UNITED NATIONS INTELLECTUAL HISTORY PROJECT
The Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF

SHRIDATH RAMPHAL

BY

RICHARD JOLLY

London, 14-15 January 2002

Transcribed by Ron Nerio

RICHARD JOLLY: This is Richard Jolly in London, interviewing Sir Shridath Ramphal about his work as foreign minister of Guyana, as secretary-general of the Commonwealth, and in many other ways as a player on the world stage. Sonny, if I may call you Sonny, perhaps you could start by telling us something about your own background in Guyana, perhaps even about your grandfather in Guyana.

SHRIDATH RAMPHAL: Well, it was my grandfather that was the beginnings of my links with Guyana, because my roots are in India from where a great grandmother, with a young son who became my grandfather, came to Guyana in the 1870s. And of course, all that came out of the indentured labor system, which was a cousin to slavery. My grandfather, though basically a farmer, rose through the lay side of the Canadian Presbyterian Church to a role in the church, where he became what they called in those days a "catechist," which was a lay preacher. And my father was then rising in the Canadian Presbyterian mission schools to the status of a teacher, and then himself became a pioneer in secondary education in Guyana. So I grew up as the grandson of a farmer and preacher, and the son of a quite serious schoolmaster.

RJ: In Georgetown?

SR: Ultimately, in Georgetown. The beginnings were in Berbice. I was born in Berbice, but my father's school was in Georgetown and we grew up there. Of course, I attended his school, the Modern High School, and later the Modern Educational Institute. I did my junior and senior Cambridge, as it was in those days, there—pre-university.

RJ: As I recall, you set this personal experience in wonderful context at the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery.

SR: Well, I tried to. It was an occasion, of course, to talk about the great movement of struggle on the West Indian plantations, and of the evangelical movement in Britain that fought

the sugar planter at Westminster. The combination of those forces led to the ending of slavery; but led also to the evolution of indenture, and Indian indenture in particular, in which lies my own roots. So my own history is much involved with this process of imperial domination through slavery and indenture, and of course through sugar, which was the lure of it all.

RJ: Did your father or grandfather ever get involved in organizing politically, as opposed to organizing through the church?

SR: Not my grandfather, but my father did, though not so much in the church. He came to grief a little with the church as a result of his political activities. But these were the very early days, the early 1930s and late 1920s, when political parties did not exist. Suffrage was a paltry thing. Women, of course, were outside the mainstream altogether. Women were outside the mainstream of education. One of my father's missions in life was to bring on the education of girls in Guyana, which he did. But he got involved on the political side.

RJ: Your mother, did she play any part?

SR: No, she played no part at all. My mother kept the family together and did a very essential job in that respect. She helped to make the role as a schoolmaster possible in economic terms by running a dormitory for out-of-town boys, which had the dual effect of bringing in some money for the family and also of facilitating the education of boys from the country, many of whom went on to do great things in education and the professions in Guyana.

RJ: Do you remember the 1930s—the unemployment and the sugar problems of the 1930s having any impact on your father's thinking? Or was it more an anticolonial, anti-imperial—

SR: No, it was very much a social and economic crisis with which he was grappling, finding that there were political pathways to a solution. And that brought the political side in. It

was not that he was a political animal using the social and economic crises; it was the other way around. As for my own consciousness of this, no. I was born in 1928. In 1938, I was ten. I just have an awareness of the start of the war. I was the eldest son, and he was at pains to try to make me aware of the wider world and its impact on our country.

Through him, I remember listening to the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) Overseas Service, in the early days of the war, and learning what it was all about. But I don't want to give you the impression that I was a very grim, serious-minded young man. I was a very carefree and sociable kind of person. I did my best academic work later at university. I was a pretty average student until then.

RJ: The war years, in a sense, passed you by in terms of provoking thought?

SR: Yes, they did. I was really too young. I was just over sixteen when the war ended in 1945. I suppose towards the end of the war, my awareness grew. I remember the anguish I felt over the dropping of the atomic bomb and the devastating loss of life and all that went with it. In later years, when I went to Hiroshima, all that was recaptured in my mind, and I remained really horrified by what took place. That was, if you like, the opening of my eyes to the problems beyond Guyana.

RJ: Just to stick with the issues within Guyana, were there issues of ethnic discrimination during secondary school or even before?

SR: I was not even aware of ethnicity in Guyana as a young boy growing up. As I grew up and became a little older, I was aware of it as a political factor. What I was aware of came largely through the work that my father got involved in, because he ultimately gave up being a schoolmaster and became involved in industrial relations, and became the first Guyanese commissioner of labor, which was the head of the Industrial Labor Department. I became aware

of the problems of industrial relations on the sugar estates, in particular. Of course, it was labor—in the Caribbean, not just in Guyana—that spawned the political parties. Political parties didn't exist, but trade unions came into being. And the trade unions, in their turn, produced the political parties. My father, involved in industrial relations, was at the heart of those trade union developments.

RJ: What was your first recollection of the UN? Was there any awareness of the UN at this time?

SR: Yes, there was an awareness beginning with its creation. We all, as young boys in 1945, 1946, 1947—

RJ: You were sixteen or seventeen at the time?

SR: I was seventeen. Then I came to London very soon after that. I had done my university entrance, done my "A levels," if you like—then called the London Higher Certificate—in Guyana. I came to Britain to read law. I read law at Kings College, London, and stayed on to do my Master's, my LL.M. So I was here for over five years, very formative years—eighteen to twenty-three or twenty-four. They were the years when the UN was trying to find its role and its place, going through some terrible problems. In fact, I think my first big awareness of the UN was Suez. Suez played an important part in my own life. It was the event that switched me on politically.

Until then, a lot of international issues were in my awareness, but they were academic. They were part of general knowledge and general information, the foundation of ideas. But I really did become passionate about internationalism over the Suez crisis. I was doing a dissertation on federalism in the Commonwealth, in Australia, and Canada, and the United States.

RJ: Still in London?

SR: Still in London when the Suez crisis broke out. So I was in an academic environment with my tutor, Richard Fitzgerald at the University College, a wonderful man. Through that kind of interchange, I became very angry about the British and French action in Egypt and the Suez and very excited by the role that [Dwight] Eisenhower played as an American president in saying to the British and the French and the Israelis, "Take it to the UN. Military intervention is not on. The place where this must be settled is in the Security Council." What a wonderful contribution, I thought, by the major western power, which the United States already was. I wish it was a mood that had lingered in Washington. It certainly fired me with a lot of enthusiasm.

RJ: What particularly outraged you about Suez?

SR: Aggression. For me, the legitimacy of the nationalization of the Suez Canal, as a sovereign act by the people and government of Egypt, was basically being thwarted by imperial powers in the interest of property. They owned the canal. They owned the shares in the canal company. That, in their sight, justified military intervention.

RJ: Just before we move on more to the UN, what encouraged you in your studies of law? First, what encouraged you to move into law, and then to move into this aspect of law in which you were looking at a Commonwealth dimension of cooperation?

SR: Well, I told you I wasn't a terribly serious student as a youngster. I didn't have any burning ambition to be anything. In my final year of high school, I co-produced and performed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, edited the college magazine, and played some cricket. So I didn't come to university with a burning desire to be a lawyer. My father had always said to me, "Law, my son, is a great foundation for anything you do in life. I know you have no idea what

you want to do. My advice to you is that you read law. You can go on to do other things. If you can do some history as well, do it."

So I grew up with the notion that I was going to read law. So it happened. I got turned on by legal studies at university. I got turned on in particular by constitutional law and the whole notion of a word which we didn't use then, and which was to play a big part in my life later on, but I suppose was always there: lay governance. I did a lot of work on constitutional law. It was essentially British constitutional law. But it coincided with a great movement that was taking place in the Caribbean, and again taking place against the background of the trade union movement. It was the movement for federalism.

The trade unions were the first to recognize, from Guyana to Jamaica, that they needed to come together. So the Caribbean Labour Congress was formed long before any political parties ever got together. It didn't take them long, when they came together regionally, to recognize that political evolution should be regional, and that freedom, independence, should be sought on a regional basis. That was partly making a virtue of necessity because none of the early political leaders believed that independence was viable on an island basis—Barbados or Jamaica or Trinidad or Guyana.

But what was talked about in those days was dominion status for a federal West Indies—like a federal Canada or a federal Australia—that should be viable. And, of course, with dominion status would come suffrage and internal autonomy. Now that was happening in the Caribbean. I was intellectually stimulated by constitutional law in Britain. What evolved was my interest in federalism as a commonwealth experiment for the evolution of political freedom. So I did my dissertation for my Master's degree on federalism in the West Indies in light of the comparative experiences of Australia, Canada, and the United States.

RJ: Using "commonwealth" not in a particularly British Commonwealth sense.

SR: That is partly right; because you couldn't do federalism without going back to the origins of federalism in the United States, and then seeing how the commonwealth dominions of Canada and Australia had taken these concepts and developed them in a way which made political freedom possible. So I was looking at the relevance of federal constitution-making around the world for federalism and freedom in the Caribbean. That was my dissertation.

RJ: Surely London at the time had a lot of people working for independence, aiding the colonial struggle, trying to accelerate what was still seen as twenty, thirty, or forty years, if not more, in the distance.

SR: That's right.

RJ: Did you have contacts with any of the African leaders?

SR: No, we didn't have a great many contacts. We had friends. I did not live in one of the hostels in London, so I missed the opportunity to meet people like Seretse Khama and Kwame Nkrumah, and so on. In any case, they were two or three years ahead of me. But I did associate with those in the West Indian student body in Britain. You are right, what they were all involved with, as young men, and as young men going back to their countries, was the evolution of political progress in their countries, in their separate countries.

These were the days when we didn't even have local self-government. We didn't even have adult suffrage. So there was a lot to agitate for, and there was a lot to play for in terms of young men with political ideas and ambitions. Not surprisingly, that student body became a seedbed of federalism in the West Indies. First of all, they ceased to be Trinidadians or Jamaicans or Barbadians in London. They were West Indians. They were West Indian students. This could never have happened to them in the Caribbean, at least not until the University of the

West Indies became established. They had to be taken out of their island homes, if you like, brought together, brought to the common realization of their oneness in the British community—among other things, brought to their common experience of discrimination in the London of those days. They came together in the knowledge that politically, we have to be one in the Caribbean. So Britain was, in fact, the nursery of that whole generation of West Indian politicians who went on to become federal politicians.

RJ: Do you remember any particular friends or later politicians that you met at the time, that you plotted with as a young student, or graduate student?

SR: I remember the person who turned me on to federalism in the Caribbean. This was Norman Manley, the father of Michael Manley. I was at King's. We did intercollegiate lectures. Norman Manley was perhaps the most visionary, the most eloquent, and the most forthright of the Caribbean politicians. He was a friend of Sir Stafford Cripps in those days, and people of that kind. He was an insider with the socialist intellectuals of the Labour Party in those days. During a visit to London in the early fifties, he gave a lecture at the lunchtime lecture series at LSE (London School of Economics) on federalism in the West Indies. I was moved beyond measure. If my life has been dedicated to any one single idea in the Caribbean, it is unity; it is oneness, it is federalism. And it began that lunchtime in LSE.

Manley was to visit London later (in 1958) at the time of the Notting Hill riots. These events really shook the British government into the realization of a bubbling concern among a community of West Indians who had come to Britain, at Britain's postwar request, to help in the reconstruction, only to find themselves harshly discriminated against and very marginalized. It was out of that reality that those riots grew. And West Indian politicians came over to London to identify with the movements and to reconcile the British government to the fact that they had to

do something about it. Among them was Norman Manley. But at this time I was at home working for the federal government.

RJ: Fascinating. From the sound of it, you always saw yourself moving on to be a practicing lawyer rather than an academic lawyer, or even a commercial lawyer. Am I right?

SR: Well I never saw myself as a commercial lawyer, because commercial lawyers didn't really have a place in the Guyana in which I grew up. There wasn't that kind of commerce. Big investment was in the form of big industry, which was imperial. Sugar had its roots in London. But I did see myself in law, in practice, but in fact not necessarily as a practicing lawyer, but as a public lawyer, as what one could only be in Guyana, in a colonial situation, a government lawyer. So if you were interested in international and constitutional kinds of issues, they had to be pursued professionally as a government lawyer. That's how I became a member of the legal department, solicitor-general, and eventually attorney-general.

RJ: Perhaps we should move now back to Guyana in 1953/1954. Is that right?

SR: That's right. That was the end of my law studies. I had been very specially fortunate. I had done well in law at the university. I had an Upper Second in the LL.B. and was second in my college—King's. And on the back of that, I ventured to apply for a kind of scholarship, which was, I don't think, designed for people like me. I remember the language now. It was an advertisement by the Colonial Office wanting to recruit "the better type of barrister" for the Colonial Legal Service.

RJ: What would they have meant by the "worse type" of barrister?

SR: I wouldn't know. However, I applied and I got it. What was happening was that the British government wanted to get well-qualified lawyers into the Colonial Legal Service. Because independence wasn't around the corner, the legal departments of the colonies had to be

staffed and so on. My priorities were deferred. I wanted to get the true equivalent of a first in the LI. I applied for this and got the probationership. It allowed me to do my Master's, the work for which was essentially in the evenings, and my dissertation. But it also gave me two years of pupilage in Chambers in Britain. That was very special. That was not something that anyone from Guyana or the Caribbean could do on their own without charge. First of all, I couldn't keep myself in London for two further years. But I wanted to do the Master's and the probationership helped me. My parents didn't have to foot the bill for that.

And so with the pupilage, I was able to get two years of really top quality professional training, one as a pupil in chancery chambers. I was a pupil of H.E. Francis's (later Justice Francis) chambers. This would mean something in the legal profession in Britain. And the second year was in what are called Common Law Chambers. Here, I became a pupil of a great man, Dingle Foot.

RJ: Was he the right sort of lawyer?

SR: He was and he wasn't. He was in the sense that he had a great Privy Council practice. He handled a lot of the constitutional cases on the "freedom side," on the political side, from Asia, from Africa—Africa in particular.

RJ: Nkrumah?

SR: More East and Southern Africa. In Dingle's chambers, I took the chair of Herbert Chitepo—Herbert, who went back to Rhodesia to be assassinated. So that was Dingle. And the whole environment and atmosphere of the chambers was that of constitutional struggle, using the law to advance the political movement. Dingle was everything in those days. He was chairman of the Observer Trust and he was head of the Liberal Party. They were very exciting years.

RJ: And there were never any doubts expressed by the British establishment that they were supporting you working with Dingle Foot on some form of British scholarship?

SR: No, but I think this had a lot to do with Dingle—Dingle, whom I only knew because I was recommended to seek him as my pupil master. Through him I got to know and be involved with his brother—as he called him, "my younger brother"—Hugh. And Hugh Foot went on, of course, to be the governor of Jamaica. We were later to meet with each other in the General Assembly when I was a young foreign minister and he was Britain's ambassador as Lord Caradon. The Foot family was a great family in Britain. They were for me the most wonderful years.

RJ: Just before we leave Dingle Foot, do you have any particular incident that you remember of his vision, his personal integrity, or his legal skills?

SR: Well, I remember very well the case he did in support of plantation Tamil citizenship in Sri Lanka. It was one of the last cases that he did. I had a small brief in the case, in the Privy Council. But that case, which he won, remained in my mind as an example of Dingle's passionate involvement with minorities, with the underdog, with those struggling for what he saw as basic human rights. I think it stood me well in later life to have been involved with this great champion of civil liberties.

