The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

GARY H. MAYBARDUK

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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[Note: This interview was not edited by Mr. Maybarduk.]

Q: This is a Foreign Affairs Oral History Program interview with Gary Maybarduk. Today is the 18th of October 2007. This interview is being conducted under the auspices of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. I'm Stu Kennedy. Gary let me ask where your last name comes from.

MAYBARDUK: It comes from Russia, although it may have much more ancient history in that. My father's father was from Russia; actually my grandparents and my father all emigrated from Russia right after the Revolution. He had been a medical officer in the Czar's army and served on the German front, so after the revolution he was not immediately suspect, in fact he became head of a neurological department of the state hospital. But an uncle was arrested and he said time was near. This would have been about 1920? I thought it was over by then, yeah I think it was over by then.

Q: They were getting ready; I guess that was about the time of the Polish war.

MAYBARDUK: Apparently they came from Odessa, and there was apparently fighting in Odessa at one point. My father was a little boy and was out in the street and told the story of his father, my grandfather, literally pulling him back from a street corner as machine-gun fire went off and where he was standing, bullets were flying.
So they were in that part of the fighting.

He had been born in Vilnius, reportedly born on a train or had been on a train, his mother, and born unexpectedly at that point. I don't really have a history as to how she happened to be there at that time. In any event, he got permission to go to Vilnius to seek medical treatment; he was a doctor himself but he claimed some sort of illness. He rented his apartment to a KGB agent or someone with a precursor to the KGB.

Q: That was probably UMPUR (OGPU, State Political Directorate), or something like that.

MAYBARDUK: I'm not a great history buff of Russia at that time. Then he traveled with my grandmother, my father, and my grandmother's mother who had been trapped in Rividine when the Great War started, up to around Vilnius and crossed the border into Poland. He had the foresight to see what was coming and he had spent all his money

buying jewelry and he used this jewelry to bribe his way all the way. In fact, the last part of these days was to a Rabbi, there was a butterfly diamond broach, which was used to pay whoever got them to the railway trestle and then escaped literally in the middle of the night, a moonless night over the railway trestle with my grandfather carrying the suitcases. My grandfather was about 5'11". My grandmother, I guess, was about 4'11" and was having trouble negotiating the trestle getting herself over and a Polish guard coming over to get my father and my great grandmother and carrying them across. My father was seven at the time. This was about 1921, I think.

My father told the story, you know, "The first time we never had white bread was at the railway station across the border before they went to Warsaw." He fell asleep on some crates next to somebody's pet wolf. It was quite an escape.

Q: Well how did they end up in the United States?

MAYBARDUK: My grandmother was from Poland and my grandparents had met in Berlin before the war where my grandfather was studying neurology and psychiatry, which were a joined profession at the time.

My grandmother was studying opera. My grandmother actually sung with the Berlin opera for a while and they moved back to Russia. Well, when they crossed over, they ended up spending three years in Poland. My grandfather already established a name for himself in neurology in the publications he had done when he was in Germany and was offered after three years polish citizenship, which was very unusual for a Jew, very unusual.

The family story goes is that he seriously considered staying. He asked his family there and my father then ten, or roughly ten, said, "You promised me we were going to go to America." My grandfather kept his promise, thank God, because the remnants of the Polish family died in the Holocaust.

Q: How did they all get to America? Where did they go?

MAYBARDUK: I think they got to Paris first and my grandfather spent some time there in the neurological institute there. I don't know how long a period, but it's interesting we have a print done by,..I don't remember his name at the moment. He was someone who was famous for his movie posters after the First World War but this is a print of all the people at the neurology institute and technological university of medicine in Paris. I subsequently discovered that it is a very well known print in a couple of museums around the world. I've got to find out more about it. On the back of our copy, there's a penciled "19," so it may be very early, the first of a series and he must have collected it in Paris. But then they came by ship through Ellis Island, pretty direct.

Q: Where did they settle?

MAYBARDUK: In New York state.

Q: I think your family would be at that time rather unusual because most of the Jews coming out of Eastern Europe were really village folk, pheasants practically, and here is a professional family. I suppose when they got to the United States their experiences were also somewhat different…?

MAYBARDUK: My grandmother actually started singing professionally right away. I guess she was known and she sang at Carnegie Hall several times. The newspaper reviews at the time, which we still have, all said that she belonged in the Metropolitan opera.

Q: Is her name…

MAYBARDUK: Her stage name was, I don't know, her name was Maria, Maria Maybarduk. I don't know if she had a stage name. I might find that out as we go along in this and find out more history on that. My grandfather spent the first year working as an orderly. Grandfather was very sophisticated, very proud looking, very erect looking man but he spent his first year working as an orderly in a hospital as he learned English. But he immediately decided that they should live on 5th Avenue. How he managed it economically, I don't know, but they moved to 5th Avenue very quickly and he established his practice. He had done very well financially in Poland, those three years in Poland; he arrived in Poland without and money. He did very well financially in the first few years in the United States until the year of the Great Depression when there were plenty of out of work for psychiatrists at that time; but nobody had money for it. At the same time he accepted an unpaid teaching position part time at the New York Medical School, called Flowers of 5th Avenue, I think it is now incorporated into another school, which he continued to teach at until he retired.

We have these citations from his work with the poor. He never made a lot of money after that, after the Great Depression. That became a bit of a problem for my father who started college at NYU (New York University) and loved it. After his freshman year because of the financial situation, he had to switch to City College of New York. My father was a very good student. City College at that time was, of course, a reputable institution. He went to school with both (Albert) Sabin and (Jonas) Salk at various times.

Q: I was going to say academically City College of New York was no come down at all.
MAYBARDUK: No, it was no come down at all, but it didn't have a campus. My father always suffered from the Depression complex of never feeling he had financial security even when he did. That was a key theme when I was a kid.

My grandmother gave up performing publicly after my grandfather got established in his practice. She was a very traditional wife and my grandfather was a very traditional husband at the time. She taught opera and music for the rest of her life. In fact, when she died in her mid-eighties she was teaching that night. She still had a beautiful voice in her 80s. It was kind of a shame because she clearly probably did have a talent to have gone on and performed in the Met and so on.

Q: How about the maternal side of your family?

MAYBARDUK: My mother now is old, old American. The family lore, but I don't think it's been established, is that great, great, great grandfather several times removed was, David Kinnison. He was reputedly the last remaining member of the Boston Tea Party. There is a statue to him in Chicago. I think the family tradition has been that her father, the Kinnison line came from that line and I've been told there is some skepticism about this.

Q: When did your parents meet?

MAYBARDUK: They met I think on the beach somewhere in New Jersey; they were introduced by a great aunt and uncle at age 15 but they didn't marry for another eleven years. They were good buddies and my mother was diplomatic but interested and it took her a long time…my father was interested right away.

Q: Your father was doing what then?

MAYBARDUK: My father went to City College of New York, from there he went to NYU medical school. I think he did his internship at Kings County, which is a well-known hospital. He started his surgical residency and I'm not sure where he started his surgical residency but volunteered for the military before the start of World War II. He was Jewish, of course, and really felt very strongly about it. So he volunteered, he was in the Louisiana maneuvers.

Q: The famous maneuvers in 1940 where Eisenhower as a lieutenant colonel showed his stuff wasn't it?

MAYBARDUK: Well that is another funny story. I will get back to that in a minute but quickly to give a feel of the story. He suffered severe asthma attacks during that period. He got a medical discharge and as soon as he recovered he really missed it and came back in the military and served all through World War II. He never went overseas which was lucky because whatever his unit was, his first unit, they were badly mauled in the Battle of The Bulge, but my father never went overseas. There were interesting stories from that period. He was passed to a headquarters company during the Louisiana exercises. General (George) Patton had been captured during these exercises. I never heard this story anywhere but from my father. He apparently got out of his tank to take a smoke and two privates captured him. They brought him back to headquarters and he said, "You have never seen anyone so angry as was General Patton who was brought in by two privates."

Q: In your family now how many…do you have any brothers and sisters?

MAYBARDUK: I have a sister.

Q: In your family did you sort of grow up on Park Avenue or…?

MAYBARDUK: No, no. Well, let me quickly finish with my father situation. When he joined the military the first place they put him, a surgical resident, they put him as a resident in a psychiatric hospital, typical Army snafu. He hated it at the time because his father was a psychiatrist and he didn't want to be a psychiatrist. Later he said it was probably the single best education in his career. When he got out of the Army he went back to Mt. Sinai where he finished his residency. I was born in the Bronx, I guess, in 1945 but we were living on Staten Island at the time. My father was still in the military and I was almost born on the Staten Island ferry in a rush to get over. We later moved to the Bronx. At one point we lived in a Quonset hut, a temporary Quonset hut at Bruckner Blvd and 33rd that famous interchange, it took thirty years to build. I guess he started practice in the same office with his father, but he really hated New York.

Eventually in 1950 when I was five and my sister had just been born we moved to Orlando, Florida, which was the home of my mother's family. My great grandmother was born in a covered wagon on the way from South Carolina to Orlando right after the Civil War. Two of the broader lakes in the area were named after her sisters. That side of the family is huge none of them I know, but its thousands of relatives. On my father's side of the family there was just a nuclear family, myself and my sister who was born in 1950.

So, I grew up in Orlando.

Q: In a way your mother was not Jewish then?

MAYBARDUK: She was not Jewish, no.

Q: This technically makes you not Jewish. How would you describe whether your family was Jewish or not?

MAYBARDUK: I think we were ethnically Jewish but not religious. My father was never willing to deny his Jewish background. He did not want me to call myself Jewish because he was worried because of the Holocaust. I took a different lesson out of it, I admired him for the fact that he couldn't change his identify and so I've always called myself Jewish but nevertheless he really did not want me to call myself Jewish.

Q: That's interesting but technically isn't it that if your mother is not Jewish you are not Jewish

MAYBARDUK: Well, in the U.S. the Reform Synagogue, the reformed branch of Judaism had changed that, Conservative and Orthodox Judaism has not. But, no, in the fact, my identity has been questioned over the years because those Jews would still not consider me Jewish.

Q: It's not really much of an issue anymore but at one time it was, wasn't it?

MAYBARDUK: It was a big issue. It was a big issue when I was growing up. But, I've learned a lot about the family name and it is quite clear to me now from my studies that it is probably has some sort of Turkish language origin.

Q: You know I was looking at it and it sort of the MAY part of it looks Turkish.

MAYBARDUK: BARDUK was the Babylonia god of wine and MARDUK, of course, was the equivalent, the Syrian equivalent of Jews of Jupiter. It was translated at one time as seller of wine, a seller of wine flasks in some languages. The family married into the creed or the paradise, which was a totally different separate branch of Judaism that did not follow the rabbinical tradition of the Talmud. It accepted the Torah, but not the Talmud and really developed during the Babylonian exile. There was a very large group at the time. In 1790s or 1796 or something, the Parilites were given full citizenship in Czarist Russia, which my grandfather had. Although we are not sure it came at that time and when it came but he had it. He had studied in Yalta, which is where I think the family had come from, in the gymnasium, a high school of the princess.

Q: That's the summer residence of the Czarist family.

MAYBARDUK: There was a high school equivalent where his daughters, princesses studied. We still have a gold medal from that because he was the top of his class. Well you know it was a unique family in that, even though it was Jewish, was well situated in Russian society. His father had been a doctor as well, a dentist I think, and before that there was someone who had been a quartermaster to the Czar's army. So you know it was a very different background for most Russian Jews.

Q: Well I was going to say well then let's talk about Orlando. What was Orlando like as a kid?

MAYBARDUK: Remember some of the older towns in the Midwest that were dying? That's kind of what Orlando looked like at the time. It wasn't dying but brick streets were still everywhere.

Q: Picket fences?

