



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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FLOR HUNT: Well, I always like to begin with a biographical note of the person being interviewed. Could you please tell me your name and your current position?

JOSÉ HUGO GRANADINO MEJÍA: My name is José Hugo Granadino Mejía. I am a lawyer and a notary. At the moment, I work as Chief of the Professional Training Unit (Jefe de la Unidad de Formación Profesional) of the national police, the PNC (Policía Nacional Civil), and before that I worked as... instructor, first, in... in the Academia de Seguridad Nacional Pública. After that, I was chief of studies (Jefe de Estudios) of the academy, and later on, General Director (Director General) of the Academia Nacional de Seguridad Pública. And, at the same time, I am a university professor.

HUNT: Excellent. Could you tell me, first, about the posts you've held before beginning your work with the police?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Very well. I've always grown in my career as a lawyer, but most of all, I have a tendency towards teaching. And in that sense, I've taught at many universities, and I still teach, to this day, at some universities, such as the Universidad de El Salvador, the national university. I've been working there for 25 years. At the Universidad Tecnológica (Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador)... Additionally, I've been involved with the Academia Nacional de Seguridad Pública. And it was there that I had my first encounter with the security system, in the Academia Nacional, after returning from... from studying in Israel.

HUNT: Very interesting. In terms of your various posts and your work with the police, could you tell me what your greatest experience or specialization is as far as police work goes? I'll give you an example, say, internal administration, recruiting, training, mostly. What would you like to talk about today?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Correct. In terms of training, police training... Because the first... the... When I first arrived at the Policía Nacional, pardon, at the Academia Nacional de Seguridad Pública, it was... there was an open call for applications. And that was how I participated in the search for instructors. I was teaching at the university level and I have a Master's degree in higher education and another one in university education and administration, with another graduate degree in technology education and science from... from... from Israel. In that sense, my whole effort has been practically geared towards education and training, and that's how I became interested in the academy. The United Nations gave us some tests and that's how we were... that's how we were hired as professionals who could lead class. But, also, at that moment, the first director of the Academia Nacional de Seguridad Pública asked... he asked me if I wanted to be chief of studies at the academy. That is, to be the person who was going to work on building a curricular structure for the academy, the person who was going to oversee the training plans, but also, there's an essential topic involved there. Because you have to remember that by 1992, the Acuerdos de Paz (Acuerdos de Paz de Chapultepec) had stated that the academy, as well as the police, is an autonomous entity, and they still are. Each one has its own director. However, and also... Pardon, the fact that they are not integrated to the Ministry of Defense, to security, but rather, first of all, it was the Ministry of Government (Ministerio de Gobernación). And after that, now, the Ministry of Public Safety (Ministerio de Seguridad Pública). There is something important, yes, in... in... By 1992, countries came here to collaborate towards the building of a new police. A sui generis police emerging from the armed conflict, a process during which 20 percent of police officers came from the guerrilla, 20 percent from the army, and the other... The rest came from the section of the population that was entirely civilian. In that sense, that mix was important because it was also the links between different criteria, the fusion of criteria that was very important, but at the same time, it wasn't just us who had... different ways of thinking, ideologically as well as politically, economically, what... what... whatever it may be. It was also a matter of the countries that came to collaborate, such as Spain, which brought along the police corps, the Guardia Civil (Guardia Civil de España); the United States, which... which, well, the police, the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigations) came, the Ministry of Justice of the United States, the Department of Justice, through... with ICITAP (International Criminal

Investigative Training Assistance Program). We had Sweden, Norway. Germany helped us. Japan helped us. Some countries brought training personnel, but others helped with... financial assistance. As was the case with Germany, Japan. It was very minimal, that... that financial stimulus. The other countries brought with them their... their personnel, "carabineros" from Chile. They were here. Therefore, it was also a mix of countries, everyone trying to do a... Or everyone contributing as best as they could to see if we could form the model for the police. However, and I want to... Part of the anecdote, because you also asked me to tell you that, is that everyone wanted to contribute more, that is to say, to impose that this had to be done this way, that this procedure had to go here, that this has to be taught; no, we have to begin with this, the method for marching, and a lot of things that each one was contributing. The situation that I found as chief of studies was the following. I had to make a melting pot where everyone would fuse together, but our philosophy was not to adopt but rather to adapt the best that everyone had to offer and to build along the way what we considered the model of police adequate for the Salvadorian society and for the historical moment that was then taking place. So, that was a bit difficult, it was very tense, but... Well, thank God, with a bit of... of imagination, by putting the best effort on our part, friendship, a lot of work, by the way, little by little, we regained control and we created a police model that... that is really Salvadorian, to put it one way, with very universal traits, very universal, and always choosing... Because police sciences are always advancing, trying to get back in touch with each of them but not in a way, as I'm saying, like that, just... But rather, also adapting them to our needs. And that is why we... The training of... of... of the first police officers has been very successful, because, first of all, we managed to bring together all... all the different elements. They came from a war and war was really finished and everyone... In reality, we were also trying to take advantage of that moment of peace so that all of us would work together and in an incorporated manner. I think that was something positive and also... To not make any distinctions between the different groups, of any kind. We, for instance... When I began to teach classes, I would teach and I did not know who was from the guerrilla and who was from the military, I did not know at all, so the treatment was equal, the treatment was even, as we say. However, afterwards through friendships, through... through... through interrelationship, professor-student relationships, we began to... to listen to a great many histories, many, many things that they wanted to... to tell. Because they came precisely from the mountain or from combat to the academy. And other ones, well, imagine, the... the civilian ones. Which was 60 percent, trying to mold to these two... these two perspectives that were coming from a period of conflict. This is one of the most interesting parts that our country created, which can be a humble model for other countries that may have a conflict. If we managed to reach peace after 12 years of war, a very bloody war, a war between... a war between Salvadorians, well, I think that other countries can do that, as well. They can take that example. We had already provided the first example with one of the best or most respected cease-fires that ever existed, and after that, well, the... the end of the signing process of the peace treaties (Acuerdos de Paz de Chapultepec), and after that the model of Chapultepec, which paved the road for the creation of a new police and of other entities or security forces that were there before, but that were dissolved.

HUNT: Can you describe in a bit more detail the training programs used in that... that initial group of police officers at the Academia Nacional?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Of course, of course. We noticed the need to construct basic axes, or trans... transversal axes in the training process. First of all, respect for human rights, which was the foundation and which is still the essential foundation of our police force. Every police force in the world uses force legally. And there are levels for the application of this force according to the case that needs to be solved. But you also have to remember that every police force in the world faces the problem of... of being the ones that exercise the... coercion and... and action and coercion based on the law. So, in that sense, the authority emanates from the people, they exercise it. It may be the case that there are excesses. Those excesses must be stopped. But in that case, the best thing to do is to prevent and to give and to contribute knowledge of human rights, respect for human rights, because that is the foundation of Salvadorian rule of law. That's one, the first example, human rights. After that, police ethics, that is, behavior in society, the way in which our police officer has to be courteous. He also has to be a very responsible person, a