RJ: So you were in chambers for two years, and then you go back—

SR: And then I go back to Guyana in 1953 as crown counsel—the first rung of the ladder in the legal department. The federal movement was then getting into high gear. They were beginning to have constitutional conferences about establishing a federal government. The British government, the Colonial Office, was giving encouragement to the idea of federalism. So

as we got into 1955, 1956, Caribbean legal departments became much involved in advising about federalism, about "federation," as we called it.

I was the only lawyer in the Caribbean who knew anything professionally about federalism, not because I was specially bright, but because I had had this wonderful opportunity of studying federalism at close range and studying it in this West Indian context. So, I got drawn into this series of regional conferences. It was for me the beginnings of a love affair with the Caribbean as a region; I grew out of just being a Guyanese into being a West Indian from Guyana. And I have remained so all my life.

Eventually the federation was established. I became the assistant-attorney-general in it. Sadly, ultimately, it foundered on political rocks, really because, I think, small-minded politicians in Jamaica took a stand against Manley, the same Norman Manley. And I think he was unwise enough to submit it to a referendum. It lost, and with it went the federation. And with it went a lot of my own dreams. I didn't want to see a lot of West Indian politicians for a long time. In 1962, I got a Guggenheim Fellowship and went to Harvard.

RJ: I didn't know why you had gone to Harvard at that point. How much was the politics of the time being driven by the Colonial Office, and how much was it being driven by Caribbean politicians?

SR: It was being driven by Caribbean politicians, but with a favorable wind from the Colonial Office. It is unfair to say that it was being driven by the Colonial Office. I would have liked to see the Colonial Office drive it in the years when it had the chance to drive anything. The UK couldn't drive anything in these later years. Political power, popular power, had already moved into local hands. So federalism was being driven by men of the quality of Norman Manley, or Grantley Adams in Barbados, and so on. Political forces opposed to federation—and

there were some forces opposed to federation, mainly politicians who saw themselves not making it in the bigger pond—mobilized too, and paradoxically portrayed federation as being in opposition to independence on an island basis.

RJ: That wasn't true of Manley.

SR: That wasn't true of Manley, but it was true of people who opposed Manley. They tried to create a picture of federation as the choice of the British government, not the choice of the people. What the people wanted, they said, was self-government for Jamaica, or self-government for Barbados. The truth of the matter was that the federal movement came too late. British support for federalism came too late. And it's a natural evolution of imperial policy, because imperial policy, in the time when sugar was king, dictated that the islands should not get together, that the sugar planters should make their profits separately. And there shouldn't be anything like a political welding of the region.

RJ: But if you jump ahead to today's world, when many of us would say that federation, say within Africa, in some form has important things to contribute, are there lessons from the 1950s in the Caribbean about the feasibility, or unfeasibility, of federation today?

SR: Yes, I think there are many lessons. And in fact, I had the opportunity, as chairman of the West Indian Commission in the late 1980s, to draw those lessons and to advance the case for closer and closer integration, leading to political union. The truth is that, when I say that British support for federalism came too late, it was late in every sense. And of course, with independence on an island basis, a whole new set of vested interests in separatism were created and generated, which today stand in the way of unity, stand in the way of federation, or even of economic integration. But thank goodness, as we speak, at the turn of the century, 2002, the movement for economic integration, and I think the impact of globalization, and the reality of

interdependence, and the threat of marginalization for tiny, vulnerable economies like the Caribbean, are forcing us—Caribbean publics, Caribbean governments—into a realization of the need to organize ourselves for this new world—to reorganize ourselves.

RJ: Did you have any involvements at the time with the UN?

SR: At which time?

RJ: Before you went to Harvard?

SR: Not really. In those federal days, we weren't so much looking to the international community as we were looking into the business of getting ourselves eligible to be part of the international community. It was a pre-UN stage, if you like. We were aware of the decolonization committee (Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples)—the Committee of 24—and its support for the decolonization process. We knew we could draw on it, but we weren't even advanced to that point yet where we could. Africa came first in that queue.

I remember now, going back a little bit, as a youngster, India's independence in 1947, which was just before I came up to London, and I remember Ghana's independence, which was when I was back in Guyana, as great moments. We celebrated Indian independence, and Ghana's independence, in Guyana. And they have remained today as holidays because we saw them as the beginnings of the end of colonialism.

RJ: Tell me about getting involved with the political process in Guyana, and indeed in the Caribbean, meaning more of the process that led to you becoming attorney-general, and eventually minister of foreign affairs. Was this a big change? Was this through getting to know Forbes Burnham, Cheddi Jagan, and others?

SR: Yes, it was. I told you I went to Harvard with a feeling that I didn't want to see very much of West Indian politicians for a long time. They had destroyed my dream of a West Indian nation.

RJ: When was that?

SR: That was 1962. And in 1963, when it was finished, when I had done my year at Harvard—a wonderful year—in which I pursued the idea of constitutionalism, looking at judicial review in the context of the Caribbean, I went into private practice with the man who had been the attorney-general of the federation, and who had had a background similar to mine. When I told you that I secured a colonial legal probationership from the Colonial Office, he was the only other West Indian to have secured one.

RJ: Who was this?

SR: Harvey Da Costa, a wonderful lawyer. He was in chambers here with Leslie Scarman, who was later to play such a prominent role in the aftermath of the Brixton riots. And we formed the first set of chambers, as the profession knew it, in Jamaica. Until then, barristers were organized in a separate way. This was a wonderful experiment. The legal profession was at the height of its powers in Jamaica at the time. I enjoyed that kind of private practice for about a year. Towards the end of that year, Guyana had an election. It really was the election that would move the country to independence.

The election was won by Burnham, and I got a telephone call. I didn't know him terribly well. I knew him as a lawyer in practice. It was a call that said, "I would very much like you to come back and be the attorney-general, draft the Independence Constitution, and help us to become independent." It was the kind of request you couldn't refuse. I couldn't refuse. I could

lay down conditions. I could say, "Look, I'm not going into politics. Don't expect me to join up with a political party. I don't want to go into parliament."

RJ: You were saying all of these things.

SR: I was saying all of these things, and he was agreeing with the whole thing. "So, if I can help Guyana to be independent through legal work on the constitutional side, well yes. I will do it." I gave up private practice, gave up our home in Jamaica, went back to Guyana on those terms. Of course, it isn't that easy to be the attorney-general, in a purely technocratic sense, and not be drawn into the political environment. My whole time in Guyana was a time of struggle to keep my distance. It was not always easy and it was not always possible. But I did the best I could.

My preoccupation was, first of all, independence, and the Independence Constitution, which I drafted. I'd like to think that was a contribution, although Burnham, later in the day, when he was less visionary than I think he was at the beginning, tore it up. Along the way, I became Guyana's first foreign minister. So I did the Constitution, and Guyana become independent. With independence came the need to have a foreign policy, to have a foreign ministry, to have a foreign service, and to have a foreign minister. So I was invited to be that foreign minister.

That intrigued me. It was, first of all, not on the internal side of Guyana's politics. And it raised in my mind the whole business of internationalism and helping Guyana, as a young country, to mold itself, to mold its foreign policy, as a good member of the international community.

RJ: This was 1972?

SR: No, this really was 1965. What happened was that Burnham kept the portfolio of foreign affairs and I became minister of state in the Foreign Office, but really ran the Foreign Office. In 1972, I formally became minister of foreign affairs. But in my own consciousness, I was the foreign minister from the beginning and did all the work from the beginning. That brought me into a very close relationship with the Commonwealth, through Commonwealth meetings, and with the United Nations, through the General Assembly. I attended meetings of the General Assembly for ten years as foreign minister, or minister of state, from 1965 to 1975, when I became secretary-general of the Commonwealth. And, of course, I attended all the Commonwealth meetings that took place in those ten years.

RJ: Your reason for not wanting to get involved in the local political process, perhaps you would say a word or two about that.

SR: I think it basically had to do with the fact that I did not have political ambitions in the sense of wanting to be the prime minister of Guyana. That never had any lure for me. I think I also had a kind of rather lofty antipathy to political party life and the dirtiness of it. That's not to say I have anything against political parties, but they really were not my scene. I was more the lawyer, more the diplomat, more the international kind of person than I was a hustings person.

RJ: Now if the federal ideas had faded, what were the issues that really were switching you on in terms of political vision in foreign affairs?

SR: Well, certainly at the level of the United Nations, a number of things came together. I was deeply concerned with human rights, with civil liberties. This had partly to do with my role as attorney-general and as a constitutionalist. And human rights in those days meant the

UN. The international gatherings you attended on human rights were UN gatherings. It was the UN attempting to further civil liberties through activity in the human rights field.

That was one of the issues. But I think the central issue—although not the only one, but the central issue—was the economic. Social and economic conditions in Guyana and the Caribbean were bad, very bad. The essential argument for political power had to be to do something about poverty.

RJ: This was a good deal ahead of [Robert] McNamara, for example, discovering poverty in the World Bank.

SR: It was well ahead of it. But I was living with that reality. He found that reality at the Bank.

RJ: Even the human rights issues at the time, the late 1960s, though the UN was working on them, my impression is that there was a Cold War divide on human rights, in that the West tended to be pushing civil rights and political rights, and the Soviet bloc tended to be pushing the economic and social rights. And there was a lot of rhetorical battle between the two, rather than active support for countries to help implement them.

SR: You are absolutely right. But people like me found ourselves opposed from both ends. Because I was opposed by the leftists on civil liberties, and I was opposed by the rightists—which really was the West—on economic and social issues. But that was the reality of the Cold War. It was, for me, the attraction of the Non-Aligned Movement. Now nonalignment came to mean many different things later on, but for young countries starting out in the world, in the 1960s, nonalignment—this was at the height of the Cold War—was absolutely essential.

RJ: What did nonalignment mean in Guyana at that time?

SR: In Guyana, in the western hemisphere, it provided the ideological basis for resisting being drawn into the American orbit. It was the principle that allowed you to say, "No, we are not going to be pawns of either East or West." Of course, even nonalignment brought you into difficulties sometimes with the hard-line leftists, like Cheddi Jagan, who was very much a Cold Warrior.

RJ: Very clearly a Cold Warrior.

SR: Obviously he was not going to be happy with a nonalignment, which he described as aligned in favor of capitalism.

RJ: Now Forbes Burnham was preaching the "Cooperative Republic," and many of us were trying to understand what was meant by that in Cold War terms.

SR: Well, what he was trying to do, and not very successfully as it turned out, was a 1960s equivalent of what Tony Blair is now calling the "Third Way." He was trying to find a way between capitalism, in its pristine form, and Marxism, which he was sensible enough to recognize had no future in countries like those of the Caribbean. It might have had a lot of meaning in an industrial country like Russia, but not for us. So what was the way? How was Guyana to go forward? He conceived it in terms of cooperatives. Cooperatives basically never worked very well.

But a lot of people besides him, and outside of Guyana, were themselves looking for this Third Way. Some people were really enthused by the idea of the cooperative. He even called the country by the name, the "Cooperative Republic of Guyana." And they thought maybe this was the way. That Third Way has eluded us for all these years.

RJ: Were there any examples at the time of countries that seemed to be pursuing the cooperative way, or even the Third Way, apart from Guyana itself?

SR: I think Michael Manley attempted to do that in Jamaica when he came to power, through nationalization of the bauxite industry and yet keeping the door open to private investment in the tourist sector and so on. He was trying to find the mix between the capitalist and the socialist models. He didn't really succeed. He came to grief with the IMF (International Monetary Fund).

There is no absolute model that worked, certainly none that seemed to fulfill both of those desires. There have been some very successful economies. I think Barbados is something of a model of an economy that has managed to be efficient and effective, and to deliver, and to do so in the context of a democracy that is real and flourishing, and in which the social capital is very high. Maybe that is the Third Way. Maybe Barbados has found it. But Barbados is a very small country. It is, in a sense, a great laboratory in which to do this. Translating it into a larger scale is more difficult.

RJ: What about the Cuba model? It is five or ten years into the revolution during the period we're discussing. Did that ever impact on your thinking?

SR: I don't think the Cuban model ever attracted any support at a significant level. It obviously had advocates in every Caribbean country. But I don't think the economic model appealed to anyone. The Caribbean is a fairly robust democracy at the level of the individual countries. So the authoritarianism that was part of the Cuban model, in those days certainly, could not have worn well in any Caribbean country. No Caribbean leader could have applied the Cuban model hand-in-hand with that tight control of society. And they weren't impressed with what Cuba was achieving, except in health and education. And that was the marvel, and has remained the marvel, of the Cuban revolution.

So in a sense, what the Caribbean sought to do was to get the benefit of the revolution without paying that price. So Cuban doctors proliferated in the region. West Indian students were trained at Cuban universities in very large numbers. But the political model didn't fly.

RJ: And copying the Cuban literacy campaign—rapid expansion of secondary and technical education, bringing adults back into schooling who had missed out on opportunities before—none of those ideas were really tried in the Caribbean?

SR: Well, all of those ideas were admired and influenced developments. They were never tried out large scale because their large scale application really went hand-in-hand with the political system.

RJ: Before we leave this phase and move to your role in the Commonwealth in 1975, are there other points that stick in your mind about this period?

SR: Well, my whole life really has been an evolution from that accident of becoming a lawyer—through my parents instilling in me that this is what you are going to do, right through the legal probationship, and Dingle Foot, and getting back into Guyana, and federalism, and constitutional law, and becoming foreign minister. All of that seemed to lead, almost inexorably, to what I did in the Commonwealth, because I got fairly well-known as a foreign minister in the Commonwealth meetings. I played a big part, for example, as a foreign minister in 1971 in Singapore when Ted Heath, with whom I later collaborated most happily in the Brandt Commission (North-South Commission), when Ted Heath really was extremely obdurate, as the British prime minister, over selling helicopters to South Africa. That nearly tore the Commonwealth apart.

I played a part in helping—helping people like Ivan Head of Canada and Mark Chona of Zambia and so on—to draft what became the Singapore Declaration, which was the declaration

that held the Commonwealth together. It said that we had to stand for these principles, and so on. I think that kind of Commonwealth work got me well-known in Commonwealth circles. So in 1975, when Arnold Smith, the first secretary-general of the Commonwealth was leaving, my name came to be talked about long before I ever developed any ambition to become the secretary-general. And it happened in a very natural way. And it was unopposed. I became secretary-general and remained secretary-general for fifteen years. That was a whole new life.

RJ: When did it first start getting talked about in specific terms and start entering your thinking?

SR: Well, I will tell you exactly how it happened. I was foreign minister. John Carter was our high commissioner in London. He was a good friend. He was a very urbane kind of person. He would have been a senior high commissioner at that time. I got a telephone call from him one day in which he said, "We have just had a meeting of Commonwealth high commissioners, and we have begun to talk about Arnold's successor and who it should be." He said, "You know, if you would like to be the secretary-general, I think it is yours for the taking. What do you think?"

I said, "John, I haven't ever thought about that. I can't give you an answer to that kind of question. I'll have to think about it and talk to the prime minister." I said, "Anyway, why don't you just take the temperature before you ask me to do anything?" I then got a call from him about two or three days later, and he said, "Minister," he became very formal, he said, "Minister, you asked me to take the temperature, and I have done. It's a forest fire." Those words remain indelibly printed on my mind. So I had to think then very seriously about it.

RJ: This was 1973 or 1974?

SR: This was early 1974. I had chaired the Non-Aligned foreign ministers conference of 1972 (Ministerial Meeting of the Conference of Non-Aligned Heads of State). I had done all the things that a foreign minister might have done. I ushered us into the community of Latin America, because that was a very important part of what Guyana's new foreign ministry had to do to make the English-speaking Caribbean countries part of the Latin American group of which they found themselves a part. So if you were going to be a player at all internationally—and that meant at the UN—you had to be a member of the Latin American group, and you had to make your way in that group.

