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Yale-UN Oral History

Sir Marrack Goulding
James S. Sutterlin, Interviewer
June 30, 1998
Oxford, England

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James S. Sutterlin: This is an interview with Sir Marrack Goulding, in Oxford, England, on June 30, 1998. The interviewer is Sutterlin.

First of all, I would like to thank you, Sir Marrack Goulding, for agreeing to participate in this Yale Oral History project. As is usual in such cases, I would like to ask you to identify what your position was when you became associated with the United Nations effort, first of all in Namibia. At that time, of course, the Namibia operation went back a long time in UN history. But what I would like to get on the record as we begin, is when you came into the picture so to speak and what you were doing there.

Marrack Goulding: I had joined the United Nations Secretariat on the first of January 1986, succeeding Brian Urquhart as Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, in which capacity I was in charge of the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations, and some aspects of the peacemaking efforts of the United Nations, especially as regards the Middle East and Cyprus. I remained in that position until March of 1993. In this conversation I will refer to what is now called the Department of Peacekeeping Operations as SPA, which was the office of Special Political Affairs, as you remember, Jim. I think that's more accurate than DPKO. So I was in charge of peacekeeping, and my responsibility kicked in when it had been established that there was a need for a peacekeeping operation, or when it was clear there was going to be a need for a

peacekeeping operation, as will be clear from what I have to say both about Namibia and about Cambodia. One of the problems was the transition from the peacemaking effort, from negotiation of the peace settlement into implementation that involved the peacekeeping operation. It didn't work terribly well in either Namibia or Cambodia, but it worked much better in Central America. This was because the Under-Secretary-General responsible for peacekeeping was brought at a very early stage into the negotiation and participation in the negotiation; and was directly responsible for the negotiation of the military aspects.

JS: In Central America.



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MG: The peace settlement in El Salvador, whereas in Namibia, the key role in the negotiation had been played by the Americans, by Chet Crocker. The Contact Group had ceased to be an effective negotiation mechanism after the Americans adopted linkage, and the other four members of the contact group were unhappy about that. And so the Americans went on alone. I had been very much involved in this in my previous capacity as the British Ambassador to Angola, because at that time the Americans had no representation at all in Angola, and the British Ambassador was, with the agreement of Washington, one of the channels through which communications would pass to the Angolan government. That, in parenthesis, involved some difficulties because the European Community, as it then was, didn't approve of linkage, didn't approve of what the Americans were doing. So it had to be kept a top, top secret, that the British Ambassador was involved in this exercise. And one spent every Sunday on the beach,

with the *chers collègues* pressing for information. "Somebody must be involved, somebody must be handling this visit," ...they said, "Who could it be, Mig, any idea who it could be?" ...and I always had to play the dummy and say, "I don't know."

So I had been familiar with the negotiations at that stage, then when I joined the UN, I was no longer involved, because the Americans were talking to Martti Ahtisaari, who had been designated as the first Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and they were not talking to the Office of Special Political Affairs, or not much. And at that time, I'm now talking about '87-'88, Martti and Cedric Thornberry, who was his right-hand man, a very efficient right-hand man in these matters, were not terribly keen about the idea of implementation being the responsibility of the Office of Special Political Affairs. In particular, they were not keen about any idea that Martti would report to the Secretary-General through the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs. As you know, Jim, in the five traditional peacekeeping operations that existed at that time, the head of the operation was a military officer reporting to the Secretary-General through the Under-Secretary-General in New York. Martti didn't want to fit into that mold. There was never hostility between Martti and me on this. There was a little bit of tension with Cedric, right at the beginning, in the last weeks before the operation was to be implemented. The way it worked out, and we'll come back to this in later questions, was that the demands of business, and the fact that (I'm banging my own drum here) we ran quite an efficient operation at SPA, meant that Martti was on the telephone to me all the time. He couldn't get to Pérez de Cuéllar on the phone all the time, so the work tended to come through me. *De facto*, a relationship developed in which after the meetings of the

Namibia Task Force, it was I who would draft the instructions and send them in my name to Martti. This never created any problem at all between us; we had a very honest relationship once he was there on the ground; it worked very well—one of the best operations we've ever had.

JS: Yes, I think that's the general consensus, but what you say is particularly interesting because one of the reasons that is usually given for the great success in Namibia was the extensive planning that took place in advance, the planning for UNTAG. And to what extent was SPA involved in that?

MG: To a very little extent. Except that General Timothy Dibuama, who was the military advisor (at that time I think to the Secretary-General; or maybe he was still military advisor to the Under-Secretaries-General for Special Political Affairs), was the person who advised Martti and Cedric about the military aspects. And he was close to Prem Chand.

[Interruption]

MG: Timothy Dibuama was the person who was the main source of military advice to Martti and Cedric. He had been working on the Namibia file for a long time. He got on well with Prem Chand, who a long time previously had been designated as the Force Commander for the eventual UNTAG. He kept me informed of what was going on in general terms, but it wasn't until the last few weeks that the civilian part of SPA was brought into the planning.

JS: I see, because there was some controversy in the Security Council as to the budget.

MG: Well, let me move back a bit, Jim. The operation had been on the books for a long time, been in prospect for a long time. Quite a lot of work had been done before I arrived, including by Brian, I think, in the early '80s, about the operation and the people in FOD, or whatever it was called then, perhaps it was called something different, wasn't it? Anyway, the function became FOD and now FALD, they had been out, and done all their quantity surveying.



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JS: The Field Office, you mean.

MG: Field Office, that's right. They had done their work, so a great deal of information was available, indeed planning documents were available in the, whatever it was called then, the Department of Administration and Management. Cedric had very much got on top of those, and Martti at that time was Under-Secretary-General of Administration and Management. The other thing which he and Cedric had done very well was to identify staff members who could fill civilian posts in UNTAG when it was fielded. It was a great achievement; I do have a great admiration for them. They didn't just go around the usual political bits of the Secretariat; they went into the economic and social sections and got some extremely good people. So it was very well planned in that respect. Then suddenly the negotiation accelerated: end of the Cold War, Soviets started helping, and so on. The planning accelerated, and we in SPA were brought in. It turned out at that stage that the

size of the operation, especially on the military side, was more than the major powers felt willing to finance, and the usual paring down exercise took place.

At one time we also discussed a proposal by a commercial firm—a sort of “Brown and Root-type firm”—to do the whole of the logistic side as a commercial contract. But there was a general feeling that that was not an avenue to go down. I personally think we should have explored it a bit more. It was understandable that the people who had been working in Administration and Management on planning this operation for a long time felt they had a vested interest and wanted to do it themselves. I think it’s arguable, even though this operation did come out under-budget, that it would have been quite interesting to have contracted out the logistics, as was done subsequently, to a limited extent, in other operations.

But there was a crisis about the budget, because the major powers wanted to reduce it, and as a result the budget was, as you say in your question, adopted only on the first of March, one month before the operation. And 11 days, no, 12 days, 13 days after the Security Council resolution. That’s fantastically quick by modern standards. The average now is six months between a Security Council decision and the adoption of the budget. Again that says a lot for the preparation that had been done in Administration and Management, that the budget could be adopted so quickly. It had to be massaged a bit when the Permanent Five insisted on reduction in the military, and there were delays. But I don’t think myself that the budgetary issue was a major cause of delay in the deployment of force. It was simply the problem of getting the troops out there in time.

[Note by M.G. on 2 June 2000: having since read in papers and my own diaries for this time, I now believe the budgetary argument was a major cause of delay.]

JS: Could you elaborate a little bit on that, because this is often cited, the budget is often cited, including by the former Secretary-General, as one of the reasons why the troops were not there.

MG: I think, I can't remember, or maybe I didn't even know, because I wasn't terribly involved in the deployment stages of this operation. But I think the problem may have been that yes, the troop contributing countries had been identified, and knew what they were expected to provide. I can remember going to Finland in about '87, and being shown all the kits sitting in the store ready to go. The budgetary delay made it difficult for Administration and Management to charter the ships needed, and the heavy aircraft, because they couldn't enter into financial commitments without the budgetary provision being there. I don't know the detail of this, James, I'm afraid.

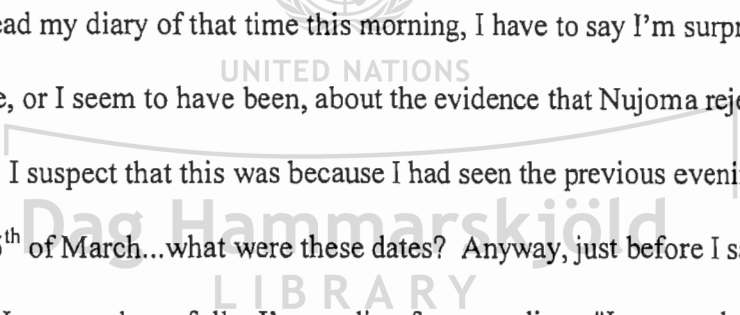
JS: And you were not involved in the decisions, out of necessity, to order some of the equipment from South Africa?

MG: No.

JS: Then let's go on to your visit to the region in March, to be particular, to Angola, where you had conversations. How would you describe the impressions that you gained at that time in talking to Nujoma?

MG: Well, my impression was that we had a problem with Nujoma. And your book, or Javier's book, accurately reflects what he said to me in the conversation which we had on the 25th of March, was it? The 26th of March.

JS: That's just about right.



MG: Having read my diary of that time this morning, I have to say I'm surprised at how relaxed they were, or I seem to have been, about the evidence that Nujoma rejected the 1982 agreement. I suspect that this was because I had seen the previous evening, the evening of the 25th of March...what were these dates? Anyway, just before I saw Sam, I saw dos Santos. I prepared carefully, I'm reading from my diary, "I prepared carefully for the meeting. It went better than I expected. Dos Santos tried to escape the subject of SWAPO bases, but eventually said that Angola would honor the commitments it had accepted in 1982, that an UNTAG military delegation could return to Luanda early next week, and that by then the necessary Angolan liaison officers would have been nominated." The next day began with a sparky meeting with Sam Nujoma. He launched straight into our working paper on Angolan monitoring of SWAPO bases. He said this was totally unacceptable, and it goes on as in your book. I think that I must have been lulled into a false...or into under-rating the seriousness of what Nujoma had said—by the

belief that dos Santos was going to get him into line. If I can say in self-defense, we'd seen a lot of dos Santos getting Nujoma into line in the preceding months as those negotiations were brought to conclusion. Dos Santos had always wanted to get SWAPO out of Angola. The change in the Soviet position—the willingness of the Soviets to work with Crocker—led him to see a possibility of doing that. And of course he had already conceded the point about the withdrawal of Cuban troops. I made a mistake.