very respectful person. Because being the authority, he is the one who has to exercise it in the best possible way and with respect towards others. In that sense, knowledge and police techniques are also there, that is to say, we are talking about knowledge, abilities, and police skills. There were programs about this, about what police intervention in crimes is. Criminology. The police interview. I am talking about subjects that form a whole curriculum. Human rights. Police ethics. Also, police deontology, and also... knowledge and technical careers. We also began with the situation of information technology. It was also necessary to learn not just typing, but also computer skills. We also needed a lexicon that helped us be better understood by society. After that, the... the sustaining axis, which is community service, as a philosophy, as a culture. The police has... We came from using various models. A primarily legalist model, in the belief that it was only the law that will generate social control. That's impossible. After that, we came from a primarily preventive sector, a preventive police method. After that, it became something mixed, legalist and preventive, in such way that pre... preventing crime is better than fighting it. But, well, sadly, with crime in the world, with technology making progress as it is, the police must also make progress in that sense, and it must try to counteract it and, well... It took, to put it one way, our... our... our academy and our police force, in the sense that society is the one who must back up police actions. Society must feel as if it is its own police force. And that we all work towards that. In other words, the service is for the community. To be honest, when I began promoting these values, I was already convinced of them, because we came from... from being a young generation suffering through a war. And, really, we want a model police and a police force that will be the one that will look after our children, that will look after our family. Thus, if we had the opportunity to train it well today, I had to do it with all the... all the... all that I had. Consequently, I also still have that expectation. I don't lose it. And that is why, sometimes, when excesses of any kind come forth, we regret it a lot, but there are also achievements. We also have achievements of our... our own. And the... the excesses, and perhaps some difficulties or some mistakes serve to... to... to make the... the police career fuller and to build a better temperance. And from the error, well, we have to extract positive things. Therefore, the configuration of... of all the police programs had at its core those transversal axes and we had a great amount of subjects that were very useful at that time. Of course, we needed a police to substitute another police. That's another problem, that it was not just a question of training, but also a matter of "do it now," right? That "right now" that I think... Because society was demanding it, it was a demand from society. So, it was hard work. Countries, let me tell you, friendly countries that... that I've already mentioned. They helped out a lot but frankly they only left us with a legacy that we had to follow-up on. And thus we have been able to have a police that to date we consider a substitute... Or maybe not a new police that is really better than previous police forces, because there were several police forces before: the National Police (Policía Nacional), the Treasury Police (Policía de Hacienda), the Customs Police (Policía de Aduana). The National Guard (Guardia Nacional). So, attached to... to armed forces, to a military force. Now, with the peace treaties, the situation is different and we go from public safety to citizen safety, so that it is the citizenry who has to play the biggest and best role with the police, with its police. So, police and... and community together. So, that's what community service hinges upon. I've explained to you, then, the four axes, to put it one way, the transversal axes of training and I want to tell you that, first of all, our police officers were trained in six months and after that, the time span was increased to nine months, and now we have a police officer that trains for fourteen months. We are talking about the... the police officers, the first ones, that is to say, their initial training. After that... In the peace treaties, it was stipulated that high-ranking officers needed a college degree. But, since they were very young, and also since the majority of those who came from the guerilla and the civilian sphere were young people trying to get into the academy and were only in their third year of college... So, for the first graduating classes it was agreed that higher-ranking officers, assistant supervisors and up, had to had three years of college education. That is to say, we have three police ranks, three categories: basic, executive, which is the higher-ranking officers, and superior. The basic ones are: police officer, corporal, and sergeant. The executive one are: assistant supervisors, supervisors, and chief supervisors, who have been trained in the academy up until now. And after that comes the... the superior level, which is formed by assistant commissioners, commissioners, and general commissioners. So, they, too, are the ones missing, the ones needed to finish the chain, which is really a young police force, it's

15 years old, it is now turning 15 years old. It's fifteen years old, the... the... And since I believe that every young person has some problems, then it is necessary to see how that person needs to be directed so that he or she can work better and with more of a professional character. That is how we believe our police force has been taking shape. It has also had its high points. Sadly, not... The high points have not been as timely as they could have been. But yes, now they are taking place. Yes, slowly, deliberately. Now, there are almost 17.000 police officers in our country. We intend to have 22.000 to 23.000. According to the statistics, in order to have 200... In order to have one police officer for every 250 inhabitants... And that is what we intend to do. Still, well... I mean, the academy went over that amount, but since there has been many purges... There's also been the case of young men that leave the force, there's been deaths, there's been... there's been police officers that have not only died but that have been injured in the line of duty. Some, well, they go on to administrative posts. They are not discharged, on the contrary, they are... they continue working. But some of them with, well, disabilities that... that cause some difficulty, well, they, too, retire. And thus, we intend to, I think, two years from now... That police roster has been successfully completed.

HUNT: Speaking of the creation of the academy, of the construction of the curriculum and all of that, can you tell me how the training was conducted? In other words, in the sense of how... how you decided which subjects were most important. Did the instructors find gaps in knowledge? How did the process of building a school from scratch take place?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Yes. You said something. When we started over here, the first day that we came into the Academia Nacional de Seguridad Pública... There was nothing there, there was nothing. There was no place to sit. That is to say, we began from zero, with paper and pencil in hand. I don't think I take that as a mistake, but rather as a virtue, as a challenge that we solved little by little. Yes. When the first instructors from abroad came in... Because there were national instructors and foreign instructors. We began working on drafting a curriculum, a web... a web of subjects where we could see what subjects were needed and how many hours we would need to teach those subjects, to go over not just a theoretical level but also a practical level. Our philosophy was always to learn something while doing it, that the young person that received the theoretical knowledge could immediately apply that knowledge in practice. That is to say, we could not linger on the theoretical, but rather, practice was what was going to make us create or observe or revise whether the theory that we were studying was good. That is why it was essential for us that the boys in the academy have a three-month period of practices after they left. So the students go on to practice with the police so that they could do their praxis as students. As if they were police officers, not to imitate reality, but rather... within reality itself. So, they saw what were the skills, the abilities or knowledge that applied well to reality, and which ones did not apply well. That was very important, because qualitative changes in the curricular process have emerged from that, changes in the design of subjects and in the expansion of them. Afterwards, after the initial training, you have to remember that we also have specializations, but we also have reinforcement, retraining. So, specializations are very important because... The boys have certain attitudes, certain attitudes towards certain police activities that they are most skilled in. From there, there arises the fact that these young men are the ones that have to specialize in a certain profile. They assume that profile, they have what it takes to fill that profile. Most of all, they have the experience that they need in order to make that qualitative leap and to continue with their professional career. The police career in El Salvador, it has its own law. Thus, the police has a professional character to it. So, in that sense, the agent is... graded. And the higher-ranked officers, as well, through this knowledge. That is to say, he not only has the initial training but also his specialization, he also has his reinforcement. Constantly, theoretical as well as practical. So, police practices. That is what they're called. The students. They're called APP, students doing police practice (alumnos en prácticas policiales). They go out to do their practices on the street. No longer a simulacrum, no longer in the academy, but on the street. And there, they gradually find, they really string together all that knowledge, and they gradually see that other people... Because they have to adapt their knowledge to the reality where they have to live. So, that... that is very important, because that gives them a certain experience and certain confidence in themselves.

HUNT: During that first moment, when the Policía Nacional Civil was taking shape, those practices that the first students had, who... who was supervising them? Who were the instructors, or, say, the ones that were imparting class at the time?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: *Yes. By then, the peace treaties practically had a sponsor, which was the United Nations, and the United Nations came up with a protocol for El Salvador that was called ONUSAL (United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador), the organization of the United Nations for El Salvador. So, the one supervising was ONUSAL, and some of the instructors, some of the ones that participated were also part of... of the United Nations. The first practice session, that is very important, what you just asked me, took place in places where there used to be conflict. They were called PAT, Patrullas... Patrullas... Transitorias. That is, the Patrullas Transitorias were the ones that went there. The boys would go there to do their practices, let's say, in Chalatenango (El Salvador), in places where the conflict had just ended and no other authority could access. So, the United Nations came along with us. And I want to tell you that it was one of the most, one of the most beautiful moments, because people waited... These were other young men. Additionally, they would look at other young men that looked familiar, no? So, that was very important. I want to tell you that the first graduating classes are still the ones that support all the scaffolding of our current police force. Very good officers, very good agents. People welcomed us with a lot of affection, with a lot of... openness, to put it one way. When we went there to supervise the... the... the PAT, for instance, we looked at how the population would arrive at the police stations. And they brought tamales with them, they brought food, they asked about them. In other words, we also had the opportunity to be borne with all those transversal axes of knowledge, with those novel matters. Not to transform them, but rather, from the beginning, to nourish those principles that are so important and... and also that war weariness and that desire for the future of... of the fact that we had one with peace. In other words, that was very important. The other thing, the youth of the young men, that is, young people who had really fought. And also, the ones driven hopeless by the war. Many left the country. Remember, there was huge migration wave. It was not just brain drain but also very young people, people with... with... Skilled labor left, not just to the United States but to other countries, as well, too many, perhaps, to the United States. Because... because of the culture of having relatives there, and they went over there. But yes, it was... well regarded, the police was well regarded in that sense and I also remember that since there was not academy for higher-ranking officials, only for the basic level, Puerto Rico and Spain opened the doors to their academies so that higher-ranking officials can or could earn their academic degrees over there, in those... those police academies.*

HUNT: How many people went abroad to get training during that time?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: *It was... It was the... the first higher-ranking officers, around... Perhaps 40. 40. But, additionally, there is a very interesting anecdote there because I remember that the director told me, the director, Dr. Mario Bolaños, he called me and said: "Look, Hugo, I want to ask you something. It turns out that these young men are going to... they're heading to other academies. We've been told that in these academies, people sleep two to a room. How... how do we match them up? The ones that come from... from... from the civilian part, the ones that come from the military or the ones that come from the guerrilla or everyone separately?" And I told him: "No, Doctor, that war is over. Put them all together, please, mix them up, as Salvadorians say." And... So he said to me: "And what if there is a problem? What if they fight? What if they kill each other?" And he had, then, those questions, because that was his responsibility at the time. I told him: "Doctor, we have to have faith. I think that if the war is finished, thank God it is over. These young men, well, they can set another example for us. They already set an example, but they can give us a further example of cohesion." And that's what we did. We placed the... the names. And well, a commander of the guerrilla, with a... with a military man, well, they slept in... in... in bunk beds. One on top and one on the bottom. And the most beautiful thing that I want to tell you is that until today, those friendships that were borne there are all still kept, for the most. Some of them have already retired for a reason, but yes, I get emotional thinking about all that because I lived through it, I lived through that as an instructor, I lived through that as the director of studies*

and they would tell me... and they would tell me their anecdotes. For instance, one of them would tell me, he had the top bunk. He would tell me: "And what if this one gets up in the middle of the night and kills me, suffocates me?" And the other one, thinking the same thing, that is... But none of that ever happened. On the contrary, it was very exemplary behavior and I think that is why, that is why we can humbly motivate others towards that experience. God willing, Colombia will one day achieve that, no? I think that can be part of the solution. Let's hope so.

