happen. The Turkey-Greece conflict, the Cyprus problem kept creeping in to discussions about what Europe should do in terms of Kosovo. During the entire time I was in Kosovo and during the time I was in exile certainly with the NATO bombing going on down to today almost, the Kosovo issue was, and might still be, the top issue in European concerns with whither goeth Europe. The last thing Europe needs is a real major sort of civil war or battleground in the heart of Europe, which is certainly what Kosovo, represents.

Q: Also another factor, maybe.

WALKER: There are a lot of other factors I haven't.

Q: With this coming up, I mean, Spain had the Basques, the French had the Brittanese and the God knows.

WALKER: All of the above.

Q: I mean it was not Europe was becoming a little bit unstuck.

WALKER: Sure. The English have the Scots for heaven's sake. Ireland has Northern Ireland. I mean everybody has a bunch of people who aren't too happy living together and want a divorce, but most of them are a lot less prone to perhaps explode in an all-out war than was Kosovo, but I'm going back. Maybe I told you this story before, Stu, and if I did I can't remember.

Q: Go ahead.

WALKER: Back to the Oslo meeting and this question of deputies. I went back to my hotel that night and Tom Pickering headed back to Washington in the morning after it broke off. I stayed around to talk to some of the Norwegians. I remember talking to a couple of Norwegian colonels who came and said Mr. Ambassador we've been assigned

to go down there and we've got \$20 million. We're going to do a survey to see what infrastructure is in Pristina. We'll find a building for you, a headquarters. We'll put in computers. We'll do this; we'll do that with that \$20 million. I said, "Terrific. That sounds great, thanks." One of the colonels, they had out their notebooks and one of the colonels said, "Mr. Ambassador what are your needs? What would you like to have down there and we will see if we can get it down there right away." Again, wiseass that I am, I couldn't think of a thing. I said, "Well, you know what, I would really like a Rolls Royce to drive around in." The guy starts writing it down. I said, "No, no, really, I'm just kidding." But this is what Norwegians are like. Maybe our senses of humor just don't coincide, but he started writing down, Walker wants a Rolls Royce.

Anyway, that night, so I spent the day while Tom Pickering was flying back to the United States, I spent the day in Oslo and went to bed late that night expecting to get up the next morning and fly back to Washington and start the preparations for getting out to Kosovo, to go to Warsaw for this human rights conference and then go to Kosovo and take over. That night, late at night, in my hotel the phone rang and it was Tom Pickering. I think I told you this story and Tom says, "Bill, that was a good conference. Everyone is on board; you're the head of mission, terrific, terrific. Things are really boiling back here and when you come back we want you to do this and we want you to do that." I said, "Great, Tom." He said, "By the way, you have to go to Paris tomorrow morning." I said, "What do you mean I have to go to Paris?" He said, "The French Foreign Minister called up and he wants to see you immediately." I said, "Tom, I've got a plane ticket. I'm leaving Oslo tomorrow morning early and I've got a lot of things to do back home." He said, "No, Bill, you've got to fly to Paris tomorrow morning to see the Foreign Minister." I said, "What about?" He said, "Well, they're very, very upset, but I'll let them tell you what it is about." I said, "Tom I don't know if I can change my ticket tonight." He said, "No, the embassy duty officer is already doing that. You'll be on SAS or something. Here's the flight number." I said, "Great, terrific."

The next morning I got up early and got out to the airport and everything worked. I flew into Paris on a Sunday afternoon and there was some young control officer from the American Embassy there to meet me at the airplane, got me off the plane, rushed me through customs and tells me that the Foreign Ministry is awaiting me on Sunday afternoon. The Foreign Minister just had to leave to go to Poland I believe, but the Tom Pickering of the French foreign office will be there to see you. I said terrific. This young guy from the Embassy was going to go with me. On the ride over to the Foreign Ministry he started telling me what to expect although he had no idea of what the problem was or what the issue was. You get to the French Foreign Ministry and unlike the State Department it is a pretty nifty building. It's a Sunday so there is no one there, you're looking around at all these paintings and statues and stuff and they finally lead me into a room that was about I'd say I can't imagine the throne room in the palace of Versailles was any larger. It was a huge room with big murals of the history of France all around. In the middle of this huge room there was a table about a quarter the size of this, like a card table almost and two chairs, one on either side. I sit on one side and sure enough there's a rustle of aids running around and coming in. All of a sudden the door opens and in comes the French Tom Pickering. I'll be darned if I can remember his name. One of the more

unpleasant fellows I've met in a long time. After a cursory introduction he reveals the purpose of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is for him to chew me out royally and say, Walker, paraphrasing of course, Walker, I don't know who you think you are, but if you think it's your choice as to who your deputy is, you've got another thought coming. This after all is not an American show and we Europeans are involved in this, too. If you think you're going to pick your own deputy or have anything to say about it, forget it. I was totally taken aback. I said, well, what makes you think I think I have that power. He said, well, another thing, if you think you have a deputy and it's going to be a Norwegian, forget it. Norway, I mean, Norway isn't even a member of the contact group—the big players of Europe that have dealt with the Balkans. He said if you have a deputy it is going to have to be either a Frenchman, a German, a Brit, an Italian or a Russian or another American, but that's impossible since you're an American. Norway is a very small country. I said, well, there is something wrong here. I haven't picked a deputy and then I remembered this conversation with the Foreign Minister of Norway. I said, oh, I think I probably know what you're referring to and let me explain what happened. Well, this did not lower his anger at me and he told me in no uncertain terms. He said, look, if you have a single deputy, it is going to be a Frenchman. I said, oh, does everyone else agree on that? He said, absolutely, and we're the only ones that put a candidate forward. I said, well, you know, the only reason I thought that I'd like a single deputy was and I told him about the American embassies, it's very important the chemistry between number one and number two. I'm sure this chap is terrific, but you know, it would be really nice if I met him before. He said, well, he's in London today, but he'll fly to Washington. You'll meet him next week and you're going to love him because he's one of our finest; he's a great fellow. I said, okay, great, I look forward to meeting him. Are you sure that no one else has a candidate? Absolutely.

I flew back to Washington and the Frenchman flew over to meet me and he was a typical Frenchman, but within 48 hours I had seven deputies, a Brit, a Frenchman, my principal deputy, a German, an Italian, a Russian, who have I left out? Well, I had one from each of the contact group countries and the Norwegian. I guess that had to do with the \$20 million I didn't think I could take it away from them. This for me was a big lesson in European politics and I now understand how Americans become heads of such missions because even though all those countries probably don't like to give it to an American, they even less like to give it to one of their rivals. Germans don't want to give it to a Frenchman. Frenchmen don't want to give it to a Brit. The Brits don't want to give it to an Italian. The Italian doesn't want to give it to. So, the least offensive is one of these offensive Americans.

Q: Or one that is offensive to all.

WALKER: Yes. So, anyway, I ended up with seven deputies which was a problem throughout the mission especially the Frenchman who turned out to be, when I go to the Hague next week, if the opportunity arises, if anyone asks me, I'm going to bite my tongue the first couple of times, but if anyone really gives me an opportunity to say what I think of my French deputy, I will certainly say it.

Q: I think you better make it understood about the Hague just very briefly and we'll cover this.

WALKER: Okay. Since I served in Croatia where I was dealing with Milosevic and Tudjman in Zagreb, this might have been one of the reasons that I was picked to head the Kosovo mission. When I was in Kosovo I, of course, saw Milosevic a number of times and when we get to what I did in Kosovo I was the first to publicly place responsibility for a massacre on Milosevic's head. I was also one of the first from any government who fully cooperated with The Hague and gave them deposition before I left Macedonia. They think of me as a star witness who can go in and take the path of responsibility right up to Milosevic himself so I've been invited next week to go over and testify. [NOTE: Circa early June, 2002.]

Q: I hope we'll pick you up when you come back.

WALKER: If I come back.

Q: Yes.

WALKER: A friend has already said to me, Bill, do you have a picture of yourself? I said, you want a picture of me? He said, yes, do you have a picture? I said, why do you want a picture of me? He said, well, so we can remember what you look like.

Q: Okay, when you got back to the State Department, how did you put this thing together and how did the State Department work with you?

WALKER: Well, you know the State Department. They already had several task forces running off in several directions. There was a task force looking at the autonomy question. What are the conditions historically of autonomy because at that point we were hoping that Kosovo would be able to reassert itself as an autonomist part of Yugoslavia?

Q: It used to be known as that back in my time, part of the old Serbian mafia, although I never subscribed to it.

WALKER: Kosovo lost its autonomy I think it was in '81.

Q: Yes.

WALKER: It was stripped from them. Originally the Kosovo liberation movement, maybe not when the fighters got involved, but originally was to regain autonomy not to succeed from Yugoslavia. By the time I got involved it was we want out, rather than give us back that autonomy because they saw that autonomy once given can be taken away again. There was a task force that I spent a couple of hours with; here are what the conditions of a real autonomist republic are and here are the guarantees of autonomy and here are the legal precedence for setting up an autonomist province. I didn't pay a hell of a lot of attention to that. There was a task force just on the logistics of setting up a

mission. We thought at that point that the verification mission was going to have as one of its responsibilities setting up elections, well, first take a census in Kosovo because no one really knew how many Serbs, how many Albanians, how many gypsies, how many anything were in Kosovo so we thought we might have to do a census. That was going to lead, hopefully, to a province wide election process to see what the people there wanted. There was also a great deal of talk about putting together a police force that was a provincial police force that would replace the bad guys coming out of Belgrade. The State Department was light years ahead of everyone else setting up task forces, trying to determine who would come over. Who would be on my mission to help set up a police force, a police academy. Who in my mission were experts on election processes? I attended a lot of meetings and discovered that there were a lot of people in the State Department, certainly in the European bureau and in the office of the legal advisor, in the international organizations people looking at some of the issues that were now right up front in terms of putting this mission together to see what it was going to do. Of course above it all or off to the side of it all or someplace was Richard Holbrooke who saw himself as the patron saint of this mission, so he was calling up and telling everybody what he wanted and what he thought would work.

Q: I mean, here you are, are we even a member of the OSCE?

WALKER: Yes.

Q: That's right, we are a member. I mean they're saying this is a European thing, but I mean who was putting together the thought pieces, was it just the State Department?

WALKER: I don't know if others were doing it. The Brits were looking very closely at the military side of the thing. Most of the senior people I had on my staff who were Brits were in fact seconded military officers. My British deputy was a two star. My chiefs of a couple of the things that we were looking at military deployments and that sort of thing were British lieutenant colonels and colonels. I had a couple of SAS guys on my staff.

Q: Special Air Services.

WALKER: Yes, who did not go forward as that, but they revealed to me who they were. The Brits put up some very, very good people and they had obviously done some previous thinking about how this thing might go. Now, another part of the deal was there were already in Kosovo some bits and pieces of observation missions. These were called KDOMs. Kosovo Diplomatic Office Mission. These were sort of diplomats, attaché types from embassies up in Belgrade who were accredited to the whole of Yugoslavia so they could go down there and travel. So, an interim measure had been back in the summer when everyone was trying to figure out what was going on there, I think the U.S. and the UK were the first to send some of their people down there and they called them KDOMs. By the time the OSCE mission had been thought of, the French had a KDOM, the Germans had a KDOM, Russia eventually put in its KDOM, these ranged in size from the American KDOM which was about 200 people. The American KDOM, I'll never forget, was composed of Foreign Service Officers who were picked up in the four corners of the

world and told to pack their bags, so most of them were young and single, first tour officers and one day they were in Hong Kong issuing visas and two days later they were in Kosovo supposedly looking around to see what was going on. It was incredible.

Q: We did this after the peace accords in Vietnam.

WALKER: Oh, really?

Q: Yes, this type of thing.

WALKER: It was just incredible. I mean 200 they rented a whole hotel on the outskirts out where Milosevic made his famous speech on the field of the blackbirds.

Q: No one will ever dare beat you again.

WALKER: That's right. Right out there at Kosovo _____, it used to be called, now it's got an Albanian name. So, they assembled 200 people. Most of them were Foreign Service, but a good number were also our military guys. Somehow they got them all accredited to the Embassy in Belgrade and they dispatched them down. Some people were there for a week, two weeks, whatever their home office could spare. The U.S. KDOM also had a lot of vehicles, Humvees, these big monstrous army things, most of which were broken down most of the time because the units in Europe that supplied them gave their junk to the KDOM.

One of the plans was that when the Kosovo verification mission went in, my mission would absorb these KDOMs. The Russian KDOM was three guys who had no idea what they were doing there. The French had a few more, the Brits had a fairly robust one, but we were the big gorilla on the block with our 200 and our Humvees and all that kind of stuff. We were supposed to absorb them all. In the five months we were there I absorbed all of the KDOMs, except the U.S. one. I got a lot of them, but at the end the U.S. KDOM still had a couple of dozen people. The Embassy in Belgrade was reluctant to turn this resource over. They wanted their own collection effort down there. It was an incredible effort to build up a very robust international presence in a corner of Europe where there is very little infrastructure in place to accommodate the mission going in there. I can give you several examples.

First when I finally got to Kosovo I was told by the Norwegians who were already there that the four star Yugoslav hotel, it's actually a five star on the roof there are five big stars, it is called the Grand Hotel. It doesn't deserve one star. I mean it is a horrible, run down, communist backwater provincial capital, miserable hotel called the Grand Hotel.

Q: I think I stayed there back in the '60s.

WALKER: It's horrible. It was probably built around the '50s or '60s, a big monumental slab of nothing and the rooms are horrible. Nothing worked, the elevators don't work. It smelled horribly. Terrible place. So, the Norwegians and it was already filled up with

Norwegians who were there with their \$20 million. They had to find me a hotel room. They found me a hotel room, which was in a small hotel that up until three, or four days before I got there had been a brothel. The owner obviously felt that he could make more money out of these international folks who were coming in with OSCE per diem and I'm sure he was right. I was given I guess it would be called the penthouse and leather studded doors.

Q: Mirrors on the ceiling?

WALKER: No, no mirrors, it was mostly red velvet on the walls, horrible place. But it was preferable to the Grand. We quickly found a Yugoslav bank building, again the national bank. Had what for Pristina was a skyscraper of 11 or 12 stories, also terribly run down. Wiring hanging and elevators that didn't work. You almost always went up the stairs. Bless their hides the Norwegian advance team went in there as soon as they leased it and rewired it, put in fiber optic cable throughout the whole building. I was told that they used to wire that building something like 40% or 50% of the coaxial cable usage of Norway or Oslo or something. It was an incredible amount because we were going to put high speed computers, etc. in just about every room of the building. They did that. They flew in two enormous generators, which had to be brought in by helicopter into the middle of Pristina and put down in a parking lot next to our building so that we had good electricity. They had to do an incredible amount of work to bring this up to the barest minimum standards of a modern office. This was not in East Timor; this was not in Sub Saharan Africa. This was in the center of Europe and all the Europeans wanted to know what was happening all the time. So, real modern communications was essential. The only problem was that it took them a few days, we brought in, I think the initial load was 400 computers. I got the biggest and the best and the first and all that kind of stuff even though I'm essentially computer illiterate but they put it in and my illiteracy showed because I could never get the damn thing to turn on. One would say, oh, sir, we'll get the tech up here and he'd turn it on for me. Okay and I'd call him back because I couldn't get into anything. It took I don't know how many visits by the, what do you call them, help desk people.

Q: You were saying when they finally got you so you could use the thing.

WALKER: The screen was in Norwegian because of course they'd brought down Norwegian software and for Norway it makes a lot of sense. In Kosovo with an organization which the vast majority of our 2,000 people were not going to be fluent in Norwegian this did not make sense.

Anyway, the Norwegians did a super job of another very big need. We had all sorts of logistic issues and my first meeting with Milosevic in that context was to talk about we are going to bring in a lot of stuff and we don't want to be bothered by bureaucrats doing the customs stuff. We don't want to be bothered by visa problems. Of course, he promised total cooperation and then delivered on none of it. When I would go to meetings over the next months and people would say, well, you up to 2,000 yet. I'd say, no, we're at 800, now we're at 1,300, now we're at 1,500. The question is always, why is

it so slow? Why are we having trouble getting all these people in there real fast Walker? There were any number of problems some generated by Belgrade, other by the capitals of Europe not coming up with the right people at the right time, but one of the major impediments was this question of the protection of our people. We decided that we were going to need an awful lot of vehicles. I think the first order was for 400 and they wanted them to be armored, not full armored, but at least a modicum of armoring. There's no place in the world you can just pick up 400 vehicles, brand new, four wheel drive vehicles to get around the hills of Kosovo that are also armored. So, orders went out and they started flowing in as fast as they could, but that was an impediment. We didn't want anyone to come into Kosovo who was not given access to an armored vehicle.

A big decision, it didn't seem so at the time, but it became what was in retrospect not only a big decision, but a good decision was what color do we paint our vehicles? We could paint them all white. That's what the UN does, puts a big UN on the side of every vehicle. We could come up with a different color. The Yugoslav police vehicles were blue, so we couldn't take blue. Some of their other vehicles were green, so we couldn't take green. They finally came to me and said we've got a couple of choices here. I think pink was one, orange was another, yellow was another and I selected orange. We ended up with 400 very bright orange vehicles and the idea was everyone would recognize this as OSCE verification vehicle and maybe they wouldn't shoot at it. We only had a couple of incidents where people took potshots.

Q: Also, this goes back to a lot of our farm vehicles aren't they a sort of orange. The reason for this being that they're easy to spot on farms.

WALKER: Caterpillar does yellow. Alice Chalmers, John Deere I believe, some of the Japanese big equipment types paint them either orange or yellow, but our orange vehicles became a symbol of different things to different people. I guess eventually to the Serbs an odious symbol, but to the Kosovars it became a symbol of hey, there are people here trying to help us. When we took these vehicles, 400 vehicles into exile in Macedonia six months later, it became a problem because there we didn't want to be recognized. Macedonia was very nervous about all of these people being there. They're still nervous about the Kosovo verification mission. The word came down from Vienna, repaint them all white. They found some local paint shop and they started repainting them white. I and several other people went to Vienna and said, really the orange color symbolizes something and when we go out to the refugee camps it really would be good to have some of these still painted orange. The order came down repaint all the white ones orange. They repainted them all orange again and then a counterweight came in and we repainted some of the cars three times in about two months. Some paint shop made a lot of money off the OSCE and its need for the right color on its vehicles.

Q: I wonder about recruiting. I had been an observer twice in Bosnia, an election observer and they had an internet connection, a website in which they exchanged gossip and really were talking about what opportunities there were as observers. I remember they came out and they said there's going to be something in Kosovo, but we can't recommend that you all get into it, it's too dangerous.

WALKER: They never said that to me.

Q: No, but I mean, this was at one point.

WALKER: That was probably when they were recruiting for the KDOM.

Q: That may well have been it.

WALKER: Yes. The way the OSCE gets its people on a mission is its different than the way the UN does it. The UN just asks contributing states to say how many people they're going to send off which type and send them. The OSCE and then the UN pays the people. The UN assumes your salary when you join. The OSCE, which has never fielded big missions and is also not as flush with cash as the UN does it differently. Contributions that come in from the member states of the OSCE are voluntarily provided by the contributing state. In other words, they continue to pay your salary. As a result of that and maybe it's actually written in the statutes, the people that come in are almost always government employees who are seconded to the OSCE. The easiest place to find secondees certainly for the United States, but I assume for most countries is to go to the military because the military, there are a lot of people hanging around with not much to do during peace time. So, you can always find big blocks of folks who also have a predilection for going to war zones. A lot of the people I got on my staff, I was mentioning the Brits earlier, were seconded military. I had a fair share of that, but the State Department also wanted to make sure there were Foreign Service Officers there so I had a sizable secondment of Foreign Services Officers. Some countries didn't contribute just because they couldn't afford it. They couldn't. The Foreign Ministry of Tajikistan, 12 people or something, couldn't cough up anyone and continue to pay for them. If they were paying for them their pay wouldn't go very far in a part of Europe to the west of them. The cost of living goes up even in a place like Pristina in comparison to some of the capitals of Eastern, far Eastern Europe.

We got a mixed bag. The thing was put together so quickly and no one really had an idea of what the activities were going to be that we weren't able to say we need 12 election observers. We need 15 police officials because we're going to train police. We weren't able to tailor the contributions to what were going to be the needs of the organization. Some countries, the Brits to give you a good example, I guess the French, the Germans tried to send very capable people. Some countries I got a feeling sent some people they just wanted to get rid of. I'll never forget one day very early in the thing, maybe a week into the mission I'm sitting in this office wondering how to work my Norwegian computer and things like that and there's a knock on the door. I go to the door and I open it and there's a little rly poly man standing there with a big book in his arm. He salutes me and he says, I can't remember the name, but I'll come up with one. It was something like Mr. Ambassador, I'm Giorgio Papandreo or Papadopoulis or something like that. I am your Greek political advisor. I said, wow, welcome. I didn't know I had a Greek political advisor. I didn't even know I had a political advisor. He said, yes, sir, I've been sent by Athens. I'm on your senior staff here and if you want my resume, here it is and he

hands me this volume and sure enough he'd gone on every mission ever put together on the face of the earth. You just had to look at this and you came to the conclusion the Greek government didn't want him in Greece; they wanted him off doing something.

Q: Probably somebody's nephew.

WALKER: Yes, God knows who he was. I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to insult Greece. It was kind of tender with them over what we were doing there. I said, well, go down to personnel and they'll sign you in. I never did figure out what to do with him because one of the first things he did was he went around the building and he commandeered the biggest office in the building. Then he went down and commandeered four computers for himself. He demanded this. He was just a pain in the neck. He didn't contribute anything to the mission during the three or four months he was there. When I said, let's send this guy back I was told by all my European colleagues, oh, no the Greek government will be insulted, plus they probably don't want him back, so you got a certain amount of that involved. You had to be very careful giving assignments to people.

I had another example. We quickly recognized that one of the big chores we were going to have was letting people know who we were and what we were doing and why we were out in these orange vehicles and putting out confidence building messages to the people of Kosovo. So, a public affairs department, plus a public affairs department that listened to the radio from Belgrade that had people who knew the language and that stuff and could compile a synopsis of what was going on in the press was very important. At first I was told that I was going to have a Brit. A young former lieutenant colonel in the British tank corps was given to me. He was a very nice man. No experience in public affairs, very high opinion of himself and he started making mistakes almost from the day he got the job. Not mistakes due to a lack of intelligence, but it wasn't his field. With his self-confidence he went out and said some things that maybe were better not said. I then tried a Russian. There was a Russian working for the OSCE in Vienna who came very highly recommended and he was very, very good, but he ended up essentially saying if I stay here I'm going to get killed. The Russians are going to kill me because I was involved in denouncing, I was a journalist. I was in Chechnya. I denounced some of the atrocities that were taking place. The Russian government doesn't like me. That's why I went to Vienna and am working for the OSCE. I really like being in Kosovo. I'd like to work for you, but I don't think I'd last very long, so I better go back to Vienna so he went back to Vienna and a lot of people told me the same story that he probably would not make it so we got rid of him.

I was desperately looking for a person with a journalism background, a person who understood the media and somehow I was given the recommendation for a French lady. I was told there was this dynamite lady in Paris who had served on a number of these kinds of missions, very knowledgeable, very good writer, spoke beautiful English, etc. I said, well, I'd like to meet her. So, the next time I went to London she flew to London to meet me. I met her in an English hotel with a fireplace in the background, sipping tea and that sort of thing. She was very well spoken. We discussed my problem with my French deputy, which she knew about. She said, oh, I understand how the French foreign service

types can be a real pain. I totally sympathize with you. Anyway, we really hit it off. I mean it was just perfect. Then she came to Kosovo and turned out to be Looney tunes.

Q: To be what?

WALKER: Looney Tunes. Turned out to have a couple of screws loose to the point that within a month or so she had alienated the entire mission. She ended up literally in a wrestling match with one of my British lieutenants who heard her doing an on camera interview with BBC and telling them military information that was totally off the wall, had no relationship whatsoever to the truth or to reality and he tried to interject and finally he lost his temper. She lost her temper and they ended up sort of wrestling in front of the TV cameras. I can imagine what the viewers back home and in the UK thought of the KDM when they saw our spokeswoman literally being verbally and physically attacked by a British lieutenant. It was just an incredible scene. We had to get rid of Beatrice was her name and then we had a Dane. We had a real problem on the public affairs side, but I have no idea why the French offered up Beatrice other than maybe they wanted to sabotage me. I don't know.

Q: Where was she, what was her.

WALKER: She had worked with a, if I remember right, with a UN publication of some sort. She had been a feature writer with a UN publication. She also had a fairly extensive resume with you know, again, probably with places that she'd been fired from. We didn't have the time to check any of these things.

Q: Sometimes the longer the resume means they've been cut loose.

WALKER: Yes. There were personnel problems just because of the way the OSCE collects people.

Q: Well, when you got there what were you supposed to do? I mean in the first place, you better talk about when you arrived there, what was the situation on the ground and then what were you supposed to do as you saw it or as defined for you?

WALKER: The situation on the ground was very easy. It was a deteriorating military situation with winter coming on and all these people up in the hills with the KLA and the Yugoslav armed forces going at each other and the Yugoslav armed forces, security services, burning down villages, usually saying, well it was a hot bed of KLA activity. This is what drove people out of the villages and up into the hills. It was a nasty military situation, but both sides in one way or another either explicitly or implicitly had said if the other side stops shooting at us, we'll stop shooting at them. So there was this hint of a cease fire and we were supposed to go in and verify whether or not both sides were adhering to this attempt at a cease fire. The basic premise was that we would be a "verification mission." The leadership of the OSCE, the leadership of Europe thought verification was a stronger word. It sounded more aggressive than monitoring mission. I made the mistake of talking about the monitors occasionally and I was reprimanded for

not using the proper term, which was verifiers. By that they meant that we would verify the reality on the ground. If there were violations, if people were not in compliance with their promises not to start shooting at each other we would be able to tell people. The Holbrooke-Milosevic Agreement, set certain limits on the number of military and the number of special police that could be in Kosovo. It set limits on what they could do with their forces, what they could do with their heavy equipment, artillery tanks were supposed to be put in cantonment and if they ever took a tank out they were supposed to tell us and we were supposed to verify that it was not being used against villages, that sort of thing. We were also supposed to, at least in the eyes of the people that sent us in there, the leadership of Europe, if not in Milosevic's eyes, we were supposed to make preparations for a census, preparation for elections, preparation for a civilian police force that included Albanians as well as the Serbs.

