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**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF
JAVIER PÉREZ DE CUÉLLAR**

BY

THOMAS G. WEISS

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THOMAS G. WEISS: This is the 4th of April 2002, Tom Weiss interviewing Javier Pérez de Cuéllar at the embassy of Peru here in Paris, at 50 Avenue Kléber. Mr. Secretary-General, good afternoon. I wonder whether we could start at the beginning, and whether you might tell me a bit about your family background, with particular reference to how you think this contributed to your interests in diplomacy and international cooperation.

JAVIER PÉREZ DE CUÉLLAR: Well, actually, this is something that I referred to in my memoirs, *Pilgrimage for Peace*. I was born in Lima in January 1920. Since a young age, I was surrounded by foreign news, perhaps because my family was from Spanish and Italian stock. Now and again, we had foreign magazines at home, mainly in French. I remember one magazine, *L'Illustration*, that I used only to leaf through, looking at the pictures, as I couldn't read French at this point in time. I was the only one in the family interested in foreign news. I always liked stamps. Stamps are really very important if you want to learn about geography and about foreign countries. I still have many from different countries and, of course, from the United Nations. I like coins and medals and I still treasure them. I think that it was for me a kind of introduction to this idea of "abroad"—that is the United States, Europe, Latin America, even Asia (mainly China and Japan).

Incidentally, when I was Secretary-General, I was received by Emperor Hirohito at his summer residence, far from Tokyo. The man in charge of protocol told me, "Please do not speak to his majesty about politics." I was wondering what I could say to him. When I met him, the modest feeling of the house surprised me. He did not speak common Japanese, it was a Japanese used only by the royal family. There was an interpreter who was Peruvian Japanese, so that I could fortunately speak in Spanish, as I didn't know what subject to raise with him.

I told him, “You know, in my country we have quite a lot of Japanese. Ever since I was a child I knew about Japan from stamps.” And he was very interested in my hobby. Then he told me about his interest in small fishes or something like that, as I did not really understand. I spoke about our common relations—Peru, Japan, et cetera. Anyway, stamps were very useful to me especially on that occasion.

At school, I started learning English with a Polish teacher, which was not ideal for learning good English. Later on, because I was the only child, I was living with my cousins and one of them had a French teacher. She was not very interested, but I myself was eager to learn when I was thirteen or fourteen years old, as I was able to speak a little of French.

You see, everything foreign was attractive to me. As I am of Spanish origin and I was living with an aunt of mine who was Italian, we were always surrounded by many foreigners. I think that my family was rather foreign-minded, in a way—not very local. Even the food in my house was not exactly Peruvian cuisine. I am adding all those details in order to explain to you why I was always so attracted by everything that was foreign.

When I entered the university, and then received my law degree when I was twenty-four, I never practiced law. From the beginning, I was much more interested in international law. You see, there was—as we say in Spanish, “*encadenamiento*,” a kind of a chain of events that led me to diplomacy. I decided to enter the Foreign Ministry as a clerk in 1940 and made the necessary studies in order to become a diplomat. I had my first appointment in 1944. As I was already fluent in French, I was sent here to Paris in December 1944.

TGW: I wondered whether we could just stay at this point for a moment. During the 1930s, there were a couple of dramatic events on the world scene, namely, the Great Depression and the Spanish Civil War. I wondered how those events appeared to you at the time.

JPdC: Well, in 1930, I was ten years old. What I remember is a little later, when Nazism started because we had a house radio station. Then I could listen to Germany because we had a Telefunken radio. I remember having listened to the speeches by [Adolph] Hitler, because I used to listen to foreign stations—Spanish, English, French. Then I remember having listened to him, without understanding a single word. I could recognize the word “Hitler.” I hated him, of course, as it was normal for a young man who was fourteen or fifteen years old who used to read the newspapers that were very much against him. You see, this is one other reason why I was so attracted by diplomacy.

TGW: During either your school years or at the university, was the League of Nations or the experiment with the International Labour Organization (ILO) a subject that came up?

JPdC: Well, actually, in international law it obviously was something that came up. But I don't remember whether I was that interested in the League of Nations until Peru had a problem with Colombia and this problem went to the League of Nations. The League of Nations took a decision that was not in Peru's favor.

There is another thing that I remember. The Spanish Civil War was from 1936 to 1939. That I remember very well because I was at a Catholic school where the teachers were all Spanish priests. And that's why I followed the war more or less. As you can imagine, they were all against the republican regime.

And then in 1939, the Second World War broke out, and my country was rooting for the Allies. Something important happened for me in 1944 before the end of the war. I came to Paris when France was still occupied in the north, more or less on the border with Belgium. Of course, as a diplomat I started following the situation. I saw General [Charles] de Gaulle, who was president. I admired him very much as a man who was fighting against the Nazis. Peru was

perhaps the first country to interrupt its relations with the Axis countries: Italy, Germany, and Japan.

TGW: Was it a decision to go to the Catholic university in Lima, or was this just the logical choice?

JPdC: It was the family decision, of course. We are Catholics in Peru—90 percent of the population. And it was normal to go to a Catholic university.

TGW: You mentioned that you were interested in literature as well as law. What led you to opt for the law as opposed to literature?

JPdC: I am very interested in literature, and I love Latin American literature, as well as English, American, French, and Italian literature. I also read German literature through translations. English, French, Italian, and of course Spanish, are the languages that I can read easily. I think it is for me, apart from a pleasure, a relaxation, together with classical music. When I am tired—not physically but mentally, music is the best cure. Perhaps it is the same for you?

TGW: Exactly. Many Latin American diplomats are trained as international lawyers, whereas in other parts of the world they are sometimes in history, sometimes politics, sometimes economics. What are the particular strengths and weaknesses of being trained in international law?

JPdC: Well, I think it is extremely important to be trained in law. It has always helped me. It has given me a really important background throughout my diplomatic career. For me, the study of law is order. Legal order is something that is for the better, it helps everybody in every activity—the application of law, the existence of law. Of course, you belong to a different system. You have no codes whilst we have several codes.

TGW: The Napoleonic system versus common law.

JPdC: The Napoleonic system and common law. The Napoleonic code has been evolving considerably. All my life I was very interested in international law. Again, this was because of my inclination towards anything that is foreign. When I became a diplomat, I concentrated on international law. I have written a book on diplomatic law, a branch of international law.

TGW: *The Manual of Diplomatic Law*.

JPdC: Well, you know all about me—much more than I imagined.

TGW: You were based in Paris at the end of the war. I wonder what were the impressions of the Bretton Woods Conference and the San Francisco Conference (UN Conference on International Organization), and the founding of the financial institutions and the founding of the United Nations? How did they appear to you in the embassy?

JPdC: It seemed to me that it was the beginning of an international order, and that was very important. The principle that always ruled my activities is order. What we had in the international community meetings was order—an order that still exists, more or less, and works. When I was in Paris, I had the chance to be sent to London to attend the first meeting of the General Assembly in London in 1946. What was really very interesting was that I was present when the first Secretary-General of the United Nations was elected, Trygve Lie, in 1946. I always remembered this rather large gentleman who took over as Secretary-General. A Belgian, [Paul-Henri] Spaak, was the president of the first General Assembly. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt attended as one of the members of the American delegation, together with the secretary of state—I don't remember his name.

TGW: You were fascinated. You were present at the beginning. But then you basically concentrated on bilateral diplomacy?

JPdC: I concentrated on bilateral diplomacy until 1971. I was ambassador in Switzerland in 1964, then I went back to the Foreign Ministry in 1966 as vice-minister of foreign affairs. In 1969, I was appointed ambassador in Moscow, and two years later, in 1971, I was transferred to New York. That was a surprise for me. Nevertheless, I was very pleased because I thought that a multilateral diplomacy experience was something that I needed greatly. There was a kind of gap in my diplomatic formation.

TGW: So when you were teaching at the diplomatic academy and writing your *Manual on Diplomatic Law*, it really was based on your bilateral experience.

JPdC: That's right. There is a second edition in which there is a reference to multilateral diplomacy, which in a way is the same thing. When I was ambassador in New York I discussed bilaterally with my different colleagues in order either to have support for one Peruvian resolution or to obtain support for a position in the organization. I think, actually, that multilateral policies are an aspect of bilateral activities. If I wanted to get support for an idea or a resolution, I went to see my colleagues—the American ambassador, for instance, who was a very good friend of mine, he was George Bush's father—and I asked him, "What is your position on this particular point?" And then, "Please, I would like to have your support for an election, for instance, in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)."

I think that, in a way, it would be much more explicit if we said "parliamentarian diplomacy," rather than "multilateral diplomacy." But anyway, that is something that can be discussed because many writers have established a difference between bilateral, multilateral, and parliamentarian. In the United Nations it is almost a parliamentarian diplomacy—and in other

gatherings it is much more multilateral than parliamentarian. Perhaps I am wrong, but that is my experience of it.