HUNT: When that first group of police officers was trained, was the training divided up into different phases? Say, did the ones that had been police officers receive the same training as the ones that came from the guerrilla or the civilians? Or were they all placed in the same school to do the same thing? How was it, exactly?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Everyone started from the beginning. Of course, some of them brought skills with them. With the conflict itself, they practically grew in it. And they had those... those... to put it one way, those aptitudes. Skills, certain skills with guns. Others had never shot a gun. Others were tired of shooting them. So, they helped each other out. I want to tell you something, because first of all, we didn't even have guns in the academy. So... They began... And they were taught with a pencil, how to take aim and then the countries realized that we did not have any guns. I remember that Spain sent some... some... pistols, very... old, but functional for... for that purpose. Same thing with the United States. They gave us some... some... some equipment. Because, really, there was nothing. And we had to use small arms and shotguns and, well, the situation that goes with each of them, to know not just how to shoot them, but when to use them, which is the most important thing. Yes, because that's where professionalism practically belongs. That is, the levels of police force, beginning with police presence all the way up to, well, the use of lethal weapons when the situation calls for it. So, a bit of... of... what you were telling me. There were people that had never shot a gun, and, moreover, they... they did not... they did not like it. But, that way, with training, everyone gradually picked it up... right? But everyone, yes, as you say, everyone started out from the same place, even though some of them brought knowledge with them. Very advanced, perhaps.

HUNT: Thinking about these programs, to what extent were the objectives set for them met?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Look, the programs really... New needs arise all the time. Thus, the paradigms of police training, like any paradigm... A college paradigm is transformed according to reality... to universal reality, in terms of new knowledge, new technology. Thus, the programs... We really tried to meet them exhaustively, in the strictest way that we could meet them, but they were also changed because they were renovated along the way. I was telling how we started with 6 months, then 9 months, then 12 months, 14 months, and thus it... Well, it grew, the... what was known as the initial training, and remember that for the higher-ranking officers, as well, the training was 2 years long, even though they were college graduates. I'm trying to tell you that this is the only police force in Latin America, I don't know about Europe or other places, the only police force where higher-ranking officers are doctors, architects, lawyers, environmentalists, dentists, business men, architects, economist, philosophers, sociologists, lawyers. In other words, these are officers that were already professionals on a career path before they entered the academy. Afterwards, once they entered, once they came in and spent two years training in the academy, they were trained as officers, with the exception of medium-level officers, which are the executives, which, remember, the first ones, as I said, came in with three years of college education. But other than that, everyone else, the requirement is for a college degree. So we have the advantage of having doctors, we have everything, and that... that leads to their having a certain degree of maturity. Yes. And to review or acquire, most of all, that knowledge of police sciences, because we had to teach them the legal basis, the technical basis of police work, the concrete basis of... of... techniques that go hand in hand with managerial police duties, the managing of human resources, leadership qualities, leadership ability, yes. So, the ability to give an order, to follow up on it, to monitor it until its completion, no? That situation is very important, then. That gives it another... another outlook, as well, for our police... Very different, very much its own. The truth is that... sui generis.

HUNT: Can you give me an example of an aspect that was more successful than what you had expected?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: *I think that one of the most successful ones, first of all, is human resources. Yes, yes, it was notorious. After beginning from scratch, to be able to make quantitative leaps and then qualitative leaps within the academy, as well as within the police. Two institutions that are, well, growing together, separately, but together. Perhaps, one... one of the... Society's approval. Because society is the one that exercises the largest control within the police, and that's how it should be, because that is how we serve. And I believe that they, whenever there is an achievement, they... they... they admire it, but they also criticize their police when they are doing something wrong, whenever there is an excess, because it is theirs. There are no perfect police forces in the world, but we do consider that we... I do believe that we have a police that has move forward with a lot of determination, with a lot of eagerness, more than anything. And with plenty of commitment. It is one thing to form a police force and another one to build it after a conflict where a regrettable loss of life took place, a loss of Salvadorian brothers who died from one and the other side. We cannot go about making distinctions of any kind beyond the fact that they were all Salvadorians and that we have to respond in their honor. Not just the police, but all the state institutions, because the police cannot work alone. The police is one part of the social control; it is not the whole, it is a part. Because the justice system, the attorney general's office, they are the ones that have to be incorporated in their professional work. Against crime, and more than anything, more than anything, against... In prevention. In providing security, in being promoters of security, as well, and being agents that solve many problems. You have to remember that sometimes communities don't have... they don't have crime problems. Problems that are... that are... that have to do with people or with criminals. But there are also other needs that the police cannot address, sorry, that the police cannot address, but it can be a managing agent, a channel to facilitate the solution to that problem, the more so if the problem contributes to the criminal situation. That there is no running water in certain sector, that there is no electricity, that there is no place where... where boys can go have fun, that itself also practically implies a commitment within the police or for the police, but it cannot work alone. It needs a whole structure and, of course, the support as the standard bearer of the community, to put it one way. Because the... Our police was borne with those... with that thought. With that community service, with that parameter... And it is not a matter of paying lip service, but rather it must be a culture, a philosophy, each police officer, not just operational officers but also administrative officers. From the general director to the last worker in the police force, each must know that he is a public servant. Because we're also... We serve our communities. That is very important.*

HUNT: Give me an example of an aspect that has failed, or one the success of which has taken longer than expected to achieve, or one that did not come out as well as you wanted to.

GRANADINO MEJÍA: *I believe that, yes, we can talk about strictly operational programs, and we could talk about training programs. We consider that, yes, there has been some delays in promotions. Promotions serve to assess, first of all, the training of our... our agents and officers. But not just that. It is a motivator in the sense that if it is a profession where hierarchies exist, well, they have to be attentive to... to... to stay with that hierarchy. Because it is part of their achievement in their time and in their development as professionals. But also in their salary situation, which is extremely important, because it is also a dignified job. So, I think that the delay has been a parameter that I believe has to be... that has to be improved. Programs, perhaps, aside from that... I very much regret that we, in the academy, let go of what we called integrated practices. What are integrated practices? All instructors of the different subjects, we formed groups, polyvalent groups, and the boys conducted their practices according to the knowledge they received in the... in the classroom, and they executed. And we, each of us, let's say, someone from human rights, would say: "No, no, no. This here is an excess." "No," the... the... the other one, the one from intervention, would say, "no, this here is wrong. Look, the way you intervened in order to... to... to ask the lady what was going on, I think we failed there." So, each one... That is to say, we made sure that in those integrated practices everyone, everyone was*

working with the same protocol of knowledge, of teaching and we were all under the same light. So... And each error was rectified here, not in reality, but in training. That is what training is for, what we call trial-and-error, in other words, it is very significant within the scientific method, no? So, I think that that was for us something very basic, as well, that they could develop their abilities, and to be watchful, to say: "No, there is a mistake here." "Look, sorry, you approached this person to ask her for her documents but you did not greet her. You missed the part about courtesy." "Ah! Really?" "Look, you positioned yourself wrongly in relation to the car door. You did not have to place yourself... And you were poorly positioned. What happens if the person takes off? What happens if the person is armed? What happens...?" It is a different thing to work in a situation involving people that are... that are suspicious. Criminal suspects, compared to a normal person. So, I don't know... There are completely different approaches according to the situation that the police officer confronts. So, in that sense, we were all watchful, but sadly, that was not followed up. I always call for that to be possibly taken into account. And then, within the police, perhaps, in terms of operational matters, the last director recognized it. That... The matters of heavy handedness and the super-heavy handedness... The sectors that had to be incorporated in order to make that whole apparatus work, not just in terms of knowledge but also in terms of strategies and policies, well, it did not work because not all of them were integrated. So, that resulted in all those processes not being completed as they should have been. There was a heavy hand, a friendly hand, etc. And, well, that, on the contrary, increased a bit the points of violence in our country. But... Well, that was recognized, the police did its... its part. Of course, they were... they were... they were programs of a political nature, as well, programs that had to be adapted to programs eminently related to police technique, and, well, certain imbalances existed in that sense. Not all the agents that had to participate participated, and that also had its decline.

