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**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF**  
**M. ALISTER McINTYRE**  
**BY**  
**THOMAS G. WEISS**  
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THOMAS G. WEISS: This is Saturday morning, the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2001 at The Graduate Center. Tom Weiss is beginning an interview with Alister McIntyre. Good morning, Alister. Let's start at the beginning, if you don't mind. I wondered if you could tell me a little bit about your own family background, and what it was like to grow up in the Grenada of the 1930s and 1940s, and how precisely this contributed to making you the person you are, and your own views about the way the world operates.

ALISTER MCINTYRE: I grew up in a fairly sheltered middle-class family where one was expected to do all of the right things—go to school through secondary school. If you were a boy, you were expected to get to a university. Girls had a different track. In fact, my father quite opposed the idea of my eldest sister going to university, which she has greatly regretted. But I think my whole concept of the world, and my whole awakening to the forces of change took place in 1951, when the quite notorious Eric Gairy led a major strike on the island against the planters, for which I had some sympathy. He then proceeded to start a very long period of misrule on the island.

Quite early in the game, I was then a student in high school, a number of us began questioning what he was trying to do. The form in which I was—the sixth form, which was a very classical kind of British structure—became a hotbed of political discussion. And out of that, we began reading all sorts of works. In that cauldron of discussion, I came across the books of Arthur Lewis. He had donated copies of his books to the leading politician on the island prior to Gairy, T.A. Marryshow, who is often called the father of Caribbean federation. Marryshow in turn donated them to the school library.

So I began reading Arthur Lewis, and was very proud to find that this young man from St. Lucia was now among the leading economists in Britain. That sparked my interest in

economics so much so that when I came to take the equivalent of A-levels, I told my headmaster that I wanted to do economics. He said, "How can you? We don't teach this here." I insisted. I said I would teach myself, and I think I am still suffering from the scars of that. There were three papers to be done at the examination, one of which was taught at the school by a member of staff who was very interested in the subject and was himself studying for external examinations. So I had to struggle with the other two myself. I read everything I could lay my hands on in the island. When the time came to go to university, I was quite convinced that I wanted to study economics, and with a particular emphasis, of course, on developing countries such as the Caribbean.

After a period of some years, I went off to the London School of Economics (LSE) as an undergraduate. Then my eyes were further opened by a number of things. But I was particularly disappointed, in a way, that there was no teaching in development economics per se, except for a set of graduate courses taught by Peter Bauer, who was very controversial and not then thought to be a sympathetic exponent of the subject from the point of view of developing countries.

During my undergraduate years, actually I think it was in 1955, the Bandung conference (Asian-African Conference) took place. At LSE, a Bandung Society was formed. After the initial discussion of the major political issues of the day, the Bandung Society got into development questions. It invited a number of prominent speakers, persons in Britain from the political or academic communities or from the media. They were invited to come for a luncheon discussion or something equivalent. Actually, in the three years that I spent as an undergraduate at the London School of Economics, I spent a lot of time reading about development issues, discussing development with my peers, and listening to views. I remember being particularly influenced by Andrew Shonfield, who himself was influenced by Lewis. Shonfield was a kind

of middle-of-the road liberal, but on development questions I think that he was much more inclined towards liberal in the U.S. version, that is, somewhat left of center.

When all of this was over, the professor with whom I studied most intensely at the school, James Meade, discussed with me what I should do next. I wanted to go on to do graduate work, but Meade said, "Look, you must change institutions. Why don't you try to get into Cambridge and work with Joan Robinson?" Well, I had read some of Joan Robinson's work, and I did not think that small open economies were a major interest of hers. So I told him that I wasn't too keen. He was rather surprised, because at that time she was writing on China, and she was really quite an exceptional scholar. I had met her twice as an undergraduate.

So then he reviewed other options, and said, "Why don't you try to get into Nuffield? Donald MacDougall is there. He has done some work on the Caribbean, and you might find him interesting." Ian Little was also there. He was then working on India. So I applied and went to Nuffield. I had two spells there of one year each, which were interrupted by illness and other family matters. From there I went to the University of the West Indies (UWI) as a lecturer, which is in the U.S. system equivalent to an assistant professor.

When I got to UWI, I discovered, to my shock, that a lot of the ideas that I had been playing with, discussing, and so forth, were very quickly dismissed by my colleagues. Actually, at the time, I had few colleagues in economics, because economics was just a subject in a general studies degree. We were still then a college of the University of London, and London had advised that UWI develop arts and sciences before going to a full-fledged program in social sciences. But there was an Institute of Social and Economic Research, and in that institute were some extremely bright sociologists and anthropologists. So I was almost contemptuously shoved

aside as belonging to a discipline that was only peripherally relevant to development. They seemed to have all of the answers.

I was very much taken up trying to understand the sociology and anthropology of development, which in the case of anthropology was essentially looking at development at the micro level, the community level. I was getting some familiarity with what is now called the “informal sector,” and how it interfaced with the rest of the economy. I learned a lot about the rural economy, about which I knew precious little—the functioning of plantation and peasant systems. This was time well spent in broadening my own understanding of the development process.

Later on, when the economics department was formally established, a number of people came in to it and we began some quite serious and intense work on development problems. I should backtrack a bit and say that because of MacDougal’s influence, I had begun reading [Raúl] Prebisch when I was a student at Nuffield. He was very skeptical about the Prebisch-Singer hypothesis, and so we had some quite lively discussions in his rooms. But nonetheless, he brought the literature to me. I became particularly interested in Prebisch’s advocacy of a Latin American Common Market partly to see what insights could be gained for the Caribbean.

By the time I had spent three years at the University of the West Indies, I met Albert Hirschman at the Rio Conference on Inflation and Growth in 1963. And in the course of discussion, I said to him, “I am the only person working on international trade in Jamaica, and I feel quite isolated sometimes.” He said, “Why don’t you come and spend a year with me at Columbia?” I applied for a Fulbright Fellowship and went to Columbia and worked with him. I read all of his material. It was very good being associated with him. Although he was a very busy man, he found time for me. I really enjoyed my year at Columbia.

While I was at Columbia, Arthur Lewis, who had then become vice chancellor of the University of the West Indies, said to me that Jose-Antonio Mayobre, who was then executive-secretary of ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), wanted somebody to start some work on the Caribbean. But he wanted it done from the Mexico City office of CEPAL (or ECLAC). Would I go there and do a long essay on trade and development issues in the Caribbean? So after leaving Columbia, I did, in fact, go to ECLAC for about seven months to work on that topic which resulted in a long essay on “Aspects of Trade and Development in the Commonwealth Caribbean.” The period in Mexico gave me a much more direct link to the CEPAL thinking. It also gave me the opportunity of trying to sort out in my own mind how much of it was relevant to small island states, as against the larger type of Latin American economies, where import substitution industrialization was something that was more feasible than it would be in small islands with very limited markets and a narrow resource base.

I began thinking along those lines. In so doing, I related much more directly to Prebisch’s hypotheses on integration than I did to import substitution industrialization per se, although the two were linked. So I spent a good deal of the latter part of the 1960s in my own academic work focusing on integration and small economies, and the problems of dealing with smallness as a factor in development. After my spell in Mexico, I arranged with William Demas, who was then head of economic planning in Trinidad and Tobago, to convene an informal group of people to discuss the feasibility of moving towards a free trade area in the Caribbean using my Mexican paper as a background document. We met, discussed and agreed that governments should be encouraged to think along these lines.

Demas was enormously influential, not only with his own government, but also with other governments in the region. Arthur Brown was also there and was very taken with this idea.

This virtually guaranteed Jamaica's interest. A program of academic studies was put in train, a series of intergovernmental meetings were held at official level to examine the matter, the private sector was brought in as advocates. Thus, the stage was set for governmental action.

The heads of government took up the matter at a meeting which they had in October 1967, to which I was invited as a kind of advisor. The decision was taken there to proceed toward CARIFTA (Caribbean Free Trade Association), very closely modeled along EFTA (European Free Trade Association) lines, as it was at that time. The whole strategy was to commit them to an idea, and then we would develop it as we went along.

From CARIFTA, the discussion moved towards the Caribbean Community Common Market (CARICOM), which came into being in 1973. I was intensely involved in this process, both in terms of writing, and in terms of on-the-spot advice to representatives of governments. Out of that, I was asked in 1974 to succeed [William] Demas as secretary-general of CARICOM. I went, therefore, to live in Guyana. Virtually the first time I met Prime Minister [Forbes] Burnham officially, he said to me, "Look, we are involved in a major interregional project. We have just managed in the UN to negotiate an Action Program in Trade and Transport among nonaligned and other developing countries. Guyana has been asked to coordinate it, but we have nobody. Could you also take a hand in managing it?"

Well, I didn't really know what it was all about. We spent a good deal of the time trying to get people to come and live in Georgetown, which was then regarded as a difficult duty station. So we suffered from severe personnel problems. We probably got one or two studies done, but we really didn't get the program moving with the vigor that had been anticipated by the G-77 (Group of 77) in New York. Partly out of that, I became involved in the Commonwealth heads of government decision in 1975 to set up a group on the New International Economic

Order (NIEO) consisting of representatives from both Commonwealth developed and developing countries. I was asked to chair it.

Our whole objective was to see whether we could find middle ground between what the G-77 was proposing, and what the developed countries—or at least the more progressively-minded among them—were saying at that time. We brought out the first report, which supported the 0.7 target for development assistance and supported also, in principle, the Integrated Programme for Commodities (IPC). It was the first time I encountered this latter idea. In general, we endorsed most of the proposals being put forward by the developing countries, but with qualifications which we hoped would make them more palatable to the developed countries.

The G-77 didn't like the first report very much. At the Seventh Special Session (of the UN General Assembly), which I was asked to attend, I was privately advised not to push it too hard because the G-77 felt that it was too northern in orientation. But we didn't think so. And the people who were in the group—which included for example, Peter Lai, who was then Malaysia's ambassador in Geneva, and Adebola Onitiri, who was Nigeria's leading economist—were not people who would have easily sacrificed the interests of developing countries. Anyway, we proceeded to the second stage of doing a final report. By the time that came out, where we were further able to elaborate our ideas, that strong criticism somewhat lessened, but remnants remained.

As a result of this work, I became interested in a whole range of issues then being discussed, some of which I supported strongly, and others less so. I was on my way to a meeting of the NIEO group in Lagos when I got a telephone call from Gamani Corea asking me whether I would stop in Geneva to see him. I didn't know him at all. I said, "About what?" He said, "We have got our Division of Economic Cooperation Among Developing Countries



(ECDC). We need a new director. Several people have raised your name with me. I think we ought to talk about it.” So I said, “Well, look, I’m not looking for a job right now. I’m quite happy doing what I’m doing.” He said, “Nonetheless, would you come and let’s have a chat?”