TGW: For me the difference relates to some of the processes in which you are trying to group together large numbers of countries with a single voice. The number of voices is not quite infinite, but anyway quite numerous. To try to come up with common positions means making trades in ways that I think probably would not occur in a national parliament.

JPdC: But you know, in several countries where there are so many political parties in parliament, it amounts more or less to the same thing. But anyway, that is immaterial, actually.

TGW: You said that you had never practiced as a lawyer, but for a while you had taught law. Were you ever tempted to become an academic instead of a practitioner of law?

JPdC: Well, actually, yes. At some stage, because I was studying both law and literature at the same time at the university, I was much more inclined to move to literature rather than to law. But finally, I decided that law was my calling. Still, I continued studying both law and literature. Nevertheless, I was tempted to give lectures on literature, much more than on law—perhaps by a kind of laziness, in the sense that to prepare a conference on literature requires much less rigor than in law. In law, I think rigor is indispensable. For literature, you can allow your imagination to wander.

TGW: In your experience as a diplomat, and then subsequently within the United Nations, do you think that academics have an influence? And if they do, when do they make a difference to people working in national government bureaucracies or international bureaucracies? What kinds of academics make a difference?

JPdC: I think academics are important as advisors. There are moments in which a politician or an international diplomat may need the advice of an important independent

academic either for advice or background knowledge. For those who are analyzing problems—that is really, extremely important. In your country there are so many of them, and in all western countries, there are excellent analysts. They are not always right, unfortunately. Some make mistakes, but as a rule it is a kind of a permanent think tank, which is extremely helpful for diplomats.

When I was in government, for instance, less than a year ago, I had a group of people who advised me. In Peru, we have a problem with the Law of the Sea because we have not adhered to the convention. I really wanted my country to join the convention, and I presented a report to congress to obtain their approval. On that subject, I know quite a lot, but not enough. Then I went to my team, and my team gave me the necessary assistance to present my case in parliament. There is always somebody who knows more than you. But you have to admit it, and unfortunately that is not always the case.

TGW: But this also assumes that the quality of the analysis, the quality of the ideas themselves, are more important than the political use of these ideas. In your experience, do good ideas make a difference?

JPdC: I think so.

TGW: I was wondering, during this long period of bilateral diplomacy from 1945 to 1970, a quarter of a century, when you were a practicing diplomat—France, England, Bolivia, Brazil, the Soviet Union—or back in the capital, in an assignment in Lima, how did United Nations events, affairs, ideas, enter into the affairs of bilateral diplomacy? Were you obliged to take them into account?

JPdC: Well, yes, to be honest, in those twenty-five years, with the exception of the first three years in which I was involved as a modest member of our delegation, both in London and

in Paris, the UN went out of my mind. I remember I went several times to New York and never visited the headquarters of the United Nations. I was not curious to see what the United Nations building looks like. That's very strange. I was so involved in my bilateral specialty—if I can use that expression—that I was only interested in everything related to the country in which I was serving.

TGW: But there were particular Latin American angles on problems. I was just thinking back to the emphasis at the outset on regional organizations, which actually emanated largely from the Americas. Were you following those issues?

JPdC: Well, I was informed because our embassies are always very well informed, and a diplomat is supposed to read everything that is sent from his foreign ministry. But I didn't pay special attention, not even to the OAS (Organization of American States). I was totally—I would not say ignorant, because that wouldn't be right, but I was not interested in international organizations until 1972. Actually, I had to make a tremendous effort in order to prepare myself to produce good work.

TGW: I was wondering how, in Lima or your diplomatic postings, the phenomenon of decolonization appeared? In Latin America, of course, this was largely irrelevant. The Americas had been independent since the beginning of the nineteenth century. But the host of perhaps nearby neighbors in the Caribbean or Asia, Africa, the Middle East—how did this appear within the diplomatic service?

JPdC: Well, actually, I think it was inevitable sympathy for decolonization, as we had been a colony, although the historical differences were enormous. My Spanish ancestors were colonizers in a constructive way. I had a natural solidarity with them. But at the same time, some of them were fighting for our independence. That is the reason why I cannot avoid

sympathy for the Palestinians because they are fighting to have a state. They already have it legally, but they don't have it in fact.

TGW: What do you recall of the Bandung conference (Asian-African Conference)? Latin America didn't participate in it, but then subsequently became part of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

JPdC: Well, I think the Bandung conference, for some Latin American countries, including my own, was suspicious because of the participation of communist China. It was something that created a kind of mistrust in some Latin American countries that thought it was a mechanism that would serve mainly the interests of the international "left," if I can use this expression, which I do not now quite like because now I do not know where the left is and where the right is. But in those times, it was very clear before the end of the Cold War. However, that was the first movement of solidarity among developing countries.

TGW: And Latin America at the time, and actually still is much more closely aligned, if you will, with the United States than with the Soviet Union.

JPdC: Oh yes, but always with nuances. With the United States, I think, there is a relationship that is both mental and affective because we belong to the same hemisphere and we have all received considerable assistance from your country. But at the same time, some of the American policies are difficult for the Latin Americans to understand.

TGW: Or for Americans to understand!

JPdC: So you rightly say. For instance, now, I think, one cannot totally agree with some of your compatriots who are now leading the country. But at the same time, we have a very close relationship with Europe as many Latin-Americans are from European origin. As General De Gaulle used to say, "the Americans are *les enfants*, the children of Europe," referring, I think,

to all our continent. From a cultural point of view, North American influence and European influence are felt very strongly. For all of us—Spain, France, Italy, England, and Germany are part of our culture. Culturally we are a mixture, but politically we tend to be much closer to the United States than to Europe. I don't know what's going to happen if the European Union (EU) becomes a reality. Unfortunately, I think it is a little far away. But still—

TGW: Were you surprised at the speed of the decolonization movement once it began? What began slowly in the late 1940s with India and Pakistan, by the time you are posted in Switzerland, there were 100 new countries.

JPdC: But it was a result of the war. The end of the war weakened the colonial countries. Then it was much easier for these colonial countries to become independent. Unfortunately, it was too early for many of them. I think ten more years at least would have been necessary for them to become more mature. The same happened to us almost 200 years ago.

TGW: Well, decolonization was clear from the UN Charter. But the original notion, at least according to my reading of history, and other people's, was that this would take fifty or seventy-five years, and not fifteen. And once it began, there was the *boule de neige*. It really did go quickly. So I just wondered whether and when, within the Peruvian diplomatic service, the notion of Third World solidarity, or developing country solidarity, became a reality. When did it seem to make sense? Obviously at Bandung, it really didn't, but when did it become a reality?

JPdC: Actually, the real interest was economic much more than political. Don't you think so? I think that what gave us a sense of solidarity was the fact that we all were poor, developing countries. There was this feeling, much more than, let's say, intellectual or political solidarity. Don't forget that for us Latin Americans, emancipation from Spain was peculiar. Don't forget that there were what we call the Creole, the children of the Spanish who started the

revolution against Spain. It was not the case of Africa and Asia, because there was not a mixture of races. We wanted our independence because we were conscious, wrongly perhaps, that we were able to govern ourselves. We had been formed by the Spanish to govern ourselves, even if they didn't have this in mind. But it was not the case with the Africans. I have been in almost every African country, and in 1991, when I left the United Nations, I noticed that they were far from mature. I am sorry to say that, but it's the truth.

TGW: What was your recollection of the importance of the *Alianza para Progreso* (Alliance for Progress) in the beginning of the 1960s? This was a [John F.] Kennedy initiative, as was the first Development Decade. I am wondering how these rather big ideas were seen.

JPdC: It was a beautiful conception, I think. But unfortunately, the implementation—I think it never took place.

TGW: That's true. But in both the case of the Alliance for Progress, but I think more for the case of the Development Decade, some of the big calls, whether this was related to aid, whether it was related to preferences, or related to special efforts on behalf of certain kinds of countries—these notions entered the discourse of diplomats. And while we certainly can't be pleased with the progress made, were these ideas not important?

JPdC: I think that both ideas raised expectations. And then, of course, disappointment and deception. We felt deceived, in a way. Actually, the American assistance has never been well-thought of. I think many years ago—it was in 1950, or 1948—a Peruvian foreign minister, the father of our present foreign minister, asked for a kind of Marshall Plan for Latin America. What we always hoped for was a plan for Latin America like the Marshall Plan was for Europe. We wanted to solve the social problems which still are so terrible in Latin America.

When we say that in Peru that there is the end of terrorism, this is not totally true, as long as we are having the social problems we have. One day there will be a kind resurgence of terrorism. The situation in Colombia is one case. In that case, they are all other elements that help perpetuate terrorism—the drugs and so on. But as long as we have this social condition in Latin America, there will always be the risk of terrorism—and that’s why we thought that we needed to receive a substantial help from the United States. You Americans should concentrate on helping your common hemisphere. Of course, I understand that you are a world power and that it is very difficult to concentrate yourself solely on Latin America, but you are rich enough to concentrate a little more and in a much more coordinated manner. And if necessary, I wouldn’t be against the coordination of the United States and the European Union to work together to solve Latin American problems. The field is much better prepared than in Africa or even in some parts of Asia for accelerated development.