HUNT: Thinking about the types of instructors, the relationship between instructors and participants, the curriculum, the place and time of training sessions, etc., etc., could you offer a parameter to improve the development of the programs?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: *Yes, I think so, yes. There is or there exists, always, a... an improvement to the programs. Of course. But when you... you... when you speak to me about the relationship between the... The instructor-student relationship, a very good one, very important. Excellent. Trust. A great deal of professionalism and also something very important. The foreigners left and we were left with the national ones. What have we done? Now, we, too, have trained an instructor of instructors, and we have young men with... with aptitudes and attitudes for teaching all the police sciences, in a way you cannot imagine. Therefore, the majority of the instructors who are now in the academy, they're all policemen. That is another situation. From police officers to higher-ranking officers. And that is a very good parameter. However, there are always new subjects or new knowledge and other people must come, perhaps, to... to impart that knowledge to us, or people from our country can go to other countries to trade in those experiences, because one is not always going to bring them in. One always must also go impart knowledge. That feedback, that relationship, is also very important. Now, yes, I want to tell you about one... one... one layer... For instance, we have not, in the police, in my unit, for instance, the Unit for Professional Development (Unidad de Formación Profesional), last year, we trained 12.500 people, police officers, that is, operational officers, as well as administrative officers. The academy in this aspect also trained for us around 2.500, 2.800 young men with specializations, in the development of job posts, because the development of job posts is important. We cannot send all the young men to the academy because we would saturate it. So, what do we do? We go to the places where they are deployed, the... the... our police officers, and there we see what the needs are. The needs for... for reinforcement, for instance, new laws, law reforms, always... Introducing, as well... Promoting human rights, ethics, and community service as transversal axes, but also imparting new knowledge. And new techniques and new tactics. New forms or strategies of... of police action, that is to say, of what policing is, of the whole police action. So, I'm trying to say yes, we have had excellent relationships there. Now, yes, now, for instance, each program that comes out of the training... Right? We take all those experiences from reality, good or bad, and we also are... The people that come from practicing police duties now go to the*

academy. Things are not done from the desk, but rather, one goes from the streets to the academy. "I bring experience with me. Now let's see how we incorporate it in the... in the... in the... in the catalogue of subjects, in the web of subjects studied in the academy. In the curriculum." And those experiences are incorporated there, yes? And they are renovated. For instance, we began, as I was telling you, by learning to conduct the scientific method, properly speaking. Also, the basis of constructivism, the fact that we would build our own police, and our own... Based on our own reality. We used our actions and our theoretical ways. And now, additionally, what is known as learning by competences, which is very essential. Learning is no longer by objectives, but rather by competences. What needs to be learned, known, and done by this young man? What for? In order to be all... In order to be an officer. What do we want...? Who do we want that young man to be? So, competence is very important. Even though competence is already being phased out, now... Because, since they are paradigms, they have to be broken, and the truth is that what science shatters is always paradigms, and we are left with a training grid. That's it. No longer can we... And professionalism comes to an end. Now, it is no longer a matter of competences, but rather, "co-competences," that is to say, to do things with other people. Cooperating, doing things with others. So competences are already done, to put it one way. Some are still... theoretical about that... Experimenting with that, but... but yes. So, those qualitative leaps are made. And one also learns a lot from mistakes. Why shouldn't we say that? Why shouldn't we? One needs to be humble about that. But... But... I always think that what has been done wrong has to be overcome, and what is being done right also has to be taken beyond, because we cannot remain stagnant. Science does not allow it, neither does reality nor Salvadorian society, which also has its eyes set on its police. They have to. They are attentive, most of all, to what we do. If we do something wrong, they are the ones who judge us. And, well... And they are very much entitled to do that. Because they are... they are the ones who we serve.

HUNT: You've already told me that you've counted on the participation of the international community, as it is usually called. Frequently, those programs that are preferred by the international community and by donating countries are too costly for the budgets of many communities and countries. With regards to the subject we are now discussing, can you think of one or two suggestions for cost saving, of a way of conducting these programs that is not as costly for the host country?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Yes. The truth is that there is a way. And I want to tell you that we are working along those lines. For instance, the European Union, the United States, friendly countries, they maintain certain... in their internal cooperation systems. They have certain beneficiaries abroad, among them El Salvador. Also, the one helping us a lot is the United Nations, through the PNUD (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP). We just finished a course on high police management, sponsored by the PNUD, bringing here some of the most prominent figures in Latin American in the field of management, high police management. And it was very important because it had been almost 15 years since the high police commanders were there. And I want to mention that even the director and the assistant general director joined in. They joined in. And... It is important to listen to new findings, to the experiences brought to us, for instance, from Brazil, Colombia... Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, Venezuela. Who else could I tell you about? Nicaragua. And since they have been in various... in various... Peru, please. They have incorporated that knowledge. So they come here to participate. So, the important thing is this: to impart knowledge to those people that are going to be the multipliers of knowledge. If the course is taking place in another country, and the travel expenses for one or two people from El Salvador to go to that country can be a lot less expensive than the costs of those that may come here, so be it. The important thing is that... Every time that a country collaborates, helps out, one or two instructors come along. For instance... Mexico, as well. My apologies, I had forgotten that Mexico has been helping us in terms of investigation, cyber crimes, motorized police and many other aspects. So, these countries, they, too, send very qualified personnel to this country, and they impart courses here. That saves a lot of money. Another thing is that we, as hosts, have to do our part. So that the aid is not burdensome for the countries. And the other thing, really, is to make the most of it, because it is one thing for them to be able to come, to have the opportunity

to... right? And also, moreover, the aid provided is not just limited to that. There is also the donating of equipment. In donating logistical equipment, didactical materials, police equipment, which is sometimes hard to acquire. Now, given the state of security systems in every... in every country, it is a bit difficult to transport that equipment. So, you also need, then, to... to have a guarantor like the United Nations or others, who can... have that... that... that sponsorship and that stimulus. Therefore, yes, I think that... It can... Costs can be greatly reduced. In the sense that either they come here or we go there to gather the experiences, to bring them here and to multiply that knowledge within the police and also within the academy. That is to say, the... Of course, I believe that... That would be the important part in... as a response to that... to that aid that we receive with dignity.

HUNT: Another subject of special interest to us is your experience, if you have any, in the incorporation and fusion of different security forces or police services into one coherent police unit. You have already spoken to me about how the Policía Nacional Civil was established using quotas of people from different sectors. In your work, have you ever helped to incorporate different police organizations into one single unit? And how did you do it?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Very well. I was telling you that, firstly, what... what we fused together was the... the active elements. Practically speaking, the elements that were to be part of our police force. That... that was also a... a very interesting way of incorporating them. After that, the incorporation of the friendly countries, of all the instructors that came from friendly countries, because they all wanted to do something. "Look, I am going to put an arm to it. I..." So, we were making a Frankenstein and so that could not be, it could not be. We were putting together someone and we did not where he was going to go. We had to have, then, the wisdom to gather the best from everyone and not to adopt, but rather, again, the philosophy was to adapt and to adapt it to the Salvadorian reality. We could not have a Swedish police officer in a Salvadorian reality. That was impossible... right? In that sense, neither could we have another friendly country or countries. Rather, that was also incorporated. After that, to incorporate the students with the instructors and then our police officers with society. For that was the most important incorporation. After that, of course, to also incorporate other sectors such as private enterprise, universities, which, let me tell you, we have, which our current training unit receives... They get reduced tuition for police officers to continue with their college education. Right now, another cycle is about to begin. Right now we are... All the universities are opening their doors to us, they reduce tuition for our boys and some universities even offer reduced tuition for... for their family members. So, this results in the integration not just of private enterprise, not just of universities, but also other sectors. FESPAD (Fundación de Estudios para la Aplicación del Derecho)... We work with the UCA (Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas"). We work with the Universidad de El Salvador, with the Universidad Tecnológica, with the Universidad Matías Delgado (Universidad Dr. José Matías Delgado). They opened their doors for us. The truth is that private enterprise also helps us a lot, the... the... the police, but you know who else? The communities. When they see a patrol car that does not work, they come over and say: "Look, we need patrolling here." So between all of them, they fix the vehicle. Some buy the tires, others... And that way, people, store owners, people... Look, I am not talking about... Of course, large enterprises help out, but I am also talking about that small-business owner, that medium-business owner that, in good faith and with a lot of... how can I put this? With a lot of... happily, they help out. They help out the... There are mechanics over here that fix their tires. "Look, there's something wrong with that tire. Let's fix it." "Look, I'll fix this." And he doesn't charge a thing. So, that's important. I think that if the police wasn't working well, I don't think that we would have those benefits. So one has to have those hands open and the police also has to have its hands open. Not to receive things, but to say: "Come in, come right in," right? "We are part of society, therefore, let's become part of it." In other words, we've had incorporation of that sort. Now, we've also incorporated... I want to tell you that I had an incorporation process that was very important. I was also director of ICESPO, the Central American Institute for Higher Police Education (Instituto Centroamericano de Estudios Superiores de Policía), and we created one single curricular web for all the academies of the Central American region. That is, we tried to integrate the training of all the academies in Central America. El Salvador is the headquarters of ICESPO.