MAYBARDUK: There weren't picket fences that I remember very much, but downtown you had brick streets. You had a few tall buildings, what is called downtown Orlando today was downtown then but it really wasn't downtown then. The first strip mall shopping center was built around 1950. We had two department stores downtown, you had a big movie theater downtown, there was another one in Winter Park and I think there was one other somewhere. Winter Park was like a sister city to Orlando. But it really was a downtown. Lake Yolo was the biggest lake near downtown. In 1950 they had just built a big hotel there. It was the first new hotel that had been built quite a few years near Yolo Park it was called Yellow Plaza. My father set up his office there as a doctor. He was a doctor for the hotel as well as providing a certain amount of income at that time. My mother remembers Orlando as a girl as a place that everybody would come

in from the countryside on the weekend to shop. It wasn't a very big place; I don't think it was more than 40,000.

Q: Well, what was it like being a kid there?

MAYBARDUK: Well, the first few years we lived with my aunt and uncle, the aunt and uncle who introduced my parents. It was an old neighborhood, houses built in the 1920s by another relative there downtown but there were no kids in the neighborhood. It was very difficult for when I went to school. This was a property the equivalent of a nine city lots, there was a lot of places to run around, two small rows of banana trees and plenty places to hide and play and a lot of space. But people didn't worry about kids being outside all the time and we all played outside. So I don't know whether there were little fears of a small child going to school and so on.

In 1953 we moved to a newer part of town to a tract house to a newer part of town right next to a new elementary school, dead end to an elementary school. There were lots of kids there. I grew up with people my age, we had our gangs, not nasty gangs but they were gangs.

We could roam for blocks and blocks and blocks and we tended to play army a lot, I had a cool set of rifles and army helmets and bazookas and machineguns and plastic hand grenades.

Q: Were you much of a reader or not?

MAYBARDUK: Yes, very early.

Q: Do you recall any of the sort of early books that…

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, I don't know the name of it, I don't know the name of it but there was a reader at the time that talked about families who had traveled the United States in a trailer and lived in different parts of the United States, working part-time and living in a trailer. I wish I knew the name of that book but I liked it and of course I would finish it within the first six weeks of the school year. I was a very good reader, a fast reader but I think that is the earliest book that I actually remember.

Q: Well how about as you move on a little bit…

MAYBARDUK: Well I got into science fiction.

Q: Science fiction oh yes.

MAYBARDUK: Loved (Isaac) Asimov and to this day I've read everything that Asimov has written in science fiction. But I remember in school at some point they had a summer reading program where there was some sort of prize, I don't remember what it was, if you read more than 70 books or various numbers and I know I read 70 books, short books.

But we didn't get TV until about 1953 or 1954 so books and the radio were my sources. That's very important by the way, because I think the radio really stimulated the imagination the way TV cannot do; as do books. My grandmother, in the first five years particularly, when she visited us would tell these stories, made up stories, birdie stories and they were usually stories that were designed to make you think so she would tell about a birdie flying this way or that way. I don't remember any of the story but it very often ended up with they flew into the nest and my nest was my mouth. It was a happy childhood, I really felt, I never had any anxieties like everybody else. It was a good time.

Q: How about in elementary did you take to school or how did you find school?

MARBARDUK: I enjoyed school, liked my teachers for the most part. Was often bored.

Q: Which is a problem sometimes.

MARBARDUK: It probably showed up in other ways in my life as well. But you know I had good teachers and I enjoyed school. I was not an athlete I have this foot that pronates out quite a bit and I could never run very fast and I just never, even though I was a big kid I was never an athlete and that created a certain amount of anxieties on the playground and elsewhere. I never got in a fight except maybe in sixth grade. I avoided them; I didn't like confrontations.

Q: My grandson just went to kindergarten two weeks ago and I didn't tell him but my first day of kindergarten stressful.

MAYBARDUK: I remember kindergarten we had a shoe tying contest and my mother had double and triple tied my shoelaces. I was still untying my shoelaces when everybody had finished tying them and I came home so angry at my mother.

Q: I assume the school system in Orlando was segregated and like much of the South there wasn't that much emphasis on education as farther north. Did you get any feel that maybe Orlando was different?

MAYBARDUK: Probably not, my father's colleagues were all professionals and we all came up in a well-educated family. My mother had not had much formal education. She actually did not graduate from high school that's because her parents were divorced. In fact, all the women in her family are divorced, married at least three times, several of my aunts. So was her father but I don't know if he had five or six wives; he was quite an adventurer himself actually. She had moved around a lot, which disrupted her education but she was apparently president of a junior high school in Orlando at one point, she lived in Orlando. She did not live in Orlando her entire life she lived in the Dominican Republic with her father, she lived sometimes with her mother in California and she lived all over.

Q: In Orlando when you were there I assume that there wasn't much Spanish influence or anything like that at the time.

MARBARDUK: No, no, the race issue though was important in the family history. My father was a New York liberal and my mother shared his view. During the Louisiana maneuvers he was leading some sort of medical company or some sort of march at one point and then he stopped at a diner to eat. The proprietor would not serve the black soldiers or soldier whatever, in the dining room but would do it in the kitchen and my father stood up and marched out. He really did believe in civil rights.

The main reason we moved out of the home of my aunt and uncle was my father's view on civil rights, which infuriated my mother's aunt who was a real Florida cracker, real old south. At one point, this was during the McCarthy era still, while we were still living there, she denounced my parent's to a local newspaper as Communists and luckily the local newspaper was the Orlando Sentinel which was very conservative realized that she was a nut. But that was the break for many years and that's kind of why we moved out although my uncle, sweetest guy in the world, I mean still to me is my second father and grandfather, we remained very close until he died when I was sixteen.

Q: In sort the early years before you went to high school did the outside world intrude much within your family, in other wards sit around and talk about…?

MAYBARDUK: My family was interested in events, news events. I wasn't, I always thought that newsreels when we went to see movies and the newsreels were the most boring part of the whole thing. I wanted the cartoons and I wanted the movies but I couldn't stand the newsreels, but yeah. My mother was extremely well read and people who knew my mother would be surprised to learn that she hadn't gotten a masters degree.

My mother was more intellectual than my father despite the fact that my father went on to higher education. My mother was a true intellectual and they were both thinkers but she was a much more, if you know the Myers-Briggs category, I'm an INPP. Intuitive, introspective, thinker, is always thinking, is always trying to perfect his thinking in thoughts and so on and always late. Still today. My mother was much worse. There was a lot of discussion around the family table.

Q: Where did your family fall politically?

MAYBARDUK: They were both Democrats. I became a Republican very early. I like Ike and I liked to play soldier; I liked being a Republican. I somehow became attached to the Republican Party because of Eisenhower very early on. But they were fairly liberal government but they loved Adlai Stevenson, they loved Adlai Stevenson.

Q: Now, did you do middle school in Orlando?

MAYBARDUK: Yes. My middle school was called Robert E. Lee Junior High and it wasn't too far from the house.

Q: Named after a traitor.

MAYBARDUK: Well we didn't see him that way. Actually the fact that I was from the North and always took northern views there was a sort of respect for Robert E. Lee. You know that even I absorbed, but we did have a Confederate flag. Now this time, you now in 1954 there was a Supreme Court's decision, on school desegregation, Brown vs. the Board of Education.

I was in fourth grade in 1954 and I guess the decision had been announced, I was not aware of the decision of course, but one of the favorite teachers I loved just went on and on and on about she would never teach class to so on and so forth. I went home and cried to hear a teacher I really liked saying something very different from what my parents had taught me and I think that more than any other time sort of made me aware of the whole civil rights issues and so on.

But eventually I went on to this Robert E. Lee Junior High, I was happy there, I liked the school, I was still bored sometimes but it was seventh through ninth. I was at this point fully planning to be a scientist. In third grade we had had a lesson on electricity and I thought this was the neatest stuff and I decided I was going to be a scientist and that continued to college. So I joined the radio club and joined the projection crew, which showed movies in classes, I joined the sound crew club (it was a different club then) which provided all the music for school bands and rallies and so on. By eighth grade I was president of at least one if not two of them and by ninth grade I was president of all three, of course it was almost the same kids in each of the groups. but anyway, that was kind of the focus of my activities in junior high school. I ran for class president and lost but I had fun doing it.

Q: Were you picking up anything or any interest in foreign affairs by the time you were say in high school?

MAYBARDUK: I was probably about 14, maybe 13, in about 1958 I'm not sure exactly my father went to the Amazon. The Linguistics Summer Institute was based in Orlando. A group of missionaries, as well as the churches of Orlando, had all contributed their pennies to buy them a PBY amphibious aircraft for the Institute's use in the Amazon and the city had adopted the sister city of Goiania in Brazil. So there was a delegation going to South America and someone came into my father's office to get shots and told my father what he was doing and he was fascinated and he said you need a doctor on this trip. Ten minutes later the patient had called the mayor and my father was a member of the delegation. He was a Jewish member of the delegation.

Q: This delegation would be basically Evangelical…

MAYBARDUK: An Evangelical trip but it was also sponsored by the city, yes. My father spent six weeks starting in Venezuela, going to Brazil, going into Peru. At one point he was the third European the Indians had seen. If you've ever seen the Dumas story, the story about Rachel Carlton and the three missionary men who were killed by a tribe and

then their wives went back to work for the same tribe. There is a movie about it and a couple books.

Q: Yes, I remember that.

MAYBARDUK: Well he met them all and had them all over to our house over the years. I had joined a radio club in addition at the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) and this was ham radio and I got busy with hams but there were some electronics there and we communicated with my father on this trip by ham radio through the radio club. The ham radios would call out of the Amazon and would eventually make contact with him and then they would patch it to the home by telephone and that is how we communicated. So this I think really sort of opened my eye up quite a bit. About the same time and I was trying to remember before or after and I will clear that up later for the record we took a trip to Mexico. My first airplane trip. We spent about a week or ten days in Mexico doing the tourist route of Mexico City, Taxco and Oaxaca. So yeah at this period I had quite a bit of introduction to that.

It was about this time that my mother went back to work. My mother had been a dance teacher of Hawaiian dance and so she went back to teaching Hawaiian dance and, of course, my mother took as much from the intellectual as from the dance view. She had studied with someone who really knew the ancient hulas and so she taught it a bit academically as well, I think.

Q: Of course, the Hawaiian dance the talking hula hands I mean they are telling stories, it's not just dancing for dancing.

MAYBARDUK: Right. She liked to see the hula as something more than sexy. She of course had lived in the Dominican Republic and Haiti with her father. Her father had been the engineer with the, I think it was with Florida Power, and had build much of the power plants in Haiti and some in the Dominican Republic for thirty years putting in the hydroelectric facilities. They still exist in Haiti and they've never been improved upon. So the family had quite a bit of international background. It was not my interest, I mean I was introduced to it but it really was not my interest I was very definitely into science.

I remember in eighth grade my first science project which was a little voltage divider, which provided very little power, supply for all sorts of battery power and various project. In ninth grade I built, or maybe it was tenth grade, I built my own stereo amplifier tube stereo amplifier from scratch, not from a kit; I'd built kits as well. Sputnik [Ed: October 4, 1957 the Soviet Union launch the first satellite.] had happened as I was going just before going into seventh grade and this is when the accelerated programs were started all over the sciences.

So I entered seventh grade and there were class sections divided from 7- section 1 to 7- section 23, right? I was in section 7-1 and the dumbest kids were in 7-23. So I was in 7-1, 8-1 and 9-1 and between seventh and eighth or eighth and ninth they gave a summer

school course in electronic circuitry and I loved it. I learned a tremendous amount. Which goes to show you that they really should teach some things a lot sooner than they do.

Q: Where were the teachers coming from because I think in certain parts…

MAYBARDUK: That particular teacher was from Martin-Marietta, a company which has engineering and space divisions.