TGW: While we’re on this notion of developing countries and the beginning of this movement, I wonder what your recollections are of the UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development) meetings. You were posted up the road, or up the train line, in Bern at that point. How did UNCTAD and the coming together of the Group of 77 (G-77) look from Bern?

JPdC: I had been at one time the chairman of the Group of 77. How can you trust a Group of 77 that included, at the same time, Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia? How could coordination be possible? Impossible, you know. I think UNCTAD is more or less the same. UNCTAD was a disappointment. For instance, the Group of 77—does it exist? I don’t know, but if it does it is really, totally useless. And the nonaligned group does not exist any longer. Who is nonaligned? Who says, “I am nonaligned?” Nonaligned against what? It is a situation in which everything has changed in a radical way.

I remember it very well. I had been in touch with UNCTAD when I was Secretary-General, and even before. But it never worked properly. They had some good ideas. But I used to say to myself that I shouldn't say that as a former Secretary-General, but I said that we could paper all the United Nations walls with United Nations resolutions that have not been implemented. And you see what has happened with this 1402—the last resolution adopted by the Security Council? The only time it was implemented was against Iraq in 1990. I was Secretary-General in those times. I have a very, very clear recollection of what has happened. It was unavoidable.

But it was not a United Nations war, as I said publicly. It was authorized by the United Nations, which is different. But it was, I think, the only time that a resolution was fully, fully implemented. Of course, the other resolutions on Iraq are not implemented. The fighting against Iraq is still going on. But it was the first time in which the United Nations said, “We decided this, and this has to be done.” And it was done.

TGW: During that time, did you know or did you meet one of the people who is seen as being one of the intellectual giants of the UN system—Raúl Prebisch?

JPdC: Yes, but when he was in the last years of his life.

TGW: So not during the period when you were in Geneva?

JPdC: When he was in Geneva, he was a brilliant man. I attended two lectures he gave when he had retired.

TGW: I was actually interested, when reading *Pilgrimage for Peace*, that you pointed out, in relation to the New International Economic Order (NIEO)—but I think that you could probably make the same application to UNCTAD or other parts of the UN system as well—that

the rhetoric was a chimera, and that the main result was not action, but rather an increasing distrust between the North and South.

JPdC: The New International Economic Order was really absurd. I think that if they had concentrated on trade, for instance, and some aspects that were really important for developing countries, it would have been a success. But they wanted to make a revolution that was tremendously dangerous for the developed countries. I was a member of the Peruvian delegation, and I said what I am telling you now: “What about concentrating on trade, for instance?”

I was very much against the NIEO but my government instructed me to vote for it. But in the bottom of my heart, I thought that it was absurd. The same thing happened in UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). There were all these ideas that are not realistic—the lack of realism within the developing countries is really sad. Do you understand what I mean?

TGW: They are unrealistic?

JPdC: Well, they are realistic, but rarely. It would be rare.

TGW: Rhetoric certainly at that time contributed to making poisonous, I would have to say, the discussions such as they were between North and South. How would you stimulate a sustained North-South conversation, if not dialogue?

JPdC: I think, as I said before, it would be important to have an agenda in which we start moving step by step. What I mean is subject by subject, and not to try to insist on a global approach. That is what I really think. If you start saying, “Let’s join in order to discuss this aspect until we succeed,” and then let pass to another subject. But a global approach is, in my opinion, at the heart of many of the failures of the United Nations. The developing countries

always say they want a global approach: “Let’s present all our views.” I think it is not practical. That is my experience of seventeen years in which I have been related to the United Nations, both as ambassador of my country in Cyprus and in New York, dealing with Afghanistan and Cambodia, and then ten years as Secretary-General. My experience is the lack of realism of the developing countries. I am sorry to say.

TGW: When did that thought dawn on you first? You arrived in New York in 1971. How long did it take you to think that amassing all kinds of demands was not going to produce results?

JPdC: Well actually, I started realizing the mistake of my friends when I was ambassador to the UN. As I mentioned, when there was the New International Economic Order, I was a member of the Group of 77. It was the first time that I realized that they were totally wrong in starting with a global approach.

TGW: What role, in your view, did the 1973 war play in the discussion related to the New International Economic Order? The Yom Kippur War and OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries)—how did that play into this rhetorical frenzy?

JPdC: Well, when I went to the UN, I was not far from Moscow or New York. In my country, there was a leftist government. There was a military government that I didn’t like, personally. And I wasn’t always in agreement with my instructions, although I never received an instruction that I thought was totally unacceptable for me. That means that my heart was not in the debates, but I couldn’t move beyond my instructions. In any case, I was in a very low-key position while voting as I was instructed to vote, but not to intervene directly.

TGW: What circumstances then led you to become the under-secretary-general to special political affairs and these assignments before that?

JPdC: Actually, I remember very well, that in 1975, I was about to complete four years as a permanent representative in New York. Then for personal reasons, for family reasons, I didn't want either to go back to Peru or to go to another position, and my predecessor, Kurt Waldheim, knowing that Maurice Strong wanted to resign from the UNEP (UN Environment Programme), proposed to me—

TGW: Executive director of UNEP?

JPdC: Executive director. I remember that we were together at a luncheon, the two of us, with Maurice Strong. I told Waldheim, “No, it is not right to accept a post that I know that I cannot serve properly.” Then he came back some weeks later with a proposal that was attractive. I immediately accepted.

I was to be in charge of a function of good offices in Cyprus. I arrived in December 1975, and I spent two years in Cyprus. Incidentally, I was reading an article this morning in the *Herald Tribune* about the island. For more than twenty years, the same men are still there, fighting against each other. But it was nice for a diplomat, to be fostering good offices between the two parties. I had some small successes, in a way, when I managed to get the Archbishop Makarios and Rauf Denktash to meet together in the UN “no-man’s land.” I really liked the manner in which they dealt with their problems despite there being no agreement.

Makarios was a man of great dignity both as an archbishop and a head of state, who was able to play in a most intelligent way with the “two hats,” so to speak. I remembered observing him in a very important ceremony, when he started with a religious blessing as an archbishop and then made, a few minutes later, a strong speech against the Turks, as president of the republic! It was really funny. It was an excellent diplomatic exercise.

Then my government asked me to go back to the Foreign Ministry and appointed me as ambassador to Venezuela. I stayed in Venezuela only one year, because Waldheim called me again. He told me, "Listen, I need you as under-secretary-general (USG) for political affairs." I think it was 1978. I always had excellent relations with Waldheim, since I arrived in New York 1971. Austria was not yet a full member of the UN. It had the status of an observer. When he ran for the post of Secretary-General, I supported him, giving him some hints about other candidates. We still are good friends, but I haven't seen him for three years, or four years. Back in New York in 1979, I had to deal again with Cyprus, and then with Cambodia. What was the other subject?

TGW: Afghanistan.

JPdC: Afghanistan was at the end because I was again asked by my government to go back to the Foreign Ministry. I was about to be appointed ambassador in Brazil. Then there were political problems and I didn't go to Brazil. Still, at the request of Waldheim, I continued dealing with Afghanistan.

TGW: Was it difficult to be an international versus a national civil servant? What were the main pluses and minuses? How was your life easier and harder as an international instead of a national civil servant?

JPdC: Well, it is quite different. But in my mind, which I don't know whether it is a peculiar mind or not, when I was an international civil servant, I put my nationality in the freezer. I felt that morally, ethically, I couldn't be an under-secretary-general of the United Nations and at the same time act as a Peruvian and try to be in touch with my ambassador, and ask him, "Listen, what do you want me to inform you about?" I think that it has been totally immoral to do such a thing. And as I told you, I put my nationality in the freezer. Of course,

that does not mean that I was not interested in what happened in my country. But I didn't want to have any kind of complicity with my embassy because I thought that it was unacceptable—still more when I was Secretary-General.

Then I had no difficulty. Actually, I changed nationality in a way. In a sense, I was no longer Peruvian. I was international.

TGW: What lessons did you learn? You describe Cyprus as a labyrinth, which I think is a fairly apt description. But Cambodia and Afghanistan—what lessons did you take from one labyrinth to another?

JPdC: Well actually, as Secretary-General, I constantly used the experience that I had obtained during my dealings with both Cambodia and Afghanistan. Afghanistan was less easy than Cambodia. I think it was due to the fact of knowing much better the mentality of the Pakistani and Afghan negotiators. In the case of Afghanistan, I had been in Kabul two or three times when I still was under-secretary-general. I never went as Secretary-General, but the solution was found when I was Secretary-General. It is very easy to say it now, but I always had the impression that it was a really, very difficult country. We say in Spanish, *ingovernable*. You understand what that means. Finally, we were able to get rid of the Russians, but I think it was for the worse because after the Russians left there was chaos. And now we are suffering from this chaos.