And we achieved that with the effort... El Salvador managed to be the headquarters. And, well, in that sense to incorporate all the police forces in Central America through training. Of course, each of them heeds its own legal characteristics, its own traditions, its own idiosyncrasies, of course, but all the while integrating the training system because the police sciences are an assortment of knowledge that has to be on the vanguard. Because if they are sciences, they have to be on the vanguard. Techniques and technologies also change and we have to keep up with that progress of the times, even if we don't have the logistics, even if we can't do it. But we must know what to do at a certain point. And I want to tell you, that... that it was my task, to integrate that... that... that very important point that... that the SICA, the Central American Integration System (Sistema de Integración Centroamericana), which is also the comptroller entity, to put it one way, of that... of that Central American Institute for Higher Police Education. I can also tell you that... that... that it was our task to incorporate ourselves with other national and international institutions. For instance, as I was telling you, the PNUD (United Nations Development Programme). United Nations has always been attentive to the needs of our country. Other friendly countries have joined in, such as Japan, helping us. Chile, of course. You should see how... We can't... We cannot... And other countries that have been following up on that cooperation effort. In other words, yes, incorporation has taken place, not just in terms of people but also in terms of institutions. Not just institutions, but also certain training criteria. Also, why not say it? Of... Of... Of work, incorporation of work, incorporation of... of ways of... thinking. We have incorporated ways of thinking, even different ones. I think that it is... essential. Latin American is like... like a beautiful painting made of many colors and if we did not have those colors, the landscape would not look pretty. So those differences also make us... they should make us stronger.

HUNT: How much freedom did you and your team have when you designed these incorporation procedures?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: You see, yes, I want to tell you, and I say it with a lot of... perhaps with much pride and with plenty of... professionalism. Yes, we had some freedom in that we were left to our own and we were told: "You are the technicians, you do the training, yes?" I was entering the academy with ten, twelve years of... of college education experience and with... right? And, I want to tell you, so did many of our colleagues. United Nations was very meticulous in their selection of instructors, you know? And... yes, well, we were given the freedom for that, and we were also asked... right? And... and I remember Dr. Mario Bolaños, he once told me: "Look, Hugo, I don't really know about training, I don't know." As we say here: "I do." "As far as administration and the matter of political strategy, leave that to me. You take charge of training." That is important because that also gives one some room to act. However, it's a greater responsibility. But there, the fact that one is not alone also plays an important role. Rather, decisions are collegial. These are countries, these are experienced instructors, and the ones involved are countries, and the ones involved are institutions, and they are people. That is to say... And we took decisions jointly. Were there any arguments? Of course there were. "No, this does not work. The way you proceed... This procedure is not supposed to be like this. We were taught this way, this is better. This..." And so we would see along the way and we would say... and we told the... the young men: "Look, there is a way, for instance..." A simple handcuffing, a simple handcuffing, and that was already a discussion. A byzantine discussion, with no end to it, no beginning and no end. So, what did we do? "The thing is... If this happens, do this. If this happens, to this." And nobody stayed... nobody remained irritated, because their criteria were taken into account. "But, what if this person is armed? What do we have to do? Or of he is stronger? And what if it's a woman making the... the detention?" Because we also have, we are very proud to have very good, professional women. Women who have abandoned their roles, or rather, they have not abandoned them. They have chosen one more role. The role of being a mother, a wife, a daughter, to also be public servants through the police, that is to say, brave women. Salvadorians, please, my... my... my... Our women are very special. So, we have managed to have a group of... of... of... women who also, together with... with the men, they have managed to keep this police up... up to date. So, I want to tell you, yes, incorporations happened. The... The changes that have been... taking place through those discussions... have been constructive, not destructive. And those parameters are positive steps. They are not at all

negative. Sometimes... We are... We fear change, and sometimes changes have to happen gradually. There are different ways of applying political strategies, tactics, techniques that have to change. Reality also imposes those changes on us. And that is what's important. From that point on, we have to take them well and incorporate them to the training system in a technical manner.

HUNT: Can you give a slightly more detailed account of the principal elements that you used? I can give you an example, things that we have seen in other countries, just so you see what I mean. I think you've already touched upon this subject but let's see if we can develop it a bit more. Many times, we witness the decision to exclude people or groups of people because they have operated with a... with a great degree of impunity in the past. How has that... that process been handled here?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Well, the truth is that police forces always have, within the institution, their internal controls and, really, the Policía Nacional Civil of El Salvador has always had a constant purging of its members. However, some... That applies to the administrative part, but it can also become something judicial, that is to say... right? And those processes go further until they reach... the halls... of the Supreme Court of Justice of El Salvador (Corte Suprema de Justicia de El Salvador), in litigation-administrative trials, even in constitutional appeals. So, of course, I want to tell you, of course certain people have been excluded, people that have... that have worked. Because... So that no level of impunity remains. Yes, I think the controls have worked. And moreover, the institution has also been respectful in terms of those who, even if they have been purged, to put in one way, through internal administrative process, when they have reached judicial levels and these have given a... a... a... a ruling in favor of the person. They have had to be incorporated. And, well, they have had a certain... a process of adaptation. But yes, here you find many people in that situation. And they have pointed at, to put it one way, that... that painful situation they... they have been in. And well, they have been adapted again to the system of professionalism of the police... of the Policía Nacional Civil. Now, yes, there are people who have had problems. People who have not heeded the rules and the regulations of the police, and these people have been expelled from the institution. That's what it is about, it is about really maintaining that level of trust from the population, because when the population no longer has any trust... I always tell our police officers: "Let's not loose the privilege of serving. Let's not loose the privilege of having people call us all the time." Look, if a dog is lost, they call the police. If electricity went out somewhere, in a certain sector, it's the police. If there is no running water, it's the police. A pregnant woman? The police takes care of it. That is to say, the first one to be called is the police, our police, that privilege. The day that they no longer call us, that's when we have to worry. So, that's why the population's trust in their police is for, because otherwise... this... this... this does not work. So, for instance, those bad elements, because in every police force, even in families, there are bad elements. Even if they all grew up under the same roof. Under the same roof. So, these procedures always have to be there. Because they have to set an example. So that things stop there and other know that there is a control, a social control, and there are... channels of... of... of control, which are not arbitrarily constructed but that are rather fully established, internal channels as well as external channels, administrative as well as judicial.

HUNT: Even though the peace treaties ended what used to be an armed conflict, obviously tensions must remain between those that came from the guerrilla, those that had been in the police, and also citizens that were in the middle of all this. Did you take any explicit measures to reduce the tensions between the different parts?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: The best way to reduce tension is to bring people together. Logic drives us to do this. In order to kiss as well as to fight, people have to come together, because otherwise things don't work. I want to tell you something, yes? I was already telling you how that was a step that... that we were all waiting for and we were all in fear, but... but no. Our police force is there and I wish you had been in this course on high management that just took place, listening to all the chiefs. The chiefs that come, even from the same sector, arguing, with totally different perspectives, even coming from the same sector, it's not even one sector against another one.