I went to Geneva and saw him. We had a discussion, but most of it centered around the Integrated Programme for Commodities, which I was going to have further discussed in Lagos. I became interested in some of the things that he was saying. And when he ended up, he said, “You know, I’m quite happy for you to become the director for ECDC, but would you think of becoming the director of commodities?” I said, “I can’t say that I know a lot about commodities. I know a little about sugar, bananas, citrus, cocoa, and coffee, but not much else.” He said, “That’s quite a handful there you’ve got. You can build on it.” He said, “We have to get the Common Fund negotiated. The Nairobi Agreement is there in principle, but the negotiations are not going well. They started rather shakily, and I think somebody of your particular orientation would be good for the division.” He said it was the largest division, anyway, and I would have a lot of resources. It had just been given a special budget.

I told him that I would reflect on it. I went on to Lagos. We had our discussions there, and we got into the question of implementing the IPC. I really began to think seriously about it. By the time I finished my round with the NIEO Commonwealth group, I decided more or less to give the IPC a shot. This, of course, came as a blow to the Caribbean governments who were expecting me to continue leading the integration process. The secretary-general wrote off to all of them promising that he would arrange to give me some time so I could keep in touch with the regional movement and help as best as I could. And there it was. I went to Geneva to work on the IPC.

TGW: That's a fascinating itinerary. I wonder if I could just go back a moment to ask you a few things. What, when you were growing up, do you recall about the role of the Depression and the Second World War? Did this come on the horizon, or on the radar screen? Did either the League of Nations or the founding of the UN or the beginning of the Bretton Woods institutions enter into the curriculum, or did this just arrive on your plate when you discovered Arthur Lewis and company?

AM: Well, in a very superficial way. The Depression affected me directly because my father's business collapsed. He was one of the casualties of the Depression, and he was, at the time, running a very substantial pharmaceuticals business. When he said that his business was failing, it was because people couldn't afford drugs. That struck me. I said, "My God, I never thought about the possibility that people could not afford drugs." This came as quite a shock to me. It was in 1937, I think. I was five or six.

So I had a very sharp recollection of the Depression and what it meant in terms of economic and social distress in Grenada. It became obvious in a number of ways. Our own circle began cutting corners and trying to get rid of the less essential items of expenditure. My father, after some bumps, ended up doing something similar, but not identical, which involved our moving from one part of the island to another. Of course, he was not then his own boss and that was a bit of a humiliation for him. So the Depression had an impact, and I was very interested in why. How did this Depression come about? Oddly enough nobody in Grenada, at the time, even heard of the name Lord [John Maynard] Keynes. This was something that came to my attention when I went to the university. But on the island, people just thought it was one of those acts of nature. How could the prices for our nutmeg and cocoa just plummet downwards? No one could understand it.

The war was different for two reasons. One was that they began voluntary recruitment of a supplementary security force. We never had any soldiers at all, and anybody who was anybody joined up. My father was a member, and all of his friends. They all became part of the force, and they all drilled and took it seriously. On one occasion, I remember a lot of excitement because a submarine had been sighted. The harbormaster, who was head of the supplementary force, took off in the little naval launch which we had, to see whether he could get a better view of the submarine and report back. No one considered that if it was an enemy submarine, he could have been blown out of the water. It turned out that it was a British submarine, so that was the end of the matter. But there was submarine activity right around the area because the Germans were trying to shut off the supply of oil from Trinidad.

I became interested in the war. Every night, I sat with my parents listening to the wireless, to the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), and listening to [Winston] Churchill's speeches and so on. I became very much involved in the unfolding of events, and Montgomery's famous victory at El Alamein, and then the Normandy landing, and then, of course, V-E Day, as it was called, and V-J Day that followed. So we were very much involved at that level.

On the first occasion that wheat flour was once again imported into the island, we had bread for the first time in some years. I remember the remarkable crush on the bakeries and how my brother and I scaled the wall to get a front place in the lines.

The idea of the United Nations was something that happened, but nobody quite knew what it would do. It remained a very vague idea until I went to university. I joined the United Nations Association (UNA) because the chap I used to sit next to in class was the president, and he said, "You have got to come along." So I joined it, and once I joined it, I became quite

interested. We discussed the whole business about the Security Council and permanent membership. Even in those days there were questions about the veto and that sort of thing.

The only time we had a discussion on economics was when Arthur Lewis and Paul Hoffman, I think it was, developed this idea of SUNFED (Special UN Fund for Economic Development), which failed. And I can remember our being quite disappointed that SUNFED was literally stillborn. This was partly because the major countries and institutions opposed it.

TGW: In the cafeteria, or pub of the moment, what role was played by—I was thinking of three ideas that must have been floating around, or maybe two. You mentioned Bandung. Some people I've questioned were totally unaware that Bandung had occurred, or felt that it was a minor event. Other people argue it was a major event.

AM: Yes.

TGW: I just wondered what the Commonwealth foreign students, or whatever you would have called it at the time, were discussing. Were decolonization and nonalignment to the fore? And the second thing is your subsequent interest in integration. How did events in Europe and then the Treaty of Rome toward the end of your time at LSE—how did those two sets of ideas come into your life and into other students' lives at the time?

AM: Decolonization was, of course, the burning issue right through. It impacted on the prospects and the thinking of practically every student from a Third World country. This is why the idea of decolonization took strong root on the occasion of the Bandung conference. Here were [Gamal Abdel] Nasser and [Kwame] Nkrumah, and other names that were very familiar to people, gathering together to discuss a third way, neither aligned to the West nor to the East. So that was very interesting, and we followed it very eagerly. I remember [Chandrika] Bandaranaike coming to the LSE to address us. Nkrumah also came.

Most of the major figures, at the time, showed up in one form or another while we were there. It was a very lively thing. The European idea did not, initially, attract much discussion, although we had quite a significant number of European students at LSE—Germans, in particular. And I remember when I was trying to decide whether to do my graduate work at LSE or go somewhere else. I went to see Alan Day, and I told him I would like to do a short dissertation. He said, “Why don’t you look at the implications of the European Common Market for the countries in the Caribbean?” I said, “I’ve never thought about that.” He said, “You should. Britain is likely to go in. This will affect your trade preferences.”

This was the first time I came to a clear understanding that this was something that the Caribbean should pay some attention to, as well as the academic literature on the subject. In my courses with James Meade, he was very interested in customs unions. He did introduce us to some of the developments in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and Benelux (Belgium-Netherlands-Luxembourg) countries. We did not discuss the Treaty of Rome, as far as I remember it. The Treaty of Rome was in 1957. It came towards the end of my stay at LSE. I do not recall Oxford being very interested in it. My recollection is that several people didn’t think that Britain should join the Common Market. So the academic interest in it was not very strong. Later on that situation changed.

Uwe W. Kitzinger was among those who stirred up the subject. Kitzinger was German, a European in every sense of the word. He wrote *The Challenge of the Common Market*. So he began trying to stimulate interest in European integration in the college and the wider Oxford community. But by the time I left, interest was just beginning to grow. Kitzinger kept on the subject during the 1960s. He was invited out to the University of the West Indies when we were thinking of a program in international relations.

TGW: Did you think about going on to do a Ph.D.? Or had you had enough of the university after Nuffield? You went back to the University of the West Indies. Did you think about returning to do a dissertation? Did it seem not worthwhile? Did you regret it later?

AM: Yes, that was my initial aim, and I prepared a manuscript which I hoped would have been accepted. But people had difficulty with it, principally because they felt that the subject was not substantial enough for a D.Phil. I had written on West Indian trade with Canada. One suggestion was that I should have expanded it to a study of UK-Canadian-West Indian trade. Instead I accepted a B.Litt degree for what I had done.

The discussion of pursuing a doctoral degree went on while I was at Columbia. Some voices urged me to do another dissertation or to stay on at Columbia to do their comprehensives and submit a revised version of the thesis. In the midst of all this, UWI decided to set up an economics program at the St Augustine campus in Trinidad. The vice chancellor then sent a message to say would I go and head up a new program in Trinidad to start a Division of Social Sciences there. This sounded extremely challenging. So off I went. And I said to myself that probably after a couple of years there, I would think again, but that never happened.

So I went on to St Augustine. At some point, I felt the need for upgrading my work. It is one thing to learn research on the job, as it were, but it is quite another to be subject to the discipline of working on a research team, which I did after that. So I felt the need for it, but the time just wasn't there. And my health began interfering with me from those days. So I was always being encouraged to slow down and not take on too much.

TGW: I wondered, in this period at Columbia—and somewhere in your c.v. (curriculum vitae) you said you were at Princeton for a year—whether you recall two kinds of turmoil actually in this country that were going on. One, of course, was related to racial relations and

U.S. domestic policy. The other was [John F.] Kennedy's launching of the Development Decade, and what that implied. How did this idea of a Development Decade strike you at the time? A third is the question of race, which is obviously an issue in the Caribbean, and obviously is an issue in the United States. What do you recall from those days?

AM: What I recall from Princeton—in Princeton I was literally put in cotton wool. I was given a nice apartment on the lakeside. I had very comfortable accommodations in the Woodrow Wilson School and a group of highly motivated students. I don't think I've taught as good a group of students as I did at that time. They all went into different kinds of public service. Some went into the USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and others went into the Peace Corps. They were all highly motivated by the Kennedy message. I could never forget that.

I didn't meet too many blacks at Princeton at the time. In fact, I went into the library once to put some books on the reserve list, and the lady told me, "I'm sorry. You can't touch those. They have been reserved by Professor McIntyre." I stood and looked her in the eye for a little while, and then it suddenly dawned on her that I might be the person who had put them on the reserve list. I found this to be quite amusing. But as I said, I was in cotton wool. Columbia was different, because I was living on 115<sup>th</sup> and Riverside. I was all over the place because Columbia was a center of controversy and agitation. I came in touch, at Columbia, with Terry Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein. They were over in sociology, but nonetheless we made some links in discussions of development and the international system.

The degree of activism that I found at Columbia on the racial issue was much higher at the time than it was at Princeton. I remember on one occasion I was given a carrel and some students came to see me, mainly Puerto Ricans. They said, "Why are you not in a big office?" I

said, “They haven’t got it.” They replied, “No, no, no, absolutely not. You should go to the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE).” They were really quite upset. So I went and said to the office manager, who was a very pleasant woman, “I don’t know what is involved, but a number of people feel that my office is inappropriate. They are suggesting that I should appeal to CORE.” She nearly had a heart attack. The next thing I knew, I was moved to a very palatial office, which remained quite out of proportion to my comparatively humble status as a Fulbright Scholar. But there was a lot of that.