This had difficulties because colonialism had turned our faces away from Latin America to Europe, and we didn't go into independence speaking Spanish. It was a great difficulty, and a great difficulty to persuade the Latin Americans that we really were not still colonials. We did in the end because I think we out-radicalized the Latin Americans. But that was the scene at the time.

It was also a time when, if I am absolutely honest with myself, I had done the things that were exciting to me as foreign minister. It was a time to move on. It was also a time to move on because I was growing unhappy with some of the things that Burnham was committed to. The thing he was most committed to was turning Guyana, already a republic, into a republic with a presidential system. I had been instrumental in turning Guyana into a republic of the non-presidential kind, in the independence constitution, and I was and remain strongly in support of such an arrangement for Guyana.

But he wanted to be president—an executive-president—and I was against it. And he knew that. I think we both felt that this was the right time to part, before that clash came. We had had other problems—national service, nationalization, problems with elections, all of those

problems. So it was the right time for me to move on. I went to see him and told him what had happened with John Carter. He said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "I think I would like to accept the challenge, if it was there." He said, "Very well, if that's what you want to do, I'll help you to do it." And the help was very necessary. Your government had to sponsor you.

Once that had happened, it was over. The British press described it as a "shoo-in." They also described me as "lotus-eating." So this lotus-eating secretary-general, the first from the—

RJ: Lotus-eating, a reference to—

SR: A reference, I suppose, to the Caribbean, and my personality.

RJ: I think we should then turn to the Commonwealth. So perhaps you could say a word about your vision of the Commonwealth when you took over. Arnold Smith had been secretary-general ten years, I think, at that time. Did you have a clear vision of how the Commonwealth needed to raise its sights, how it needed to move into other areas? Indeed, how your own experience at the time could be carried forward from the New International Economic Order (NIEO) issues, seen from Guyana's perspective, to seeing them within a global perspective?

SR: You have posed the question in the right way, because although my years at the Commonwealth came to be dominated by political issues, and particularly by the problems of political freedom in Southern Africa, my initial instinct of the value of the Commonwealth, and of my coming to be head of the secretariat, was the contribution the Commonwealth could make, because it was so much a North-South club, to the evolution of the issues with which I had been most vitally concerned as foreign minister in the UN, just before I came to the Commonwealth, which were the NIEO issues. I became secretary-general in 1975. And 1972, 1973, 1974 were the years when the UN was agitated by North-South issues.

So I saw the Commonwealth very much in a North-South context and an ideal institution to further North-South reconciliation in a progressive way. I suppose what that meant was using the Commonwealth to bring Britain and Canada and Australia on board in terms of our aspirations for a New International Economic Order. As things turned out, right at the outset that was where my emphasis lay. I was elected at the heads of government meeting in Jamaica in 1975. Michael Manley was prime minister and chairman of the meeting. Harold Wilson was prime minister of Britain, and the British prime minister at the meeting. Burnham was prime minister in Guyana.

Harold Wilson came to Jamaica with a major initiative, on which he had produced a paper, for economic change in the world. And Arnold Smith invited Burnham to be the core presenter of the agenda item with Wilson. So he paired Wilson and Burnham on the economic issue, and in a North-South context, obviously. Wilson was very proud of this initiative, which I need hardly tell you fell far short of the aspirations of most of the developing countries. And it was left to Burnham to present the New International Economic Order ideas.

I was much involved, of course, in producing that response. Out of that debate, which turned out to be a very good and important debate—because in Wilson's presentation there were the beginnings of an accommodation—came a decision by the Commonwealth that it would bring together a group of experts. It was the first time the Commonwealth had moved in this direction—a group of Commonwealth experts, obviously with a North-South character, who would examine the issues involved in moving towards a New International Economic Order.

That was the first task I was faced with as secretary-general. I invited Alister McIntyre to be chairman of the group, and I invited Gerry Helleiner of Canada to be a prominent member of it. We had a mix of people from all over the Commonwealth. I remember Amir Jamal of

Tanzania, Sidney Golt of the UK, Nurval Islam of Bangladesh, Professor Brownlie of New Zealand all being involved in it. So that first year, and certainly my first speeches, were very much in the context of a new and vibrant Commonwealth, playing a role that the UN found hard to play, in the larger North-South community. If we, as a kind of microcosm of the world, could give a lead, we would help the international community really to negotiate where it had failed hitherto. I never saw the Commonwealth as a replacement for the international community. I saw the Commonwealth as a kind of a small organism within the international community, giving encouragement to the international community and showing that consensus is possible.

RJ: In your own phrase, "the Commonwealth can never negotiate for the world, but it can help the world to negotiate."

SR: That indeed is how I felt.

RJ: When did you coin that phrase?

SR: I really can't remember. It was very early on. I was trying to state that because there were people who were saying about the work of the Commonwealth, "Why are we doing this? This is what should be done in the UN." I was defending it and saying, "Look, we are not really usurping the role of the UN. And we can't do that and we mustn't aspire to do that. But if we can show that this is possible, then we will really be helping the world."

RJ: Let's jump ahead, and say, looking back on the fifteen years of your time as secretary-general, what stands out in your mind as the best examples of the Commonwealth making a difference and helping the world to negotiate?

SR: I think on the political side. I think I must say on Southern Africa, and in particular on South Africa. I think the Commonwealth role in South Africa was vital, absolutely crucial. It wasn't the only contributor. Many others contributed, but we were a catalyst that was necessary.

And I think that was an example of helping the world to negotiate, because it was a global negotiation that basically led to the end of apartheid. The same is true, to a lesser extent, about Zimbabwe, because Zimbabwe was more a Commonwealth effort on its own, as it were.

On the economic side, we did the most work. A lot of it was unsung work, but the economic reports that were produced every year of those fifteen years—by the best minds of the Commonwealth being asked to work—whether it was on debt, on protectionism, all of this was a good three to five years ahead of the issues coming full bloom onto the agenda in the international arena. Our efforts were very, very important. They were important professionally to the technical people who were working on these issues in the UN, in the committees. And we came to realize that they were important to a wider circle. The export group reports were much sought after in an international community that came to recognize that here were reports that were trying to bridge the gap and pointing the way. In the end, they covered the whole field.

Some of the names of the reports give an indication of the range of issues that we tackled. I have already mentioned *Towards a New International Economic Order*. Others were *The Common Fund*; *Accelerating Industrialization*; *Protectionism*; *The North-South Dialogue: Making it Work*; *Towards a New Bretton Woods*; *The Debt Crisis*; *Technological Change*; *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society*; *Jobs for Young People*; *Climate Change*.

And among those who led the expert groups or served on them were names like Alec Cairncross, Amartya Sen, Jeremy Moss, Kenneth Dadzie, Lal Jayawardena, Harold Lever, JGK Mennon, Frances Stuart, Bernard Chidzero, Manmohan Singh, LK Jah, Gerald Helleiner, Philip Ndegwa, Tommy Koh, and one Richard Jolly (then of the IDS Sussex), and from my own part of the world, Arthur Brown, William Demas, Alister McIntyre—altogether a sampling of the very

best minds in the world across the North-South spectrum. With that co-mingling of rare minds you could not help but make a contribution.

RJ: We identify, in the history project, four ways in which we believe ideas make a difference, not just by being simply implemented, because that happens in a few cases, but four ways. Have ideas helped change the way an issue has been perceived? Secondly, have ideas helped to define an agenda? Thirdly, have ideas provided a focus around which groups can mobilize to apply political pressure? And fourth, have ideas found their way into institutions in a way that may get institutionalized into some form of action? If you come back to the Commonwealth and, say, of this range of reports, almost covering the entire area, which are the reports, which in your view have had more impact in one or other of these different ways?

SR: Well, I think the report on debt had a very significant impact at the level of finance ministers.

RJ: Which year was this one?

SR: 1984. That was a report geared to the finance ministers, and the finance ministers were dealing with the issues in the Bank and the Fund. And it was very much directed to them, and along lines that they were ultimately to come to terms with. The report on trade, on protectionism, which again was ahead of its time—

RJ: Chaired by?

SR: Chaired by Alec Cairncross. That was a very important report. That was in 1982. I had the pleasure of hearing Mike Moore, so many years later, nearly twenty years later, telling me that this was the report that turned him on as an internationalist in trade. He was then, in 2001, the director-general of the WTO (World Trade Organization). So these reports did touch people. They made them actors. They touched institutions. The UN took very seriously the

report on the vulnerability of small states, which was a report that came out of the Grenada invasion. It speaks for itself—the reality of small states in a very rugged world. That, I think, started the whole debate on small states, which has now reached very significant proportions.

RJ: It has been institutionalized into programs of action on small states.

SR: So there are all these ways in which I think these reports made a contribution. If I go through them, I will no doubt find others.

RJ: That's a very interesting point actually.

SR: They also did a very important thing in terms of raising the level of intellectual life of the secretariat. We were not just producing reports of other peoples' reports. We were at the cutting edge of ideas. That, to me, was what the Commonwealth had to be about. We had an opportunity to go the extra mile. We weren't the final decision-making body in the world, so we could go the extra mile and show the world that these things were possible.

RJ: This was something that really you brought in that had not been part of the Arnold Smith Commonwealth regime.

SR: No, it wasn't. And I regret to say that it ceased when I left. The Commonwealth got out of the business, and that I regret very greatly.

RJ: From a research point of view, you've got a marvelous test case. I am meaning this very seriously. This would be a very interesting theme to get perhaps two or three people to look at, and look down the reports, see which ones have made an impact, and coming at it from the point of view of global negotiations, which issues have languished through lack of ideas being injected. Perhaps we should go back to 1975, 1976. NIEO, of course, in the end was more or less killed.

SR: That's right.

RJ: Did the Commonwealth struggle to keep it alive? Did the Commonwealth, behind the scenes, help to put the nail in the coffin?

SR: The Commonwealth struggled very hard to keep it alive. Indeed, right through the fifteen years I was there, the Commonwealth struggled to keep elements alive. Some of the work that we did on the Common Fund, for example, did make an impact in the Commonwealth, because in the end, that work got the support of Pierre Trudeau. And Canada played a very important role in the Common Fund debate at UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development). I remember that very well in terms of change—that report changed Canadian policy. And Canadian policy moved the debate along again. If you look at the record, and say, "What was the point of it all?" The Common Fund didn't happen, but thinking evolved in the direction in which it should.

RJ: If we come to the late 1970s, what were the issues that came at that time? Of course, that was when Rhodesia became more and more on the agenda.

SR: Yes. But if we could just stay with development for awhile, what happened in a personal sense was that, from this involvement of the Commonwealth, I was invited by Willy Brandt to be a member of the Brandt Commission on development. I will tell you about this evolution. The issues that were with me as foreign minister in a NIEO context, and that preoccupied me in the Commonwealth in the expert group context, now acquired a new international focus through the Brandt Commission, which was itself to start a new species of international consensus building efforts, bringing together, again, some of the best players in the world on a North-South basis, and on an East-West basis in respect of other issues. I was very pleased in the Commonwealth about the Brandt Commission, because it allowed me to throw the intellectual resources of the Commonwealth, through the Commonwealth secretariat, behind the

commission. In fact, as it turned out, the final draft of the Brandt report (*North-South: A Programme for Survival*) was written in the Commonwealth secretariat by Ted Heath and myself.

RJ: Tell us a bit more about that.

SR: Well, the Brandt Commission really brought together serious people who were not just technicians and not just practicing politicians. There were people like Ted Heath, who had retired. There were people like Abdelatif al-Hamad, who was at the Kuwait Fund at the time. There was myself. There was someone like Kay Graham, who was at the *Washington Post*. Some of these people had never heard of NIEO. There were Goran Ohlin and Robert Cassen working for the commission. So the intellectual resources were being assembled within the commission.

And the arguments were fierce. Ted Heath and I began as the protagonists, North and South. Ted was a conservative and brought that kind of thinking. But he was also a development person. You can't forget the role that he played in the first UNCTAD. So here was the type of person who needed to be converted, but was receptive to conversion—a leading Tory politician who had an instinct for development. But notwithstanding that, it meant that there was a tremendous cut and thrust within the commission, and he and I were at loggerheads. It reached a stage, towards the end of the two-year period—

RJ: This was 1979?

SR: Yes. Brandt was hoping to wind it up, and there was no consensus. Ted Heath and I were the persons, I suppose, that he would have regarded as principally responsible for not allowing this consensus, because we were not reconciled. I never will know whether Brandt contrived what happened or whether it just happened spontaneously. But he threw a tantrum in a

meeting of the commission. This was following a Ramphal-Heath passage. He said, "Well, if we can't agree, let's tell the world that we can't agree. Let's tell the world that these good men and women met, and argued about these issues, and couldn't agree."

And of course both Ted Heath and I rounded on him, and said, "Mr. Chairman, this is very unreasonable. It is necessary for us to have these arguments and disagreements. This is the essence of what it's about." He said, "Very well, if that's how you feel, the two of you, as commissioners, on behalf of the commission, take all the work we have done, go away, and bring back a final report." This is why I say I will never know whether it was contrived. But that's exactly what we did.

I offered the Commonwealth secretariat's services and forum. Both Ted Heath and I were in London. And we worked in the secretariat. Bob Cassen came across from the Brandt Commission secretariat and led its team. We worked and produced a report. Within six months we had the report finished, and the two of us presented it jointly to the rest of the commission at Leeds Castle, where the final commission meeting was held. That's how the Brandt report came to be finalized.

I think what happened in the process was, of course, that we made accommodations. Not all my people, if you like from the Third World, were happy with everything. And certainly not all of Ted's constituency were happy with what he agreed to. But the Brandt report remains a blueprint to this day of what could be done, should be done, and is going to be done.

RJ: Let me ask you a little bit more about the process. There was, in addition to Robert Cassen, surely Goran Ohlin and Drag Avramovic, who themselves found it difficult to agree on anything.

SR: Right. Which was why neither came to London. We didn't need Goran and Drag, because they would have been at each other's throats. We needed a Robert Cassen, whose heart was in development, who was respected in academic and professional circles, and who I felt very comfortable working with. So did Ted. And that's what we did.

RJ: Coming to other commissioners, in a sense, as you said, you were both representing your broader constituencies. Who were the commissioners who you thought were the most difficult in terms of getting agreement on the joint text?

SR: By a far way, the man from Algeria, Layachi Yaker. And to some extent, Amir Jamal.

RJ: Of Tanzania.

SR: Of Tanzania. But Amir Jamal was much less so.

RJ: And on the developed country side?

SR: The man from Lehman Brothers, the American, Peter Peterson. He was a very good member. He was the top man at Salomon Brothers, so he brought Wall Street. But he was very sympathetic. I remember him for something he said on the commission, which doesn't suggest that empathy. But he was saying to the commissioners, "We have got to get away from this NIEO business. It has the MEGO effect." We said, "What the hell is the MEGO effect?" He said, "It is when something is repeated so often that when you hear it again My Eyes Glaze Over." So for him, NIEO had the MEGO effect. Of course, what the commission did was not just slavishly take the NIEO formula, but those elements of it and those adjustments to it that might make consensus possible.

RJ: Looking back on the Brandt, and on your positive assessment you have just made briefly, that these are the ideas that won't go away, that these are the ideas that we will, if not

immediately, have to act on, what are the ideas that you are summarizing in your mind when you say that?

SR: I am summarizing interdependence. What was Brandt? Brandt was saying, "There is a mutual interest in development. Both North and South need to ensure, in their own self-interest—forget doing good—in their own self-interest that development takes place in the world. There is a mutuality of interest arising out of the interdependencies of the new era." This was 1980, that we were saying this—that out of these interdependencies this must happen. That essentially is the argument. It was in trade; it was in debt; it was in elements of development that were involved in the financial transactions, international capital markets, and investment.