That is the feeling I had. When I was Secretary-General, I had meetings with the Afghans in Iran. Some of the names which I read now are names of the people I have met in Iran in a meeting with Afghan leaders. Some of them went to the United Nations when I still was Secretary-General. And then I understood that it was impossible to deal with them. I had always this feeling—how could we achieve the withdrawal of the Russians troops? Well, because there

was an agreement between the Americans, the Russians, the Pakistanis, the Saudis—because there was political will. They were very interested in being present in Afghanistan. Thanks to that we were able to obtain that all of them sit around the same table and obtain an agreement. Then, of course, I will never forget what I owe to [Mikhail] Gorbachev.

TGW: What do you owe to Gorbachev?

JPdC: Almost everything. I will tell you something interesting. I don't know where it is in my book. You know that there was a succession of death in the Soviet Union. First it was [Leonid] Brezhnev, and then it was [Yuri] Andropov, and then it was [Konstantin] Chernenko. Well, I attended the first funeral of Brezhnev, whom I had met several times in Moscow when I was Secretary-General. He was already a figure completely out of the picture. He was there as a kind of a façade—a very tragic one, but still a façade. I went to his funeral, and then Andropov took over after him. I remember that Andropov invited several leaders—of course, the president of the United States as well, but he didn't go. He never went to any of the three funerals.

TGW: That's right.

JPdC: The secretary of state went on behalf of the U.S., as well as the president of France, the prime minister of England. Then Andropov passed away and Chernenko took over. I remember that at the UN, I had a very able advisor, a Russian one. He used to give me information about the political situation in the Soviet Union. When Andropov passed away, he told me this, which was very interesting: “Listen, Mr. Secretary-General, the next one will be Gorbachev. He is a very young leader and brilliant. He has been prepared for becoming secretary-general of the party.” Instead, Chernenko was elected. Then with a cynicism, a very communist cynicism, he told me when I asked him: “Well, what happened? You gave me an erroneous piece of information.” He said, “You know, sir, the problem is that he has not yet

completed his formation. Now we have chosen Chernenko because he is going to die soon. He is very sick.” I found this extremely cynical.

Still, I went to Washington, and I met Mr. Chernenko, who was really a non-existent man until he passed away. When he passed away only one year later—I went to his funeral. But to my surprise, among the personalities Gorbachev invited to see was the Secretary-General of the United Nations. I was surprised and flattered. I said, “It is wonderful.” Then he told me this in two words: “I think the Soviet Union, from now on, will be very supportive of the United Nations because we think that in the future all problems should be solved through your organization. You can rely on me.” Then he told me, “We are going to pay all our arrears, which are very large.” He called in my presence the prime minister and told him, “Listen, try to help the United Nations. Pay if possible our contributions.” We achieved a kind of arrangement in order for them to pay the arrears in three installments. I think it was more than \$200 million.

I tried to understand why he told me that. My conclusion—perhaps I was wrong—was that he had, during his formation period, realized that they could not compete with the United States. They were no longer a superpower. They were, perhaps, not even a military superpower. But really, he realized that it was the end of the tremendous strength of the Soviet Union. And Gorbachev, I believe, thought that, as they were permanent members of the Security Council, they could be part in the solution of all problems. At the United Nations, they have a voice as important as the United States. That was my analysis. On my flight back to New York, I confirmed my conclusion that he had realized that it was the end of this superpower. They were always a military superpower, but economically they were nothing. Politically, the communist regime was a catastrophe.

And that is really the measure of this man, a pragmatic one. As soon as he took over, I started moving around my chessboard. They started working with the United States, and with the other western countries. Thanks to the five members of the Security Council, I had several successes as Secretary-General—the independence of Namibia, the withdrawal of the Cuban forces from Angola, the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the solution of the El Salvador problem, despite it being theoretical. I was very active at the beginning in the Yugoslavian crisis.

TGW: When you were ambassador to Moscow, did you think that you would live to see the end of the Soviet Union? Or was this a total surprise when it came fifteen years later?

JPdC: Well, to be honest, I didn't.

TGW: I don't think anyone did.

JPdC: I don't think anyone could guess. Impossible. I never thought that.

TGW: You write in your book about how you became Secretary-General, basically saying you were the least offensive. Or you were the one who wasn't vetoed when Olara Otunnu came up with his system. What did it feel like once you became aware that you were a candidate?

JPdC: Well, it was at the very last moment. There were endless fights between the two candidates. I think the main mistake of Secretary-General Waldheim was to think that the Chinese would support him. I remember that I was back from Afghanistan in November, and I went to see him. And I asked him, "What about your trip to China?" because he had been in China just before—I think it was in October or November. He told me, "Ah, but they were so splendid." I said, "Listen, you never know with the Chinese. You never know." I recollected something way back. When he was elected the first time, as Secretary-General, it was in 1972.

TGW: 1971, it would have been.

JPdC: The end of 1971, you are right.

TGW: You yourself began in January of 1982.

JPdC: I remembered there was the election of the Secretary-General, and there were many candidates, a Latin American among them who was a very close friend of mine, and an Argentinean, who was very close to win but the Soviet Union vetoed him. Then, just as I was back from Moscow, my Latin American friends told me, “You have been in Russia, and you know [Andrei] Gromyko, the ambassador. Why don’t you speak with Malik to ask him to support the Latin American candidate, a country from the Third World and so on?”

When I went to Jacob Malik, I told him, “Listen, dear friend, we resent very much your position. You are not supporting a Third World country.” Malik said, “I would never vote for this man.” His name was Carlos Ortiz de Rosas. “This man is not the man for this position. It is too much for him,” he said angrily. Later I learned the reason. Perhaps you remember that in 1970, there was a meeting of the Security Council in Ethiopia. It was an extraordinary meeting because the Security Council has met only in two or three countries—one was Addis Ababa, the second one was Panama, and the third one I don’t remember where.

It was the war between Pakistan and India. And my friend, who was a member of the Security Council—a non-permanent member—had fought for the Pakistanis. Malik himself, who fought for India, never forgot his aggressive speeches against the Indians. When Waldheim was elected, the ambassador of China—I was the chairman of the G-77, as I mentioned previously—came to me and said, “Listen, we have voted for Waldheim only in order not to be obstructive.” He wanted me to relay his remark to the group.

TGW: China had only recently been admitted

JPdC: Very recently. I voted for its admission, despite my friendship with George Bush and the Japanese ambassador, who kept asking me to vote against. I voted for China, following the very firm instructions of my government, as well as by realism—pragmatism if you wish.

Then this Otunnu system appeared. It was a very clever, very imaginative solution. It was the first time that I had heard about my candidacy. I had no idea. I don't know how they presented my name. My ambassador in New York who was lobbying for me wanted me to go to New York and present myself. They knew me very well, as I had been under-secretary-general. But I couldn't see myself pleading—

TGW: Lobbying.

JPdC: For a vote. Lobbying for a vote. That would have been unacceptable, until I learned my election, thanks to the Spanish ambassador, a member of the Security Council, who called me to Lima to tell me, "You have been elected Secretary-General." I was happy. But still, I was wondering whether I was the best choice. I am very honest when I tell you this. It is not that I am not impressed. But I even wrote something. When I was elected, I wrote something for myself—I have got it somewhere here—in which I asked whether I was the best choice. In 1981, I was really fond of the United Nations because I had been serving the organization for such a long time that I became a real addict of the organization. I used to say the United Nations Charter is my credo. I believe in the Charter. I believe in what the United Nations can do. Still I was wondering whether I was the best choice. But later on, thanks to the assistance of my former colleagues, Brian Urquhart, for instance, who was a very good friend of mine—we worked well together. Under-secretaries-general for political affairs—there were two under-secretaries, one was Brian.

TGW: Who was the other one?

JPdC: There were two under-secretaries-general for the same post of political affairs. It was divided because it was so large. He was the one dealing mainly with the Middle East, or the Near East, as they used to say. And the other one was myself, who was dealing with Asia and Africa and Latin America.

TGW: By the way, Brian said to say “hello,” and also to your dear wife, Marcella. I saw him last week. But he also reminded me. I think he wrote this in his own book, or maybe it’s just that he said it so many times—he said “the major powers can never decide whether they want a secretary or a general.” Does that seem sensible to you?

JPdC: Yes. You remember that [Franklin] Roosevelt said that the Secretary-General should be a mediator. The word he used was “mediator.” He said that at the very beginning, when he conceived, together with [Winston] Churchill, the United Nations as a new League of Nations. He said that the Secretary-General should be a mediator. I don’t think a mediator is a secretary. A mediator has to be, if not a general, because the word general does not go together with mediator, whose task is to look for solutions.