The Alliance for Progress was being discussed a lot. I was at the Institute for Latin American Studies also, and there was considerable interest in it there. There was substantial support for it. [Albert] Hirschman, himself, was a Latin Americanist. But I didn’t link it at all to the UN at the time. The first time I had a contact with the UN was when Hans Singer got in touch with Hirschman and said, “Look, we are looking for some people to work on UNCTAD I (UN Conference for Trade and Development). Do you have any people there whom you can recommend?” Hirschman said to me, “Why don’t you go and have a chat with them?” But, of course, by then I had committed myself to go to Trinidad to start up a new economics program.

Nonetheless, I was highly interested. I spent an afternoon at the UN discussing what they were doing in preparation for UNCTAD I. This was the first time that UNCTAD and the UN’s role in economics came directly to my attention. Of course, later on, as I said, it came through the Commonwealth Group and the New International Economic Order.

TGW: Let’s just fast-forward a moment to your own role as vice chancellor from 1988 to 1998. What had changed most substantially between your initial encounter in the 1960s, and even at St. Augustine, and later? What were the biggest changes amongst student discourse and ideas, and the way people approached issues?



AM: I'll tell you that the thing that hit me from the first week I was there in the 1960s, as a young faculty member, was that politics were the order of the day. All of the political parties in Jamaica—I was on the Jamaican campus at the time—had groups on campus, including parties out of office. The left wing groups were very visible, but there were smaller groups like the Rastafarians. Students were very much involved in politics at the time. Jamaica had just achieved independence.

When I returned to UWI as vice chancellor in 1988, and I saw luncheon groups on the campus, I asked “Who are these groups?” I expected to be told the PNP (People’s National Party) and the JLP (Jamaica Labour Party). Those are the two parties in Parliament. But who are the other groups? They said, “These are not political groups, they are religious groups.” So, as I usually took the opportunity of the luncheon interval to move around the campus, I listened to some of these groups. They were principally evangelical groups. I really began to see that I ought to try and get students more interested in governance, and more interested in politics—not party politics, but essentially national issues. So whenever I went to speak to student groups, I always chose a topic along those lines. I was not trying to compete with the religions.

A religious fervor seemed to have gripped the campus. But then when I looked at it in greater detail, I discovered that part of the reason for this—not the whole of it, but part of the reason—was the tremendous gender shift that had taken place. In the 1960s, I would say that the ratio of male students to female students was about 75 to 25 percent in favor of males. That had changed entirely the other way. I was shocked to find that nearly two-thirds of the students graduating were females, spread across the faculties. The only two faculties where this was not quite so were engineering and medicine. But now they are catching up. This, of course, has its positive aspects, because one found female students much more focused, much more involved in

their work, and in the general discussions of campus issues. But the males had retreated, and this was a great worry to me. There was a lack of determination to achieve academic excellence, and even a lack of interest in academics per se. It came home most forcefully to me when my youngest son dropped out of college. But I think this has largely to do with disenchantment arising from perceptions of intellectual stagnation in Jamaica and in the rest of the Caribbean. He is coming back to Columbia this fall after several years.

TGW: You mentioned the male/female balance. The notion of gender is something that obviously one cannot ignore today. There was a major UN conference in 1975 (UN World Conference of the International Women's Year). But, in your recollection, when did this idea actually hit the UN system and begin to make a difference in development thinking and development policy? When did you, yourself, begin to try to come to grips with this in your own work? When did this come on stream?

AM: I think it was pretty much before the Beijing conference (Fourth World Conference on Women), and the preparations that were taking place. Partly because a Jamaican woman was involved in it at the UN—Lucille Mair. So Lucille, of course, I had known on campus. She was a faculty member in the early days, in the 1960s. She, in fact, ran the all-female hall of residence and also taught history part-time. So we are good friends. She had a habit of discussing all of these issues with me. But the whole issue of gender and development had, of course, surfaced because there were a number of activists in the Caribbean. Nita Barrow, who became her country's ambassador in the UN, was very well-known internationally. So was Lucille. But there were a number of others. A lot of them came through the church system.

So on issues of gender and development I first became aware that it was no longer a lobby. It was now an issue that had to be addressed in a very systematic way. And when I got to

the university, I was very pleased to discover that a lot of thinking was going on among the young people—meaning the women. Some of the men—thankfully a minority—still said that this was a way of downsizing them and so on. Now, it has become an article of faith.

TGW: In the academy, or at least as I view the academy, an enormous distinction is always drawn between theory and practice, or the practical and the abstract. Do you think this distinction makes sense conceptually? Does it make sense in a university, in a developing country, in particular? And finally, how did your own long experience as a practitioner, so to speak, serve you in your capacity as a university administrator?

AM: First of all, I have always held to the view that the university was perhaps the major thinking part of the population. Therefore, it had a responsibility to try and clarify concepts and issues that were relevant as people saw the development problem in their own countries. So I have always felt that the role of the university academic was to spot what were the emerging issues and to help people to clarify them, to separate the wheat from the chaff. At the same time, while I was vice chancellor and even before that, I very strongly supported theoretical work. I didn't believe that the university should allow itself to become entirely absorbed with so-called practical problems, but, as I said before, I recognized a strong link between problem identification and the role of the university in problem clarification.

During the 1970s, events unfolded in such a rapid fashion, and people took sides in a very sharp way, that burning political issues at the time, more or less, defined the intellectual interests of the faculty. A number of things happened. One thing that was very distressing to me—hopefully it didn't last for too long—was this business of insistence on ideological compatibility, and people feeling that if you weren't on the left as defined by them, then there was no place for you at the university. I had to fight this—not when I was vice chancellor, but

when I was on the faculty—I had to fight this very intensely, to leave space for people of different points of view. That changed, of course, after the 1970s. And now I think there is greater pluralism among academics. But in the 1970s, we went through a short, but very difficult period, when academic intolerance rose to unacceptably high levels.

I remember at the time that the university academics, and economists, were very intensely involved in a plan that Michael Manley was trying to promote, a new production plan. And it certainly hit me when they asked me to read drafts—I don't know why, because I was not identified with them in a visible way—but it certainly struck me. I thought, “I have read the first fifty pages of this draft, and I haven't seen any major commentary on poverty.” I said to one of my interlocutors, “Your first fifty pages has nothing of interest to the vast majority of people in Jamaica who are below the poverty level (which was about 40 percent at the time).” I think there were many questionable propositions. I suggested some rewriting. But one has to be careful that, in one's intellectual fervor, one does not forget the whole purpose of public policy.

When I went back to the university in the 1980s and I found that this situation had substantially corrected itself, I was pleased. On the other hand, a different tendency was emerging, which I think was somewhat unfortunate—several university people, who used to give a lot of their time to pro bono work, now tended to see themselves as consultants whenever they were called upon to do anything outside of the campus. And I had some quite serious concerns with them about this. I said, “I am not against consultancy. Of course not. But you have to achieve some balance. Some of the people who need you most can't afford to pay you as consultants.” I pressed them to take on a dimension of community service at the time. I see instances of this, but also of a culture of materialism which has taken root both on the campus and in the society as a whole.

TGW: Either from the vantage point of being within a university or from within the UN system, I wondered whether you could comment on the role of outsiders—a guy like Gerry Helleiner, for instance. Basically, an academic who forces new ideas on the system, or alternatively, an idea that comes up within an international debate, sustainability or something like that, and how those ideas then filter back into the work of university academics. So the two-way traffic of ideas, from outside the UN system, from the academy in, and from the inside of the system, to the academy.

AM: Well, I think both processes have to be encouraged and nurtured. When I was vice chancellor, I insisted that the university should see itself as the region's window to the outside world, that we had more natural points of contact with the outside world than any other institution that existed in the region. I pushed very hard for a number of things. One was institutional networking. We started some quite interesting programs on that basis. Two, a much steadier flow of academics to and from UWI and other institutions, attendance at professional meetings around the world, and building up contacts, even joint work with people outside. I also started, almost as a personal mission, of organizing conferences to bring in outside scholars. We had a big conference, for instance, assessing the state of regional and interregional cooperation. I brought all of the executive-secretaries of the regional commissions, heads of integration secretariats, scholars like Helleiner, and so, and others from Europe and Africa. We had a very successful conference on that subject.

We also did a conference on poverty. We did a number of conferences on issues of finance and trade. But this was a way of connecting our university academics, and policy analysts as well, to the flow of thinking that was going on in the rest of the world. Of course, the other way, namely, ideas being generated within the university itself, finding themselves into the

wider global discourse, was naturally more limited. One of the things I discovered when I went back to the university was that, in the 1980s, intellectuals dropped international issues.

Practically all of the attention was focused on macroeconomic adjustment. When I picked up the coursework for the Master's degree, I saw only a reading course in international trade. I said, "Wait a minute. You guys don't know that the world is become globalized?" They said, "Yes, but we want to focus on what is hitting the communities." I said, "This is an immediate problem of concern. But, of course, you have to cover longer-term issues as well."

I began systematically trying to insert international issues into academic discourse. The few years that I was there, I spent some of my time doing that. Now, it is coming again into its own. You have students doing Master's-level programs with courses in international economics. You have a lot of multidisciplinary work with international relations. We are getting back on track there.

There is an association called the Association of Commonwealth Universities. We meet usually once a year and have discussions of common problems of university development. I was absolutely appalled by the breakdown that had occurred in some parts of the Commonwealth. Places of quality that I knew very well had experienced drastic falls in capabilities and standards. I couldn't believe that such deterioration had occurred. There was little space to address issues beyond survival. The vice chancellor of one of those institutions told me—I knew him quite well—he said, "Alister, what are you talking about? Networking and research. We can't get involved in that right now. I can't even buy toilet paper for my school." He was very blunt about it.

So I really felt that those of us who could contribute should do so in a wider setting. And I actually got some university people interested in looking, for example, at the whole business of

new trade arrangements in Europe. We had a working group on the subject, and I became highly interested in trying to influence not merely the policies of the Caribbean, but trying to link up with other parts of the world that have an interest in this. I was very delighted to find that when I joined the IDRC (International Development Research Centre) that they have set up a research in Africa consortium which is doing quite well. They have got multi-donor support now. Fourteen donors are supporting the consortium. They have a common structure for a Master's program. They pool resources for teaching. There are a number of joint research projects.

TGW: This is the beginning of tape number two on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March. Why don't we spend a moment or two on UNCTAD? You mentioned that you had encountered Prebisch's writings as a student at Oxford. What was Prebisch's legacy at UNCTAD in terms of ideas?