RJ: And in stimulating a high level of activity in the global economy. These were the years of recession.

SR: That's right.

RJ: Two questions. There was the academic challenge, indeed, of Dudley Seers "muddling mutuality with morality." How did you react at the time to that?

SR: I thought, of course, that Dudley was wrong. But it wasn't muddling. It was saying that morality alone could justify this reform. But morality alone will not work. So if you could establish that not only is it good to do good, but it is necessary to do good—mutuality reinforces morality. And that surely is a good thing. And that the Brandt report should try to elaborate this and elucidate this seemed to me to be very necessary. Because if these things are to happen—go back to slavery—if emancipation was to happen, the emancipation movement in Britain had to establish that not only was it morally right that slavery should end but that it was economically necessary that slavery should end. And that's what they did. And that is what I believe had to happen in the world. And that increasingly is happening.

RJ: Examples?

SR: Tony Blair's speech at the Labour Party conference this year. [Bill] Clinton's Dimbleby lecture on the BBC. What better articulation can you have than this on mutuality?

RJ: Well I agree, of course, but my job is to press you.

SR: Yes, go ahead.

RJ: So if you look back on the fifteen or twenty years following Brandt, are there particular recommendations of Brandt, or even ideas in Brandt, that you see being reflected in subsequent agendas?

SR: Well certainly debt. It isn't often remembered that the Brandt report attached so much importance to debt that it went on two years later to produce a separate report on debt. And that was 1982. That was all those years ago. And it was saying that exactly what has happened has to happen—that there has to be a measure of forgiveness, that there has to be a situation in which countries are relieved of the burden.

RJ: Now we see, fifteen, if not almost twenty years, with very little action on public debt and international debt in spite of these recommendations. Now fifteen or twenty years afterwards, without a doubt there is some action underway—still much less than any of us would like to see. How do you interpret this unfortunate delay of fifteen or twenty years? Is that the inevitability of politics?

SR: I think it is partly—and I suppose when you come back to it, it's a single cause—the institutional lock that is placed on reform by international financial institutions. And it is partly the power of capitalist lobbies within major western countries. Those lobbies are powerful, whether it is in Washington or London or Frankfurt. These are major inhibitors on the willingness of governments to do what in some cases they know ought to be done. This is mixed

up with a lot of things. It's mixed up with the funding of political parties, for example. When the Americans moved against Caribbean bananas at the WTO, it had to do with funding the Democratic Party in an election they were to lose.

RJ: But in the case of debt, one of the ironies is that the private sector very rapidly reached accommodation, realistic write-downs on their own. What reasons do you think these capitalist interests are reluctant to see action on the public debt?

SR: Well, they are reluctant to see action on write-downs on debt generally in an investment context. But they are practical enough, when countries are in insolvency, to recognize that there is need to make an accommodation with that reality. So they make the accommodation. That is why they have been ready to move before the international institutions, which are closed down ideologically. It is an absolute disaster that the international institutions have been so tardy in relation to international debt.

RJ: What light does your experience in the Commonwealth cast on the difficulty of getting the Bretton Woods institutions to act? Because, after all, you were having these pre-Bretton Woods meetings with Commonwealth ministers of finance, for example.

SR: I think one of the things it brought home to me was the importance of what was not happening in the world, but was happening in the Commonwealth. That is, prime ministers and presidents meeting face to face and talking on these issues. Not just making set speeches, not talking at each other, but talking in the Commonwealth with each other, out of their experience. Talking about the needs, talking about the limitations, the political realities. And every Commonwealth heads of government meeting on economic issues brought the heads who were there closer to a realization of need.

It happened, to a lesser extent, at the finance minister level, because they were so much closer to their bureaucrats and so much closer to a national treasury kind of interest. But if somehow you could translate a political dialogue at the more senior level, globally, I think you could have a chance. And in a strange way, we are groping our way towards it. The whole business of the New International Financial Architecture is moving in this direction. We were caught in the trap of a wrong development, in my view, with the G-8 (Group of 8). I think the G-8 crystallized division in the world. And what is worse, it crystallized it with a pretense that the G-8 was in fact the global directorate. Well, that's another story.

RJ: But a highly relevant one, because the G-8 has been meeting for twenty or twenty-five years. Let's stick to the Brandt report. Did you feel that some of the issues painstakingly hammered out between you and Ted Heath, and then supported by the Brandt Commission, were undone by Mrs. [Margaret] Thatcher?

SR: Oh yes, but a while later. Mrs. Thatcher, you see, brought a counter-philosophy to Brandt. Brandt was looking outward to a new internationalism, to countries saying what's good for the world. Thatcherism was about what's good for number one. And number one in terms of the country meant Britain, the West. What's good for us. She was an "us and them" person. Brandt was a "we" person. That is the most fundamental difference. And that was the most unfortunate consequence of Thatcherism, I happen to think, both nationally and internationally.

RJ: Cancun. That, of course, was Thatcher and [Ronald] Reagan. Were Brandt and you at Cancun summit (International Meeting on Cooperation and Development)?

SR: No, we were not.

RJ: This is 1981.

SR: It was spawned by Brandt, of course. It was the thing that we recommended should happen. And the running on Cancun was made by Pierre Trudeau and the president of Austria—

RJ: [Bruno] Kreisky.

SR: Yes. And it was Trudeau and Kreisky who were kind of the co-chairmen of Cancun. The tragedy of Cancun was that the West produced Reagan and Thatcher at that time. So people like Trudeau, who were minded to go in another direction didn't have the basis and essential support of the U.S. and Britain. Cancun was a disaster because Reagan, who was not a Cancun person, could not discourse on economic issues of his own knowledge. And the whole idea of Cancun was that it should bring together these heads of government so that they could understand at a political level what we were trying to say.

RJ: Don Mills has been interviewed by our project. His comment, post-NIEO, was that the absence of a radical ideology has left the current international system without a potent force to tackle national and international issues, and has led to a wider acceptance of the free market system. Do you share that view?

SR: No, I don't think so. I don't think so. I think we were unwise to over-radicalize NIEO. I don't think progress is going to be made by revolution in international issues. It is going to be made by conversion. I would hate to think that the Third World would see value in going back to a situation in which we were convincing ourselves that we could change the world because we were the majority, or had a majority of votes. We won't. We can't. But we can help the world to change by demonstrating what the reality of the status quo is. I believe that this is how change will come. It will be very slow. It will be very painful. There will be greater suffering in the world because of it. But I don't think Don is right in thinking that we will make progress if we go back to an ideological polarization of ideas.

RJ: And you would say that the Brandt report represented that sort of non-ideological analysis of the key issues?

SR: Yes, I would. And I would say that the whole series of reports that followed it in different spheres, because they are all issues that related—environment is related—demonstrated to me, certainly to me, that that is the way to make progress. Of course, my most recent experience with that has been the commission one, where, in a sense, all of these issues came together in terms of, "OK, how do you get these things done? How do they get implemented?" As I said, in relation to why didn't Brandt happen, a big part of it is the institutional environment at the international level. That has a lot to do with the United Nations, the UN system—not just the specialized agencies, not just the Bank and the Fund, but the place of social and economic issues in the UN system, which in my view leaves a lot to be desired.

RJ: Let me just stick to the commissions as a whole, because you had a big hand in at least five if not more of them. Which do you think, of the ones that you have had a hand in, will in the long run achieve the biggest impact?

SR: I think the Commission on Global Governance. You may be tempted to say, "Well, you would say that, wouldn't you? You were the co-chairman of it." But it isn't that. It is because it brought together all the elements that were in need of being brought together globally. We were not, even in Brandt, paying enough attention there, or in the Palme report (*Common Security: A Programme for Survival*) on disarmament, or in the Brundtland report (*Our Common Future*) on the environment. We weren't paying enough attention there to changing the world.

RJ: To the process of changing the world.

SR: To the process of changing the world, to governance, to international governance, to the evolution from the age of the nation-state, which is obviously a necessary evolution when you are talking about the needs of the global community. Because if politicians are to operate in an environment where their manifest duty is to further the interests of the state, then how do you get to the global state? So it has to be infused with the recognition that the global community and the global good is a part of the national good.

RJ: This is the end of tape one.

RJ: This is tape two of the interview of Sir Shridath Rampal in London on January 14, 2002.

Sonny, you've talked a lot and very interestingly about the idea of the Brandt Commission. You have not talked very much about the process of interaction with the Commonwealth. Presumably, at the end of the Brandt Commission, or even while it was going, in addition to the secretariat, you were trying to use the Commonwealth to mobilize understanding and, presumably, support for the Brandt Commission ideas. Did you find that easy?

SR: No, I didn't find it easy, for the same reason that we didn't find it easy globally to get all the Brandt ideas accepted. But it provided a basis for evolving Commonwealth opinion. For example, when we got to Australia in 1985, the Declaration on Economic Issues that Malcolm Fraser was able to influence was itself much influenced by Brandt ideas. Here again was a conservative prime minister understanding the issues of development. I remember Malcolm Fraser telling me once, "You know, Sonny, as a sheep farmer in Australia, I understand what you are talking about with the Common Fund. It makes sense." I said to him, "Well, it was

only when Michael Manley put it in those terms to a peanut farmer that the president of the United States understood."

RJ: Do you think if Mrs. Thatcher had not been there—if there had not been this ideological swing to the right in the 1980s with all that implied for the IMF and the Bank, as well as for domestic politics in the United States and UK—that the Brandt Commission might have had a better practical reception?

SR: Yes, of course, because the forerunner of the "Washington consensus" really was not the climate in which any of this was going to get accepted. That was very true of the Common Fund, because there were ideological objections in terms of the new right, when practical considerations could have pointed towards some kind of Common Fund and some future for commodities.

RJ: Perhaps we should come to the South Commission, which was established in 1987. Now there, you were still secretary-general of the Commonwealth, indeed with another eight years to run. You were made a member of the South Commission. What did you feel the South Commission could achieve which the Commonwealth was not achieving?

SR: I was one of the persons who, if you like, inspired the formation of the South Commission. I urged Julius Nyerere to accept the chairmanship of it. Then I found myself in the impossible position, because I felt I had been on enough commissions already, of being unable to say to him, "I won't be with you," when he asked me. But the idea was that the South had to do some hard thinking for itself, quite apart from the necessary work that Brandt had done, and the argument about mutuality and all of that. Quite apart from those issues, there were issues of development that had to be faced by the South.

This concerned not only international policy but also national policy—what the South had to do for itself at home in terms of development. It was a difficult commission for Julius Nyerere, because some of the answers to those questions were undoing some of the things he had dedicated his life to doing—wonderful ideas in principle, but what did it produce in development? It produced equal shares of poverty. Equal shares, right, but of poverty, not very satisfying. How to move away from a preoccupation with those issues? How to encourage entrepreneurship? How to take a grip on corruption, and the relevance of corruption to development, the essentiality of an environment conducive to real development?

Those were the things that the South had to say to itself. The need for unity. Remember, the South Commission stated a powerful case for a South secretariat, not just in terms of managing a South-South cooperation program, but in terms of managing a North-South dialogue, a kind of OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) of the South. Again it was thwarted by the South, by the bigger countries who thought that they should not be circumscribed by a South secretariat. Countries like India, Pakistan, Egypt.

RJ: Brazil.

SR: Brazil, indeed. Much of Latin America, including Mexico. There was Algeria too. So the South Commission, I think, was essential introspection if you like. And we had to be brave. We had to say the things that needed to be said. I think they were said. We had a lot of arguments in the South Commission because some of the things didn't come easily to the chairman.

RJ: In retrospect, do you think the South Commission lived up to your expectations?

SR: I think it lived up to my expectations in terms of what we eventually set out. But it certainly did not live up to my expectations in terms of its reception by the South. The

governments of the South didn't really pay it much attention. And the institutional changes we recommended were totally ignored. The result is that today the biggest problem facing the South in negotiations is the absence of effective negotiating machinery and effective research.

RJ: When we discussed the federation, and the way the federation in the Caribbean failed, you said it came into conflict with the ambitions of individual politicians. If you had to identify the reasons why the idea of a South secretariat keeps failing to come about, what would you put as the forces?

SR: I would put the national interests of the bigger countries of the South as perceived, first of all by their bureaucrats and then, of course, by their politicians. And national interests, mainly in terms of freedom of action, freedom to deal, freedom to make their own compromises, freedom to negotiate with the North on their own terms, not to be hemmed in by a secretariat that is promoting a common position for the South. Of course, that's not how it really worked. An OECD does not circumscribe the countries of the North, unless they are ready to be circumscribed and want to be.

But a secretariat would do the basic research and come up with the basic ideas that will allow the South, separately or together, to advance its interests. But it's not happening. We tried to turn UNCTAD into the secretariat, and of course the inevitable happened. The big countries who were paying for UNCTAD said, "We're not going to allow you to do this." So we don't have it in UNCTAD. Yes, UNCTAD makes brave attempts from time to time to help the South. But it can't function as a South secretariat ought to function.

RJ: I see a slow progress within the European Union to develop and indeed insist on common positions in an increasing number of areas. It is perhaps a more relevant example than

the OECD, in terms of doing that, and ironically happening without the United States, but with the next most important rank of real powers.

SR: In the European Union? Of course. I am myself so anxious to see my part of the world unite that I long for a dose of this in the Caribbean. I understand what you mean. I happen to think that much of it is good for Europe. I know there is questioning of the emergence of this super-state in Brussels and so on. I don't think it will happen. I don't think the nation-state is about to roll over and die, not even within the European Union. But I think some of the things that the European Union is bringing to this ancient part of the world that has had the longest history of the nation-state are very good. I wish we would follow their example.

RJ: Let us come back to the Commonwealth. Is it fair to say that the Commonwealth got more and more involved in the political issues of Southern Africa—Rhodesia, South Africa, anti-apartheid? These are brilliant and vital issues, of which I would like you to say something. But the Commonwealth itself became less of a fulfillment of issues in the economic and social arena, and that you worked yourself more through the various commissions as think tanks on those issues, rather than using the Commonwealth as a mobilizing group.

SR: That is a fair statement. We didn't abandon altogether the economic issues. And the secretariat remained in the service of these commissions. There was always a link, whether it was the environment, or it was the South Commission, or it was Brandt I and II, or Palme on disarmament. We kept the secretariat as a resource. And of course that helped the secretariat and helped the Commonwealth. But yes, in a wider sense, the commissions took over and played a role that might have been played by the Commonwealth. It was better played, in some respects, by the commissions.

If you take the Brundtland Commission on the environment (World Commission on Environment and Development), for example, it was good that it was not just a Commonwealth commission. It needed to be a global commission. Mrs. Brundtland was most insistent that I be a member of it. So was Robert McNamara, who made his own membership contingent on mine. I think they knew that I spoke with the backup of the secretariat and brought the resources of the Commonwealth, in one way or another, to these commissions. But the commissions suffered the fate of some of our expert groups. OK, the Brandt Commission produced Cancun, and the Brundtland Commission produced Rio. What did Rio produce? Rio produced the UN's sustainable development commission. What has that commission produced? Disappointment.

You have to acknowledge small gains here and there from all of these developments, of course. We would be the poorer if Rio had not happened, if the Commission on Sustainable Development didn't exist. But yet, so much that should have been done by Rio and since Rio remains undone. So we are ten years from Rio, and its essential work has not been fulfilled. You know, at Johannesburg we have got to do more than produce an Earth Charter. We have really got to do something on global warming and climate change. But again, we are meeting in a political climate that is not propitious to accommodation.