In 1960 Orlando was citrus country. It was citrus country and it was cattle country and it was the center of the state so a lot of traffic went through there. But it basically had a large agricultural base until about 1960 when the whole space program developed. It had a decent airport, which Cape Kennedy did not. Martin Marietta was there with a missile factory with 10,000 employees. In a town which only had about 40,000 people! So between 1960 and 1970, part of the time I was living there, Orlando underwent tremendous growth. The number of high school expanded from two to ten, all over the area. A significant investment in education. I don't know where the teachers came from and some of them were not very good.

Q: Did you feel the impact of desegregation? This wasn't an area where there were many blacks was it?

MYBARDUK: Desegregation, not really. There was, there was an African-American population, but at the time of the 1954 decision we had LeRoy Collins as governor and who were they to say that he had always lived in segregation and never thought much about it but after the decision realized it was wrong. He really helped Florida get through it without a major struggle, unlike Mississippi and Arkansas and somewhere else. But it really didn't hit Orlando until about the time I graduated. In fact, my old elementary school the first black child to go into my old elementary school was the daughter of my parent's housekeeper. We lived at a dead end to the school and it was easier for her that her child went into first grade and through the entire system and there were no problems, very little problems. So yeah it was a big thing, there were certainly a lot of feelings about it and strong feelings in the schools and talking about it and so on but the process was relatively at least a lot less painful.

Q: The kids weren't feeling all the strains and all of that?

MAYBARDUK: Not as much, not that I could see anyway. The high schools were integrated when I was there. However, my first teacher; pre-kindergarten I guess in New York was black. Some of the vaguest memories of that but vague because I think we pulled out half way through the year.

Q: Do you recall that the 1960 election of Kennedy engage your family and all?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, yeah, it engaged me.

Q: How did it engage you?

MAYBARDUK: I think I was getting interested in politics at the time. I heard the debates. I always thought Nixon won the debates. I don't know if I heard them on the radio, on television or what but I heard the debates, I still think he won the debates. So I was for Nixon. I think I was a Republican because of Ike. My parents were clearly for Kennedy, clearly, clearly for Kennedy.

Q: When did you graduate from high school?

MAYBARDUK: 1963.

Q: The Cuban Missile Crisis was close to home.

MAYBARDUK: Oh yes, God yes. I remember we went out stocking up on …somewhere we picked up a great big tool box about 18 inches by two feet wide and I remember we stocked that completely with food, still have it, I just keep tools in it. Stocked it completely with of food. We didn't leave; I mean I don't remember seeing the military vehicles but they were a real presence. We had a SAC (Strategic Air Command) Air Force base at McCoy, Pinecastle Air Force Base back then. We always practiced ducking under the desks and the mothers were organized to pick up the kids from school. Now what they were going to do with them…it was all the stuff from the 1950s and you were worried about nuclear strikes.

Q: You've got to do something; you have to have people feel they have something to do.

MAYBARDUK: Right, yeah. I was a patrol boy in the sixth grade and so I remember, vaguely remember the front driveway of the school as we loaded kids in cars and mothers came in.

Q: How did you find high school? Was this a social time?

MAYBARDUK: I was pretty awkward in junior high. I didn't start really to date…back then, of course, we had dancing schools at least for those whose parents could afford it. So seventh through ninth grade I went to Mrs. Pounds dancing school. So I guess my first dates were going to the dance at the end of the…I don't remember those very well at all. At a reunion some woman reminded me that I was her first date but mostly I remember this one girl I liked an awful lot but I had allergies and her perfume always made me sneeze and I never knew how to tell her that.

But as far as high school, I would say ninth grade was a very good year for me before I went. I just felt everything was psychologically cozy. I was school leader at least in my clubs and so on. Then, of course, in tenth grade you are at the bottom of the ring and so I remember the tenth grade being uncomfortable and an awkward year although that is when I started dating. I joined the science club and by the next year was president of it that was my main extracurricular…except we kept the radio club from junior night school and we moved it with us to a union hall. I guess I had been sort of a dictator to my friends

and colleagues in junior high so when they moved the radio club there was a coup and I was ousted as president. It taught me a lot actually, it taught me a lot, which would serve me well later. So that was my main activity. But we did we did all the music for all the school dances, we did all sorts of things, we had a great time, a great time.

Q: Well were you pointed toward any particular college? You were pointed toward college I assume?

MAYBARDUK: Oh yeah. I think in somewhere in elementary school or junior high my father wanted me to play football and I was out there on the football field, failing miserably. Somebody I knew had a brother who was going to MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and I had never heard of MIT. But after that that became my goal. So yes I was very much directed toward college and my father was very tough on grades, both my parents were. I could never spell worth a darn so in elementary school my mother would have practice spelling sessions each week and before the silly tests we'd have spelling sessions. So I got reasonable grades in spelling but only by the brute force method. But I took all the science classes in high school and my senior year I built a laser and won all the local science fair prizes except the one I really wanted which would have taken me to national, I qualified for state but not to national.

Q: Well then where did you go to school or college?

MAYBARDUK: I went to MIT.

Q: How difficult was it to get in?

MAYBARDUK: I was on the waiting list. My grades weren't all that good; they were good but they weren't all that good. I got bored easily, trouble sitting myself down to work and then senior year I had a terrible physics teacher. They were still trying to fight the Russians and so they had introduced a new PFS some like that, I don't remember the initials, physics program much more experimental and it was clearly beyond our physics teacher. It was a very poor class and I was never introduced to calculus, we had what they called Algebra III, a new teacher, I think, who couldn't control the class so in some ways I wasn't prepared when I went to MIT. But I was on a waiting list; I was actually all set to go to Carnegie Tech [Ed: Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh in 1967 merged with Mellon Institute of Industrial Research to form Carnegie Mellon University.]

Q: You were at MIT from when to when?

MAYBARDUK: From 1963-1967.

Q: When you got there in 1963 how did MIT strike you?

MAYBARDUK: I was comfortable there for the first few weeks and became steadily more uncomfortable that first year as I really struggle with my courses. I had never come

across a function and so I was in the first year of calculus where of 900 freshmen, 200 who had scored 800 on college boards in math. I was in serious trouble. I wasn't in as much trouble in physics although little mistakes on exams and not quite getting things right always seemed to knock me down. So I really at the end of the first semester wasn't sure if I was going to make it. I had gotten Ds in several courses and I was really struggling; it was a very difficult period. I joined the fraternity but at the end of the first semester was kicked out, I think because MIT was a strange place where people were rated by their academic grades and fraternities to get pledges had to have high GPAs (grade point averages) and I was bringing it down. So I went home and to save my parent's money I took a bus home instead of flying. Got off the bus, the last long bus trip I ever took and I was at the absolute bottom with everything, everything seemed to be going wrong. But it got better it got a lot better; it got a lot better.

Q: Were you concentrating on any particular element of MIT course of studies?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, I had gone from wanting to be an electronic engineer. Well, I guess my first interest was astronomy, went to being an electronic engineer, this was through junior and parts of senior high. At some point I decided I really wanted to be a physicist and, of course, I always hope to be one of the great ten physicists of our time and so did the other 900 colleagues, MIT freshmen. By the end of the first semester that was clear it was not going to happen, but it was my goal at the time.

The key thing about my freshman year for what this project is about was that in the second semester, I think it was in the second semester, I took a freshmen course in the emerging nations. It was the beginning of the Kennedy era, a time of great hope working with the developing nations. Both MIT and Harvard had a whole series of professors who were well known in the field of government and political developments…

Q: Of course, it was at that time Africa was coming into…this was really an emerging time.

MAYBARDUK: This was during a period of intellectual ferment in views. So the academics primarily at Harvard and MIT had put together a book called <u>The Emerging Nations: Their Growth and U.S. Policy</u> [Ed: Max Millikan and Donald Blackmer, eds. 1962], discussing emerging nations and what was happening. The freshmen seminar was really just a seminar in which the writers of the various chapters of the book would come in and talk to the class. So the big names of Poole, Joseph Nye and Max Milliken, a sociologist who wrote on Turkey, and so on, all came in. It was like peanuts to me I couldn't get enough of it. So by the end of my freshman year I was loving this stuff and trying to figure out what to do with it. So the second year at MIT I was still at MIT and taking all the physics, calculus, standard courses you had to take were still primarily science in my second year but I was doing much better, I was getting Bs at least in the courses, Bs and As. I took this course in political science and at some point I went in to talk to the professor who was a linguistic anthropologist I think, he was interested in my name too. Everybody always asks me about the name.

I asked him, I love this stuff but what do I do with it because I really didn't have a clue. I guess at some point in that conversation he mentioned the Foreign Service. I had never heard of the Foreign Service. I think I've always needed a sense of direction in my life just like in third grade I turned toward science. I think I very quickly turned to that being my goal. I ended up getting a degree in economics, minor in I don't know if I had a minor in any sense but I took enough chemistry and biology courses that I could have gone into medicine if I'd wanted to.

Q: I don't want to denigrate Orlando but at the time it wasn't exactly the center of intellectual endeavor, but moving to the Boston area, did you find it sort of an exciting place?

MAYBARDUK: I loved Boston. Not my first year because I was too busy struggling, I made my second year struggling but by the time of my junior year I was in love with Boston. I just absolutely loved it; it was a very exciting place. Probably not as much change though as you might think because I had well educated parents, did both at one time or another serve on the board of civic music in Orlando which was an organization dedicated to bringing in artists and so on. Before that you had a private sector doing it, this was a volunteer sector so you know ballets, opera singers, symphonies and so on. This was the group that somehow managed to bring them to Orlando. So with this kind of level of sophistication around me and, of course, most of my father's friends were Jewish, not all but a lot of them were from New York, a lot of New York Jews and doctors and so on, not always Jewish but you know. It was the kind of crowd that created a home perhaps something different that you might have thought about Orlando at that time. My sister was a ballerina, my sister was on her way to becoming a soloist, she was younger than I was but she was in ballet. My grandparents were still from New York and I guess had died by that point, no they were still alive at that point. So there was a different level of sophistication or cultural and…

Q: Was there any contact at all with this extremely large Jewish community in Miami and Miami Beach and that area?

MAYBARDUK: No, I mean I'm sure the grander Jewish community had it with Miami but I don't know. The only really contact we had with Miami was once a year my mother went down to buy shoes, she had a hard to fit shoe size. Orlando just didn't have that, but now you can get anything. Back then it was just a small town. I remember when the first real delicatessen came to Orlando sometime in the 1950s and brought bagels. In New York the family tradition or practice was that Saturday night to go out and get some hot bagels from what they called the bagel factories and they get the Sunday funnies. When we got to Orlando there were no bagels. So when Ronnie's came to town, it was an institution for the next twenty odd years my parents were delighted and so was I, I guess, as here was a real delicatessen.

When my parents came to Orlando there was only one pizza place, just one, and it was going bankrupt. My parents always took credit for helping bring pizza to Orlando because after the performances at Civic Music there were a huge bunch of people, they

had to convince them to stay open late and they would take them over to Joe's Question Mark it was called and introduce them all to pizza.

Q: You know pizza was…as a kid I went through college without knowing pizza. I went to spaghetti joints but I didn't go to pizza joints.

MAYBARDUK: I didn't understand the history of pizza at all until maybe a year ago when there was some sort of PBS (Public Broadcasting Station) or some sort of special on the history of pizza and it was right in that area. After World War II with the soldiers coming home, pizza spread out of Brooklyn because I thought that was a strange story how could there only be one pizza place in all of Orlando. Apparently they were all around the country that is when it spread.

Q: I went to Williams College and we lived next door to North Adams, which was essentially a General Electric working place with a large Italian population – spaghetti. I mean I never heard of a pizza.