AM: I think that his essential message was a message of hope: that the gap between North and South could be closed, and that institutions could be developed to support the process. When I went to UNCTAD, I was rather impressed by the confidence with which many of the directors there felt that in their particular sector they could make progress. Gerry Arsenis in money and finance and Surendra Patel in the transfer of technology are two examples that come to mind. On the other hand, I found in UNCTAD a kind of attitude that once one had thought through the problem, in a sense, it had been solved. I had the greatest respect and admiration for our leader at the time, Gamani Corea, who believed in the power of ideas, and was himself a very powerful intellect. But he did not do as well in marketing his and the organization's ideas, taking them beyond the meeting rooms downstairs, out into the hinterlands, into the capitals where the decisions were being taken, and which one had to influence. To be fair, there were resource constraints to pursuing such a strategy, but the absence of it limited the impact of the

institution. This was particularly important in Africa, where only a handful of countries had missions in Geneva. One had to find a way of getting to them.

I came to UNCTAD with this particular orientation—I'll say a bit more in a while—because of my experience in CARICOM as secretary-general. I remember when I first started, spending a lot of time crafting my addresses to the council, or to the heads of government, and overseeing the preparation of documents. And one day, a prime minister who was very much a man of the people, came to ask me a question. He said, "I've come to ask you one question. What is all this business about MNF?" I said, "No, MFN (most-favored nation)." He said, "Well, what is it?" I then explained. He then said, "If you don't mind my saying so, you can't stay here and write all this scholarship. You have got to come and talk to us. You have got to spend time on the road." That very much influenced my change in perspective. I felt that as leader of the organization, I had to make my presence felt in all of the capitals, and beyond the capitals, even in the countryside of the member states that we were serving.

I think that approach was absent in the UN. Prebisch was a great interpreter and polemicist, in the best sense of the term. And, in a sense, his messages could cross continents with much more power than anyone else, largely because of his stature. But after the Prebisch era, [Manuel] Perez-Guerrero, whom I knew well from the Venezuelan side, was a very nice man and a very able man. He was a man of the UN, but he was not a man to take himself into the nooks and crannies of the Third World. Corea had, as I said, enormous intellectual strengths, but it did not carry through to his ultimate constituents.

The view that we had to get to countries and not just to missions in Geneva affected my approach to my own work in UNCTAD. When I arrived at UNCTAD, I was disturbed to discover that we had not studied systematically the possible impact of the Integrated Programme



of Commodities on different countries. I put in hand a set of country studies covering about thirty countries, and found some quite scholarly people there who were attracted to the idea. So we started these country studies after we had launched the Integrated Programme. And to our great surprise, we discovered that, in most countries, it could be important, but what was more important was that the policymakers had not thought about it sufficiently and had not factored it into their thinking. They were sort of fence-sitting. And some of those were among the major commodity exporters.

When we probed a bit further, we realized that we hadn't yet done a sufficiently effective selling job with the commodity organizations that then existed. They would be invited to meetings from time to time, discussions would take place, but I am talking about influencing the thinking, moving beyond the heads of the organizations to senior staff and the governmental membership itself. But even more surprising was the fact that we had developed this Common Fund for Commodities as a major financial institution, and we had not consulted private financial institutions which were highly influential both with governments and the private sector. One of the things that we did was to have a group of quite senior executives from financial institutions come in to discuss the Common Fund with us—late in the day, I must confess. But they helped us out. They came out very strongly that the Fund had to have its own equity, because at one time the Group “B” countries were saying that no, it wasn't necessary for it to have its own equity; the Fund would pool the resources of the commodities agreements. The group came out and said, “Yes, it should start with \$500 million, but we expect it to grow.”

Once they had said that, it was clear that the United States government would not contest the view of the number two or the number three man at Chase Manhattan Bank; nor the British the man who had been head of the treasury and was in a very senior position with a private

group; nor the Deutsche Bank; nor the Crédit Lyonnais, and so on. So once we had gotten that report out of the bankers, we were pretty much home and dry as far as the equity was concerned. Group "B" never again took up the position that the fund did not need an equity. The question was how much. And around that the battle was centered.

We should have brought them in at a much earlier stage, at the stage of conception and design. But there was a prevailing mood against this kind of close interaction with the private sector. The private sector was essentially thought of as market-oriented and therefore inseparable allies of Group "B." I was never, myself, entirely comfortable with that view. We eventually got a fund which was a shadow of its original conception. The question is: did the original conception really reflect a sensible way of dealing with the problem? Of course, over and beyond that, was buffer stocking the best method of dealing with the problem of a number of commodities? We eventually discovered not. And I think really that the foundations of the Integrated Programme of Commodities began to display fundamental weaknesses that required a re-thinking. The major developed countries seized the moment and decisively brought the Integrated Programme to an end, if not formally, at least in its essential elements.

To me, that was an experience of an intellectual journey that ended, not in a green pasture of promise, but in a rather arid area of disappointment. But it had its personal pluses. I enjoyed working with Corea, especially the dialogue on a one-to-one level that we used to have. I had an excellent group of colleagues. We called ourselves the "Nine O'clock Group." And we met every morning at nine, and it really was extremely invigorating. I enjoyed it thoroughly. Of course, this came close to my own university style of seminar-type discussions. They all worked hard and very enthusiastically. Most of them were from the "B" Group. I hated this political division of the staff into who's in the "B" Group and who's not. I never paid the

slightest attention to it. It got me into a fair amount of trouble with the (Group of) 77, but I managed to survive that.

I learnt a lot from the experience with the Integrated Programme for Commodities. But I didn't go there for personal education. I went there to try and advance the interests of developing countries. At the end of it, I considered it largely to be an example of policy failure.

A little later, I moved up to become deputy-secretary-general. There, I returned to ECDC, which was my first love. But again I found that we spent an inordinate amount of time on the GSTP (generalized system of trade preferences), whose value I questioned. I thought that our best prospects lay in direct involvement with, and support for, the evolution of groupings at the sub-regional and regional level. We did some of this. We had some inter-regional advisors, two or three of them. But the main focus of the work in ECDC was top down, as it was in commodities. UNCTAD is essentially a top down institution. From that point of view it had obvious limitations. There was not enough bottom-up work, either in the sense of trying to involve capitals in whatever was going on by direct linkages with them, or in terms of the particular measures and instruments that were being proposed.

I would say that I very much enjoyed certain aspects of UNCTAD—the intellectual challenge, the collegiality, and so on. But I left there quite disappointed at the limited contribution that international institutions can make—international institutions of that kind, anyway—to development. The situation hasn't changed. It has improved in the sense that there is more bottom-up activity today, for example, more NGOs (nongovernmental organizations). The development issue at the level of capitals and in countries as a whole is being kept alive by the activities of NGOs, and they are being particularly vocal on gender issues, the environment, and now on governance of world trade and that sort of thing.

So that helps a lot. They are, in fact, tending to take the battle to the institutions, not the other way around. And they are arguing for policies that involve action by countries on their own, joint action with neighboring countries, and across continents. They have all of these different dimensions built into their thinking. They are still too concerned, in my view, with protest diplomacy, as against trying to work out specific programs. I have been working with some of them in the Caribbean. I have said, "Okay, you don't like this. But what do you like? Let us hear more of that? And why don't you set up a working group?" Well, they are doing that. But it may require international support. UNCTAD, I don't think anymore has the resources to do this kind of fieldwork. It was better placed in the 1970s. In a sense, its influence is pretty much confined to two annual reports—both of high quality—one on trade and development and the other on investment, and also to periodic conferences on issues such as LDCs (least developed countries). They are going to have one this year, right?

TGW: Yes, this May. You mentioned colleagues and staff, and collegiality. I don't know whether it is a fair question, but if you feel comfortable about generalizing, in your view, what is the quality of the international civil service? How does it compare with a good social science faculty? How does it compare with a good government civil service? There always are deadwood and stars. But is it a good place to produce ideas, or do ideas get produced better elsewhere?

AM: I have to confess that my answer to that has to be mixed. You say forget the stars and the deadwood and just concentrate on what's in between. But I'm afraid you can't forget the stars because they are the people who, in the end, energize the whole organization with their ideas. So the question is: do you have good stars in the UN? I would say yes, but they are now less than they used to be. One should avoid generalizations, but I think the UN has been severely

affected by this business of geography. As you know, a lot of attention was paid by the Ford Foundation report, and other analyses of ways to install into the system, right from the bottom to the top, an ethic of competitiveness and of excellence. Secretaries-General and executive heads have tried. But they have been defeated by this passionate insistence by governments on geographic representation in secretariats. At first it used to be said that it was confined pretty much to the 77, but now it is everywhere. After all these years, everyone has become imbued with the idea that their interests can only be attended to if they have a sufficient number of nationals in the secretariats.

I would say that, because of the legacy of “equitable” geographic representation, the UN is far less capable now of being an intellectual leader than it was before. That is not to say that good staff work is not going on. It is. But in terms of taking up an original idea and building it up and trying to influence governments and institutions to move with it, it is not sufficiently there anymore. We no longer live in the day of Prebisch, or even in the days of Jim Grant and *Adjustment with a Human Face*. Do we have the executive heads in the UN today who can confidently do that kind of intellectually innovative work? This is not a question of competence; it is rather to draw attention to the imperative of dynamic, intellectual leadership.

TGW: Who are the stars?

AM: Today?

TGW: Today or yesterday.

AM: Well, I can't speak about today. But I would say that the people who I thought had a lot to offer, in terms of ideas and so on, included Sidney Dell and Richard Jolly on the New York side. UNCTAD—Gamani Corea who had a good mind and a sparkling mind at that. At a somewhat lower level, in New York, Geneva, and the regional commissions in particular, there

were a large number of very bright people who to a greater or lesser extent contributed significantly through staff work to the flow of ideas, but sometimes bureaucracy got in the way.

I haven't done justice to the people in the regional commissions. There have been very able executive heads. For example, I think of Enrique Iglesias, who, when he was secretary of ECLAC, did a remarkably good job of intellectual leadership, stimulating and carrying forward the Prebisch tradition. Others who came after him also produced good technical work. Robert Gardner at ECA (Economic Commission for Africa) was also a very good example of exceptional leadership.

Of course, as I have said before, we have always had a group of middle level people doing very solid technical work. In UNCTAD, of course, we had a number of them in money and finance, commodities, trade, technology, and other divisions.

So I am not entirely pessimistic about what the UN can do in generating new ideas. Today, it can draw ideas from outside. For example, the UNDP (UN Development Programme) with Mahbub ul Haq and the *Human Development Report* (HDR), which was a very good use of outside expertise. I used to try my best to encourage that in UNCTAD, and again when I was in the Office of Director-General, to bring in people to help us think through problems.

TGW: One of the forms in which geography manifests itself is obviously in terms of staff. The other—and it may be UNCTAD's legacy—is, I guess, the group system of negotiations. Do you think that this is, on balance, a positive contribution to the international production of ideas and the negotiation of texts and moving out agenda items? And was it a force that made more sense at one moment in time and makes less sense today? How do you look back on this period, beginning in the 1960s, through today, in terms of group relations? Do they still make as much sense as they did when UNCTAD was founded?