And so, the good thing is that after arguing, after talking, after extending or expressing their reasons... And that is the good thing, that words continue to be tools for peace. As long as this is substituted by something else, let's regret that, but as long as... Let's stay with that. The good thing is that after coffee, the distension, the talking, the telling things to each other, the fooling around, the... And I, believe me, I've witnessed this, I've witnessed this and... But, well, I am not a current witness, I am a past witness, for I have seen this and I see this... I think it's positive. To see that, that incorporation. Even with people with... with... with different ideologies. Remember that everyone has the right to an ideology. Democracy hinges on this, for God's sake. That is fundamental. There are contradictions even within the same groups. And... and well, if the... if they have opinions, we have to respect those opinions, even if we don't share them, we have to respect them. So, that's the way I see it. That's the way I see it. Discrimination? I honestly, as far as... as far as I'm concerned, and as far as I've sensed, I've never... right? I never took part in that. Even though supposedly some say that some people have tried to create an atmosphere of disintegration and all of that. Well, people like that are always around and they always will be. For what purpose? Well... Well, I don't know, but yes, what I've seen, let me tell you, has been really good. There's an incorporation of criteria, there's respect, there's... There are still very tangible differences, to put it one way, but, as I was telling you, as long as words maintain that... that unity of ideas and of criteria and of presenting criteria, I think at that moment, there needs to be respect for that... that way people have of functioning that works. For instance, higher-ranking officers, young men. Of course, there are always people that will want to divide things up. But I think the best thing is to unify, to incorporate. Incorporation is the word.

HUNT: How have promotions been handled in the new police force? Has an oversight mechanism been implemented to guarantee that the promotion system does not favor any one side?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Yes. I want to tell you something. Promotions in our police force have two traits in their origins. Some promotions are external, some are internal. That is to say, there are always people from outside coming into the institution. People that are going to be incorporated into the systems, people that are going to be higher-ranked officers, for instance, people that are going to be inspectors, but there is also a... there is a... there is a percentage that must be internal, according to the law. As I was telling you, I think that in 15 years... I think we should already have... Because they have the years behind them, you see, they have the years, they have the knowledge, they have the experience necessary to have our police incorporated, from the police officer up to the general commissioners. That's why I'm telling you, one of the matters, of the factors, has been that delay. Of course, it is also very difficult to take those young men out of their praxis. Out of their police work and into training. But training must be seen as an investment, not just for the individual but also for the institution and for society. So, I want to tell you that yes, promotions... I think that the whole chain should be structured and it should be a constant. It should not be... once in a while or... No, it must be... There must be a plan. There is a plan, you know? I formed a commission that made a plan that has been presented to different... directors. And, well, sometimes, because of matters of reality... There are certain matters of... Complicated. Maybe because of that, it won't happen, but aside from that, another matter of police work, as I was telling you... And that imbalance remains, that... that... that thing about going to training, but training is what will make him qualified for it. That's why I, I tell you, that's why I think that it must be regulated, and it must be said: "Well, gentlemen, sergeants are going to... be incorporated to be able to... to train towards becoming assistant inspectors, and there will be a course that will last however many days." That is to say, they are already programmed, no? Programming every five years, for example. I think that would be most important. Because that way the police staff grows gradually. Our people get gradually prepared and the police's professional service towards the community is gradually qualified and that is the objective. Training brings that result. Also, not just knowledge but also the police officer's attitude, that he be a very responsible person, professional, educated, courteous in society. Sometimes, it isn't possible to solve every problem for society, but if I treat you in an educated manner, in a courteous manner, I think... And I will contribute a spirit of... of work, in order to... in order to overcome the situation that you are presenting to me. Because if you came to me it's because I

am going to solve it. Maybe I can't, maybe partially... But that's why you're talking to me. So that's where the police has to conduct itself in the best possible way. And I think that yes, promotions are enriching, they nourish the police's qualifications, it always makes it better. It qualifies not just the person, but also the institution, and the professional service to society is improved, of course. And that is what I know... I told you that... As one of the... of the... of the points, to put it one way, the weak points. I've told you... I've told you about strengths, as well, but it is a small point that... I think good planning and execution of the plan can manage to stabilize that process.

HUNT: Thinking about these efforts, what would you say were the main obstacles in developing an effective strategy for the incorporation or fusion of services? Could you please offer us some advice on how to overcome those obstacles?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: *Hmmm... You're asking me about police services, obstacles... Look...*

HUNT: The question is: what were the obstacles faced in creating a national police with personnel that had such diverse antecedents, such diverse activities, before entering the academy.

GRANADINO MEJÍA: *Yes. Look, the thing is that a conflict that lasted 12 years came to an end. A police force was created, made up of the protagonists of that same conflict. Therefore, a bit of... There were always expectations, positive and negative, yes? Always, always. "No, this will not work, this will..." Right? "No, I think it will, I think that the best way to incorporate them..." Etcetera. Voices in favor, voices opposed. But at the time, there were more people in favor of it because in reality, the other security forces were dissolved. The dissolution of these forces has, as a consequence, the fact that there cannot be a lack of authority, yes? More than anything, given that these people were no longer affiliated to armed forces... They were not military men, but rather, they were going to... to be under civilian command, yes? A person, a... a... a civilian minister, as well, and a civilian director in both institutions, these were going to be the people that were going to give them the policies and strategies to go forward. There was always, as I said, a bit of resentment, but in the end everyone understood that it was also part of the solution and that was part of the good sense of Salvadorian society, so that the police would be incorporated in that manner. So, there have always been people that... that... I'm... I'm gonna say it. They say: "Well, great, our police... Yes, it was incorporated in that manner." Some others, I'll say... Some others long for the old security forces. Because they say: "Ah, if the National Guard (Guardia Nacional of El Salvador)... were here, that guy, that criminal, would not do that because he would be treated in such and such way and he would never... right? Or he would disappear, no?" So, it's a bit complicated. I want to yell you that when the National Guard was born in 1912, it was practically the reflection of the National Guard... of the Civil Guard of Spain (Guardia Civil de España), a... a... a very prestigious institution. And also, with... with... with ideas that were practically European, which were used to... to... to incorporate that entity. Afterwards, the situation began to change and... The truth is that sometimes, people, institutions, situations change. So, some people say... they yearn. Look, sometimes there are people that, for instance, in a police development, they want to hit the police. "Ah!", they say, "these... If only the Guard was here, they would have hit him three times with the handle of a gun, they would have disarmed him, and now what? There's nothing." So, I think that... Remember that when you... Because you are not the person taking the hits, but if you were, I think things would be different, and that is where the matter lies. That's where the matter is. So... But the majority of people think that... I think we've made progress in our country in terms of security. Even though, I want to tell you something: we never thought that after the war there would also be a post-war situation, the matter of gangs and organized crime, which, remember, organized crime has practically taken gangs as breeding grounds, gangs that start in the United States. They're organized there, as a product of self-defense by the first Salvadorians that migrate over there, after they see the gangs of Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, Whites. Well, there is... And... And all of that, that cluster of criteria, of ideas, well, that makes it so that they create their gangs and, well, it turns out that when they are deported, they come here and they bring the same... the same situation over here, and they*

adapt it, and we have a problem, a serious problem that has resulted in increases in crime indexes in the whole country. The homicide rate. Even though it's been reduced to 8 every day, when before we had 10 every day. It used to be 12, but... but I still think it's too high. So... But additionally, aside from all this, there is the matter of petty crimes. We can't just talk about organized crime. So, we never imagined that after the war there would also be this problem, such a... such a serious problem. Really, that is what is increasing the... And what has resulted in the preventive branch of the police using more of its force in fighting crime than in preventing it. And it should be the other way around. A modern police force should be at least 20, 30 percent towards fighting crime, and the rest, 70 percent, towards prevention. We practically have opposite percentages, but the logic of reality has led to this situation, which is almost overflowing. So, yes, I tell you, even then, the police force responds to these needs, even though it could respond better with better equipment, which is something I think is always needed. Equipment. To give it all the necessary tools, because the law is not the only instrument, education is not... not the only instrument, a good... values, knowledge, skills, abilities, knowledge, techniques, but also equipment, to give it equipment that satisfies its own security, it's well-being, because in order to provide security to the country... So, I think and I believe that this is also another thing that will always be lacking, one of the things that I believe has a deficit, but that is also why you have to plan ahead very well in order to be able to meet the needs of our... our police force, as far as its equipment goes.

HUNT: Given that you have so much experience with this, I'm going to ask you for some recommendations for those who are trying to design or administer strategies of incorporation and training for national police forces.