The mission was verification of what was going on on the ground and then planning for some of these other peripheral exercises at the same time the Milosevic agreement with Holbrooke, which was later sanctified by agreements between the OSCE and Belgrade as well as NATO and Belgrade. At the same time we were doing verification on the ground, NATO had permission from Milosevic to overfly either in manned or unmanned platforms, to look down to verify what the verifiers were saying. To be on the lookout for tanks moving or artillery pieces being dragged around. The intelligence that NATO gathered from these overhead platforms plus the reports unclassified, but nevertheless reports that we sent in to the OSCE, would come together someplace and the world would have a pretty good idea of what was going on in Kosovo.

Q: What had brought Milosevic to allow this thing to take place in his country?

WALKER: I can only speculate since I have very little understanding of what goes on in the mind of Slobodan Milosevic. The man is arrogant, cocky. He actually had been in total control of what was Yugoslavia for ten years. He had had one experience with the OSCE, which was this one with Kosovo. I think he liked what he saw. It was a fairly weak organization. It had never mounted a big mission. I think he felt that he would be able to pretty well call the shots and that this was not going to be of any threat to him whatsoever. I think he preferred it to these diplomatic missions which I think he probably thought had better people on board. Why not have a mission in there, plus he had a lot of friends in the OSCE. Russia, the Ukraine, Belarus, Tajikistan, all the Stans. So, I think he thought that this would not be a problem. This would not become an irritant and it would give the world the impression that he was being totally open.

Q: Was there a threat at that time or just before you went there of sanctions or military action?

WALKER: Yes, what did we call them? ACTOR. Action order or something like that. NATO, during the summer when things were really very nasty, Milosevic and his army of special police used the summer of '98 in an all-out effort to wipe out the KLA. They did so in a very aggressive, rough, destructive fashion and this is when a lot of villages were destroyed and a lot of people fled to the hills. Milosevic, I think, thought that he was

going to really get rid of the KLA and probably thought he had pretty much dismantled it and now we would go in and his folks would not have to do the things they'd been doing all summer, plus it would be winter. There would be a lot less activity on both sides. I just think he felt that the OSCE represented no real threat to him, that he could continue doing what he wanted to do in Kosovo.

Q: When you got there was essentially a Serbian administration in place?

WALKER: It was a bit of a joke. There was a fellow named Andjelkovic who I had to pay my first call on because he was the not provincial governor, but he was the head man, the head representative of Belgrade and he ran a committee, sort of a cabinet, of local folks which included an Albanian or two, which included a gypsy, which included a show of diversity, but they had no voice in anything. He didn't have a voice in much. The real power in Kosovo not only when I got there, but throughout the time I was there was the military, the generals, and the special Serb police force out of the Ministry of Interior in Belgrade, their commanders and they pretty well had a free hand. I'm sure Andjelkovic never in his entire time there ever said anything to any of them that implied an order or a request or anything else. The force that dominated what went on in Belgrade, in my opinion, was a Vice Prime Minister who came down from Belgrade once or twice a week named Nikola Sainovic who has just turned himself into The Hague a couple of weeks ago so he's also a not convicted war criminal, but he was Milosevic's man who would come down and he ran things. There was in fact this facade of a local administration by this Andjelkovic.

Q: Did you feel that you had to report to them?

WALKER: No.

Q: I mean, in other words, you were bypassing.

WALKER: Some of my people didn't deal with him. He was a nothing, he and his group. I saw him twice I think the whole time I was there and the second time I saw him he was at the side of a general or something like that. Before I went out to officially take my place in Kosovo, which was 22nd of October, I finally met the great Richard Holbrooke. He came down from New York where he was still an investment banker with one of the big banks on Wall Street and he came down to Washington to tell the Washington press corps what he had achieved, what he had put together with Milosevic. So the noon press briefing over at the State Department was Dick Holbrooke and he wanted to outline what was going to happen because now we had a pretty good idea, 2,000 people, unarmed, blah, blah, blah. Walker's been confirmed and he wanted to present me to the press. Out of the hour and a half that we were up there I got maybe three minutes to give my pitch and then the rest was Dick Holbrooke. After that he took me up to the seventh floor and sat me down to tell me what was what. What was what was Walker, you're going out there, very, very tough job, Walker. You've got probably the toughest job in the Foreign Service. Let me tell you what you're going to do when you're out there. Me and Slobodan we put together this agreement and when you get out there you should really

only deal with Milosevic, don't bother with any of the underlings. If you've got a problem or if you've got something to say you say it to Milosevic. Have you ever met him? I said, yes, I met him in Croatia. He said, oh, okay, so you know him, you know what he's like. He'll bluster; he'll do this. I've had very difficult negotiations with him. It really took blood, sweat and tears to get this agreement from him and he's going to interpret it as tightly as he possibly can. I want to tell you where he's going to interpret it his way and I'm going to tell you what was my way and then we just let the ambiguity stand, but you're going to deal with that treaty the way I tell you it should be interpreted. Okay.

So, we went over the treaty almost the thing almost word by word. Of course, he was right. When I finally met Milosevic and he said, we've got this agreement, we're going to obey it, but write every word and comma, is the way we're going to interpret it. Every time I would bring up something that wasn't remembered or wasn't thought of when they put this thing together, it was oh, we're going to have to open the whole treaty again. Getting my instructions from Dick Holbrooke, I don't know if it helped or didn't help, but it certainly, I was impressed. He was up on the seventh floor of the Department. He was the guy who put this thing together. I didn't know quite what his status was. I had heard rumors that he and Madeleine Albright didn't get along too well, but hey, you know, he seemed to be the man in charge. That uncertainty as to exactly what role Richard Holbrooke was playing in the ongoing drama I never figured out because while I was there he was still a private citizen, but he'd call up every few days and bark orders at me or whatever. I never knew whether I was supposed to obey them or not especially when they were in contradiction of something I had just been told by the OSCE or by the Department.

Both from the Holbrooke thing as well as my knowledge of how Belgrade worked, there were really only three or four people that I felt I should deal with. One was Milosevic; one was this guy Sainovic, the Deputy Prime Minister. Another was the chief political advisor to Milosevic who had formed a relationship with Dick Holbrooke and anytime I heard from Holbrooke that there was something happening, he would always say, well, have you talked to so and so? I'd say, no. That was obviously his way of getting in to talk to Milosevic was via this political advisor who spoke absolutely fluent English. Maybe that was what the attraction was. Then there was a military general who I had known in my Croatia days who Milosevic sent down to Kosovo to be sort of the liaison on the military side of things a fellow named Lončar.

Q: Hopping back a bit, but you mentioned you wanted to talk about the Warsaw meeting.

WALKER: Oh, yes, I mean just to put the flavor of that. I fly into Warsaw, again.

Q: This was before you had been on the field?

WALKER: Before I'd been on the field between being appointed and actually arriving a week or so later. I got there after the meeting had started so all of a sudden again the American Embassy picks me up and rolls me down to this palatial place that the OSCE

was using for its conference and you walk into a room and here's this huge table with things all around it with all the countries, 54 countries and their ambassadors to the OSCE. Every member state has an ambassador to the OSCE. I'm in there. I don't know what the hell is going on. I know sort of what the conference is about, but not too much about it. I sit down and put on the ear phones and start to listening to speeches in all these different languages and everybody's praising the fact that there's going to be a mission going into Kosovo and isn't this a worrisome situation. We're so glad that we've got Walker here and he's going to tell us all about the mission. I've got very little to tell them because there's not much known about the mission, but the chairman of the group is a Swiss diplomat. He's the head of this OSCE human rights division. He's in the chair and I'm only in the room for a half an hour or so and he says well, let's hear Walker talk about what the mission is going to do in terms of the human rights situation and democracy building. Okay. Everyone turns to listen to the words of wisdom of this. Well, all I said was I am sure human rights is going to be a very important component of what we do and I will try to put together a good human rights team. We will try to get reporting out as much as we can and as accurate as we can as to what's going on in human rights, but I'm sure it's going to be a very, very important part of what we do.

BOOM! Half the room came at me. The Russians came at me. The Belarusians came at me, you know, but in the way European diplomats come after you in a very flowery, oh, wonderful to hear the words of Ambassador Walker and he's a man of great experience, but and then they strip you clean. So, I learned at that meeting that although we had total consensus that a mission should go in, there was total lack of consensus as to what the mission should do. How we should go about our work with, as I say the Russians on one end of the spectrum this mission is to go in there and tell about the evil deeds of the KLA. These terrorists secessionists. On the other end, the United States and most of the Western European countries at least saying, we want this mission to be very forceful and aggressive in terms of protecting human rights. The mission, right from that moment I realized we were in the middle of these ideological and other types of debates among the member states of the OSCE and it was important that we try to keep the consensus.

Q: When you arrived there the reports of atrocities in Bosnia and maybe Croatia, where was that? I mean in other words was the world, the press, everyone else, aware of the facts that particularly the Serbs had been pretty beastly and had killed a lot of Bosnia?

WALKER: Srebrenica had happened and we were still trying to track down the major war criminals of Bosnia, most of whom were Serbs, but, of course, there were also Croats in that category. The Republika of Srpska was alive and well in Bosnia and causing all sorts of problems for Europe. I guess I would say that the great fear was that Kosovo was going to become another Bosnia. There were all these indications that thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of harmless civilians were going to end up in a bad way if winter came on and the fighting went on and the army and the special police went on doing what they'd been doing during the summer.

Q: Were there reports that you felt as part of your agenda to look for mass graves and things of this nature?

WALKER: No, not really.

Q: I mean this, had this even become an issue or was this something that was to develop as time went on?

WALKER: Not long after I got there a Finish forensic team came in which I'll talk about later in terms of the _____ thing. There obviously were efforts to see if some of these stories about mass killings or executions of unarmed civilians had in fact been taking place. Obviously the Albanian part of the population was very skillful in its use of the international media in trying to get the story out that there had been these bad things happening, but equally the government in Belgrade was putting out stories that all they were doing were trying to police up the KLA. They were the victims of libelous attacks by supporters of this terrorist organization. There had not been that much in terms of real evidence gathered about atrocities in Kosovo other than you could look at burned out villages, but again the government was always able to explain that this had been a village that was a hotbed of KLA activity.

What turned out to be either the value of the KVM (Kosovo Verification Mission) or something to be criticized by the KVM was that we were able to tell the world, and that is what we thought our job was, what was going on and one of the things that was going on was the massacres of civilians on a number of occasions while we were there. Of course Belgrade didn't like that at all. It contradicted what I said earlier; I think Milosevic thought we were going to be harmless and he was going to be able to manipulate it so we wouldn't be able to do him any harm. When he found out that we were actually able to do him some harm he turned on us big time.

Q: You arrived there and how did things work out?

WALKER: I thought things worked out swimmingly. We had this constant increase in our numbers. One of the things I said at one of these early meetings in Oslo, in Warsaw I said the same thing, wherever I had the chance to say it because people would say, well, Walker, is your mission going to remain in Pristina and you're going to try to get out to the countryside, but you'll have all of your people in Pristina and send them out every day. I said, no, I'm going to try, a couple of questions along those lines. I'm going to try and not have zones where the French are in charge and another zone where the Americans are in charge. I'm going to try and mix up our teams so that it really is a multinational force and I'm going to try to get people out as far forward as I possibly can, consistent with their safety.

Q: Was your thinking in this, too, that if you had zones you could end up with the politics of that country taking control?

WALKER: Oh, absolutely. Sure. I wanted to diminish as much as possible the ingredient of national agendas. Very quickly, as soon as we got this fairly fragile, but nevertheless acceptable level of structure in Pristina we set up and divided the country into zones. We

were going to put a regional office of the KVM in major cities of those five areas. Then we hoped, and that took a little while, sending people out, finding accommodations, finding where you could park 50 cars in Prizren or where you could find accommodation for 30 people in Peja. Then once we established those regional centers, which is what we called them, I was hoping that each regional center would send out teams to live in villages so that pretty soon we would have a web throughout the country and this fit in very well with what most of the European countries wanted to happen. It also fit in very well with many of the people that came. They didn't want to sit in Pristina the whole time and drive four hours out and four hours back over bad roads. They wanted to get out. Again, we found that in most of the villages we put them in; they had to live with families and that sort of thing. Although none of us spoke either Serbian or Albanian or very few, a lot of interaction took place between our people and people very far removed from Pristina.

One of the issues that I thought was going to be a big problem was interpretation. Putting people from 34 countries none of whom speak the languages of where they all of a sudden find themselves. Going out in a dangerous situation, even in orange armored vehicles, it was pretty quickly determined that the only way this is going to work so that they could go out and talk to villagers or really find out what was going on was if they had interpreters with them. So, each patrol was supposed to be two internationals and an interpreter for each of the two major languages. I said, oh my God, we're talking 2,000 Serb interpreters, Serb-English interpreters and 2,000 Albanians-English interpreters because English is the lingua franca of the OSCE. Everybody that was sent on the mission was supposed to theoretically speak English. None of the Italians did. The French didn't like to speak English, but this was supposed to be the way it worked.

I remember saying how in the name of God are we going to find 4,000 interpreters? It turned out to be not a problem at all. It turned out we had great interpretation, mostly young kids, many of whom had not gone to college because they were Albanians and had no access to college, but they had a parallel phantom university there in which they gave English classes and damn, I was very impressed. I also found out very quickly that even though many of the Albanians had both Serb and Albanian, none or very few of the Serb native speakers also had Albanian. Lo and behold if you ever used an Albanian speaker to speak to a Serb audience using perfect Serb I was told it would still be detected that this was an Albanian and people would come up to you and say, why did you use that blah, blah, Albanian to talk to us? Don't insult us the next time. We want a real Serb speaker. I found out that language is important. The religion is important, all sorts of things are important there that to an American is a little hard to understand.

Q: You mentioned that as you were there, what about, I know that within Serbia proper the orthodox religion is important. It was during communist times and all that, but my prejudice is it has been a source of many of the problems.

WALKER: I think I said that when we were talking about Croatia that I found the most bloodthirsty people on the Serb side were the orthodox priests who wanted to right the wrongs of the last thousand years.

Q: What about on the Islamic side? Did you find that this at the time you were there were they really Islamic mullahs or?

WALKER: They have mullahs. They certainly have little minarets in every village that is Albanian Muslim dominated. There are minarets all over the country. It has got to be from what little I know of that religion, it's got to be the mildest form of the Muslim faith that I've encountered. There was a great fear in Europe as well as in the United States and there was a certain fanning of that fear out of Russia that the KLA was recruiting Chechnyan and fundamentalists al Qaeda type of fighters to come and take on this Christian Serb Orthodox type of country. I was asked to look into that as much as I could. The KLA told me every place I asked about it I said we would be crazy to, they said, we've had approaches, but the last thing we want out here are our guys from Chechnya or guys who will be coming here fighting with their fanaticism.

Q: A different agenda.

WALKER: A different agenda. The Kosovars wanted this to be strictly a Kosovar issue, but the Russians like to say we know Chechnyan fighters have gone there. The mullahs I met and I heard a lot of them give the equivalent of sermons, very mild mannered, very, nothing at all came across as any sort of Muslim fanaticism or I think they've lived too long among the religions of Europe to try and assert themselves as anything beyond very modest, mild, Muslims and not all Kosovars, not all Albanian speakers by any means, there are Catholics, there are some who are Orthodox. There are some who are other things.

Q: Did you find any problems or influence coming from Albania? You were saying that the Russians and Milosevic and all were talking about the Albanian expansion, Greater Albania, that sort of thing.

WALKER: Yes. This is what to this day in Belgrade they try to say that Kosovo independence is only a precursor to a Greater Albania being formed up which you know sends shivers of fears through Macedonia, through Montenegro and through Greece. They've used that a lot to say, Albanians are Albanians wherever they want and they all want a Greater Albania. The truth of the matter is and I've looked at this as much as I possibly could and talked to an awful lot of Albanian speakers, the Kosovars see themselves as a very different bunch of people from Albanians in Albania. They speak the same language. They observe many of the same customs, but they feel that Albania proper, the country of Albania is 20 years behind them. They were part of Yugoslavia when it was really Yugoslavia, that the country of Albania was behind the Chinese iron curtain for up through.

Q: About 40 years.

WALKER: Yes, 40 years. I mean this was the center of Maoist thought in the middle of Europe. It closed its borders. No one could go out, no one could come in, so the

Albanians in Albania have a very different way of looking at things from the Albanian speakers in Kosovo. I know no Albanian from Kosovo who has ever said anything to me about wanting to join in any way with Albania. The Albanian Albanians have a strange way of looking at Kosovo, too. They recognize that it's a different brand of Albanianism if there is such a word. I could be totally wrong, but I preached that I don't see any likelihood in the near term, middle term, maybe 1,0000 years from now, who knows that there is really any great sentiment or force behind uniting Albanian speakers into a single country. Kosovars think that Albanians are, as I say, are much more primitive, much more violent, much more corrupt, much more tribal.

Q: Sort of hillbillies.

WALKER: Yes, but hillbillies, the Hatfields and the McCoys would feel right at home in beautiful Albania. Yet I've met some very, very impressive Albanians from Albania. The two places have such a different recent histories that they are really very, very separate places.

Q: How is your time working?

WALKER: I've got to go in about ten minutes because I have finally been called by the Department of State. They have just discovered that I'm going, they haven't just discovered, but they have just realized I'm actually going to go and testify against Milosevic and I found out from The Hague on a phone call two days ago that the State Department has been struggling with whether or not they had the authority to let me go or not go or whether they should ask me if I should go or whether they are going to find out what I'm going to say.

Q: Well, you're retired now.

WALKER: Yes, that's what I said. I finally called the State Department the day before yesterday and said, I hear you've been struggling with this and that's why The Hague was unable to call me earlier and the answer was oh, no, The Hague must have misunderstood. We knew all along that you're retired, but we would like to talk to you before you go. I said, Thursday afternoon, tomorrow I go up to New York.

Q: Before we finish this session here, let me just ask one other question. What about because we're rounding off the, till we'll get into the personalities and how things preceded. What about Macedonia? Macedonia of course has its own problems, which are of the same nature in that the Kosovars, when I was in Yugoslavia we used to call them Shuktars.

WALKER: Yes, Shuktar. That's an Albanian word for them.

Q: It became a pejorative term, very much so, so you wouldn't use it.

WALKER: Oh, did it?

Q: So, you wouldn't use it.

WALKER: Tomorrow night I'll be with a bunch of Shuktars, that's certainly good to know.

Q: Yes. Going now to Macedonia, I mean these were people, they had their own Albanian minority I guess, not much of a minority, but pretty close. With what was going on, I'm talking about the time when you arrived there. Was this something you had to keep looking over your shoulder in Macedonia because you didn't want to screw things up in Macedonia?

WALKER: Complicated question. At the very beginning I didn't pay much attention to that issue. At the very beginning I still was working under the premise that the international community was never going to let Kosovo split off. It was always going to be a province of Serbia, that our mission was to put in place the conditions under which it would get some autonomy. It would hold some elections, but it was still going to be part of Serbia, which I didn't see would in any way threaten Macedonia. Macedonia became more into my radar screen later, especially during the NATO bombing when tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of refugees poured in and I discovered that Macedonia, as you said, is also a country where a relatively slim majority of Slavic peoples tend to dominate and treat as second class citizens a rather sizable minority of Albanian speakers. The legend is that the Albanian community is out-producing, out-populating their part of the country and therefore within the foreseeable future they will become the majority and the present majority thinks my God what will they do us then.

Q: I mean actually this is a theme runs certainly from Israel up through all of Europe from the loins of Muslim women are going to, they're going to dominate everything and tear down out...

WALKER: If you drive around Kosovo and see the numbers of children in the villages and go into a house and you encounter 10 or 12 children. You can see where the legend comes from, but I didn't realize to answer your question the dimensions of that factor until later in the game. At the same time when I started becoming aware of the Macedonia ingredient. I haven't mentioned Chris Hill who was our Ambassador in Skopje and Ambassador to Macedonia and he was part of a two person team trying to get the two sides of Kosovo to come together, but he was the Ambassador in Macedonia and he would talk to me sometimes about the problems that the conflict in Kosovo was causing for Macedonia. My theory of what happened then and what evolved, and it is probably an erroneous theory because subsequent events have not added to the evidence, but I felt that Kosovo which essentially lies between Macedonia and Serbia proper, was like a buffer zone between the two areas. As long as Macedonia felt that Kosovo was and would remain a part of Serbia, they had to be damn sure they never did anything to offend Mr. Milosevic. But once the bombing took place, the Serb army and police were chased out of Kosovo, it became a UN protectorate more or less. I felt well that relieves the pressure on Macedonia. They don't have to worry that Milosevic is going to get mad

at them and come south and do something to them. Therefore they're going to be able to be more tolerant, more at ease with themselves. This is not the way it turned out.

Today is the 26th of July, 2002. Well, we're back in Pristina. So, we've talked a bit about the relations around there, but what did you do on the ground and how did you find after your staff was selected for you. How did this work out?

WALKER: Let me go back. I can't remember if I said this before, but I came into Kosovo via a meeting in Oslo to meet the leadership of the OSCE, the organization that was putting the mission together. I then went to Paris and got chewed out by the French for thinking I could pick my own deputy and then finding out that I was going to have seven deputies. Then I came back to Washington and went through a certain amount of well, a very, very, very limited amount of in-briefing. I was honored, I guess, or I was blessed, having Richard Holbrooke come down from his Credit Suisse suites of offices up in New York. He came down for the day to present himself to the Washington press corps and to tell the world about this deal that he had put together with Milosevic and oh, by the way, here's Bill Walker who is going to go in and lead this unarmed mission. Hey Bill, why don't you say a few words to the press and then I'll take the rest of the afternoon to tell them what it is really all about. So, I met Dick Holbrooke, that was the one time I met him before going in. I also had a couple of meetings with the NSC in the White House situation room because Kosovo was something they were meeting on every single day at the deputies level. So, I'd go with Tom Pickering for the three or four days I was here. Of course the push on me was to get out of here and get over there because things looked like they were going in the wrong direction on the ground.

Q: When you were in Washington was anybody saying I sure as hell hope you can do something there because if not we're going to have to go in there by force?

WALKER: No, at that point, everybody I think thought there was going to be a negotiated settlement. That Chris Hill.

Q: He was our Ambassador.

WALKER: He was our ambassador in Skopje and he was a part of a two person negotiating team. Chris Hill and a guy named Wolfgang, oh, I'll think of his name in a minute. Wolfgang was the Austrian Ambassador to Belgrade, I believe or maybe to Vienna, but he was an Austrian Ambassador. Hill and Petritsch was his name, Wolfgang Petritsch. They had been negotiating for some time with Milosevic and with the KLA, etc. trying to broker some sort of an agreement. The first I knew of the existence of someone named Chris Hill was when I was over at the situation room in the White House and they had a speaker phone connection to Chris Hill as he traveled the region. Wherever he was that day he would hook into a phone and he would participate in the session. So, for me at the beginning at least and for quite some time, Chris Hill was this disembodied voice that came out of the ether and talked about his sessions with Holbrooke or with the KLA. I'm not sure what Chris Hill thought of the mission at the beginning and I'm not sure what he thought of it as it went on. I only know that at the end

he was quite upset with the KVM, which we can go into later. At that time at the beginning, I then, my only meetings in Washington where I actually asked for anything because everyone was saying Walker will give you the world, what do you want. The Pentagon is ready they'll do anything you need. This mission has to be a success. I went to the CIA. I got exactly the same speech from them. At the CIA I met a two star army general who was the head military guy from the Pentagon at the Agency and I'll never forget because he told me that anything I needed he would get for me if it was DOD resource. I said, look, the only thing I can think of and I just told General Ralston, our Deputy Chief of Staff, the Deputy, who is the head of our military forces?

Q: The Chief of Staff?

WALKER: No, Chief of Staff, what do you call it, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Joseph Ralston at that point was the Vice Chairman and he came to these deputy meetings and he had promised me anything I needed. So, when I saw the general over at the CIA I said I can only think of one thing that I really could use and that is I need someone to keep me organized. I need someone to be by my side, to take notes, keep a record of where I've been, etc. I need a very strong administrative assistant and the best I've ever seen is an air force major, I think he's a Lieutenant Colonel now and he, Major Phillips, Mike Phillips. General, I could really use Mike Phillips. This is to a two star at the CIA. He said, Mike Phillips, okay. We'll find out where he is and we'll call him up and tell him to get on a plane and to meet you in Pristina. I said, no, no, please don't do that. I know Mike, he's a friend, he's got a wife, he's got kids, he's in Hawaii. I'd like to approach him to see if he is at all interested in doing this. He might not be. Just find out where he is. Get me a phone number and I'll call him. I then drove back to my office, which was about a 40 minute drive from the CIA to the State Department. Got to my office and the phone was ringing and it was Mike Phillips calling from Hawaii. Who had already been contacted by the general obviously and he told me he'd be proud to be on this mission. He wanted to do it and he'd be in Washington the following day. Well, that was the type of response I appreciated obviously. So, Mike and I flew over to Belgrade a couple of days later and I went to see Milosevic for my first time back in the region after the Croatia experience.

Q: Had you met Milosevic during the crisis?

WALKER: Yes, in Croatia I'd met him twice, face to face, both of which meetings were very jolly in that I was doing God's work in his estimation. I was there trying to save Serbs from the dastardly Croats. This time I knew it was a different arrangement. The first meeting was relatively friendly. He greeted me in his usual debonair fashion. A man who obviously pays some attention to the clothes he puts on every morning, well groomed, looked like he smelled nice although I can't swear to that. He met me with just a couple of his staff, I think the foreign minister was there, a little nondescript man who I really never remembered his name or got to know him. I think at that first meeting his deputy prime minister was there, a fellow named Šainović who I later had a lot to do with because he was Mr. Kosovo in the government. There were probably two or three other people. It was an informal meeting. I didn't notice anyone taking notes or anything like

that. We spoke in English so I have no idea whether other people in the group that was with him understood what was going on, but they always smiled when he smiled and frowned when he frowned.