AM: Probably not. I got into a bit of trouble after UNCTAD VI. I did an address at Sussex, which was published, “Developments After UNCTAD IV: Aspects of the Intellectual Task Ahead.” One of the things that I proposed was a rethinking of the group system, and allowing for cross-group coalitions wherever this was feasible, as a way of building consensus, rather than insisting that everyone should stay behind the line, as it were, of their particular group. I found the group system, after a while, to be quite tiresome. I must say that having to manage the Integrated Programme of Commodities, and having all these groups meet, and having the Group of 77 meet Group B, Group D, and so on—it just meant that positions hardened as one moved along. And I desperately tried to see how I could build bridges with more liberal elements in Group B, with more pragmatic elements in the Group of 77. I tried some activities like lunches and small group meetings. Of course, people were very nervous, particularly in the Group of 77, to be involved in this kind of bridge building. But I thought it quite essential that we should do that.

Yet, when I look at the debacle of Seattle, I say to myself, “The green room is not the answer.” Would we have done better with a group system at Seattle, even if the text was somewhat minimalist? On further reflection, I thought, “What is the use of a minimalist text?” I am more convinced that, in the case of the WTO (World Trade Organization)—and it could apply to UNCTAD—that we should really have a board of directors, or an equivalent thereof, reflecting different constituencies. It is more or less the style of the World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund), except that weighted voting gets into the way. But if ever we can find a more equitable distribution of voting rights, it does seem to me that we have to move towards a system such as that—and for the reason that, without ignoring the commonalities that still exist, the Group of 77 has become a much more differentiated group than when Prebisch

advocated its establishment in the 1960s. For example, Mexico and Korea are now members of the OECD. The gap between and within regions is, if anything, growing. And those gaps reflect differences in interest too. India and China are two mega-blocs, if I can call them that. They are very huge aggregations of people. Despite all of the interest on the part of the Indians in continuing to be part of the South, and leading in that regard, it has become more and more difficult to do so. In Africa itself, the past twenty to thirty years have been years of division and the resurgence of tribalism and all the rest of it.

We face a very difficult situation in the South, in that regard. Yet, I think southern countries could still aspire to pursuing certain common aims. One is poverty alleviation—everybody is interested in that—and getting the international community focused on seeing what can be done there. That includes the heavily indebted countries. Everyone is interested in the environment, although not necessarily in the way the northerners would wish to see. So there are issues of common concern. But I don't think they are sufficient to sustain the cohesion of the group in its present form. The group will have to accept that it would take different forms in different forums, and that you won't have the strict geographical breakdown into regions of the world that had been originally favored.

TGW: How do you explain this desire to have political correctness, to use the contemporary expression? I think we can characterize the way secretariats often function. And it seems to me one of the roles of the university, at least as you have described it in early years, is to make sure there is room for differences in views. What we actually argue in *Ahead of the Curve?* is that, on occasions, the UN is ahead of the curve and calls into question orthodoxy and begins to think about ideas. But, to use a couple of contemporary examples, we argue that the UN was behind the curve in confronting the Washington consensus. And you have argued



earlier that it was behind the curve in holding on to ideas on import substitution and being unwilling to call into question sacred cows of the IPC. Is this just the way human beings operate? What explains this?

AM: I don't know. You have periods in the world of intellectual fertility, where ideas sprout. I think the 1960s was very much a decade of that sort of thing. The 1970s wasn't characterized so much by new ideas, but simply by the propagation of old ideas with greater vigor. But the aridity came in the 1980s. I don't know whether it is because, by the beginning of the 1980s, with a new flavor of administration in the United States and the beginnings of the end of the Cold War, interests shifted from development towards other issues. The West virtually did a U-turn in shifting from development towards the immediate concerns of a rapidly crumbling Soviet empire. Maybe there were very good political reasons for this, but that's a fact. The 1980s were very difficult years in the UN. At one point, Pérez de Cuéllar called me to head a small group within the secretariat on secretariat reform. We did quite a bit of work on that. Out of that emerged a realization among most of the secretariats in the UN system—not the specialized agencies so much—that political support for their work had dwindled, certainly in the West and even in southern countries that had begun to react to the changing political agenda. Development studies went into recession in most universities. So you had all of these forces, in a way, working against robust institutional support for intellectual innovation.

TGW: You mentioned the 1960s maybe being a particular period when ideas were in ferment and the 1970s as the propagation of some of those ideas. How do you look back on what probably was the master shopping list of such things—the NIEO and its aftermath? I suppose the final nail in the coffin was Cancun (Summit on Global Negotiations), or somewhere

thereabouts. How do you look back on that period? Was this too much, too early? Or just too much? Too abrasive?

AM: Yes. I think that the South should have strategized their agenda much more than they did. It was too maximalist. If you look at the Sixth Special Session, and even the Seventh—which was supposed to be consensus-building—if you look at Paris and CIEC (Conference on International Economic Cooperation), it was really, in a sense, asking for too much. But it was, in a sense, responding to perceived vulnerability in the North. It was saying, “This is our chance to get what we have been waiting all these years and decades for.” But I think greater strategization of it was necessary. And the thing about it was that, in the 1970s, when, although the northern countries were vulnerable because of the oil crisis and so on, the South neglected the peoples of the North. Not a great deal of attention was paid to building up support for southern agendas among the peoples of the North in the way that NGOs are playing the game today. I think it was excessive confidence that they had the negotiating advantage, admittedly for a very short period of time.

But I think that the underlying changes taking place in the world were then not as manifest as they became in the 1990s and have become today. The whole of Southeast Asia was changing, but it hadn't come to the fore. The Asian tigers had not yet come to the fore. China was beginning to change, admittedly slowly and in very small ways. But still, I remember I went to Beijing on an official visit in 1983. I took with me an Indian colleague from the Manufactures Division. Wherever we went, the conversation tended to become “India slash China.” The Chinese would say, “I hear you are building up quite a technological base in India.” And my colleague would be very evasive on this. On one particular occasion, at the Institute of World Economy, my colleague said, “Tell me, I see that you are making a lot of progress with

manufacturing. You are getting in some foreign investors. Do you consider yourself now to be aiming to be a major player in international trade?" And the Chinese response was, "In twenty years. It will take twenty years."

This discourse highly amused me—to see these two guys sitting there and trying to assess the thinking of the other side, as it were. I think that has made a big difference. China was a silent member. In Geneva we used to say "the Group of 77 and China." But I never once heard the Chinese make a substantive intervention in the Group of 77. They just simply were there to associate themselves with the Group of 77 leadership. I am sure that this would not be the case today. I don't know for sure, but I would not be surprised if that were the case.

Of course, one of the things that has happened is that the leadership of the Group of 77 has evaporated. The leadership, when I first went to UNCTAD, was India, Algeria, Yugoslavia. Latin America never really had very vocal representatives, but I suppose the closest that any Latin American country came to it was Venezuela. And that was largely because of Perez-Guerrero's influence. But all of these countries, for one reason or another, have moved back from the front line to occupy a backseat. They are now in the backseat, wishing to be so. Latin America, never in the front seat much, is decidedly in the backseat. So the countries that are showing interest in leadership in the Group of 77 are few and far between. Malaysia is, to a certain extent, and Nigeria, I suppose. But Nigeria's leadership role has been very compromised by its checkered history. I don't know whether President [Olusegun] Obsasanjo will eventually succeed in changing it, but the whole history of military rule and poor governance have damaged Nigeria's image in the Group of 77, as indeed it has with other countries.

The leadership in Africa is unclear as is the capacity to articulate new ideas about development. I noticed at Davos that the presidents of Nigeria, Algeria, and South Africa spoke

about an African renaissance, which involves an African common market and all the rest of it. It sounds very encouraging, although skeptics will say that it is remarkably similar to what people were thinking two or three decades ago. I noticed too that the G-8 (Group of 8) is going to discuss it, so it is obvious that they think it is sufficiently important to devote some time to talking about it. But it is African and not global. And I don't see any big global initiative coming out of Asia or Latin America. So there you are.

TGW: How do you look at big changes in development thinking over the course of the last fifty years? I think you've mentioned earlier whether, when at the university, that mixture between macro and micro, or between internal and external, was out of whack. UNCTAD's mandate was external, but it was a little hard to argue with a straight face that domestic policies had no role, which was, not to overstate it, more or less the party line in the 1970s and the 1980s. Getting this mix right, in terms of analysis, is probably the biggest challenge. But how do you look at the last half-century of thinking about this mixture?

AM: Well, remember we started with confidence that the problem of development can really be addressed by robust state action. This was the Rosenstein-Rodan "big push" idea, and to a certain extent, Arthur Lewis was of that genre, although more pragmatic than others. Hirschman began to shift the emphasis, in a way, with ideas of unbalanced growth, which suggested more of a reliance on market mechanisms than the state. But basically, the Development Decades, the Hollis Chenery "two gaps," the big ideas of the 1960s on development, all presumed a very vigorous role for the state. That persisted, of course, into the NIEO debate.

Where things began to go in a different direction was with the arrival of President [Ronald] Reagan in Washington. The Reagan administration was strongly committed to a

market-oriented approach. In fact, there was almost exclusive reliance on the market. And, of course, there was the disappointing performance of governments in practically all of the three regions of the Third World. Policy error was widespread and profound. So disenchantment with government action, together with new ideology, came to the fore—not so new, but the resurgence of an old ideology—changed the direction of development thinking towards less state action. Macroeconomic stability through adjustment, only at the end modified, in a footnote, with *Adjustment With a Human Face*, was an attempt to bring back the development dimension to thinking on economic policy. And, of course, it was very powerfully argued, not resisted at the intellectual level by the institutions, but rarely implemented with the vigor that the presentations envisaged.

The other day, I was looking at some notes and suddenly discovered the fact that I was probably the first person to ascribe the 1980s as a “lost decade for development.” It wasn’t my idea. John Cuddy I think it was who coined the phrase in drafting a speech for me when we were preparing for the conference on least developed countries. But, anyhow, it came out in UNCTAD, “the lost decade for development.” It had a great rhetorical flourish to it, because through no construction of UNCTAD’s, or anyone else’s, the 1980s were a period of slow growth of the world economy. And developing countries found themselves in a very difficult situation, the result of which was, apart from the other contributing factors, a massive accumulation of debt, which continued to thwart any efforts at development for the rest of the decade, and even into some of the 1990s. In fact, even today, some countries are still struggling with their legacy of debt, even though there are initiatives like HIPC (heavily indebted poor countries) and so on.

But it is interesting to notice the convergence of a number of things, a change in ideology in the major player associated with less support for international institutions, slow growth in the world economy, a petering out of interest in development as an issue deserving of special attention. Most of the mainstream institutions said, “You don’t need to teach people development economics. If we teach them economics well enough, they can deal with the problems of developing countries.” So a number of subjective and objective factors converged to throw the development discourse off track in the 1980s and into the 1990s.