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Yes. I think that... I am not so old as to provide advise, but yes, I think that every day is an experience that piles up and that, really, egotistically, it cannot remain in... in ourselves, as people. Rather, it must be shared. And I think that... If there is a lot of... There are experiences to be shared... But yes, I think that the first thing is to... One of the first things is to be humble as one learns. Something can always be learned. We can learn marvelous things from the most humble person. To listen, to know how to listen, to know how to observe, to know, then, how to take and also how to give. Because, as I was telling you before, sometimes we believe that we are imparting knowledge, but really, the truth is that we're learning while we're teaching. Sometimes, we feel as if police officers are our sons. We learn from our sons, they are our teachers. Do we believe that we are their teachers? No. That is the worst lie. So, I think that this is the way we should view our police officers. Police officers are the children of society. Police officers are human beings that have decided to risk their lives for us. We cannot do what they do, that's why we have to teach them not just to be good, but also to be efficient, to be patient. Patience... Look, patience really is something very important, because we want things to be done now, in a hurry. Well, politicians are... In that regard, they think we're magicians. A politician is not the same thing as a technician. That's why I pity politicians that think they are technicians. It's pit... It's sad, but technicians that want to be politicians are pitiful. So, I think that at in that regard we must find a very essential equilibrium and I do think it's also a matter of knowing how to get help, to receive everything that comes from abroad with dignity, when it's available. Because what's important is that we can't just to on saying: "Well, let's live off international aid, let's live off the contributing countries, let's live...." No, no, no, no, no. I don't think... I think that Salvadorians don't... We don't really have that... that... that... We like to do things on our own. Of course, a push, that has... You need to provide a push of sorts, no? The inertia should drive us to get things done. I do think so. The important thing is to know and to understand that every reality is different, realities and societies are all different. And that's why we have to look for the best ways to adapt... what we do or how we train people, or how we're going to put together a police force, or how we're going to structure our system and our policy of citizen security. In line with the reality that we have. And also, to see what's changing and what's being transformed and we have to change the methodology, as well. We cannot stick with paradigms. We cannot close ourselves off, either. That's the other thing. And, as I was saying, and I think I've said it twice before, the philosophy is to adapt and not to adopt, rather, we must look for our own way of doing things. Our society has its own idiosyncrasies, its own traditions. They have to be respected. We have to

know where we stand, that's the other thing. Sometimes, we also... There are a lot of people who... who don't say anything. They don't say anything. Because sometimes, whenever... Or maybe it's because they just don't know. It's like when we're in a dark room. In a dark room, you don't criticize. Why? Because you don't see anything, yes? But when the light comes in, even if it's not a lot of light, you begin to see the details of the paintings, of this one that is not hanging well, this thing over here, and you begin to criticize as if you knew better... as if you knew everything. And then, that syndrome that I'm describing for you, which I called the dark room syndrome, is like that, like when you think you're in a place and you just got there and you start to criticize everything. But you don't see the effort that other people have done in order to let that small sliver of light that has to be strengthened in order for things to be seen better. Because we can't be satisfied with that sliver of light and with being able to see things more or less well. No, it has to be... There has to be more light. Because light makes things seem transparent. Things seem clear with light, and when things are clear, the better they are suited for change, the better they are so that we ourselves are better and our society is better, for a better country. So I think that's what I can say for... for all those people that are going to be listening to us.

HUNT: Do you have a bit more time or have we run out of time?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Yes, yes.

HUNT: A bit more. Very well. Our program intends to help citizens and those that are in charge of public policy to build police services with the participation of the United Nations and with international aid, and without it, as well. However, sometimes the relationships within international organizations or between the donating countries affect the ability of people like you to complete your functions appropriately. And sometimes foreign aid produces its own problems and difficulties. I'd like to talk about this subject. Can you provide any advice to improve the relationship between donating countries and recipient countries?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: *Yes, of course. I think that the selection of personnel is important on the part of the donating country, yes. But it is also important to see this as an exchange, that is, not just a matter of the donating country, as I was saying, sending personnel but also that they can move into another reality to see and to gain another experience. Of course, the... the... the... the... person that comes to help out has to be someone with a high degree of professionalism, with plenty of knowledge about the place where he or she will be. Someone situated, who knows what he or she is going to do, who knows what the development has been, the development of... of the historical process, for instance, of the institution, if it's the police, or the academy if that's the institution being supported. I think so, yes. However, I... I think it's necessary that the exchange be not just an exchange of police personnel but also of administrative staff. And not just that... Students can come do their work. Their thesis work, their thesis and other such things. I know that they bring very refreshing perspectives, they bring other ideas and also they work with young people, which is something very important. For me, that is a... a... a... a very... a very interesting link, to bring in fresh ideas, new ideas, to understand each other given the age similarity. I think that's... Well. Cooperating countries have to send people who come to do a job, people who know that they're not going to come here and try to tell people to do things, for instance, to El Salvador, but rather, people who are coming to work jointly. If we want a ship to sail, if we want it to stay afloat, we have to make it happen together, to nail it together, to put down the wood planks and to keep working together. If I come to you and say: "I want the ship to be like this." "Oh, I don't like it anymore." "Look, do it this way because that's how it's done in certain places." No, that's where the problem is. Yes? No? How are we going to do this? What are we willing to contribute? How can we incorporate ourselves. I think that, yes... I... We are grateful for the countries that have collaborated with us, but... Yes. I think that there are also universities that can collaborate a lot. For instance, in training... in education related to training, to curriculum development, for instance, to teaching techniques that can be easily adapted to the teaching of police procedures. I think that there can also be studies that can be conducted here. Not from over there, but conducted here, in the field itself, in situ. And that they can develop and leave their work as part of the... the... the development of our country, and to say: "Here you*

have a... a work document and here you have instructions on how to do the work." Right? And that person, at a certain point, can even be hired by another institution, by NGOs or inter... international organizations such as the United Nations, who can then say: "This person knows about things. I'll hire you and I want you to conduct a study and I want to see how far you can go... For instance, I want you to change the way the police is... trained in environmental matters, in matters of armament, of toxic substances, vehicles... How to do it, who is best prepared..." Help is always welcome. In that sense, I think that things can be vastly improved, but only if the cooperating country is told exactly what the concrete weaknesses are. But sometimes, politicians are the ones that are asked the questions. That's another great problem. Technicians are not consulted, yes? That's another problem and that's where things break down, which is not the same thing. Politicians also have their range and their reference points. And if politicians are respectful towards technicians and vice versa, everything goes well. So I believe that, well, that priorities need to be drawn first, in terms of the needs we have, as a country, as an institution. And we have to acknowledge that we cannot have everything, but that we can have a part. And also, we cannot just receive everything because that's also a bad thing. One gets into the bad habit of... of just putting one's hand out, just like that. One has to use one's hands to make things happen and to walk and to grab tools and work. So that's the part about the dignity of Salvadorians. So, I think that yes, we could have a very effective relationship with universities, with NGOs, with international organizations, with friendly countries that can say to us: "What do you need?" Right? And sometimes, I feel that we don't need money, we need knowledge, which is a lot. It's a priceless treasure. Priceless. So, I think that yes. We could have that... that exchange of ideas, that exchange of experiences, so that other professionals from other countries or institutions or universities can greatly collaborate with us on the development of institutions that provide security to a whole society. It will always be welcome.

HUNT: Are there one or two mistakes that you see frequently in the way in which donating countries or international organizations like the United Nations handle the relationships to the personnel or the politics of the host country?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: *That's a question I'd rather not answer.*

HUNT: You don't have to answer if don't want to.

GRANADINO MEJÍA: *Yes, I'd prefer not to, but I do think that... If you give a chance to...*

HUNT: Yes, please.

GRANADINO MEJÍA: *I think I should do it, out of honesty. Very well. Sometimes, they don't send the right person. The person might be knowledgeable, but the person might not have the character to confront a reality that has no... that... a reality that person doesn't even know. Human relationships are the most important ones. That's the water where we all swim and if there's no water, there's no swimming, no movement. So, yes, I think that the selection of people in terms of their... It's a matter of their attitude. We can then talk about aptitudes, what's apt. It has to be a specialized person. Someone that can really rectify or be part of the project towards... towards... towards solving a need. Because it cannot be a person who comes here to cause more trouble, trouble that we don't want. So... And sometimes, we get... we get that, and we say: "But we can't say it's a problem because it's help, it's aid." But it is a problem, for God's sake. So no, no trouble, no more problems, no, because that would no longer be a contribution of aid but rather a contribution of problems. So... Or people that really do not master what they have been really asked to do. But in that matter, it is important to know how to ask for things. If we ask for the wrong thing, it's our fault, yes? And in that case... And... Because they say: "What is it that you need?" Right? So I can say: "One thing I do not need... or maybe what I need now is..." But sometimes, we mix up what's important with what is urgent, and if we cannot recognize and distinguish between those two things, we're going to be lost. I do think so. That's why I... I... I think it can be improved. It has to be a person with aptitudes, that's one thing. It has to be a person with aptitudes and also a person who knows how to look for support.*

