

Interview with Jorge Heine, President, 1990-1991
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(CAN WE HAVE A PHOTO OF JORGE HERE PLEASE AND ONE OF HAVANA WHERE HE HOSTED HIS CONFERENCE)

Jorge Heine's responses to Caribbean Studies Association questionnaire

Biography

Jorge Heine (PhD, Stanford) is the CIGI Professor of Global Governance in the Political Science Department at Wilfrid Laurier University and a Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation, Canada's premier think tank on IR, in Waterloo, Ontario. He serves currently as Vice-President of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) and is gearing up for the XXI World Congress of Political Science, to be held in his native Santiago, Chile, in July 2009. He was previously Ambassador of Chile to India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (2003-2007), and served also as Ambassador to South Africa (1994-1999) and as a Cabinet Minister and Deputy Minister in the Chilean Government. He is the author, co-author or editor of eight books and some sixty articles in journals and symposium volumes, many of them on Caribbean politics and IR. His next book, "Which Way Latin America? Hemispheric Politics meets Globalization", co-edited with Andrew Cooper, will be published in 2009. A founding member of CSA, he was on the CSA Executive Council from 1983 to 1991, and served as president in 1990-1991. Even while in Africa and Asia, he continued to participate in CSA Annual Meetings, and was recently appointed to the CSA Advisory Board, which he formally joined at the XXXIII CSA Annual Meeting in San Andrés Isla, Colombia. In this, the first of a series of interviews with former CSA presidents, an initiative of current CSA head Patricia Mohammed aimed at preserving the historical memory of the Association's activities, he shares his reflections on the current state and future direction of Caribbean Studies and the CSA with Allyson Salinger of the University of Southern California.

1) How did you come to specialize in Caribbean Studies?

I came to Caribbean Studies as a result of my taking up my first full-time academic position, as Assistant Professor of Political Science at Inter American University of Puerto Rico (IAU) in August 1974. This was the San German Campus, on the island's West Coast, in many ways the most beautiful and unspoiled part of Puerto Rico. IAU, originally the Polytechnic Institute of Puerto Rico founded in 1912, had a long tradition of involvement in Caribbean Studies. In its long history it had attracted many students and faculty from the rest of the region, including Gerard Latortue (who was to become Foreign Minister of Haiti in 1988, and then acting Prime Minister in 2004-2006), Terence Todman (a native of the Virgin Islands, who after graduation joined the U.S. Foreign Service and became Assistant Secretary of State for Inter American Affairs under President Jimmy Carter) and many others. When I joined the Department of Social Sciences at IAU San German, I did so with a Cuban and a Dominican historian—Harry Swan and Fernando Perez Memen. This reflected the intellectual atmosphere that existed

at the time—though located in Puerto Rico’s rural *hinterland*, there was something special about that striking, 260-acre campus, something to which San German’s well-preserved Spanish colonial architecture contributed a fair share. The Department chair was Lynn Darrell Bender, who had quit the U.S. State Department a few years earlier and done his dissertation on Cuban foreign policy at George Washington University. He was keen to promote research and exchanges on Caribbean affairs.

At the time, the University published a first-rate journal, *Inter American Review*, under the leadership of an excellent editor, John Zebrowski, who also led the University Press, which brought out some very nice editions. Lynn Bender published a column in the journal, “The Perplexing Hemisphere”, with commentary on the state of Inter American relations. We had to do a lot of teaching—the normal course load was five courses per semester (though some of them were duplicate sections), which, looking back, seems rather heavy—but somehow we found the time to do that and some research as well. Having been born and raised in Chile, I had not been exposed to the Caribbean until my arrival in Puerto Rico, and I was fascinated by its natural beauty, its sheer cultural variety and richness, as well as by its resilience in the face of natural and man-made disasters. I lived in Mayaguez, some 25 km away from San German, and driving my VW Beetle on my way to work had to drive through many cane fields, which reminded me on a daily basis of the origins of plantation society and the mode of production that made the Caribbean into what it is.