MAYBARDUK: The story I saw on television pizza was from Brooklyn, that's where it was, that's its center in Brooklyn not even all of New York it was Brooklyn

Q: When you were in Boston did you get a chance to sample the wares of Boston?

MAYBARDUK: Oh yes, oh yes, I became an avid theatergoer and at that time in Boston going to a theater was almost like going to the movies, it was amazing. I had not been to theater going in Orlando although I had actually, I forgot that even… my senior year they opened a playhouse in Orlando and I became their sound man in several of the plays, it was a dinner theatre.

But I went to plays, occasionally went to a ballet. I really made an impression with one young lady when I invited her, I met her at a mixer and I invited her to go to ballet and I couldn't stand ballet because I had grown up with ballet with my sister and I really didn't particularly care for it. But I made a big impression. She was a friend for forty years after…but I didn't marry her.

But I think what I really loved were the coffee houses. This was the era of folk music, Peter, Paul and Mary and Joan Baez, and the Brothers Four, the Chad Mitchell Trio, at one point John Denver joined the Chad Mitchell Trio.

Q: This was era you were trying to get "Charlie off the MTA."

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, exactly. The MTA, Pendleton Square, was right behind MIT. It was a campaign song with the Boston campaign and it was really true. At some place you enter the Metro and you pay to get on. In other parts of the area you pay to get off and if you went too far then you had to pay to get off and if you didn't have the money you were trapped. So I mean, oh yeah then we hit all the concerts. I would go down the Charles Street for about $3-4 dollars and buy a cup of coffee for a date.

Q: I remember Boston as a place where you could see all these foreign films. You couldn't see foreign films in most places except New York or Boston but they had a lot at the Exeter Theater and all these theaters around in Boston. It was great.

MAYBARDUK: And it was not very expensive unlike New York it was not very expensive. I don't remember the foreign theaters but I do remember maybe when I was getting my Masters degree out there but I do remember all the ethnic restaurants, you know, you remember. Well I was there the day Kennedy was shot. My freshman year, yeah.

Q: How did that hit you all?

MAYBARDUK: I had signed up for ice-skating in the gym program and I was waiting to get on the rink when we heard about it. I didn't get on the rink. The main building at MIT is a very long, long corridor. I remember walking through those corridors absolute silence. I mean it was like shock everywhere. I had a date that night, a girl from Wellesley and I went out and picked her up. I didn't know her very well, she was actually of Chinese background and we went to a Chinese part of the city. Most restaurants were closed but this one was open and so on. But Boston was dark. I mean there was hardly anyone on the streets. I mean everybody was in shock. I wasn't particularly fond of Kennedy but everybody was in shock.

Q: Had the government intrigued you at all, working for the government, while you were in college?

MAYBARDUK: Well yeah because of Foreign Service, an interest I had picked up in my sophomore year, I mentioned that. Although I had a new goal, it was the Foreign Service but I wasn't sure of that. I wasn't sure of that I mean I came from a long line of medical doctors; I would have been the fourth generation. There wasn't any real pressure to become a doctor but there was certainly a sense of family tradition. So I did a lot of thinking during the summer to sort of try and figure this out a little bit. Now I had been a camp counselor several times including in upstate New York but I spent one summer working as an orderly in a hospital in Orlando and I went on a foreign exchange program Experiment in International Living, I think it was in my junior year, to Argentina. I lived with an Argentine family in Mar del Plata.

Q: How did you find that?

MAYBARDUK: It was fascinating. I had a real interest in Argentina but that was over…

Q: This was Argentina; this would have been when Peron was there wasn't it?

MAYBARDUK: No this would have been probably 1966 and there had been a coup the day before we arrived [Ed: June 29, 1966]. (General Juan Carlos) Ongania had overthrown an elected president, Arturo Illia. We weren't sure what we were going to

find, we arrived the day after and it was very peaceful. I didn't learn as much Spanish as I had wanted to. The family, the mother was an English teacher and her oldest daughter was an English teacher and everybody in the family spoke English so I didn't get as much Spanish as I had wanted and I was never a linguist to begin with. But we spent three weeks with the family and three weeks traveling. That further confirmed what I was interested in.

I decided to get a degree in economics thinking it would be a good background for a PhD. in political science. I mean if I wasn't going to be a medical doctor I certainly wanted to have the same level of education as my family. It turned out to be a very expensive consumer good doing that and I struggled, I wasn't particularly good at economics as far as that I didn't particularly understand it that well but I had taken almost as much political science courses in political development kind of stuff as I had had economics. At MIT there was a science school, which was known for its specialization in the whole concept of what is political development and political integration and so on. From my senior thesis I wrote on Argentina, on inflation propagation in Argentina, which really turned out to be not much of an econometric study but very much just an anecdotal kind of historical study. My professor was a fan of Everett Hagen, an economist but had written a book on the theory of social change and the psychological basis that creates entrepreneurial groups around the world and that was a great influence in my thinking at the time.

My senior year I decided I really didn't want to do political science I found that this was too loosey-goosey for me.

Q: Was political science at that point dominated by statistics as it is today or was it more looking at how governments were organized and worked?

MAYBARDUK: No, it didn't have a heavy statistic emphasis. At MIT it was why cultures develop the way they do. It was much more about political cultures than the now forms of government.

But I just didn't find…there was enough of an engineer scientist in me that I liked a bit of a theoretical structure to work around, I think. So I decided I wanted to do economics; by this time it was spring in my senior year. So I wasn't going to get into a decent political science program. I was accepted, however, at Washington University in St. Louis. I decided I really wanted to do economics but it was too late to switch easily so somebody suggested I go over and talk to the Fletcher School [Ed: Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University], this was past their acceptance date and I hadn't applied yet. But they said go ahead and apply and I guess they'd never had anybody from MIT before and so they accepted me, kind of fairly quickly so I spent one year at Fletcher.

Q: How did you find Fletcher?

MAYBARDUK: I loved it. I loved it. The best single year of education, higher education I ever had.

Q: Could you explain the Fletcher system that you encountered?

MAYBARDUK: Well they had normal courses like other schools but Fletcher almost everybody at Fletcher had traveled, many Peace Corps, a lot of foreign students, a lot of foreign diplomats. Most people unless they were married lived in a U-shaped dormitory and for dinner we had sit down meals with tablecloths and waitresses. I don't know if we had to wear ties or not but anyway it was designed to make sure that we discussed and had discussions with each other and we would talk. So much of that year was not so much the course work; there was some good course work but was learning from my fellow students. This was now 1967-1968, this in some ways the height of the real Vietnam discussions before everyone turned against Vietnam. This was still a period when there were people on both sides. There were continuous debates all year long rigorous debates on this at school. Jerry Rubin was one of our classmates, whom I can remember very well. And Mahmood Mamdani who is now at Columbia who is from Indian origin from Uganda and very much a believer in liberation movements and the whole thing. I have this Jewish background and I ended up with one of my roommates being a Palestinian from Jordan who had lost three homes to the Israel's. Anyway, it was a year of constant discussion of foreign affairs and every belief I had being challenged and hotly debated. I mean it was just an incredibly electric experience.

Q: While you were at MIT and then how did it evolve where did you come out on the Vietnam war?

MAYBARDUK: I came out in favor of it most of the time. The question to me became whether we could win it or not; was it were winnable. I never thought it was an immoral war. I knew what had happened in North Vietnam after the Communist takeover, I knew what had happened in other places the Communists took over, the slaughter. I switched my views from thinking it was of national interest to much more in terms of a human side of it. My first introduction to the Vietnam war was actually my freshman year when Noam Chomsky was talking about it at some rally or something. Chomsky was saying things like you know somebody you know all the democracies in Southeast Asia were against the war, Burma and Cambodia, which I knew these were not democracies. Everything I've read about Chomsky since is this is a man who is great in his field but he is completely dishonest in his writings, completely dishonest in his writings. But, I don't think I was really into Vietnam issues at MIT, the student body in general wasn't at MIT. Think of MIT as high school science nerds and put 3,600 of them together. I mean in my dormitory there were 70 people on my floor, it was a big dormitory, and you know there are about four or five of us who dated regularly (laughter). Yeah we would throw these big parties at the dormitory, which had about 350 people or 400 people, and we would even offer people to fix up dates and we would try to cut our costs and everything else you know and if we got 100 people we had done absolutely enormously well, absolutely enormously well. It was not a school you would expect to produce diplomats; it was none of that kind of polish. It wasn't a Harvard, it wasn't a Princeton, it wasn't even a Dartmouth.

Q: Suave was not a word.

MAYBARDUK: Suave was you know people talked about the tech tool and took a bath once a week if then, not that I was around to make it…this was not a suave school. I mean freshman thought it was cool to go to these mixers to meet women and they would wear their slide rules on their belts, and then they got switched to calculators but I don't know what they did then.

Q: Were there women at MIT?

MAYBARDUK: Interesting you should ask. They had just completed the first woman's dormitory, which had about 100 women graduate students and undergraduates. I participated in MITs first panty raid.

Q: You better explain what a panty raid was.

MAYBARDUK: Well you know you go in front of women's dorms and hope that they throw out some of their underwear. Next to this somebody yelled, the door was open on the right hand of McCormack Hall, right hand of the building and everybody would rush inside. I didn't, I just stood there. It was almost a mistake because all of a sudden the police came charging out of the front door and the first person they grabbed was me. I was not arrested. I met an ambassador; I think his name was…he is now working in on Iran. I can't remember his name at the moment. He was there the year before me and he said he too was in that panty raid. He wasn't much of a science major he actually graduated in literature.

Q: Did the Vietnam protests that were closing down universities hit MIT?

MAYBARDUK: Not to my sense, no. Remember MIT had defense contracts in its labs, which were big things with the Defense Department. It was a pretty conservative group and they weren't necessarily from liberal families, they were from all over the country. One of my roommates in the dorm his father was president of the American Soybean Association from Iowa. I never heard of soybeans until I met him but they came from all over. It was not a Harvard it was not a Princeton.

Q: How about Fletcher? In the first place how about you was the draft breathing down your neck?

MAYBARDUK: It was a potential, I hadn't been called, my plan was that if I were to be called I was going to try to…I really wanted to pursue my economics in summer. I was not a conscientious objector in regard to the war; I didn't see how I could refuse to go. My hope was that if I were to be called I would try to join AID and volunteer to go in a civilian capacity, at least I could use my education. As it turned out, my number was being evaluated by the head of the medical board. The medical advisor for my draft board was my father's best friend and my personal doctor and he just wrote me off as a 4F. I called him on it because I knew I wasn't a 4F. I actually applied for protocol because of

the Experiment in International Living I applied to a program called Crossroads Africa, which was an exchange program in Africa. I was rejected and couldn't quite understand why and my father figured it out. My family doctor who was an allergist, I had a lot of allergies, and he really didn't believe I should have gone to Africa and said so. So when I went to Experimental in International Living my father had to talk to him and say let Gary go. But when it came time for the draft board I think he actually believed that I was a 4F, between my feet and my allergies. I called and talked to him about it. He said, "Do you really want to go?". I said, "No I don't want to go but that's not an honest evaluation." So we switched it to a 1Y, which was the same thing equivalent in terms of we weren't calling up 1Ys. But at least I felt 1Y was you could be called up but they picked men up at the higher medical category first and that was probably true, it was probably fair given the fact I still don't walk very well and I still have allergies. That probably was a fair evaluation.

Q: Well then you graduated from Fletcher when?

MAYBARDUK: Back then they offered a one-year masters degree, they still do but only for people who had experience as diplomats already.

Q: So you get your masters degree, then went off to the University of Minnesota to study economics from when to when

MAYBARDUK: I guess I went there in 1969, was there for three years, I think it was 1968, the fall of 1968 I was there until the summer of 1971 when I went to Argentina for two years to do research on my dissertation. Then I came back to finish my dissertation expecting to spend one year and ended up spending three very frustrating years.