Now the only thing I question in your book is where Javier says he didn't get the letter, or the report, until the 28th. I'm not sure quite how that happened. The meeting with Nujoma had been on the 23rd, that's right. As far as I can tell from the diary, I did a long cable drafting session on the evening of the day I'd seen Nujoma. I'd seen dos Santos on the 22nd; I saw Nujoma on the 23rd; and that evening I had a long cable writing session. And then I had two days, a weekend, to spend in Zimbabwe before going back to the Middle East. And I can't believe I would have spent that weekend going down to Greater Zimbabwe without having sent the report to Javier about the important conversations. At that time I thought that dos Santos was more important than Nujoma was. So I don't know how Javier didn't see the report until the 28th, whether it got lost in the machine in New York, or... [Note by M.G. on 2 June 2000: I have now done some research on this which will, I hope, be published in my book *Peacemonger*, a copy of this draft will be sent separately to J.S.]

JS: Well that is really something that requires clarification because there is that time lapse which again, some people have suggested, was one of the reasons the United Nations was not adequately prepared.

MG: I also did a letter, a cable writing session, the diary tells me, on the evening of the 28th. But by that time, I was in Tehran. I was writing about the difficult negotiations I had with the revolutionary guards in Tehran about the plotting of the no-man's land between Iran and Iraq.

JS: Where would the cable most likely have gone out? Angola, or from...?

MG: It would have gone out from Zimbabwe, I would guess.



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JS: Zimbabwe?

MG: I was being looked after by UNDP in Harare. Of course they wouldn't have had code cables. I suppose it is conceivable I kept the cable with me until I got to code facilities in Tehran. It would be interesting to know the date on that cable...

JS: Right, because that is one of the mysteries of this particular operation. At least that clarifies that you wrote the cable.

MG: I certainly wrote the cable and as is clear from Javier's book, I clearly gave a full account of the conversation with Nujoma, didn't hide the obstreperousness of Nujoma. I'd be interested to know what the cable said about the previous meeting with dos Santos on the previous evening, when he was categorical: they were going to do what they said

they would do, which was to monitor the SWAPO bases in Angola. That was in the 1982 document.

Can I say in parenthesis, and this is not to be a self-excuse, that that episode is one illustration of the great problems you can get into if you start amending an agreement that's already been adopted, without making sure that all the parties to that agreement are equally aware of the amendment and have an equal perception of what they think it implies for them. If I may make a criticism of Javier, I think that he had a slight tendency not to be as open as possible. The classic case was the Western Sahara, where the Moroccans and the Polisario were allowed to have very different views of what they'd agreed to and what was going to happen. I think myself, painful though it can be sometimes and time-consuming though it can be—it may delay things as much as two years—you've got to get the two sides 'round the table, and say: "This is the amendment we've agreed to, and this is what we, the UN, think of this, and are you sure, both sure that you accept that?" That didn't happen in the case of the 1982 agreement.

JS: I'd like to go further into the Western Sahara part, because some studies have come out recently which have been very critical of Pérez de Cuéllar in that connection.

MG: Rightly so, in my judgment.

JS: That is covered in his book at some length, it's certainly not his view, but that he was overly under the influence, some might say, of the King of Morocco.

MG: I think he was overly trustful of Issa Diallo. He delegated a great deal of that negotiation to Issa Diallo.

JS: That's true.

MG: Everybody gets accused of being unduly influenced by the Moroccans. That's the absolutely standard. ...Pérez de Cuéllar, Boutros-Ghali, Goulding, everyone, all "have been paid by the Moroccans." That's not true. Moroccans can be very generous in their hospitality; one has to be careful not to be sort of misled into that. But I don't believe anyone was over-influenced by the King of Morocco. I do think that Javier allowed himself to be deluded by Issa into thinking there was more common ground between the parties than there was.

JS: Well, to go back to Namibia, what was the reaction in the Secretariat, and particularly SPA, when the incursions by SWAPO did take place, and the UN was not quite prepared?

MG: Well I'm not in a position to answer that, James, because I had been sent down to Angola to talk to Nujoma and dos Santos about this problem, about the SWAPO bases, in the last week of March. I went to them but found they weren't there; they'd gone to Zimbabwe for this Front-Line States meeting. I followed them there, to Harare, and I saw them both there. I then went off to Iran-Iraq to visit UNIIMOG. I was just coming out

after that visit, when this horror happened on the first of April. I came out from Baghdad, and then I came to Amman, and then I got the message from Na Jah to go to Luanda as quickly as possible, which I did. It was a hell of a journey from Amman to Cairo to Addis, to Kigali, to Bujumbura, to Luanda. Then I spent almost a whole month in Angola. I didn't get back to New York until about the second or third of May. So I can't tell you what the reaction at headquarters was to the reports from Ahtisaari, nor was I present during PdC's telephone conversation with Pik [Botha]. I was in Luanda, in Angola, for most of April. Initially in Luanda, then in Lubango, trying to get all concerned, which included Nujoma, who was down in the south by about the tenth of April, and the Chief of Staff of the Angolan army, to get the SWAPO fighters back under some kind of monitoring. It was only when that had been done, and the diplomatic process in South Africa, with the Americans and the Russians and the Cubans and so on, had come to a successful conclusion that I was released and went down to South Africa. Or rather, I went down to Namibia to see how UNTAG was getting on. Then I spent a day in Praetoria and then came back to New York.

JS: Did you find that the SWAPO camps were ever effectively monitored by the Angolans?

MG: It was very difficult to get access to them. I think that they were effectively monitored after the lads had been got back from Namibia—the survivors. I don't believe there was any Angolan intent to monitor them beforehand. I don't think that that was with malice aforethought; it was obviously not in Angola's interest that the Namibian

operation should fail. I think it was partly a mistaken belief, which I shared, that they had got Nujoma under control; partly, an assessment that it really couldn't be in Nujoma's interest to do this; and partly Angolan inefficiency. They just didn't get their officers into the camps in time. Some of those areas, in the South, had become kind of "no-go" areas. SWAPO had been there such a long time, and they were so security-conscious. They didn't want anyone to see the preparations they were making very cautiously when the war was still going on. And so the Angolans didn't have a sort of database, as it were, for immediately switching on a system of monitoring. But I think that the debacle at the beginning of April it was very threatening to the Angolans. The Cuban withdrawal was underway. If the whole Namibia thing broke down, they would be naked in front of the South African forces. So they did get SWAPO under control.



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JS: Did you reach any conclusions yourself as to why SWAPO undertook these incursions?

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MG: No, I couldn't understand it, and I still can't understand it. I talked a lot to the Namibian I knew best (because I saw a lot of him when I was Ambassador in Angola), Hidipo Hamutsuya, who was the Secretary of Information. He was very evasive and embarrassed about this. Theo-Ben Gurirab later on was equally evasive and embarrassed. I think it was foolishness, straightforward foolishness on Sam's part. I quite respect Sam, I think he's done extraordinarily well as President of Namibia. I think he's shown statesmanship, he's shown a capacity to listen to good advice and act on it. I think that was reciprocated by a lot of statesmanship on the South Africans' side. The way both of

them encouraged the whites to stay in Namibia; the way both of them were patient about Walvis Bay and didn't allow it to become an issue between the newly independent Namibia and South Africa: that was real statesmanship. Namibia has benefited very much from it. So I've become an admirer of Sam. I wasn't much of an admirer when we were neighbors in Rwanda. He used to come down because he liked my then-wife's cucumber sandwiches and strawberry cake and tea, but he was always strident, he had an infantile anti-imperialist attitude. But I got to know him pretty well during those three or four weeks in southern Angola. He was then a terribly troubled man, because of the casualties he had suffered and the rap he was getting, including from his old friends the Russians, for doing something so foolish. Of course he was very unpopular with the Angolans, and he was a sobered man. But I just can't understand why he made the mistake in the first place.

JS: Now were you back in New York at the time the task force was formed?

MG: The task force was formed as a response to the crisis in April. And I got back and found that it was at times an almost hysterical body. The hysteria was led by Viru [Dayal]. Aby Farah was there but didn't join in. James [Jonah], I think, was there, and he was a bit hysterical too.

JS: Yes he was a member.

MG: It took quite an effort. When I came back, I was very unpopular. It was fact that a) I had failed to give adequate warning that this was going to happen; b) I had been too ready to agree with Ahtisaari about the inescapability of letting the South African troops go out and deal with this incursion. It was felt I'd taken an anti-SWAPO position. Snide references were made to the fact that Mrs. Thatcher was in Windhoek on the first of April or the second of April, I think. And I found that the task force had become a kind of old-fashioned Non-Aligned Movement body. Carl Fleischhauer was the voice of common sense there, but he was also the lawyer. It was quite a political job to persuade these people of some of the realities on the ground and to persuade them that we were beyond the stage where we were going to strike anti-South African poses. It was a real operation, a settlement plan was being implemented. It wasn't the South Africans who had broken the rules from Day One; it was SWAPO. This was something that we couldn't turn a blind eye to. We obviously didn't want to—or I didn't want to—accuse anybody, because I wanted to get the thing back on track. I think that we succeeded in the end.

Timothy Dibuama was very helpful in this. Brave, sometimes. We did succeed in getting some common sense into the task force. And then the task force began working. Again it will sound as though I am beating my own drum, but the reason why, one of the reasons why it began to work, was realistic common sense. Second was that once I got back, SPA was providing a very good service as the secretariat, as it were, of the task force. The cables came first to us, we made sure they were distributed; we prepared drafts in time for the daily meeting of the task force. We took action on the decisions taken. The meetings finished at 6:00 or 7:00, so we in SPA stayed very late sending off the mass of cables of

instructions overnight to Ahtisaari. So things began to work very well. I would say that by, certainly by the time Javier [Pérez de Cuéllar] went out there in July, by sort of the middle of June, things were working pretty well, and the ship had regained its stability.