I have fond memories of two Cuban colleagues, economist Francisco Aruca and political scientist Waldo Valdes, who taught first at UPR-Mayaguez and then at IAU-San German. They published a journal, *Areito*, that took a somewhat dissident position within the Cuban exile community. My wife and I spent memorable evenings with them talking at great length about Puerto Rican politics, about Cuba and about the Caribbean condition. Another colleague, political scientist Yereth Knowles, knew also the Caribbean very well and was a great scuba diver; we spent many a Saturday with her diving in La Parguera, where she had a house on the water.

Reading Gordon K. Lewis, I was enthralled by his erudition, but even more so by his pan-Caribbean vision, one that pulled together so many strands of history, politics and economics from the various islands, often topping off his commentary with an improbably apposite quotation from Anthony Trollope, of all authors. One of my very first book reviews, for *Inter American Review*, was of Gordon’s *Notes on the Puerto Rican Revolution*, and I was enthralled by his ability to put “the Puerto Rican question” within the wider Caribbean *problematique*.

2) How did your interest in and commitment to Caribbean Studies evolve?

If Inter American University-San German gave me my first exposure to Caribbean Studies, the second one took place at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC. While doing my PhD in Political Science at Stanford, where I had gone to study under Richard Fagen, one of the leading scholars doing work on Cuba at the time, I spent the summer of 1979 at the Latin American Program (LAP) at The Wilson Center, at the time barely two years old. I was working on a project on U.S.-Puerto Rican relations and ended up coordinating a conference on the subject held at The Wilson Center and at Yale in March of 1980 (which led to my edited volume, *Time for*

Decision: The United States and Puerto Rico). I returned there in the summer of 1980 to take up a position as deputy director of the LAP, and one of my responsibilities was a two-year Caribbean project. It was an exciting place, where some of Latin America's leading minds congregated—Albert Hirschman chaired the Academic Council, and people like future Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso were on it, as was future Haitian President Leslie Manigat. Abraham Lowenthal, the founding director of the LAP, a great institution-builder and one of the leading specialists in U.S.-Latin American relations, had done his Harvard dissertation on the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, and knew the Caribbean well. Cuban sociologist Lourdes Casal was a Fellow at the LAP, and we brought Carl Stone from Mona, and Juan Manuel Garcia Passalacqua and Arturo Morales Carrion from San Juan to spend a summer with us in Washington; Vaughan Lewis, Sidney Mintz, Ransford Palmer, Anthony Maingot and Franklin Knight also became involved. Many Congressmen and government officials joined our deliberations at the Smithsonian Castle on the Mall where The Wilson Center was located then (though, not any longer). Jorge Dominguez from Harvard was also part of it and we had some excellent seminars. One of the high points was a U.S.-Caribbean Policy Dialogue held in Barbados in late 1982, whose deliberations I summarized in a LAP Working Paper “Puritans and Afro-Saxons: The Challenge of U.S.-Caribbean Relations”. I learned much in those two years at The Wilson Center, and I developed an affinity for the life of research centers and think tanks, as well as for the kind of institutions that bring together academics and “practitioners”. In political science and public policy deliberations there tends to be more spark when you mix scholars with policy-makers and politicians, than if you have them meet separately, though one needs to be very discriminating—not all politicians are reflective, and not all academics are able to engage ministers or parliamentarians fruitfully.

After returning to IAU in San German in 1982, I was appointed director of the Caribbean Institute and Study Center for Latin America (CISCLA), an institute that had been founded in 1961 by an American journalist and author, Irving Peter Pflaum, who had been foreign editor of the *Chicago Sun Times* and then worked for UPI, and had brought some top-notch speakers to the campus, including President Juan Bosch of the Dominican Republic, as well as Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King. Although small, CISCLA allowed me to pursue my interest in the Caribbean in a serious fashion, with a reduced teaching load, some administrative support, and a university administration (most prominently Rector Federico Matheu) keen to position IAU internationally. We started a Working Paper Series which published 28 papers in the first two years, and held a major international conference every year for the three years I was there—the first on “International Relations of the Contemporary Caribbean”, which led to a co-edited book of mine (with Leslie Manigat), entitled *The Caribbean in World Politics: Cross Currents and Cleavages* (Holmes and Meier), the second on “Democracy and Development and Collective Security in the Eastern Caribbean: The Lessons of Grenada”, which led to another edited book, *A Revolution Aborted: The Lessons of Grenada* (Pittsburgh University Press) and a third on “Puerto Rico and the Caribbean Basin Initiative”. We also had a long list of outstanding speakers at our colloquium series. The Ford Foundation was very supportive, as was the Rockefeller Foundation. Caribbean Studies owes a lot to Ford.