A couple of things happened at that meeting. First he tried to convince me that Kosovo and Kosovars were near and dear to his heart. That he had nothing against the Albanian population in Kosovo just these troublesome terrorist bandit criminal separatists, Albanian guerrilla fighters of the KLA. This is where he showed what appeared to be great detailed knowledge of Kosovo. He told me that this story that Kosovo was full of Albanians was just poppycock, that actually the Albanians were a minority in Kosovo, that if you added up the Serbs who represented 20.3% of the population, he came up with very exact figures and gypsies who represented 8.75%, he had all these incredible statistics and you added them all up and it turned out that Albanians were a sizable, but nevertheless, minority. They didn't represent 50% or greater. Well, number one, he says things in such a, this is the truth fashion, you can't contradict him. If you try to contradict him, he doesn't take it too well. He went so far as to tell me that some of his best friends were Albanians. He told me that his Albanian friends who lived in Kosovo wanted nothing to do with this demand of the KLA for an independent Kosovo and he said they just didn't want that at all, much less did they want a greater Albania because, he said, many of them told him that as Albanians they travel to Albania every once in a while, but anytime they went to Albania, when they came back to Yugoslavia they would get down and kiss the ground to be back in this part of Western Europe as opposed to this crazy place called Albania. He says things in such a manner that there was no room to come back with counter arguments or counter information. On the question of who was the majority in Kosovo, everything that I had read and seen said that Albanians made up to 90% maybe even more than 90% and a growing percentage since they had large families, but all such descriptions, always were caveated by saying well there hasn't been a census done in Kosovo for more than a decade so no one really knows, plus there's been movements of people out and in from the other parts of Yugoslavia, so no one really knows what's what in terms of the size of the population but Mr. Milosevic, he had it down to decimal point and two figures to the right of the decimal point.

The other thing that came out of the meeting. I was asked about it in The Hague because he either has a different memory of it or for his own purposes at present he is saying something else. But when I walked into the room and you sit down and you've got to think of something to say, right? What I said to get my side of the conversation started was, nice to meet you again, see you again. I worked well with your people in Croatia and I hope to work well with them again and by the way where is General Lončar these days? General Lončar was the Serb general who was in command of the Serb officer corps that was left behind in Croatia when I was in Eastern Slovenia. So, I was just asking about this guy just to get a conversation going. Milosevic told me that General Lončar had retired. He really didn't know where he was and that was the end of the conversation. We went on to the more applicable subjects of the mission.

The following day when I flew down to Pristina of course, at the bottom of the plane steps there was General Lončar to meet me and present himself as the government of

Belgrade. Obviously Milosevic in the 24 hours that passed between my meeting with him and my arrival in Pristina, he had thought about this and thought hey, Lončar is just the guy to send down there that Walker has a favorable impression of and this will be someone who will have an easier time of slaying Walker than anyone else. Today or as recently as two weeks ago in The Hague, Mr. Milosevic is telling the court that Walker to show what a good fellow he was, when Walker came and asked him to bring Lončar back out of retirement and send him down to Kosovo, he, Milosevic, wanting to cooperate with my mission before he discovered what a bastard I was, of course immediately found Lončar and sent him down there. So, the prosecutor asked me very directly, did you ask for Lončar or did Milosevic on his own send him down there? The answer was Mr. Milosevic's recollection is absolutely incorrect. All I did was mention Lončar's name. Anyway, that was the meeting with Milosevic.

I came out of the meeting and had a press conference on the front steps giving an overview of what the mission was going to be. We were going to go down there. We're going to try to build up to 2,000 people as quickly as possible and try to bring about a stability, try to ensure that the ceasefire and the Holbrooke-Milosevic agreement was complied with by both sides.

Q: From the atmospherics at this point did you feel although it had been reached, did you feel that this was, your mission was one that was favorably looked on? I mean not only from the Milosevic side, but from the press comments and whatever you were getting in Serbia?

WALKER: Yes. Well, from, I went into this having met Milosevic several times. I obviously since I was in Croatia I had spent a good deal of time reading the papers everyday about what was going on in the Balkans. The more you learn about the last ten years in the Balkans the more you come to realize that Mr. Milosevic has been a huge part of the problem in Bosnia, in Croatia in all these breakaway provinces and in most of the violence that has occurred there. So, I went in knowing that Milosevic was going to be a tough guy to deal with especially since this represented what he considered his own territory. From that first meeting it was obvious that that was the way he was going to treat us as he had invited us in and we better behave or he'd invite us out. I don't know what he thought about the mission. I mean it was the first time he had allowed any sizable foreign presence to go into Kosovo with a mandate such as this mission had. It had been forced down his throat, but I think he felt that he was smart enough and had enough controls in hand to be able to not have to worry about the mission. He did have all sorts of tools to either harass us or to make life difficult for us in terms of just letting people in, the visa process, letting our supplies get in, letting our vehicles get in, all that stuff. He had all sorts of controls. He also knew, and I knew he knew, that he had a very good security apparatus in place down there. I'd always been told that the Yugoslav security secret service, whatever you want to call it, apparatus was as good as any in Eastern Europe and therefore was pretty damn good. I wasn't going in there thinking that he was my buddy and he was going to do everything to help us which he said he was. He said some things in that first meeting that were a little disturbing. He kept saying, we will abide 100% with every letter, every word in the agreement with Holbrooke. The

implication of that being don't try to do anything outside the agreement. Another message I delivered to him at that time was, we really would appreciate as much administrative support as we can get from you. I'm familiar with Eastern European democracies and sometimes things don't work so well at the bottom so please will you make sure that you give instructions that everyone in your bureaucracy will cooperate and do as much as they can to help us. He of course assured me that that would happen. It never did.

In terms of the press, I think there was considerable skepticism that an unarmed group would be able to come in quickly enough and forcefully enough to really find out what was going on and take whatever measures were necessary to make it all work. I divide the time we were on the ground in three distinct phases each of which was about two months in length. The first two months was when we were setting up. We went into Pristina and then out to the regional centers and then beyond that to some of the village level offices in a place with very little infrastructure, very little accommodation for large numbers of people coming in expecting showers and running water that worked and that sort of thing. It took quite a while to bring in, to start getting the pipeline pumping out people and pumping out the wherewithal to mount the operation, that is vehicles, transportation, computers, telephones, that sort of thing. The first two months were dedicated almost exclusively to just setting up. My going up to Vienna and telling the OSCE what my plans were, how I was going to do it. Even before I got to Vienna there was a planning group that was put in place mostly Norwegians, Brits and Americans. So, there was something underway when I got there. We took over a big bank building, the former Yugo Bank building. We had to rewire the whole building. We had to fly in three enormous generators and bring them in by helicopter and put them down in the backyard so we'd have a good supply of electricity. The cabling of the building consumed an enormous amount of that type of cable that was available in Norway at the time and they were responsible for wiring up the building. We brought in hundreds of computers overnight and we started to get delivery of these armored vehicles that we had said were necessary for our people to be out and about.

Q: When you arrived there, you arrived there when?

WALKER: This was November 4 of '98.

Q: What was the situation on the ground when you arrived there?

WALKER: The situation on the ground was a very tentative ceasefire that was probably not being observed by either side when in the vicinity of foreigners. In other words, going in there I couldn't state on day one that there was a lot of fighting going on. There probably was, but we just didn't have people out where the fighting was going on. My impression would be that the KLA was attacking, was provoking, and the government was retaliating very strongly when that happened and refugees were moving up into the hills, but we didn't have many people there in the beginning. It wasn't until we got people out into the boondocks that we started running across real non-compliance with the agreement. For example, part of the agreement was that the security forces from

Belgrade would be reduced in numbers, considerably. That all heavy weapons, artillery, tanks, would go into cantonment and that if any of this were moved, that is the heavy equipment, we would be notified, that we would verify what they were doing with it, where it was going, etc. When the troop withdrawals took place just as we were arriving, I think Milosevic and his government said, ten or twenty thousand troops are going to be pulled back into Serbia proper, the only people who were there to observe this happening were some of the KDOM. I believe we've talked about KDOM before, the diplomat observers who were few in number, but they stood on some of the attachés from the embassies in Belgrade who were down in Kosovo. They stood on the main road from Pristina north that goes up and through Serbia and eventually reaches Belgrade. They counted the number of buses going by and the number of army trucks that went by and made a fair estimate of how many passengers were normally in each bus and therefore calculated that he had in fact withdrawn a good number of his people. We later came to the suspicion that was probably a false count, either that or they went up and then just came back in smaller numbers, smaller groups. I am also convinced that until we got people out into the boondocks where they would run across tanks going down streets where they shouldn't be going down and artillery pieces in places where they were not supposed to be, we weren't able to say that they were doing these sort of things. But as soon as we started getting out people out we noticed a greater amount of non-compliance by both sides, but especially by the government. Whether when we first got there there was this momentary lull or whether it was just out beyond our seeing it, I don't know, but there was never a full blown ceasefire in place, not that I saw.

Q: When you arrived were you getting delegations and making contacts with people?

WALKER: Yes. When I went through Oslo and met the leadership of the OSCE and when I went through Vienna, one of my major pitches was based on my experience in Croatia, the capitals of Europe like to see you face to face to talk about their specific participation in your mission. This was an even more European mission. It was not with all the UN players. So I foresaw correctly that I would be traveling around, going to the capitals of Europe to get more help, or to discuss the situation. I made a big pitch coming through both Oslo and Vienna for some sort of airlift transportation for me. When I was in Croatia I think I mentioned earlier the Belgian government had put a very nice plane at my disposal. The Belgian air force with pilots would come in and picked me up anytime I had to fly anyplace. At first we thought this was going to be repeated, but the Belgian air force I think was a little reluctant to put their planes into Pristina where a war was going on. It ended up that anytime I needed to fly anyplace I would call Vienna or Major Phillips and then Colonel Phillips would call Vienna and they were always nice and they would rent a little executive jet and send it over to pick me up. Sometimes it would come into Pristina and pick me up. That was when my relations with Belgrade were okay, but any time there was any argument with Belgrade they would say, oh, it's too late to bring you into Pristina, so you'll have to go down to Skopje to get on these planes. I did a lot of traveling around Europe. I went to Moscow twice. I certainly went to Brussels. I saw Wes Clark. I saw the NATO people. I saw Javier Solana. I did a lot of that. Did a lot of that. It was worth it; it was worth keeping everyone informed.

Q: What type of contact did you have with the powers on the ground, with the Kosovars and with the Serbs?

WALKER: The first two months I would say November into mid-December, a month and a half, something like that, most of my energies, most of the mission's energies were spent building up. When I first got there, within a day of arrival, I was invited to meet with a Mr. Andjelkovic who was a young, Belgrade bureaucrat, I guess, who had been given the title chairman of the Yugoslav government Kosovo commission or something like that and it was supposedly a diverse group of Kosovars plus him to work with my mission. Mr. Andjelkovic was as far as I could see a rubberstamp of any order that came down from Belgrade. I only saw him that once. His commission, his committee, whatever it was, he introduced me to one person who was a Roma, a gypsy, he introduced me to one or two people who he claimed were Albanians. He wanted to show that this was a diverse group of people, but none of them said a word. He didn't say much other than how much he was going to cooperate with us. As I said I saw him that once and never again.

General Lončar was a more formidable figure although he, too was not much more than a message carrier from Belgrade. As a general I ended up only seeing him four or five times mostly when we were complaining about something and I wanted to enforce the seriousness of the complaint. Most of the time my British two star general, General Bi Zed was the liaison to General Lončar. I split up the, since I had these seven deputies, I had to divide the responsibilities. The French deputy who was my "principal deputy" since he had served in Belgrade and at this present time today is serving as the French Ambassador in Belgrade. He speaks a little Serb and claimed to understand the mindset of the Serb. I put him in charge of our relations with Belgrade, with the civilian government in Belgrade. The Russian deputy had come out of being ambassador I believe in Ankara, a nice fellow, a nice Russian, nice Foreign Service bureaucrat, never caused any problems. I put him in charge of relations with the local government structure especially the Serb side of it since many of them speak Russian. My German deputy I put him in charge of the democratization issues trying to put together the wherewithal for an election or census, human rights, those issues. The judicial side of things. Who have I missed? The Italian deputy was put in charge of the police. We thought when we went in we were going to be able to create a new civilian police to relieve the province of the special police forces down from the minister of interior of Belgrade. That really never got off the ground. So, my Italian deputy I don't know what he did.

Who else? The Norwegian deputy was the chief of staff of the mission, the administrative side of things. Also a two star general. Any other deputies in there? Anyway, it was a rum lot I guess is the way I would put it. That first month and a half, two months, was this trying to put things in place. The way the OSCE recruits people or the way it gets people to work on its missions is kind of a bizarre one in that the OSCE doesn't pay anyone anything so governments contribute in kind. Almost all the people that came in with the possible exception of the Americans were government employees from the various countries most of whom were either military guys, those are the people you can count on to pack up one day and be someplace else the next. In a situation where we were saying

we've got to get people in here fast, the quickest way for most governments was to find some of their military and put them in civilian clothes and send them over. Some were Foreign Service Officers from various countries. The U.S. did it a little differently. We went out and hired a contractor; DynCorp is its name, a big Rosslyn or Dulles airport road outfit, a traditional beltway bandit. We just said we need X 100 Americans to do this and this and this. Go find them and planes started arriving with American policemen and American this and American that. The problem with that is, with that system of recruitment is there is no correlation between what you think you're going to be doing and the people that come in. Again military guys, flexible as they might be, might not have the talents to do some of the things we were thinking we were going to be doing.

I told Vienna every time I went up there and they asked me Walker, what is your philosophy? My philosophy was I want to make the headquarters in Pristina as lean and mean as possible. I want to get as many people out to the rural areas, to the other population centers as I possibly can and I want to do it as quickly as possible. We ended up setting up five regional centers in the five major population centers, Peja, Pristina, Prizren, Gjilan, Mitrovica. Those were the five regional centers. We carefully selected the leaders of those five regional centers. I picked people who were not from the major countries that my deputies came from. I put in a Canadian one, I put in an Austrian one, I put a Dane in one, that sort of thing. Then I told them I want you to do what I've done which is take your people and put them in the principal villages in your region. I told Vienna as well that I didn't want to create zones. I didn't want to have a French zone, a German zone, an American zone, etc. I wanted each regional center to be a mixture of nationalities so that their allegiance was to the OSCE. It worked and it worked very nicely. The first month and a half or so was devoted to that. By the end of that time we maybe had 800 people in place from 25 or so countries. Over the next couple of months we built it up to 1,400. From 34 countries I believe was the maximum number of participating countries. The second phase of being on the ground was when I think we made the biggest difference. It came about partly by our being better equipped and better prepared to do what we thought we were sent in to do, but also because we picked up some additional things to do that started showing people. For instance the press corps. It went from being fairly cynical about the mission, well, what do you think you can do just by looking through binoculars from a distance? You have no weapons. You have no arms. How can you go in and tell an army one side or the other to stop firing? You're going to just throw your bodies between these two armies? That turned fairly smartly to a press corps that was really favorably attuned to what we were doing. We started getting good press.

Q: Was the press corps pretty much veterans of the siege of Sarajevo and all or was this a new breed?

WALKER: Hard to say, I think most of them were a new breed. I think when we first got there for this first two thirds of the time there, the press corps were mostly stringers. The pros would come in occasionally and set up their cameras and ask for a one-on-one interview with the head of the mission sort of thing, but that was the rare. The ones that were there day in and day out who set up their cameras outside our headquarters were

mostly young hustlers looking to get a name for themselves in hoping I guess that things went wrong so they could show their foreign correspondent skills. There's nothing like young reporters to be a bit more cynical of what a group like this is going to be able to do. Over time it changed very much in our direction. This became evident from a couple of things that we did in that period.

I went up and had a second meeting with Milosevic in November, at the end of November. I was instructed to go in and tell Mr. Milosevic that the international community considered that both sides were in noncompliance, serious noncompliance with their agreement. That meeting did not go as well as my first meeting. This is when Mr. Milosevic came back to say what do you mean we're not in compliance? I told you Walker we would be in total compliance and we are in total compliance. I've heard nothing about noncompliance. I said, well, that's why I'm here. I also brought up a couple of other subjects. I brought up the town of Mališevo, which I think I mentioned earlier. Mališevo was "the capital of the KLA" early on and one day the Serbs security forces went in, drove the KLA out, drove the local population out to a person and then destroyed the town. It looked like, it was worse than Vukovar next door in Croatia where most of the buildings were flat. Dick Holbrooke had an obsessive dream that he was going to show that his plan would work by rebuilding Mališevo and he was going to do this by making both sides agree that Mališevo was an open city, that no fire arms could come within the city limits. So, I was instructed sometime in November to go into Mališevo and put up signs where a Kalashnikov rifle and a big stripe across it, you know. No guns allowed. I did it and I felt kind of stupid doing it, but I did it.

Q: Was Holbrooke a force over the horizon all the time you were there?

WALKER: Well, over the horizon because he was always calling me from Hong Kong and places like that.

Q: He was essentially an international banker at this point.

WALKER: He was an international banker, but even at that time they were talking about he was a future Secretary of State so no one in the State Department wanted to cross swords with him not even I don't think Madeleine Albright. He was able to call up and scream commands and that sort of thing. Anyway, Mališevo was an issue I talked to Milosevic about in that November meeting telling him that Dick Holbrooke wanted it to be a demilitarized zone, telling him that Dick Holbrooke thought that he should reduce his police presence there because there was a very heavy police presence there, no citizens, but a heavy MUP special interior police unit there and I was asked to tell him, you know, reduce the MUP force, get the armored personnel carriers, get the tanks, get them out of the city and then maybe some of the people will come back and then we can build this little enclave of peace and demilitarized zone in the middle of the war. Milosevic, of course, told me to go to hell, that the police should be there, the guerrilla terrorist types were still in the hills, etc. So I had no success on that one. I also asked him if we could, if he could look back to my arguments about why we needed a helicopter ambulance capability. That we had hired a Swiss ambulance in Switzerland at a very,

very high cost and much to our surprise his people had not given it clearance to come into Pristina. He said you don't need a helicopter, I'll give you a helicopter, one of my military helicopters and I've got very good doctors. I said, well, that'd be great if all of our people only get hurt in parts of the country that you control, but if they are hurt in parts of the country that the KLA controls, if they have a traffic accident or fall off a cliff or get shot, you know, we couldn't send your helicopter in to pick them up in parts of the country controlled by the KLA. He of course said, there are no parts of this country that are controlled by the KLA. I can go anyplace. Well, that was obviously not true. Anyway he would not yield on the question of the helicopter. The OSCE ended up spending a couple of million dollars for this helicopter to just sit in Skopje for six months.

I also talked to him about letting us have a few weapons for our security force. We had a small security, bodyguards on me, a couple of people that stood around and watched the buildings. Sometimes mobs would come to crash into our buildings and our guards had sticks. So, they just had to stand away and let the crowds do their thing. He wouldn't yield on that one either. This is an unarmed mission. The agreement says unarmed Walker, so if you want to change the agreement we have to renegotiate.

Q: Was he using rent-a-mobs to go do this or were these spontaneous?

WALKER: Oh, no, I think they were rent-a-mobs, but the Serb radical activists didn't take much. They didn't require much in the way of rental. They were always willing to come down and chant their allegiance to Belgrade and Kosovo was theirs. In that meeting in November Milosevic said to me, Walker, I've got something for you to do. Two Serb journalists have been kidnapped by those Godless criminal secessionists, terrorists, KLA. Two journalists. We believe in freedom of the press and we believe journalists should be able to go anyplace and these guys have been captured and they're being held against their will. We know where they are and you talk to the KLA and you get them out. If you don't do that I'll send my boys in and they'll get them out. I said, well, if you send your boys in they'll probably get them killed. He said, we'll get them out. I went back to Kosovo and I talked to Sean Burns who was the head of the American diplomatic observation mission and he had had a lot of contact with the KLA during his months there. He spoke some Albanian and was a regular Foreign Service Officer. I think he was the head of the Political Section in Rome when he was seconded over to Kosovo. I said, Sean, you know, it would be very nice if the KLA would turn these two guys over to my mission. It would be a nice gesture on their part welcoming the KVM, Kosovo Verification Mission. On the bottom side of that if they don't, Mr. Milosevic has promised to send his troops in and he knows where they are, etc., and a lot of people are going to get killed.

So, Sean went out into the hills and he came back within hours and said they agree. They'll turn them over to you, when do you want to do it? A couple of days later I went out to a village that was totally under the control of the KLA, very close to Mališevo and I met my first KLA leaders. The local guy who I talked to in the little town of Dragobilit today is a friend of mine. He is a guy I like to see when I go back to Kosovo, but back then he was a uniformed KLAer. I met him. Sean introduced me in a little hut in the

middle of this dirty, filthy, little village in the middle of winter and I told him that it would be very nice if they turned these guys over to me. I thought they had already agreed to do so, but he said, well, he was going to have to go off and talk to some other people. He went off, I guess he talked by cell phone or radio or something and came back and said, okay, we'll turn them over to you and they'll be here in a few minutes.

I went outside. It was a rainy, wet, wintry day with mud on the dirt streets and off at one end about 100 yards away from the house where we were was a whole slew of journalists setting up their cameras who had followed us out there who heard something was up. They set up their cameras. There must have been 30 or 40 of them. One thing I never understood in Kosovo was that we the international community people traveling around we had to have four wheel drive Land Rover, Mitsubishi, big solid heavy vehicles to move us around. The KLA went around in what looked like 25 year old, run down, rusted out Honda Civics.

Q: Or probably Fićas, which were a Fiat.

WALKER: Yes, they mostly had Fiats, you're absolutely right.

Q: Called Fićas in Yugoslavia.

WALKER: These damn things would go up and down the hills. And we'd be stuck in the mud and they wouldn't get stuck in the mud. I never figured that one out. Anyway, shortly thereafter, I think it was one of those Fiat type vehicles putt putt into the village and the KLA guards who were around the village, most of whom were dressed in the black pajama like camouflage suits of the elite of the KLA units I later learned all with their machine weapons. They went over and dragged these two guys out of the car, both of whom looked terrified. I don't think they knew what was about to happen. I think they thought they were about to be shot or something like that. They really looked quite forlorn. I went over to greet them with my interpreter and tell them they were going to be freed in a couple of minutes, and that they had some colleagues over here who wanted to chat with them about their experience, the press corps. When I went over to get them I noticed in the back of this beat up vehicle there were two more people sitting with blindfolds on and with their hands tied. I wondered about them, so when I saw the KLA leader a minute or so later, I said, what about those other two guys? Who are they? He said, don't worry about them, they're Albanian traitors who have been informing on us and we tried them and convicted them. Don't worry, we're taking them back to their village and we're going to release them as well, but they're not going to misbehave again. That car putt putt off with the two guys in their blindfolds.

I took the two journalists over to this line of reporters and it was interesting. They were asked if they were mistreated. They said no. They were asked what did you talk about with your captors. One was an older guy I would guess in his fifties. He was a photographer. The other guy was a reporter. The younger guy, the reporter was from Pristina and they both worked for Tanjug, which is the government press service. I later got to know him because we put them in my car to take them back to Pristina. They were

both obviously hyper, elated to be freed, smoking one cigarette after another. Thankful that we'd gotten them out. They had no idea 20 minutes before that they were going to be released, I mean it was really nice. When everyone got back to town I called ahead and the family of this guy who was from Pristina, I invited them to come to my office, to greet them at the office and he had a fiancé. When I got to my office the older guy he was from Belgrade so he wandered off after thanking us all. The younger guy I got to know him and was invited by the family to come to a celebration that night at their apartment. It was the only time during my entire stay in Kosovo that I was shown the hospitality of a Serb family, and it was overwhelming. They lived in one of these big old communist style rundown apartment buildings which there were 20 or 30 going in every direction. We had to walk up five or six flights to get to their apartment. Dark, dingy, smelly stairwell up to the fifth floor. Run down, graffiti all over the place, and at every landing we came to the neighbors were out to cheer this guy. It was obviously a totally Serb community and they cheered the guy and he was a very modest, very nice young man. I got to really like him and we got to his parents' apartment where he and a slew of his brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts all lived in the same sort of area. They all came in and we drank grappa, we drank rakia. We sat there and Mike Phillips and I were the two big gringos there working through a couple in the room who spoke a little English. The only one who spoke 25% English was a brother who had gone to Saudi Arabia as a soccer star and he was back with his ill-gotten gains. He went out and bought the booze. It was a very, very nice evening. I kept my words and comments and questions to what I thought would be easily interpreted and so I kept asking all through the night when was this guy that we had just gotten released going to marry his fiancé. When is the wedding? I want to go to the wedding sort of thing. I was assured that when he got married I would be a guest of honor. We had a wonderful time, an absolutely wonderful time. I only saw him and his fiancé one time again and it was just before we pulled out of Kosovo four or five months later and it was obvious that by that time post-Račak and all when I was no longer tolerated by most Serbs, he showed some courage to come and see me with his fiancé and to thank me again and to say that they were in fact going to get married. She, of course, was now pregnant and that if all possible he'd like me to come to the wedding, but a month or so later we pulled out. It was a very human night with this family all of whom certainly forget for that evening that I was anything else than someone who had helped their son return.

As a result of that exercise a couple of weeks after that we got another request this time I think from Lončar who said that eight VJ soldiers had been captured by the KLA. Again they knew where they were. They were going to go in and get them if we didn't negotiate their release. I went to the KLA, the people I had met in the first exchange, and said would you give these prisoners up. They had arrested eight young recruits who had no idea what the hell they were doing in Kosovo, conscripts, 18, 19 years of age. They had, various stories went around, but the one I believed most likely was that these guys were out on patrol and they got drunk and lost their way and the next thing they knew they walked into a KLA roadblock and were easily captured. I did the same thing with them. I tried to figure out what it would take to get the KLA to release them and what it would take was for the government to release seven or eight tit for tat prisoners that they had. The government initially said, no, no, no, no way, we don't deal with the KLA as an

equal. They have to release our guys unconditionally. Eventually they came to the point of saying if they release our eight guys, five, six or seven of their guys will show up one day free, but we're not going to say, it wasn't tit for tat, we didn't negotiate with them; well, that was fine. One fine day we went up into the hills with our vehicles and picked up these eight guys, brought them down and turned them over to Lončar. In between that and the government wanted to wait I think 48 hours or something before they released anyone to make it look like there was no connection, but in that 48 hours some really bad things happened. If I'm not mistaken, Račak happened.