RJ: Do you see the recent conference chaired by Jan Pronk as making the very basic political decision, that it's more important to get an agreement on the global climate without the United States than not to get an agreement at all—is that a model? Is that a risky model? But it might also be one for the Commonwealth on some of these issues.

SR: I have always been predisposed to the principle of making progress where you can, with whomever will come with you.

RJ: A coalition of the—

SR: Yes, a coalition of the willing. It is not a wholly satisfying philosophy. And when the body that stands aside is the world's biggest culprit, and the world's biggest power, then it is easy to make what you are doing seem ineffectual. Yet, I don't think that argument should carry the day. I am with Jan Pronk. And I am for shaming those who stay out. But we must do that. My complaint is that western countries, and the European Union in particular, who know better, who know that the Americans are out of step and out of line, don't say so. They say so in drawing rooms. They say so to you politely. But they don't say so to the Americans, because they are allies, because they are friends. And yet it is the world that is going up. I think they owe a responsibility to the rest of the world to say it to their friends: "On this you are wrong, and we are going to stand against you." The Americans wouldn't hesitate to say it if the boot were on the other foot.

RJ: Perhaps this is the moment to ask a bit more about the things the Commonwealth did do in the 1980s very successfully, during the Mrs. Thatcher era, particularly South Africa and particularly the Rhodesia issue. I'm sure you must have written much more about that, but for this interview you ought to give at least an overview of both those two issues and how they helped the UN reach agreement. The apartheid issue was one of the great causes of the UN for years.

SR: Absolutely. Well, the two issues were different. While apartheid and discrimination and racism was common to both, Zimbabwe was essentially a Commonwealth issue because it was so much of a British responsibility to deal with UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) and bring Zimbabwe to freedom. So the Commonwealth had a necessary role, and a very legitimate one. And we knew that it was something that had to be done if we were ever to deal with the bigger issue of South Africa, the more global issue of South Africa.

So the Commonwealth tackled the Rhodesia issue legitimately. There we came up against formidable instincts. The "kith and kin" factor of Rhodesia had always been the underlying problem in the Commonwealth and is still a factor—though not the only one—in Zimbabwe. Overcoming that had to take a very great deal of effort. It was not going to be overcome by bludgeoning. And it's very interesting, and history should reflect on it, that it wasn't the Labour prime ministers—like [Harold] Wilson and [James] Callaghan—that made the ultimate accommodation, that made Lancaster House possible, but Margaret Thatcher. It had to be a Conservative politician to do it, to carry Britain. They would never have succeeded, and Wilson and Callaghan knew it. That's what was responsible for the talks on those warships—HMS *Fearless* and HMS *Tiger*—and responsible for a policy of "no military intervention" to put down UDI.

I remember when Mrs. Thatcher came to power. I was at the secretariat. She had come to power on a manifesto that was for the recognition of Bishop Muzerewa—a disaster. She had campaigned describing Mugabe and Nkomo—it was then Nkomo and Mugabe, Joshua and Robert—as monsters. She called them "guerillas." And she believed they were terrorists. Her mindset identified them as terrorists. Part of what I had to do was to try to perceive of the Rhodesia issues differently. And I remember saying to her, "Please do not think of them as guerilla fighters. Of if you do, think of guerilla fighters in a positive sense. Think of them as the British thought of the partisans in the war, as the legitimate freedom fighters. Not all guerillas are evil people. They are people fighting for just causes. So try and perceive them in these ways. And if you go to Lusaka"—because she was facing the Commonwealth summit in Zambia within months—"if you go to Zambia without that mindset, I will undertake to ensure that the Commonwealth does not gang up on you."

RJ: And she responded to that?

SR: And she responded. And the Commonwealth responded, and Nyerere and [Kenneth] Kaunda and everyone. And the queen played a very important role in the wings. We created a climate at Lusaka, which made the Lusaka Declaration possible. And that led to Lancaster House. Now there were some things that were not properly done at Lancaster House, and we are living with the aftermath of some of them, in terms of the situation in Zimbabwe today. Land redistribution could have been better dealt with at Lancaster House, and was not. It could have been dealt with better afterwards, and was not. Now it is compounded by the totally inexcusable practices and policies of Mugabe. Starting from a position in which he was essentially right, in relation to the need for land redistribution, he has converted that situation into one that is wholly indefensible in terms of the Mugabe government. But that's the story for another Commonwealth conference.

What we did at Lusaka, and later at Lancaster House, was to create conditions by dialogue. And mature politicians, like Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda, were able to make a deal with Mrs. Thatcher. And there were times in Lusaka—don't forget, when we came away from Lusaka, we were rounded on by ZAPU (Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union) and ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union): "Who gave you the right," they said, "to negotiate for the Lancaster House conference for us?" Well, they were entitled to say so. But if we had not done it, it would not have been done.

And Zimbabwe ultimately led to South Africa. Zimbabwe was a Commonwealth effort, and the UN stood back. The UN was with us. [Javier] Pérez de Cuéllar observed the Zimbabwe elections for the UN. I remember him telling me this many years later as Secretary-General.

RJ: The Commonwealth supported by providing observers. And that was, of course, one of the first elections, wasn't it, where there were observers?

SR: Yes. They were essentially Commonwealth observers. I think the UN Secretary-General had a representative there. And it was he, Pérez de Cuéllar. But this was a case in which we were doing important work for the UN. Or if you like, work that the UN wanted to have done, and we were the best agency to do it. We had a special legitimacy because of UDI and the British responsibility and so on. But the UN looked on with approval. And of course the secretariat kept the UN informed. I kept the Secretary-General informed of how we were doing, and what successes we were having, and how we were functioning.

And Zimbabwe then made it possible for the world to move together on South Africa. It strengthened the hand of the Commonwealth and what it could do. And what the Commonwealth was doing strengthened the hand of the UN. And it became very much a joint effort. The UN Committee Against Apartheid was an important factor and worked with us throughout. But there were some roles that only the Commonwealth could have played. For example, there came a point with South Africa when it was necessary to have a face-to-face dialogue with white South Africa. We had done all the necessary things, the right things—isolation, sports, sanctions, everything. But none of those things are designed to lead to capitulation. They are designed to lead to negotiation on more sensible terms. And we had come to that point. But it couldn't yet be a global negotiation.

So when the Commonwealth decided, in 1985, that the time had come for us to go to South Africa, this was a very difficult decision for the Commonwealth. After all, we had ten years of the opposite—withdrawal and isolation. But I thought it was necessary then, and we had a great conjuncture of forces. Beside the African leadership, we had Bob Hawke. We had

Brian Mulroney. We had Rajiv Gandhi. We had Michael Manley. We had people of this quality who came together across the racial divide, and who backed my idea that the time had come for us to do something. The person who initially opposed us was Margaret Thatcher.

RJ: Was she reflecting her own reactions, alone, or [Peter] Carrington's reactions?

SR: I think a Foreign Office reaction. Carrington would have been part of it. But she did come around. She came around to accepting it, but I think she came around to accepting it thinking she would control it. But sometimes that is a necessary part of getting acceptance—getting the other person to believe that there are no devils in what they are agreeing to. So each of you can agree, expecting to control the operation. I think that was manifest in having the agreement that the Commonwealth secretary-general would appoint a group of eminent persons. Obviously the secretary-general always consults with heads of government in such matters. And when I talked with Mrs. Thatcher, she suggested Geoffrey Howe, her foreign minister. I said, "No, Prime Minister. This has to be independent individuals, not intergovernmental representatives. We can't have a foreign minister." That's how Tony Barber became a member. She trusted Tony. Tony knew South Africa. It turned out he was a great asset in the eminent persons group, because he was able to say what had to be said. And it came from a Brit, who was chairman of Standard Chartered Bank at that point.

But in that situation, of course, what we were doing was building on so much that was being done in other places, building on the congressional effort, building on what the UN was doing through the Committee Against Apartheid, and ultimately doing it in a way in which we could make progress by agreement. That basically is what the Eminent Persons Group did, because the principal good that emanated from the Eminent Persons was the release of [Nelson] Mandela.

RJ: Dramatic.

SR: And it was the release of Mandela that ended apartheid. When you brush everything aside, the Commonwealth managed the release of Mandela. Mandela managed the end of apartheid.

RJ: Standing back from it and asking what are the lessons for the economic and social arena, what are the equivalents on the economic and social side to ending apartheid, or releasing Mandela? And is it that the issues are not focused with such a sense of political obstacle—we can't move until there is some solution to the economic and social logjam. Because we haven't got that sense of total obstacle that has to be dealt with politically, so we can't get some dramatic action that will release the brakes?

SR: Well, I doubt that on the social and economic side it's going to be any one thing as dramatic as that, because there are so many elements and factors that are involved in those issues. But I believe that there are some big issues. I think the global economic architecture, as we're describing it now, is one of them, and a big one of them. I think the whole concept—and you can give it whatever name you like—the concept that revolves around the idea of an economic security council is ultimately going to be the way forward. You might come to it through the G-20 (Group of 20) finance ministers, becoming the means for enlarging the G-8 into something else that is more genuinely North-South. And you've got the Economic Security Council.

I attach no great significance to how it happens. But that we have to bring about a global economic directorate that is genuinely North-South. That, I think, is the big challenge. It is here, I believe, that the UN institutional framework has not delivered what some of the founders hoped for in 1945. The argument began in 1945 about the role of social and economic issues as part of

the role of the United Nations. And the West, of course, saw the United Nations essentially in political terms. It saw it in terms of peace and stability. They were just out of the war. It was a war to end all wars. The South, the incipient South, saw it in terms of development, because that was their war. So we got the relevant language, but we never got the will.

So ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) which, if you read the language, should be a big edifice within the UN, turned out to be a pale reflection of ambition. I was chairman of the Committee for Development Planning (CDP) for three years—1984, 1985, 1986. We had very important member, very good members, from North and South. Bob McNamara was on it for the U.S. when I was chairman. We produced very good reports. We gave them names which signified what they are: *Crisis or Reform*; *Breaking the Barriers to Development*; *The Challenge to Multilateralism: A Time for Renewal*; *Doubling Development Finance: Meeting a Global Challenge*. Those were the reports that went from the CDP to ECOSOC.

RJ: And disappeared without a trace?

SR: And disappeared without a trace. We tried. We held press conferences. We initiated that. We went to ECOSOC. McNamara and I addressed ECOSOC on the report, talked to the ambassadors. But of course these are New York ambassadors who summer in Geneva, and this is one of the things they do for a couple of days. And they, too, disappear without a trace.

RJ: In the case of the Commonwealth, you have sometimes used the Commonwealth ministers of finance to set up a common position, or at least an agreement on certain issues in the Development Committee of the Bretton Woods that are desirable to debate. You never tried to do anything similar with the CDP report, using the Commonwealth to try and lead into a debate in ECOSOC.

SR: No, I didn't. And I think I would have been inhibited from doing it, because the Commonwealth doesn't like to act as the Commonwealth in the UN. I think this was partly because of reluctance on the part of developing countries. The Commonwealth, in the early days of my fifteen years—I think it changed towards the end—was still slightly British. And if acting in the name of the Commonwealth, it wasn't easy to bring allies from francophone Africa, from Latin America, from other parts of Asia. So Commonwealth countries were always a little diffident.

As we grew more respectable, if you like, as our credentials became stronger and more manifest, largely over Southern Africa issues, the Commonwealth stood tall and people were less reluctant, even in the UN, to identify. But I think there was that inhibiting factor. And it wouldn't have played well in ECOSOC.

RJ: I think we perhaps ought to be calling a halt for now. But we will continue tomorrow, and perhaps look at other issues in the Commonwealth, and perhaps come back to the other commissions, the Brundtland Commission and the Commission on Global Governance, as well as your work with the Caribbean group. So thank you very much, indeed.

RJ: This is January 15, 2002, and the continuation of the interview with Sir Shridath Ramphal. Sonny, perhaps you would just tell me the origins of the Palme Commission on peace and development (Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues) which followed the Brandt Commission.

SR: In fact, to understand it, you have to go back a little to the Brandt Commission, because the Brandt Commission really arose out of Bob McNamara's concern that there had to be some mechanism to achieve a breakthrough, which he was finding it impossible to achieve at the Bank. He persuaded Willy Brandt, as a grand old man then, still head of the SPD (Social

Democratic Party) in Germany, but very much a grand world figure, to take on the chairmanship of it. Brandt persuaded me to be involved in it.

But in association with Brandt in this were many figures of the social-democratic center in European politics. A key figure in this was Olaf Palme. Olaf was prime minister of Sweden, a great friend of developing countries, particularly African and Asian countries, and a wonderful man in every sense, and a great and logical partner to Willy Brandt. In the work of the Brandt Commission, it didn't take us long to recognize that you could not say all that needed to be said on development, and certainly you could not advance a program for development unless you did something about the global environment, which was of course beset by the Cold War and the massive expenditure on armaments.

So the disarmament dimension of development, if you like, was something that was enormous and yet couldn't come within the compass of the Brandt Commission, or it would have overwhelmed it. So Willy Brandt and the whole commission realized that there was need for a similar commission on disarmament issues—disarmament and security issues. And Olaf Palme was the obvious person to chair that commission. So in the early 1980s, after the work of the Brandt Commission was concluded, we went through similar motions. Olaf volunteered to chair the commission.

We had people like Cyrus Vance on it. I was on it. David Owen from the UK was on it. We had the Russians with us playing a very prominent role. This was at the height of the Cold War, so it was a very important opportunity. Gro Brundtland was on it. She was then in politics in Norway. She was later to become the environment minister. And of course with her experience on the Palme Commission, when the time came, a few years later, to establish the

commission on environment, this time with the involvement of the UN, Gro was a well-groomed character to take on the chairmanship of it.

RJ: Now this Palme Commission was meeting at the time that President Reagan was referring to the "evil empire." Did the U.S. attempt to provide informal advice or limitations or direction to the Palme Commission?

SR: No, they didn't at all. And it would not have been easy, because Cyrus Vance was a member from the United States. The people who were supporting him would all have been disarmament-oriented people. They weren't going to be taking instructions from the State Department. I have no doubt that they kept people involved in these issues in the State Department aware of what was going on. And it didn't inhibit the United States, it didn't inhibit the president, in making these outrageous remarks. But likewise, it allowed a process to take place with which the administration could not be associated, but which, I like to believe, some people in the administration at any rate, recognized was a very desirable one. And the Cold War was characterized by that kind of thing right through—there was this loud protestation of anger between the two sides, but there was always a conduit of dialogue.

RJ: Did you have any other experiences of that conduit to dialogue?

SR: Not really. In a personal sense, no.

RJ: And even in the Commonwealth were there countries which had their links with the Soviet Union, like India most notably, but also Tanzania and others? Did the Commonwealth ever quietly try and speak to the issues of either the Cold War or the desirability of some mutual reduction in armaments?

SR: The Commonwealth spoke constantly to the issues of the Cold War and to the issue of disarmament, but never in the kind of detail which would have put it into a position to be an

interlocutor. It always drew attention to the link between development and disarmament, for example. It couldn't but do that. So it was firmly committed to the disarmament process and to the de-escalation of tensions from the Cold War. But there was a kind of unspoken recognition that this was a game that was beyond the Commonwealth in terms of really being an effective player.

RJ: Come back to the Palme Commission. In terms of its recommendations, and indeed its broad prospectus, do you have any specific examples about how these made an active impact on thinking at the time or soon after?

