

cross would have been an intolerable development. We had built a situation where we were compelled to stick to our bargain, precisely because we intended to do so. We had no other wish than to abide scrupulously by every detail of these arrangements. This is what happened.

The mechanism for safe conduct in this case was different, to my knowledge, from anything that has happened in any other country. There have been kidnappings elsewhere. People have been released from prison and shipped abroad, and the victims subsequently released. That kind of operation is relatively simpler because the kidnappers themselves don't feel trapped. They're not apprehended. They continue to hold their hostage. The local government in that type of situation merely tries to protect itself from any double-crossing. For instance, it arranges for prisoners to be sent out of the country and put in the hands of an impartial third party, say the government of X. Once the prisoners are there, they await the release of the hostage. When he is released, the government of X proceeds to send the prisoners on to Y, their final destination. If the hostage is not released, the government of X presumably returns these people to their country of origin, in accordance with prior undertakings. In our case, we had to devise a system whereby the kidnappers would come forward of their own free will and release their hostage before they had attained a safe haven abroad. It was quite tricky.

The kidnappers obviously expected that the Canadian Government would play fair. The way they behaved when they arrived at Terre des Hommes, the way they behaved during the trip, was not suspicious. They obviously thought the mechanism provided quite reasonable assurance.

There was never any problem in the fact that Canadian officials would accompany them?

No, because, first, they were accompanied by the Cuban representative who had received them at Man and His World. Secondly, they seemed to find it quite natural for Canadian officials to accompany them. After all, we had to satisfy ourselves that the arrangements were complied with. There was no surprise, no resistance.

Can you describe the flight? Did you talk with the kidnappers during the trip?

The flight itself was in a Canadian aircraft manned by Canadian personnel. The atmosphere was quite relaxed, quiet and subdued. There was no unpleasantness. We spoke with the kidnappers, who seemed to react quite well to our presence. The Canadian Government had made available a doctor on the flight — one of the women was expecting a child at almost any moment.

What is the status of the task force now?

The officers who comprised it have now returned to their regular duties, and the Operations Centre continues its normal functions.