Q: You mentioned Račak. What was, did that come at this time?

WALKER: That comes at the end of this second period. Anyway, what I want to say is that these two events, getting the release of the journalists, getting the exchange of prisoners, led us into other activities that were not contemplated when we went in. We never thought we were going to be negotiating the release of prisoners, etc. and other things like that we were starting to pick up.

Q: Were you under any constraints about talking to the KLA?

WALKER: If we were it was never said to us because I made this comment as recently as two weeks ago in The Hague when Milosevic was saying you were in cahoots with the KLA, you went and talked to them Walker, didn't you? I said, the first time I went to talk to them was under your instructions. You told me to go and get these two journalists freed.

Q: You hadn't talked to them prior?

WALKER: No, I had not. I had not. Some of my people ran into them, etc., but nothing in the way of formally dealing with them. It was obvious that you can't deal with two sides to a conflict and only talk to one side especially the one side that is filling you full of bullshit. I never accepted that there were any restraints or anything in the way of a restraint on my dealing with whoever in Kosovo that I wanted to talk to.

Q: Were you running across people with your seven deputies and all who were beginning to pussyfoot saying do you think we ought to do this?

WALKER: Oh, sure, of course. Of course. I mean, the most vociferous of that type was my French deputy. I don't think he ever had a meeting with the KLA. Probably better that he didn't because they were not great fans of France or the French, especially a Frenchman who spoke some Serb. The most activist, the most supportive of my deputies was my British deputy who was extremely.

Q: He was a two star.

WALKER: Two star British general of Polish descent. His father had been a free Polish army type in World War II and he was brought up there, went to Sandhurst, had been the

commander of the engineering corps, Royal Engineers. Really a savvy guy, a very good guy. When he saw that the military were doing what they were doing, when he saw that they were not being open with us or complying with us in terms of informing us when they were doing things they weren't supposed to be doing or at least informing us, I don't want to say he turned against them because that wasn't it, he was willing to tell Vienna what was actually happening rather than the Frenchman who would always come up with some excuse as to why the Yugoslav authorities had to go into village X and do whatever it had to do.

The Russian deputy very seldom said anything. The German deputy was a young Foreign Service Officer. He was the youngest of my deputies and his issues, certainly the issue of elections and census, we weren't able to get up and running on those so he was mostly in the planning stages. I had to reject the first Italian that they sent me as a deputy who was an idiot. The Italian government got very upset with me and accused me of being anti-Italian or something like that. I just said, no this guy is the wrong guy for what we want him to do. This was a guy who was supposed to come in and put together a new civilian police force and when I met him in Vienna and we went before the permanent council of the OSCE in which I was going to introduce the fellow and say he's going to go down there and as soon as we can we're going to put together a civilian police force so we can insist that the MUP get out of there, he got up before the council and made this rambling statement about he wasn't going to do anything quickly. He was going to go down there and he was going to do sort of a psychological profile of the police that were already there and see if they could perhaps be turned into something that would be useful and he went on and on. It sounded like it was a job that would take about 20 years. Everybody in the council was looking at each other saying who is this idiot? So, at the end of that I told the Italian government that maybe they should send somebody else. They were very upset as only the Italians can be.

Q: He used to be a carabinieri officer?

WALKER: Yes. This guy, what was he, I can't remember what he was, deputy prosecutor or something. Then they sent someone finally after they'd gotten over their wrath. They sent someone who looked like he was going to be pretty good except we never got around to doing anything with the police.

Q: Were you getting reports of people coming up to you and saying, my God, there's been a massacre and there's a mass grave and that sort of thing? Or was this not the time you were getting that?

WALKER: Not really, not much of that. As I say we were still fanning our people out trying to get a presence. We quickly learned that wherever we got our presence in place and out and about in their little verification vehicles, the incidence of violence dropped. Unfortunately we would then hear about violence or tales of violence in other parts. So, what was happening was as soon as we got some place the incidence of violence from either side would drop dramatically. But they would just move off and conduct their violent acts someplace else. But as we started covering most of the territory we thought

the level of violence was definitely going down. The only thing I remember in terms of your question was sometime in mid-December I believe it was, and this has later bearing, a rather large bearing on the Račak incident. But in mid-December I was told by my German deputy, yes, I'm sure it was him, that the European community had financed and was bringing in a Finnish forensic team under the command of a Finnish Dr. Ranta, Helena Ranta is her name and this team was being sent in to investigate some of these stories of mass graves and that she had come in with a list of X number of sites, some that were supposedly Albanian graveyards and some that were supposedly Serb. Some of these went back a number of years, went back to the early years of the conflict.

One fine day in mid-December, a bitter cold day, I was invited to go out and see Dr. Ranta at her first excavation of a gravesite. I and several carloads of my people drove way out into the sticks. I have no memory of where it was, but it was way out in the middle of nowhere. I remember we had to get out of the vehicles up on the high ground on the dirt road we were on and hike down through the snow, maybe a mile, maybe a mile and a half and I remember how bitterly cold it was and I kept slipping. I've got a bad left leg and I was having trouble. I wasn't sure I was going to make it, when the hell are we going to get to this place. We finally, way down in the valley someplace we came to this little village and this little graveyard by the village and out in front of the graveyard, in front of the little fence or whatever it was that divided you from the graveyard there were two or three 55 gallon oil drums with fires going in them and a whole bunch of people standing around trying to warm their hands because it was bitter cold and it was foggy. I went up and I was introduced to Dr. Ranta and some of her people. She told me that this was a claimed site of a massacre of a number of Albanians from this village. I said, well, have you found anything? She said, no, no, if you will look in the graveyard you'll notice there's a figure in there and I looked and sure enough there was this guy who looked like something out of Star Wars. He was sweeping for mines and he was very carefully going over each inch of the graveyard. Dr. Ranta told me that they had been told by the villagers that there were mines and that there were booby traps in the graveyard and that the place where the supposed mass grave was there were a lot of bodies in there that could have been booby trapped individually, collectively. She told me they were going to sweep the graveyard first and then they'd come back the following day and actually start digging if it was clear. I sat around and talked to Dr. Ranta for an hour or so and she told me all about the process of exhuming bodies. We left without seeing anything other than this guy sweeping the graveyard for mines.

The following day somewhat to my surprise Dr. Ranta came to my office in Pristina. I said, oh, I thought you were going to be back out there, was it too cold for you or what? I don't blame you if you wanted to take a day or so off after yesterday. She said, no, no, we've abandoned that project. In fact we're going back to Finland. I said why is that. She said, well, this morning when we were ready to go back in and start digging, the investigative judge for the government in Belgrade, a woman, Marinkovic I believe is her name, came and said she was going with us that she had responsibility for any investigation especially of a criminal sort and that she wanted to go into the village, but she knew it was an Albanian village and therefore she was going to bring in a company of MUP policemen to make sure nothing untoward happened to her. Dr. Ranta told the

judge that she thought that would be a big mistake, that there were KLA, that it was KLA controlled territory and that if the MUP went in there it would be a big fight and people were going to get hurt. The judge insisted that she had every right to go in and that she wasn't going to go in without proper security and proper security in her eyes meant this big body of troops. So, Dr. Ranta, correctly in my opinion, called off the exhumation and said we can't work under these conditions so she went back to Finland. Now, I tell that story because in the aftermath at Račak Dr. Ranta, the Finnish forensic team and this investigative judge was also in charge of the investigation of Račak and we became very involved in each other's lives at that point.

That middle third of our time, as I said earlier, was when we started coming up to speed, not full force, but we were at least a significant presence, 800 or 900 people. We were out and about, getting our people out into the far flung reaches of Kosovo. We were winning the respect of parts of the population that saw that we were there to actually do some things rather than sit around and look through binoculars all day. That we were willing to go out and find, recover people who were held by one side or the other. We started seeing people coming to us to tell us that relatives had disappeared, etc. Could you help us find them. We think they're being held by so and so.

Q: All of this is before the mass exodus. I mean essentially you had a population in place?

WALKER: Yes. The population was mostly in place. There were still people who were internally displaced, those that we thought were going to go up to the hills and starve if we didn't come in, a village like Mališevo where the people had moved out and gone to a neighboring village or gone to relatives in the city or whatever. It wasn't, everybody was not exactly where they should have been, but with our presence of another indicator of this building confidence in the mission was that people were starting to return to from whence they came. The specter of tens of thousands of people up in the hills without shelter through the winter months evaporated. I put a presence in Mališevo. I opened a little office there and as soon as we did that some of the villagers started coming back from whoever they'd gone to to get out of Mališevo. It was starting to move in the right direction in many aspects.

We were becoming increasingly confident in our knowledge of the situation, in our contacts to the extent that on that second visit to Belgrade to meet Milosevic, 18th of November I think? I was told that the "families of Serb disappeared people" wanted to meet with me. I said, great, let's set it up. So, it was set up for a certain day and then it turned out that Milosevic wouldn't see me that day and he ended up postponing my meeting with him and I had to stay in Belgrade an extra day and I called down and said, look, tell the Serb families I can't see them as promised, but I'll see them the following day. A rent-a-mob came down to the mission building complaining that Walker was ducking it, that Walker was only taking care of Albanian problems. They had a big rally out front and guys got up and denounced me and denounced the mission. When I came down I went and had a meeting. The first meeting with this group and it wasn't a very pleasant meeting, but I told them, look the reason I wasn't here was that your president

wanted to see me and wouldn't see me the first day so I had to stay an extra day. A very nasty meeting. It really was not very pleasant at all. These were people whose relatives had disappeared maybe eight or five years earlier and they claimed they were still living as prisoners someplace in the hills and Walker, you're supposed to go in there and find them and bring them out and bring out the people who kidnapped them or mistreated them. Highly emotional. Probably the most emotional meetings I've been in. Anyway, these were things that were happening during this middle third of the mission. Increasingly accepted, increasingly able to do what we were sent in to do, picked up other things to do. The European capital seemed to be happy with the way the mission was going.

In the meantime of course the Hill-Petrich negotiating track was ongoing. It wasn't getting anywhere, but it was ongoing. I remember the first time I met Chris Hill in person other than as a voice coming in over the ether, he told me that well, these are tough negotiations, but we'll have an agreement by Christmas. It's not going to be, it's going to be tough to get the Albanians to agree to this because Chris Hill, Holbrooke and I think an awful lot of the people back here were unwilling to consider the possibility of an independent Kosovo. They were going on the assumption that somehow something would be signed that would permit the world to let Milosevic maintain Kosovo as part of Serbia, but giving it some autonomy. This was what Hill was thinking was going to be arranged by Christmas. He said it's going to be very tough to get the KLA to agree to this, but we'll drag them across the goal line is the way he put it and as soon as we do that Milosevic will sign up. This turned out to be totally wrong.

Q: Today is the 2nd of August, 2002. Bill, take over. Put a date in here.

WALKER: We're talking mid-January 1999. The Kosovo verification mission had been in place for about four months. That was about two-thirds of the way through of what eventually turned out to be our tenure. In the early part of January we noticed a considerable increase in potentially conflictive situations turning into shooting situations between the KLA and the government forces. Around about Christmas time there was a very tight situation in an area called Podujevo which is the main road north out of Pristina heading towards Belgrade and we noticed a lot more military traffic on the road. When our people were going up that road they noticed emplacements of tanks, some of them hidden, camouflage, behind barns sort of thing, but many of them were quite brazenly out in the open. These were vehicles; these were heavy equipment that were supposed to be in cantonment that were not where they were supposed to be under the agreement. So, we went up there. I sent some of my military guys, a couple of my British lieutenant colonel types up to Podujevo to scout around and what they found was that the KLA had moved into some areas where they had previously been in force. They had been chased out and as we were trying to get the government forces to back off, as soon as they did the KLA would move back in. It was a push and pull between the two sides. The government had moved out this heavy equipment in violation of the agreement. When we told them they

were in violation they said, oh, no, no, we're all on training exercises and training exercises are permitted under the agreement. We said, well, these are kind of strenuous looking training exercises and they really look like they're out there aiming up into the hills where we think the KLA is. Then some of my guys went up into the hills and talked to the KLA. It was very much on both sides the story was well, we're not going to shoot first, but if those sons of guns shoot at us, we'll shoot back and then we'll wipe them out. Both sides were saying this. Around the time of Christmas fighting did in fact start breaking out. A couple of villages were destroyed, a good number of people were killed, civilians as well as combatants and I ended up sending a British lieutenant colonel up to actually sleep in the headquarters of the security services and another one to go up into the hills and sleep in the headquarters of the KLA. They were both under instructions to let us know if anything untoward happened. That was the end of December.

Also, during December, there were two incidents. Maybe I mentioned these before, I can't remember.

Q: Put them in.

WALKER: One was an infiltration column coming in from Albania of 50 or 60 KLA fighters carrying large amounts of resupplied ammunitions, weapons, etc. Coming across the border and coming into Kosovo they were ambushed by a military unit that had advance warning of their arrival and a good number were killed. Several dozen were killed. We heard about it and got our people up into this very remote and snow covered part of the border area. They determined that these were in fact infiltrators, they were in KLA military uniforms. There was a lot of weaponry on them and it was obvious that this was in fact what it purported to be. Of course the government have every right to defend their borders and to kill people coming in as an invading army almost.

The next day an incident happened in Peja or in Peć depending on which vocabulary you're using, Serb or Albanian. In the town of Peja in a bar there was a little pool hall by the side of the road some masked guys broke in and sprayed the place with machine gun bullets killing five or six young Serb men who were in there having drinks and playing pool. The immediate conclusion everyone drew was that this was in retaliation for what had happened on the border. This was the KLA getting back at the government by killing these civilians. The guys that came in left no calling cards. They were masked. The KLA never took credit for this, which they quite often did when they pulled off something like that. To make a long story short, end of December, I held a press conference. I had been up in Belgrade waiting to see Milosevic when all this happened. I didn't see him and I came back and held a press conference in which I denounced this violence and said this was the very thing that was causing the tension.

Actually I expressed my regret at the violence, my sadness that this sort of thing had happened, that people were being killed on both sides. This later in fact down to today is used by Belgrade, is used by the Serb side, saying that I was making these two events equivalent. That I was saying that the military invasion could not be repelled by the security forces or I was saying that what had happened in Peja was identical to what had

happened on the border when in fact there were innocent civilians being killed when they were playing pool. I have tried to explain many many times including in the court a couple of weeks ago at the trial of Milosevic that what I was denouncing was this incidence of violence sort of tit for tat, sort of cycle that was fostered when one side or the other killed members of the other side. I also said that we didn't know who had killed the people in the bar in Peja and that it wasn't quite as clear cut as the thing up on the border. I also tried to point out when people on the Serb side used the incident in Peja as an example of where Walker had shown a preference for the Albanians because I went to the burial of the victims in c, but I didn't go to the burial of the victims in Peja. I have a perfectly valid reason why I didn't go to the funeral of the victims in Peja. It was because I asked to go from the government, I said I was thinking of going to the funeral of these young Serb men who had been gunned down in the pool hall. I was told by General Lončar that it would be unwise for me to go, that emotions were very high, that my arrival might in fact spark something, so he told me I should not go to the funeral. I took my cue from him and didn't go. As I say this was later used to show that I did not care about Serbs when they were killed I only cared about Albanians.

Okay, that was through the end of December. Into January, dead of winter, a lot of snow on the ground, there were some more very violent incidents, but the dividing line between what had come before and what came after occurred on the 15th of January, 1999.

Q: Before we get to that, have you made any contact, I can't think of his name now, the guy who goes around with the scarf on his neck.

WALKER: Rugova is his name.

Q: Yes, well, maybe you can mention that later.

WALKER: Sure. I was seeing the leadership of the Albanian side. He was the leader of the civilian non-violent, non-military, non-KLA side. Ibrahim Rugova is his name. Yes, he's really a, although an Albanian to the core, Kosovar Albanian to the core, he presents himself to the world as sort of a French intellectual. He's an academic. As you say, he wears this scarf around his throat. At some point people have claimed that he made a vow in his youth or something like that that he would only take this scarf off when Kosovo was independent or free or something like that. I'm not sure of the truth of that, but his scarf is his.

Q: Is his trait.

WALKER: Is his hallmark, yes. I saw him a number of times. I think we are actually friends. I saw him within days of arrival in Kosovo, but I also saw some other leaders of the Albanian community, one being a fellow named Damachi. Damachi is a fellow who claims he is the Nelson Mandela of Kosovo in that he has spent more than half of his life and that's a long life so it must be 25 or 30 years in prison for his rebellious attitude towards Kosovo being part of Yugoslavia. Adem Damachi, I think something affected him after his many years in prison because he's now all over the political spectrum. At

one point he stood up while I was there and announced that he was the prime minister of the KLA and that he would speak for the KLA and within 24 hours the KLA military leadership came out and said he didn't know what he was talking about. They had never elected him to anything and that he really wasn't even a member of the KLA. But because of his Nelson Mandela persona you had to respect him and so I went to see him a couple of times and had him come to see me, but he was very difficult to deal with. So, Adem Damachi is Nelson Mandela, as I say, Rugova is this French intellectual leader of the Mahatma Gandhi if you will of the situation and of course you've got the military leaders who I met some of them.

Q: KLA types.

WALKER: Yes, KLA types. The other major player in terms of the Albanian side was, is a fellow named Veton Surroi who was the publisher of the major Albanian lands newspaper in the province. Surroi comes from a distinguished family. His father was a Yugoslav diplomat. He and I quite often converse in Spanish because he grew up in Bolivia where his father was ambassador and in some other Latin American posts. Veton Surroi is also your tough European newspaper publisher type, probably the person most known to the outside world NGOs, you know, we invite them to give talks at conferences and think tanks that really want to know what's really going on in Kosovo will always bring up the name Veton Surroi. Those were the three major out in the open civilian people that I would talk to.

Q: Now, we're moving to another part, but I'm still trying to get the background. Did you find any of these or within the KLA an effective leadership or were you working with a split leadership?

WALKER: I would say the split leadership pattern was the prevalent one. We never, with all the resources of the CIA, with all the resources of contacts with the KLA, the military side, we never figured out what their internal structure was, who their real leaders were. They were always announcing new high command structures. I have no idea whether it was to confuse people or they were confused. I'm not sure which was the case.

Q: You didn't feel that you were up against a secretive structure, that this didn't, there was somebody calling the shots?

WALKER: We were always trying to find out if there was a central command someplace. I've described several of the KLA military guys and they; many of the characteristics are sort of a local warlord. If you wanted to go to Peja you would see one guy who was the military commander of that zone. If you went to another zone, you went to another military leader, occasionally not at that level, not at the actual warlord level, but a couple of levels down if you went and needed negotiations to get prisoners exchanged, you'd go and talk to someone who you thought had decision making authority. But they'd say, well, excuse me, they'd go off to their room and you would assumed they were calling someone on their cell phones, or on their radios, but you never knew. You never knew if they were just making you think there was a high command someplace.

On the civilian side, it was not warlords, but it was three or four of these fellows. Rugova one, Damachi one, Surroi one. They all intensely disliked each other and those were the territory and you couldn't ever get them to pull together and this was one of the problems at Rambouillet which we'll get into shortly. I first met Rugova well before I went to Kosovo. I was in the Department of State one day while I was still at National Defense University and I went to see my friend Bob Gelbard and I walked in and talked to him he was surrounded by a visiting team of Kosovo leaders. The leader among them was this fellow named Ibrahim Rugova with the scarf around his neck and I remember him. He was kind of a weird guy, speaks very softly, isn't comfortable in English, or not terribly comfortable in English, speaks good French. He's apparently got a PhD in France. Rugova all the time I was there, if he give you his card it had the title President of Kosovo on it because he had been elected in some fashion to be president of the province. I was never quite clear as to what that process was, but my guess would be that Rugova, no it's not my guess, I often asked people, who do you admire most here among the leaders? Is it Rugova sort of the Mahatma Gandhi, these guys in the KLA leadership out in the hills fighting or is it Damachi, this guy who spent so many years in prison and the answer was fairly consistent which is we admire all of them for different reasons. We just wish they would pull together. We wish they could act together because we know that these divisions are not helping the cause. Down to today there is very little harmony among the leadership groups of the Albanian population.

Q: How about on the Serbian side? You mentioned General Lončar and you've got Milosevic who is calling the shots, but was there in the field, what was the relationship with Lončar and was there a Serbian equivalent?

WALKER: Well, Lončar was the Serbian equivalent to my two star British deputy. He was a liaison on military, strictly military matters, police matters. For me to have an equivalent, that was the deputy prime minister that would come down from Belgrade, Nikolai Šainović and he came down once a week, once every two weeks when there was something to talk about. We would get together over dinner; long dinners we would argue whatever the points were that we were still trying to resolve. Also, the son of Milosevic type, a very much old line communist bureaucrat only he was pretty good with English and he knew certain things that were politically incorrect. He knew what to tell me, he knew what words to use. He knew how to describe whatever their policy or their answer to a question was in the best possible terms, but he was still a slick, slimy, little guy you wouldn't trust with anything. Those were the people I dealt mostly with.

Q: Okay, let's move on to developments then.

WALKER: Came January 15th and it was an interesting day for me because I had decided, one of the few times I asked permission to do something, that one way to show Milosevic that we were not there at his pleasure was to create a little diversion. The diversion I decided to create was I was going to go over to Montenegro. Montenegro is another part of Yugoslavia. Unlike Kosovo, which was actually a province of Serbia, Montenegro was an independent entity that had coalesced with Serbia, Croatia, etc. in the

old Yugoslavia. Montenegro remained independent in the sense of Belgrade although it was by far the minority partner in the partnership, but it had its own president, elected locally. It had a somewhat different flavor than Serbia proper. Montenegrins, the population in Montenegro is a bit more ethnically mixed than in some of the other parts of the country of Yugoslavia, the former Yugoslavia. The Serb speaking, Serb leaning, portion of the population, as I understand it, is over 50%, but there is an Albanian minority. There are other minorities there and the government in Montenegro while I was there was considerably in rivalry with Belgrade and was often saying things critical of Mr. Milosevic and his government. Critical of some of his policies, was playing more to the West, to Europe, than it was to the East because, maybe, it is physically separated from the Ukrainians and the Belarussians and the Bulgarians of the world.

Q: Montenegrins have ties all over the place. The queen of Italy had been Montenegrin. The Czar kids married Montenegrin kids.

WALKER: Right. Yes. It's always been closer to Italy and to Trieste and that sort of thing. So, it's an Adriatic country. It has an Adriatic coast. I decided that I was going to fly over to Montenegro. We asked if the president would receive me. We got an immediate reply. Absolutely he'd love to see you; he wanted to show the West that he was not in favor of what Milosevic was doing in Kosovo. I went over there to entertain the idea and he was kind enough after our talk to go out to a press conference and say Walker and I have discussed the possibility of our inviting the OSCE to come in and set up an office here in Montenegro. They've got a good track record in Kosovo. It was very nice and this would show Belgrade that you know, Montenegro is going to play ball with Europe and Europe was going to play ball with him and maybe we could do some things to further the space between Belgrade and Montenegro. I flew over in the morning.

Q: Was this your thing or had you been told to do it or not to do it?

WALKER: This was my thing.

Q: Actually at this point in time of course you were not the creature of the State Department?

WALKER: No, no, I was not a creature of the State Department. I knew that everyone west of the Danube was looking at Montenegro and hoping it would show that not everyone in the former Yugoslavia was as Milosevic. So, I flew over in a helicopter. A beautiful ride in the wintertime over the mountains. It is a very high mountain range between Kosovo and Montenegro and we flew into the capital. I was taken immediately to see the president. We had a very nice talk. He is still the president. He is very slick, tall, handsome, wears beautiful British cut silk suits. His interpreter was the most beautiful young lady interpreter that I saw in Europe where many of the folks have pretty young lady interpreters, but his was very attractive, very good interpreter. We had a good hour and a half meeting or so. Then we went out and did a joint press conference. The questions were the right questions. He'd obviously gotten people to ask the right questions about what did he think of the OSCE being in Yugoslavia. What did he think

about what was going on in Kosovo. What did he and Walker talk about? It had to do with opening an office and telling the world what good things were happening in Montenegro. So, it was a good visit. Late in the afternoon I got back in my helicopter and flew back to Pristina.

On arrival we're now talking the sun going down or thereabouts in the office. My British two star general, Major General DZ (John Drewienkiewicz), as we call him, came to see me and told me that earlier that afternoon he had been notified by General Lončar whether in person or over the phone or whatever, that there had been another military clash in a village called Račak which neither I nor DZ had ever heard of. I think I asked him where it was. He told me it was down near Shtime. Southwest of Pristina. The story was that there had been a conflict that the armed forces of Yugoslavia had come across a KLA unit and they'd had a fire fight. According to Lončar 15 KLA fighters were killed with no casualties of the Yugoslav security forces. This was just another report of an incident and I said, great, any other details? No. Did we get anyone out there from any of our patrols? DZ said that our regional center in Prizren had sent some patrols out, he wasn't sure whether they had gotten to the sight or not. He said that the early reports from Prizren were that our little orange armored vehicles during the day had heard about this fire fight or had heard shots or had heard a report there was some sort of clash going on. Prizren had dispatched a couple of vehicles as had one of our other regional centers because Račak was on the border between two of our regional center territories. The vehicles had originally not been able to get to Račak because they were stopped by army units, by roadblocks, and they were told that fighting is still going on. It's dangerous so we can't let you go through. Our people tried to insist that we had immediate and unfettered access to wherever we wanted to go, but the army units, roadblocks, would not let our people pass. That was the knowledge I had the night of the 15th.