Q: You know 1968 and the next couple of years were the height of Vietnam war activism, what was happening on your campus?

MAYBARDUK: Well there were so many anti-war protests and civil rights demonstrations, but nowhere near what you found the places like Wisconsin. But I mean the anti-war sentiment was very great on campus.

Q: Did you find yourself; I mean graduate students are often somewhat aloof from the passions of the undergrads.

MAYBARDUK: And that was my case. I joined and later became vice president in the international student council, which had its own issues including debates between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Many of my colleagues in the graduate school were strongly against the war but they're economists and quite frankly that wasn't their major goal in life. Their major goal in life was to get their graduate degree.

Q: What was it the Department of Economics like? In the first place economics was it, like political science, into the number crunching business or…?

MAYBARDUK: Well at that time Minnesota was rated the seventh best graduate school in economics, whatever that means. It was known as a highly mathematical school, great on theory, great on mathematical model building. It was really did very little institutional economics, very little political economics. In fact the only person of the political economics in any real sense say it was Walter Heller who had just come out of the Kennedy administration and was still quite full of that experience. His class was here's what happened to me during those eight years kind of experience. It was interesting but it was not in the main stream of Minnesota, which was very much, a mathematically oriented program. We even had Horowitz who had just got the Nobel Prize was there. He actually was a great mathematician; he was a great teacher who could teach a lot of these issues or subjects from four or five different approaches from verbal to graphic in various stages of higher mathematics.

Let me explain one thing. My economics education up to that point even though I had gotten a degree from MIT was not all that strong. I had really taken as many political science courses as economics courses and I felt very weak in theory. So there was a reason I went to Minnesota, which was to make sure that I got the good foundation in theory, feeling I already had a lot of the political economics, if you will. That may have been a mistake, but it did give me a very good training.

Q: Well you are talking here now to somebody who's profound immersion in economics was a D- my freshman year at college. So the mathematics, where did this math lead you?

MAYBARDUK: Well remember having gone to MIT and having struggled for the first couple years at MIT I never lasted three semesters of calculus, another semester in statistics and another semester in differential equations I think I'd been in algebra as well. So I had had not actually enough for the competition in Minnesota, many of whose students had actually graduated in mathematics but I wasn't afraid of mathematics, either.

Q: But I was just wondering I mean in the overall scheme of things what was this going to…

MAYBARDUK: What I was going to do back then I mean the use of mathematics in economics to a large extent properly done is to make sure that when you postulate relationships that mathematics is just sort of a logic, a system of logic where you can demonstrate that if A and B, then C follows. When you sort of verbally argue economic issues and so on, you're never quite sure you can do that. At the same time it has great limitations because it can put you in a straight jacket in which a lot of things can't be economically modeled in mathematical terms. So your pure mathematical economists, I think, I'm not sure how relevant they are in normal life. But the training is designed to help you, and become a shorthand as in any field in terminology.

Q: As in law for example. Well now what were you pointing toward?

MAYBARDUK: Mostly towards the Foreign Service. Remember I came from a long line of medical doctors, I had decided after experimenting I decided I did not want to be a medical doctor but I did want to achieve the same level of education as my forefathers. So I had decided fairly early I wanted a PhD. more a consumer good than an investment good and it turned out to be a very expensive consumer good. Then I felt coming into the Foreign Service that having a strong background in economics and having studied political science and international relations would in fact put me in good stead in terms of analytical capability in understanding how things worked and why they worked and why things happened.

Q: Did you have any cross over under the political science field at…Minnesota?

MAYBARDUK: No it's similar to my dissertation. I did take a course in economic anthropology, which was fascinating.

Q: What would that be?

MAYBARDK: Economic anthropologists study the economic relationships of so-called primitive society. That was actually very interesting because as I began to read the materials which I found fascinating I found that economic anthropologists often lack the vocabulary to explain what was going on. That lack of vocabulary I think failed to make them see certain relationships that immediately come to my eye. I actually did a paper on this which I have somewhere. Looking at a lot of the famous economic anthropologists and the countries and the people they studied and showing how a lot of these different concepts that they talk about are actually related and can be brought back to fairly simple economic principals in a true economic framework. It didn't have to be seen in terms of cultural values, could be seen as cultural values but could also be shown that this would have been a natural outcome of economic relationships that have some sort of relationship like that. Of course, for a short period I played with the idea that maybe I wanted to go into economic anthropology.

Q: OK, you get your course work done and then you are off to your dissertation. Where did you go and what was it?

MAYBARDUK: This is where the politics came in actually. As an undergraduate at MIT I had this exchange program the Experiment in International Living where I traveled to Argentina. I had written my undergraduate thesis on inflation in Argentina, which is as much political as economic and I always, not always, but at some point of my life I decided that I would like to do overseas research for my PhD. I got a Latin American teaching fellowship, which was done by Fletcher at the time to Argentina and I headed for Argentina because I decided maybe the thing to do was to go back to Argentina to do it. I started out with a whole area called effective protection, which I don't think we really need to get into now.

I'll skip that except that it was new at the time and if it came back and has come back in a couple of trade negotiations these days, not so much back when I was doing it but…I was kind of proud of myself as I met one of the famous trade economists from Israel.

So anyway when I got down to Argentina I found my idea for working in effective protection areas, levels of protection were just too difficult because the data was going to be too difficult to collect and I started looking around for another topic. Argentina as usual, was going through another high level of inflation and I noticed that the bank had fixed all their interest rates. I don't remember exactly how I got there but in the economic development literature at the time people talked about inflation in places like Latin America. They talked about how people instead of investing and putting money in banks often invested in housing simply as a way to protect their capital. We had been having this same debate in the U.S. and the literature there suggested that the housing slows down when you get that kind of situation because the banks no longer have the money to lend and borrow. So there was this difference between these two views in the literature and nobody had bothered to reconcile them. So I actually did a lot of work before I convinced myself that in fact a lot of mathematical work and various attempts far more than I needed to actually, so I convinced myself that in fact there was no way of knowing a priori what was going to happen. So I decided I would test the proposition that not only does it not affect, do you get more in this housing or how it starts with the data I already had but building.

But before I could do that, however, because Minnesota being Minnesota not being terribly institutional, not terribly being interested in development was going to require that I do some math and do some econometrics, statistics applied to economics which was fair enough. But before I did that econometrics like most things with a computer, what jumped in and jumped out definitely holds. So I really needed to know whether these various issues of interest rate controls had been placed in an entire period that I was studying and how had the market changed during that period, because if you have two different market structures and try and do simple statistical correlations doesn't get you anywhere. So actually this became important later. The first half of my thesis turned out to be an economic history of the financial markets in Argentina between 1950 and 1973 and I wish I had published my dissertation, especially if I had done it sooner because everything that happened in Argentina made it happen in the U.S. with the savings and loan crisis. I mean the savings and loan crisis that happened in the 1980s in the United States could have been predicted by anybody, I mean even I saw it, who had spent some time studying Argentina. So there was my first half of my study and the second half was in fact looking at the effect of inflation and various other variables on whether housing starts went up or down and then somebody had done that study on the automobiles as well so I simply repeated their study using their data. What I found was the correlation was that is the higher rate of inflation the less housing got built and contrary to the earlier study which said that the higher inflation the more automobiles were purchased I came up with the conclusion that you really could tell very little difference between the two.

The obvious economic explanation for this was, I think everybody knows it now, is that people in that kind of situation are not just investing in houses and cars, they may invest

in foreign exchange which I think everyone in the third world sort of figured out. I was still young, I was a little naïve and I hadn't quite gotten my act together in thinking this through. It really was a relatively simple thesis, unfortunately when I got back to Minnesota I ran into problems with it and it took a while to get that through.

Q: I would love to get in all the details but were the problems sort of with your faculty or with the situation itself or what?

MAYBARDUK: In terms of the Foreign Service I want to go back a little bit because of what happened in Argentina.

But to finish off on my thesis I get back and people on my committee, a professor named Tom Sergeant who just recently was head of the American Economic Association, had become enraptured with the new idea called rational expectations which means in an economic modeling you've got to assume that everybody already knows what the model looks like and performs as if they could predict inflation as well as you can and make adjustments for that. It substantially complicates the mathematics of models. I had no idea what he was talking about because it hadn't been taught before I went overseas - I was overseas for three years. I happened to take his course which I had no intuition and I was about two-thirds the way through his course with blackboard after blackboard of mathematics. I got it because I understood what it meant realized that in teaching it that the graduate student teacher for years in a various simple graphical form, he was very good at explaining the co-existence of inflation and unemployment in the 1960s and 1970s in the U.S. But he didn't need to do, which Keynesian theory allowed for, and it didn't require all the elaborate mathematics and it make no relevance in Argentina where the public had no knowledge of what the money supply was and even if did it was six months later. Even the rates of inflation sometimes came out later. It just didn't work in my model but it cost me several months. It ended up as a footnote in my thesis and was later discarded in my thesis.

But then I had another professor who kept asking me what was it I was trying to prove. It was clear to me but he kept asking me. I really couldn't see what he was asking. I mean he was very, what's the word I want, enigmatic about it and that was a great trauma because I just did two preliminary defenses of my theses and neither time did my thesis advisor attend. It was really a great trauma back then.

Q: This story comes across again and again I think the whole PhD. process is a terrible waste of talent.

MAYBARDUK: It was, it was and I had planned to finish it in one year and it took three, actually it took a little longer than that but I stayed three years. Half way through my third year I said I am leaving, I'm going off to the Foreign Service now and either I finish or I don't and at that point my advisor finally stepped in. I finally had a so-called final defense of my thesis in which this one professor kept asking the same questions and finally it came up as to what he was trying to say. What he was trying to say was some of the results of my models could have been explained by other things. Well, I had done

quite a bit of work on looking at the other things but he had a particular thing in mind and finally I saw it and finally I said, "Well how about if I did this." He said, "Yeah, that would work." Well I had already done that, but I just hadn't written it up. I had actually done it pretty much in my undergraduate thesis. So I getting ready to leave for the Foreign Service but in about two weeks I wrote that up answering his objection. But I mean so the end result was my final thesis came out almost identical to what I had expected it to be when I came back from Argentina, having wasted at least two years of my life. Then I went on for several more years sending final drafts to my professor making small changes. So again I finally said, "Professor Brownly, this has been going on for years, I haven't changed anything significant in four years. What do I need to do to finish?" He thought and said, "No, I guess you are finished." I should have asked him like two years earlier instead of spending nights while I was still working going to the embassy at night and working on a new draft of this thing.

Q: You wonder if the sort of self-indulgence of professors who are playing with your lives.

MAYBARDUK: Yes, yes. They did a survey in Minnesota that found that on the average it took about seven and a half years to get your PhD. and only 25, of course, ever finished, 25 percent ever finished. But they always told students when they came in they would be doing their dissertation in the fourth or occasionally the fifth year and graduating. Well nobody finished in four years

I mean there was false consumer advertising among other things.

Q: Well actually it was something on this whole PhD. thing is a ritual rather than advancing the cause of knowledge and producing significant research.

MAYBARDUK: Well, what I think was had I joined the Foreign Service two or three years earlier, which was a time of quick promotions, my guess is I would have moved up a lot quicker. It cost me in a lot of ways. But there were some important things about the whole experience that were useful for what came later, particularly the period in Argentina. This was the period when Juan Peron was dethroned. The history of Argentina just couldn't…number one it was kind of a surreal experience seeing him coming back and I met a friend down there who was actually a CIA analysis who was taking a year of leave to work on his dissertation. We spent an awful lot of time in the coffee shops, cafeteria, as they are called, sitting around talking politics trying to understand what was going on. The whole research on the development of the financial markets involved a lot of politics so this was a very good training for what would come later, because I really had to get in to learn why institutions were reacting the way they were, how was it relating to politics in great detail and that set the tone for a lot of reporting and analytical work I would do later or a feeling.