Putting together the book on Caribbean IR was particularly daunting task in the days

before e-mail. Leslie Manigat was based in Caracas at the time, and I was in San German, and we had to look for ways to spend time together on it, managing to do so at various periods in Berkeley, Fort-de-France and Mayaguez. Leslie has such a brilliant mind that it was a real pleasure to work with him on it. The book was published in New York by Holmes & Meier a week before Leslie was inaugurated as President of Haiti in February 1988, and I remember traveling to Port-au-Prince with fifty copies of the book in my suitcase, and handing them over to him and his wife Mirlande (a noted political scientist in her own right, today Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the Universite Quisqueya, the leading private university in Haiti), who also had a chapter in it.

While working on broader Caribbean issues I kept doing research on Puerto Rican politics, some of it published in co-authored pieces with my friend Juan Manuel Garcia-Passalacqua, a remarkable analyst, with whom we shared some very special moments while we prepared *The Puerto Rican Question* for the Foreign Policy Association, a monograph that, although published 25 years ago, has stood its ground remarkably well. Part of the stimulus of Caribbean Studies for me has been that it has allowed me to get to know some great intellects, and to work with them. I also wrote *The Last Cacique: Leadership and Politics in a Puerto Rican City* (Pittsburgh University Press, 1994) a study of local politics that attempted to develop a broader theory of voting behavior in the Caribbean, and which was selected by *Choice Magazine* as one of the Outstanding Academic Books published in the United States in 1994. I also started to collaborate with the *Anuario de Politicas Exteriores de America Latina y el Caribe* edited by PROSPEL in Santiago de Chile, and published by GRupo Editor Latinoamericano (GEL) in Buenos Aires. I coordinated the Caribbean section, writing a chapter on regional foreign policy trends and commissioning country chapters from different colleagues. On my return to Chile in 1989, I ended up editing this yearly volume, by then published by Nueva Sociedad in Caracas, as Heraldo Munoz, the founding editor, left for Washington DC as Ambassador to the OAS.

3) When did you first join CSA and what did it mean to you?

I joined CSA in 1975 when it was founded in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Credit must be given to Roland Perousse, the first CSA president, a political scientist and colleague of mine at the San Juan Campus of Inter American University, for having taken the lead in bringing people from all over the region for this purpose. As often happens with people ahead of their time, he received a lot of flak. I still remember Gordon Lewis and a number of pro-independence leaders like Senator Ruben Berrios, demonstrating in front of the hotel where the meeting was being held, and denouncing CSA as nothing more than another front organization for U.S. imperialism and the CIA. It was, of course, nothing of the sort, and a few years later, I would see Gordon happily giving papers at CSA conferences, and even getting the *Caribbean Review* Award from Barry Levine--*c'est la vie*.

The whole idea of CSA was to think the region *from* the region, as opposed to doing so from the imperial capitals, and I would like to think that, in that sense, it has succeeded remarkably well. There is a specificity to the Caribbean condition that is quite different from the one obtaining in the broader Latin American area, and that very fact demands its own intellectual space for deliberations and exchanges. CSA has contributed to

establishing that specificity. I saw a recent piece by Ralph Premdas (for whom I have a lot of respect, but that on this topic has been led astray) questioning the very notion of Caribbean, saying that it is confusing and confused. I could not disagree more. I tend to think that if there was some confusion as to what we meant by “Caribbean” in the mid-seventies, when CSA was founded, it was quickly cleared up. Most observers would now agree with the definition of the Caribbean based on a certain mode of production, that of plantation society. This definition, encompassing the island nations of the Caribbean Basin, plus those adjoining it that have shared in that mode of production, i.e., the Guyanas plus Belize, has served us well, and has organized our research and scholarly endeavors. The recent CSA meeting in San Andres Island, Colombia, was fascinating precisely because it is on those islands that the English-speaking Caribbean meets the Spanish-speaking one. I have seen some of the excellent work being done at the Centro de Estudios del Caribe in Cartagena, Colombia, and was very impressed. Colombia is, of course, a country split down the middle: it is both Andean and Caribbean, and the two parts of the country (one centered around Bogota, the other around Cartagena) are very different not just geographically, but also sociologically. Caribbean people *behave* differently than those from the Andes.

