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## Chapter 2

### Calypso in Caracas

As my plane landed at Maiquetia airport on the Caribbean coast, about twenty miles north of the Venezuelan capital, I was thrilled and excited. The thought of living and

working in a new, strange country in a job that promised to be as interesting as it would be satisfying, made me think of how fortunate I was.

...As I stepped out onto the hot, sunbathed tarmac of the airport, my attention was drawn to the startling beauty of the nearby verdant foothills of the Andes. The lush green tropical forest, glistening in the sunlight, was just a stone's throw from the airport runways. The march to the sea of the Andean hills seemed to have stopped just far enough from the coastline to allow the airport to be built at that spot, though not without bulldozing a few hills whose scars were still evident. Also attracting my attention was the presence of a number of heavily armed soldiers near our plane and at various points around the airport.

"What threat to Venezuela is so imminent," I wondered, "as to require armed guards to be posted all over the place?" My musings were interrupted by the hearty "hello" and handshake of Harry Kendall, who greeted me just as I was about to enter the terminal building.

"Welcome to Venezuela," Kendall beamed, looking directly at me and extending his right hand in welcome. He quickly surmised from my appearance that I was the young and eager "JOT" he had come to the airport to meet. I would soon learn that he was a Cajun from Louisiana and a former newsman who now, as a USIS officer, was the embassy's hardworking, personable press attaché. Kendall would quickly become my mentor in the art of "public diplomacy." My diplomatic passport and the friendship that seemed to exist between Kendall and the airport officials expedited the airport clearance procedures. "Or perhaps," I reflected, "the speed of my exit from the airport is an example of the well-known efficiency of dictatorships." But I soon dismissed this reflection as I noted the noise and chaotic appearance of hundreds of travelers milling about, some looking for lost luggage or friends and relatives, a scene hardly warranting confidence in the way in which Maiquetia Airport was organized and managed.

## Chapter 6

### Dominican Detour

In the first few days of the revolt the embassy came under fire and was defended only by the normal security guard force of nine Marines stationed at the embassy. Whether the chancellery was a target of snipers or was merely hit by stray bullets intended for other targets remains debatable. In those crucial first days, however, when gunfire was taking place near the embassy, a USIA junior officer trainee of USIS Santo Domingo, Al Laun, played a major role in maintaining communication between the U.S. naval force offshore and the embassy. Laun was a "ham" radio operator who soon became the key link between the ambassador in the embassy and the commander of Task Force 44.9.

To communicate with the offshore fleet where the Marines were awaiting word from the embassy as to whether or not they were needed, messages had to be sent from Santo Domingo to Washington and then back to the headquarters of

the Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic Forces (COMCINLANT) in Panama, and from there to the fleet. Knowing about Al Laun's hobby as a ham radio operator, the ambassador asked him if, using his ham radio, he could devise a means to communicate with the fleet more directly. Laun believed that he could. He drove his car, in which he had a portable transmitter, onto the front lawn of the embassy, hoping in that way to be able to relay the ambassador's messages. The power was insufficient, however, to reach the fleet. But by borrowing additional equipment that the embassy had and installing it in his car, he eventually succeeded. So for about twenty-four hours, until the Marines had landed and brought with them their own communications equipment, Junior Officer Trainee Al Laun, huddled in the front seat of his car on the front lawn of the embassy, provided the main means of communication between the embassy and U.S. Naval Task Force 44.9!

## Chapter 7

### Murder in Montevideo

While we were in Washington we were staying at a friend's house in Falls Church, Virginia while the owners were on vacation. From there it was an easy bus ride to USIA headquarters for my consultations and to the State Department medical division for our periodic medical exams.

One morning before going into the office I picked up the morning newspaper. There, on the front page, was a photo of my colleague, Nathan Rosenfeld, the cultural attaché of our embassy in Montevideo! As I read the details of the article under the photo, I realized that the car pool in which I generally rode with Rosenfeld and Gordon Jones, the commercial attaché, and sometimes a few others, had been attacked by the Tupamaros.

The normal procedure was for an embassy driver and Jones, who was the first to be picked up, to enter the basement garage of the apartment building where Rosenfeld lived, meet him there and then pick me up a few minutes later in the front of my house, a few blocks away. The morning before Rosenfeld made the front page of *The Washington Post*, the Tupamaros had been laying in wait in the garage when Rosenfeld stepped out of the elevator and walked to the waiting embassy vehicle. As he went to enter the car, one of the terrorists struck him in the head with the butt of a pistol, knocking him to the basement floor. They then grabbed the commercial attaché who was sitting in the back seat of the embassy vehicle, pistol whipped him also, carried him to the back of a pickup truck, wrapped him in a rug which they had ready for that purpose, and drove speedily out of the garage. He was enveloped in the rug in the back of the truck. When Rosenfeld recovered his senses, with the help of the driver he staggered back to his apartment and phoned the embassy to alert them about the attack and the kidnapping.