TGW: Did Waldheim’s unfortunate decision to run for a third term—did that contribute to your own initial thought that you were saying “one term only?” What was the basis for your statement to that effect?

JPdC: My recollection is that I was asked and I answered no. How could I say that I aspired to be re-elected? It would have been silly. In a way, I was wrong because of the five years of my mandate I was re-elected unanimously, at the request of the five members of the UN.

If I had made a campaign for re-election, I would have contradicted myself.

TGW: We’re going to pause here because we are almost at the end of tape number one.

TGW: This is the beginning of tape number two. You have written, and you have acknowledged my friend Jim Sutterlin in your book *Pilgrimage for Peace*, where you concentrate really on a number of security issues. I don't think we need to go into those, but one of the questions, and in the text you actually write this, and I would like to explore it a little bit, that "there has been an inadequate leadership on the part of the Secretary-General, and the Secretariat, in placing the UN in the forefront of economic thinking. The political and administrative demands on the secretary-general always come first." Do economic and social affairs have to be a kind of residual after all of the fires have been put out?

JPdC: No. I think that I wrote in my memoir that one of my frustrations, or my regrets, is that I didn't pay enough attention to the economic and social problems, despite my coming from a developing country which has social and economic problems. The question is that unfortunately my ten years—mainly the last five years as Secretary-General—were very tense. I had not much time to concentrate. In my time I had a number two who was a man from the First World. During my two mandates, I had two French who dealt with these problems. Perhaps, it would have been better to have a man from the Third World to sort out those problems, although both of them were excellent.

TGW: This was Philippe de Seynes?

JPdC: No, after Philippe de Seynes. He had already retired. His name was Jean Ripert. Then after him it was a man called Antoine Blanca. Ripert was an excellent economist, but unfortunately he decided to retire and he passed away some years ago. But one of the reasons is in fact that the social and economic problems were in the agenda of the other organizations. For the Secretary-General, what was needed was a kind of a political guidance from those organizations. In theory, there was a coordination meeting every two years which sometimes

were in Geneva, and some other times were in New York—the whole organization of the United Nations system, including the World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund)—but in order to discuss administrative issues.

The Secretary-General used to make a statement on economic and social issues that was prepared in coordination with other officers of the United Nations. But actually, the Secretary-General was not supposed to deal fully with those problems. But still, I think—and I said it—I thought I should have made a strong effort in order to be involved in those economic and social problems. That's what I said publicly and in my book. That was my sense of frustration.

I am sure you know the numerous organizations which are part of the United Nations system. I am not speaking about the United Nations in New York or in Geneva, but the United Nations system. There is not a single problem in which the United Nations system is not involved. For instance, next week I am going to attend a meeting on the age problem. And I am going to be a kind of moderator. I said, "Instead of moderator, I should be an example." I am eighty-two years old, and I still feel in good shape.

TGW: Absolutely. Since one of the things we're trying to do is to determine the role of ideas, even if the Secretary-General has limited amounts of time and can't work on economic and social issues, I was curious about what happens on the 38th floor when there is a major meeting or a conference—not just the ACC (Administrative Committee on Coordination), but let's say the 1990 summit on the rights of the child (World Summit for Children). What happens within your own office? How do these documents appear? Who is assigned responsibility to react for your own statement? Are these meetings an important occasion for members of the system to reflect on a new and different issue or take a new cut on an issue?

JPdC: With reference to ACC, one of my major disappointments when I presided over those meetings—because a Secretary-General is a *primus inter pares*—and after reading my statement on the international political situation, never in ten years was there a question, a clarification, a comment on what I had read—not a single comment. And it was no better when I passed to the second part on the economic problems and read my statements prepared by experts. The World Bank and the IMF had nothing to say after they made their statements. But when I raised the administrative problems, it was a fight for the floor. Everybody wanted it. That was really disappointing, you know—gentlemen who have been appointed not as managers, but as leaders of their respective organizations.

TGW: You mentioned, or you used the term “*primus inter pares*.” Which of those words is really emphasized in that expression—the “*primus*” or the “*pares*?” You mentioned one of the other issues we are dealing with, which is tensions and rivalries within the UN system.

JPdC: Well you see, if a Secretary-General wants to be a general, what prevails is *primus*. If he wants just to be passive, then he becomes one of the others, then *pares* prevails. I think that that is my feeling.

TGW: But how serious is the rivalry within the UN system? And in terms of the production of ideas, norms, and principles, is rivalry a plus or a minus? Maybe it’s not so bad to have competition.

JPdC: Competition is a good word, not rivalry. I don’t think in my times there was any rivalry. I don’t have recollection of a fight against the leader of the organization. Sometimes there was a matter of personalities. We had, for instance, the head of FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization), a Lebanese who was a man who had very strong positions. I remember once I had to be a little tough with him. But there was nothing substantive. That is

why I am always complaining about that—why they didn't prepare themselves for that bi-annual meeting.

Now it comes to my mind, why doesn't the Secretary-General distribute his speech and ask them to comment? Otherwise, it is so disappointing. But you know, at the same time, all these organizations have a lot of participation on the solution of political problems. You know now that I am related to UNESCO, because I am the Peruvian representative to UNESCO. There is now, I think, a kind of a—UNESCO complains about an overlapping on education questions. For instance, the United Nations is not supposed to deal with education. But everything is education. All problems can be solved if education is given much more attention, especially in developing countries. For instance, in Afghanistan now, UNICEF (UN Children's Fund) is taking care of education in some aspects. And UNESCO resents this involvement of UNICEF (UN Children's Fund), and UNICEF attends the coordination meeting which I have referred to—the ACC.

TGW: I was interested in the beginning of your book, when you write about your frustrations about not having made more progress on economic and social ideas. You also said that, because of the pressures on your time, you were heavily dependent on senior economic advisors. But then you go on to say, "With rare exceptions, they have not had the recognized intellectual authority to make a difference." And I would agree that the UN has played less intellectual leadership than it could have. Is this inevitable? And what kind of academic or what kind of analyst, what kind of intellectual would make a difference within the Secretariat?

JPdC: Let me refer to an important, and in my opinion administrative or political decision, which is to give much more importance to ECOSOC. I think ECOSOC—first of all, if I were currently Secretary-General, I would propose to divide ECOSOC and to have a

commission especially for economic issues, which will have at least an annual ministerial meeting, in which the ministers will consider all economic problems and have a different commission which would be the social questions. This won't cost much to the United Nations because it will replace the trusteeship, which now is not working. I know that they have meetings on which they can decide on economic and social problems, and leave only the exclusively political problems to the Security Council. I think that that will give the United Nations a much more important role as far as economic and social problems are concerned. That, I think, is indispensable. I know some people say, "Why is there not an economic council as powerful as the Security Council?" That is too much to aspire.

TGW: We are also trying to determine how major events influence the ability of the Secretary-General or others to act. One of the major events of the 1980s was the Latin American debt crisis, and actually Peru's own default on IMF obligations. How did either the [Alan] García decision, or the Latin American debt crisis in general—how did this help or hinder your own ability to act as a Secretary-General? How did this influence what was considered possible on the 38th floor?

JPdC: That is difficult to answer. I did intervene in order to avoid a crisis in my country. As I am a Peruvian, you could ask me, "What about your nationality in the freezer?" But at the end of Alan García's term, which was catastrophic, came this Japanese—Alberto Fujimori. As president-elect, he came to see me in a courtesy visit without his advisors because he wanted to have contacts with international banking. I took advantage of his visit in order to put him in touch with the International Monetary Fund—which, in those times, it was Michel Camdessus; the president of the World Bank—I don't remember his name; and the president of the Inter-American Bank.

TGW: Enrique Iglesias.

JPdC: Iglesias—in order to persuade him of the need to change the economic policy of his government. Of course, I did it in an informal way without engaging the UN at all. The meetings were very useful because Peru changed its economic policy and they started acting on its commitments to both the IMF and the World Bank. Of course, now that you ask me the question, you are disturbing my conscience. I shouldn't have helped my government—but I did it because I was concerned about the situation. Inflation at that time was 1,000 percent. And perhaps I don't know whether it had been a success, because one thing is to make the experience with one country, and another thing is to make it with 100 countries. But I continue to feel it was my mistake, and my omission, if you wish—much more than mistake—to say such a thing, not to have done something more effective, and to leave it to the experts. I could have taken some political initiative.

TGW: We'll come back to the details in a little while of the commission, the world commission that you headed for UNESCO. But I just wondered whether you might dwell for a moment on the role of commissions of eminent persons in general, and what their impact is on ideas and on the policy decisions eventually taken by governments. I am, for instance, thinking that at the beginning of your tenure, you have the Brandt report (*North-South: A Program for Survival*), and then another Brandt report (*Common Crisis*), and then, toward the end, Mrs. [Gro] Brundtland on sustainable development (*Our Common Future*). What is the importance of such commissions, and what makes some of them work better than others in terms of the impact of their ideas?