I went home to my pad. I went to sleep. It had been a long day flying over to Montenegro and back. The next day was a Saturday if I remember correctly. I got up leisurely and didn't go to the office until maybe 9:00 something like that. When I got to the office I was told that General DZ wanted to see me. He told me essentially that our units had gotten in the night before, at least two of the vehicles. I didn't know it at the time, but one of them had a Canadian one star in it who was the head of our regional center in Prizren and he had gone in. They got in the night before or the afternoon before after being held off by these roadblocks and watching what was going on from neighboring high ground with binoculars, but they didn't see much. They saw burning in the village. They knew that there was a lot of shelling in the village. They knew there was small arms fire, but that was all they knew up until late afternoon when the battle was over or whatever it was, was over and they were permitted into the village. When they went into the village, they found several dead in the village. They also found four or five wounded people, some them pretty badly wounded including one or two kids and they decided first to get the wounded to medical attention. Another reason they left right away was that it was getting dark and we wanted our people off the roads before dark. So they pulled out almost immediately and went back in at first light the following morning on the 16th.

General DZ coming to my office at 9:00 on the 16th told me that from the reports that were coming back over the radio from the patrols that went in at first light there was something definitely wrong with the story that we had been told by Lončar the night before. That it looked like there were a lot more dead and it looked like many, if not all of them, were civilians and it looked like as General DZ said something very fishy was up. He suggested that we go out there. He and I go out there and see if we could piece together what had actually happened. Very quickly I said sure, let's do it. We grabbed as many vehicles and people as we could and we took off followed by a column of journalists who were always hanging around outside our building and obviously some of them had heard something was up.

We drove to Račak. I guess it was about an hour and 15 minutes, or an hour and a half drive. When we got there on the outskirts of the town, General Maisonneuve, this Canadian one star was at the side of the road. We got out and he gave us a briefing on the bonnet of his car. Spread out a map and showed us what we were going to see. When we started questioning him, he said, well, look, its best that we go in and we'll show you. So we drove into the village, before we had exited the village and there were a lot of people there by now, journalists, NGO types, people from my regional center, as we were walking through the outskirts of this village which was still burning and which many of the buildings showed horrific damage from shells, we came across the first body and this was the torso, the legs, the arms and where the head normally would be there was just a little blanket. I remember walking up and looking down at this corpse and two people came up, one with a camera obviously a journalist and the one without the camera lifted the little rug and there was no head there. The head was gone, just the open wound of the neck. A lot of blood, a lot of bullet holes in the body. No signs of any military accoutrements, no uniform, no insignias, no weapons, no shells, no nothing, just this headless body. A pretty grim sight, but people said, well, you know, this is bad enough, but follow us we'll show you what else there is.

So we started up a little stream bed up into the hill by the town and first we came upon one body, then we came upon a couple of bodies and about every 10 or 15 yards there was another body or two and finally we came to a big pile of bodies. We looked at them fairly carefully although it was pretty hard to look at them because they had been pretty badly blasted with bullets through the eyes, through the back of the head, through the ears, through the torso. All were dressed in civilian clothes. All were dressed in what I would consider the sort of traditional costumes of peasants from that part of the world out in the fields working, these cheap Wellington boots that their pants were tucked into.

Q: These were male?

WALKER: All male. The ones I saw were all male. Many of them were older, elderly, unshaven, very different looking from the guys I'd seen in KLA uniforms around. A lot of blood right where the bullets had gone through in the clothing. When it was later claimed that someone had changed the clothes, that they had been in uniforms the night before, but someone had changed their clothes. To have staged that would have really been a remarkable thing especially in the middle of the night up this icy slope, very hard

footing going up and to have arranged the blood the way it was on these bodies would have been really a remarkable. Hollywood itself, special effects people would have been hard put to do it that way. Again, no signs on any of the bodies of military insignias, military paraphernalia, no sign of shells around the bodies. The only place we found shells were on the high ground on either side of this sort of riverbed going up the hill. It looked like most of the bullets had come down from above, top of the head, back of the head.

A number of the men, next to their heads or on their heads still, were these white fez like skullcaps that the old men of Kosovo wear. I mean I don't know anyone who was up the hill that day who came to any other conclusion that these men had died where they were found. Were things moved? Yes, because people were coming up looking for relatives. People were looking to see, turning heads around to see if this was Uncle Charlie, that sort of thing. Yes, some of them were probably moved, but many of them you could see rigor mortis had set in. They were in these grotesque postures. We saw, I saw in that first walk up the hill on the order of 25, 26, 27 bodies. The pile was kind of hard to distinguish where one left off and the other took over. My people were telling me that further up the hill there was another pile of bodies. It eventually turned out there were 45 or 46 bodies.

I asked if there were any witnesses around if anyone had found any witnesses. I was told there were two men in the village who would be willing to talk to me. So, sure enough they brought two men up the hill and they described what had happened the day before in the following terms. They said, sometime during the morning the army had surrounded the village in the nearby high ground, started shelling it. Shelled it for hour after hour. Most of the people in the village took refuge in their houses or in the mosque. After the shelling the special interior police units came down from the high ground at which point the men in the village decided they better get the hell out of there knowing the way Albanian males were treated by the Serb security forces. So, the men and older boys gathered together and headed off in a direction they thought was the safest direction. These two fellows said that for some reason they did not go with the main body. They went off in an opposite direction. The special police apparently captured the group of men that were all together, brought them back into the village, got everybody that was still in the village, the women, the children out of their houses, picked out some older boys that were still in the village. These two witnesses were observing this from some sanctuary. They rounded up every man and boy they could find, took them off unarmed, well before our patrol got there, but late in the afternoon and took them up this hill. The women who were left behind, they had seen their men beaten and cursed and that sort of thing, assumed they were being taken off for questioning, being taken off as prisoners, being taken off up to the high ground where the army was. It wasn't until the following morning that someone went up this ravine and discovered the bodies. The reason that I say this is because apologists for the Serbs say number one, our patrols were in the night before, but didn't report a massacre, why not? My answer is they left before dark because they were supposed to and two because they wanted to get some medical attention to the wounded. And three, because the women of the village did not know what had happened. They all had assumed the men had been taken off as prisoners. It wasn't until the

following morning that the bodies were discovered and it was realized what had been done to them.

There was no question. I spoke to women from the village, witnesses who corroborated what these two men had said the men were rounded up and taken off under armed guard and hours later were found dead. No question in my mind as to what had happened. Everything I saw totally contradicted the Lončar story, 15 dead, all KLA in uniform, military clash. The reporters who were up there, there were four or five, ABC, CBS, Reuters, that sort of thing, they all came to exactly the same conclusion. The guy from the Washington Post, Jeff Smith, came to the same conclusion. I mean there was just no question about what we were looking at. I was caught by an ABC TV crew that came along with a young aggressive woman reporter. She asked me if I would do an interview from Račak as we were looking at the bodies. I said, sure, why not. So, they set up and we did a live interview from the scene. Then she started asking what are your conclusions. What do you think, who did this, why did they do it, that sort of stuff. I said, look, I'm just gathering my thoughts, but when we get back to Pristina I will hold a press conference and I will tell you what I think I saw.

After we'd been there a couple of hours, as I was leaving the village someone told me that the local KLA commander was willing to talk to me. So we made arrangements for me to go to a nearby village where the KLA leadership was. I went in and talked to this guy and he said, you see what the Serb forces did? This is just a couple of days after we released eight of their soldiers, prisoners that we had. That was a gesture of good will and this is their response. They go into Račak and they kill 40 some civilians. We're going to take them on today. I said, look, that's a stupid thing to do. We've got to break through this sort of tit for tat violence. Let me go back and tell the world what I think happened here and let's do it that way. Promise me that you're not going to go out and do something stupid. He said okay. I will not do anything right away, but if the world doesn't seek justice in this case I'm going to have to go back to the battlefield. I drove back to Pristina with General DZ and some of the other people and we discussed what we had seen and what we thought we had seen. There was one guy on my team up in Račak who came to see me. He was a U.S. army medical corpsman who was on my, in my mission and he had gone to the high ground and he had found cartridges scattered all over the high ground. He said this was the caliber that the Serb army used, the Serb police used, whatever it was, 9mm or whatever, with Russian markings on it so it was obviously Russian ammunition. Putting together everything I saw, everything I was told, everything that came out in the way of physical evidence, I had no doubt that unarmed men had been taken away and a few hours later had been found executed.

I went back to town and went on my computer, sat down, composed a statement to read to a press conference which I put together for 5:00. I am told that all sorts of people claim that I talked to them. Dick Holbrooke says I talked to him, Wes Clark says I talked to him. Someone says that Madeleine Albright claims that I talked to her in her book or something like that. I don't remember talking to any of these people. Maybe I did, maybe I didn't, but there was so much happening. I had this confirmed last week when I talked to my military assistant who is now in the Washington area. I said, did I talk to Dick

Holbrooke? He said, no, I called Dick Holbrooke. So, maybe Holbrooke said he was getting the word from Walker, but it was from Walker, not by Walker. The same with Wes Clark. Mike said he had called and talked to Wes Clark's chief of staff or someone like that. He said, here's what happened. Here's what we saw; Walker's going to give a press conference. That having been said, maybe I did talk to the chiefs, but I have no memory of it.

Under any circumstances I received no instructions from anyone. I certainly didn't talk to Madeleine Albright. I only talked to her once during my whole time out there. I just sat down and wrote a statement that I thought covered what I had seen. I got up and delivered it and I essentially said what we had seen, how it had come about and that my conclusion was that these 45 men and boys had been killed while in the custody of the Yugoslav security forces. I said that if the government of Belgrade disagreed with me, which I assumed they would, that what was called for was an independent criminal investigation by outside experts. I suggested an international criminal tribunal in The Hague would be fully capable of doing a serious investigation. I suggested that they be invited to come in and get up to the scene before it was totally contaminated.

I was asked a lot of questions, most of them coming from journalists who had been up with me who took it for granted that what I was saying was accurate. The press coverage of the Račak massacre was very strong. It was the front page story in all the papers of Europe as well as North America the following day. In came a flood of the Christiane Amanpour journalists of all the major networks of Europe and the United States. I was besieged by people wanting interviews. I must have repeated the story 1,000 times in the next few days. The following day I called Belgrade and said I thought I should come up and see Mr. Milosevic. So, we drove up to Belgrade the next day and we were told he's got a very busy schedule, can't see you today, how about tomorrow. Well, maybe tomorrow. I sat in the Hotel Intercontinental up in Belgrade for two or three days, two days, fully expecting to see Milosevic so we could discuss this incident. In the meantime the government controlled media in Belgrade came out, as you can imagine, ripping me to shreds. Their congress passed some act that condemned me. President Milutinović, who was the president of Serbia, Milosevic had moved up to be the president of the former Yugoslavia.

Q: What was left then, including Kosovo at that point.

WALKER: Including Kosovo. President Milutinović came out in a really harsh denunciation of me. I just sat in the hotel waiting to go and see Milosevic to see what we could discuss about this. End of the second day I was coming out of the hotel late at night and a whole bunch of journalists were downstairs in the lobby and I was going out for dinner. The first question was something along the lines, how does it feel to be persona non grata? Are you going to leave within 48 hours? I expressed that I didn't know what they were talking about. They said, oh, for the last couple of hours the national media had been full of announcements by the government that Walker has been declared persona non grata and he has been given 48 hours to get out of Yugoslavia. They said you mean you haven't been notified? I mean everybody knows where you are. The government

knows where you are. They didn't tell you? I said, no, no one told me. I realized that I was not going to be able to see Mr. Milosevic on that particular trip so we just drove back to Pristina that next morning.

Then I went into a strange couple of days in which the crown heads of Europe or the political heads of the crown heads of Europe. Everybody was calling to see what the deal was. Everybody was supposedly calling Milosevic to tell him he could not expel the leader of the OSCE mission, that I was there under the mandate of the OSCE and he had no right to expel me. He insisted he did. Everybody came to see him. Holbrooke communicated with him. Wes Clark communicated with him.

Q: Now Holbrooke at this point was.

WALKER: Still a banker in New York. I can't remember if at this point he had been nominee to go to the United Nations or not, but he certainly was not in office.

Q: Wes Clark was of course the.

WALKER: The supreme allied commander in Europe, head of the NATO military. Everybody was talking to Milosevic. The Russians sent in Ivanov, their foreign minister, Knut Vollenbaek, the chairman-in-office of the OSCE went to see Milosevic. In the meantime everybody was telling me to stay in my office, not to go home. Even though the building was not particularly secure or well-guarded at least I was in a place that had an aura of being a diplomatic site. It was not to be violated. The place was surrounded by several rings, one a security force ring and another of journalist ring waiting to see what was going to happen. Every time I poked my head out, cameras would come forward and questions about whether I was leaving or not. Wes Clark called me to tell me not to worry, that they were going to put all pressure on Milosevic to let me stay and that I shouldn't worry about my personal safety. If anything really bad happened they would come in and get me out somehow. That was reassuring. In the middle of the night Madeleine Albright called me when I was sleeping on my couch to tell me that they were praying for me or something like that back in the State Department. That was reassuring. At some point Milosevic decided to extend my expulsion by 24 hours so I had 72 hours and just before the 72 hours expired, Knut Vollenbaek, chairman-in-office of the OSCE went into Belgrade, talked to Milosevic and came out to announce to the world that Milosevic had agreed that Walker was not to be expelled, that my persona non grata status was to be frozen. No one had ever seen that expression before, a frozen PNG, so no one quite knew what it meant. Again it was interpreted differently by the two sides. Milosevic claiming that it was frozen and it could always be unfrozen at a minute's notice and I could be expelled. Knut Vollenbaek telling me don't worry, it's a graceful way he can back down from expelling you so you go back to being as you were before. But I was not permitted to go back to what I was doing before because from thereon this incident at Račak, the PNGing, all the publicity that went with it essentially ended my ability to communicate with the Belgrade authorities.

Q: Well, going back to the Račak thing. In the first place, this PNGing and all this thing, did this take the spotlight away from Račak?

WALKER: No, it did just the opposite. I always thought, I do think, that Milosevic attempted to divert attention from Račak by trying to expel me and then the story became poor little American diplomat being thrown out by Milosevic. Will he leave? Won't he leave, that sort of thing. But with the arrival of all these world class correspondents, they weren't willing to sit around my headquarters and wait for me to poke my head out the window so they could ask me a question. They decided to go out and see what this Račak was all about. They went out and talked to the same people I talked to. They went out and walked up this hill and looked at the circumstances and then others came out to challenge my interpretation of what had happened at Račak so the press of Europe for that whole week was full of Račak.

Q: On Račak, in the first place, had anything happened in that area to mean that the Serbs are going into show these people, in other words, sort of a reprisal for an assassination, the usual thing or not?

WALKER: Yes. I didn't know it at the time when I went out to Račak because it had happened four or five days before. It was not in Račak. It was in Shtime, this major population center, I don't know, five, six, seven kilometers from Račak. If I remember what had happened, three policemen were attacked and killed by the KLA. As usual the reciprocal action by the government was not to find three KLAers and take them on, but to go in massively to a village that was probably sympathetic to the KLA. The KLA probably went in and out of that village, no doubt about it. This is, I mean, what bothered me was one, the first story about what had happened there from Lončar was totally an invention. Number two, even if all 45 of these people who had been killed were in fact KLA fighters, which I am absolutely convinced they were not. Some of them might have been, but that they were disarmed, unarmed when they were taken off under arms and turned up full of bullets a couple of hours later. They were executed. That's a war crime.

Q: Yes. Well, now, since, we'd already had the cases in Srebrenica and other massacres going on, so the Serb army you might say, or its offshoots was well aware of how you massacre people and what the aftermath would be. I mean here they went in and did this, they blocked off the roads, you couldn't get in there and then they let you in. Rather than take away the bodies and you know, covering up the thing, was it just unsophisticated commanders or what do you think?

WALKER: I don't know because in the aftermath of Račak over the next two months we left in mid-March, late March, the government forces made no pretense of not doing bad things to people. We had occasions where we would hear they were attacking a village. We would send our people there. Newspapermen would go there. Journalists would go there. Cameramen would go there and the security forces, I remember talking to some ABC TV crew types and they said, we went, we saw this, they were going in, they were torching houses. They were going in and removing everything they could steal and we thought, boy when they spotted us they were going to come over and confiscate our

cameras and take our film out, etc. Just the opposite. They were giving us high fives. They were showing us they were doing it totally openly. No pretense of trying to hide it or claim this was saving the stuff inside. My feeling would be that Račak was not the first example of where they had done something like this in Kosovo. They had done this in other villages. They always did it as a demonstration of what it meant for you to defy the government in Belgrade, or even look like you were defying, or sympathetic to those who were defying. So, they would go in and wipe out a village and they would just leave the bodies there, they would leave the houses burning. They would do all the bad things in front of everybody as a demonstration of what they could do. The difference with Račak, the villagers come out the next morning and find all these guys have been blown away and the government before had always been able to come up with a story and tell people and expect everybody to believe their stupid story.

Q: There is something about the Serbs, I've talked to Serbs and Serb believers here having lived for five years in Serbia myself and some of our even Serbian hands who served there and they'll believe the damndest things.

WALKER: Go into the Internet and hit the Serb pages and put in Račak and you will find all sorts of great stories about what happened, many of which I think Milosevic either propagated himself or sincerely believes, I don't know.

Q: How about Lončar? Did this destroy Lončar do you think?

WALKER: No, he continued to talk to my British general. I was the only one who was absolutely put beyond the pale as far as anyone officially talking to me. But we had no reason to believe anything he told us. After about a week after Račak there was another incident in a town called Rugova, same name as Ibrahim Rugova, and from his area of the country in which we were notified that they had encountered early one morning a whole bunch of KLAers and there had been a big firefight and the KLA guys had gone into a farm compound behind walls. Again we sent out patrols to go and see what was happening and as soon as the firefight ended our patrols were allowed into this farmyard. There was a Volkswagen microbus full of bodies. It was the bloodiest, goriest thing I've ever seen. Just bodies on top of each other. It was bloody to the extent that my military guys felt that a grenade had been put in there and exploded and just ripped bodies to pieces. In the compound we found a whole bunch of other bodies. I can't remember the total number, but it was high. These guys were obviously KLA fighters, most of them. Lončar actually took DZ to this sight and took him through and they looked at the bodies as they were being hauled out and put on the ground. Mud up to everybody's ankles. It was a horrible sight. But this did look like there had been a genuine firefight. Some of the men in the compound that were hiding in the corners looked like they were inhabitants of this farmhouse, but the majority of the guys looked like they were KLA fighters.

There were a couple of other incidents like this. There was a family traveling on a tractor after Račak about the time of the Rugova clash. A lot of people there travel on their tractors. These crazy beat up, mud covered, tractors. There was a family of four or five people, two or three of them being young kids traveling on this tractor. The government

claimed they had gone through a roadblock or something. I can't imagine you'd run a roadblock on a tractor covered with your kids. We heard firing. One of our patrols got to the sight and counted something like, if I remember right, 200 rounds of bullets that were in the bodies. The government claimed first that they had run the roadblock, and then they described it publicly as a traffic accident. The point of that story is the government appeared to feel that once they put out a story, once they decided to tell the world what had happened someplace, everybody had to believe them. No one questions what is coming out. So, what Račak represented was that for the first time someone officially had stated that the government was lying and that they had in fact committed a dastardly deed. NGOs had said bad things about the government, but they could always be expelled with no problem. Newspapermen had published things that indicated not everything was right. But Račak was the first time that someone, with the title and the aura that I had, had gone to a sight and come out and said government forces did this and it was a crime.

Q: Was there a button that was pushed that said war crimes?

WALKER: Yes, I said war crime. I used the words war crime.

Q: Well, now when you say war crime, was there, had The Hague already set up?

WALKER: Oh, yes, The Hague was in full operation. They'd been in operation looking at Bosnia, looking at Croatia. They already had had a couple of trials there. The mayor of Vukovar had been convicted. So The Hague was in full swing. One of the first calls I received after my press conference was from Louise Arbour who was the chief prosecutor at The Hague, a Canadian judge and I had met her. I've been to The Hague a couple of times and I met her. She called up and said, Bill, I've seen what you said and I see that you invited us to come in, or you suggested the government should let us come in. Will they let us in? I said, well, I know that to this point in time Belgrade has refused to let you come in either to Kosovo or to Serbia proper. I told the press last night that if they want to contradict what I said the best way would be to have independent investigators come in and do a criminal investigation. She said, well, if I came down there, do you think they'd let me in? I said, I don't know, but I think you should try to come in and that will show whether they're going to cooperate or not. She flew down the next day.

Q: Did you by the way feel that your calls were all being monitored?

WALKER: Oh, yes we assumed that they all were. She came down the next day to Skopje and tried to cross the border into Kosovo right away. I sent some people down from my mission. The border crossing guards told her she didn't have the proper visa and was not admissible, nor were any of her people. That to me indicated the government was not going to really permit any sort of legitimate investigation. What happened as a result of Račak and I think most people who have been looking at this have come to the same conclusion. In fact the four or five books that are already out on the Kosovo war all have a reference to this. They say that what Račak did was by the coverage that it got in the press, by the spin that was put on it, that we were approaching another Bosnia. We were

approaching another situation in which war criminals got away with their deeds because no one was willing to do anything. The leadership of Europe and North America decided that something had to be done, that they couldn't tolerate another Račak. It would look like they were turning a blind eye to really bad things happening to people.

A few days after Račak, I think it was maybe as much as a week and after I got out of my persona non grata status or it was frozen, the contact group, the major players in Bosnia, Russia, the U.S., France, Italy, Germany, Great Britain, decided to hold a meeting in London. An emergency meeting of the contact group at the minister level to determine what to do in Kosovo. It was suggested that I should go up there. One question that was going to be asked was if Walker leaves the country will he be permitted to come back in? I was told we will insist that you get back in Walker. We want you in London. I flew to London and attended the meeting of the contact group, which was quite interesting. I saw no signs of division among the players.

Q: Russia?

WALKER: Russia was saying something must be done. Of course Russia was saying, it should be a diplomatic effort. It should not be resorting to force.

Q: But nobody was excusing this?

WALKER: No, nobody was excusing it. It was almost a love feast between Madeleine Albright and Ivanov, the Russian Foreign Minister. She of course was not excluding any way to resolve the problem. But the French and the Brits, Robin Cook and Hubert Védrine, the French Foreign Minister, announced that the best solution would be to bring the two sides, all sides, together at a conference much like Dayton had done for Bosnia and sit the sides down. On the Albanian side, both Rugova, the civilian opposition as well as the KLA and on the government side Milosevic and his people and sit them down under the auspices of the Foreign Ministers of the contact group and tell them in no uncertain terms they had to come to a negotiated agreement.

Q: Go back, contact group, who is the contact group? Is that all the OSCE?

WALKER: No, the contact group were the major players in Bosnia, the major players in Europe: the United States, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy. That's it. They're the ones who set up the high representative office in Bosnia. The results of this emergency meeting in London were twofold. One, it was agreed that they would hold this final peace negotiation in which the two sides would be almost forced to sign an agreement dictated by the contact group. France offered to host it in a beautiful palace outside of Paris called Rambouillet. The other immediate result was that Robin Cook, the Foreign Minister of the UK, was going to be dispatched to fly down to the region to inform Milosevic that this conference was going to take place and that he was expected to be there.

Q: At that conference, were you asked to make a statement?

WALKER: In London?

Q: In London.

WALKER: No, I was just there, sitting there. A couple of times they asked me a question or two.

Q: Basically the facts were as.

WALKER: Yes. No one questioned that I was right.

Q: That you were sure?

WALKER: Right. No, none of that. Račak was horrendous. We can't afford to have another one. We can't look like we're doing another Bosnia. We've got to get these people together and talk sense into Milosevic. He's gone too far this time. Something along those lines. No questions as to the veracity of what I had said. We all left the conference. There was a huge press conference in which each of the foreign ministers spoke and as I say there was no disagreement among them.

Q: Today is the 24th of September, 2002. Bill, first let's talk about your frozen status. What did this do?

WALKER: It essentially did nothing more than cut off my communication both formal and informal with representatives of the government in Belgrade. I think I've already mentioned that the Chairman in Office of the OSCE went up to Belgrade in the last hours before I was supposed to be ejected and convinced them that they couldn't throw me out. They came out with this crazy terminology of freezing my status as persona non grata. We asked or I asked what that meant in real terms and was told it means nothing. It means that they've just chosen this face saving way out and that you can continue on as before. That turned out not to be completely true because from thereon to the end of the mission if we were going to talk to officials of the government in Belgrade even those who were locally in Kosovo I had to send someone else, one of my deputies, usually my French deputy to talk with them because they just wouldn't receive me.

Q: How did you find the French deputy worked in this thing because the French always have a slightly different, sometimes quite different slant on things and was this reflected in how he operated?

WALKER: Yes, I think I've mentioned him several times before usually in a negative fashion because he was probably my most troublesome member of my staff and since he was supposedly my "principal deputy" it made for some difficult moments. I am absolutely convinced that he was pursuing a very different path from whatever I was pursuing. I'm not sure I was on a path that I knew where I was going, but he apparently was very, very committed to making sure that the thoughts and ideas and policies of the government of Belgrade were involved in everything we were doing. He was always

telling me how the Slavic mind worked. He was always telling me about famous Slav poetry that he had read and this sort of thing. He was just difficult to deal with right till the end. In fact, at the end was particularly difficult to deal with. When we finally decided to leave, when we were ordered to depart by the Chairman in Office he came to me to tell me that he and my Russian deputy had decided to stay behind and that they were going to make sure that nothing untoward happened in the aftermath of our departure which everyone predicted would happen. I told him that that was not acceptable, that we had come in as a mission and we would go out as a mission and I had checked this out with the Chairman in Office and that was certainly his point of view that everyone was going to depart. We would leave no one behind. It was just one indicator of my French deputy taking a tangential path.

He also was, he surrounded himself, unlike most of the other deputies, he surrounded himself with a coterie of French assistants. He had a French political advisor. He had a French military advisor. No one could ever figure out quite what the latter was doing. When he came in, much over the objections of some of the other military guys on my staff, I asked this French general what he was there for and he said he was there to do some sort of strategic planning. Occasionally I would ask how is the strategic planning coming along. I never really saw a result of his work. It was a group of French citizens who were around my French deputy right till the end.

Q: Now, your other deputies were other nationalities?

WALKER: My principal military deputy was a British two star. He had a good number of Brits around him just because of the number of the military people, uniformed military people, on my staff were Brits. The German deputy was involved in elections and human rights and that sort of thing. He was there pretty much by himself. There were other Germans on the staff, but he didn't have a team around him. The Russian deputy was there by himself essentially. Who else was there? The Italian deputy who was a police commissioner. He was there by himself. I had a sort of a multinational group around me.