After going a few blocks the kidnappers came to a red traffic light. Not wanting to attract undue attention, they obeyed the traffic signal. Jones, who had not been knocked out, realized that if he was going to escape he had better do it as soon as possible. Although he

could not move very well, bundled as he was in a rug, and could not, of course, see anything, he knew the truck carrying him had stopped for some reason. He made a supreme effort to kick and roll and move until he reached the back of the truck, which was still stopped, fell down onto the pavement behind it, then got to his feet and jumped to where he didn't know. The terrorists, fearing that if they tried to recapture their prey they might get caught, fled as soon as the light turned green. Passersby rushed to Jones' assistance and unrolled the rug. In this unique manner he saved himself from spending weeks or months in captivity or of being murdered. Others were not so fortunate.

## Chapter 8

### Breathless in Bolivia

The overthrow of the Torres regime was bloody. An estimated 200 people, mostly military, were killed and over 500 wounded. But with the new government of General Hugo Banzer, the near-anarchy that existed before the war came to an end, to the general relief of most Bolivians. Like people everywhere, the majority simply wanted to live in peace and be able to plan for tomorrow.

Ideologically, the new government represented a 180-degree turn from the old government. Because of this, and the fame the CIA had gained for allegedly overturning governments (far beyond its proven capability in my view), Lewis Duigud of the *Washington Post* charged that the U.S. government was involved in the overthrow of General Torres. This may or may not have been, but in a country that had 180 changes of government during about 150 years of independence (or on average a new government every nine months), there is reason to believe that the Bolivian military was simply following an old tradition with little need of help from the outside.

## Chapter 9

### Peruvian Panorama

The visit to Peru in 1976 of "the First Lady of Plains," Rosalynn Carter, five months after Jimmy Carter's inauguration as President of the U.S., was an event which demanded the time and energies of almost all sections of the U.S. mission. Only if the president himself had planned to land in Lima might the effort to assure a smooth visit been more complicated.

USIS had a major role in the planning and execution of her public affairs activities while in Peru. This role involved publicizing the visit, the arrangement of press conferences, background briefings, and logistical support for the local media. USIS also provided working space, typewriters, and communication facilities for the twenty-seven members of the U.S. press who accompanied her on the Air Force Boeing 707 in which she and her entourage traveled.

There were nineteen in her entourage, including national security council advisor for Latin America, Robert Pastor; the assistant secretary of state for Latin America, Terry Todman; several other State Department officials; Gay Vance, the wife of the secretary of state; a nurse; her secretary; her press secretary; and Secret Service agents.

The visit of a First Lady traveling officially as the president's personal representative with the intention of discussing U.S. policy with government leaders was historically unique. As soon as her trip to Latin America to meet with the presidents of seven countries was announced, it became the subject of considerable criticism by the naysayers in both the U.S. and Latin America. How could the wife of the U.S. president expect to discuss with the presidents of these countries the serious problems and issues affecting their relations with the U.S.? One European diplomat was quoted in *U.S. News and World Report* as saying: "I don't think any Latin American statesman will take her seriously, even if she is the wife of the President of the United States."

Some members of Congress, including Congressman Dante Fascell, also opposed the trip. In her autobiography Mrs. Carter noted that when Representative Fascell walked into one of her briefing sessions prior to the trip, he said bluntly, "The Latinos are macho and they hate gringos and women. What else do you want to know?" So although she prepared herself on the major issues and concerns of the countries she would visit, she must have felt some trepidation at the start of her precedent breaking voyage.

On May 30, 1976, she left Washington for Jamaica, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Colombia, and Venezuela, which she would visit in that order. Her visits to Jamaica and Costa Rica proved she would be taken seriously and the visit with Ecuadorean leaders went well.

...As with all of the presidents she met, after some possibly initial doubts on their part, Peruvian President Morales Bermudez took her seriously and welcomed the opportunity to talk to the person closest to the president of the U.S.