Although during my years in the United States (1977-1982) I was not as active in CSA as I would have liked, on my return to Puerto Rico in 1982, Tony Maingot kindly submitted my name as a candidate to the CSA Executive Committee, and from then on I think I attended most meetings over the next decade, in Caracas, Port of Spain, Belize, Santo Domingo, San Juan, Guadalupe and elsewhere. The camaraderie has always been a special part of CSA, and something you do not necessarily find in all professional associations.

3) What were your goals for CSA the year of your presidency?

My goal was to make the annual meeting the biggest CSA had ever had, and to put CSA on the map, as it were, generating as much media coverage as possible. I felt it was important to think in big terms, and to meet in Cuba, by far the largest of the Caribbean islands, was one way of doing it. Given that CSA had been meeting for 15 years in different Caribbean locations, I thought it was a bit odd that we had never met in Cuba, and thus pushed Havana’s candidacy for 1991. My EC colleagues were very supportive, and so were our Cuban colleagues.

I was also keen to enhance the quality of the CSA Newsletter, and worked very closely with the then-editor, James Wessman of SUNY-Albany, in that endeavour. I would write quite a few pieces myself, we would commission special articles and book reviews, strengthened the section on Personal Notes, with news of the field, and so on. I am especially proud of the special issue we did for the Havana meeting and a subsequent one paying homage to Gordon Lewis, for which we managed to get contributions from some of the leading scholars in the field—Tony Maingot, Sidney Mintz and many others were part of it, as was David Lewis, who wrote a very moving piece on his father.

A third objective was to establish some sort of recognition for scholarly achievement. There was quite a bit of emphasis on stimulating student participation and that of junior scholars, all of which is fine and well, but it seemed to me that as important as that was the recognition of mature work by senior scholars—every field needs a certain hierarchy, and we needed to recognize the best among the Caribbeanists. It was on that basis that the

Gordon K. Lewis Prize for Caribbean Scholarship was established, (recently renamed as the Gordon K. Lewis and Sybil Lewis Prize for Caribbean Scholarship), a prize that, I am happy to say, has served Caribbean Studies well. At the recent CSA meeting in San Andres, I thought the award ceremony was one of the highlights of the event.

4) What did you recognize to be the greatest obstacles facing CSA and Caribbean Studies during your presidency?

The year of my presidency (1990-1991) was a tricky one for me, as I had moved back to my native Chile in December of 1989, and was therefore physically quite removed from the region, in pre-email days. Matters were not helped by the fact that we had identified Havana as the place to hold the 1991 Annual Meeting. The Fall of the Wall in November of 1989 meant that Cuba entered what was known as “the special period”, with a number of constraints that made putting together international conferences quite challenging. But our Cuban colleagues of the Centro de Estudios de America, our counterpart in Cuba, particularly Luis Suarez and Aurelio Alonso, were really outstanding in coming through for CSA. A key role was also played by Program Chair Manuel Valdes Pizzini, a noted anthropologist who had been my colleague first at Inter American University of Puerto Rico and then at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez. From Mayaguez, he put together a first-rate program. We traveled together to Havana on several occasions and were confident that things would turn out all right. In the opinion of many, given that about half the CSA members (we had about 600 members at the time, if I remember correctly) were based in the United States, holding the Annual Meeting in Cuba was a non-starter, because of the existing travel restrictions to U.S. nationals. My view was exactly the opposite: precisely because we had so many members based in the United States who could not visit Cuba normally, and CSA had never met in Cuba, there would be an enormous interest in going to Cuba: at the time, attending an academic conference was considered a legitimate reason by the U.S. Government (today the situation is different). It was, admittedly, a bit of a gamble. Some colleagues thought that another obstacle might be getting visas for some participants, particularly for Cuban-born ones, to enter Cuba. We worked closely with our Cuban partners on this, and had no problems.

5) What did you consider the greatest accomplishment of CSA that year?