JS: Now that's from the point of view of New York, so to speak. I recall myself that in this rapid formation of the task force, there was a sense that UNTAG, and in particular Martti Ahtisaari, was out of control, and that there had to be more control exercised from New York. Did you sense that?

MG: Very much so. I was regarded as the enemy by the task force, because I had been hob-nobbing with Ahtisaari the previous week. And had gone with him to either Pretoria or Cape Town. They thought that was a terrible thing, I shouldn't have done that, I was told. Viru [Dayal] said, "You should not have gone to Cape Town." I think I didn't get their permission to go. The easiest way was to get out was to get into South Africa and fly out from there.

JS: Now you mentioned earlier Cedric Thornberry. I believe if I'm not mistaken, he was one of the sources of distrust, so to speak, on the part of the people in New York.

MG: Correct. Cedric had many enemies for all sorts of reasons, and there was a distinct anti-Cedric focus sometimes in the task force.

JS: Which perhaps added to the distrust that the task force had of what was going on in UNTAG.

MG: I think that's right, but I repeat, Jim, that I would guess that by the middle of June (I would have to consult my diaries more carefully), we were back on course and yes, there were differences of opinion, but there wasn't by then the assumption that Ahtisaari and Thornberry must be getting too much involved with the South Africans. And I would say that the problems then were not actually relations between UNTAG and New York, but the problem was within UNTAG, it was a Prem Chand problem. That was quite a severe problem, and it was never really resolved. [Note by M.G.: having now consulted my diaries, I see that this was an over-rosy recollection. The tensions continued at least until the elections in November.]

JS: You're talking now about the appointment of the Deputy to Ahtisaari.

MG: That's right. Prem was perceived as being far too close to the South Africans. And Prem was perceived as being someone who was outside Ahtisaari's control.

JS: When you say perceived, now where, in New York?

MG: In New York, yes. Prem had, I think for genuine logistic reasons, insisted on having his headquarters, his own office, not in Martti's office, but down by the other side of town, by the headquarters of the military component. And that created a geographical

divide, and a certain policy divide. Prem was a very sensitive person. He didn't like Cedric much. He didn't really accept, I think it is fair to say, that there was a civilian command in this field operation. He'd been Force Commander in Cyprus, where yes, there had been a civilian official, but Prem was very much the boss in Cyprus. I think he always thought he would be very much the boss in Namibia. He had established close personal relations with some of the South African generals, and they liked him. When he found that he was being reined in politically by Martti, he didn't like it very much.

JS: Well I think the real crisis came when it was decided that there had to be an African deputy. At that point, he wrote a private letter submitting his resignation to the Secretary-General.

MG: I don't think I knew that.

JS: Well it was never released. Handwritten.

MG: This was something that we felt we had to do, it was almost the price that the OAU was demanding, if they were going to reestablish confidence in UNTAG. An African deputy SRSG and an African deputy force commander. Opande turned out to be very good. He was a well-chosen officer, he got on very well with Prem, also had a bit of military tradition, and very correct as a soldier.

JS: Going back to that subject, of course there was extensive criticism among OAU members of Ahtisaari. How influential did you find these criticisms of the OAU members within the task force?

MG: Very strong. As I say, the task force when I got back seemed like a department of the Non-Aligned Movement, and so in that context, criticisms by the OAU, the regional organization concerned, had a big impact.

JS: There's one question I wanted to be rather specific on. It was often said, actually erroneously, that Martti Ahtisaari took the decision to agree to the release of the South African soldiers from cantonment on his own. I don't know where you were at this particular point.

MG: I was in the air, it was a long journey.

JS: But in fact, there is in the record a clear indication that Ahtisaari did consult the Secretary-General, and the Secretary-General reluctantly had agreed. Can you elaborate on that at all?

MG: I've always believed that to be the case. I think it was unfortunate that Mrs. Thatcher was around at that time. Because this enabled people to say, "It's just Ahtisaari being manipulated by Mrs. Thatcher. But I know Ahtisaari pretty well, and to me it's

inconceivable that he would take a position of that kind without consulting the Secretary-General. He's a very politically sensitive and correct person, Martti.

JS: Well it's clearly in the record that he did consult. But I was just wondering, because the opposite impression does exist, and I wondered whether you had any, could elucidate why this opposite impression, and perhaps Mrs. Thatcher's presence was one reason.

MG: I suspect that the atmosphere that prevailed in the task force at that time, and as I say, still prevailed when I got back at the beginning of May, was an atmosphere in which people were inclined to forget that Martti had consulted the S-G. There was a tendency to blame everything on UNTAG headquarters.

JS: That's another element, and that's why this question is here, about the conversation with Botha that the Secretary-General had, because the question did come up in that conversation, also. But you were not there, so you can't...

MG: No, I'm afraid I can't comment on that.

JS: In fact, nobody else was present at that particular point. I want to go now to a more positive aspect, the Namibian...

MG: Was it Legwaila or Opande that caused Prem Chand to threaten to resign?

JS: Well Prem Chand did not know who the deputy was going to be.

MG: But it was the deputy SRSG that he objected to, not the deputy force commander?

JS: That's right. Because he had assumed that he was filling that role.

MG: Now I do remember that. Now I can remember. I got a magnificent letter from him, that he didn't write about resignation, but I remember him being very upset by it, yes.



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JS: Because once a deputy would be appointed, then he would of course lose that role.

MG: ...of being in charge in Ahtisaari's absence. Absolutely, that's right.

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JS: That's right.

MG: And there was some documentary thing, wasn't there some report way back at the planning stage that said that the force commander would be deputy to the Special Representative? I think that actually we were changing the written rules.

JS: That I don't know, that I don't know. But of course as we have already said, there was great pressure from the OAU to put in an African. But Prem Chand did stay on, at

least. But I want to go to the positive side, and get your assessment on that, because on the whole, the Namibia operation, I think, is viewed as an enormous success, one of the greatest successes. What, from your perspective, what were the elements that really lent the success to the operation?

MG: It had been long and thoroughly planned. The settlement was a good settlement, a well-negotiated settlement, with one exception of this codicil, in 1982, which led to trouble. Thirdly, I would say that the leadership was very professional, that Martti and Cedric formed a very professional, and imaginative, leadership. There hadn't been a UN peacekeeping operation of this kind before. I've already spoken about their readiness to bring in outsiders, people outside the politico-military part of the Secretariat. They were very conscious of public relations, and organized that extremely well. They were good on the police side. We hadn't had police on this scale—not since the Congo, anyway. And the fact that the police commissioner was from the Irish Republic helped, and Cedric took a great interest in the police, because he had a human rights background. And finally, I have to say that the South Africans were easy people to work with; perhaps not easy, but reliable people to work with. That was not the perception in the task force. There it was thought that the South Africans were cheating all the time. Very often I had to be the lone voice in the task force, "They are not cheating. You're assuming they're cheating." Ahtisaari's not reporting they're cheating. And if you look at the texts, they're not cheating. And Carl would often support me on that point...

The South African officials on the ground, especially the military, hated the orders they were getting, but they were very correct, and rather strict in discipline, so they

carried out the orders—with ill grace, it is true, but in the end they did what they were told to do. That meant that you could rely upon them. It wouldn't be pleasant, but you could rely upon them to do what they were told to do. That's very often not the case in these situations, where officials will find ways of twisting or ignoring their orders. But in Namibia it was the case and as a result, we came out, as I say, ahead of schedule and below budget.

JS: Now there are two, three questions that arise from that. One pertains precisely to police, to CIVPOL. As you say, it seems to have been a success in Namibia, whereas elsewhere it's been problematic. And I wondered how were the CIVPOL personnel selected? Did SPA, was it involved in this or not?

MG: No, this is done in Administration and Management. And as I recall, Cedric, I think, got the commissioner to come to New York and help with the recruitment. As in the case of military personnel, we asked governments to send contingents of police officers, and the quality they sent varied very much. It varied very much because the structures and chains of command and procedures of police forces vary much more from country to country than in the case of military forces. And so getting homogeneity was quite difficult.

JS: Well, the interesting point here is that in the case of Namibia it seemed to have worked, whereas in talking to Mr.

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JS: ...that CIVPOL seems to have been a weak element in Cambodia, and a strong element in Namibia. How would you account for that?

MG: In Namibia, you had a very efficient structured, disciplined police force for the UN-CIVPOL people to work with. You didn't have that in Cambodia.

JS: You're referring to SWAPOL now.



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MG: Yes. SWAPOL were professional policemen; they did horrendous things but they were professional policemen. And other professional policemen found they could work with them. I come back to the point, Jim, that in the end they did what they were told, even though they didn't like it.

JS: Now, in Namibia also, there was almost a tripartite structure, where you had political officers in the field, you had the peacekeeping military contingent, and you had the CIVPOL. They worked apparently well together. What do you have to say about that, because it's a rather unusual structure.

MG: I would say that good leadership from the center, spreading this ethos of cooperation, good selection of the district chiefs, or whatever they were called (I come

back to Martti and Cedric's skill in the selection of the people) and thirdly, I would say that after the initial disaster was overcome, it was a tremendously positive atmosphere there. People really felt that they were pioneers, things were going well, they loved the country. It was very exciting, and it was very happy. There was nobody who felt that they were being sidelined, that they didn't have enough to do, except for Prem Chand. A very happy mission. [Note by M.G., 2 June 2000: another over-rosy recollection.]

JS: Now you mentioned SWAPOL. There were some problems with, I don't know how to pronounce it, Koevoet, were you involved in trying to bring that under control at all?



MG: Yes, very much so, it was discussed a lot in the task force. Representations were made to the South Africans. And reading my diary, quite early on, it said, they had been disbanded.

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JS: That's right.

MG: They went on covertly for a while.

JS: In the north, apparently.

MG: Yes.

JS: ...and the Secretary-General, Pérez de Cuéllar, took it up repeatedly, I think, with the South Africans.

MG: Including when he went out in July, as I recall.

JS: Right. And that brings me to another question. There was a remarkable, when it actually came to the elections, the political parties, the various political parties, worked rather harmoniously together. The Secretary-General, when he went out there as you said in July, held a meeting with the various leaders of the different political parties. The first time this perhaps had been done. Did you, from your perspective, I guess at that point in New York, did you find that the Secretary-General did have an impact in that visit to Namibia, which followed a short stay in South Africa, I believe?

MG: Preceded it, I believe.