HUNT: Well, you know how much we like stories. Could you tell us a story of success or failure related to the joint work you've done here?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: *Well, then. Successes and failures. Well, there are... There.... There's plenty. What could I tell you right now? Well, perhaps one of the successes, and I still insist on... on the way that our police force was created. When I see the... the young men that were fighting, when they fought in the same areas and they began to talk about skirmishes, about combat. Combat they had experienced under the same sun, fighting and talking about their experiences, about combat situations. "Look, I sent a... I sent an column your way and you came up with this, but then this happened and you didn't send in the helicopters and you started throwing mortars." Those things do leave me with the question of how these people are eating together. They sit together in the same classrooms. They're in the same police force. I... I... Forgive me if I leave aside technical parlance. I say: "That miracle happened here. Yes, that miracle happened here." That's why I'm telling you, it's not a technical word. So, I feel like that is a... a... a great thing. This is a great step forward, this... To listen to the sincerity with which these young men talk to each other, argue with each other, as I was telling you, and they can shake hands, tell each other good night, and they go and they know that they working for the same society, yes? That, for me, is basic. This... Well, anecdotes, also... What can I tell you? I remember one, a very interesting one. We were in the... When we first arrived in the academy, the Beloso battalion (Gen. Ramón Beloso Battalion) had been there. This battalion was a rapid reaction battalion and so when they came, well, when everything happened, when the war ended, we opened... we opened the academy and there was no... there was practically nothing, not even a place to sit or anything like that. But all the sappers that had placed the mines around the academy so that it would not be taken had left. There were no maps, there was nothing. So the United Nations people came over. I remember it was Belgians this one time in particular. And they began to track down the... the mines, and they said: "Well, it's mine-free now." And that's what happened. Well, once classes had begun, one afternoon, after... after about a year and a half of being there in... over there in Comalapa (El Salvador), in the academy, a fire broke out. People here are in the bad habit of lighting fire to cane fields, or burning down stubble instead of pulling it out, and... right? And so, the fire made it all the way to the academy. What a surprise! This Bum! Bum! started. The first blow. Bum! The second one. Bum! And then a third one, and by the time we heard a fourth one everyone thought that something had happened, an attack... a coup d'état. We didn't know anything... We couldn't make sense out of what was happening. Then, some... some young men came over. "Sir, look, there's fire in here, because... right? And we think some mines that were left over are blowing up." So they hadn't cleared the mines properly. So, thank God for that fire. The mines that were left behind are no longer there. I hope so. I do hope so. That's one of the things that I'm telling you about war. And the young men inside, I'm talking about 2,000 students in there, inside the... the... the... the academy, no? And the mines exploding. Of course, these were well-made mines, not homemade mines; military mines. Mines that... that the military itself has placed there so that... so that no one would come in. That's also one of the very interesting things. After that another interesting thing is... is... contagious diseases. We had here in... in the academy, conjunctivitis. Conjunctivitis is an infection that is transmitted by contact. So, the eyes turn red and it's horrible and it festers and you have to put drops in your eyes with antibiotics made for that. So that was... it was... Imagine, at the time, it was... Imagine 200 or 300 young men with... with that, and so they said: "Well, send them home." Immediately, the director says: "Don't take them out of there because the Ministry is coming and they will put up a... a... what do you call it? A quarantine, it's going to put up a quarantine and everyone..." Because it was a matter of spreading that virus all throughout El Salvador, because all the young men here are... They come from cities, from far-away towns. So, they were going to... They were, of course, going to spread that all over. So, until they get better. I remember that some students came over with very red eyes. And they told me: "Look, we have a problem." "Right. And what problem do you have?" "Look, we... They said that all the people sick with... with conjunctivitis were going to be sent home. We've put lime juice in our eyes and we've put sand in our eyes so that they turn red, so that we can go, too, not so we would stay here." So I told them: "For now, let the doctor who is going to see you decide. Tell him what you've done. Because, really, you..." So, that was*

one of the things that took place that, to put one way, was a bit difficult, as well. When smallpox struck, since they're young, and there's smallpox and... or measles, a considerable kind of smallpox... That is to say, there's a kind that produces one eruption here, another there, another there. No. In one small area, perhaps a square inch, there were ten, at least eight, small eruptions. So, there are young men that... that... that... right? And they had to stay in the academy so that they wouldn't go out and spread that. And also the sanitary control over the young men has been very complicated, mostly because of that. Because if they don't go home and they go to... in the buses and... And the truth is that measles, smallpox, conjunctivitis, they are highly contagious, they're passed on contact. So, I remember that, all the things we had to go through to get the necessary medications, the public health control unit that always came over to the academy, and the doctors of the academy themselves who also rectified those kinds of things. And on the other hand, I feel that some of the mistakes that we could have perhaps rectified is that the police officer that provides security must also be provided with security, and we would like every young man to have his equipment. His complete uniform, and a fair salary, adequate to... to... to the economic reality of the country. Something that is really necessary. Equipment. A uniform and equipment. We're talking about bulletproof vests... right? So that he goes around with... with... a weapon in good condition. His... Because I think that police officers represent the Salvadorian society. It's an image of us. Not just an institutional image but an image of the country. And a police officer that does something wrong is something that also makes us look bad. And anything good that he does, we're giving off a good image. Therefore, I believe that is also important. That social control, always, that society that always has to see its police force moving and doing its work in the best possible way.

HUNT: If... If the United Nations or the donating countries were involved in the efforts to reconstruct police services, what would be the most significant challenges that the police force would have to face once they left?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Well, that already happened. We've already had that experience and the truth is that one of the... one of the biggest challenges for us is knowing what to do when these people that came over here leave. It wasn't just a presence... Their presence was extremely important because it was a friendly country. It was a friendly country that was like a... like a supervisor. Not just one of the ones that it had trained, but also in terms of the relationships that it had over here. I think us Salvadorians can... That is to say, as long as we have and multiply knowledge by means of the people that have brought experience and as long as we maintain that experience and that active relationship with them through other channels, despite their not being present anymore, but rather, that the consistency, the consist relationship and also that... Because it's one thing to follow up on things, and another thing to give them... to supervise them. But another thing is evaluation, that is, constant evaluation in terms of how we're doing, what we're doing right, what we're doing wrong. What is it that we are doing wrong and what is it that we are doing right. So that we can improve it and so that we can change whatever is bad. In that sense, I think that friendly countries left, in that sense, a... a mark, but they left. They completed their mission, but I think Salvadorians... right? Us technicians managed to take charge of things. I think that in that sense there's not much of a problem. What is necessary is to follow up on what is already done. Not to say: "Well, we're finished here, we're leaving and goodbye and farewell. See how you manage." Right? No, rather, to monitor it, as well, to follow up on it and to improve things, to make new changes, and to give substance to that constantly. To say: "Look, we have this knowledge, we're going to share with you this knowledge. To see how you can apply it. How are you doing and what do you need?" Because that whole question of what one needs is also important. And, as I was telling you, to prioritize is what is necessary to solve any situation. But I'll tell you, I think that in that sense, yes, Salvadorians fared well. We... We were not given any fish. We were taught how to make a fishing pole in order to be able to fish, so that's the good thing. From there on, we've even made improvements to the fishing pole that was given to us.

HUNT: Well, thank you very much for your time and your dedication to this interview.

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Thank you.

HUNT: I have one more question before I leave. If you were to write a manual for people that have to build police units in problematic contexts, what subjects would you consider the most important ones?

GRANADINO MEJÍA: First of all, human relationships, of course. Social integration, the relationship that the police has with society. Internal controls are also important, as is power. Managing human resources and how to optimize material resources, logistical and financial resources. And also, always a kind of... a kind of permanent education, a permanent training, and trying to balance the fact that even... that though there are hierarchies in the institutions, to know that we are all equal. And that we all have attitudes and aptitudes and that we all make mistakes and also have virtues, defects and virtues, but what has to come ahead is with our virtues and with our defects, that is to say, interpersonal relationships. Also, why not say it? To try and take up all the advances and the technical experiences acquired in order to impart them to those who need it, that is, to be an example but also to help out others that need help. I think that would be the most interesting aspect because that's what manuals are for. And that each one knows that there are different circumstances, different historical realities that have to be taken into account to see how... "This is not a part of it, but I can do it this way, anyway." Nothing is written in stone, but rather everything has to be done in reference to the development of each country, of each culture, of each society, of each person. I think that we... Yes, and it's a good idea because it's... it's a matter of insisting on part of the life of... of Salvadorians, of insisting on the history of our country. And I think that in matters of security, there is still a lot... a lot to be done, there's a lot to impart but there is also a lot to be learned. So it's necessary to learn something everyday. And to be open, open minded, to be able to grasp the good things, the bad things. You learn from everything. And continuing to learn is a matter of improvement.

HUNT: Well, this has been a fascinating conversation. Thank you very much.

GRANADINO MEJÍA: Thank you, and greetings to... to the students and professors at Princeton University. God bless you.