I think where it has begun to get back on track, in a way, is through this new interest in poverty alleviation. It is essentially an interest targeted not just simply to social amelioration, but a conviction that without that, the possibilities of economic growth and good governance will continue to be elusive.

TGW: In the world of ideas, to what extent do institutional rivalries—and here people would refer to UNCTAD versus Washington, but you could also talk about UNICEF’s (UN Children’s Fund) “human face” as a footnote to Washington. But you could also talk about ideas within the system between New York and Geneva. What role do bureaucratic contexts and institutional rivalries play in both the creation or the massaging or ultimately the promulgation of ideas?

AM: I think it is vitally important that one achieves, say within the UN, a sufficient degree of intellectual coherence to encourage a free flow of ideas at the staff levels and above on development, and coming to some kind of institutional strategy for the propagation of those ideas. I was very determined, and failed miserably, on coming to New York and having worked at UNCTAD for ten years, to try and get a better synchronization between the work of DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) and UNCTAD, particularly in the publication of

reviews, because we had a situation where we were presenting six reviews a year—the *Trade and Development Report*, the *World Economic and Social Survey*, and a review from each of the regional commissions, all done on a stand-alone basis. I tried to encourage the various divisional heads to come together at the stage of conception and discuss the problems of the world as they saw them, impacting globally and regionally, and what should be the particular emphasis of each review. It failed. We had discussions, and everyone said, “Oh yes, I will deal with this, and you will deal that, and so on.” When the documents arrived, they were all taking their own paths. It was partly because, by the time they got back to base, their staffs began to say, “We have expertise in this field. Why can’t we do something on it?”

So we didn’t get that. And of course, not getting that meant that a lot of our contact between the staffs in the different places was left to personal initiatives. There was no clear, institutional support for it. And I tried to get some movement of people at that level to discuss various ideas. I didn’t stay long enough to start with in my job at the UN, but I must confess that there were much more powerful vested interests than I thought existed. And, to some extent, they were encouraged by their constituencies. I remember a particular executive-secretary’s tactic was to come to Mr. [Jean] Ripert’s meetings in New York, discuss coordination and so on, and then go back and report to his board. He would say, “Imagine! They don’t want me to—.” And they would say, “How dare they!” And then he would write Ripert a nice note and say, “I tried, but the representatives objected.” Ripert was far too democratic, in my opinion. He just accepted that as a fact of life.

But I think that that situation hurt us in a number of ways. One, it prevented us from achieving critical mass. From the point of view of idea generation, one needs a certain critical mass of people working together, coming to the problem from a different regional or thematic

perspective. So we lost that. Two, we lost the value of greater coherence in the propagation of the ideas themselves. All of the audiences for these reports were segmented, and we were not putting forward a consistent set of ideas, not in the sense of forcing uniformity, but in the sense of bringing to bear on the ideas a diversity of experience. For instance, the World Bank would bring out *The World Development Report*. It had a global data base and a very big team. So I think we lost out in that endeavor. Nonetheless, a relatively small team of committed people can make some progress. The *Human Development Report* has had an impact and has never had more than twelve people working on it, as far as I know. I don't know who's responsible for it now, but at any rate, when Richard was in charge, and before him Mahbub, there were ten or twelve people. However, it had a very substantial impact. So one should not generalize.

The World Bank is losing some of its influence. And the IMF has never thought of itself as a propagator of ideas. It has thought of itself, rather, as a diagnostician of countries' problems. Although people say, "Every size fits all," and probably a good deal of this about them is true, they see themselves as essentially responding to a country focus. The WTO does not have anything equivalent to a research secretariat. It has a very small research group. So there is a role for an UNCTAD-type institution. Unfortunately, UNCTAD is constrained by limited mandates and resources. And even if people express appreciation for their surveys, I don't think a stronger and larger mandate is in sight.

TGW: You mentioned the *Human Development Report* as having an impact. I wondered if you could tell me what you think that impact is and when other reports matter. What is the dynamic between publishing something within the UN system and its being discussed more broadly and accepted in the policy arena? I think I would also include in these reports a particular kind of report—from eminent persons commissions, like Brandt and Brundtland. So



you have blockbuster reports, you have visible Human Development Reports, and you have other kinds of reports. But how do ideas in any of these move from the paper to the stage of people acting on them?

AM: Let me just take the *Human Development Report* as an example, because I keep thinking—and I always do think of the *Human Development Report* as against the *Trade and Development Report* from where I sit in Jamaica. When the *Human Development Report* is ready, there is, first of all, a very intense effort by the UNDP resident representative to bring it to public attention. There are press conferences, the holding of seminars, meetings with different groups—NGOs, the private sector—to distill its essential findings. The *Trade and Development Report* sinks like a stone. Why? Because there is no representative of UNCTAD in the capitals, and the UNDP resrep conceives his or her primary responsibility as marketing UNDP's output. So, it barely gets a mention in the local press, and there is no attempt to follow it up. In any case, it is not sent in a digestible form. One thing that reports have to do today is to bring out electronically compatible information that can be used by the media and so on. UNDP is doing that to some extent. The *Trade and Development Report* is not in that position, neither is the *World Economic and Social Survey*.

In fact, this is illustrated by the difficulty I experienced in getting a copy of the survey. I couldn't find my copy of the *World Economic and Social Survey*. I phoned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I said, "I am sending my driver. Could you be kind enough to lend me your copy?" They said, "We don't know it." I said, "This is what you get from New York every year. I thought that you people read it to prepare your minister's statement to the GA (General Assembly)." He said, "We didn't use it this year. Let me check around." He did eventually find

it. But I was surprised that the head of the economics department in the Foreign Ministry was not on board with the latest issue of the survey.

I think, too, that we have run into an era of fatigue with grand commissions, especially commissions that keep saying the same things. They are not news from the point of view of the media. The Brundtland Commission had an impact. It was saying something different. Brandt, although it was separated by some years from the Pearson Commission, was more or less covering the same area. The Commission on Global Governance, again, was—I regret to say that some of my friends were on it—repeating ideas that had surfaced before in less grand style. My own recollections bear this out.

The central idea of Brandt was a world development fund, which every one knew would not be supported by the Bank and the Fund. Many people portrayed it simply as [Dragoslav] Avramovic's Common Fund, 1980s style. It did not get a good press. I would say that this was not because the ideas in it were not sufficiently interesting to be discussed, but simply because enough attention was not paid to media presentation and mobilizing support from interest groups. Brundtland was different. Mrs. [Gro] Brundtland was an active politician. She understands how to sell ideas. She had to do it for her country at the national level. It was different. You felt Brundtland. You felt that here was a commission coming forward with new issues of concern to the world. So I don't know that in the climate of today one will get very far with this kind of discourse, unless new ways of marketing it are found that correspond to the electronic possibilities that we now have.

TGW: What about conferences as a way to either create, flag, push, or distort ideas? I think here we are more concerned not with routine conferences (maybe UNCTAD is routine, maybe it's not), but with more ad hoc events—the spate of conferences in the 1970s on the

environment and population. And then again in the 1990s, we have had another full slew of these. Some of them were revisiting earlier conferences on the environment and women, and some of them were trying to pull together strands on social development. On balance, do you think these events are important?

AM: Yes, I think it is good that from time to time the world is drawn to pay attention to a specific issue of global importance. But it has to be well-prepared. One of the things that encouraged a modicum of success, for example, with the gender issue was the intense preparation done by women's groups all over the world. I think the environment too had a number of constituencies, both in governments and outside, that ensured a degree of focus in the work of the environmental conference. That conference on social development (World Summit on Social Development) was different, because member states did not display a strong interest in and commitment to it.

Altogether, I would say that the conferences that we have had on specific issues have had a greater measure of success than the institutionalized conferences. The Millennium Summit was a good idea, but you can't just sell it because it's the millennium.

TGW: Obviously you have to have a decent idea, and you also need thorough preparation and follow-up. What about timing? Some people would say that the Brandt report (*North-South: A Programme for Survival*) was a terrific report; however, it was published with Reagan, Thatcher, and Helmut Kohl coming on the scene, or already on the scene. Therefore, no matter what you did, it was doomed. Are conferences and publications about timing?

AM: Yes. The Brandt report was just bad luck. They could not have anticipated this emergence of leaders in all three major countries of a similar ilk. I think there is a problem of timing in the sense that we don't prepare for international conferences enough in the sense of

having people going out and consulting, at the very senior level, with governments and with important groups on the issues, how they view them, how they should be introduced, where and when and what could be the outcome. I think this sherpa process has to be built into a major international conference. It should not come as a surprise that the head of government that you expected to come is not coming, or the minister of finance, and so on and so forth.

This is one of the reasons why the UN has never been able to engage the attention of the ministers of finance. They say the ministers are not interested in working with the UN; they are only interested in the Bank or the Fund. To some extent it is true, because these are the institutions with which they are in daily contact. But a number of them used to tell me, “How on earth do you expect me to show any interest in UNCTAD conferences when I only hear about it through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a couple of weeks before the conference is to take place? And you haven’t involved us in the planning.” The G-24 (Group of 24) was supposed to do that, and Sidney Dell tried valiantly in that regard. But often the constituencies we are targeting are the wrong ones, because we are targeting ministers of foreign affairs, or even ministers of trade, when the issues go beyond their particular jurisdiction.

So the whole business of orchestrating a conference and bringing an issue to international attention requires much more attention to the marketing side than international institutions are typically capable of doing. And they don’t build coalitions that can do it for them. They often don’t have the coalitions. NGOs can help, but you can’t rely on NGOs alone because in many countries they are not in a particularly strong position. You have to try to find other constituencies—the private sector, the labor movement, farming communities, farming organizations. You have to disentangle the whole web of organizations in a country and see what is the best combination of forces you can mobilize for your particular aim. But we don’t

have that kind of capacity in the UN at all. We have very small information offices, and that's about it.

TGW: You actually have served on what are called "expert groups." This was a favored device within UNCTAD and elsewhere. Do these make a difference? Or when do they make a difference, if they do, for the production of ideas, or at least coming up with new thoughts that the secretariat can use and put before governments?

AM: I think expert groups are particularly helpful at the conception stage, because you bring together a group of people well known in their field. They can give some legitimacy to ideas that staff in the secretariat may be trying to generate. They give some refinement to them and so on. And certainly they give the executive heads a better handle on the issue, feeling that there is something there that they should be concerned with. But I don't think experts are particularly helpful beyond that. They may be helpful in bringing along a particular group, for instance. But in terms of the marketing of the ideas, this is not the typical area of competence of expert groups.