JS: Or preceded, yes.

MG: I was with him on that.

JS: You were with him on that trip, and you were actually present when he met with the leaders?

MG: Correct.

JS: What was your impression?

MG: That the DTA, that's what it was called, Dirk Mudge's outfit was pretty withdrawn, and suspicious. Suspicious that the UN was pro-SWAPO, working with SWAPO. But all the others were tremendously excited, the Secretary-General of the United Nations there, they're having a meeting with him, this place a sort of shuttered colony where the South Africans had kept this kind of political activity under control, having the Secretary-General of the United Nations telling them how should behave, how they should hold an election, it was very exciting.



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JS: And they did, there was a degree of sophistication as to what the Secretary-General represented then, and what the United Nations represented. You found that.

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MG: Yes. There was certainly a great awareness of what the United Nations represented. And as I say, it was all so optimistic and positive. It was a marvelous place to be in Namibia during that operation. The refugees were coming back, nobody's killing anybody, there was some trouble with Koevost, but not that bad. There was a great sense of purpose. The UN was very, very popular. It wasn't like *la pesta blanca* in El Salvador.

JS: That would be your overall assessment of the operation there, in Namibia, a very positive thing. Was there something in the Namibia operation to be learned that was useful in subsequent operations?

MG: This was missed. We were a little bit inebriated by the success of Namibia. We didn't analyze carefully enough why it had been successful. We just said, "Well the UN is good at these things." We didn't realize how much the success depended on that long period of planning. We didn't realize how much it depended on there being a good agreement, understood by both sides. When you think that Western Sahara came along what, almost immediately afterwards, that shows that we hadn't learned the lesson.



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JS: And most notably, Cambodia.

MG: Cambodia is different. Cambodia was different. Cambodia was different because what went wrong there was that a major party withdrew from the agreement halfway through. I have a lot to say about Cambodia, but we'll come back to that.

JS: We'll get to that.

MG: We didn't learn the lessons about the importance of public relations. And that's partly a budgetary weakness. It's easier to put a battalion of infantry in, than putting an information officer in, because the information officer has to be on a post, and the post has to be created, and the post can't be created until the budget's been approved, and so

on and so on. I believe, with hindsight, that one of the greatest mistakes was not to have, in all these operations, not to have the information office there at the very beginning, because you can't rely on the parties to convey accurately to the people what the UN's come there to do. You've got to do it yourself. They will only start telling the truth about the UN when both parties have become sure that this is in their interests, as it were. So those were the main lessons that we failed to realize. And I suppose you could also say, Jim, that we failed to learn the lesson of the disaster that can befall you if you don't have your military strength on the ground before the operation.

JS: You mention public relations, or public information. Communication, I judge, was easier because of a general familiarity with English. Would you say that was one of the reasons, or one of the things that separated Namibia, in a way, in its success from some other operations that were less successful?

MG: No, I think what separated it was a clear information policy from the very beginning, information policy which had been defined by Martti and Cedric, especially Cedric, without much consultation with other departments including DPI. Before the operation started, they got some very good advice about how you implement an information policy in a place like Namibia. They had t-shirts, pencils and balloons, and that stuff, not just the printed word, not just the television program.

JS: Now the final question here goes back to the Secretary-General. He was more willing perhaps to deal with the South Africans than some other members of the

Secretariat. What was your overall impression of the Secretary-General's role in the success of the achievement of independence for Namibia.

MG: I would say the Secretary-General kept his head on the first of April. That was his greatest achievement. You know him, Jim, far better than I do. He's not a sort of hands-on manager. He's not an executive chairman. At those task force meetings he was often silent almost throughout—listening very carefully to what was being said, but not intervening. Very often it was a tussle between Carl and me on the one hand, and Viru and James Jonah on the other, with Aby being rather silent. But I think when the moment of crisis came, the defining moment, as Alvaro would say, Pérez de Cuéllar kept his head and took a painful decision which he knew was going to get him into trouble with the non-aligned world, and again, with some of his own staff. But his nerve didn't crack there. I imagine he was getting calls from Mother Thatcher, and probably from Washington, too, at that time.

JS: It happened too rapidly, I think.

MG: I thought Thatcher called him from down there.

JS: She may have, but there's no record if she did. But that's not totally unusual, because there are some other calls that she made to him that are not in the record.

MG: So that is his greatest achievement—that he kept us all in line. I think that the task force would have been more difficult had he not been there. In a way, he imposed certain restraints on our behavior.

JS: Is there any other comment, general or specific, that you'd like to put on the record with regard to Namibia before we move on to a different tape?

MG: I don't think so, no.

JS: Thank you.



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END OF TAPE 1, Side 2

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JS: We would now like to move to Cambodia, and again, if I could start to ask you about SPA's, actually earlier than DPKO, SPA's involvement in the initial planning, the drafting that went on into the Paris peace agreement?

MG: It's rather like in Namibia. We were almost not involved at all, except that Timothy Dibuama as military advisor was made available as an asset to Rafi Ahmed.

JS: And he worked very closely, I believe, as part of the team, right?

MG: That's right. But kept me informed of what was going on.

JS: So that from your perspective, then, Rafi Ahmed was relatively independent in his contacts with all the conference participants, including the P-5? Because he had repeated meeting with the P-5.

MG: Absolutely.

JS: But SPA was not involved.

MG: Again we became involved when implementation was very close. I tried to get close to Rafi about this, but it was very similar to what I said about Martti and Cedric. At the beginning they didn't want to get into a position in which they were going to be in some way subordinated to SPA. And Rafi, as you know, can be a rather touchy person.

JS: Yes.

MG: We were brought in, as I say, I remember beginning to take part in the meetings of the P-5, in the pre-implementation phase.

JS: Let's move on then, to the actual operation in Cambodia, which was the largest peacekeeping operation since the Congo. How did that work in terms of the Special Representative's chain of command to New York?

MG: It was very different. It was very different partly for personality reasons, but also I think that the larger time difference was a factor. With Martti, I'd be on the telephone to him several times each day. And there was a very full exchange of opinion, and a confidence between us. With Akashi, we hardly ever spoke on the telephone. And Akashi was not good at responding to cables, whereas with Martti, in addition to our telephone conversations, there was a regular exchange of cables. This is mainly, and the same occurred in Yugoslavia, Yasushi's management style. He likes to have a rather small, rather junior, but very bright private office. And he keeps headquarters at a certain distance. He also, and this was a real problem in Cambodia, kept at a certain distance the directors of the various component parts of UNTAC, and didn't give them a great deal of access to his own thinking, nor to the cable traffic with New York, such as it was.

I used to get, when I went out there, and when people came through New York, very strong complaints from the rather senior UNTAC staff members, the representative of the Commissioner for Refugees, and so on, complaints about the fact that they were simply not being taken into the Special Representative's confidence. With Boutros' agreement, I actually made an effort to try and persuade Yasushi to change. Boutros said, "You won't succeed. But if you think this is worth trying, you can try." I didn't succeed. Attitudes in headquarters were made worse by the fact that Yasushi, and I think this is in a way perhaps to his credit, liked spending a lot of time with the media. He talked a lot to the media, especially of course the Japanese media, but also others. And there was a feeling that if you had a television camera then you had much better access to him than if you were director of a component part of his operation. From our point of view in New York that was a major problem. So there was much less dialog, much less openness

between him and New York, and between him and his senior staff, than there was with Martti.

JS: What about the military commanders? Did they ever report directly to you?

MG: They complained directly to me. And they reported to Dibuama, military to military. But it wasn't Dibuama very long, soon it was Baril. But UNTAC was centralized, Sanderson would not make a recommendation about policy, unless Akashi endorsed it. Often he didn't act on their recommendations, often he didn't agree with them. Some of these things would just sit on his desk.



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JS: But there was no effort on their part to go around Akashi to headquarters?

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MG: Not that I recall, except that when one went there they would complain. And when they came through New York, they would complain. Right, Sanderson, as far as I know, never sent a message to the Secretary-General saying, "It's not working."

JS: Well, the previous French commander had more difficulties with Akashi.

MG: He was the Frenchman in charge of UNAMIC, wasn't he?

JS: Right.

MG: He was difficult number. I can't remember his name.

JS: I haven't got the name here either, unfortunately, but...

MG: ...but that was a transient phase.

JS: Well, no. Subsequently there was a French commander, actually, who felt that a far more aggressive attitude should be taken toward the Khmer Rouge.

MG: But he was deputy force commander.



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JS: He was the deputy. And eventually left.

MG: That's right, I'm beginning to remember that. Sanderson was very cautious. I think militarily he was right. He was a good General, Sanderson, perhaps rather conventional, he's not one to get into fights, unless he's sure he's going to win them, unless he's sure he's got the military capacity to do. And he didn't have the military capacity to fight and beat the Khmer Rouge. In that sort of terrain, those sort of guerrilla movements were extremely difficult to beat.

JS: Because that of course brings up the next question. What was the reaction in New York to the decision not to try to go into Khmer Rouge territory?

MG: Well the decision in New York, or the view in New York, was that it was evident that the Khmer Rouge were not going to allow either Akashi or UNTAC military personnel into their main headquarters in Pailin; and that Akashi therefore made a mistake in driving down the road with all the press men behind him and being stopped at the barrier and forced to withdraw in ignominy.

JS: The bamboo pole, so to speak.

MG: That's right. And the feeling was that it would have been much better if he had not put himself into a position where he and the UN were bound to be humiliated. There was no way in which the Khmer Rouge was going to be intimidated by the television cameras to lift the bamboo pole.

JS: As I mentioned earlier in connection with Namibia, Mr. Akashi felt that the CIVPOL operation was one of the weakest operations in Cambodia. Why was this, as seen from New York again? And then you made your visits to Cambodia, so you saw it on the spot.

MG: It was because, I've said before, they didn't have a properly organized, professional police force to deal with in any of the areas. Secondly, there was a tremendous language problem, which there wasn't in Namibia, well there was some, but it was nothing like the language problem in Cambodia. And thirdly, I think, I can't

remember who the police commander was in Cambodia, he was that Dutch man, wasn't he?

JS: I think so.

MG: He wasn't as sensitive and intelligent a commander as the Irishman who commanded in Namibia.

JS: Now as you know, the Cambodian operation has been subjected to various types of criticism. One of them was that insufficient attention was paid to human rights, that the ballot box was more important than human rights. Did this influence thinking in New York?