In May 1991, at the XVII Annual Meeting of the CSA we had 600 participants—an absolute record at the time-- of which about 400 were international and some 200 Cubans. The Centro de Convenciones in Havana, an architectural gem built in 1979 for the Non Aligned Summit, was a first-rate venue, on the ocean, with some great views and wonderful Cuban hardwood furniture. We had plenary sessions with 500 and 600 participants. ABC and CNN covered part of the proceedings, and *The Miami Herald* provided daily coverage. Some Cuban colleagues based in Florida, who had never been back, did so for the first time in decades, leading to some very moving scenes. Jorge Dominguez of Harvard gave one of the plenary addresses, an abridged version of which was published in the following Sunday's *Miami Herald*. Former Governor of Arizona and Democratic presidential hopeful Bruce Babbitt (who would later become President Clinton's Secretary of the Interior) was another of the featured speakers. Regrettably, that

was the first and last time CSA has met in Cuba.

6) Why did you choose the location you did for the CSA annual conference that year?

There are two schools of thought in selecting locations for international academic conferences. One is to pick the most attractive place that is feasible; the other is to go for the cheapest (some sister associations have been known to meet in the Los Angeles Airport Hotel). I am a great admirer of Havana, which for me is one of the most striking cities in the Americas, and I thought that it would prove to be a great magnet. Many visitors to Havana make the rather predictable and trite comment that it could do with some additional paint—which is undisputable. But once you put that paint on and undertake the repairs that so much of the city's housing stock needs, you end up with a splendid urban setting. In many Latin American capitals we have demolished whatever architectural heritage we had. In Havana, despite the sorry state of many of its buildings, *they are all there*, from the sixteenth to the twenty first century, in a remarkable collection of styles. I am especially fond of Old Havana, and spent many hours walking on its cobblestoned streets, as well as on the *Malecon*, the great avenue on the Atlantic Ocean, ideal for evening strolls.

As an architect *manqué* myself, I wrote a piece on Havana's history and its architecture for the *CSA Newsletter*, and another on its restaurants and the city's gastronomic landscape. One source of frustration was that the *Hotel Nacional*, the Cuban capital's grand, old hotel (and the place where Fulgencio Batista found himself at a New Year's party in 1958 when he decided to flee the island after being appraised that the game was up) was being refurbished and was not ready in May 1991, despite earlier assurances to the contrary. It is a hotel with a lot of history: Errol Flynn used to stay there, as well as Libertad Lamarque, the Mexican filmstar, and some rooms have these incredible balconies looking out on the ocean. I still hope to be able to stay there some day. In the end, we had to settle for the *Habana Libre*-- whose modern, brutalist, very 1950s architecture is not my cup of tea,--as the main hotel for the conference. But the service was fine, and we had no complaints. In any event, the conference itself was held at the *Centro de Convenciones*, an outstanding facility, so things worked out well.

Cuba, as the largest of all Caribbean countries, also has a very significant and lively academic community which could provide both a local counterpart to organize the meeting with CSA, and a sufficiently large number of participants at the meeting for us to spread the word about Caribbean Studies and about the CSA .

9) Where do you hope to see CSA in the next ten years?

The key challenge to CSA is to institutionalize itself and professionalize its Secretariat. Having been around for 33 years now, and with over 1000 members, the Association has proven there is a demand for an intellectual space devoted to this field. The *Newsletter* has also become a regular feature, coming out periodically and keeping us all abreast of developments in the field. However, the very quick turnover of presidents (on a yearly basis—other associations have their presidents serve for two or three years) and the fact that there is no professional, permanently based Secretariat, means CSA is exposed to the vagaries of university politics and the good will (or lack thereof) of

university administrators for performing some of its basic functions. We should look for ways to leave that phase behind. The yearly meeting is an important event to which we all look forward, but it cannot be the only activity of CSA. We should aim at making CSA into a permanent resource and a dynamic network into which members and the wider community interested in the Caribbean can tap into.