TGW: So you hire an expert or a consultant to say what you would like and to provide legitimacy to an idea that is already floating around?

AM: Or illegitimacy, as they have frequently done. I know of at least two expert groups in UNCTAD that absolutely destroyed the secretariat's original conceptions. But it is a sifting process, and I think it is a very useful sifting process.

TGW: I wondered if we could go backwards, for a moment, to your experiences in the mid-1970s, and actually today, with regional cooperation, integration, and regional efforts. I think you said earlier—when you were looking at Caribbean problems for the first time and you were trying to come up with a document—that EFTA served as a model. I was curious about the

extent to which the Caribbean picked up ideas that were around and changed them or modified them; or the extent to which ECDC in the Caribbean was something that grew up in and of itself in the Caribbean.

AM: As I said before, we began by looking at the existing models and how best they could be adapted. The EFTA model seemed to us—we didn't keep it for very long, but it seemed to us to be a good starting point for promoting intergovernmental action to get integration going. We moved very quickly from CARIFTA to Common Market, and in so doing we couldn't really rely on many of the common market models that then existed, whether European at the time or the Central American integration program, which was then quite advanced. So we had, more or less, to put together a kind of indigenous model which combined the promotion of cooperation in the field of trade and economic development, with functional cooperation in a whole variety of areas stretching from education, to sports and culture, with some amount of political cooperation, but which was so rigorously limited that it didn't give people the idea that we were trying to drag them into another political federation.

So we had to balance a number of factors and put together something which—I looked at the treaty the other day and said, “My God, how did we put this together?” But what has happened, of course, is that in the age of globalization, the principal rationale for sub-regional and regional groupings is that it gives the member states concerned greater leverage in their relations with the rest of the world. They can speak with one voice, or as we say in the Caribbean, “sing from the same hymn sheet.” And they can economize on very limited human and financial resources. This is not a factor only affecting so-called small countries, because the range of issues on which one has to negotiate today, the complexity, make most of them well beyond the resources of even some of the medium-sized states. You go into a negotiation on

market access, for instance, and you look around the room. The Americans have over one hundred people on one side. Canada has forty or fifty. Mexico has one hundred, and Brazil sixty. Then you work down to CARICOM with two or three. That's all you have. There are no reserves waiting in an adjoining room. And you now have to confront trade in services, an entirely new area, very broad. Each service industry has its own peculiarities. And you have investment, competition policy, environment, government procurements, intellectual property rights. All of these require areas of expertise that are often in very limited supply and sometimes don't exist at all.

The regional model is one which gives small states in particular, but not only small—medium-sized states too—a chance of mobilizing expertise with greater effectiveness than would be the case if they represented themselves individually. When we started the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) negotiations—I know that well, because it is very close to me—there was a great resistance to negotiations by regional groups, not only by the U.S. Some of the Latin Americans were saying, “No, no, no, you must represent yourselves.” We insisted. I insisted. I said, “If you want us to leave the negotiation, say so. But we can't do it that way. I am afraid that you will have to accept that when we come and say, ‘This is the negotiation position of CARICOM; it is a faithful representation of the position of our governments. And if necessary, we can provide written evidence to that end.’”

So when we started, CARICOM was the only group saying this. We had somebody behind every flag. And I moved around the flags, depending on the issue being discussed. But somebody would get up and say, “I am speaking on behalf of the members of the Caribbean Community.” First of all, once we did it, MERCOSUR (*Mercado Común del Sur*, Southern Common Market) started to do so. I think the original objection of the U.S. was really targeted

towards MERCOSUR, rather than to ourselves anyway. The Andean Group started to do it. And now Central America occasionally does it. Of course, their regional integration arrangements, certainly in the external field, are really on hold at the moment.

But the fact of the matter is that experience showed that this was the most economical and most effective way of getting effective participation by our countries. That has now become, in a way, the principal focus of the integration effort today. It is to maximize one's chances of getting beneficial results from a globalizing world and much less concerned with the advantages of emerging markets and economies of scale.

TGW: To what extent is the big/small problem replicated within the Caribbean, itself, or within the Caribbean community? You are from a particularly small state. Are there similar kinds of differences within the group, between big and small?

AM: Yes. Traditionally, there were. But they have become less and less so, for the simple reason that in the 1990s, or even before that, the so-called smaller states grew at much more rapid rates than the larger ones. Jamaica retrogressed. So today, you have a situation where the so-called less-developed states in the treaty have, on average, a much higher level of per capita income than some of the so-called more-developed states. So there is much less of this less-developed/more-developed dichotomy in the intra-CARICOM discussions than before. But it surfaces in areas such as external representation. Notwithstanding the fact that per capita incomes are higher, the capabilities of representing themselves have not increased in a commensurate way. So it's still there, but much less pronounced.

Of course we encounter a lot of opposition to the idea of small states getting special treatment in the FTAA or the WTO and so on. There is still battling on those fronts. But there are little windows of opportunity opening up.



TGW: Also, I would like your reflections on differences between the Caribbean and Latin America. Earlier, you used the acronym ECLAC, which is one we are familiar with today. But at one point, before you had gotten into this business, it was only ECLA (Economic Commission for Latin America). To what extent have traditional linguistic, cultural, and economic differences been overcome by putting the two communities together? Or would it have actually been better, as the original proposal had been, to have an Economic Commission for the Caribbean as a separate entity?

AM: Well, first of all, I don't think the differences have been overcome at all. There are still wide gaps separating Latin America and the Caribbean. They are, in a sense, inevitable because of significant differences in size, historical experience, language, and so on. There are more conscious efforts to break that down. There is much more interaction. When I was at the university, I promoted and signed off on a scheme for the joint delivery of certain Master's programs between ourselves and three universities in the Dominican Republic. My colleagues were skeptical, because they said, "Look, these universities—when we go into a network like this, we go into a network because we think their standards are somewhat higher than ours. We have something to get. But we don't think so in this case." I said, "Forget it, in ten years you will think differently—in any case, their students are just as good as yours."

Anyhow, it has worked very well. In fact, we started with some EU (European Union) funding, and the EU has agreed to continue funding for another period of time because the results have been so good. But a lot of effort has been concentrated on trying to narrow the differences between the two sets of institutions, and increasing the level of understanding. Some success has been achieved in that regard, but there are still yawning gaps in developing a

common perception of belonging to a single region. It is on both sides. It is not something that is one-sided at all.

I don't think that an Economic Commission for the Caribbean would have worked, simply because we are too small a part of the world. We would not attract the resources that could come to us if we were to align ourselves with a larger grouping like ECLAC. So I don't think that that would have worked at all. I think, myself, that we have to shift our focus away from Europe and recognize that we are part of the western hemisphere. In that context, we have to become much more interested in Hispanic culture, language, and so forth. We have to build it in.

Jamaica is trying. Trinidad is trying. Spanish is now compulsory in all of the secondary schools, and they hope to bring it to the primary level, and so on. They are trying. Certainly within the expanded Caribbean community, we are working now with the Dominican Republic. We have certain arrangements in hand with Cuba—trade agreements, and things like that. And a lot of personnel have been exchanged. As I speak, the University Hospital in Jamaica has just recruited a large number of nurses from Cuba. Their nurses migrate to Florida, and then they import nurses from Cuba. That's life. A lot of students study there—several thousands—who would not have gotten a university education if they had not opted for a scholarship to go to Cuba.

So these things are happening, and one hopes that more of it will happen. We are building relations with Venezuela. I think the present president has much larger ambitions, so the Caribbean doesn't particular attract him. But he is not against it. He is quite responsive to the idea that there should be more interchange between the Caribbean and Venezuela. Colombia is preoccupied with its own problems at the moment. Central America has also its own

difficulties. So it is not a good moment to advance further initiatives for cooperation since they would largely be centered among the states that are in the Caribbean basin. We don't expect the southern cone countries to have a great interest in it

TGW: You would be sanguine, at least in the medium to longer term, about NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) becoming a sort of western hemisphere grouping?

AM: You mean expanding it into a free trade area of the Americas? Yes, I think so. Obviously, special arrangements have to be made of one sort or another for transitional periods for freeing trade. I would also like to see a more explicit arrangement for financing the adjustments that must accompany the liberalization of trade. But I think that we are moving in that direction, and I feel that that is probably the right way to go.

TGW: What exactly is the writ of the regional negotiations?

AM: We are responsible for coordinating external negotiations taking place at the WTO with the European Union, with the hemisphere, et cetera, and bilateral negotiations. Most of the external negotiations are to be coordinated. What coordination means is that we have the responsibility for preparing the negotiating briefs, for consulting the social partners, for briefing representatives of countries where they exist in the particular capitals. And where they don't exist, to act on their behalf. So we are often spokespersons for the Caribbean Community countries, particularly in places like Geneva and Brussels where the representation is only partial.

But our principal work has to do with the preparation of negotiating positions—commissioning studies, peer reviewing them, bringing expert groups together to consider them, and to distill their conclusions for the negotiations. This is really what we are about.

TGW: So what is the main difference from the beginning of your career at the university and the end of your career in the university? How do you look at regional integration in the Caribbean? How has it changed from your experience in the mid-1970s to today?

AM: It is no longer a major area of controversy. Certainly Jamaica, which was hostile to federation and suspicious of integration—most of that has disappeared, not all, but most of it. It is no longer a controversial issue. People now are beginning to realize that they can't assess the success or otherwise of integration solely by reference to the trade figures. There are trade imbalances that have continued, but there are other ways in which, as a community, individual states can have benefits, one being in the external field, as I have explained, but also in others.

We have run successfully a Caribbean examinations council, which conducts the examinations for all students graduating at the level of the secondary school. This ensures common standards, for one thing. But it also gives a greater possibility for mutual recognition with outside countries. Can you imagine if the government of Grenada had its own exam to graduate students? How successful would they be in getting that qualification accepted in North America and Europe? But the Caribbean countries, acting as a whole, have developed a system which people much admire, and which is helping to open the way towards much greater cooperation in education.

There is a lot of cooperation in the field of health, for instance, particularly in an age of communicable diseases. There is a lot of cooperation with respect to the management of natural disasters. And, in general, cooperation in the field of the environment, particularly the marine environment, is growing. There is a fair amount of cooperation on security and police matters, particularly with the drug problem being what it is. I wouldn't say that it is very successful, but it is there. They meet regularly and try to see what they can do together.

So there is a much wider sense today that integration means more than trying to encourage an expansion of intraregional trade. There is much more of a concept of a common community, even if a community of separate states.

TGW: Did the end of the Cold War play into this in any way? Or to ask the question another way, to what extent has the disappearance of the Soviet bloc and state-centered models had an impact on the way the Caribbean or anyone else does business?