MG: It was one of the main issues of contention within UNTAC. And Denis McNamara, who was the Director of the human rights component, who is a good friend and a good man, is a bit of a passionate advocate.

JS: Yes, I've interviewed him.

MG: And he, more than any of them, more even than Sergio de Mello, felt he couldn't get through to Akashi. And he stated in writing, and in meetings that I attended with Akashi, that until human rights improved, he could not say that conditions existed for holding free and fair elections in Cambodia. Whereas Akashi's policy was to press ahead

with elections, and not worry too much about the finer rules and the finer principles. If we could get an election that was reasonably free and fair, he felt that was better than having no election at all. I personally think he was right on that. I sympathized with Denis, because from the point of view of a human rights professional, it was pretty unsatisfactory what was going on, and we appeared to be condoning the situation. And with respect to human rights, it was pretty imperfect. So yes maybe the ballot boxes mattered more than human rights, were given higher priority than human rights. I would say the best can't be the enemy of the good in these circumstances.

JS: Right. Now the Namibia operation took place when Pérez de Cuéllar was Secretary-General, Cambodia when Boutros-Ghali was Secretary-General. Did you detect a difference in the leadership of the whole organization, so to speak, as reflected in the operation in the field, depending on the two secretaries-general?

MG: Boutros was a much more hands-on leader, as I said just now. He took a closer interest in the detail. He was forever on the telephone, much more so than Javier. He regarded Sihanouk as being a close personal friend because the Egyptians were close to the North Koreans and Sihanouk was close to Kim Il Sung, so he knew Sihanouk quite well. But as far as the operation was concerned, he was very reluctant to criticize his representatives in the field. He might criticize them in private, but he would certainly not criticize them in public. Even small groups of senior staff, he was a bit reluctant to voice criticisms about them. I had great trouble in persuading him that Akashi wasn't actually

doing a terribly good job, and we ought to do something about it. He would say, "You can try, but you won't succeed."

The main problem was this ban on travel by Under-Secretaries-General. He was very determined in this position: "I'm not going to have the U-S-Gs going on promenades." And we all tried, I tried, Kofi tried later on, Akashi tried, Eliasson tried to persuade him that you can't run these large, complicated operations halfway across the world by fax and telephone. You've got to go and see what's going on, what it's like on the ground, how people are interacting with each other. And I only got to Cambodia twice, I think. Which is absurd, the largest peacekeeping operation since the Congo. And when air travel is so easy. But he said "No you can't, you're supposed to be here, you run your department, you stay here." One of his greatest weaknesses, in my opinion.

JS: And that applied to participation in the Security Council also, which was problematic.

MG: I felt quite relieved at not having to spend all those hours in the Security Council. Chinmaya Gharekhan did a good job, was a very effective buffer. And if we wanted to make points to the Security Council, we did it by calling up the Ambassadors.

JS: You didn't find a problem there.

MG: No, I welcomed it. Some people felt they were being denied access to the Security Council. I was thrilled by it, to get out of it.

JS: General Sanderson was the force commander. You've already mentioned, I think, that you found him to be effective. Was this the general impression? He had a major command there.

MG: He had a major command, he commanded it well, he commanded the respect of his subordinates. He inadvisably brought his wife to Phnom Penh, which was supposed to be a non-accompanied station, and that sort of thing could spread some discontent in the ranks. I admired John Sanderson. He's not somebody who is going to excite you. I wouldn't terribly want to be led into battle by John Sanderson, I think, but in a peacetime operation of this kind he's a safe pair of hands.

JS: And he went back to a major position.

UNTAC had one great success, and that was in financing, unlike most other UN operations. Again, what do you attribute that to? Why was it easier to get a great deal more money for UNTAC than any other operation?

MG: The salving of the U.S. conscience. I think that there was greater support in the U.S. Congress for an expensive peacekeeping operation, and readiness to appropriate money for it, because Cambodia was not one of the happiest subjects in American history.

There was a feeling there that all that bombing and bringing Cambodia into the war had led to terrible horrors for the country and the people.

JS: And the U.S. paid fully.

MG: As far as I know, yes.

JS: And Japan?

MG: Japan also, for its own regional reasons, was keen to play a part, and they held a conference in Tokyo where \$800,000,000 dollars was raised for reconstruction.

JS: Right. So, I have the same questions of course in regard to Cambodia. Are there lessons that should have been learned from there, perhaps one of them pertaining to finance?

MG: Is that the end, is that the last question?

JS: Not quite the end, no.

MG: Because I was wondering, I wanted to talk about the big issue, which is the whole question of the Khmer Rouge, and the handling of the Khmer Rouge.

JS: Of course, right.

MG: There are two points I want to make. First, was it right to press ahead regardless, when the Khmer Rouge withdrew from the military aspects of the agreement? I thought at the time that it was, that for us to say, “they are no longer cooperating,” and put down our tools and go home would have been a mistake. Better to have a partly implemented agreement than no implementation at all. Looking back, I think that we didn’t give thought to another option, which was to reconvene the peace conference, the Paris conference. Suspend things, but stay on the ground, and go back to the parties to the Paris conference, who under the peace treaty were required to make an effort if things went wrong. Say “we’ve got a problem, and we’d like to meet in Paris to talk about it, find a solution, take some political decisions.” As I recall, Jim, we did think about that, but the feeling was that that would inevitably cause delay, that UNTAC was an expensive operation, stories were beginning to get around about how badly the Bulgarian troops were behaving, and how Cambodian society was being corrupted by the operation. And we decided to not to pursue it. It is interesting to think of what would have happened if we had gone down that road. That’s the first point I wanted to make.

The second point is that there was a lot of criticism in New York about the way Akashi handled the Khmer Rouge, partly I think because of the humiliation at the bamboo pole. Akashi had become very combative and aggressive towards the Khmer Rouge.

Sanderson was also combative and aggressive for different reasons, for military reasons—for the KR soldiers not doing what they were supposed to do. And the dialog, insofar as

there was one, broke down very easily. We all felt that Akashi could have been much more sophisticated in the way he handled the Khmer Rouge.

JS: Who were still at that point in the Supreme Council.

MG: They were still in the Supreme Council, we felt that he ought to have avoided these confrontations arising. He should have avoided the confrontation at the bamboo pole by simply not going there. He should have avoided the breakdown in relations which occurred when they started getting difficult over the military thing. And he should have established a dialog with, what was he called, the civilian who was there on the Supreme National Council, anyway...



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JS: I get them mixed up, but I think it was Ieng Sary, but I'm not sure.

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MG: No, it wasn't Ieng Sary it was.... Anyway, it doesn't matter. We felt that he should have got a dialog going, a quiet dialog. And he didn't. What I'm about to tell you is not generally known; you may know, but I don't think so. We got Rafi Ahmed engaged and asked him to try and open up a back channel to the Khmer Rouge. Rafi tried, and spoke to the man whose name I can't remember two or three times, but didn't really get anywhere. Then I had a rather strained dinner in Bangkok with Rafi and Yasushi, in which the script was that we would talk about the Khmer Rouge and Rafi would talk a bit about how he'd handled the Khmer Rouge during the negotiations, and try and convey, not too directly, to Akashi the message that maybe you can get

somewhere by being a little less tough with them. But Akashi was not to be changed. You know he was very set in his ways. So that is the second point I wanted to make before we get to the final question.

The third point I want to make, which I will introduce now, is that more than anywhere I've seen, the presence of that peacekeeping operation had a really corrupting affect on the local community. It wasn't only the prostitution and so on. It was the injection of all this money into a very, very poor, war-torn society. It was the injection of all these vehicles, all these material goods. It was the astonishing contrast between the standard of living of the UN people and the locals. And it wasn't like that in Namibia. Namibia by Cambodian standards was comparatively prosperous. We didn't have so many people. There wasn't so much ostentatious living. They were excellent troops we had in Namibia, whereas the Bulgarians obviously did tremendous damage to the standing of the Organization in Cambodia.

So lessons to be learned: One lesson to be learned from Cambodia is you've got to have your contingency plans. It was not unforeseeable that the Khmer Rouge would deny us access to their territory. It wasn't unforeseeable they would withdraw from the military arrangements. It wasn't unforeseeable that Hun Sen would refuse to disassemble, dismantle, his administration, as he was supposed to do. We didn't realize that he would maintain a party structure in parallel with the ministerial structure, the government structure, as is standard in communist countries. All our planning was based on getting some kind of supervision of the governmental structure, we never thought about the party

structure, which remained a completely closed book to us throughout. That's where the decisions were taken. So it was a case where a) there wasn't enough contingency planning and b) there wasn't enough care and analysis in thinking at the planning stage of the main operation. That's one lesson.

A second lesson, which we learned in many other cases, is that it's not enough just to negotiate a peace treaty, go in with a peacekeeping operation to implement the peace treaty, and then withdraw your involvement. We should have devoted more time and money to the transition from the peacekeeping to post-peacekeeping, to the economic and social phase of peace building. We didn't do much in the way of peace building. The Human Rights Commission stayed; a certain amount of reconstruction went on. I didn't think at the time, but I now think that we should have kept a much more senior kind of pro-consul there, after the military withdrew. Somebody who would have enjoyed the confidence of Sihanouk, and would have been a sort of senior political advisor to Sihanouk. Again, you have the problems of language, because Hun Sen hasn't got any language except Khmer, and Russian possibly. Someone who would have been there, not too visible, like an Oriental Counselor in a British legation of the last century. Someone who wouldn't be very visible, but would be trusted by all the parties, would go around, would help build bridges between them, do a bit of peace-making between them. The sort of thing the French have been quite good at, sometimes, in Africa. So those are the main lessons, the failure to follow through properly, the failure to plan for bad contingencies.

JS: What about the decentralization? This was the most decentralized operation, I think.

MG: Was it?

JS: Well, according to Akashi.

MG: Well I would say the very reverse. I would say that it was the most centralized.

JS: Well what I mean is, in terms of the field and New York.

MG: Oh I'm sorry, I thought you meant in the field.

JS: No, I don't mean in the field, not UNTAC.