Q: Did you serve in Argentina later or not?

MAYBARDUK: No.

Q: All right well then let's talk about Argentina at the time. What is there about Argentina, which was blessed with a majority European population?

MAYBARDUK: I think it was before 1930 there was a study done. In 1920 Argentina was supposed to have a per capita income close to that of the United States and Canada, third in the world.

A partial answer is that prior to World War I people sent their clothing to Paris to get it dry cleaned. Everything was imported. Then during World War I all that stopped and so Argentina was making a huge amount of money on its selling of beef and commodities to the warring powers. It was also a crisis of basic need essentials other than food in the country. After World War I, and it became true in a lot of Latin America, they studied this whole policy of import substitution that is bringing their own industries to produce things whether they were efficient or not and that continued you know and got worse under Peron and during the Second World War and after the Second World War.

But there has to be something else as well and there seems to be at some point in Argentina somewhere they developed a culture where everybody viewed the world as a zero sum game. That is, you can't get ahead unless somebody else loses, that really got into the politics of the country. Generally Peron is credited for having sort of really crystallized that and created this very conflictual society. It made political compromise difficult, but I don't know what to think Peron created it or it was already there and maybe he just articulated it a little bit better and created the conflict. In any event, I think that is basically what happened and made it hard when they got into the 1950s where there was a general realization that import substitution policies didn't work. You had so many vested interests at this point that reform became extraordinarily difficult. Perhaps this long period of new presidents every two years and a new finance minister every year. It seemed there was great difficulty for the individual businessman to make plans to invest in the country.

Q: Well, what was your impression of Peron? Peron came back and was this sort of was the fire gone out of the system at all?

MAYBARDUK: It was amazing. I had friends, economists, in fact, local economists who would tell me that they think Peron had been a disaster for the country but were now voting for him because they thought he was the only person who could bring the country together, sort of like Nixon going to China kind of thing. But Peron wasn't up to it; he just wasn't up to it. He had the same advisors he had when he was back earlier, the labor unions, which were always Peronists, were still controlled by the same people and he just didn't do it.

Q: Were the labor unions a real problem of featherbedding, of corruption, and all that?

MAYBARDUK: Oh yes, absolutely, one of the things I kind of discovered when I was working on my thesis was why did the confederation of small business support all the

interest rate controls on the financial system because they were the ones who were being cut short on this because there was less credit to go around and banks not being able to compete with interest rates simply took what money they had and gave it to their safest customers, cutting out most of the small businesses. It puzzled me at first why this confederation of small business, a Peronist organization, continued to support this policy until I realized that the people in charge of the confederation were also medium-sized businessmen who had no problem getting credit because of their position, and they got it very cheaply. Those were the kind of things going on in the labor unions as well. No, corruption is always there, very bad.

Q: I understand too another factor was that at the top of the pile, the well-to-do tended not to invest in Argentina.

MAYBARDUK: That was partly true because it was not a terribly secure place to invest especially since a lot of the well-to-do, not all, but a lot of the well-to-do were in agriculture. The policies the country adopted, the tariffs on exports, the penny packing of exports, made it a no win deal than if they had been a more open economy. So yeah, but I think it was across the board I don't think it was any one group at least. The wealth didn't want anything to do with the peasants and the peasants were hostile to the wealthy, and the middle class was divided itself too. It was just a very conflicted society. It was an absolutely fascinating experience because every time you got into a cab you got a course in political science, not 101 but like 501 and 701. The Argentine cab drivers were educated and extremely articulate about politics and very, with a bit of Italian background, very interested to tell you all about it. It was wonderful training for my Foreign Service career.

Q: Did you have much contact with the embassy?

MAYBARDUK: Very little. At times we talked about getting a cottage somewhere for the summer and then I had to go back to the States for some reason and it never happened. So I had very little contact. A lot of times I hung out with the Australian embassy people. Before I went to Argentina I had gone to Cuernavaca (Mexico) for six weeks, two months to improve my Spanish. I met the admin officer from the Australian embassy. So I got to know them very well; I dated two of their secretaries I was part of their social scene for quite a while.

Q: OK, well then when did you come into the Foreign Service?

MAYBARDUK: Officially 1975 but I hadn't finished my dissertation yet, I had taken the Foreign Service exam and passed it, there was quite a delay on this and I think when I had taken the written exam again and I said, "I think I will just go through the process again and give myself another year." And Djerejian who was in personnel at the time basically said, "I'll tell you what we really need to fill this class so why don't we give you a year's leave without pay?" So I was sworn into the Foreign Service in June 1975 but actually didn't come back to the State Department until fall of 1976.

Q: Did you take the A-100 basic officer course?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, I took that in June 1975, we were the 119th Class, ninety-six members strong.

Q: How did you find that introduction to the Foreign Service?

MAYBARDUK: That was fun; that was fun.

Q: What did you think of your classmates?

MAYBARDUK: You know the interesting thing was most officers know their fellow classmates fairly well. The fact that I took A-100, didn't go to consular training and immediately went back to work on my dissertation meant that I really kind of lost touch with my cohorts. I couldn't even tell you the names of all but one or two of them. But I did very well in that course, people later told me that I was one of the stars of the course but I just didn't make contacts and I think that kind of hurt me later on not having a cohort. [Ed: a number of Mr. Maybarduk's A-100 classmates have oral histories on file with ADST: James Bindenagel, John Campbell, Gregory Frost, Margaret Jones, and William Primosh.]

Q: Well when you came back in 1976 what did they do with you?

MAYBARDUK: Well they had just started the open assignments process and while in Minnesota they sent me a letter listing all the places they were offering me to go. Of course I was a South American expert so they only offered me one job in South America. I remember when I got the list I recognized most of the places but there were two I didn't recognize: one was Qatar and the other was Port Moresby. I knew where Port Moresby was but I wasn't sure so I had to run over to the library and look them up. Further discussion indicated that the Ambassador Mary Olmsted wanted to put an economic officer in Port Moresby, but didn't have a designated economic position for one, but wanted one. So she would be interested in having somebody with my background to serve as the economic officer. So technically I was paneled into a consular job but I've only issued one visa in my entire career in the Foreign Service.

Q: So you are off to Port Moresby, which is strictly a wonderful place to do economic anthropology.

MAYBARDUK: It was wonderful. And Ambassador Olmstead was excellent by the way. I was there from about January of 1976 until January of 1978.

Q: OK, let's talk first about the New Guinea and Port Moresby before we get to what you were up to.

MAYBARDUK: Well the embassy was one year old and Mary had opened it. It had been a consulate and she had been the consul general. It was unusual but they gave her an

ambassadorship. It was a small building overlooking the Coral Sea in the harbor, a beautiful setting. Port Moresby was a frontier town, it was scattered among the hills, most buildings were one or two stories, it had a large number of Aussies there and New Zealanders and Brits and everything else because a lot of them were still in the government providing services and the rest had businesses there of all sizes. In my own view the Aussies at their worse when you think of beer drinking.

I joined the local RSL, the Retired Serviceman's League fishing club because I liked to fish and I knew if I went to their first meeting, they didn't say anything about meeting I just wanted to learn where and how to fish there. We sat in the bar for the first hour drinking. We went off into a backroom and the first order of business was ordering a beer and then about every ten minutes they came in and dumped another beer on you. Well I'm a two-beer drunk so by the end of the meeting I had ten beers in front of me. But what struck me about the Australians was they would sit in a bar for hours and talk about everything, sports, politics, drinking, they talked a lot about drinking and never would they discuss women, ever. I said for someone assigned to Port Moresby I couldn't quite figure out how Australians even multiple. That was the most chauvinistic place I had ever been.

Q: I got a bit of this because when I was consul general in Saigon this is 1969-1970 we issued passport for young Americans going on R&R and one of the places they'd go was Australia and they would come back with their eyes wide open and said they saw some of the most gorgeous girls in the world and these guys, these dopes, didn't know they were there.

MAYBARDUK: Australians are like that and in Argentina too by the way. They very much liked American men because we paid attention to them. They thought the Brits were better than the Aussies and they thought the Americans were better than the Brits because we paid attention to them.

It was a strange place. The Papua New Guineans were very impressed with them, this was a culture, a society coming out of the Stone Age and virtually everybody in government was a first generation out of the village. I mean you know the first college graduates didn't start coming out until the mid-1960s.

Q: How was this working? How did someone coming out of a Stone Age village, I mean we aren't talking about farm boys, we're talking about inexperience.

MAYBARDUK: They had good leadership, Michael Somare some 30 years later back in Australia. Independence came much later than it did in Africa. The Australians had learned I think the Papua New Guineans understood at least some of them so they didn't get rid of all the foreigners in the government service; they kept a lot of them. They even had some white members of the cabinet, people who had decided to become Papua New Guinea citizens. At first it went fairly well, there was a separatist movement over in Bougainville, which I guess, still goes on to today. But at first it went fairly well. Crime was a problem, but not violent crime. The first attack on a European woman in any

bodies memory took place just after we left. It was the PAO's (Public Affairs Officer) officer's wife; she was raped. But the two years we were there there were no such reports. It became a very violent place later, it was not when we were there. We probably were there at the absolute best of times.

Q: Well what did New Guinea consist of? You mentioned Bougainville I mean was there…?

MAYBARDUK: It had the main Islands, which of course is split between Irian Jaya, Indonesian and Papua New Guinea and then you have the Northern Islands. You have New Ireland and New Britain. Then you have Bougainville.

Let's see, of course, you have Manus where Margaret Mead wrote about coming of age. Then you have the Trobriand and the Luf Islands down at the far tip.

Q: Again subject to anthropological study.

MAYBARDUK: Right. Then the main island, I think it is the second largest island in the world I mean after Greenland, it is a big place. It was extremely rugged so you had mountains I think they went up to 18,000 feet crossing the islands. You had deep valleys, you had swamps and the reason the country has I think they say the estimate is 850 but back then we talked about 700 different distinct languages, not dialects, languages is that people got trapped in these high mountains or in these valleys and they really developed separately. So what you have is a diverse population. I mean you had very light people who were probably mixed with mainly traders on the coast, you had areas in the highlands where you had pygmies, you had the Chimbu who were kind of a short, squat and very muscular people. When you got out to Bougainville to particularly the island of Buka, off Bougainville, you had people who had a true black skin. Once I met with the head of the foreign investment commission I was sitting in his office with his window behind him and all I could see was the whites of his eyes and his white teeth, was that odd. So you had tremendous variations. Unifying the island was two pigeon languages; pigeon English and something called police motu, which I think was a coastal language and had been used by the native police so it became a pigeon language as they went around the country. So you had the two pigeon languages, it is amazing that most Papua New Guineans could speak three or four languages even in the villages. They would have a village language, a tribal language, the main language from somebody from another tribe and they would know that language and they would learn English or a foreign language or police motu or one of the others. So usually they would know four but my secretary knew seven languages. I mean they were all coming right out of the villages basically.

Q: Well in the first place did the U.S. have any interest there other than…?

MAYBARDUK: Very little, it was interesting, it was interesting having spent most of my time in Latin America up to that point it is easy being in a country where we were generally ignored. Liked by the government, liked by the people, but the big power was

Australia. Australia was giving them enormous amounts of money but the students would demonstrate against the Australians on a regular basis but left us alone.

Q: Well you know as a kid I followed the war avidly, read about the trail up and down the old Stanley Mountains; Rabaul was the major Japanese airbase. Was the war a memory or was it…?

MAYBARDUK: We never occupied these Japanese bases throughout the war. We just bypassed it. As we did in Wewak we also bypassed it; tens of thousands of Japanese troops in both places.