In the next ten years, I would like to see a CSA with 2000 members, with a permanent Secretariat that proactively looks for ways to promote the field of Caribbean Studies around the clock and around the year. It would run an interactive website with blogs and dialogues on the issues that concern us as Caribbeanists and that is constantly disseminating information about developments in the field—conferences, grants, jobs, internships, publications. I would also like CSA to have launched its official, flagship journal (*The Review of Caribbean Studies?*). The latter is a less daunting challenge than it seems: with a membership of 1000, there should be publishers around that are keen to take it on, with CSA providing the editorial input. I am aware that there are already established scholarly journals that provide an outlet for our research—*Caribbean Studies*, published at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, and *Social and Economic Studies*, published at the University of the West Indies, Mona, come particularly to mind—but it would be nice to have an official journal of the Association, with a truly pan-Caribbean perspective, that would do full justice to the many exciting developments happening in the field.

7) What is one of your fondest CSA memories?

Having attended a majority of the CSA annual meetings in the course of three decades, there are many moments of which I am fond.

One of them took place in one of my favorite islands, Grenada. The 1992 Annual Meeting held in St George's coincided with the anniversary of the birth of Maurice Bishop. I thought this was a remarkable opportunity to put him and what he meant in some perspective, and I convened a panel on his leadership and his legacy. We invited his daughter Nadia, at the time about to start her studies at Stanford Law School, to be one of the panelists; as you can imagine, it was standing room only, and very moving. Nadia's mother, Angela Redhead, was also there. It was the first time they were back in Grenada since 1983 (some people in fact wondered whether they would be allowed into Grenada at all, but they had no difficulties), and I was glad CSA could facilitate it. Nadia, though very young at the time, already showed she had inherited her father's eloquence and incisiveness (in addition to her parents's good looks). The presentation she made left us all dumbfounded. She has now her own firm in San Francisco, and I am sure she must be doing very well, since she is brilliant, something that came through on that occasion. Without CSA and the space it provides for such initiatives, such a moment would not have happened.

Another, somewhat different, moment took place at the 2005 meeting in Santo Domingo. That year the election of the new Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) was held. I was based in New Delhi at the time, but thought it would be a good idea to have the new Secretary General address CSA. I suggested this to the CSA president, my good friend Emilio Pantojas, who ran it by the EC, got it approved, and wrote to the various candidates for the position to keep in mind that the

CSA meeting would take place in late May in Santo Domingo and that they had an invitation to provide the opening address. I did some follow-up with the Chilean candidate, Jose Miguel Insulza, who was Minister of Home Affairs in Chile at the time, and things seemed to be going OK until we hit a snag. In the elections held in early April at the OAS, after an unprecedented five consecutive ballots were held, the Mexican candidate (Foreign Minister Derbez) and Minister Insulza, were tied at 17 votes each, and the decision was postponed. Chile found itself under a lot of pressure to withdraw its candidate and thus open the doors for a third candidate, but President Ricardo Lagos stood his ground, insisting that Chile had the best candidate. In the end, President Lagos did some additional canvassing across the region, and secured Insulza's election. The only problem was that with this delay, the new Secretary General was only able to take office on 20 May. The CSA Annual Meeting in Santo Domingo started on 25 May, and the OAS General Assembly, the new Secretary General's first, started in Fort Lauderdale on 29 May. Everybody told me that there was no way Secretary Insulza would make it to CSA and that I better forget about the whole thing; between what it takes to start on such a demanding new job *and* overseeing the final details of the upcoming Assembly General, any commitment to CSA would fall by the wayside. Yet, Caribbean member states had played a key role in the election of the new SG, and I was sure CSA would be seen as an ideal forum to respond to that support and assure the region of the SG's interest in it. Remarkably, even Carlos Rubio, the Chilean Ambassador to the DR, a good friend of Insulza and of mine, was convinced he would not come, and left for Santiago those days, leaving me at the Chilean Embassy Residence, where I had traveled especially from New Delhi (privately and making use of my vacations) to participate at the CSA meeting.

In the end, Secretary Insulza came to Santo Domingo for two days, I hosted him at the Chilean Embassy Residence, where he stayed, and he gave the opening address at CSA. The government of the Dominican Republic was delighted, as this meant that the DR was the first country to be visited by the new OAS SG, something I elaborated on in an extensive opinion piece I published that day in *Listin Diario*, one of the country's leading dailies. President Leonel Fernandez (recently re-elected for a second term, for the 2008-2012 period) a man with strong academic interests, and whose Fundacion Global does some very interesting work, spoke as well and attended the CSA reception held afterwards. It also happened to be the SG's birthday, and we took him to a restaurant in the Old City, where we had dinner under the stars, accompanied by live music. My wife Norma, who has also known the SG for a long time, was there, as was the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the DR (whose support had been crucial for the election of Mr Insulza). It was a splendid evening.