MG: No, no, he was more autonomous. He was allowed to be more autonomous, and that was in my view, unwise for reasons I've already said to you. Whether, if he had been as much, I wouldn't say under our control, but getting as much guidance from us as Ahtisaari—and Ahtisaari accepted that, although initially he didn't, and he said he enjoyed it and it worked well; and he felt secure getting all, having all that exchange with New York.

JS: Who exactly was in charge in New York of the Cambodian operation?

MG: I was.

JS: It came under DPKO.

MG: Yes. When Boutros established his Department of Political Affairs in February of 1992, then Petrovsky wanted to have a finger in the pie. But it wasn't difficult to keep Petrovsky out of what I regarded then as my pie. I believed then that you can't say the political aspects of peacekeeping belong to DPA, and the operational aspects to DPKO. It's all one ball of wax. And I was not going to have Petrovsky kneading my wax.

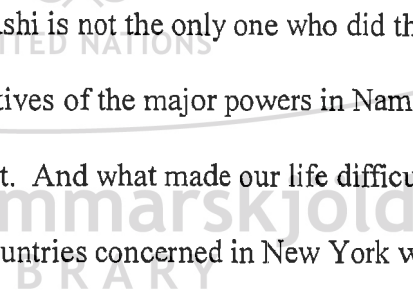
JS: Akashi has referred to occasional instructions that came out from DPKO which he felt did not reflect a real knowledge of the situation.

MG: To which we would say that if there was a lack of understanding of the situation, the reason was that he wasn't reporting. But again, Jim, I think that the time difference...if Boutros had allowed me to go every two months to Cambodia, as I went every two months to Namibia, it would have been different. Not that Goulding is a great man, but simply there would have been more exchange, better understanding.

JS: Well did you have the sense that Akashi actually accepted that DPKO was really in charge?

MG: No. He thought he was in charge, he was even perfunctory in his reporting to the Secretary-General.

JS: Okay. Because there is one other question in that connection. He places great importance on his contacts with the Ambassadors in Phnom Penh, which he used as a kind of "friends," you might say, and their indirect influence on the decisions of the Security Council, which—and I think this is justified—were much more sensible in the case of Cambodia than subsequently in the case of Bosnia. Did you, from New York, see this beneficial effect of the close contact with the crucial Ambassadors in Phnom Penh?



MG: It was absolutely essential. Akashi is not the only one who did that. Martti kept very close relations with the representatives of the major powers in Namibia. All Special Representatives are instructed to do that. And what made our life difficult was that sometimes the representatives of the countries concerned in New York would come to us with facts and of which we were not aware, because Akashi wasn't reporting them. And so there was a real disconnect there, which I think affected the quality of the operation in the long run. Because there wasn't what there had been in Namibia, it wasn't so much control, it was exchange of ideas and information. It was dialog, which I think improved Martti's capacity to run the operation. Certainly it improved our capacity to send him instructions that made some sense.

JS: That's an interesting point, because clearly if there is this kind of close relationship with Ambassadors, it's got to be reflected by a similar relationship with headquarters.

MG: Of course, that's right.

JS: And perhaps that was not the case then, as you saw it, at least in Cambodia.

MG: It is personality. Martti is a much easier person to dialog with than Yasushi. Yasushi was very able in some ways, but he's not somebody with whom you'd sit down, drink a bottle of wine and have a good thorough discussion of things.

JS: The final question in this connection again pertains to Akashi. Were you familiar with the background of Boutros-Ghali's choice of Akashi?

MG: Yes.

JS: Could you describe it?

MG: I'm just trying to remember what the political... He wanted to abolish the Department of Disarmament Affairs. He had to have a Japanese Under-Secretary-General, who he'd been told was going to be Akashi. So he had to find something for Akashi.

JS: Enough said. Thank you very much.

END OF TAPE 2, Side 1

BEGINNING OF TAPE 3

JS: Turning now to Central America, I'd like to start if I could by asking you a few questions about the UN role in Nicaragua. When, and to what extent did you perceive the operation foreseen in Nicaragua as something new and different from previous peacekeeping operations?



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MG: Can I just step back a little bit, Jim, and set this all in context? I think that the Central American Peace Process was one of the jewels in Javier's crown. I think it was a tremendous success of his Secretary-Generalship. It started with Esquipulas II. He and Alvaro saw that the fact that the Presidents of the five Central American states had reaffirmed the commitment to get all these individual insurgencies under control, and were interested in the help of the UN in doing so, gave them [the S-G and Alvaro de Soto] the opportunity to put their feet in the door. The foot was put in the door by means of that Security Council resolution whose number I've forgotten, which, you will remember, called upon the Secretary-General to continue his good offices mission with the five states. That was the framework within which we then did quite a lot of things. One of the things, of course, was monitoring the election in Nicaragua. I think we all

realized immediately that this was something new for the United Nations. We had done election, plebiscite and referendum monitoring in the past, but always in a decolonization context. I don't think that there was a previous occasion where we were monitoring an election in an independent state at the request of that state. That request itself emerged in the Esquipulas process. It wasn't seen as a peacekeeping thing at all, at the beginning, and I was not initially involved. In fact, it was a condition of the Sandinistas that there should be no military involved. ONUVEN, as it was called, was a civilian operation led by Richardson in a rather titular way, with Iqbal Riza in charge on the ground. But very shortly thereafter, there was the decision to establish ONUCA, which was a military observer group whose purpose was to verify that the five states complied with their commitments in Esquipulas Do not to permit trans-border arms shipments and armed groups based on their territory. The two operations got a little bit intertwined, because Iqbal had his civilian operation, and we were setting up small military observer teams in Nicaragua, as in the other four countries. So the Nicaragua operation was not initially seen as an expanded form of peacekeeping; it was seen as an electoral operation, the application to an independent state of something we'd done in dependent territories as they progressed toward independence.

JS: Can I just interrupt a minute to ask, this aspect of the ONUVEN, did that fall under what was by now DPKO?

MG: No, it was still SPA.

JS: It was still SPA?

MG: No, it didn't. It fell under FOD, the field office.

JS: Field service.

MG: Field service, because they had to provide the logistic arrangements for ONUVEN, Iqbal's group. But it didn't come under SPA. And I was told, fairly clearly, that it was not a peacekeeping operation. It was run, I think, out of the S-G's office, wasn't it?



JS: I believe so, but it's not entirely clear from the record.

MG: I think it was; certainly Iqbal was not reporting to me. I think he was probably reporting to Alvaro in the S-G's office.

JS: Yes, and certainly Richardson was.

MG: But I became involved in Nicaragua after the election, when the Contras were demobilized, and there you did need a peacekeeping operation, especially to take delivery of the weapons that they handed in and to destroy those weapons. This couldn't be done without a UN military presence. It's a matter of principle, if you're taking weapons off them, you've got to have the capacity to guard those weapons before they're destroyed.

So we brought in, you'll remember, a Venezuelan infantry battalion, which was temporarily attached to ONUCA to do that function. That worked very well, that was a successful operation. I'm sure that some of the weapons were not handed over, and as we know, a lot of ex-Contras are now bandits. But nevertheless, we regarded it as a success.

JS: I was going to ask, in that connection, about the relationship with the OAS, which was involved in these operations, at least supposedly. What was your experience in that relationship?

MG: My direct experience was really nil, because I don't recall any discussion with Baena Soares about the peacekeeping. But I do remember some sort of uneasiness on the part of the OAS, which had seen, this whole peace process, and the involvement of international organizations in the peace process, as being something where the OAS would be in the lead and the UN would be there because it was the UN but essentially in an OAS show. Iqbal, however, had made quite clear in Nicaragua that as far as he was concerned this was a UN show. As a result he had difficult relations with the Argentine, Murray, who was in charge of the OAS operation in Nicaragua. There was very obvious rivalry between the two, and the OAS were at that time rather better equipped than the UN, and that led to jealousy as well as rivalry. It was quite tense; Baena Soares didn't like it, and complained to Javier as I recall. This may all be in the book, I don't know. By the time we got to the operation in El Salvador, I think the OAS had accepted that if it was a peacekeeping operation, as that was, or a human rights operation it was going to be

a UN operation and there wasn't going to be much role for the OAS. So CIAV never really worked, in my view.

JS: Could you elaborate on that a bit? CIAV was supposed to be responsible for the demobilization...

MG: It was supposed to be responsible for the follow up of all the Esquipulas stuff, wasn't it?

JS: And the reintegration of the Contras. Did this even theoretically come within the framework of peacekeeping?



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MG: I would now say yes. I would say that the demobilization of troops and their reintroduction to civilian life is a peacekeeping function. It involves military because of the disarmament bit, which can't very easily be done by civilians. I can't remember, Jim, whether CIAV were on our backs and wanted to be involved in the demobilization of the Contras. I don't recall any CIAV presence when those demobilizations took place and we destroyed the weapons.

JS: I think the two were separate, the disarmament was clearly a function of...

MG: The UN...

JS: Actually of ONUCA.

MG: ONUCA, that's right.

JS: Whereas CIAV had the responsibility of reintegration, resettlement, and so on.

MG: Yes, I think you're right. We gave the Contras their documentation that they'd surrendered their weapons, and so on, and I think we gave them some sort of basic civilian clothes, didn't we?

JS: Yes, and you did give them a document. I don't want to answer these questions, but I interviewed a couple of Contras actually in Nicaragua, and they were very proud of the documentation that they received both from ONUCA and from CIAV.

MG: I see. Anyway, my general perception, Jim, was that it wasn't a great success, the relationship between the OAS and the UN.

JS: I think that certainly is true. I wanted to ask in this connection whether you again, or the UN in its peacekeeping role, had any contact with the Nicaraguan military, either directly with Mrs. Chamorra after her government was established, or with General Ortega, who stayed as Minister of Defense, I think.

MG: I had first had my contacts with General Ortega and the chief of staff, who was a very suave General, whose name I've forgotten. A real sort of middle class general, unlike the Ortegas. Before the election, when ONUCA was being established, the people we were dealing with, the people whose good behavior we were to verify, was the Sandinista army. They were very cooperative and helpful. After the election, the transition was quite difficult, as you'll remember; Iqbal stayed on as the Director of ONUVEN, and played a very important mediation role between the victor and the vanquished in the elections. But that again was not considered peacekeeping, it didn't come under SPA. I think we got the cables because we had ONUCA there.



JS: And were you aware of any problems that resulted from differing attitudes on the part of the force commander or various battalions toward the different elements?