No actually it wasn't just a memory. The Papua New Guineans remember the war and the American occupation. The racism of the American military was apparently never noticed by the local population. What they remember is you taught them how to drive trucks; you brought all this cargo. We taught them how to use guns some of them, they learned how to use bulldozers all the things the Australians would never teach them.

Q: Was this sort of a racist thing?

MAYBARDUK: Oh yeah even when I was there, quite racist. So throughout the island at least where the American troops had been, there was still a memory of our presence there and you could still see the military junk in a lot of places. I got to Buna. John Glenn, who was then senator and was chairman of the foreign affairs subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific came out twice.

The second time was for Solomon Island independence, which we also covered. I reported on it for the embassy from Port Moresby. There wasn't much hotel space in Honiara. I mean Honiara hadn't changed much from the days we occupied it. They asked for a three-person delegation because that was all they could house. So we sent a destroyer to house everybody, we had a 20-person delegation and a marching band and as well as Ambassador Olmstead, a political officer and I think the public affairs officer all went over to Honiara to get ready for the delegation and left the admin officer in charge of the embassy and I was in charge, for three or four days of escorting John Glenn and Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary for East Asia, who were going to spend time in Papua New Guinea. I worked up several possible trips including a week to Fisher Reef where no European had been before…

I went over to set up the Glenn visit the week before with a missionary from the Center of Linguistics the same people my father had been with in the Amazon. I had made a contact while I was there because this was a wonderful place to be a missionary. I flew in with a small plane into a small strip in this village and met with the old men of the village and the missionary. At this point about the only Europeans that anybody in the village had seen was the missionary and his family. We talked about the visit of Glenn and we showed them a picture of an astronaut and they wanted to know why he was wearing a space suit. So I struggled through the interpretation of the missionary to try to explain the concept of air. So we got around to asking if they would be willing to receive this man

who had gone into space actually the missionary had not remembered it correctly and said the man who had gone to the moon. They thought that was all right. These may be primitive people but their manners were not and one of the first questions they had for the missionary was, we know that you will eat our food but will the astronaut? So he turned to me and I said I thought he would. Pretty soon an old lady came over with their food and passed it out. It was fine it was vegetables cooked or baked in a ground-level oven. The next question was, would the astronaut mind if they stared at him? A fascinating question. My answer to that was I'm sure he wouldn't if they didn't mind that he starred back. They thought about that amongst themselves and they thought that was fair.

Well, what happened, I think it must have been July of 1976 about six months after I had been there, maybe it was 1977, but Glenn came with his large delegation and with Richard Holbrooke and I greeted him. I was a junior officer but you know there were only three of us left in the embassy; the admin officer who was a story unto himself and then a junior officer. We took him up and we used a Hercules, one of those C-130s whatever, to get to Papu Dam, which was close to Buna. There we were met by missionaries on July 4th and they were met by a bunch of missionary families and we had this wonderful July 4th, in the middle of nowhere. Had this wonderful July 4th lunch with the missionaries. We saw parts of Buna where the battle had been fought. I can't imagine fighting there, cannot imagine. I mean the grass is well over your head and we would come to a stream you'd have to cross it and you have no idea what's on the other side waiting for you, you can't see a thing. I can't imagine fighting in that environment. The gun emplacements for the anti-aircraft batteries are still there. Anyway we then used small planes, we flew up to the village and nobody was there to greet us that was surprising. We had to go up a ridge to get to the village. We started up, Holbrooke, who was twenty years older than I, was doing a lot better than I was up these long paths and we hit the top of the ridge when all of a sudden it seemed the entire village came out in war paint came up close, threatening us with their spears. It was a surprise; I did not know it had been arranged. But we got together along with the missionaries and we had a wonderful day with going around and everybody staring at everybody and going around and visiting the homes and so on. Then we had this traditional feast in the big house, the great house, women outside of course, they were not allowed in. We had been trying to figure out what kind of presents to give the villagers because the U.S. government doesn't pay money for presents. Then Ambassador Olmstead came up with some 1976 bicentennial medals. Since I arrived at post in 1977, this event was July 1978. She put a hole through them and put red ribbon through them.

So Glenn presented the village elders with the bicentennial medal. In turn he got, and I also received, some wonderful shell necklaces. The missionary said that there had been no trading on the coast in seventy years so you can imagine how old these necklaces are! I still have them. Glenn made his speech and the old man got up and he said, "You know I have never longed to be old but now I curse being old, I curse it, I curse it, I curse it." He said, "Because what I want to be able to do is to go to all the neighboring villages and show this off." It was an absolutely wonderful experience. Then twenty years later I wrote it up and had it published in the Foreign Service Journal. Unfortunately it was limited to a page; it's a one hundred-word article. But it really was an experience.

I did forget one part. On the first trip up on the way back that I was there by myself and with the missionary and the missionary pilot we left late and it was getting dark. We were going through these very tall mountains and were looking for holes in the clouds to work our way through. There was light through the mountains though. I looked at the situation and my normally somewhat irrelevant manner said, "You know, I'm glad I'm with you guys, I'm glad God is with us." The pilot thought for a minute and said, "Well you know, sometimes God wants us with him." I crawled back into my seat and shut up.

The whole thing was wonderful. Eventually the delegation was heading off to the airport and we had some lunatic come in the front door of the embassy. The embassy had no real guard, no real protection, we had no marines, we had not even any bullet proof glass on the consular interviewing office. We had to move Glenn and Holbrooke out the back and we were in the car ready to go and the official government photographer shows up with all the pictures taken from the trip. Heading for the airport Glenn and Holbrooke are looking at them and Holbrooke was getting really upset. There were no pictures of him and he was really upset nobody bothered to take any pictures of him. Now Glenn was head of the delegation, this is what I understand was classic Holbrooke.

Classic Holbrooke. He came out at least twice and anyway when it was all over I had taken pictures of him and when I got them developed I sent them to him. When I came back from Washington I ran into Wendy Chamberlain, I think, I not certain how I knew her, but she said, "Gary I want you to know that Holbrooke thinks the world of you. You are one of his favorite officers." It had nothing to do with the trip; it was that I had taken pictures of him. But it was a great trip it was a wonderful trip. The whole experience in Port Moresby was one experience like that after another.

Q: Did we see any potential in sort of in the heart of these mountains of any interest of gold or other minable ore?

MAYBARDUK: Oh yeah, there were several things going on. Kennecott was looking for copper up near the Irian Jaya border and it was a project called Octavya that went on while I was there, the entire time I was there. Then in Bougainville there was a British-Australian firm that opened a big copper mine and this is when gold was worth $800 an ounce and they discovered that there was a huge gold layer on top so this mine, hundreds of millions of dollars worth of investment back then and that was in 1975 paid itself off in two years, just in the gold. Now the Papuan New Guineans feel that well they got ripped off on these mining deals and they developed with the help of the UN I think a very good model of how you handle this kind of thing. They tried to apply it at Kennecott but Kennecott rejected it and walked out of its own investment. They were later sorry they had done so.

I'd often visited Octavya which was clear up in the Bismarck Mountains, which divide the island and there is literally a sheer wall of rock several thousand feet tall, like one sheer cliff that you have to go over. First of all we had been in a helicopter and we were going over to the Japanese side, on the other side of the island. But in the meantime we

helicoptered all around that. The French had built a new helicopter just for Octavya; they had lost several helicopters down there because the down drafts just drove them into the ground. So they designed the Allouette II helicopter which they put much larger engines in it to keep them safe. There was this deep gully I think it was one of the most rugged places I had ever seen and of course the major problem was going to be how to get the ore out.

Q: Were we observing or were you able to observe what the Indonesians were doing? Were there any problems…?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, yeah there were. We didn't observe it but we knew it was happening. I mean there was an insurgent group in Irian Jaya and there were clashes on the border from time to time and the Papua New Guineans did not want to have problems with their Indonesian neighbors, which I had a certain sympathy for it but we were not directly involved. Our main interests involved looking out for American companies which was relatively small and a modest amount of consular work. Our last ambassador to Papua New Guinea recently, Bob Fitz, was actually there as a junior officer at the time, rotation officer, and he handled the consular work part time. We had two issues; we wanted to open the country up to U.S. trade. Then we had the whole issue of the South Pacific migratory species, tuna issue. That and bottlenecks (dolphins) was fascinating, it crossed economic and environmental issues. So I really made my job very interesting. There was no commercial officers' course being offered when I went out to Papua New Guinea so basically the Department then had an office that helped train people in this and so I basically took the course all by myself and spent several weeks learning a lot about commercial officer duties and these various programs and so on. Papua New Guinea had just announced a very high Australian trade barrier I guess and the Papua New Guinea coffee was going directly to the U.S.

Q: This was coffee exports?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah and it was great coffee, it was a quality coffee. The largest state that had been nationalized in the sense that the Australian landowners had sold off to the local people so there was actually foreign exchange not only from (mining on) Bougainville at that point, but also from coffee at the time. So we had direct shipping from the States, ships came over empty and went back full. So there was a great market for each of these to the American export issues basically to the Australian market.

So I went around the country I set up a commercial library, I went around the country speaking to chambers of commerce, these were tiny little chambers of commerce in all the little cities letting them know that we could help them out if they needed to trade with the U.S. and we were a lot cheaper using the U.S. We became a very busy office. The first trade fair ever held in Papua New Guinea we put together with the help of the trade center in Sydney. They sold a half million dollars which was a lot back then all off the floor. We took another two and a half million worth of orders. At one time they were buying special fire engines for the airport, the type for airport fires and so on, and trade there was dominated by these trading firms. The British trading firm couldn't find the

kind of engines they wanted in Britain or Australia. They called me and said, "We have this name of this company we've heard about but we can't find it. Can you help?" I went to my trade manuals and found it, it was Oshkosh Truck or something like that name in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and out of that they got the contract. The first truck was a quarter million; I don't know how many they bought after that.

Sometime after that there was an author, he did a whole series of books one of them was called Diplomats and the other was The Merchant Bankers [Ed: Joseph Wechsberg]. He came out to interview me in anything in Port Moresby. He came to our home and we had dinner with him and I appeared in the book. He talks about this PhD. economist who had been willing to go out to the middle of the bush somewhere and has taken great delight in having sold an American fire engine. The workers of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, will never know who had helped give them a job and talks about a Summerset Maugham type porch with Adirondack furniture. Anyway it is somewhere in the book, a couple pages in the book. He misspelled my name as everybody else does but you know it was kind of neat.

Q: You mentioned tuna. What is the tuna issue?

MAYBARDUK: The tuna issue was because Star Kist was out there. They had a big fishery operation off New Ireland and New Britain. I actually went out and visited the fleet and that was interesting; I spent two days in the fleet spending two days on one of these pole boats. There was only one American on the fleet, sort of the admiral of the fleet. The number two was Japanese and the boats were a combination of Koreans and Papua New Guineans so it was a Tower of Babel. I spent a day in a pole boat where nobody spoke English, but anyway.

Q: A pole boat is?

MAYBARDUK: Is a boat that has these long poles, a fishing boat, and they have these long poles that has a little silver hook, nothing more, at the end of a line and they toss out sunfish that during the evening they've gone in and caught in a small bay. They toss them out and the tuna get really excited and then they will strike anything, anything shiny. You put your hook down and the tuna grabs it and then your job is to semi haul all this twenty to fifty pound fish up and throw it over your head…

Q: I've seen pictures of this.

MAYBARDUK: You are supposed to wear hardhats but nobody gave me one and I'm struggling to get the right angle and leverage to haul these things up and throw them over my head. Meanwhile fifty-pound fish are flying and I was afraid of some of these. You know it was fun, I love to fish, it was a great experience and then for meals, our meals were raw tuna, sashimi I guess and this pickled cabbage, kimchi. Kimchi, it didn't look very good but actually it was delicious.