JPdC: Do you remember one expression that was very naughty, from a famous French politician, Clémenceau: “If you want to solve a problem, just create a commission,” saying that

a commission serves to delay solutions—which is not quite true. It is very witty to say such a thing, but it is not true. But I think those commissions were very important, because actually they attract the attention of the international community to some very important problems—human development, for instance. And in the case of my commission, this Commission on Culture and Development was very important because it was one dimension of the problem of development that has been disregarded, I wouldn't say forgotten, but in a way considered as a kind of a second or third degree problem. And it was very important that we provided lots of ideas. Some of them were, perhaps, too bold. But it is much better to be too bold in those cases, than to be shy.

But I thought that in our case—I say “our report,” because actually it was not my report in the sense that I was the leader of the commission. But actually it was the result of discussions among the twelve people. We worked together. When I read even books on development, I notice that our ideas are there, without mentioning them—the necessity of giving the necessary importance to the cultural dimension. But what we mean by culture is not the bazaar, and the literature—we see much more. Culture means the conduct—the importance of having a conduct. And then our idea would have been to be able to draft a kind of a code of conduct for all nations, working on the basis of the common denominators. There are lots of common denominators among different cultures and different countries.

I think without speaking about the ten commandments that we have—the Christians and the Jews—something like this, a code of conduct which will, for instance, refer to ideas as important as for instance, democracy, respect of human rights, and respect of minorities—all this is common to several cultures. Everybody is in agreement with them, but in order to make them well-known by everybody, you have to create a kind of code of conduct. But we couldn't

achieve it, because there was more than disagreement of what concepts should be included. But I think the idea is there. I was really trying to achieve such as a result of our work.

Of course, the report has some recommendations that are very interesting. There are ten points. Some of them are really things that we are not aware of. But it is important that everybody knows about it. It is, as we said at the very beginning, a problem of education. We have to educate people. You have to give in all countries, mainly in developing countries, lessons of *civisme*. Civics is very important in the developing countries. And unfortunately, it is not always the case. On the contrary, it is very often the case that they don't use it in the education of children. But that must start at the age of ten—one must teach the children about civics.

TGW: I am interested, and let's just pursue this. You put together a group of eminent people whose names are recognizable in various parts of the world. You kick around some ideas. You come out with a report. What is important in the report? Is it the quality of the findings? Is it the timing of the report's issuance? Is it follow-up with governments? When do these things work and when do they not?

JPdC: I would say that the timing was all right—perhaps a little late. The substance is all right. The problem is the follow-up. As in everything, there is the problem of the United Nations system—sometimes the lack of proper follow-up. I wanted to have a kind of a built-in follow-up process in this report. It should happen in all the United Nations resolutions. They make a decision but why don't they include a last final paragraph—the way in which the resolution will be implemented? That is really fundamental, and that is what is lacking in our report, perhaps. But still, we have had meetings in Sweden in order to assure a follow-up. And

as I told you before, I see in many books and many reports and articles I read—the ideas have been accepted.

TGW: Penetrated?

JPdC: Penetrated, right.

TGW: One of the other primary vehicles, it seems to us, for the production, dissemination, adaptation, sometimes distortion of ideas, happens to be global conferences. Actually, during your own tenure there weren't as many as occurred in the 1970s in the 1990s. Some people see these as a waste of time. Other people see them as essential. What is your own perspective?

JPdC: More important was the photo opportunity. That's so—a photo opportunity. I was very flattered to be surrounded by all those world leaders, but nothing has happened. That is the problem. I think it is not only in the multilateral, but as well in the bilateral framework. It is the same thing. Now, in the case of state meetings, what happens? Beautiful music, perhaps, and military parades. But nothing is achieved. I think it is important to start from the very beginning, to give the diplomacy the time to prepare the ground for the visits of the heads of state.

It is exceptional—I can assure you that it is exceptional—to find heads of state who are prepared for discussing any subject. One example—now she's not very popular—is [Margaret] Thatcher. There was no way for me to surprise her in our conversation when I raised a problem. She was aware of everything. She was always like this [snaps fingers]. She would say, "Oh yes, about that situation...." Of course, I did not always agree with her positions, but I admired the way in which this woman did her homework. Another one, less concrete but a little more

elevated was [François] Mitterrand. He was a real intellectual. I can't think who else was like them.

I don't remember a single leader in Eastern Europe—not a single one. Perhaps at the end, Gorbachev was very important. But who else? I can't think of anyone. With the Chinese, there is the language barrier, which is terrible. And then Europe—well, they were very good interlocutors. There is the famous man, who is now a little in disgrace—the Italian, Andreotti. And there is Gonzalez, a very good interlocutor, as well. That's it.

Helmut Kohl—in a way, yes. I remember something that Kohl told me at the beginning of the unification of Germany. I told him, “Mr. Chancellor, I think you are going to face a terrible problem, economically.” He said, “Oh yes. But what concerns me is the assimilation of all the Germans, their integration to the German country.” And he was not wrong because they are still having problems with the East Germans. He was a very good interlocutor.

In the United States—well, [Ronald] Reagan was very nice, excellent. Well, I made a reference to Reagan, not very generous, I must say, in my book. [George H.W.] Bush was much more aware of problems. When we met in Camp David, I remember that he was really concerned about what would happen. On the contrary, Saddam Hussein was so cool, so indifferent, as he was about to win the war—*inconciente*. How do you say it in English?

TGW: Unconscious.

JPdC: This man had little conscience. But Bush was very conscious and very much concerned. I went to see him. I said, “I am going to Baghdad.” “Do you think you should go?” he asked me. I told him, “Yes, because I want the Secretary-General to be the last one to make an effort, even if I know that I have nothing decisive to promise them—the Iraqis. But I do it for the sake of the United Nations as a peace organization.” Again, he told me, “I agree with you.”

TGW: In your book you do not spend a lot of time on economic and social things, but you had a couple of things to say, and I just wanted to probe a little bit. You wrote, “Despite its image of stodginess, the UN has been a groundbreaker and mobilizer of movements to control chemical and nuclear weapons, protecting the environment, population planning, sustainable development.” We have other items on our list, but I was wondering why you chose to single out these four areas. What makes them different? Why was the UN more of a groundbreaker in these than in other areas?

JPdC: Well, sustainable development is a priority. The nuclear concern as well, I think, is fundamental. I think, even now, we should not be totally reassured about the nuclear proliferation. You know that Pakistan has it, India has it, Israel has it. We don’t know whether there is any other country that has this terrible potentiality. I think we should never lose sight of the importance of nuclear arms. I think these subjects were very carefully chosen. And what is the other one I mentioned?

TGW: Population planning.

JPdC: I believe that great disadvantage is population growth. With population growth, and now with the problem of the old age, I don’t know what is going to happen. In approximately twenty years—I don’t know how many years exactly—there will be more or less the same number of young and old people—which is terrible. I am a Catholic, of course, but I am not in agreement with the position of my church as far as birth control is concerned. I am very much against abortion, but at the same time I am very much for birth control.

TGW: You write, a little further on, “The extent to which the UN-defined universal norms bring closer to realization a just and equitable world is hard to quantify, but I am certain they have had a constructive effect.” What makes you so certain? What are some examples?

JPdC: Don't forget that it was written almost ten years ago. Read it to me again, please.

TGW: You were talking about the UN. You said it is difficult to quantify the exact effect, but you are certain that UN norms and their efforts to define universal norms have had a constructive effect on bringing closer the realization of a more just and equitable world.

JPdC: Well, actually, the United Nations is playing its role. It defines the problems. Of course, one thing is defining problems, another thing is to solve them. I think that for fifty-seven years, the UN has produced very good vision results. I think this paragraph is still valid, in the sense that the United Nations, since the approval of the Charter, has been defining the issues. I think that it is an important achievement.

TGW: As you look back over this period, how do you see the division of labor between the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)? How did the activities or the ideas or the pressures of NGOs enter the front office?

JPdC: I think they play a very great role. That's a fact. But the problem is that not all of them are reliable. It is absolutely so. I think I said in one of my memoirs—I don't know whether you have read the ten annual reports on the work of the organization that I wrote as Secretary-General. I think I have paid a tribute to the NGOs. But there are some NGOs which are just a business. It is a shame, you know. It is something that I am very much against, but at the same time there are NGOs that are really essential—fundamental.

TGW: I certainly would not disagree. What about the private sector? How does the private sector enter into the work of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat? Do you see a growing role for the private sector?

JPdC: Do you remember the organization of the ILO? There is a delegation of governments, a delegation of patrons—how do you call it?

TGW: Tripartite: governments, employers, and employees.