MG: The main concern about the chief military observer, as he was called, was his desire to reestablish the Spanish empire in Central America. It was a very Hispano-centric operation there, and I had to speak to him from time to time and say that he must remember that there were other nationalities represented in his operation, including some non-Spanish speaking ones—the Swedes, or the others who could operate in Spanish. But he was, I can't remember his name now, a very enthusiastic officer, but a very nationalistic officer. And that did cause some problems.

JS: Now ONUCA was supposed to control the cross-border movement of personnel and of arms. They never did at all catch a single one. Was this a matter of concern in SPA, or were you aware of it? Was this a problem that you had to deal with?

MG: It was a problem in that it sometimes became difficult to justify to the media and the skeptics in missions what ONUCA was for. And ONUCA was not there in reality to intercept trans-border arms. It was there to ease in the thin end of the wedge of a UN military presence in Central America. And so we didn't in the real world worry about the fact that they weren't catching anybody.

JS: And you found this to be true, that is, that the presence of ONUCA served that purpose of familiarizing people with blue helmets, so to speak, so that later in El Salvador this facilitated cooperation.

MG: This was Javier's and Alvaro's judgment, I think. With the weakening and probable collapse of the Soviet regime in Russia, there were going to be opportunities for resolving these conflicts because they would no longer be proxy Third World conflicts between East and West. We thought, and again it was right, that the Americans would be prepared to allow an international organization, which was then in quite good standing in Washington, to play a part in mediating the end of these conflicts. And clearly the UN was better qualified to do this than the United States. So the Monroe doctrine was suspended in that context. Getting military observers there in uniform was a good way into that. That was basically our thinking.

JS: And as the head of SPA or DPKO initially, did you become involved in the distrust that became apparent in Washington toward these operations eventually? Not in Nicaragua, but in El Salvador.

MG: Yes, very much so, because I already had, what was he called, it began with a B, the Assistant Secretary for...

JS: I was thinking of Aronson.

MG: That's right, Bernie Aronson. James Baker actually hit me once, in Lisbon, because he said, "Mig, you've got to get on to the cease-fire, for Christ's sake negotiate a cease-fire." I said, "Secretary, you know as well as I do that the cease-fire is going to come at the very end, because it is the only card that the FMLN have to play. We've got to get all the other bits in place before they will agree to a cease-fire." (He said), "You think that? You UN people..." and he thumped me on my left arm! I actually had a bruise. Bernie was very difficult at times, but he came around in the end. They were under pressure from Congress and so on. It was a political game that was being played. What I should have said, actually, is, if you want to hear about my personal involvement, right at the beginning of this process, I was asked to come and brief representatives of the five countries who came to a meeting with Javier in New York, and Alvaro was there, and I was asked to go, and in my Portuguese, briefed them about '101 UN Peacekeeping,' which I did in several sessions. It was all part of softening them up to the idea of the UN

perhaps having a role to play in the future. Then of course Alvaro got started, and there was the San Juan agreement on human rights which led to the establishment of ONUSAL, and Iqbal was put in charge of that. ONUSAL then became a peacekeeping operation. Its mandate related to human rights at that stage, but clearly it was intended by all that it should be the germ of the eventual operation to implement a peace agreement. Fairly soon after that the negotiations on the cease-fire started. Alvaro was excellent and brought me fully into the negotiation. I actually took over the negotiation of the military aspects, which were the cease-fire and where they were going to be grouped, and all the rest of the demobilization. It was a very good working relationship that Alvaro and I had. Excellent. He kept me fully informed about what he was doing on the civilian table, and he entrusted the military "table" to me.



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JS: Which was primarily a negotiation of the cease-fire, right?

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MG: It was a negotiation of the cease-fire and the cantonment of both sides' troops—the army and the FMLN troops. They started, both of them, with totally unrealistic demands. I had to point out that if both demands were met there were going to be some 400 different locations, which was about twenty times what there were in the whole of Cambodia. They agreed in the end. Then of course there was question of what was to be done with the arms; there was the question of collecting any arms caches which they declared to us. As you know they didn't declare some of the arms caches to us; we had to embarrass them later on. All that, and then the places where they would stay while they were trained for re-entry into civilian life. So I did all that. What I didn't do was the

downsizing of the army, which Alvaro did, it was a highly political part of it, nor the purging of the army.

JS: Nor the purging of the army.

MG: No, Alvaro did that.

JS: And that would have been only of the government army, so to speak, but there was none in the case of the FMLN.

MG: No.



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JS: What was your experience in these negotiations in terms of the two sides?

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MG: The FMLN were extremely distrustful. But that's not surprising, these insurgent movements always are. The army were extremely conscious of the army as "the institution." This created a very broad gap that had to be bridged. I judged that it had to be bridged by bringing them together. It wasn't the sort of gap that you were effectively going to bridge by shuttling and coming up with propositions, et cetera. You had to bring them together so that they could both see they'd got to change their culture, change their ethos. It was very time-consuming. We had some pendulum periods when we did shuttle from one to the other, but then we had long, joint meetings, which sometimes became very acrimonious and had to be suspended. But it worked over a period of months. I will

always remember the thrill of pleasure when I walked along a corridor in that ghastly hotel in Mexico City and found, half concealed behind a tree in a pot, Villalobos of the FMLN and Vargas of the government delegation, talking to each other, and I thought, “we’re now on the home track.” They’d been there together and gotten to see that they had to adjust their concepts. Alvaro did one very good thing, among many very good things; he persuaded the FMLN to bring the field commanders in, to actually be present at these negotiations and join the negotiating commission; then they could see what was going on, they’d see how the negotiations, see then they weren’t being sold down the river.



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JS: In the cease-fire negotiations, then, you had direct access to the field commanders.

MG: That’s right. And not only in cease-fire, they were brought in to be at least observers, and at time participants, in all the negotiations. So we had a series of field commanders who came in, because there was round after round after round of these negotiations. Alvaro spotted that this process was becoming slightly incestuous between the whatever it’s called, the peace commission on the government side, and the negotiating committee on the FMLN side. The rank and file ought to see what was going on.

The only hiccup in my relations with Alvaro in what was nearly two years of fairly tense negotiation, was that....

JS: Yes?

MG: You know about this?

JS: No.

MG: That we had been negotiating up to the last minute on the military aspects. And I and my team was waiting down in the other end of the 38th floor for this signature ceremony, which depended on some last minute things...

JS: This is the midnight ceremony?



MG: Midnight ceremony, at midnight on the 31st of December. We waited in vain and we were never called, and we heard everybody leaving. I was very piqued about that.

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JS: So that's why you are not in that picture.

MG: That's why I'm not in the picture. The friends of the Secretary-General, they were all there, and so on, but nobody from the military table, who had negotiated, was there, so I was upset by that. But otherwise it was a very good, harmonious working relationship.

JS: Incidentally, you mentioned Villalobos. He was here at Oxford.

MG: He still is. At this College.

JS: Is he, because I've been trying to find him?

MG: Just got his MSC here.

JS: Oh really? And he's still around?

MG: Still around, and he's staying on for another three years doing research into civil conflict.

JS: So he'll be reachable through here, then?



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MG: Reachable through here, yes.

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JS: That's good to know, because he was identified in the book by Pérez de Cuéllar as the most interesting of the...

MG: He's gone astray now, though.

JS: Yes, I know, because when we were in El Salvador his former colleagues did not speak well of him.

MG: No. And before we go, I'll get my secretary to give you his coordinates.

JS: I'd like that.

What kind of, you had very good relations with de Soto in terms of the negotiations. Was there any kind of a liaison mechanism in the Secretariat, though, to keep DPKO or its predecessor in touch with the negotiations? Or was this a personal, your personal participation in these negotiations?

MG: My personal participation, but it wasn't just me, it was a team. We had a team in SPA, which consisted of myself, Michele Pelletier, a couple of military officers, a really very bright Spanish half-colonel. We were the UN part of the military table, so we were part, I feel like it was, and Alvaro was at the top, was the head of the whole enterprise. And then on this side there was a military, on that side there was a civilian, and I was head of the military bit, although senior to Alvaro, but seniority didn't matter.

JS: Right. And he was Special Representative.

MG: Personal Envoy, then it was. Where there was some tension, was between Alvaro and Iqbal Riza. Iqbal felt that he was there on the ground, the war still continuing, he was not kept informed. I used to urge Alvaro to keep him better informed. But Alvaro never liked Iqbal very much. He didn't want the information to get out too far. He thought that if he were to tell Iqbal, Iqbal would tell his people, his senior staff, and it would get back to governments, and so on. The relationship with the friends of the Secretary-General had to be managed very carefully. It had to be made clear to them that they were not there to

take initiatives. They were to do certain tasks when the Secretary-General asked them to do those tasks. Some of them saw that more clearly than others and there was one point when the President of Venezuela very nearly screwed the whole thing up. Carlos Andres Perez.

JS: He tried to take over the negotiations.

MG: That's right. I look back on it, Jim, as one of the happiest aspects of my life in the United Nations, that negotiation.

JS: But just to continue on the Friends question a moment. Mexico was very important providing a locus, but also in other ways. How important, leaving aside Venezuela, did you find this institution of the Friends in this particular case in bringing about the ultimate agreement?

MG: I won't say that we couldn't have done it without them. But doing it was greatly helped by their existence. See, they could be used so flexibly, Jim. In fact they became five plus one when the Americans came in. So you could select from that group of six states any individual, any combination that you thought would be able to deliver the bait wherever you wanted the bait delivered. So we would give tasks to the Mexicans, we'd give tasks to the Americans. The Mexicans to push the FMLN a little way towards the middle, and the Americans to push the government towards the middle. The only problem came, as I say, when the Friends started thinking they would do it themselves,

and start having conversations that we didn't know about until we heard about them through the Salvadorian parties.

JS: Now there's one point regarding the military struggle, which is a complete dichotomy between former FMLN people and former government people. And that is what was the significance, or let's put it this way: When did the FMLN really decide to negotiate seriously? Was it because they did not succeed with their offensive that took them into the capital, or not?