AM: In the case of the Caribbean, there was a very big division in CARICOM on the issue of what was then called “ideological pluralism,” that is, a community of states, some adhering to the socialist model, while others adhere to a market one, so much so that in 1982, the government of Jamaica, proposed a CARICOM I and a CARICOM II. CARICOM II would have consisted of an inner-grouping of states adhering to parliamentary democracy. It failed, but the fact of the matter is that there was this big division. That disappeared, of course, with the end of the Cold War. That’s the first thing. The second thing is that those states that were not part of the socialist grouping had a certain suspicion about the intentions of Cuba and a certain reservation about dealing with Cuba. That again has disappeared. Now cooperation is growing in a number of areas on a purely pragmatic basis. Sometimes it is institution-to-institution, rather than government-to-government, and I expect it will grow over a period of time as the two communities get in a closer relationship.

So it has had a good effect, the ending of the Cold War, in the sense that it has removed from the debate a number of polemical issues that were threatening the very survival of the community.

TGW: As you look ahead, what would you think might be the biggest, or the couple biggest, intellectual challenges facing the UN system in the arena of economic and social development?

AM: I would think that the most fundamental problem facing the UN, and the international community, is to deal effectively with the issue of—I wouldn't describe it as the "digital divide," but as the "knowledge divide." The knowledge divide is now coming to occupy a central place in the discussion of international development and the whole business of closing the gaps between North and South. It is not something that the UN is particularly well-equipped to deal with, for the simple reason that there is no single agency that would have a sufficiently strong jurisdiction to exercise leadership on that issue, and with that would come concomitant expertise. And then it requires a fairly close relationship with those parts of the private sector that are involved in knowledge development. How to bring the two together and get a good interface is going to be an exceptional challenge, I believe.

In the IDRC, we have a quite active program with ICTs (information and communications technologies). We have engaged in a number of projects in Africa, for example, on increasing connectivity and bringing schools into computer networks. One gets the feeling that although it is worthwhile doing, we are still just scratching the surface of the problem. That, I think, is going to be a very central issue.

A second issue, which is almost flowing out of international economic integration, is the business of international migration. It is a very powerful issue. It nearly wrecked the Cotonou Agreement. We reached a point in the negotiations where the Europeans were pressing for much stronger provisions in the field of governance, human rights, and so on. And the Africans pushed on the whole business of migration. The conference virtually collapsed. It took a lot of

effort to bring it back by getting both sides to withdraw and ask for less than they had put on the table. But the issue is simmering. It's simmering there, and it's going to cause immense difficulties in Europe, as far as the African relationship is concerned. But I expect that it will happen also in Latin America. Once you get a free trade area in place, there is bound to be increased possibilities for movement of persons for providing services and so on. With that will come pressures for migration.

It's not going to be easy, because the two main receiving countries are the U.S. and Canada. They have their own problems with integrating peoples into their own societies. They are trying, but there is no guarantee that the answer can be found. Then, of course, some people draw attention to the possibility of large waves of migration from Asia to the rest of the world. How is that going to be handled? So we have a big problem there.

Then we have, of course, communicable diseases. Just yesterday, we were talking. India has now developed a package for AIDS costing \$350, as against the \$10,000+ that a package costs from the pharmaceutical companies in North America. Is that going to be allowed? Is trade in that going to be allowed? We don't know.

So there are whole sets of issues in the human area—human improvement through human education, through empowerment, and through knowledge, et cetera. The issue of, in a global economy, promoting the free movement of goods and capital, but not labor—how long can it last? And the strains imposed by unstructured flows of migration, strains particularly for receiving countries. These are going to be, I think—even as we try to address, and only partially, the issue of poverty alleviation—very, very substantial. Of course, the environmental issue—I am looking with great interest at the discussion in Congress on permitting exploration of oil in Alaska. And I was listening to a late program—I think it was CNN (Cable News

Network)—somebody making the point that there is no energy crisis, really. It has been entirely manufactured by the business interests. So there really are some very major issues which will stretch across the globe in good time. If we are doubtful whether we needed a UN in the past, we most definitely do so now.

TGW: So I shouldn't be worried about not having enough to analyze?

AM: You can keep going without any problem.

TGW: As you look back, is there anything that you personally regret about this period of involvement in international cooperation?

AM: I don't regret it. I enjoyed it. I benefited from it. I learned a lot about the world and how it is organized. But the lack of tangible results has been a disappointment. I was naïve. I thought when I was going to be director of commodities that we would get a Common Fund with substantial resources and an IPC and so on. I didn't know enough about the intricacies of getting international consensus. I was over-confident that we would succeed. My colleagues were also brimming with optimism. It's amazing how people in an organization cohere around an objective and keep going even though the signs are clear. There was an American chap at the mission in Geneva. He was not a conventional diplomat. But he used to come and have lunch with me fairly often. He used to say, "Alister, I am warning you. You are not going to get the results you are looking for with this thing. If we achieve anything, it is going to be minimalist and it won't last. By the time it gets to Congress, it will disappear." I said to myself, "How can he just keep on this thing all the time?" But I have to say, his warnings were very timely. He also issued a warning about UN inefficiency. When I went and told colleagues "Look, I had lunch with an American who I like because he's up front," They would ask: "About what?" I said, "We were discussing the need to improve efficiency in the UN." They said, "No!



Nonsense! Rubbish! There is inefficiency in all organizations—national and regional. I will not spend a minute of my time on it.” I said, “Will you allow me to do things?” There was not happiness about that. I did one or two small things, but it was not regarded as a valid issue. But it is a valid issue because, while it is true that one might say that for political reasons, countries such as the U.S. wanted a smaller UN, the fact of the matter is that we played into their hands by rather inefficient methods of program delivery and our methods of work, generally. And this is not the secretariat alone, but the political organs as well.

TGW: Actually, Paul Berthoud mentioned that, in his view, there was a justifiable part of UN inefficiency—call it the “coefficient of inefficiency.” The question is, to what extent is this justifiable, or is it totally out of proportion? One would not have to side with Mr. [Jesse] Helms on too many things, but if there are important things to be done, important ideas to be launched or research to be done, are there not plenty of resources? In fact, from time to time, should one not reallocate what is going on instead of adding on? Is that fair or unfair?

AM: No, I wouldn't say that my contact was the only person to influence me in that direction. But I certainly felt that there were a number of ways in which, at UNCTAD, we could have improved our efficiency. When I was officer in charge for those thirteen months, I took some steps. I remember one step I took was that anybody traveling had to consult the travel schedule which was then computerized to see if there was anyone else going to the same capital, and for what purpose, and report that to his or her division chief before they got permission to travel. As a result of that, do you know that we ended the year with a savings in travel of a \$150,000 in UNCTAD?

I then said to New York, “Look, we have saved \$150,000 in travel. Could we retain half of it, which I will split between the divisions to do anything that they thought needed to do in

order to improve their performance—whether sending people to professional meetings, buying books and journals, whatever it is?” They turned it down. And the directors told me at the directors meeting, “What did you achieve? You achieved nothing, because this money went back into the pot in New York and these fellows could take all sorts of trips.”

So that failed, but I have always had a great interest in efficiency. I feel strongly that the UN played into the hands of its critics by not taking earlier preemptive action to tighten the organization. Definitely so.

TGW: I wondered what it felt like, as a product of a colonial society, and as a member of the Commonwealth, being knighted.

AM: I had been sounded out informally some years before. I had doubts, and I felt it would not have sat well with my position in UNCTAD. I had to get the approval of the Secretary-General anyway to do it. And when I called New York and asked, they said, “Look, don’t ask him because he won’t give you approval.” So I left it.

When it came back to me, of course I was at the university. It had been fairly conventional that all vice chancellors are knighted. So I said, “It’s like an honorary degree.” We have this traditional arrangement that the Queen is the official visitor to the university. She comes periodically to visit. But it helped us. I can tell you that when I went to the university, two days literally after getting there, Hurricane Gilbert devastated the campus. The royal family link was very helpful in raising money to rebuild. Princess Anne worked very hard to help us to get funding from all over the place. She rang friends. We got a donation out of Baron von Theissen. I thought, “What on earth is Baron Von Theissen doing donating to the university?” I surmised that it was because of the royal family connection. So it has its value.

I expect that on the next round, Jamaica will become a republic. They will do away with the Queen being head of state. I think that is fair enough. In the twenty-first century, it is a rather anachronistic kind of link. But the involvement of the royal family in institutions, where they want to work—like Princess Anne does a lot of work for the street children; she has done a lot of work for the preservation of nature and so on. She is, I think, a very diligent royal. I was really very impressed with her.

TGW: Is there a question that I should have asked you, or you wish I had asked you?

AM: I spoke to you about the IPC at some length and about ECDC, and the disappointments in that regard. I think that I should have stressed a little more some of the positive things that happened at UNCTAD. I think UNCTAD started earlier than other institutions in emphasizing interdependence both among countries and issues. This was a persistent theme in the Trade and Development Reports—in particular, the need for the North to take more seriously the mutuality of interests in a robust world economy. UNCTAD started much earlier than most. The other institutions were trailing behind. Even on the question of the least developed countries, the debt forgiveness resolution of 1981, UNCTAD had started the work on debt forgiveness from then and on drawing the attention to the plight of the least developed countries.

A number of the areas of the secretariat's work went off course. I think on technology this was certainly the case. When I was trying to get the division to take on the business of the new technology, they showed less interest in this than in the more conventional transfer issues. Shipping—too much intellectual effort was expended on the Code of Conduct which, in the end, has not really produced any major results.

So we have had our problems, but the mere existence of UNTAD meant that there was a recognition that there was a group of countries that could be called “underdeveloped,” “developing,” whatever one wished. And they deserved some attention, even if that attention was uneven. So I can’t say, really, that the period with which I was associated with the UN was wasted, although, as I said before, I entered with a lot of naïve expectations.

TGW: I would have to actually say the same thing about my own career there.

AM: Really?

TGW: It was a coming of age in thinking that not everything was possible. I hope I haven’t become cynical, but it did bring home a few realities, in the same way that my more recent experience with violence and war zones and the use of the military—this is a necessary part of international relations that somehow I had ignored for a number of years.

AM: But you did the right thing, because you shifted into a kind of academic role of writing and reflection and so on. I think that is more satisfying, because one can deal with failures in an intellectual sense. I think this is right. It is why I think too that perhaps there should be term limits on service in the UN or international organizations. They should let people move. I have always found that people who have spent their entire career in the UN are very inward-looking, not at all responsive to outside criticisms. This may be true of all institutions, I don’t know.

TGW: It’s the downside of having a civil service, or tenure in universities.

AM: That’s right. It’s the same problem. Yes.

TGW: This has been delightful for me to spend these few hours.

AM: Me too.

TGW: I look forward to sending you the transcript and remaining in touch. Thank you very much.

AM: And good luck with it.

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