SR: I would have to go back, Richard, to refresh my memory on it a little. I know that the very process of the commission was, I think, a very important one, because we were dealing with players on the Russian side who valued this opportunity for interaction. I forget the name of the Russian member, but he had with him a general. He had with him somebody from the military. And that was very important because the dialogue that took place at the commission was one thing; the dialogue that took place between Cyrus Vance and his people, and the Russians and their military people, was even more important. And the building of confidence that was generated by the whole Palme exercise was something that was, I thought, very significant.

RJ: Let me take you, Sonny, to your direct involvement with the UN at that time, when you were a member of the Committee on Development Planning for three years. Perhaps you would first tell us your broad impressions of the CDP, some of the other people who were on it, and then perhaps some of the strengths and the weaknesses of that process, which indeed was started by Jan Tinbergen within the UN in 1969 or 1970.

SR: Well I had known of the origins of the CDP. I, of course, grew up as a great admirer of Tinbergen. When I was invited to be the chairman of the CDP, I was really quite pleased. I had just come through the process of the Brandt Commission. We had been involved in the Commonwealth secretariat in all the experts groups. Development was very much a part of my life, and I accepted it very readily. I was enormously impressed with the quality of the people who were associated with me in the CDP at that time. They included people like Ismail Sabry-Abdullah of Egypt, Abdelatif al-Hamad of Kuwait, Gerry Arsenis of Greece, Ken Berrill of Britain, Bernard Chidzero of Zimbabwe, Jean-Pierre Cot of France. They included Bob McNamara of the U.S., Celso Furtado of Brazil, I.G. Patel of India, Rehman Sobhan of Bangladesh, Janez Stanovnik of Yugoslavia—people who all went on to do enormously important things, and who were full of energy, full of ideas, who were basically, too, internationalists. That was the really vital thing.

The CDP is, I think, unique in UN institutional arrangements in that none of the representatives on the committee speak for governments. It is a non-governmental part of this huge intergovernmental system. And there are not many elements within the UN that are of that nature. So it presented a very important opportunity for independent practitioners, because these were not idealistic NGO (nongovernmental organizations) types. They were not academics. They were practitioners. They knew the limitations of governmental actions. They knew the realities of developmental needs, and therefore they were approaching the issues of development with a sense of realism.

Therefore, the work of the committee offered the UN system an opportunity to go beyond what was possible in debates like the NIEO and all that. And it was well serviced by the economic division of the secretariat. And I think its reports stand the test of time. It is very

interesting to go back and read them. I keep my own three years' reports as a testimony to what we were trying to do—*The Challenge to Multilateralism*; *Doubling Development Finance*; *Crisis or Reform*.

But there was a big problem with the Committee for Development Planning, and that was follow-up. We could say the most practical things. We could say the most essential and necessary things. But what happened? Well, what happened was that the report was transmitted to ECOSOC, and it was transmitted in particular to a meeting of ECOSOC, in the summer, in Geneva. Traditionally, it was just sent to ECOSOC. Then it really went into a black hole. With the encouragement of McNamara, the committee at that time and I were determined that having produced these reports, we were going to take a hand in the follow-up process. So one of the first things we did was to hold a press conference, both in New York and later in Geneva, at which we tried to advance the ideas in the reports, to make it public, to give it a wider outreach.

But secondly, and this was very much in the second and third year, after we saw what happened in the first year, McNamara and I went to ECOSOC. We asked to be received by ECOSOC, to present the report in person, and to explain the thinking and urge action and so on. Well, for both of us that was a very distressing experience. First of all, we did not encounter among the ambassadors, save for here and there, any particular ambassador who was a player in the development debate; we didn't encounter people who we felt were turned on to the development issues. They were generalists. They were ambassadors, many of them from New York, enjoying ECOSOC in the summer in Geneva. They gave us a good hearing, and there were platitudes, and we had the distinct impression that that was that, and it was going nowhere.

This was a terrible letdown because, in a sense, the UN system was failing to develop what was best in the UN system. The CDP was part of the system. ECOSOC was to advance

the work of the CDP. And in fact, ECOSOC turned out to be the *cul de sac*. So I think in that sense the system let us down, or let itself down. And to the best of my understanding, nothing's changed.

RJ: Well I recall, in the early 1990s, that ECOSOC, under the pressure of some governments, in particular the Dutch and Jan Pronk, who was then the development minister, said that there should be several days of development debate. And Pronk himself said he would come, and he encouraged other development ministers to come and some equivalents on the developing country side. But the point relevant to the one you are making was really twofold. If you had, say, development ministers in ECOSOC for the two-day discussion of your report, might that have made a difference in your judgment and your experience? Secondly, if they had come, might the process of debate taken on some of the character of a Commonwealth discussion, where it is not formal speeches, but informal interaction?

SR: I think unquestionably. And I recall what Jan tried to do. These were the days when we had counterparts like Judith Hart, for example, in Britain. And there were others—Jean-Pierre Cot by then was in government. Yes, it would have helped, because what was needed was a political discussion, a political discussion of development issues against a backdrop of an awareness of what the possibilities were, what it was really possible to do, and with the aid of the very good professional work having been done by the Committee for Development Planning. But it never happened. My own feeling is that ambassadors in Geneva would have greatly discouraged the involvement of ministers.

RJ: Let me come back to the Commonwealth as a model, because surely with many of the ministers of finance meetings of the Commonwealth, and indeed surely with prime minister models, you had that type of discussion in which the political realities from different points of

view around the world are brought together. But in practice, has that dialogue led to advance, or has that dialogue made clear the limitations of the conflicting interests to see some real change of the sort that these reports are—

SR: Well I think it led to advance, but in the interstices. It didn't lead to big reform because larger interests always got in the way. What little progress you made in the Commonwealth got thwarted in the larger forum. But just to be able to get a large group of nearly fifty countries, with a North-South character—I remember once we got the Canadian minister of finance to speak for the Commonwealth in the annual meeting of the Bank and the Fund that was a very important development. It didn't necessarily carry the day, but it advanced the debate.

So I think it was useful. It was desirable. But it was not sufficient. The Commonwealth couldn't do it all. As I said in those words you quote, "We could help the world to negotiate, but we couldn't negotiate for the world."

RJ: Let me press you again today on an issue I raised yesterday. If you look at the many issues that the Commonwealth took up, can you think of any particular cases in the economic and social arena in which, in the interstices perhaps, the Commonwealth helped make real progress?

SR: I think certainly in debt. I think what little progress was made in the Common Fund debate we accomplished. We didn't get the Common Fund, but we got various advances in trade against protectionism and so on. I think, over the question of development finance, we made gains here and there, but no big breakthrough. There you were up against all that constrained the Bank and the Fund.

RJ: Perhaps we should come on to the next mission, the Brundtland Commission. That also grew out of membership in some of the earlier commissions.

SR: Brundtland was slightly different. It did grow out of Brandt and Palme, in one sense, in that there was a nucleus of members who were associated with both. But it also had an origin in the UN which made it different and, indeed, I think gave it an additional strength. It was based on a UN resolution that nevertheless called for an independent commission. It wasn't a UN commission, but it was inspired by a UN resolution which called and named Mrs. Brundtland, and invited her to bring together an international commission which would raise its own financing and produce an independent report.

So it was a tenuous link with the UN, but in my judgement a very important link. And I think it ought to have paved a way for more commissions of that kind. But they didn't in fact come. What it meant, however, was that for example, in the case of Brandt, we had to maneuver at the end of the work of the commission to get the Brandt report into the UN system. And the way that had to happen was to get a few governments to introduce it in the relevant committees and so on, which we did. Whereas with Brundtland, it was a logical thing to report back to the Secretary-General that this work had been done. There was a follow-up to that in terms of the Commission on Global Governance, which I'll tell you about in a moment.

So we had that link with the UN. There was, of course, another link which developed out of the Brundtland Commission, because the principal recommendation of the Brundtland Commission on the institutional side, on the immediate follow-up side, was the Rio conference (UN Conference on the Human Environment). So we had a positive, practical recommendation to make in terms of what should be happening in 1992. That meant that there was every reason why the secretary-general should have the report, have it officially, and be able to advance a

secretariat position on its recommendations, which ultimately of course led to the Rio conference and all the preparatory work by Maurice Strong that preceded it.

RJ: Did Maurice Strong play an important part in the Brundtland Commission?

SR: Yes, he did. He went on to play an even more important part later on, but he did play an important part. It was a good commission. All these commissions brought together really worthy people. They were important moments in their own lives and careers and intellectual development, and convinced me, of course, of not only the essentiality but of the practicality of the world working together. There was no attempt not to have protagonists. I remember, for example, in relation to the Commission on Global Governance, both the prime minister of Sweden, Ingvar Carlsson, and myself, attaching great importance to having a Republican member of the commission. You were going to get nowhere in the United States unless a Republican figure had been identified. Similarly, in Brandt it was very important that we got a senior and respected American. In the end, we got Kay Graham.

RJ: Of the *Washington Post*.

SR: And all that that meant. It meant a great deal. In the Commission on Global Governance, we got Barber Conable, who brought to it, not only a Republican background in the Congress, but also experience as president of the World Bank.

RJ: Let me ask you about the Brundtland report. As I said yesterday, our position is that ideas have an impact by changing the way issues are perceived. And surely the Brundtland report did that in making development and environment a seamless web, and in stressing the interests of all, though in different ways, in that set of issues. It did help define an agenda of action. It did institutionalize the idea of a follow-up Rio conference, five or so years later. And fourthly, it did serve as a focus around which coalitions of interest could form.

So by those four tests, the Brundtland report surely must be judged a considerable success. Is that your judgement? Perhaps there were good things and bad things.

SR: There weren't a lot of bad things. It was very important that the commission developed the concept of sustainable development. That was its central contribution on the policy side and on the intellectual side. And sustainable development proved capable of carrying forward many of the ideas—ideas on climate change, ideas on the ozone layer, which was then an even greater issue. Climate change was just beginning to emerge. And of course the development dimension. It brought them all together.

RJ: Some people have criticized it, saying, "Sustainable development is a wonderful concept, but precisely what does it mean?"

SR: I think they are expecting too much from a definition of sustainable development. But surely the notion that development must take place in a way, and on a basis, that it can't be a stop-go arrangement, that it is vulnerable to the environmental failures that would be taking place all around it, that we have to pass on to the next generation a system of development, and of caring for the environment, which made development possible, not only in our time but in their time. That link between development and environment was really the essence of what sustainable development was about. Until then it had not existed. Particular elements of it were in peoples' minds. Everybody knew that population issues had a link with development. But it was never fully carried through. No, I think producing the concept of sustainable development was very important. Even if what it led to was a general discussion and debate about the inadequacies of sustainable development as a concept, it was doing something important.

RJ: Come to the ideas of consumption and limits to consumption.

SR: I think you know how strongly I feel, that that is at the heart of the environment debate. It is consumption more than anything else that is going to lead us to disasters, because we are not showing a capacity in the world to come to grips with consumption. Particularly the rich countries, and particularly the United States, see consumption as a threat, not as a challenge, a threat to the American way of life, when you get right down to it. Therefore, their knee-jerk reaction to the consumption issue is: "Well, we've got to find other ways in which we can sustain consumption, or make consumption at this level sustainable."

An absolutely essential attitudinal change must be to reduce consumption—reduce consumption in absolute terms. Then, of course, comes the question of how to sustain consumption at a tolerable level. For me, the consumption issue is inseparable from development, because it is impossible to conceive of development, certainly on the basis of the best science that we have at our disposal, to conceive of development across the board at present levels of consumption in the West. If the rich countries continue to consume at their present rate, then it is not going to be possible for the poor countries to develop to a tolerable level of consumption. That, I think, is the great threat, the great challenge, and I do not believe that we are dealing with it adequately.

RJ: Yet the main test of economic success in the West, quarter by quarter, year by year, is how is GDP performing—gross domestic product, gross domestic production, and indeed gross domestic consumption. And that must be judged as one area in which the perceptions of the issue of the Brundtland Commission somehow have not managed to break through to the economic establishment or to the political establishment.

SR: I think that is true. And I think it is the political establishment, more than anything else, that is the impediment to real progress.

RJ: Have you got any examples where real-life political leaders in the industrial countries, or indeed anywhere, have shown willingness to grapple with this issue?

SR: I think there is a chance that you can get leaders in Scandinavia to give that leadership—in Sweden, in Norway. I can't tell you that I have hope for many other countries. I think, perhaps, Canada should be on that list, although the pull of the United States at the public level is so powerful that it becomes harder for Canadian political leaders to carry the community with them. But the Canadian political culture is certainly closer to the Scandinavian one than it is to the American.

RJ: You can argue, and some have, that the issue is most practically addressed politically if the emphasis is not on total levels of consumption, which sounds like reducing living standards, but if it is taken step by step in specific areas: we must protect the forest, we must ensure the water supply is used on a sustainable basis without adding to pollution, we must be sure we do not create such vast dumps of refuse that we ruin our own environment or export it to developing countries. Surely there is a lot of public practical political support for actions in these arenas.

SR: Yes. I am all for trying to make progress through practical action in particular areas. The trouble is that those who want to oppose those actions very quickly turn the debate into a consumption debate. Then you are up against this. But tactically, of course, that is the right approach. I am glad that it is making some progress in some areas.

RJ: Perhaps we should move to the next commission and, I think you said yesterday in view, the most important because it brought all the elements together—the Commission on Global Governance in 1995, for which you were co-chairman. Perhaps you could tell us how

you became involved with that commission and then set its recommendations in broader perspective.

SR: Well again it is a story of evolution from Brandt. Ten years after the Brandt Commission, Willy Brandt brought a group of commissioners together. We couldn't assemble the whole commission. We didn't have the money to do that. But he was able to bring perhaps ten of us together. In some cases, people had changed. Olaf Palme had been assassinated. Brandt invited Ingvar Carlsson to come for Sweden. Jan Pronk was there. I was there. Abdelatif was there. The question was, ten years on, what is our judgement on why the Brandt report has not led to significant change in development or in global attitudes?

It led to a very interesting discussion, because it led us to a recognition that the real issue wasn't just failure to communicate, or failure to convert, if you like, in relation to the mutual interest argument. The failure had deeper origins, which lay in the very nature of the international system, which lay in part in the weaknesses of the United Nations system, which lay in the problems of democracy for the reform process, which lay in the need for reform to bring the people of the world more into the mainstream of policymaking. Very fundamental kinds of questions, to which none of us at the time gave the name "governance."

What emerged from that meeting of Brandt's tenth anniversary, if you like, was a request for three of us—Ingvar Carlsson, Jan Pronk, and myself—to produce a reflection paper on these issues, and to explore and recommend whether there was anything as a group we should do. We worked for a year on that paper. We produced it, and then we had another meeting of the rump Brandt Commission. What emerged from it was a recommendation given that we had had all the subject commissions—we had done development, we had done disarmament, we had done environment, we had done the South—the time had come for something much more holistic that

would not go over the ground covered in those commissions but would look at the structures of governance in the world and see to what extent they could be made more propitious to advancing the ideas of these separate commissions.

That recommendation found favor with Willy Brandt and the others. It was to be the last kind of involvement for Brandt. He died shortly after. And the decision was taken that there should be a commission of this kind. It emerged, as these things emerge, that Ingvar Carlsson and I should lead it. So for the first time we had a kind of co-chair situation. It was one with which I was very happy. So that is precisely what we did.

Now the link with Brundtland and the systemic issue with the UN was, could we get this done through the UN? Could we get Sweden, as they would be willing, to initiate a resolution in the General Assembly, or in a relevant committee, recommending the idea of establishing a commission that would look at these larger issues and organizing it as Brundtland was organized, as an independent international commission which would have to raise its own funds? So it was not committing the UN to anything other than saying the idea of a commission was a good one. We came to the conclusion that it would not fly, that there would be opposition to the very idea of looking at the institutional structures and looking at UN reform. It would be perfectly obvious that one of the areas of reform would have to be the Security Council, so you would run full tilt into opposition of the permanent members.