MG: Villalobos says that they never expected that offensive to succeed. They did expect it to give the government a nasty shock, and make it possible for others to say to the government that there wasn't a military solution to this conflict. He says that well before then they had recognized that the situation was changing, the world situation was changing, which made it necessary for them to negotiate, to get as much in return for giving up the armed struggle as they could get. The longer they waited, they felt, the less they would get, because the Americans would see that they were becoming less of a threat with the change of regime in Russia, and what that implied for Cuba and Cuba's ability to support them. The change of government in Nicaragua was another factor. So they made that big push in November of '89, realizing that their time was running out. That may be *ex post facto* clever thinking. He says it's not. I'm prepared to leave that as their calculation. Does that make sense to you?

JS: Yes. The former President Cristiani says exactly the opposite. Namely, that they had no intention of negotiating the agreement until they recognized essentially the defeat of that major...

MG: I don't believe that for a moment.

JS: Anyhow, that's why I asked, because it's a complete difference in the story you hear from the two sides. And I believe the general UN belief, in terms of Alvaro de Soto and the former Secretary-General, is what you have just said.

I want to go on to your later role, surprising role in the agricultural reform. But before that, I'd wanted to ask you if there's any other aspect of this really extraordinary operation in El Salvador that you would want to comment on from your personal experience.

MG: There's one big aspect, which Alvaro and Graciana [del Castillo] have written about a lot, and you know that. It's very relevant to the lessons learned by the UN. Again, it sounds as though I am beating my own drum, but if you look at the negotiation with Guatemala, and the way we handled that, you'll see that we learned the lessons. We brought the Bank and the Fund and the military generals into the negotiations from the very beginning of those three years of negotiation. We did it by regularly briefing them at consultative board meetings. We did it also, as far as the agencies are concerned, by bringing them into the negotiations in the sense of asking them for experts who joined the negotiating team. The indigenous rights agreement of Guatemala, which is probably the

most revolutionary of that package of agreements, was negotiated with great help from the input of a British official at the ILO, who turned out to know quite a lot about minority and indigenous rights. Fortunately he was a Spanish-speaking Brit, so it worked extremely well. We succeeded in giving the agencies a sense of some ownership of the agreement that was being negotiated, which made them readier to cooperate with the UN proper when it came to implementation. That's different from what we did in El Salvador when ONUSAL came in bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and started setting up its own structures to do things, like the encampment and the sustenance and retraining of the ex-combatants, things that would have been done much better by UNDP, for instance, who had been on the ground there for decades, knew everybody, knew how to get things done in El Salvador. The fact that we came in and thought we would do it ourselves in our own way, a) was inefficient, and b) caused bad blood with the rest of the United Nations community. We avoided doing that again in Guatemala by bringing the agencies in from the very beginning and giving them a part to play in the negotiations. So I'm rather proud of that as a lesson learned, and a lesson quickly applied in the neighboring country. I think that's the main point I wanted to make.

Another thing I'll tell you about El Salvador is what I call the White Car Syndrome. In a small country like that, somewhat uneasy about the UN getting involved and mediating its internal conflict, having such a conspicuous presence is politically damaging. I remember going there and seeing this array of about thirty white Jeeps marked "UN" lined up at the back of the beach on a Sunday. That does look a bit like an occupying army. In the report which I prepared for Kofi before I left on how to do things better in peace and security, I said one thing you should do is decide not to have white

cars everywhere. Have a mixture of colors. There are many cars that don't do anything but drive around in the town; they don't go out on patrol in the bush. They could be painted like ordinary cars to avoid being so conspicuous.

JS: Let me ask you two other questions.

MG: Can I say one other thing about El Salvador? The follow up. The agreement in El Salvador was negotiated in a way that made it possible for us to monitor pretty closely how well the two sides were complying with it because we had to make regular reports to the Security Council. Boutros got quite uneasy, and even angry sometimes with Alvaro and me, because he said we were constantly snapping at the heels of President Cristiani and his successor President Calderon. They were heads of state, he said; we ought to show more respect and give them the benefit of the doubt. The lesson there is that Secretaries-General have to recognize that sometimes their mediating role, and the implementation of a peacekeeping role, requires UN officials to play in a less deferential way than they normally do towards heads of state.

JS: I have two questions. The first is, as we've said before, there was, especially in Washington, but also in San Salvador, a feeling that the United Nations was less than totally impartial in the negotiations. That they were, that de Soto in particular, favored the FMLN. What was your impression of this?

MG: I think that it is true that Alvaro and the rest of us all liked our FMLN interlocutors more than we liked the government lot, with one or two exceptions. There was a nice old man whose name I have forgotten who is in this picture.

JS: Diallos?

MG: No, what was he called? Eduardo Torres. I liked him, but on the whole we didn't like the government team very much. Whereas we did like the FMLN team. That's one, that was our personal likes. I don't believe that it at any time affected the way in which we conducted the negotiation. We might come out of the room spitting at one side, usually the government side, and might make rude jokes about them. But we conducted the negotiation in an impartial way, in a neutral way, because we knew, I mean we'd all been in this business for some time, we all knew that if we didn't do that we weren't going to bring the bacon home.

JS: Second question in this respect is the role of the Secretary...

MG: One other point and that was the fact that Washington was so keen to get a cease-fire, and we were saying that the dynamics of this negotiation were such that you're going to get the cease-fire only at the end. That made us appear to be partial to the FMLN. But that was a dispassionate judgment.

JS: Right. The other question is the same as with regard to Cambodia, the role of Pérez de Cuéllar as Secretary-General. How important was it, how crucial was his presence at the end, which was the very end of his term, in bringing the agreement to fruition?

MG: I think that his personal role was tremendously important, both in the deadline, the midnight on the 31st of December deadline, which was of such symbolic importance that it helped bring that final negotiation to an end. But more widely, he was very important because he is Latin American, and the fact that Alvaro is Latin American helped to, I know they talked about *los dos peruanitos*. But the fact that a Latin American was seen to be dealing with a Latin American problem probably helped a very sovereignty-conscious part of the world to accept the UN, the introduction of the UN into their affairs. And that was another reason why I had no problem with being subordinate to Alvaro, because it was good for the negotiations that he and Francesca [Vendrell] should be out in front.

JS: Let me go ahead then, to your unique assignment, as far as I know in your career, of developing an agricultural reform plan for El Salvador. How did that happen?

MG: What happened was that in those last wild days before midnight on the 31st of December, the provisions in the agreement relating to the distribution of land to demobilized combatants from both sides were drafted. But they were drafted in a very

loose way, without any technical input, except we got the Guatemalan with a German name who was the head of ECLAC in Santiago...

JS: I don't know him.

MG: Gert Rosenthal. We got him to come at the very end to give some advice. It was too late, really, the train was moving so fast then. There were all sorts of ambiguities and loopholes in that very brief passage in the agreement, as a result of which the government was able to go slowly. That of course was very threatening, because of the people in the encampments who wanted to get out and get onto the land. And so Cristiani agreed that we should in effect, not exactly renegotiate the provisions, but expand them and get agreement on the transfer of land. And I was there as a sort of political leader of that but Graciana did all the work.

JS: And that was after the...

MG: That was after implementation had begun, when it became clear that this was— there were other parts where the agreement hadn't been terribly well negotiated. When things were going wrong because of the differences between the two sides about what exactly was it that had been agreed to. But this is the main one, so this is I suppose about six or nine months after the signature.

JS: That's right, and it was done in El Salvador, right? The negotiations took place there.

MG: Right.

JS: And who participated in these negotiations there?

MG: The senior staff of ONUCA, ...no, ONUSAL, Iqbal Riza again and his civilian people. And Graciana and myself. I feel there were agricultural experts, but I can't remember...



JS: But it was with the government? The FMLN no longer existed as a part.

MG: Yes it did. The FMLN was party to the agreement. That upset the government a lot too, they felt they should have disappeared when the troops were disbanded. They were party to the agreement.

JS: Oh, and they negotiated in that capacity and not as the successor political party.

MG: Correct; as parties to the agreement they signed in Chepultapec.

JS: I see. Did you conclude these negotiations with any optimism that they would result in land reform?

MG: Not land reform. It was simply redistributing state land and other land that was available to the state. So it wasn't really a reform program. There had been a land reform program sometime before. But this was only a matter of using available land, some that had to be bought, and the existing land, to provide the livelihood for both sides' ex-combatants. And this again, coming to lessons learned, Jim, this is a tremendously important lesson to all these operations, that one of the highest priority things, and one of the most expensive things, is to provide gainful civilian employment for the ex-combatants as soon as possible after demobilization.

JS: Yes. That was really the general question I wanted to ask you, taking into account all the areas we've been talking about. The reintegration of the former combatants has not worked well any place. And number one, were you aware of the problem there as these various agreements were reached, and so forth? Was some effort made to devise ways in which reintegration could be successfully done, and to what extent did you, from the perspective of the United Nations, figure in a role for NGOs in this process, in your planning?

MG: We became more and more aware of the need, became a little bit cleverer in planning for it, and in stockpiling resources, agricultural equipment, that kind of thing. But we had great difficulty, and still have great difficulty, even getting member states to put money up front. It's difficult for them to see this is a terribly important program. It's also difficult for some of the agencies to see it's a terribly important program. Because if

you're in a development agency, you will think, "God, we could spend that money elsewhere and get a much better return in terms of the increase in the GDP of the country concerned. Better development return than giving it to these people who've been killing civilians for the last twenty years." So you have to bypass the developmental imperative, and persuade the developmentalists to allow their resources to be used for a political purpose. And that's not easy to do. As far as the NGOs are concerned, I'm not conscious.... The NGOs got involved in demining, but I'm not sure they had been involved much in these programs. But I'm getting a bit out of touch now, I left DPKO a long time ago. It may be that there are programs involving NGOs.



JS: There are some. Good, well those are my questions. Again, my final comment is, do you have something you'd like to add to this review of, really, three crucial operations in which you were centrally involved?

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MG: I don't think so, Jim, I've got some general observations, and my answers to your specific questions. I think that the overall record of what the UN has done in the peace and security field in the ten years since the end of the Cold War is pretty good. Some fairly major blots on the copybook, but there are a lot of tick marks, too. I do think that we've learned a lot. And I think we're cleverer at it now than we were ten years ago. I shudder to think sometimes about the ease with which we slipped into some of these new operations after the initial success in Namibia—such as the Pakistani battalion we sent into Somalia in 1991 without any real analysis of the threat, without any real definition of what its mandate was going to be, without any real consent from Aideed...

End of Tape 3 Side 1



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