JPdC: There you have the three. In my report—in our report, because I always say always me, because it takes my name—we were thinking in a General Assembly of the UN in which the private sector would be represented. Actually, how many governments, and how often, do not represent their people? Mainly in the Third World. And I think the private sector has to have a very important role in the organization. Mainly, you prefer to be selective. Let's think, with all these social economic problems, the private sector has a role. It has a word to say.

TGW: So how would you then integrate, or at least incorporate in some way, in an intergovernmental organization, the views of civil society, both for-profit and not-for-profit institutions? How would that work? How would you pull these together?

JPdC: I think for the United Nations, we use, for instance, a kind of nongovernmental organization—for instance, the Red Cross (ICRC). Another one is *Médecins sans Frontières* (MSF, or Doctors Without Borders). All these kinds of organizations which are serious, and which can help us—there are many of them. The World Council of Churches (WCC)—they are really, very important. When I went to Geneva as Secretary-General, I always received them. It was important to listen to them, and I was sure to use them in order to pass messages through them. It is very important. In the case of the Red Cross, of course, it is much more effective, or *Médecins sans Frontières*, et cetera. I think they must play an important role, and they have to be given the opportunity of cooperating with the United Nations, provided they are serious.

TGW: Within the United Nations, there are a large number, but a limited number of states. And it's quite easy to say, "You exist, therefore you enter." The private sector is nongovernmental—there are 20,000 international nongovernmental organizations, and I don't

know how many major corporations. How would you pick and choose among the serious and the un-serious?

JPdC: But you know that ECOSOC has a kind of a mechanism for choosing and selecting the NGOs that have a say at the ECOSOC. I think that is important. The United Nations has already thought about this problem, but the problem is that they know that among them, there are so many demagogic NGOs that are really, in a way, counterproductive, because they discredit the other serious ones.

TGW: Earlier, when we were speaking about the ACC and the rivals, competition among UN agencies, I forgot to just ask you to describe the role of the Bretton Woods institutions while you were Secretary-General. What happened?

JPdC: Well, actually, the United Nations is a result of the Bretton Woods, isn't it, in a way?

TGW: Well, it's usually considered separate, but—

JPdC: Philosophically they are the same thing. But I must say that the Bretton Woods itself produced its work and it disappeared. I don't know how to answer your question, actually. Only by saying that philosophically it is part of—it is not only part, but at the beginning of the conception of the United Nations.

TGW: Right, but I was interested that, in your memoirs—and it also comes out clearly in some things Alvaro de Soto and Graciana del Castillo have written about the peace process in Central America—that philosophically the origins may be the same, but the institutions can be on a quite different wavelength, and even work at counterproductive purposes. Is that true?

JPdC: Are you referring to the Middle East?

TGW: To Central America.

JPdC: Well, you mention Alvaro de Soto, my compatriot, who is now in Cyprus.

TGW: Right, basically saying that the UN had agreed on one peace settlement in El Salvador and the Fund was pushing a different agenda that wasn't the same as that of the United Nations.

JPdC: Well, I don't recollect any interference of the World Bank or the IMF on the solution of this problem of Central America. I imagine they worked very closely with the United States. What I recollect is that sometimes I had differences with the United States, mainly at the beginning. During the Reagan period, we had difficulty because they were suspicious of everybody, even of Alvaro de Soto. I was even asked by the United States secretary of state to get rid of him, which of course I didn't accept because he was working in a remarkable way.

You cannot avoid that in the El Salvador problem, it appeared a kind of personal, intimate feeling, mainly because the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation), in many points, was right. They had good points. The only thing that was wrong was the way they had chosen for solving their problems. But it is the same thing, in a way, which has happened in the Near East, and also in other places. There are national liberation movements, but what is wrong is not their aspiration. What is wrong is the method they have chosen at the beginning.

TGW: Themselves.

JPdC: You remember the Stern Gang? And our countries, where we were fighting for our liberation, we committed some excesses in the nineteenth century. And then it is possible that Alvaro de Soto had a kind of a secret sympathy that was detected by the Americans. But you know, he is a man who has the sense of discipline. He checked everything he did with me. I could have said to the Americans, "Then get rid of me because I am the one who is monitoring all of his movements."

TGW: I guess I was thinking that, as one looks back at the 1980s, which was your tenure—from 1982 to 1992—it is now called the “lost decade” for development. The common label of “Washington,” or “Maastricht Consensus” that refers to democratization and liberalization, which is certainly identified with the World Bank and the IMF—the common view is that the United Nations was, and is, pushing a different kind of agenda for development. Not just adjustment, but “adjustment with a human face,” according to UNICEF, and a whole series of related ideas. I am just wondering whether there wasn’t more of a clash between Washington and New York, between the Bretton Woods and the UN system.

JPdC: Well, you know, I’ll tell you honestly that the ten years when I was Secretary-General I had never had a clash with the secretary of state of the United States. Sometimes I had clashes, mainly on Central America. It is the only subject on which I had problems with the secretary of state. It was in [James] Baker's times. He is a good friend of mine but sometimes he was very tough. I had as well some small problems on the Iranian question with the issue of the hostages, because I could solve the problem of the hostages thanks to the help of Iran. And then I suggested to President Bush, in the presence of Secretary of State Baker, “Why don’t you make a gesture?” Because it is thanks to President [Akbar] Rafsanjani of Iran that I could have solved the problem of the hostages.

And then I remember Baker said, “No.” But I think some gesture, because the problems you had with Iran—they paid for some armaments and you didn’t deliver the arms, or something like this. And then they were asking for their money back.

TGW: But I guess what I was also referring to in the difference between Washington and New York is the World Bank and the IMF versus the United Nations in terms of a vision for what “development” consists of. There were obvious clashes in Central America with the United

States, but were there ever obvious clashes between your office and the Bretton Woods institutions on policy? Because other parts of the UN system—the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and UNICEF—actually confronted the World Bank over some of these policies.

JPdC: Well honestly, I don't recollect any difficulty. Perhaps Alvaro recollects—honestly, it is a blank. I don't recollect any difficulty with the IMF or with the World Bank on this problem. I don't know whether it is mentioned in my book.

TGW: No. Perhaps it is not a fair question, but I actually would like to draw you out on your own impressions of the quality of people who work within the Secretariat and the UN system. What is your sense about their level and effectiveness?

JPdC: I must say that I am a man who always works as part of a team. I am the leader of a team. And I must say my team, during my ten years, was not always the same. But many of them worked with me for ten years. They were very loyal, and it was very good for me. I am grateful to them because if I had some success, it was not my only success, it was our success. I always use the plural because not even Napoleon, who was supposed to be a genius, was responsible for all his successes. I think one is responsible, in some way, for his defeats. But you cannot say honestly, "I am the only one responsible for my success." Then I think all of them—well, Brian was not there the whole time, but when he was, he was extremely helpful. He was the one who wrote my reports. He was always impeccable, as well as the other ones. I had an Indian one. His name was Dayal.

TGW: Virendra Dayal.

JPdC: Yes. Dayal was excellent. And then there were those who stayed with me all the time, who also helped me very much. For instance, there was Picco—

TGW: Giandomenico Picco, sure.

JPdC: He worked very well with me ever since I met him the first time in Cyprus. I promoted him because he deserved it. I don't know what has happened to him now.

TGW: He is in the private sector in New York. He has established his own firm.

JPdC: I like him very much. Sometimes I didn't take him very seriously because he was very young. And I mentioned James Sutterlin. He is a perfect advisor. He is a man who always provides you with a very clever, balanced piece of advice. He helped me enormously on my memoirs—really enormously. He did the dirty work. For me, he is a brilliant man. I think it is a pity that American diplomacy has not taken advantage of his talents and his experience. Sometimes when I see the ambassadors you send abroad, I think, "I have met so many Americans who are so qualified but who are more or less lost."

TGW: Or, quite simply, fully lost.

JPdC: One exception was Tom Pickering—a brilliant diplomat. I like him very much and I was observing how he was able to put together, on the Security Council, everybody with his skill, his niceness, and his excellent knowledge of languages. He was a very gifted man—about the best United States ambassador to the United Nations.

TGW: I just wondered how you look back over your experience in the transition to the present government in Peru from Fujimori. How did that fall to you, and how do you look back on that experience?

JPdC: I will tell you how it happened. After I left the United Nations, I spent one more year in New York arranging all my things after ten years as Secretary-General. And then I didn't stay in New York because I said, "I will be a kind of a shadow for the new Secretary-General." I knew him well. And he was not such an easy personality. I didn't go to Peru because of

Fujimori. I didn't want to set up in Peru and decided to go to Europe. And I set up here in Paris. I had spent many years in France and loved this city and this country.

Then one day, in 2001, in November, I was with my wife in our apartment. I had a telephone call from a friend of mine, a politician. He told me, "Listen, the new president-elect wants to speak with you." I didn't know what he wanted. I had met him twice or three times in my life, because I had been absent for so many years. [Valentin] Paniagua was the name of the president. He had been the president of Congress when Fujimori left the country, in the most ominous way. Then, there was a vacancy in the presidency, and the vice presidents were to complete his mandate. But the vice presidents resigned as well. The constitution says that if there are three vacancies, it is for the president of the Congress to become head of state, until the new elections, and so on. Paniagua had been elected a week or two weeks before as president of the Congress, and he took over as president of Peru.