So we had to put that aside. Nevertheless, we remained very anxious that we should have the imprimatur of the UN. We knew that at the end of the day, we had to take the report to the UN and through the UN. So we settled on a half compromise, in that we encouraged the Secretary-General, who was Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to meet with Ingvar Carlsson and myself on a visit he made to Geneva, when we would put to him the ideas we had, and say that we were

willing to go ahead with the establishment of the commission and to do the work involved. But we would want to know, before we committed ourselves to this, that it had his blessing, that he saw it as an effort that could make a contribution to the UN as it looked to the issues of reform.

Boutros was very enthused by it. He wasn't just lukewarm. He was very positive. He said, "This is very important work. It is work that we can't get done through the UN. If the two of you would lead a commission that would do this, I would regard it as helpful and I would be very happy to receive the report." Now that was enough. We could say that the report was being done with the knowledge and blessing of the Secretary-General, and would be submitted to him at the end of the day. That was a very important element of its genesis.

We then proceeded, as all the other commissions proceeded, totally independently. There was never a UN representative working with us and so on. Of course, what was very interesting was that up to this point it did not have a name. I remember the very first meeting of the commission. We talked a little about the name. Carlsson and I floated the notion of governance, of global governance. There was a good deal of skepticism in the commission on all sides, developing and developed countries. It raised the specter of global government, and there was a feeling that we would have shot ourselves in the foot, that we would kill the thing before it even got off the ground and so on.

But it was very curious. We shelved the decision. We said, "We don't have to have a name. Let's talk about it at the next meeting." Three months later, when we came to it, there wasn't the same difficulty. Governance was beginning to be part of the international language. So while it still had those risks of confusion with global government and federalism at a global level and so on, the commission took courage in its hands and decided, "No, we're going to be an international commission on global governance."

RJ: If you had to go back to the 1950s, what words were people using at that time to indicate what in the 1990s people now talk about as global governance?

SR: Well, there weren't. They were not thinking systemically. To the extent that they were thinking systemically, they were thinking in terms of specifics—the Bank and the Fund, the UN itself. They were not thinking of reform as such. Of course, that was derived heavily from the Cold War. Any question of the reform of the Security Council was out, so long as the Cold War environment persisted. And in a sense, in the 1950s, and even into the 1960s, the UN was in its infancy. This wasn't a time for review or reform. So the big systemic issues were really not addressed. It is not surprising that it didn't have a name.

RJ: Now coming to the follow-up to the Commission on Global Governance, a number of initiatives were taken to try to get the ideas debated even more seriously considered for implementation. How would you assess that process?

SR: I thought the efforts made by the UN were gallant, and the various forms it took—the *Agenda for Development*, Kofi Annan's report to the fiftieth anniversary session on reform, the work done by Maurice Strong from his group—were really very important. But I think underpinning them is something we have not talked about. You have not talked about it, perhaps with modesty. But those years, the latter years of the Brundtland Commission, the years of the Commission on Global Governance, were underpinned by what I regard as the tremendous work that was done by UNDP (UN Development Programme) in the *Human Development Report*. That series of reports in a sense advanced the ideas of the commissions, had the value of being impeccable in terms of their professionalism, and brought the issues to the fore and compelled attention. So they together generated an improved environment for change, change over a whole variety of issues.

It demonstrated in particular, in a way that not even McNamara had been able to do in his poverty years at the Bank, the fundamental importance of coming to grips with international poverty. So the climate was enormously better for the reform debate. Why then didn't we make more progress? I think two things were responsible. One is the power structure of the world. I think there are policymakers, leading political figures in Europe, who recognized that there is validity in the call for reform. But they also know that there is no will for this in the United States, and they are uncertain of the alternatives. So they stall. They go along with nothing happening.

I don't think there is obdurate resistance to change in Europe, but I think there is a failure of will to grapple with it. They don't feel as passionately the need for change. The heart is overruled by the head. Of course, in the United States there is an absolute fear of change. When we produced the report of the Commission on Global Governance, called *Our Global Neighborhood*, trying to send a signal on what we are talking about to Adele Simmons, the president of the MacArthur Foundation. She had played a very prominent part in the work of the commission. She and I went to call on Hillary Clinton. She was a friend of Hillary's and she arranged it. I was enormously impressed by Mrs. Clinton. Her staff had read the report. She was well briefed on it. She had clearly dipped into it herself. Her attitude was, and her words were, "You have done God's work. We must all be grateful to you for it. This clearly is the way we must go." Then we went on to talk about the problems. She was almost talking to herself and being enormously self-critical of the Democratic Party for allowing the Republican right wing, and right wing forces in general, to capture, as she called it, "the high ground."

She was almost, in a sense, being critical of the administration, or certainly of the Democratic power structure, that they had lost the ground. They had lost the debate. Even with

a Democratic administration it was a right wing mood that was going to determine the political outcome. Basically, what she was saying to us is, that if we are to make any progress in this country, in the direction of an acceptance of the notion of the world as a global neighborhood, we have got first to put our house in order politically. The political culture of the U.S. will just not accept it.

Of course she was absolutely right, because the strongest criticisms, to the point of hate letters, that Carlsson and I received were from right wing movements in the United States, who immediately turned global governance into global government. There were commentators who went on radio stations in the United States and presented the report in terms of recommendations for black helicopters coming over and determining the course of life in the United States and so on. It was weird. But that was the other side of the environment.

Of course, I do believe that the UN suffers from being in the United States. It suffers from being so overborne by this overwhelming media power which surrounds you in the United States. That too was a factor influencing where it could go in the debates in the General Assembly or in the committees or in the debates in the country. Add to that—and I say this with great reserve—the failure of ambassadors at the level of the General Assembly, and of the missions in New York, to deal with these issues with the intellectual depth that they demand. It's not just a criticism of ambassadors as individuals; it is a criticism of the system.

It was perhaps asking too much that ambassadors should be concerned with the whole range of issues that affect international affairs and deal with them all in that depth. So there is something systemically wrong. And of course the commission sought to address some of these issues: one, of course, in terms of civil society; another in terms of strengthening the capacity of the General Assembly, returning the General Assembly to its former position contemplated in the

Charter; another, of course, was doing something about reform of the Security Council. I think the package of reform proposals put forward in the Commission on Global Governance represent a manageable package.

I remember when Conable and I went to see [Michel] Camdessus with the report. Now here was a former president of the World Bank, and we went to talk to the managers of the Development Bank and the Fund about the Economic Security Council. We recognized that the Bank and the Fund set their face against us rigidly. Camdessus said, "If I were a member of the commission, I would have signed up for this recommendation. But that is not to tell you that I believe you are going to get very far with it." It was very interesting that he said so, because the people on the commission, the members of the commission who most pushed the idea of the Economic Security Council, were Conable, I.G. Patel, and Jacques Delors, the former president of the European Commission. They were the ones.

Camdessus said to us, "I sit in on the meetings of the G-7 (Group of 7). I can tell you that the G-7—although it presents itself as a directorate of the world on economic issues—knows that it is powerless to implement its decisions. It recognizes the need for a different forum, a larger forum. But it is terrified of making the step without the assurance of how it will turn out. So you are right, the recommendation is on the right lines. Whether it is in the UN system or out of the UN system is in a sense a detail. The question is that the world badly needs management of the global economy if we are serious about the realities of globalization. And we haven't got it."

RJ: Barely two months ago, former president Bill Clinton made this largely extemporary speech for an hour on British television, setting out the vision for global governance. At the Labour Party meeting three months ago, shortly after the September 11 bombing, Tony Blair

delivered what was recorded as the most genuine and impassioned speech, largely done himself, also on global governance. Now there's the case of the former president, there's the case of the current prime minister, both setting out a vision for global governance that is truly inclusive in both cases and presumably had many elements common to that of global governance. That suggests to me that it is not the lack of ideas. It is somehow the ability even of people in these very important positions of power to make it practical politics.

SR: That's absolutely right. You have mentioned two events to which I attach the utmost importance and have referred to them in much the way that you have done. I'll just go back one step. Almost a year before Bill Clinton gave the Dimbleby lecture, he made his farewell to Britain. He was clearly anxious, and I conveyed that to Tony Blair, that he needed a platform to make a speech about world affairs. And as things turned out, it was agreed that he would make that speech at the University of Warwick. As the chancellor of Warwick, I officiated at the proceedings. He tried out the ideas that were later to be in the Dimbleby lecture on that occasion.

It was clear to me that he was developing an intellectual basis for his future role in international life. It was certainly not a speech he would have made in the United States, nor did make at any stage in his presidency. And I was sitting in the front row with Cherie Blair and Hillary Clinton listening to him. At the end of the speech, I leaned across to Mrs. Clinton and said, "That was a truly magnificent speech. I am saying this not just as chancellor of Warwick, I am saying this as someone from the developing world." She said to me, "Please tell him." That said a lot to me. It said to me, "Yes, you're right, he is trying out these ideas. But you must tell him yourself, he needs to hear this." And I did. So you can imagine my delight when I saw this

same lecture refined and elaborated and presented to that tremendous audience in the Dimbleby lecture.

RJ: This is the end of tape two.

RJ: Perhaps I can ask you to comment on a common theme in many of your speeches, *One World to Share*. Indeed, this is the title of one collection of your speeches.

SR: *One World to Share*; *Inseparable Humanity*; *No Island is an Island*; *An End to Otherness*; and, of course, *Our Global Neighborhood*. This idea is so fundamental to my own thinking. And unless we get to that state in our minds which removes "otherness," which removes "us" and "them," finds a common humanity, we are not going to find a will to do the things that have to be done. Our destinies are inseparable.

RJ: In your speech on the 50th Anniversary of the UN, you indeed make this point in drawing attention to the very positive and, in these respects, visionary statements by [Clement] Attlee, by Eisenhower, by [Harry] Truman as well, and by [Franklin D.] Roosevelt at the beginnings of the UN. And you set it in historical context. So even though you emphasized the world is interdependent and inseparable, perhaps still often as a lone voice crying in the wilderness—do you see little doubt in the long sweep of history that we will move to this?

SR: I have no doubt at all. My doubt is about how long, and exactly how. But I believe it is written into the whole structure of human society that it has to move in this direction. And I believe that current events are demonstrating what perhaps we failed to convince people of in all these commissions, this inseparable character of humanity. The reality of the interdependencies drawing us into a commonality is being borne out and borne home to political leaders, not by development but by security. In a sense, the Cold War had done that in a way. But between the Russians and the Americans, and the crazy notion of deterrence, and mutually assured

destruction, they eliminated it. So nobody was going to be destroyed because we had worked out that—

RJ: —everyone will if it happens.

SR: And we're not about to destroy ourselves. So forget it, that's not going to happen. But what is happening now is awareness that we are all vulnerable. We are vulnerable to terrorism, but terrorism is itself compounded of all these elements—of hatred, of division, of exclusion, of lack of development, a sense of injustice. All of that is behind terrorism. We can't get away with saying, "Terrorism is evil." What generates evil? And what we are coming to recognize through all of this is oneness.

So for my part, even within my lifetime, I believe I have seen the evolution of global opinion, world opinion, in this direction. Of course, it takes terrible events to catalyze these ideas, as it took a world war—World War II—to produce the UN Charter, to produce all the hopes and expectations. So September 11 is beginning to produce a renaissance of global thinking. We may suffer another setback, but it is an inexorable process.

RJ: In what you just said, you referred to many ideas implicitly that have come from people. Yesterday I asked you what first gave you political perceptions, and you focused on Suez and that event. When I asked you about the federation, you emphasized it to mean more in terms of a political process that would deal with the problems of small islands. Who were some of the other people who have influenced the idea of common issues on the global stage? Perhaps academics, perhaps others.

SR: I think pride of place in my own life, in this phase of intellectual development, must be Barbara Ward. Barbara Ward wasn't a member of the Brandt Commission, not because we didn't ask her, but because she felt she could serve the commission better outside of it. And she

was a constant friend of the commission. I have in my home a photograph of the two of us standing on the shores of Lake Geneva, where the commission was meeting, a photograph taken during a break. To me, it is a precious memento.

Barbara Ward was, first of all, someone who had a profound intellectual and professional grasp of the issues. She was a realist, but she was also a committed internationalist. She understood implicitly the concept of one world. She was wedded to the essentiality of progress on development. But I think, more than anything else, she was a human being of compassion. That characteristic of compassion on the human level infused everything she did, and probably explains her own progression through life, from, if you like, a hardheaded part of the establishment at *The Economist*, to someone who eventually became the symbol of environmental progress in the world.

I was very close to her through the life of the Brandt Commission. She welcomed this commission. She helped it. She read parts of the report as we went along. And we regarded her as one of the great friends outside the commission. I had another link with Barbara Ward which I treasure. Barbara had written the great book for the environment conference in 1972.

RJ: *Only One Earth*.

SR: *Only One Earth*. That was in 1972. In 1990, when Maurice Strong was preparing for Rio, he came to me and asked me if I would do for Rio what Barbara had done for Stockholm. I said, "Maurice, you must be crazy. Nobody can do that. To ask me to do that is too much. I can't." He said, "But Sonny, it has to be done. Someone has to do it. *Only One Earth* was twenty years ago." Well you know Maurice, he usually gets his way. Eventually I agreed, and eventually I produced the book which I called, *Our Country, the Planet*. In it, of course, I went back to *Only One Earth*. And I recalled that I was taking the title from language

Barbara had used in the introduction to *Only One Earth*, where she had said, with Rene DuBois, that the truth is that each of us has more than one country—our own and the planet. I said, "This is what I am trying to capture in the title to this book." To me, writing that book was a most wonderful experience. I like to think of it as something she would have been happy with.

RJ: When did you first meet Barbara Ward?

SR: I met her in London as Commonwealth secretary-general in the context of some of our work in economic issues. I think it may well have been a symposium that we held during my early years on New International Economic Order issues.

RJ: Because, as I recall, you were both governors of IDS (Institute of Development Studies).

SR: That's right, we were. I wasn't a very good member of the board in terms of attendance.

RJ: But Barbara was.

SR: It would have been one place that we met. Then we met frequently then in London.

RJ: Earlier, you mentioned the *Human Development Report*. And Mahbub ul Haq played, of course, the critical role in founding and having the vision for the *Human Development Report*. Did you have many interactions with him?

SR: Yes, I did. And I put Mahbub very high up among the people who influenced my own ideas, and who I think made a massive contribution to the whole development debate. I liked Mahbub. I liked him as an individual, and I liked him as a technician. I liked him as a writer. I liked all he did in the *Human Development Report*, of course. But before that, I interacted with him in an effort we made in the days when we had the Third World Foundation, in trying to make the case for a South secretariat, for a Third World secretariat. He and I worked

very closely on those issues. We did a monograph on it. I made a speech in Kuala Lumpur talking about it. Eventually, we got it recommended in the South Commission.

But Mahbub was someone who advanced Third World causes in a very, very significant way. He did it without demagoguery, without descending into polemics. That of course was his strength with the industrial world. He commanded the respect of the industrial world. It led him into some difficulties with his own constituency, where they didn't feel that perhaps he was as radical as he ought to be. But of course, he was more radical than most of those who spouted radicalism.

RJ: Are there any others in the area of generators of ideas that stand out?

SR: I must tell you a name that would be familiar to you, but you might be surprised. To me, he represented someone with the qualities of Barbara Ward, with a much softer voice. So he never got the acclaim. But he influenced me and my ideas. That was Hans Singer. Hans you know well. There was deep dedication, wonderful clarity. He was a great letter-writer to the press, which was a great strength and a great thing to do. He was unafraid to speak out. And of course through his letters to the media, bringing the quality of his professionalism to the causes of development, Hans played an important part in the work I did. Many a time, at the secretariat, when I wanted confirmation that I was on the right track, I would chat with Hans.