Q: But did you find the team sort of divided? I mean, you were a team, but the French were an adjunct to the team or off to one side?

WALKER: I guess that's what I'm saying. Yes and a difficult adjunct to deal with.

Q: Have we covered up to what happened before you went to London?

WALKER: I'm not sure I remember, but let me repeat it maybe in other words. Račak took place. I was declared persona non grata. The press of the world picked it up very quickly. They first came to see me the poor beleaguered international diplomat who was being expelled by Milosevic. That led many of them to start talking about and asking about Račak and pretty soon the papers of Europe and I guess North America and the Far East were full of news about Račak, this massacre. It took a few days, but not too many days before the foreign ministers of the contact group, UK, U.S., Germany, Russia, France, Italy, I guess Greece was also in the contact group, decided they had to get

together to determine what to do with this stark massacre staring in their face. What they decided to do initially was to get together and talk about it. That led to a meeting that was first scheduled for Paris but for some reason at the last minute was changed to London. We all went to London. The foreign ministers from all the contact group countries. Ambassador Hill from Macedonia. Everyone who had been involved in the Kosovo problem. Dick Holbrooke was not there. Wes Clark was not there that I know of. Madeleine Albright came in. It was essentially a full day meeting.

Q: Madeleine Albright at this point was Secretary of State?

WALKER: She sure was.

Q: Yes, I know.

WALKER: Yes, this was in '99.

Q: Oh, yes.

WALKER: She was well situated in the seat of Secretary. I'm sure there was disagreement. I'm sure there were discussions coming at it from various viewpoints, but everything I saw in the formal session of the ministers was in total agreement. The Račak thing was horrendous and it was certainly not the only bad thing that was happening in Kosovo or might happen in the future. Both sides were doing bad things to each other and that we, the contact group ministers; we cannot let this go on and are going to have to do something about it. There seemed to be no real debate as to what they wanted to do about it. That decision was to bring the parties together at a meeting which would be attended by the contact group ministers and they would hold them in place until they agreed to some sort of end to the conflict.

The French foreign minister immediately volunteered that France would host this conference and he offered up the palace in Rambouillet just outside Paris. The co-chairs of the meeting were determined to be Robin Cook of the UK and Védrine of France. They were going to co-host and be the co-chairs of the meeting in Rambouillet. It was determined that Robin Cook would take off the following day and would go to both Belgrade and Pristina and he would inform Milosevic that the contact group was calling this conference and that he and his delegation were expected to attend and be prepared to sit there until they reached a final agreement with the Albanians of Kosovo. He was going to be the messenger to bring the invitations or the dictates of the contact group to the two parties. Someone suggested that I should go aboard and fly with Cook down to the region. So the next morning about 4:00 AM I went to an RAF base near London and got onboard what I was told was the queen's, one of her special airplanes that takes her around the world. It was a very, very nice airplane. It was myself, a few British foreign office types, the Foreign Minister and his deputy minister; I'm not sure quite what his title is. As we flew to Belgrade, which was the first stop, I briefed Minister Cook on what he might expect.

When we got to Belgrade I guess he asked me if I thought it was desirable that I go along with him when he met with Milosevic and I told him that I thought that would not be helpful. It would probably be counterproductive for me to be there. I was in this silly status and I knew that Milosevic wasn't very receptive to seeing me. I sat in the airport until he came back. He told me he had delivered the message. We were not allowed to land in Pristina. We were told there was some weather problem or something wrong with the airstrip or something, which was quite often the way the Yugoslav government in Belgrade dealt with non-Yugoslav planes landing in Pristina. So we diverted and flew into Skopje, Macedonia and I think in the air called up our people in Pristina and said get the leadership of the Albanian community down to Skopje right away. I don't remember who came down from Pristina. I remember Rugova did and some of the other sort of civilian leaderships of the Albanian community. Robin Cook got a brief there by my deputy, General DZ, my British military deputy on the situation right up to the minute and then he, Cook, conveyed to the Albanians that they were expected to attend this conference in Rambouillet which I think was going to be a week later. At this point the obvious question was, great, we'll be able to get the civilian leaders up there, but how are we going to get the KLA leaders up there because they were up in the hills away from mass transport. It might take them more than a week to get out if they have to walk out. The decision was, or the thought was, well we'll go to Milosevic and tell him that these people have to be at the meeting, the contact group demands that people like Thaci and others be there, the leadership of the KLA, the military wing, and they will have to come down out of the hills and take off from Pristina airport. We all recognized that this might give Milosevic and his people some hiccups and it certainly did. In the time between that flight with Cook to when we actually flew off to Rambouillet, as I say it was something like a week.

Q: Cook had gone?

WALKER: Yes, Cook flew back and I drove up to Pristina. Just before I left my British deputy, General DZ took off in his car and I took off in my car with whoever was with me at the time. You've got to remember this is a point in time when our relations with the government in Belgrade are not too good. So, when I pulled up at the border between Macedonia and Kosovo, you obviously have to exit Macedonia, go through the formalities on that side and then you cross into Kosovo and there is the Yugoslav authority who are taking care of you or supposed to take care of you. When I got there there was General DZ's big Suburban sitting between the two points. Since he had left half an hour or 45 minutes before I had I was a little dumbfounded by finding his vehicle there. Some of his guys came over and told me that General DZ had been hauled into the immigration office and I said what's the problem. The problem was they came out and insisted on inspecting his vehicle. They were going through it as a search. He informed them that this vehicle was an OSCE vehicle which was obvious, that he was the deputy, that he had diplomatic immunity because my mission was a diplomatic mission and he wasn't going to let them peek in the window. They said, well, until you let us peek in the window, we're not going to let you go. This led to various chiefs being called, the person who first approached him, called his chief who called her chief. I went into the office and there were five or six chieftains of various rank in there very upset with General DZ. I've

described him to you I think physically. A little short man, roly-poly, he had your beard and a red suit on and he looked like Santa Claus. A very pleasant looking little Brit. He's in there and he's red faced. He's mad. I come in and ask what's wrong. He starts to explain to me and we're doing this group translation and interpretation and officials are jumping in and saying that's not true, all we asked was to look in the vehicle. Then we decided since he wouldn't let us look in it must be something in there, so we wanted to search it. At some point he just blew up. I can't remember the words he used, but some nasty adjectives he threw at these people. You stupid sons of bitches or something like that. They picked this up and now they were incensed. Now we've got a diplomatic problem and here's Bill Walker who is even less acceptable to these officials than he is. I said, well, look, the only thing I can think to do under these circumstances is I'm going to use my cell phone and I'm going to call Belgrade and I'm going to talk to Vice Prime Minister Šainović who was the number two guy to the President in terms of Kosovo. I'll just explain what's going on here and I think that this is going to be more embarrassing for you than it is for us and we are a diplomatic mission and you have no right to look in our vehicles or search.

At this point they backed down and ended up letting us go off as long as General DZ would issue some sort of apology for calling them whatever it was he called them. He mumbled something to them, which they had no choice but to accept as an apology and we were allowed through. But it was this sort of thing that we were going through all the time. Little incidents. This one was the only one in which General DZ himself truly lost his cool. Whether he did it on purpose or whether he was truly mad, I don't know, but it was an interesting scene.

Q: Well, then, how did you get the KLA people out?

WALKER: Another interesting scenario. Since I could not deal directly with the Belgrade authorities, we turned that part over to my French deputy. I think we sent him up to Belgrade to talk to Šainović and explain that the contact group of foreign ministers insisted that the KLA leadership be able to come out. The fastest way to get them out, the only way in the time frame allowed, was to come out through Pristina and he, the Frenchman was talking I'm sure to his minister and to his defense people. They said they would send in a French air force plane to pick up whoever was going to be taken out of Pristina. It was my responsibility along with Sean Burns who was head of the American KDOM still, but who was theoretically working for me.

I had received a cable from the Department saying you are now to absorb the last of the American diplomatic observation mission and Sean Burns now works for you. He didn't see it quite that way. But anyway our responsibility was to get the KLA leadership out as well as the civilian leadership of the Albanian community. Sean went up into the hills. He kept coming back and telling me what the problems were. I'm not really mentioning it in a derogatory fashion although it might sound that way because I really like Sean Burns a lot. Sean Burns, one he speaks pretty good Serb I understand and a good bit of Albanian and he was the person who introduced me to the KLA leadership up in the hills. He liked to go up to the hills. He's a field officer. He liked all that sort of stuff. He liked being an

independent operator, let's put it that way. The more I was pulling in his people into my mission and eventually was going to take over his mission entirely, I found it increasingly more difficult to locate him at any point in time. I knew he always carried a radio with him or a cell phone, but he had an absolute ace up his sleeve which was, he's absolutely deaf I believe in one ear because he wears hearing aids. When you try to locate him and you couldn't find him it was because when you later found him oh, I turned off my hearing aid for whatever reason. It was too cold. It was raining or something like that. He could choose when he wanted to be located which made for difficult times especially during this incident when he was up in the hills running around trying to locate the various KLA types and find out were they willing to come out if we could put enough protection on them and had enough guarantees from Belgrade. Of course they were not very trustful of Belgrade's promises. During this whatever time it was Frenchmen working with the Yugoslav side, Sean Burns and myself and my mission working with the Albanian side, we sort of got it all put together. The tough part was getting the KLA guys out. Right up to the last minute we were not sure it was going to work. Šainović gave my French deputy his assurance that they would be able to come out under, I think he said, French protection. As a result of that comment the French Ambassador to Macedonia came up to help his French colleague. This was a little mouse of a man who I think had no idea where he was or what he was doing, but he assumed command of this wholesale operation. We had a French air force plane coming in. They were going to Paris after all. We were told the French government really wanted this to be a very successful Rambouillet get together. So this Ambassador wanted to make everything work, but he turned out as not really know quite what he was doing. At the end of the day we sent Sean Burns up into the hills with some of our armored vehicles and they picked up the KLA leadership. The French Ambassador to Macedonia was with them or at least he met them halfway back to town and was in the vehicles when they approached the airport. The French plane for some reason, the first time it tried to come in it was waved off but then the authorities let it land. Again, a gimmick that the airport authorities quite often used when they just wanted to show that they were in control.

I had already booked an OSCE executive jet to take me to Rambouillet so that had landed and I went out to the airport just to make sure that everything went okay from our point of view, or to witness some fiasco if it all went wrong. I parked right at the gate onto the tarmac. I had my bags with me because I was going to get on my little plane and fly off as well. While we were standing there, again in a very typical gesture from Belgrade, they had a fly over of the four antiquated MIG-21s or MIG-19s or whatever the hell they were that they usually kept in the Pristina airport. For some reason or other they just had to do a fly over of the airport when this French jet was there and when we were taking out the KLA leadership, just to show again, we're here and we're in control. Then they landed and that was the end of the show off. Our convoy arrived with the KLA leadership. The civilian leadership had just come out in their private cars because they had no problems. They were taken out to the airplane. The French air force plane first and then this caravan was let through the gate after some haggling at the gate and went out and all those guys got on the plane, the same plane. I went out and got on my little executive jet and I waited until they took off first to make sure they were airborne before we took off. We all flew to Rambouillet.

Q: Just to talk about, here the leadership of the KLA which the Yugoslav army dearly would love to have gotten, was coming right into the lion's den. I mean there must have been considerable concern that you could have a so-called rogue commander or something.

WALKER: My point on that would be there were no rogue commanders in the Yugoslav army. Yugoslavs who are ready to admit that maybe the security forces misbehaved in Račak say, well, maybe it was some commander who just lost his cool and told his guys to do X, Y and Z. Yugoslav military officers did not go off on their own and show initiative. If this had happened it would have been obviously the work of the government of Belgrade. If it had happened it would have truly brought down the wrath of the contact group.

Q: When the cars came in did you have other cars meet them? In other words to pack the convoy, so it would really be a mess if they tried to do anything.

WALKER: No, the convoy was three or four armored Suburbans I think. I was there in my armored Suburban a half an hour before them and I saw no preparations for anything untoward happening and the airport is isolated by itself. If you know the Pristina airport?

Q: No.

WALKER: No? There's not much you could mount there unless you were obvious.

Q: I was thinking did they go through Pristina?

WALKER: No. They came down out of the hills; they went out and picked them up in various locations. I think they congregated in some place. I mean we're talking about four or five people. The plan was they were coming in to some fork in the road where this French Ambassador was going to be waiting for them and he jumped onboard and the convoy would come in. Well executed, well designed, pristine plan for extracting guerrilla leaders from the jaws of death. It worked. I didn't really think it wasn't going to work. As I say, if anything had happened it would have been obvious who had caused the commotion. I think maybe there was trepidation on their behalf.

Q: I don't blame them. Okay, you're off to Rambouillet.

WALKER: Okay, we find Rambouillet. Let's see, who was with me? I guess it was my two military assistants. Mike Phillips, then Major Phillips and Captain, my Slovak captain. Who I think I told you got married a couple of months ago and are now living in Washington. He's going to Georgetown and is an army light colonel. We flew off and went to Paris and we got a hotel. I can't remember who got the hotel for us. It was quite a bit removed from Rambouillet so we saw a little bit of Paris. We immediately went over to see what the arrangements were. Rambouillet is this beautiful chateau in the suburbs of Paris I guess, surrounded by incredibly serious looking and well festooned gendarmes

and French military types in various uniforms. We found out that there was a stable area or something like that and the various contributing countries all had taken bits of these stable areas. Maybe it wasn't a stable, I remember it sort of looked like it to me.

I went and visited the American pavilion. We had a lot of Foreign Service types and military types there who were there to analyze what was going on in the discussions over the coming days. That evening they had the opening ceremony. The host was the French Foreign Minister; President Chirac came and officially opened the meeting. They sat the two delegations quite widely separated one from the other. I, by circumstance, sat directly behind the Yugoslav, the official government delegation and could not resist tapping Šainović on the shoulder and tapping Milutinović the president of Serbia on the shoulder. He was the head of the delegation and just saying hello. Smiles as they were turning around froze on their face when they saw who was tapping on their shoulder. But I kind of enjoyed that. They had a nice opening ceremony. I thought Chirac's speech was very good. It was we cannot tolerate this civil war in the middle of Europe. This is perhaps the last chance to solve it peacefully by negotiation. I thought he gave a very good speech. Robin Cook gave a speech. Madeleine Albright was not there for the opening ceremony. She flew in another day or two later after I had left. After the opening ceremony there was a wine and cheese or wine and something reception. Again I walked around. At that one I spent more time talking to Rugova than some of the people on the Albanian delegation that I knew.

Q: How did Rugova feel about the thing or could you read him?

WALKER: Oh, yes, this was Rugova's time to shine. He had always preached negotiation, non-violent end to the thing. So, this was a negotiation process. The people on the Albanian side who were less sanguine about what was going to happen were the military guys. They just had no faith in anything the Yugoslavs might sign their name to.

Anyway, the following day I decided there wasn't anything for me to do there. I mean the French made it very clear that this was under their auspices. I felt perhaps just my natural paranoia or my natural discomfort around official Frenchdom I felt that they weren't going to give me any opportunity to participate. So I thought I might as well go back and see if I could get back into Kosovo because I wasn't sure they'd let me back in. There was no problem. We flew back and landed in Niš, which is up in the Yugoslav side, again because we couldn't land in Pristina.

Q: That's N-I-S?

WALKER: Yes. Anyway, we flew into Niš and I wasn't quite sure what my reception might be and it turned out it was one of the easiest entrees I ever made into that part of the world. I was whisked through immigration and customs with nary a question. Anyway, from my vantage point in Pristina, mostly relying on newspaper accounts, I followed what was going on in Rambouillet. There were very serious discussions I believe at first with the two sides actually in separate rooms and shuffling back and forth the two hosts, the Brit and the French Foreign Ministers. They were described as very

tough meetings. They were described as ultimatums being laid down on both sides. In the middle of this when it looked like in these discussion, if I've got my memory correct, it looked like the tougher sell was going to be on the Albanian side especially these military guys. At some point they flew in Wes Clark to talk to the military guys from the KLA and I don't know exactly what was discussed. The KLA guys felt they had gotten some assurances from Wes they would not be allowed to be tricked or destroyed if they decided to lay down their weapons. But the general, the conventional wisdom was it was going to be tough to get the Albanians to sign on, but if you could get the Albanians to sign on, then it would be a piece of cake to get the Yugoslav government to sign on. Because at this point no one except the KLA military guys were questioning the inviolability of Yugoslavia, that Kosovo was a province of Yugoslavia, that it needed more autonomy, but it was not going to be a separate country. Independence was not going to be discussed as I say except by the KLA guys.

That's why it was thought that if we could get them to agree to lay down their weapons, etc. Belgrade will sign on post haste.

At the end of the day it was decided that someone gave Madeleine Albright the advice that if she flew in and talked to the KLA, talked to the Albanian delegation, they saw her as someone who had been fair in this and had received delegations in Washington when they came here. She talked tough about Milosevic. She talked tough about Karadzic, so they thought that the wisdom on our side, the government's side was that if Madeleine Albright walked in and told the KLA, said the right things to the KLA that they would sign and then it was just a question of getting the Yugoslavs. Much to everyone's surprise and much to, I understand, Madeleine Albright's chagrin she got there, she talked to them, she thought they were ready to sign. The Albanians at the last moment said we can't sign now. We have to take a week or two. We have to go back. We have to touch base with our constituencies, but we'll be back in two weeks. We will probably sign.

Everybody on the American side at least, I don't know about other countries, was really upset at this. Madeleine Albright felt she'd been really undercut by the Albanians. I think she was also upset with those advisors who told her all you've got to do is come and talk to them and they'll sign. They're ready. Anyway, that first session at Rambouillet broke up without no signature on any paper with a draft document, with Madeleine Albright upset, with a certain amount of confusion as to how we proceed from here. But that confusion was immediately settled in that a second meeting was called for I think two weeks later.

I have no idea how the KLA leaders returned to Kosovo. I don't remember if the French sent another plane. I assume they came in through Macedonia or something. We had nothing to do with their return. It might have been tougher to get them back up into the hills where they were going back up to fight again, but a few days after the collapse of that first session at Rambouillet, I asked to see the KLA guys that I knew the best. One was a fellow named Sokol Bashota who was on the delegation, who I had met where we got prisoner releases and that sort of thing. He was my principal contact. I asked to see him out in the village near Malishevë where I had usually met with him. I told him I

wanted to talk about Rambouillet. When I got out there he was there I think his brother was there and a third man who was an intellectual leader of the KLA, an older man, I never caught his name. Anyway we sat around for a couple of hours drinking that wonderful muddy Turkish coffee that they serve.

Q: Turecká káva.

WALKER: God, horrible stuff.

Q: You get used to it.

WALKER: This is sitting on a dirt floor out in this small village in the middle of nowhere. My question was: why did you break off? You know you got Madeleine Albright very upset with you. You know she's going to have problems believing her advisors from here on who have been talking to you. Why did you do that? You get the blame for having Rambouillet One fall apart. They gave me a very good answer or I thought it was a good answer or a series of answers. What they said was the following. Look, we went to Rambouillet. We didn't get together to talk much about what we were going to do there. We had the two parts of the delegation, the civilians and the military. We had no common bond. It wasn't a unified delegation, but we went there and I think we represented various constituencies here of the Albanian people, the Albanian people as a whole. This is the first time in our history, certainly in recent history, that the Albanians in Kosovo have had anything to do in discussions about their future. This was incredibly important to us. We knew that what we decided or what we signed on to was going to affect the lives of all our people that we've been fighting for and struggling for for so many years. We get there and who is across the table from us? Not only this delegation sent down by Milosevic that we are supposed to negotiate with us, but in between us are people that we've only heard about in the books. There is the French Foreign Minister, the German, the American Foreign Minister, the British Foreign Minister. We're all of a sudden in the big leagues without ever having gone through the minors in baseball terms. We looked at the document. We liked the document. We were ready to sign, but we thought to ourselves, maybe we're too green at this, maybe we don't see the tricks here. Maybe we don't have enough pizzazz to really see that we're signing something that we shouldn't be signing, so we wanted to take a breather. We wanted to take a couple of days or weeks. We also wanted to come back and show it around, sort of spread the blame and let other people come in on it and see if there were any tricks in it before we signed, but we've done that. I said, well, I hope you've done it not just with KLA, not just with the military. I hope you've actually gone to the civilian side where there are a lot of people who are very anxious for peace. You guys up here in the hills, maybe you like to continue fighting, but I think the vast majority of the Albanians want a peace agreement of some sort. They said, well, no, in spite of the difficulties of our getting around, movement is not easy for us, we have conducted a survey, plus Rugova and his people have been surveying and we think we've got the go ahead to sign, so we're ready to sign.

So, great. I reported this back and two weeks later they gathered again in Rambouillet. Now I remember, some of the KLA leadership did not return. I think Thaci stayed in Europe and went around and talked to other people in Europe to see if this was a document they should sign and could sign. Anyway, they regathered in Rambouillet. The Albanians immediately announced that they were ready to sign and then all eyes turn to the Yugoslav delegation fully expecting them to say, okay, we're ready, too.

Q: Had this been vetted by the Yugoslavs before?

WALKER: Yes, this was a document that had gone back and forth. This was a final draft that had met most of everybody's objections. They certainly knew what the document was and the Albanians came back and didn't ask for changes, so everyone looked to them and much to everyone's surprise they said, we can't sign and left. Well, this really threw everything into a mess. If nothing else, it showed who was not prepared to sign on the dotted line for a negotiated settlement and no one quite knew what this meant in terms of well, what is Belgrade now going to do? There was no call for a third Rambouillet. From there down to our departure, weeks later, this was the slippery slope down to what became the NATO bombing campaign.

Q: Now, what was the general outline of the agreement that was presented at Rambouillet Two?

WALKER: It was all you might expect in terms of demilitarization of Kosovo. A certain presence of Yugoslav security forces would be allowed in. The rules of the game as to how Kosovo would get a certain amount of autonomy. The political future would be determined at some final indeterminate date. It was all something, I haven't looked at that document for a long time, but it was all stuff that I thought the Milosevic would have no problem signing on to. Instead they said no.

Q: Was there any discussion about the no?

WALKER: I don't think so. Not that I remember at least. Between the final breakdown of Rambouillet and what became our departure as a mission and the following day the beginning of the NATO bombing campaign, those days, those weeks, whatever time it was, I don't remember, everybody and his brother flew to Belgrade to try and convince Milosevic that he had to sign this document because now those seen to be the hawks, Madeleine Albright, Tony Blair, were saying NATO is prepared to enforce this dictate that you signed. Everyone who went to Belgrade from the Russian Foreign Minister to a Russian special envoy to Hill, to Petrich, the Austrian negotiator, everyone that went in, the OSCE Chairman in Office, my boss went in, everybody went in and had long and interminable meetings with Milosevic at the end of which the answer was always essentially no.

Q: What was the reading? I mean people in your mission must have been and around you must have been talking about why this stand came about. What was the folk analysis?

WALKER: Well, it really would have been folk analysis of the most primitive sort. Who understands Slobodan Milosevic? I think of him in terms of other guys like him that I've met, Noriega, people like that. He's a man who cannot relinquish an iota of control once he has it. He was just unwilling to let the international community force him into making concessions to release his rabble down there. He thought he could do anything he wanted with. He's a very strange man.

Q: Were you getting anything, or not you particularly because you were frozen, but those that weren't frozen, did anybody coming back saying, you know, there are others in the Yugoslav leadership circle that think that this is a good deal, we ought to have it or something like that?

WALKER: I encountered no one who came back with any such tales. I had made contacts during my trips to Belgrade as well as when they came to Pristina, to Kosovo. I had made contact with a number of Slav journalists, Serbian journalists. There was a radio television network up in Belgrade that was thought to be somewhat independent that was the voice of reason, B12?

Q: Yes, something there was like that.

WALKER: B12 or B2 I think. The young reporters that I met from that group were serious people and they saw what was going on. They saw that this was a very slippery slope and they certainly had no love for Mr. Milosevic. But, did this appear in newspapers or did you hear about figures within the government that were advising go slow or sign on or whatever? I heard no such rumors. Even the guys who were thought to be Milosevic's competition came out with strong nationalistic xenophobic statements in support of what the government had done in Rambouillet which seems to be the way Serbia does things. I heard nothing; no inkling about anyone had anything other than the same answer to what had been put before them at Rambouillet.

Q: While you were there do you recall was this a matter of weeks, months, after Rambouillet two and your departure?

WALKER: My memory would be weeks. My memory would be a month or so, something like that, and what that brought was a steady deterioration in our ability to do what we were there to do. We had a few incidents in which our people went into Serb villages and stones were thrown at the vehicles, etc., curses. We had a number of times when we heard fighting was occurring, we would send off one of our patrol vehicles and it would be stopped on the road by the Yugoslav security forces and told they couldn't go forward, not that they shouldn't go forward, which was what had been the previous, well, you shouldn't go forward for your own safety, there are bad things happening up there. Now it was you can't go forward. We would protest, but it fell on deaf ears.

Q: Had the great mass exodus of Albanians started yet?

WALKER: No. I think the Albanians community was still for the main part sitting where they lived and hoping that somehow it would not lead to war. Nevertheless, most of them I think were fairly pessimistic. This was a gloomy time in Kosovo. You really couldn't see what was coming except that it was probably bad.

Q: Was there any gathering of repressive force?

WALKER: Another indicator that things were going in the wrong direction was that our people were increasingly encountering Yugoslav army tanks, artillery pieces, troops, out in places where they weren't supposed to be or they weren't supposed to be without notifying us. Fighting was on the increase. After Račak, after something that happened in a village called Rugova in which a whole bunch of men were killed who probably were KLA, but they were blown apart very, very viciously, all you could see was that more violence was coming. All you could see was that these two sides were now going to fight it out; they were going to duke it out. Up until we actually pulled the plug on the mission and left, no, there was no migration.

Q: Did you feel, in the first place, among yourselves, your advisors and all, did you feel that we really were serious about doing something and what?

WALKER: I personally felt having spoken to Javier Solana, the secretary general of NATO, a Spaniard, and someone I got to know and admire. I keep thinking I told all these stories.

Q: Some of this you may have, but we haven't talked about the end game.