Well, when he called me, he said to me "I need you." I told him, "Alright, I am prepared to leave tomorrow to Lima." Then my wife told me, "But what for?" I didn't ask him. Then he called me ten minutes later and told me, "Excuse me, I didn't tell you I want you to become prime minister," which in our way is president of the Council of Ministers, which could be either with no ministry or with a ministry. I thought, "Why not?" I went there. Then, thank God, I had a reservation for Lima for the following December. The only thing I did was to advance my reservation and to leave the day after. I left the day after, and then I discovered that they wanted me to be foreign minister as well, because in their opinion nobody had had the experience in international relations.

Then I started working with him. It was a wonderful experience, I will tell you—a marvelous experience. The cabinet was a group of fifteen men and one woman, who was the

minister for women's affairs. We were a group of sixteen people or seventeen people working for eight months in such a coordinated matter that we could achieve what we intended to achieve. The first priority was to restore order in the country. This was not a problem, as the internal order was not challenged. The second problem was to organize honest general elections. We were proud to do it in an incontestable manner. The third one was to clean up the armed forces—that is the army, the navy, the air force, and the police (very important in Peru), which had been for years under the control of [Vladimiro] Montesinos, Fujimori's powerful adviser. Public opinion wondered how the army would react. We did it and nothing happened. It was for me a wonderful experience.

Actually, it was my second political experience. The first one was not as fortunate. In 1994/1995, I was asked to run for the presidency against Fujimori, who was seeking a second mandate, the legality of which was very much contested. Still now I wonder how could I be persuaded to enter politics being seventy-five years old, with no political experience and facing an unreliable incumbent. They said to me that I was the only personality with strong chances to win and that it was my duty to accept after so many decades far from my country in international functions.

TGW: Lots of fraud.

JPdC: There was fraud, indeed; but, besides, I had several handicaps. Fujimori had been in power for only five years and his sins were not very well known. I was a very bad candidate and well-known as an internationalist. As somebody said, "You would be an excellent president for Switzerland, not of Peru." It was a compliment that I had. I had to take it as a compliment.

TGW: Absolutely. I'm wondering about Fujimori's departure. On the one hand, he was praised for going after the Shining Path. At the same time, his undemocratic style and his authoritarian style—

JPdC: His democratic façade?

TGW: He was dismissed for that reason. To what extent was this really local politics, and to what extent did international norms, ideas about democracy and good governance, come into play?

JPdC: The first two years of his mandate were definitely democratic. Then he dissolved the two houses of parliament because he had no majority. That was the beginning of his dictatorship—or his autocracy, if you prefer. Of course, he deserves credit for the full control of terrorism, but at what price? Constant violation of human rights are now being discovered. The Americans are helping us by opening some archives that will be very useful to us.

That was first. Second is the illegality of changing the constitution in order to draft a new one allowing his second re-election against the traditional practice of our country. The third was corruption.

But from an international point of view, at the beginning he had full credit until the violation of the constitution by the dissolution of the two houses. But it did not have the expected bad effect internationally. In the United States and the Latin American countries, there was some reaction of the OAS. Then the OAS had a meeting that he attended. He made wonderful promises. And then he got the blessing of the OAS, which was a tremendous mistake because he was obviously in violation of the democratic rules.

And from the other countries—for instance the European countries' point of view, they don't pay much attention to Latin America, as you know very well. Provided our businesses go

right, they have no problem, until the lack of juridical security was evident. Unfortunately, our drama was that even the judiciary was affected by corruption. This situation got more and more serious, more and more dangerous—not only for Peru, but as well for Latin America as a whole. Then many countries—France for instance—started freezing their relations with Fujimori. At the end, Fujimori had lost credit all over. In Latin America, a little less, but in the United States and Europe he lost credit.

But at the same time, he used all his autocratic methods to try to solve a problem we have had for years with Ecuador. I think he found a solution that was not the ideal one, but he put an end to our conflict. I myself when I was asked said: “This is not the ideal solution, but it is a solution.” Now we have excellent relations with Ecuador. He imposed it. If we had asked the country through a referendum, it would have lost probably. But fortunately, the problem is solved and now, as we have full respect of the treaty, the question is indisputable.

If you make a balance, he had three achievements—first, to have changed the economic policy; second, to control terrorism—I don’t say it has disappeared, because as we said at the very beginning, you never know; and third, the solution of this very serious problem with Ecuador, but it is a solution. As you see, I am very objective, in spite of the fact that the man is repulsive to me.

TGW: You mentioned what some would see as a real problem in contemporary relations. Namely, in your interim cabinet, there was one woman. And during your time as secretary-general the Decade for Women took place. When do you think that the notion of women’s rights and gender became an international issue? What did it come onto the radar screen of the international community?

JPdC: I think it depends. For instance, in your part of the world, it never was a real problem because I think that women's rights in the United States and in Western Europe have always been respected. There is, unfortunately, an instinctive and unfair—I would say mistrust—about the capacity of women to play the roles the men play. But in Latin America, it took much more time to accept them. Now, we are making great progress. There is a significant number of members of parliament who are women. And we now have a woman minister. And we had a woman running for the presidency and a very large number of votes. She was a woman very well-prepared.

In our country, at least officially, there is no discrimination against women. It happens in the very low sectors of the population, which have a very backward—violence against women. Well, it exists all over the world. But mainly in the underdeveloped countries there is cruelty against women—even against children, which is still worse.

But anyway, I think what the United Nations has made progress with this convention on women and with the convention on children as well—these two conventions are very, very important. Mainly what has been essential in the last century is the introduction of human rights. Perhaps you know that I proposed years ago, when I was Secretary-General, to include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with some improvements, in the Charter of the United Nations, in order to make it compulsory. Speaking about that, another idea was to amend article 2 (7) of the Charter of the United Nations, which refers to non-intervention. I thought that it was high time to include an exception with reference to crimes against humanity.

On that specific point, I think that addition to the Charter of the United Nations is absolutely indispensable. I am modest because I said only crimes against humanity. We could put violation of human rights, which would be much more comprehensive.

TGW: I remember reading some of your speeches in the late 1980s on this, and this is a topic that actually has become far more prevalent in the 1990s. In fact, I was the research director for the Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, so it is a topic close to my heart. Would you agree that perhaps the most formidable challenge in the twenty-first century, or at least in the next ten or fifteen years, would be redefining state sovereignty to include eliminating the most abusive forms of violation of fundamental rights?

JPdC: I totally agree. I totally agree. It is very difficult mainly in developing countries, because developing countries consider that they are the result of this ambition to be sovereign. They have such a large conception of sovereignty. It is only the people that are sovereign, not the governments, not the states that are sovereign. It is the people who is sovereign. I think what you said is correct. And I think we have to limit—not only to reduce the state, we have to shrink from an economic point of view, because the state is terrible, mainly in Latin America. In all developing countries, the state is too large, and there is not enough room for the private sector. That is a concept on which we all agree. But the other concept is that sovereignty has to be in some way reduced, because there is sovereignty from an international point of view. Don't you think so?

TGW: I am in total agreement, but this is your interview. So I will try to keep quiet here for a minute.

JPdC: I am preaching to a converted.

TGW: That's right, I'm a member of the choir. I just wondered how, as you look back—and maybe we could conclude with this because I am beyond my time here—how your own thinking has evolved since you were a young diplomat. How has your thinking about international cooperation changed and developed?

JPdC: Well, very, very little compared with the necessity of cooperation. I think it is an every day complaint that much more could be done as far as international cooperation is concerned. And I am not only referring to cooperation from developed to developing, but a real cooperation, a kind of horizontal cooperation among developing countries. For instance, Brazil—let me refer only to Latin America. Brazil is supposed to be much more developed than other countries, which is not quite true. Brazil is well-developed in parts. But as you go to the north of Brazil, the situation is very serious. I was a diplomat in Brazil and I know that. If they have made great advances on technology, I don't know why they don't share with the other countries.

It is not only to say, "Everything depends on the developed countries. Developed countries should assist the developing countries." What about we, ourselves? I am referring to Latin America and Africa. Perhaps, South Africa could help its neighbors. Nigeria is now in very bad shape, unfortunately. It shouldn't be, but it is.

TGW: Well, you've been very kind to put up with me this afternoon. And I thank you immensely.

JPdC: No, no, no, on the contrary. I have honestly enjoyed it enormously. It refreshes your memory, and it is an opportunity of speaking frankly about how I feel and different questions on which I should perhaps be a little more secretive.

TGW: Well, our project team and other scholars will be very grateful indeed. Thank you, again.

JPdC: Thanks to you.

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