RJ: By phone?

SR: Mainly by phone.

RJ: Let me press you further in these directions, not so much with individuals, but on the role of ideas. After all, in all the Commonwealth meetings and at so many others, you must have heard millions of words and thousands of ideas from hundreds, if not thousands of bright,

important people. This side channel to the ideas of academics, or visionaries, thinkers, how do you rate them, and how do you rate their role in this great cacophony of sound?

SR: Very highly, because I rate ideas highly. The leadership I tried to give the economic division of the Commonwealth secretariat when I was there was that we must be in the frontline of ideas. That was the shortage in the world, and not just prescriptions, but the ideas that have to lie behind the prescriptions—new thinking. Of course, much of this is professionalism, and much of this professionalism lies rooted in our universities. So the role of the academic, and in particular, the role of the academic who is a practitioner as well, or who understands the implications of being a practitioner, is absolutely fundamental to our process.

Just to give you an idea of how much importance I attach to it—I am not an economist. I spent a lot of my life writing about economic issues, and I hope writing in a way that can stand up to professional scrutiny. But I have always attached utmost importance to having around me the most competent economists when I am talking about issues of development. So when Willy Brandt asked me to be a member of the Brandt Commission, in a context in which it was perfectly clear to me that I wasn't going to be an ordinary member—I was expected to be an effective and working member—the first thing I did was to ask a small group of friends to be my backroom.

RJ: Were they called your "tinkers?"

SR: I'm not sure what we called them. But they were Gerry Helleiner, Manmohan Singh, Frank Rampersad, Mike Faber, Alister McIntyre, and one or two others. Everything I did in the Brandt Commission was done in consultation with them. Every draft I presented was run through them. And I would like to think that other commission members, or some of them, did the same thing. But I needed to have—and I felt that need from a Third World point of view—a

conviction that what I was advancing was technically sound. I would do the articulation. I would do the writing. But I needed to be sure that my economics were sound. Of course, in that group I had the benefit of some of the best young minds worldwide, from developed and developing countries.

RJ: And it's been said to me that it meant that when you turned up at the Brandt Commission, you not only had your natural oratory, you actually had some preparatory run-throughs of the ideas and issues and so forth.

SR: Absolutely.

RJ: I wonder how many other people did that. Let me press you now, what are the lessons for this for the UN, either for the South operating in the UN or for internationalists operating in the UN?

SR: Well, what are the problems they face? They need space in the UN. How do they find space in that system, in that highly-structured, very institutionalized, almost rule-bound system? It is very difficult. I think, in a sense, they have to force that space. Some of it has to rely on reform in the UN. I believe one of the biggest defaults in the UN system is the withering of the economic work of the UN. It is not the player that it used to be. And it will not take a great deal for it to assume a role, because what it ought to do is produce ideas. If it could produce a think tank—if you like, as a back-up to the Committee for Development Planning, which still exists—building on existing things, it could make an enormous difference.

Now I know there are international politics that will be an impediment. But a strong Secretary-General—and Kofi Annan is going into his second term, and this is the time to do what needs to be done, what he knows needs to be done. I would place very high value on the reform process strengthening the economic work of the United Nations in the area of ideas. You

don't have to tread on the toes of the Bank and the Fund and the specialized agencies if you can produce ideas.

RJ: You'll be ahead.

SR: You'll be ahead.

RJ: And perhaps the model of having a small group of friends, of some key players, either in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, or even of one or two governments breaking the line between secretariat and political representations, to prepare a package of ideas, informally or formally, which would then be put into the system more formally—

SR: At the Commission on Global Governance, we tried to insinuate our way into the reform process in exactly that way. And the Secretary-General was very receptive to it. We offered him, in advance of his reform agenda, his report, to send him some ideas from the commission that he might find of use in his report. And he welcomed it, and we did it.

RJ: And was it taken up in practice?

SR: Not as many of the practical suggestions found their way into the report as recommendations. But we were pleased that a good deal of the thinking, of the environment if you like, the policy environment, influenced the themes of the report. And I hope that more people are doing that, offering ideas. But of course, it will only happen if the Secretary-General surrounds himself with a cadre of insiders who are themselves receptive to these broader think tanks that want to help. This probably is where it falls down, that there is too little interaction. There is almost a fear of outsiders, whereas the UN needs to be open to these influences and ideas. They can discard them, but it needs to be known to be open, not to be fearful. That is what I tried to do at the Commonwealth secretariat. In a small way, I think it worked. And I think it would work for the UN.

RJ: Gamani Corea, in one of our interviews, said that much of the earlier agenda of the G-77 was formulated by the secretariats of the UN system, and not by the governments themselves, although these in turn adopted their thinking. Is that an early example of what you are saying, or not?

SR: Yes, it is, because in the early days, the UN system did gather some of the good minds. They had space there to work. Governments hadn't, as it were, taken over the system. Ambassadors hadn't trammeled the secretariat in the way that they were later to do.

RJ: Well that leads to a second question. What are your views of the quality of the UN civil service, and leadership, in general and compared with other institutions—the Commonwealth or the Bretton Woods, the OECD?

SR: I think the question of leadership is absolutely vital. The Commission on Global Governance, incidentally, ended its report with a final chapter about leadership. And that is leadership over a wide area, particularly political leadership. But you asked your question in the context of the UN, and that is absolutely vital; the leadership, that must emanate from the Secretary-General. And it has to be in the area of ideas. It absolutely must be in the area of ideas, ideas that derive from a vision. In my life, among the people who most influenced my internationalism was Dag Hammarskjöld. I didn't work with Dag Hammarskjöld, I was too young.

RJ: Did you meet him?

SR: I never met him, but I have read much of what he has written. And I know much of what he did. He inspired me. He infused in me a bit of his vision—that is the vision of "one world to share." And it is that kind of leadership that has to come from the Secretary-General to infuse successive generations of young people, particularly at a time when the UN is under siege

and there are so many who would like to drag it down. I grew up with the basic conviction that the UN was the world's salvation. Not many people have that understanding today. But it derived from those times. It derived, in a sense, from the leadership that was being brought by the Secretary-General and also by governments. I told you how impressed I was when Eisenhower said to the British and French in Suez, "Go to the Security Council." That, to me, was the right use of the Security Council.

So it has to come from the Secretary-General, but it also has to come from the leading governments. And that, I am afraid, is the major disaster, the fact that the world's major power, the world's only superpower, is opposed to a UN that functions in the way the Charter wished it to function, anticipated that it would function, a superpower that sees the United Nations as there to be used for the advancement of its own national interests. That, of course, is the biggest threat that the United Nations faces, and the Secretary-General can't deal with that alone.

RJ: How would you think Americans might deal with it, or indeed other G-8 governments?

SR: Americans deal with it as a big, big problem, because, I am afraid, American society has developed in a way which makes it virtually unaware of the rest of the world. The UN is the embodiment of the global system and of the society of states and peoples. Most Americans do not know that that society exists. Indeed, if pressed to acknowledge that it exists, they would say that the word "society" is misplaced. They would see it as an agglomeration of states and peoples. So it is a very fundamental problem of securing American public support for the United Nations. Equally, there are some of the most wonderful people in the United States, people of understanding, of compassion, who know of the wider world, who want the United States to be a champion of the United Nations. But these voices are stilled. They almost dare not speak.

President Clinton wouldn't have given his Dimbleby Lecture in office. It's as bad as that. But I do think that there is a deficiency in terms of how the United States can react on the part of the friends of the United States. Europe, for example, knows better. Europe understands the world and the world's needs, and understands the realities of the current times. But Europe does not, in my view, act as a true friend of the United States and the rest of the world in its reticence, in its holding back, in its unwillingness to speak out to the United States, "This is wrong. This cannot be the way." I cannot forgive Europe. I applaud so much the strength that the European Union brings to Europe that I find it unforgivable that that strength is not being used in an enlightened way, in the interests of humanity and, specially, in the immediate interest of bringing the United States on board on specific issues in support of the United Nations.

RJ: And surely the Commonwealth has a particular role also, precisely in that way, vis-a-vis the United States.

SR: Yes, indeed. And there were times when the Commonwealth had to speak out. And it did. It spoke out, for example, over the invasion of Grenada.

RJ: Other examples?

SR: Well, on a lot of the economic issues. On some of the disarmament issues it was not unwilling to speak out. On Southern Africa we were at loggerheads, not just with Mrs. Thatcher, but with the American administration.

RJ: Let me come back to the quality of the civil service in the UN as a critical group in the generation of ideas. How does that link up with your involvements with universities, both in the West Indies, Warwick University, and others? Do you see a way forward by closer links between UN persons who are involved in the day to day nitty-gritty of UN debate or analysis today, and the training of university people? Do you see new ways to try and get the best of

university people to be selected and move into the UN earlier on in their lives, on this range of issues?

SR: I would like to see more of that happen, but I suppose to make it happen calls for change within the UN system itself. What can happen without a large measure of institutional change is an acceptance by senior UN players that the system can benefit from opening up. It is too closed. And that works two ways. It means that the Secretary-General is not getting the benefit of the most enlightened thinking out there in the world, because those around him who are tendering that advice are themselves shutting themselves off from it. It is that that is my anxiety.

RJ: How do you compare the UN in these respects with, say, the much smaller secretariat of the Commonwealth, or the secretariats or, say, the secretariats of the Bretton Woods institutions? Do you think the UN is more cut off, less able in terms of the quality of people it gets than these other secretariats?

SR: Well, one must be careful. I have not been sufficiently an insider to pass a comprehensive judgement. But I have a broad sense that there is greater technical competence in other institutions than in UN headquarters.

RJ: The international financial institutions.

SR: Yes, the Bank and the Fund. I have a sense that there is great expertise within some of the specialized agencies. I think within UNDP, and the UNDP that produced the *Human Development Report*—

RJ: Although that was actually a reaching out—

SR: —an add-on, isn't it?

RJ: —of Bill Draper (UNDP Administrator), who brought in Mahbub, and gave Mahbub ul Haq every opportunity to gather round him the best from inside, the best from outside. I think it's a marvelous answer to this question.

SR: That's right. And in a sense, that's what I'm saying should happen in the Secretary-General's office too. I believe that the current Secretary-General has done that in a small way on general issues, with people like John Ruggie and Maurice Strong and so on, but not in terms of the economic issues. I continue to think of that as a big weakness in headquarters. I suppose there must have been a tendency to accept too readily that the economic issues, even the development issues, were being dealt with elsewhere in the system, in the Bank, in the Fund, in UNDP, and that the 38th floor didn't really have to take that on. That led to the collapse of the economic work of the Secretariat. But I hope there will be new thinking about this.

RJ: Let me come to the university side of things. Did you feel, in your involvements with Warwick and the University of the West Indies that these great powerhouses of academic capacity were actually being used as you would like to see them being used?

SR: No.

RJ: Did you ever try to push them, influence them? Or is the role of the chancellor too ceremonial for that?

SR: In a sense there's truth in the latter. But I think it's very difficult for the universities to push themselves. The pull has to come from the UN. So what we have settled for, in a sense, is doing the work. Warwick has a Centre for the Study of Globalization. So has LSE. These things are developing everywhere. The output of their work is being fed into the literature and so into the UN system. But it's not what I'm talking about. It's not the direct involvement. It's not my think tank that I would like to see replicated in the UN system.

RJ: Perhaps in the earlier stage, in developing the talent that could then be drawn on for the think tanks later.

SR: Well, indeed.

RJ: What about NGOs and their idealism, not always in a complimentary way. But at the moment, non-state actors are the new buzzword.

SR: Yes, they are. And I am among those in the Commission on Global Governance who came out very strongly for an enhancement of their role. I have, quite frankly, been disappointed in the lack of enthusiasm among the NGOs for some of the ways in which we tried to ensure that they have a bigger role.

RJ: Such as?

SR: We talked about a Forum of Civil Society, meeting each year in August in the General Assembly in debate on the agenda of the General Assembly. We felt, in the commission, that it would be one, an act of legitimation; and two, a real opportunity for them to generate ideas across the board, because this was now NGOs that would influence the debates. They have not pursued it with any vigor. But more than that, we made very important recommendations for, on the security side, the "right of petition," which was basically for any group of individuals in the world to petition the Security Council for action on a particular issue.

We were inspired by the work of the Committee of 24 on Decolonization, which worked through petitioners. The meetings would have never been on the map if Michael Scott had not, as a sole petitioner, gone to the Committee of 24 and got them to move. So we wanted to see this translated more effectively, because governments are not the best people to put issues on the agenda of the Security Council against other governments. You might put it against an enemy government, but not against a friendly government. So who is to put it there?

Why isn't the United Nations debating the situation in Zimbabwe? Because nobody will put the issue there. No African government is going to put it there. And no other government is going to put it there, because it is worried about the concept of non-interference. So we felt that NGOs should have an opportunity, through the right of petition, to bring matters to the Security Council. Now, that meant that we conceived of the idea of replacing the Trusteeship Council by a council for petitions, so that petitions would themselves be sifted through the council for petitions. And only the really serious and worthwhile ones would go to the Security Council.

That was all the decision-making that would reside outside the Security Council. If it has to be on the agenda, the Security Council then has to deal with it. That was a very significant recommendation in the evolution of the power of civil society and reform of the UN. But civil society has not over-exerted itself. They have said nice things about the recommendation, but nobody has come forward and said, "This is a great thing for civil society." And why hasn't it happened? It hasn't happened because NGOs, even international NGOs, are too issue-centric in a very narrow sense. They are too narrowly focused. I found this even in terms of an NGO like the association of UN Associations. So I am disappointed that civil society is not asserting a bigger role on the bigger issues.

RJ: Outside the UN, surely the NGOs have been absolutely critical in getting, say, debt taken more seriously. They were surely many of the sponsors of meeting after meeting on the Brandt report. Surely NGOs are the most critical force behind getting environment treated as a serious topic and pushing governments to act, domestically as well as internationally.

SR: Yes. You got me wrong. I was focusing strictly on civil society in the UN and in relation to the UN. I suppose the answer to my criticism of their lack of thrust into a role in the UN system is that they are playing a role outside the UN system. And that is a role I applaud. I

happen to think one of the best things that has happened is the activism which was best typified at Seattle. I didn't regard Seattle as a disaster. I thought Seattle was a wonderful example of people exerting their power, and in my case, power that was being used in the interest of development. Now, not everybody in Seattle was for development. Some were protectionist. But overall, what happened there, what happened in Rome, was tremendously important. It's sad that it was overtaken and overborne by violent people. But already, I believe, civil society, through that combination of action, has focused minds wonderfully in the industrial countries.

RJ: We're reaching the end, but I wonder whether I should ask you very directly, do you envision writing your own memoirs and taking these issues, and even these ideas for the future, and giving them your own very direct twist?

SR: I would like to. In fact, I have a bit of a conscience, because I feel I have a duty to do so. So much of the work of the Commonwealth secretariat is in the mind of the secretary-general. It is not a big institution. There are no massive archives. So I think the secretary-general has a duty to set some of this down. But I have been privileged to have worked over a wider canvas. That too needs setting down. So my answer is yes. The trouble is you have to stop for a couple of years being a doer, to being a writer. And of course, you have to survive for those couple of years. So I need help in doing it, but I certainly have the will to do it.

RJ: I hope you will do it, Sonny. The world needs it. Thank you very, very much.

SR: Not at all.

RJ: It was wonderful.

INDEX