## Chapter 10

### Passage to Pakistan

When I arrived in Pakistan in 1981 a heroin epidemic was just beginning to sweep that country. This was a new phenomenon for Pakistan and was caused primarily for two reasons. First, the Khomeini regime in neighboring Iran was hanging drug traffickers whenever they caught them, so heroin production there was getting more and more dangerous for producers and traffickers. Secondly, Afghanistan, a

traditional source of poppies from which opium, morphine, and heroin are derived, was engaged in a civil war following the invasion by the Soviet Union. Illicit drug trafficking, like everything else in Afghanistan, was disrupted. Pakistan, which shares common borders with both of these countries, began to take up the slack.

Southeast Asia, where Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam share common borders, has long been known as the “Golden Triangle” because it is a major source of the heroin illicitly sold throughout the world. Less well known, but increasingly important as a source of heroin in the early 1980s was the “Golden Crescent” of southwest Asia—Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran.

Long before Pakistan became part of British India, drug use was common, but opium, rather than the more devastating heroin, was the drug of choice. Opium dens still flourished in Pakistan but by 1980 they were rapidly becoming places where heroin was also obtainable. For the first time heroin labs were being established within Pakistan because traffickers could no longer depend on Iran and Afghanistan. At the same time many new poppy fields were being developed in Pakistan because of the growing demand for heroin both domestically and internationally.

Having spent four years in Peru where USIS conducted active antinarcotics information programs, but where the problem was cocaine rather than heroin, I felt I had learned much from that experience about how USIS might contribute to anti-narcotics efforts. The type of illicit drug was of little importance in such programs, whether conducted against cocaine use and trafficking in Peru or heroin use and trafficking in Pakistan. Many similarities existed.

When illicit trafficking of cocaine first became a major activity in Peru, most Peruvians contended that this was not their problem. They viewed the narcotics problem as being that of the United States, the society where the greatest demand for cocaine existed. Many Pakistanis, from the President on down, also contended that the increased trafficking in heroin in their country was really not their problem, it was the problem of Western Europe and the U.S. In this and many other ways I saw similarities with what I had witnessed in Peru. I therefore felt that my Peruvian experience could be put to good use in dealing with this issue in Pakistan.

The Pakistan Narcotics Control Board (PNCB), headquartered in Islamabad, was Pakistan’s leading organization for combating illicit drug trafficking. It received AID funds as well as support and cooperation from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency. It was an undeveloped organization in an undeveloped country, with limited experience, limited expertise, limited facilities, and limited staff, especially considering the size of the problem it faced. Its director, however, was well meaning and cooperative, so the various U.S. government agencies interested in combating illicit drug trafficking and use provided all the assistance they possibly could.

USIS soon worked with the PNCB in establishing seminars to train and educate Pakistani governmental and media leaders concerning the dimensions of the growing problem for Pakistan. Techniques to better utilize the press and other outlets in efforts to educate the public concerning this issue were given a high priority. But the major project USIS undertook with the PNCB was publication of a booklet entitled *The Living Dead, Heroin Takes Its Toll*. Widely distributed in English and Urdu versions, it clearly demonstrated the toll heroin was by then taking among Pakistan's citizens. I believe that it, as much as anything, influenced the president and members of his cabinet to accept the seriousness of the growing narcotics problem within Pakistan.

The second major project we undertook was a film. This project began when a Pakistani film and television producer walked into my office and told me he had traveled throughout the country and filmed heroin addicts "chasing the dragon" in about a dozen opium dens. "Chasing the dragon" is the term used to describe heroin use in Pakistan, where, instead of "shooting up," Pakistani addicts cook the heroin by placing it on a piece of tinfoil and heating it with a lighted match. The fumes are then inhaled.

He also interviewed a number of medical doctors and others affected in one way or another by Pakistan's growing heroin epidemic. Some family members of addicts, for example, who saw a husband, son, or brother become addicted, were interviewed on film. All of the addicts were men, most in their twenties and beyond, but the harmful effects on their wives, mothers, and sisters were also dramatically shown in these interviews. The film vividly demonstrated that maintaining the habit of a heroin addict often results in the loss of jobs, family fortunes, and any semblance of former family life, not to mention the often visible physical damage to the addict with death never far away. The film made "The Living Dead" seem like a very appropriate description of heroin addicts.

## Chapter 11

### The Landing

Perhaps it is time to reconsider the reestablishment of an organization similar to the now defunct USIA. Only by effectively explaining U.S. policies and actions, as expressed by U.S. officials and others, and using the experience and superb media tools which USIA developed over the years, can Americans be

assured that their views will reach important audiences abroad and contribute to reducing misunderstandings.