WALKER: Okay. I had talked to Solana. I had talked to the people up in Brussels at NATO. I certainly talked to Wes Clark often enough to know that NATO was prepared to do something. In the period after Rambouillet fell apart, there was obviously increased talk about what could NATO do. Were we going to go to the Security Council of the United Nations? Were we going to do X, Y Z? Anytime you start talking about the use of force you're going to have certain members of an alliance be more bellicose than others and of course in this situation the Greeks in NATO were not very supportive. They were talking out against doing something militarily. The Italians were not really onboard. So, when you ask did we see what was coming, did we see this was leading to something that NATO would do, I think my personal feeling was NATO has got to do something. They've put down too many ultimatums. They've drawn too many lines in the sand. They've told Milosevic he's got to do X, Y Z or else, there's got to be an "or else" there, but what that or else might be, given this chatter of Italians speaking out and the Greek Foreign Minister, German Green Party, part of the Schröder government talking out. It was hard to predict that yes NATO was going to really come down hard. But, as the days went by and all these delegations went to Belgrade and came out empty handed with no commitment by Milosevic to sign onto Rambouillet, it became increasingly clear that NATO had to do something. During this period our ability to do what we'd been sent into was increasingly difficult to do. Harassment, danger to our people, not being able to have

access to areas that we wanted to go in and take a look at I thought it was only a matter of time before I was going to get the call you've got to come out of there.

Q: Well, were your military people, I'm talking about the various NATO military people beginning to take a look at this thing and begin to take notes about yes, let's hit this bridge and let's, you know, at a certain point, this is what they're trained to do and I would imagine they would.

WALKER: During this period, the so-called end game as you call it for our mission, as we were hearing about NATO preparing to maybe do something, there was activity on many sides. One activity that my military people detected was finding that the tunnels on the road that came up from Macedonia into Kosovo which goes through mountains and, I can't remember, three or four tunnels and this road is, there ain't no other approach if you don't go up that one road and my guys discovered that they had been mined so that if NATO came across the border someone could pop the plunger and all of a sudden the tunnels would blow and heavy equipment would have a tough time coming up. At the same time it would not surprise me at all that my guys were looking at those things you were talking about, maybe on maps of Pristina showing where the police headquarters was and that sort of thing. I think I've already mentioned there was, at some point during our mission stay in Kosovo, NATO put a sort of expeditionary force into Macedonia, 1,600 guys who were supposedly an extraction force. I've described them before. It was finally admitted to me after we came out that they could not have extracted any of us.

But there was another unit down there that was under the command of a British one star who I think thought of himself as Bernard Montgomery or something like that. He had a bit of a swagger about him that was kind of disconcerting. We were always asking, demanding, Intel because Wes Clark was always asking me well, what do you think of the Intel we're getting from NATO. I was always saying, Wes, I haven't seen any of it. He would turn and tell someone, Walker's got to see our Intel because they're giving us their Intel, but we're not given them. He's got to see our Intel.

Q: Intel means intelligence.

WALKER: Intelligence gathered by various sources and methods. What Wes did not fathom as we had these conversations and we had these conversations several times and he would turn to his Intel officer and say, Walker's got to see the Intel so get it to him. Then nothing would happen and we would ask, where is the Intel and we would be told, well, you've got Russians on your staff. You've got all sorts of OSCE types. You've got Ukrainians; you've got Belarus guys. We can't put that in there unless we've got a totally secure operation and I'd say, well, get me one. Well, you know. Finally the decision was made to build us a, what do you call it?

Q: A bubble?

WALKER: Not a plastic bubble, but the equivalent, the sort of telephone booth that's got walls this thick that you can go into and you can talk secure. It was going to be under.

Q: A Stu-III.

WALKER: Yes, but it was beyond a Stu-III. In fact they told me there was a wrist watch version. They were going to get me a wrist watch. None of this ever happened, but they did finally put in this telephone booth and it had to be under 24 hour surveillance by a NATO officer. I had to recruit French officers, and British officers and German officers who were going to stand guard on this. It never worked because by the time we got it built, we were leaving. But anyway on the Intel side, this eventually answers your question. We went down to Macedonia because we were told; look if you ever come out we can brief you in Macedonia where we do have secure facilities.

One day I went down there with DZ and a whole bunch of others. Wes Clark came in and we were going to get an Intel briefing from this one star British general. Because at this point NATO was in fact doing some forward planning and trying to identify what the circumstances were in Kosovo. We went down there and I remember a couple of things happening. One, the British general got up addressing Wes Clark, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and started talking about he and his men were on the pointy end of the spear in this battle in Kosovo and we on the pointy end of the spear. I finally got sick and tired of this. I raised my hand and I said, wait a minute. You're in Skopje. You live in that beautiful, big hotel there. You're surrounded by military troops. You're on the pointy end of the spear? I'm up in Pristina. We ain't got a pistol among our 1,400 people. What the hell are you talking about? Well, he backtracked and Wes Clark jumped in and gave his definition of the pointy end of the spear, which was not Skopje. When we started looking at the Intel they were gathering. They were telling us about overhead platforms they had and drones that took pictures where you could look and see the faces of the guys down on the ground and all this kind of stuff. So, they start showing us some of these aerial photographs that they had taken and I remember DZ looking and he said, Jesus, you don't need that kind of surveillance to tell us where the bridges are. We can tell you where the bridges are. There are only 20 bridges in the whole damn province. We know where every one of them is. The tunnels we can tell you. The headquarters. There's nothing on these pictures that is going to tell you anything that we don't already know. To answer your question, yes, NATO was doing planning. NATO was identifying things. NATO was flying.

Q: I think at one point, maybe this was after you left, there was supposed to be a tremendous flyover or something like that?

WALKER: Well, remember the Holbrooke-Milosevic Agreement was that we would go in on the ground, an unarmed civilian international mission. We would be able to tell what was happening on the ground and NATO was going to be doing aerial surveillance presumably to look for tanks out on streets and artillery pieces not in cantonment. These two forms of intelligence were supposed to come together someplace. As I say it never came together where I was present. I don't want to belittle it, but I was not terribly impressed with NATO preparations at least during that period when maybe they could have been doing a little more. Maybe no one thought it was really going to happen.

Q: Well, I was wondering I would have thought that did you have the feeling they were using people from your mission, sort of second people in and out to come back to the planning place. You know, there's nothing like having people who have been on the ground.

WALKER: God, that's exactly what Mr. Milosevic was trying to prove in the trial in The Hague a month ago. He kept asking me that. Well, you do have spies on your staff who were telling NATO what was. My answer was as truthful as I could make it; it would not surprise me at all if there were people on my staff who were sending information back to from whence they came. Was I aware of CIA operatives on my staff? No. Was I aware of British M5 or M6 or whoever the hell they are? No, but it would not surprise me to hear that there were some.

Q: But as things began to deteriorate I mean after Rambouillet Two there wasn't a steady stream of young intelligence officers coming in and taking a look around and going back? I mean in other words, there was a real disconnect between, as far as you knew, your people, those who were in the military, and the NATO thing. I'm just trying to get.

WALKER: Yes, I really don't know the answer to that question. I know that I was a bit surprised when we came out eventually, on the 22nd or 23rd of March, whatever it was. There we had 1,400 people all of whom who had been in Kosovo for varying periods of time. Some as much as six or seven months who had been far flung around the entire province. No one came to me, and I don't think anyone came to any of my people and said, what did you see when you were in there, where are the trouble spots, what would you do if you were going in there to try and destroy the infrastructure? Nothing. Now, this is not to say that maybe some of my British military guys who went back and one day they were in Kosovo and as I said earlier they wore uniforms, they didn't wear uniforms in Kosovo. But as soon as they came out, they put on their uniforms and they were again serving British officers and I'm sure they were supportive of what the British at least was doing with NATO. I was surprised at the lack of inquiry among my people. Here we were sitting in Macedonia with a lot of time on our hands waiting to go back in, or what we thought was going back in. We met every day. The leadership met every day and tried to decide what we should be doing and how we should do it, but if there were approaches to try and collect the knowledge that we had among those people of what was going on in Kosovo, I saw no signs of it.

Q: It's sort of a repetition of what I've heard from almost everybody who comes out of after a difficult situation or an ongoing situation coming back to the State Department. That's very nice, now leave it to the big boys.

WALKER: Here's your onward assignment or go sit in a corner and now the new team is going to do it.

Q: Don't bother us, I mean we know what we're doing.

WALKER: I know I've told you earlier that this has been my experience time after time. Coming out of Salvador after the war. Four years there as Ambassador. No one ever asked me about it. Coming out of Croatia, UN.

Q: This is unfortunately I think is a problem not just I mean obviously work with NATO too. I think it's those who are doing it don't like to have people with field experience giving too much information and that sort of screws it up.

WALKER: Yes, we've obviously gone native when you're out there. I can't remember if I gave this anecdote but I just have to give it to make sure it's there which goes back to Mr. Solana. Did I tell you this story about going up to Brussels? This was during the period between the collapse of Rambouillet and our exodus. I went up to Brussels and I called ahead that I wanted to see Solana. I wanted to get some indication as to what NATO was thinking about and I wanted to see Wes Clark. I flew up to Brussels. When I got there I was told unfortunately Solana was leaving for Washington because he's going to go around and meet the foreign ministers of the contact group at least and see whither we goest, so you won't be able to meet with Solana, but you'll meet with his deputy. Oh, that's too bad, I like Solana and he's been very open with me. But if he's not here, he's not here.

I drove out to NATO to go and see his deputy and as we were pulling up to the NATO headquarters outside of Brussels I got out of my car and I had my little group of three or four people and we're walking up the steps. All of a sudden out of the main door comes Solana and a whole big group of people, obviously his delegation going with him to do this tour and see which way NATO should go. They were in a hurry to get to the cars but he happened to spot me coming up the stairs and he stopped the group and he came over to see me and said hello and asked me how I was. I said fine. He said how are things in Kosovo. I talked to him a little bit about what was happening since the breakdown of Rambouillet. We talked for just a couple of minutes and he said he was going to see Madeleine in Washington. He'll be seeing so and so in various capitals. He said, Bill, I want to talk to you. So, we moved off just the two of us and we're standing there on the steps by ourselves. He looks at me and he says, "Bill, what should we do?" I was taken aback. You know. Here is the Secretary General of NATO. I'm the yo-yo down in Kosovo and you asking me what we should do and you know when you're asked a question and you have no idea what your answer should be? It could be anything. I just reached and I gulped and I looked at him and I said "Bomb." He said, "Do you really think we should bomb them?" I said, "Yes, I think so." He said, "Okay, thank you." And off he went. Whatever it was a week later, ten days later, they're bombing and I said, oh, shit. I'm sure he got the same answer from Madeleine Albright and some others, but I was really taken aback. That to me shows you how uncertain everybody was about what's going on.

Anyway, that period between the end of Rambouillet and our exodus was, as I say, a very, very sad period because it was obvious that things were going to get worse.

Q: How did you leave I mean what happened?

WALKER: Chins high, flying the OSCE flags. I was in my office getting calls from the Norwegian Foreign Minister who was the Chairman in Office of the OSCE a couple of times a day telling me how his soundings were going as to what should happen. He would mention he had just talked to Madeleine, he had talked to Schröder, he had talked to so and so. He was also giving me the results of these delegations that were going into Belgrade and there was no good news. He called me I think on the morning of the 22nd or so of March. He said, "Bill, the consensus is that the mission can no longer go on as it is doing right now. The increasing danger, less ability to do what we sent you in to do. So, I think we're going to pull the plug. What do you think?" I said, "Well, I agree. I think this can't go on this way." So he said, "Well, I'll be back to you." Sure enough a couple of hours later, 1:00 or 2:00 in the afternoon or something like that, he called and said, "We've got a decision out of the OSCE. I've been instructed to tell you that the mission is over in its present form and you should get out of there as soon as you can." I reminded him that we had an evacuation plan that we had been working on with some rigor. He asked me how long I thought it would take to get out. I said, the plan looks like it calls for about eight to ten hours to get everybody out and that's if everything goes all right. I said that once I had the word from him to do this and I had to notify our regional centers and they had to notify the people in the villages. But once we got that going from the moment I got the ball rolling we thought that it would take about eight or ten hours. He said, well, when's the earliest you could leave? I said, well, having talked to my people here, we can leave anytime. We would recommend that we do it as soon as we possibly can. Tonight, tomorrow. I said, my people are recommending that we should leave in the middle of the night to make it less likely that people will see that we were pulling out because there might be people here who want to stop us. The Serb security forces might want to stop us just because they know what comes next. The Albanians might want to stop us just because they know, you know, there could be various motives for not letting us leave. If you tell us to get out, we'll get out probably by tomorrow sometime. He said, well, I leave it up to you. I said okay. So we decided to leave, I can't remember if it was 3:00 or 4:00 AM. We got the word out to the regional centers and our evacuation plan was essentially that depending on how far they were from the main road, the various groups would come in in their vehicles putting as much of their equipment as possible that they could carry and form as long a column as we could and all go out sort of together if we could pull it off. You just kept your fingers crossed that no one got into trouble.

About 3:00 I remember it was a cold March wintry night, a lot of snow on the ground. We all started bundling up and meeting at the various points in Pristina where we were going to gather together. Of course before that the first thing I did after getting the call from Knut Vollebaek, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, was I called a meeting of our local employees. I can't remember how many we had in Pristina, but we had 1,200 or 1,300 around the country of which many of them were in Pristina.

Q: Translators and other things.

WALKER: Interpreters, people that did all sorts of things. Security guards, young guys who without weapons tried to protect our property. Secretaries, all sorts of people, most of them very young. Most of them in their twenties. That was the generation that spoke English we found. I gathered them together as many as were in Pristina at that time or around headquarters, had them in the auditorium, got up and said I've just received word that the mission is ending and we will be leaving shortly without giving them the specifics. I said that the Chairman in Office decided that because of the difficulties of doing business now and an increasing danger to our people that all the internationals will be pulling out. I said that I was extremely sorry that we couldn't take any of you out, but that would just not be possible. That the circumstances were such that we could only take out the internationals. I said that my prediction was that things were going to get a lot worse before they got any better. That we hoped that we would be back as soon as possible, that Mr. Milosevic would come to his senses and sign onto the agreement, but that we would certainly be out of the country for a while and as I said, things would probably get worse before they got better. I said that unfortunately I thought that things had to get worse before they got better because Mr. Milosevic was not taking the path of negotiations, so force was going to probably be used.

There were a lot of tears in the room. There were a lot of I think the vast majority of our employees were female and a lot of them were crying, a lot of them were. So, from up in front of them talking to them, I had the impression that I was scaring them and I was, I didn't know how they were going to react. How they reacted was, many of them came up to me after I was walking away from the stage to say, look, we understand totally you have to leave, we understand that things are going to get worse. I don't think anyone understood how much worse they were going to get, but at that point we all understood.

Q: Were you able to pay them off and all that?

WALKER: Oh, yes. We realized and they realized that being employees of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission was not going to exactly be a badge of respect when the Yugoslav authorities really came down hard on Kosovo. Again most of them were Albanian speakers although we certainly had a good mixture of Serbs, but it was one of the sadder days of my career to tell them that we were pulling out.

That night, in the middle of the night, we gathered, we left. I was in the first vehicle to leave and I led the column. I wanted to see if there were any problems developing, come in to roadblocks or anything like that. We drove down to Skopje in record time; encountered no incidents. I and General DZ and my French deputy with his little group of advisors. My leadership gathered around me as they came to the border and by daybreak there was this long line as far as you could see of these little orange vehicles waiting to cross the border and go into Skopje. It took me about an hour and a half to get to the border and then took another four and a half hours for these 1,400 people. It must have been 400 or 500 vehicles. I went over and I looked in every window and said something to the people or they said something to me and the general feeling in fact it was almost unanimous, we really don't want to leave. We want to stay. We're leaving behind people that we've become friends with. We're terrified of what they're going to do, what's going

to happen after we go and when are we coming back? I said as much as I knew which was we hope to come back as soon as possible. We hope that we move out, NATO issues an ultimatum and Milosevic yells uncle and that's the end of it, that we come back in and continue on. Obviously it didn't work that way.

We got everybody out. Every last person that we knew about in six hours, so we got out two hours faster than our best estimate of the evacuation plan. The last people coming down from the various columns, from the various outposts of the mission, some of them told me about having seen VJ Yugoslav army types, MUP police units coming in right behind them. We came to the conclusion that it was obvious that the reason we got out in record time was that not only had they not put obstacles in our path, but they had actually helped us get out as fast as we could. There were no problems at the border. The only thing they did was they stamped everybody's passport canceled. This annoyed some of my people and as this column was waiting to go through the border, the word filtered back, oh, they're canceling the visas. Several people said, gee what are we going to do? How are we going to come back in without visas? Brilliant thought that I had, I said, the next time we come in we're not going to need visas. That proved to be the case, at least not Yugoslav visas.

It was a very orderly exodus. No incidents. No one got hurt. The only small problem was when DZ was remaining with me and he and I decided we were going to walk across the border together as the last remnants of the KVM. He got word from someone near the end of the column that one of the vehicles had broken down. It had gone off the road and it was stuck in the snow. Bless DZ's hide, he said, we're going back for them. We're not going to leave a single vehicle here. He gathered some of his British soldier types and they jumped into a vehicle with a big towrope and back they went and sure enough half an hour later they towed this thing across the border. We got everybody out and he and I locked arms and walked across the border together signaling the end of the mission. Pictures were taken. General Jackson who at the time was and later became known as the commander of the forces that were attacking. He was commander of the ground forces of NATO that sat in Macedonia until.

Q: He's British?

WALKER: British. General Jacko. He's now the chief of staff of the British army, so he's moved up. He was at the border to greet his British colleague and me and we had a snort or something as I remember. Very dramatic. Very dramatic.

Q: Then what did you do?

WALKER: The first couple of days, 1,400 people, 400 and some vehicles, we pretty well inundated Skopje. Much to the chagrin of the Macedonian government, much to the chagrin of the American Embassy in Macedonia under the directorship of Ambassador Chris Hill. We realized that we could not possibly find space for 1,400 people and somehow I can't remember if we preplanned this or not, but we had discovered that there

was a lake in Macedonia called Lake Ohrid and it is famous for its trout. It's a summer resort where during Tito's day everybody who was anybody went to Lake Ohrid.

Q: Oh, yes, I used to love to go there.

WALKER: Oh, really, okay, so you know Lake Ohrid. So, we realized that Lake Ohrid had summer hotels that were empty in March. About 1,100 or 1,200 of our people didn't even get to stop in Skopje; they put them on buses and hauled them down to Lake Ohrid or had them drive their cars, whatever was better. When I got to Skopje I and my senior staff and certain departments like my public affairs department, my operations center, some of the key units, we stayed in Skopje. We almost took over the hotel, Alexander Palace, which was easily the best hotel in Skopje, yes, a nice hotel. We settled in there and I think on the second day, I think it was the day after I got there or maybe it was two days later I decided to go down to Lake Ohrid to rally the troops and make sure everybody was happy. We felt they might feel kind of isolated and away from it down at Lake Ohrid in mid-winter, not much to do down there. I drove down to Lake Ohrid and spent the day going from one of these hotels to the next, to the next, to the next and bringing everybody together that was in that particular hotel and giving them my we shall return speech. It was a very satisfying day because the morale was very, very high. Everybody was very anxious to go back in and they were glad to see us because I guess in that intervening 24 hours they did worry, they were really out of the way here. That was the high point of the morale.

Over the next weeks morale sagged as we heard the news out of Kosovo. This was when the exodus took place. This was when horror stories were coming out. This was when people were hearing that our local employees were being harassed and detained just because they had an OSCE badge. This was when really horror stories were coming out. These people down at Lake Ohrid didn't have much to do. We tried to get activities. We tried to get them to plan what they would do when they went back in in terms of elections, in terms of this, that and the other thing, but as the NATO campaign dragged on. Again, we all thought it would be over in a day, two days, five days, a week, and here it was a month, two months, two and a half months. Morale dropped precipitously and when you've got lots of people in summer resort hotels, males, females, booze, you know, we started having problems, not serious problems, but we had those kinds of problems. The government started wondering do we want to retain this group in close proximity because this bombing campaign doesn't seem to be leading anywhere. It's costing a lot of money. Does the OSCE really want to maintain this? Finally the decision was made, no, let's send people back to their countries and if we need to recollect them, we'll be able to recollect them. Again, I went down to Lake Ohrid and stood around as we filled busloads of people. I guess they went out via Greece to Salonica where they got on planes and flew off to their respective 34 countries that they had come from. We went from 1,400 people down to a couple of hundred fairly quickly. The ones in Skopje had a different existence because there there was lots to do.

Q: That was dealing with the refugees.

WALKER: Yes, mostly. I spent a bit of time dealing with the Macedonian government trying to first explain to them that my 1,400 people would hopefully not be a burden on Macedonia. We were aware of the political sensitivities of these 400 some orange vehicles as a result of which, when I came back to Washington for some talks, while I was gone someone gave the order to repaint all our vehicles white so they wouldn't remind everyone of the OSCE mission. They started painting all the vehicles white. I and other people on my mission said that was a dumb decision. This is something that shows the OSCE is involved, that everybody, this is going to give some confidence to the refugees when we show up in our OSCE vehicles. They trust us, etc. So the ones that had been painted white were repainted orange. We did this three or four times. Some paint shop in Skopje was making a fortune from us. I can't remember, they charged us \$200 or \$300 a paint job, you know?

Anyway, and we did have indicators that being with the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission was not necessarily going to win a popularity contest for you in Macedonia. The Macedonians became extremely upset with this flood of refugees coming out of Kosovo. Camps were set up very hastily and sometimes against the wishes of the Macedonian government and there was total confusion. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Madam Ogata came in, but her people were overwhelmed, just overwhelmed. They don't have people sitting on the shelves that they can send in to set up a refugee camp. So, we all of a sudden had over 100,000 refugees pouring in within days and setting them up in camps was a burden. The Macedonian government set up some camps. They were disasters. The guards they put on them wouldn't let anyone in or out. The guards they put on them looked like MUP. They wore almost the same uniforms as the Yugoslav police. They were equally rough on people. I spent I don't know how many days going into this camp and that camp and that camp trying to find out what was going on. I was constantly amazed by the Albanians' ability to organize themselves and keep life going even though conditions were horrendous.

I have untold, uncounted stories of some of the stupidity you find in situations like that. I went into one camp very early; there were like 20,000 people in the camp and I remember there were like ten latrines with lines for everything. I saw this exceptionally long line of people standing out. By now it's March, April, like into May, so it's pretty hot. It's pretty warm and it's a dusty, dirty campsite with the white tents going as far as you could see. This was one was under the auspices I believe of the UN. Anyway, here's this long line of women all of whom with babies in their arms or babies hanging onto their skirts. All along the line there are babies crying. I get up and I said through my interpreter, this young lady, almost like a daughter to me, anyway, we go up to talk to these women. I say, what are you waiting in line for? They said, we're waiting for diapers. I say, okay, diapers. Boy this is a long line, how long have you been standing here? An hour and a half, two hours. Wow. I hope you get some diapers, your child obviously needs diapers. We look at this line and then we went into the tent to which they were waiting to go in. I go into the tent and there are three or four young Albanian kids who looked like they were in their late teens and early twenties and they're administering the distribution of diapers. They have a mountain of diapers there and when we walk in the woman who is getting her diapers is saying, can I have more than two diapers? No,

we can only give you two. She said, well, this is my third time through the line and by the time I get back to the tent, or by the time you give me the diapers, I need the diapers they're already dirty and I just have to go to the end of the line and come through the line again, another two hours waiting. By the time I get here the kid needs a diaper. I went up and asked the kid, what's going on here? Why are you just giving two diapers? Oh, well, that's the UN rule, two diapers per child. We don't want people stockpiling diapers or something I guess. I said, well, this is ridiculous. Give them more and they won't have to wait in line. They won't have to come back. Obviously diapers are, what do you call it, nonreimbursable, no, disposable. Once you use you've got to throw them away and you've got to get another one. All these women were just spending their entire day in the camp waiting for diapers. Lots of things like that. I discovered the women; the Albanian women in the camps were far more dealing with practical issues than their men folk. The men folk were sitting around the fireplace or the coffee table. They set up little coffee shops and the men were all sitting there drinking their Turkish coffee, smoking cigarettes and talking politics which had absolutely nothing to do with the reality of the situation they were in. Whereas the women were setting up schools and setting up little places to take care of the kids. The women saved the day, they really did.

My people did a lot in terms of helping set up these camps when there were no UN refugee folks on the grounds. Going into the camps they were being run by others who didn't have the capacities to handle the thousands of people. Mercy Corps tried to set up a camp. Some of the NGOs tried to set up a camp, but they were overwhelmed by the people coming in. I went up to the border several times to see what was coming across. The conditions at the border were just absolutely horrendous. Because as the Yugoslavs were pushing Albanians out. They were filling trains and taking them down to the border and pushing them out. Others were fleeing on their own. Others were coming down in their private cars, which were confiscated. On the Soviet side of the border [sic], there was this huge, enormous waiting camp where people sat for days and days and days until they could get across the border. The conditions there were just absolutely appalling. Just absolutely appalling. I went up at the end and saw the bulldozers going in and trying to clear this crap out. It was like a huge garbage heap as far as you could see. I went up to the border and I just walked across the border and go up to the lines as they were waiting to come across and the border guards never thought to stop me. I just asked people tell me about what happened to you on your way out. What's happening up where you came from? Horror stories of every description. Absolutely amazing.

The flood of people that came in overwhelmed everyone and they were not welcomed by Macedonia for obvious reasons. That led in those first days when it was obvious that NATO had started the bombing the refugee exodus had just started, Macedonians were nervous. I flew off. Maybe it was down to Ohrid. Anyway, I flew out of Skopje for the day, went someplace. I remember, I flew over to Albania to look at a couple of the camps over there. When I flew back I was in a British chopper, the British had decided they could take me to Albania whereas the American chopper decided the weather was too bad, so I was in a Brit chopper. When we came to the Alexander Palace there was a big lot at one side, which was where helicopters could land. As we were coming in to land the pilot saw a mob of people in the streets, eight, nine, ten blocks away running towards

the Alexander Palace. It turned out later that this was the group that had attacked the American Embassy and shown their disdain for America's policy in Kosovo. Tried to break in and didn't succeed, but scared the hell out of our people there. Then they saw the helicopter coming down and they realized that we had a lot of the OSCE people in the hotel, the Alexander Palace. So a bunch of the mob came running down the street. My pilot said I'm not going to land and let that crowd get a hold of this chopper so we flew off and landed someplace else and I came back by vehicle. They did go into our parking lot and they did damage a lot of the orange vehicles that we had parked there. They didn't try to get into the hotel. By that time the Macedonian security types had come out and tried to chase them away. It was obviously a very emotional and fairly well organized crowd that somehow had been gathered up.