10) What are you doing now in terms of the Caribbean?

Although I very much kept in touch with the region and with the CSA over the past two decades, the imperatives of distance and of public service made it impossible for me to actually do any research on Caribbean issues. But now that I am at CIGI and at Wilfrid Laurier University, one of the best things has been to be able to reconnect with the field. CIGI has strong interest in the Caribbean, and I am involved in several projects. We are putting together a conference on Haiti in September 2009 ("The Challenges of Haitian

Governance and the International Community”) to be held here in Waterloo, for which we have lined up an excellent group of speakers, including Mirlande Manigat, Marc Bazin, Leslie Voltaire and Robert Fatton. I visited Port-au-Prince last February, and I think there is a window of opportunity for Haiti today; hopefully, it will be taken advantage of. I also participated in a CIGI/CAPRI workshop on Small States and Foreign Policy in Tobago in April, which was very stimulating, and in a conference on Cuba in Jamaica in June. I am also writing a column for *The Gleaner* in Jamaica, a paper I have always been very fond of and am delighted to be able to write for.

11) Where do you see the future of Caribbean Studies?

Just from looking at the programs of the latest CSA Annual Meetings one realizes that an important part of the growth of CSA has taken place in literary studies, many of them following the post-modern canon. That is fine, and the whole idea of CSA, it seems to me, is “to let a thousand flowers bloom”. Caribbean societies are so fascinating and generate such a rich array of human interactions and cultural products that they are bound to stimulate scholarly interest from many different disciplines and perspectives. In some sense, there is no way this interest can be “guided” or “channeled” into specific directions. It just “happens”.

Having said that, I also think, that at a time when intolerance and civil strife are so common in so many countries across the world, what we have in the Caribbean is most extraordinary. These are largely “artificial societies”, made anew by people garnered from many corners of the planet, including Europe, Africa and Asia (many brought to the region against their will), who have now left behind their colonial past and have started on their own independent path. They have done so, in most cases, peacefully and democratically, and in many ways embody the best of what the developing world has managed to achieve in the past four decades or so: the construction of a social order framed by democratic institutions and based on mutual tolerance and respect. There is much that we can learn from what has made Caribbean societies prosper and thrive. This does not mean everything is perfect, or that difficulties do not exist. Haiti is struggling to stabilize itself after a very rocky period over the past two decades, but I think President Rene Preval has opened a window of opportunity for that to happen. We are all following very closely what is happening in Cuba, and what the present transition will lead to. Puerto Rico is undergoing a great economic crisis, and the still unresolved status issue is a constant source of political infighting. But if one looks at the rest of the developing world and what is happening in large parts of Africa and Asia, there is little doubt that the Caribbean is not in a bad position these days. Those interested in conflict resolution could do worse than looking at the Caribbean and how it has reached its present stage. In a century in which multiculturalism and social and ethnic heterogeneity will become increasingly prevalent across the world, often leading to serious strife if not outright civil war, what has happened in the Caribbean is quite remarkable. Oftentimes, Caribbean peoples themselves are the last to realize this.

10) What would you recommend to a young scholar starting in Caribbean Studies?

1) Get a good grounding in one of the disciplines first. You will need all those tools very

badly as you move into the field.

2) Publish your dissertation as quickly as possible so that you get that over and done with—the more time goes by, the more difficult it becomes.

3) Don't give in to what we might call the “anthropological temptation”, that is, to describe the fascinating social scene in the Caribbean in ever greater detail. That is a fine endeavor in itself, but there is much to be said for the comparative exercise—so much of social science is really about comparisons, and the Caribbean, just by itself, provides a fascinating social laboratory. To find those pan-Caribbean regularities is what we should aim for, and what the “founding fathers” of the field—the Sidney Mintzes, Franklin Knights, Manuel Moreno Fraginals, Gordon Lewis and Carl Stones of this world-- did.

4) Try to reach beyond one of the language groups which still divide Caribbean Studies—don't stick just to the Spanish-speaking islands, or the Commonwealth Caribbean, or the French or Dutch-speaking islands.