Q: I assume this crowd were basically Macedonians of the Serb persuasion?

WALKER: I assume so.

Q: Did you find though the Macedonians of the Albanian persuasion were they receptive to the people who came in, their brothers in suffering and all that?

WALKER: Yes. There were a few stories of people coming in and showing up at a relative and knocked on the door and being told well, there are refugee camps, why don't you go to the refugee camps. But there was a certain percentage and it wasn't an insignificant percentage of the refugees who came in did in fact go in and stay with relatives or friends that they knew in Macedonia. I also went up a couple of times to some of the remoter little towns along the border where refugees were coming across through the mountains rather than down the road. I remember going into one village where a village I think of 100 people was playing host to about 500 or 600 refugees that had come across, so they were being swamped. Hospitality is a trait of that part of the world, especially the Muslim part. So they were sharing everything they had with this influx.

Q: How did our embassy treat you?

WALKER: Not terribly well.

Q: How did you get along with Chris Hill and all that?

WALKER: Not terribly well. I had met Chris just a couple of times. When he would come into Kosovo on his negotiation sessions I would hear he passed through. He would not come to see me. He did come once or twice. What I remember of the conversations he made predictions that turned out to be absolutely incorrect. First he told me that they would have a peace agreement by Christmas. Second he told me that if they could get the Kosovars to sign onto any sort of a negotiation, negotiated agreement, that Belgrade would jump onboard right away, and those both turned out to be incorrect. I went down there for a Thanksgiving dinner. You know how American embassies quite often have ceremonial Thanksgiving dinners. His wife invited me to go down for that. I went down and had a very pleasant time. I thought that I had a good relationship with him and his

embassy, but when we came out in the exodus, especially in the day or two immediately after his brush with the mob taking over his embassy, he let me know that he was not very happy with me or my mission or the fact that we brought 1,400 people with these orange vehicles into Macedonia. He yelled at me once saying you've come here and you haven't even come to see me. This was like 24 hours after I'd been there. I said, hey, I've got 1,400 people I'm trying to bed down and take care of. I would have come to see you sooner or later, but I had other things I've had to do. I was going to, but did not remind him that he had not come to see me very often when he had come to Kosovo under much more peaceful conditions.

I heard from any number of people that he was in disagreement with my pronouncements at Račak. That he felt that I had somehow undercut his efforts at bringing a negotiated settlement. He was an OC; I was a CM, so I didn't worry too much about his criticism.

Q: You were one grade higher than he was?

WALKER: Two grades.

Q: Two grades.

WALKER: CM.

Q: Two grades higher, oh yes. So, what happened? How did this thing end up?

WALKER: How did it end up? It ended up with the NATO bombing campaign going on for two and a half months. It ended up with our mission being slowly ebbing away as people went back to their home countries. It ended with a lot of confusion about what is going to happen when the bombing campaign eventually ends. It's got to end sometime. What is going to be the lead agency to go back in? Obviously NATO ground troops will have to go in to keep the peace, but who is going to do things on the civilian side? Will it be the OSCE? My argument would be and I think it was the argument of Vollebaek and the leadership of the OSCE, we've got experience in Kosovo. No one else does. We still have several hundred people who were in there, who know the province. We have contacts there. The Albanian population has confidence in us. We have been doing planning for the time we have been in Macedonia on elections and how to run a census and some of these other things. We think it should be the OSCE. Within that particular viewpoint there were a number of differences of opinion. One was if a new OSCE mission goes in, if another OSCE mission or the same mission goes in, but with a different mandate under the new circumstances, it should be a mission that goes in under leadership other than Walker. He has become the figurehead of having started this whole damn mess. Others thought no, no, no, the mission goes back in it goes back in with many of the same people including being headed by Walker.

While that discussion that was going on, among those preferring the OSCE outcome, other discussions was going on in which the question was should the UN be the institution that goes in and heads up the new Kosovo. In that camp were Russians,

Chinese who had had their embassy in Belgrade bombed by NATO and weren't too friendly with anything that had come before, and players in other parts of the world wanted to get involved. That was the discussion that was going on as we were sitting in Macedonia during those last days before the NATO bombing campaign finally succeeded. At some point Knut Vollebaek came to Macedonia and told me that although the discussion was ongoing it looked as though the UN would probably be the lead agency in what came afterwards, but that the OSCE would have a significant role to play in terms of organizing elections and some other things and that under those circumstances he and whoever he had consulted with thought it would be better if I did not go back in with the OSCE. So, I said, fine. I'm now waiting for Madeleine Albright to reward me with whatever that big reward was she promised me. Still waiting, but anyway.

Anyway, and when it finally came down to it Kofi Annan and the security council, I think having been one upped by NATO doing its campaign without going through the Security Council just felt they better grab control of this. So, post-NATO bombing campaign Kosovo is essentially a UN-run operation.

Q: Well, then what did you do?

WALKER: What did I do? Returned to Washington. Took some time off. I think I've already told you the story about getting the call from Tom Pickering in my waning days in Kosovo who told me that the perfect assignment had been selected for me. Every time I had been in Washington I'd been told Bill if you come out of there you will get your reward. Tom Pickering would always ask me what are you interested in, Bill. I gave him a lovely list. Athens was on there. Mexico City was on there. Brasilia was on there. Brussels was on there, both at NATO and as Ambassador. All the things that CM's have every right to expect especially those waiting for their reward. When he finally called me to tell me that the D committee had met and determined my fate it was Bill we had a long discussion about you. We decided you're the perfect person to replace Bill Swing. I said, Bill Swing? I haven't heard about Bill in a while. The last time I heard about Bill he was in Kinshasa. That's right, Walker. That's where you're going. That's when I decided that maybe I would be looking for a second career soon. I wasn't going to go to Kinshasa. Well, you're probably going to say it's.

Q: Sometimes these offers are made, saying I know he won't take it, but let's offer it and this takes care of the problem. Did you get that feeling?

WALKER: No, no, I think Tom Pickering at least felt that I was going to leap at this because when he told me, I said, Tom I've never been in Sub-Saharan Africa. I don't speak French. All I know about that is what I read about Mr. Kabila He said, that's it Bill, you've got two or three civil wars going on. You've got possible invasions by two or three neighbors. You've got a despot in power, everything that you love, all the things you've sought all your career. I said, earlier that was fine, you know. I thought with Milosevic I had dealt with my last despot. I thought the reward was going to be someplace pleasant that I could take my family and that we could have a nice final three years of my career. It was apparently sort of a take it or leave it offer and I decided to

leave it. I've been told I made a tactical mistake. That by now it was obvious that there was going to be an election in November. This was into July. There's an election in November. Who knows who might win? Bill Clinton, who knows. Not, Bill Clinton, what's his name, Bush or Gore, you know, so there'll be a new administration. Sign up for the Congo and then come in later and say, thanks, but no thanks I want to go someplace else. I decided to tell the truth and said I'm not going to Kinshasa.

Q: I want to come back obviously to Milosevic. But what have you done since you retired?

WALKER: I've been back to Kosovo three times. I went back in November just before the elections here. I took my wife to show her where I had lived for seven or eight months, gave her a little of the feel that you were describing with crowds chasing me down the streets and yelling my name and all that sort of stuff. She saw that things were kind of interesting. We went to the restaurant that my interpreter's husband had been trying to open all the time I was there and had been thwarted by the Yugoslav authorities. So, here in the aftermath of the bombing campaign he was able to open his restaurant and he held it until I got there so he could have his opening ceremony and proudly display on the menu that he's got a Walker hamburger.

We were invited to go to the main hospital, the Pristina Hospital, where when I was there with KVM, I had gone there once when two of my people were wounded. It was a dirty, dank, it looked like it was a vermin infested place where even with those conditions, Albanian patients were not very welcome. I was quite surprised to go three months after the liberation. We went to the hospital. It was under the auspices of Albanian doctors and nurses and again they all turned out on the steps to greet me and the village that it's in turned out maybe 300 or 400 people strong to welcome my wife and I. We went in and we didn't have much time we were heading out of town, but my wife was asked if she wanted to see the maternity ward. We went up and saw the maternity ward. It was incredible because there were like 40 babies they're lying in their cribs. There they wrap them real tight and they're all pointing in the same direction. While we were there a woman gave birth to a baby. The nurse came over and asked my wife's name. She was given my wife's name, which is a Brazilian name, and we were told that the baby was now going to be named Daisy. So there's a little girl baby called Daisy Kelmendi running around Kosovo now.

On the way out that time I ran into Wes Clark coming north and we stopped our two convoys, his being considerably longer and better armed than mine. We stopped on the road heading to Skopje and blocked traffic for about 20 minutes as we stood there and conversed. He told me how bitter he was. He had been told he was no longer NATO commander.

Q: Terrible, that whole thing was, it was almost as.

WALKER: Poorly done. I told him about Kinshasa and we commiserated with each other. We decided we'd both been screwed. It was a very interesting conversation.

Then I went back for the elections, which was satisfying to go back and see this turnout. I've observed a number of elections and this one was as peaceful and as joyous as I've seen. Then I went back three months ago or so when three American boys of Albanian ancestry, brothers, had been captured by the Serbs after the NATO bombing campaign stopped and they'd been executed and thrown into a pit with a whole bunch of other bodies. They were identified somehow and we went over to accompany the bodies back. So, I've been back three times.

Besides that, what have I done? I've started to write a book. If you want to read chapter one, it's prepared. Now the other 15 chapters have still to come. It's going to be called Račak, I hope, if I ever get around to finishing it. Oh, the last three years of my illustrious career I went up to the United Nations where I served under Ambassador Holbrooke. That was interesting as well, but I was doing Latin American subjects up there and only ran into him a couple of times. I did that for three months, the general assembly of '99.

2000. The year 2000 I spent the first part of it organizing papers and that sort of thing, working on my photography collection from all of these wondrous adventures paid for by the American taxpayer. The last months of 2000 I got a job as a, set myself up as a consultant, but then they hired me on as a full time employee and am now a vice president of AES which is American Energy Company which is doing a lot of business in Central and South America unfortunately because their stock has dropped from 50 to 2 as the result of the Enron scandal, the world economic slowdown, and being way overexposed in Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, all of which are in sad economic shape.

Q: Well, now, to finish this off, can we talk about your experiences at The Hague?

WALKER: Sure. When I was still in the Alexander Palace in Skopje I had had a number of encounters with the war crimes tribunal in The Hague. First when I was in Croatia and later when I was in Kosovo I flew up to The Hague twice and went to see the people at the court because in the Croatian case we had the first major war criminal who was taken out of there. A Serb who had been responsible for the massacre of over 250 people in Vukovar in the immediate aftermath of the surrender of Vukovar to the Serb armies in '91. So, I got to know Judge Arbour who was the chief prosecutor, a Canadian. We had formed a friendship and then she came to Skopje while I was there and we talked at length. Judge Arbour was always complaining when we met that the international community was not cooperating with the court to the extent that it should, specifically the United States was being particularly recalcitrant. So, I felt pretty badly about that because I feel fairly strongly about war crimes and that sort of thing. When I was in Skopje I told people individual decisions, but as far as I was concerned I hoped everyone would in fact give depositions to the investigators who would be coming down to tell anything he knew about war crimes that were committed in Kosovo.

WALKER: Two investigators came to Skopje during my stay there. They came to see me and I told them I wanted my people to cooperate and I couldn't force anyone to testify or give a deposition, but I was certainly encouraging people to do so and that I would be

glad to give one myself. I knew that doing that might not play as well in Washington as it would play in The Hague, but at the same time I rationalized to myself, well I'm an employee of the OSCE here. I'm not a State Department employee.

Q: Why would you feel that Washington wouldn't want to cooperate on this?

WALKER: Because Judge Arbour had told me many stories of how Washington was not cooperating with the court both when I was in Croatia and later when I was in Kosovo. Back here in Washington talking to people about the court I was led to believe that we were very cautious who we allowed to talk to him and take depositions, etc. I knew that there were sensitivities involved, but I just decided that I better not ask the question to which you might get the wrong answer, so I just said sure. They came over and over a period of two days I gave them a fairly long statement. I encouraged other people to do so. A couple of days before I left, Judge Arbour came down and we had dinner, her, me and eight, nine or ten people. I remember her telling me, she said, you know, we've had better cooperation from your staff than we've had anywhere else, from people in government. We are in fact accumulating good stuff that has to do with war crimes that were committed while you guys were there. I said, well, when are you going to get around, are you going to indict Milosevic? She said, well, this is very complicated. We want to make sure we've got everything done right. We're breaking new ground here; indicting a chief of state for the war crimes when he's still sitting as chief of state. So we've got to make absolutely sure what we're doing. She said, what your deposition gives us is proof that he was at the top of the chain of command, that others could tell us about what Lončar was doing, others could tell us what the chief of police was doing and others could tell us, etc., but you're the only one who actually went in and sat with Milosevic and saw him make decisions having to do with Kosovo. We've been looking for that as the final link. I said great. I said I hope you're going to indict him. She said, well, it could be months because we're being very, very careful. I don't think it was more than two days later I was flying home at the end of my tour and I was on a British Airways flight across the Atlantic when the captain of the plane came on the loudspeaker and announced that he had just heard over BBC that the court in the Hague had indicted Slobodan Milosevic, Nikola Šainović and three or four others. I stood up and cheered. I was so happy that this had come about, but I was also pissed off that she had not told me that the indictment was within a matter of hours.

I came back to the States and I had told so many people, "I will not die until I get the chance to testify against Milosevic. By God they better call me." My military assistant, Mike Phillips, Lieutenant Colonel, now up in Alaska at his new command. They contacted him first and they took a deposition from him and they found out he had put all of his notes from meetings that we had had with Milosevic on CDs, etc. so they took a lot of evidence from him. I was worried that they were going to let it go at that and a year and a half went by before they finally contacted me; this was last June, I think. I was invited to go to The Hague.

Q: Part of the thing was that Milosevic wasn't in their custody.

WALKER: That's true, but I thought they would be talking to me finding out if I was willing to testify, etc. No contact whatsoever. Then I heard that Louise Arbour, the Canadian Chief Prosecutor, resigned. She went back to Canada where she is on the Supreme Court or something like that. The new chief prosecutor is a woman from Switzerland. So, I thought well, they're going to forget about me.

Q: Did the State Department ever talk to you about this?

WALKER: No. Well, excuse me, that's part of my story here when we get to the day before I'm leaving to go and testify. Sometime I think in June they called up and asked me if I would be willing to go to The Hague for four or five days. I said sure. They said, well, it's not to testify, as you say, they had captured Milosevic by this time, or they'd gotten him put on a plane and sent to The Hague. They want to take a fuller deposition from you. So I went over and spent, I think it was like four days in a hotel room because they didn't want to take me to court because I was too well known. In which I sat with Barney Kelly, an Irish cop who took my deposition. This was, of course, a very long deposition. I flew back to the States. They said we'll notify you. We think you will probably be a witness but we're not sure. At the beginning I think they were thinking of 1,200 or 1,300 witnesses, but the judge told them to cut it back. They cut it back to 700. The overwhelming majority of which were victims of crimes or people who had seen things happen before them, eyewitnesses. There were only a few people who were in the same league I was. I saw on the TV, on the Internet site that the court puts out that General DZ was called as a witness. Mike Maisonneuve, my Canadian one star, was called as a witness. They were trying to get Mike Phillips to go, but he was an active duty Air Force officer who happens to be an intelligence officer so he did have to ask permission and they told him no.

They finally got around to me. I gave them a long deposition. I went back to my home and sometime in July they called up.

Q: July of what year?

WALKER: This year, 2002. They asked me if I was willing to come over and testify and I said absolutely. I can't remember the date, I flew over on a Sunday, flying over at night. All the transatlantic flights were red eye special types of flights. I flew over Sunday to Monday, got there and was immediately swept into discussions with the prosecutors and the attorneys who were going to be trying the case. The principal prosecution attorney, barrister, whatever they call them in the UK is a Brit; Geoffrey Nice was his name, very, very sharp, very, very astute lawyer. We went over my deposition. He told me how the trial had been going. What was Milosevic's self-portrayal and self-defense. He told me that I would probably find it an enjoyable experience and I did. So, that whole first day right up until 11:00 at night or so when I was totally exhausted was just prepping me for my appearance. They said, once you appear in court we can't speak to you again. That's the court rules and you will be escorted back and forth to the trial by these little people who look like little French elves in their judicial robes, but they are not part of the trial, they are just escorts.

The following morning I was taken to a little room offside of the court and I was told there was a heated argument going on over my appearance. Milosevic was saying that he wanted Walker for a good number of days. I sat in this little room waiting for 45 minutes or so until I was finally escorted into the court. The court is a very, very formal judicial process. The judges looked like they are French magistrates all sitting up there with their little black robes and little white Eton collars. The three judges. The principal judge is a Brit. On one side of him was a Ghanaian, I believe, and on the other side was a judge from Korea. The two side judges didn't participate much. Mostly it was the British judge who was the chief justice. Milosevic is off to the side, maybe 20 feet away, sitting by himself. You sit at a table in front of the judges. A microphone, an overhead projector over here that they keep flipping evidence onto, and Geoffrey Nice led me through my deposition, expanding areas, etc. A lot having to do with Račak. A lot having to do with my personal meetings with Milosevic. He finished with me in about five or six hours and then I was turned over to the gentle hands of Slobodan Milosevic.

Q: Who was acting as his own attorney?

WALKER: He acts as his own attorney. He has got two bewigged British type lawyers sitting not with him, but off to the side who were appointed by the court to make sure everything is done accordingly to Hoyle. That he has someone there with some knowledge of the law besides his own interpretation, to help him if he needs help, and who can also interrogate witnesses. Milosevic continued to argue with the judges that he needed more time for me. Milosevic, I can only say, did many, many things to infuriate the judges. I mean he didn't take their instructions except when he wanted to. He asked questions that weren't really questions that were speeches. He would go over and over things time and time again when they'd say move on. The British judge in particular was by far the most active and he was constantly telling Milosevic, "Please Mr. Milosevic, we've gone over that. Please move on to another subject." Or, "You can't ask the witness that question. He knows nothing personally about that." Or, "You are supposed to cross-examine on testimony that he has given, not on these extraneous subjects that you've brought up from nowhere." He paid no attention to these instructions and just would go back to the same speech type questions. Very often it was very difficult to find a question in his five minute monologue and the judge kept saying, "Mr. Milosevic if you would not waste so much time, we would have given you extra time, but you are wasting your time. You are not asking question that are advancing our knowledge."

Milosevic seized on the smallest points and tried to build a huge picture. For instance, pictures of Račak. He had my statement from which I described Račak. And one of the things I described was why I thought the men had been shot where they lay. I said, their clothes, the bullet holes, etc., the blood on the ground, the blood around the wound, etc. All this as I came upon the bodies 12 hours after they, less than 12 hours, 10 hours after they'd been shot, so all the evidence in my eyes indicated they had died where they lay. He picked up on this thing about blood on the ground. He said, so you testify there was blood on the ground. I said, "Yes there was." "Bailiff put up the first picture," so a slide comes up there. You see half of a body and from the angle the picture is taken you can't

see any blood on the ground. He said do you see any blood in that picture? I said, no I don't. Okay. Bailiff, put up the next picture. So he puts up the next picture, taken from a different angle, you're looking at a different sort of shot of the same part of the body and on one side you can see a little blood. Do you see any blood there, Walker? I see blood yes, there is some blood there. He said, "Doesn't that tell you that someone put the blood there after they moved the body?" "It doesn't show that at all, no." He then showed that the hat that was on this guy's head that had fallen off, again, with the picture taken from a different angle, it looked like it maybe moved a couple of inches. See, someone was preparing that scene for you Walker. He went over and over and over again on this. The judge kept saying, Mr. Milosevic this shows no such thing. Walker has testified there was blood next to the bodies. He didn't necessarily say next to every body or on every part of the ground around every body. It went on and on like this.

As Geoffrey Nice had told me I enjoyed it. There was no challenge in answering any of his questions. There was an occasional opportunity to get in and dig at him when he'd say how do you know this. You told me Mr. Milosevic when I was in your office. You told me that blah, blah, blah. Oh, okay, on to the next question. I can't believe that people thought he was really winning points. Whether he's winning points back in Belgrade, it's hard to say, but even there, I'm told, that his popularity is dropping. I am absolutely convinced he will be convicted. I have no idea what the outcome, what the penalty will be. I'm just hoping they also convict Mr. Šainović and some of the other people that moved on his orders and carried them out. [Note: Milosevic died in March 2006 prior to a verdict.]

Q: Did you have any contact with the State Department about this testimony?

WALKER: They called me from the court on Thursday afternoon to say we're sorry to give you so little notice, but can you be over here for Monday. I said, you get me a ticket and I'll be on the plane Sunday night. They said, well, you know, we continue to have problems with the State Department over other witnesses. Have they talked to you? I said, no, they haven't. They said, okay, fine. So, when I hung up I thought well, maybe I should call the Department and tell them I'm going. I call them and I came in and told the desk officer or someone like that. Sure enough I got a call back from a guy I've known in L, the legal advisor's office, for a good number of years. He used to handle Latin American subjects. He handled Noriega when I was dealing with that. He called up and said, Bill, I understand you're going over to The Hague. I said, yes. He said, well, you know, anyone talk to you about it? I said, no, I just heard that no one else is going over, from official from Washington. Well, that's right. I said, well, but I'm retired. Oh, no, that's right, Bill, you can go over, absolutely, no problem, but could you come in and see us? Maybe we could chat about it and give you our prospective on how it's going? I said, sure, I'd love to. So, on Friday afternoon I went in and sat in the cafeteria for about an hour and a half with him and another lawyer who was handling this stuff. Didn't learn anything, but chatted and gossiped about who the players were and who Geoffrey Nice was and who the judges were and how Milosevic was playing it and they said, we came to the conclusion that they might have been worried that I was going to reveal sources and methods or something. I said, look, I didn't get any Intel. In fact, if anything I

complained about no Intel, so I can't tell you sources or methods on stuff I never saw. They said, what if he asked you, he's pushing this thing about there were CIA people, there were a lot of spies on your operation. I said, I will truthfully say it wouldn't surprise me, but at the same time I didn't know any of them. That's not much of an answer. That doesn't move his knowledge very far forward. I had an hour and a half the day before I left.

Q: Have you had any, when you came back and all, did any sort of Serb types in the United States contact you or did you have any contact?

WALKER: No.

Q: Or Albanians?

WALKER: Well, Albanians, I forget to mention, I have become very involved with the American Albanian community. I've gone to a number of cities around the country. Anytime my personal morale drops and I want to get a burst of juice flowing through my veins, I say sure I'll go to Boston or Waterbury, Connecticut or Chicago, Illinois or Detroit. I even went to Toronto, Canada to meet the Albanian community there. I go to these places and I swear to God I go to New York and I'm walking through Times Square and this family comes up to me and surrounds me and starts saying in very broken English, Walker, Walker, Račak. I realize these thank God are not Serbs, they're Albanians. I've been involved with the Albanian community here to quite an extent and I hope to continue to do so.

Q: How do you think things are going to develop with Kosovo? It's that amorphous thing right now. It is in, is it out?

WALKER: As these things often go, in fact almost always go, in my experience, you have this crisis that dominated the news, that grabbed the world for a certain period of time. The NATO bombing campaign, pulling in people as far away as China when their embassy was bombed. It was the big issue for a while. It comes to a partial solution, which is where it is now. The international community moves in with great promises of assistance and we're going to see this through to the end, but things happen. People move on. The international community has not put the funds into Kosovo that they promised. The European community was promising them billions. I don't know what they put in, but it's nothing near that. Peoples' attention has drifted off. Now we're talking about Afghanistan. We're talking about terror. We're talking about Iraq. Limited resources. We want to get our troops out of the Balkans. We've got new people in the White House. New people at the State Department who that was their war, this is our war which is another part of the world. You can see the participants in UNMIK (United Nations Mission in Kosovo) moving out. We being among those who are always talking about moving out although we say no. So things are a bit iffy in Kosovo. My own personal feeling is that however it goes, whether it is resolved in a more definitive way sooner or later there is no way that Kosovo goes back under Yugoslavia. That there is no way that these people, 90% maybe more now of the population, 95% since many Serbs left, that

these people are going to tolerate being put in any sort of relationship, especially one in which they are a subordinate to Belgrade. They're not going to accept any sort of relationship with Belgrade at all. To me that means independence. Now, when it comes, or how it comes, or what it takes, I have no idea, but I mean a big question is what lessons were learned in Belgrade? Is the new government that different from the Milosevic government? There are signs that it is and there are signs that it isn't. I was told that last week the president came to New York and gave a lecture at NYU or one of the universities up there and the room was full of Serb Americans. He whipped it up to a froth of nationalism and a couple of people who were there who were not Serbs and were not particularly pro-Serbia were saying, God they haven't learned anything. They're still talking about when they recover Kosovo and how it was stolen from them by NATO and that kind of stuff and this was all a plot to destroy the Serb nation. They really haven't picked up on; they're in denial as to what they were doing in Kosovo in terms of mistreating people. I just don't see at least two people, it's like how is Israel-Palestine, going to ever come together in some fashion that is minimally tolerable for everybody? I don't know. It's got to happen sometime, whether it is next year or the next millennium, I don't know.

The same sort of story in Kosovo. I've got a feeling the Balkans are not as difficult to work out. I think all the countries in the Balkans, even Serbia, want to be part of Europe, want to show that they are European, and to gain recognition of such, to join the EU, to join the various European bodies, they're going to have to show less zealousness for their nationalism and their history than they've shown so far.

Q: Well, Bill, I want to thank you very much. This has been an interesting trip.

WALKER: Wow.

End of interview