And the tuna coming right out of the ocean like that you couldn't have it fresher. That was breakfast, lunch and dinner. The only problem was I didn't fit in their toilet, which

everybody squats. I wasn't as big as I am now but I still didn't fit so I had to lean over the deck when I had to.

Q: Well now was there a migratory issue, what was the issue at hand?

MAYBARDUK: There was a migratory issue and I don't remember them but when you catch tuna with nets you catch all sort of migratory species, gill fish and others and maybe dolphins, I can't remember any more. We were trying to get some sort of South Pacific Tuna Commission to regulate this. Morris Busby was the man in Washington and he later became ambassador to Columbia [Ed: 1991-1994]. There was an Australian or a New Zealander, I don't remember which, in their appropriate ministry who handled these issues and he had his own ideas as to how to set this up. I spent hours with him, hours and hours and hours trying to understand the issues myself and actually I came up with a pretty good proposal, which we tried to sell people. We had our own ideas and thought we had Fiji with us, we figured we could roll over the Papua New Guineans. Well came the conference and Fiji changed their mind and we got nowhere, we lost everything. It was another decade before anything got through them. You could have had one with Papua New Guinea but that was another adventure.

Busby came out and we were going to do a big crop in New Guinea and he wanted to talk to the people in Honiara in the Solomon Islands. So I went with him and he went to, actually I met him there in Honiara and had the meeting there. Goes back to Port Moresby and stopped in Bougainville where he caught another plane because he was talking about twin airs that were going between Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. On takeoff out of Bougainville it was a Fokker 28, a small jet, one engine blew up just as it was taking off and they hadn't quite reached speed yet so the pilot stopped. But now he was staying there because it would be another three or four days before a plane came out. It was a tiny island off the coast of Bougainville, a tiny little primitive resort so I went out there and I spent the next two to three days with Busby learning all about border issues and everything else.

Bougainville by the way looks like Bali Hai in the movie South Pacific. The coconut trees come right down the mountains right to the white beaches. Then around the capital, which if you could see the capital there is another mountain sticking up maybe four or five hundred feet out of the water within three hundred yards off the beach coated with coconuts. I mean it was an absolutely Bali Hai type of place.

Actually there is a Bali Hai island nearby. So you couldn't travel in Papua New Guinea without…a one-stop trip was iffy; a two-stop trip was an invitation to disaster; a three-stop trip was always a disaster. So several times…because the planes don't show up.

Well you would go off and if you were going to do a city-to-city trip you might plan for five days but it would be common to come back after eight.

Q: In your commercial side or even the political side what role were the Japanese playing at that time?

MAYBARDUK: They were big players, most in extracting industries. They had a…if you were working in Octavia they were working at Frieda River on the other side of the Bismarck divide or whatever it's called, I can't remember it's name. Their camp looked like a fifty year Japanese POW (prisoner of war) camp during the war. I mean the houses are straw, a straw roof. The Japanese wore a little pith helmet and instead of rifles they went around with butterfly nets. They had like bamboo bridges over streams and they were just something out of a…without the torture and everything else it looked so much like you'd seen in a movie from World War II. But they were also very big into timber and lumber and all that sort of thing.

Q: Did we see them as a problem?

MAYBARDUK: No not really, this was not our territory. I mean we were showing the flag more than anything else. We were not…Ambassador Olmstead would not allow the Peace Corps in, she wouldn't allow AID in, she said if you bring in one AID officer and they multiple like lemmings. She felt appropriately that the Australians could handle this, we took care of our interests, we were being the nice guys. We had no real AID program, we had five hundred thousand dollar grants from the Catholic Relief Organization out there which ran a women's programs in the villages for learning to sew and so on and another half million dollars for the Summer for the Linguistics to appropriate technologies. They had like 400 missionaries in the country in all these primitive places. They were teaching people how to use 55-gallon drums to make small ovens or chicken projects and other kinds of technology. I actually worked with the regional AID director developed the program for micro loans to be managed by these missionaries because the problem with micro loans used to be anyway those were very expensive, you spend far more on the loan than they actually get. But this was the idea of letting the missionaries simply control that because they were in the villages and teaching the things. One hundred dollars could easily provide a bakery for a village. I left before that got finished.

Q: You said you had hardly any consular business. I would have thought that you would have been trying to bail out young kids of knapsacks and anthropology majors…

MAYBARDUK: Oh yeah and that was a funny story too. We had one 16-year old kid whose parents had allowed him to sail across the Pacific. 16-years old!

Q: I think there was a movie made of this kid.

MAYBARDUK: Was there? I don't know. He finally wrecked in the Trobriand Islands. We had to go out and rescue him. There was a guy who had gotten refugee status in the U.S. and while his status was still as a refugee he decided to take a boat and sail around the world, which took him out of the U.S., which he wasn't supposed to be. He wrecked somewhere in some islands several hundred miles off Papua New Guinea and wanted to be repatriated. Our consular officer, Eileen Riley at the time, went out and interviewed the guy and she came back and found his refugee card had expired so we had no obligation to him. So the Papua New Guineans turned to the UN Development Program,

which doubled as a refugee program as well, and they went out there and felt sorry for the guy and came back and said, "You've got to do something for him." We said, "No." So eventually he bought an outboard motor and took it out to guys so he could motor back to Papua New Guinea. Well the guy took off and headed out to Palau or one of the U.S. trust territories and was never seen again by us. We kept asking the UN High Commission have you got your motor back yet?

But there was a lot of that. We had some deaths. The coroner or embalmer wore a tall, black hat like a top hat. It was very narrow and always wore a dark black suit and had sort of a beak nose. I don't know if you ever read Walt Kelley's comic strip Pogo? There is a vulture in the comic strip and it says the undertaker. OK? This guy reminded me, all of us, of that vulture. You know, you had 24-hours in Papua New Guinea to get somebody embalmed and then buried them. They always insisted he died out at Sepik River somewhere. The consular officer made a couple trips out there. Eileen would come back telling about these stories talking to the funeral director's wife and she would tell stories about how when little children would die she would spend the night with them. They didn't have coffins big enough for some people so they would have to break the legs. I mean it was really a wild and woolly kind of place.

We actually had another great experience. We went up to Wewak, which is on the north coast and head borders of the Sepik River and we rented a canoe with another couple from the UNDP group, an American wife and a Japanese husband and we spent about ten days on the river with neighbors, I guess they had a 15 horsepower in the back of the canoe stopping and living in villages along the way. We ended up filling that canoe with artifacts because they were mostly Papua New Guinea art kind of stuff. But we stayed at one point in a house that was built for the patrol officers who used to…every village is supposed to keep a house for these patrol officers to give to them. There is a name for those by the Australians but they were kind of the judge, juries and everything else out there. They were supposed to keep a clean house when they came through. Kiosk!

One place we stayed in…it was the uncle of the wife of a chief of protocol. The chief of protocol was maybe 26 who had already been to the U.S. and helped set up their embassy in Washington. Now he was chief of protocol. He came from this village, his wife came from this village, he was the one who was allowed to get education, he went all through Catholic high school and she stayed and his sister stayed behind. His parents were dead because the uncle of his wife along with his first wife and a second wife and they had a big house, thatched and logged house on stilts, on long stilts as the place floods all the time so people need to build a high water point and they build their houses above it. We stayed in kind of the middle part of the house; they all had one large room. The older wife had her corner with her little fire at one end of the one corner house and the other wife was at the other corner and we were in the middle.

In the morning we woke up my wife put on a shoe and squashed a centipede and apparently it was excruciating pain. The other woman called the witch doctor, in the meantime the whole village came to see this and everyone crowded in. The old woman had hands so terribly, terribly calloused and apparently the way you could sooth people in

this society was to rub their ears. So she was busy rubbing my wife's ears with her very calloused hands and when she wasn't doing that she was in pantomime telling the whole village of how it happened. She first put on a shoe and then hops around all over the place and everybody is laughing and my poor wife is in considerable pain. Finally a witch doctor showed up. He looks just like any other doctor in the world you know who is being called for a house call he didn't want to make using a remedy that didn't really need his services. So he looked at my wife's foot and he looks it over and mumbles a few words and then spits on it. Everybody on the island chews beetle nut, which creates a big red fountain and vile looking stuff. All of a sudden it's all over her foot, we had to convince her she wasn't going to die of the bite she was going to die of the beetle nut juice. But it is apparently a bit of a narcotic and you know eventually the pain did go away.

When we left that village the family gave us, we still treasure, two woven necklaces with cowry shells woven into it and these were their bridal gifts when they got married. Imagine how valuable they are, this was an enormous gift.

My whole two years was like this. My parents came out. My father was a doctor and he went up to the highlands to Ukarumpa, which was the headquarters of the Summer Institute of Linguistics., I remember going with him to Amazon. He relieved the doctor who was up there who hadn't had a vacation for three years and spent I think about six weeks up there scared to death was one of the pregnant missionary wives would have her baby and he hadn't delivered one in about 25 years. My mother who taught Hawaiian dance stayed in Port Moresby and worked with the National Dance Troup and taught them Hawaiian. They put on a performance and she said she had never seen Hawaiian interpreted the way they did it but she said she wasn't sure, but that they probably got it more correctly…

Q: It's a part of their culture, the Pacific culture.

MAYBARDUK: Yeah. My parents are getting on and it was a great, great privilege to have given that experience to them.

Q: You mentioned in passing say well the administrative officer that's another story. What's the other story?

MAYBARDUK: John Vieira. John Vieira had been a subway driver in New York and I don't know if he was a communicator or what when he came into the Foreign Service and what was the program we used to have and they still do where staff personnel can sometimes become officers?

Q: The Mustang Program.

MAYBARDUK: The Mustang Program, OK. Well John took advantage of the Mustang Program and became an officer. John was as much of a male chauvinist as any Australian could possibly be. He also liked his luxuries so when the ambassador hosted a lunch at

her house somehow John had lunches over to his house. The ambassador said you do not order any more furniture, John ordered it anyway. The particular furniture he wanted he would go around and make sure that everybody else in the embassy wanted it but all with one exception all employees in the embassy were with him and I was the EEO (equal employment officer) officer. With that I looked at the paper and John was out advertising for employees, for male employees. I talked to him about it but it just didn't do any good and I didn't bother to tell the ambassador at that point. We did have all sorts of cat fights downstairs so one day we are in the country team meeting and Ambassador Olmstead who had come up under the old system where she couldn't marry and had to be three times better than any man at least to get where she had gotten and with her sitting there he said, "The problem is we are hiring too many women." You could see Mary's hands clutching and turning blue. John would later go off to Tehran and apparently do a wonderful job out there antagonizing everybody and I was told that when he left there was a goodbye party for him after his plane took off. But he was lucky because he just missed the seizure of the Embassy.

We had a communicator, a black officer, who had left his wife at home because he wanted to play around with local women and I think was somewhat depressed by how ugly they could be. So he did his best to date Australian women when he could find them. (Charles) Jones had a very strong vocabulary, I mean with a lot of cuss words and so on, he was a fairly good officer. Jones also went to Tehran and was there when the takeover came. When they released about half the captives, you know all the women the only black officer they kept was Jones and I met Mark Easton who was a political officer and sometimes served as chargé when Mary wasn't around we had no DCM (deputy chief of mission). We would talk and he said, "You know, Jones must have called one of them a mother-something or other. Finally I found out exactly what had happened. He had called them something from his sparkling vocabulary (laughter).

There were a lot of characters in the embassy but we also had very good people I mean Mary Olmstead was great. Mark Easton would teach the political training course over at FSI (Foreign Service Institute), he was a wonderful guy. He didn't do as well as he should have in the Foreign Service but he was a guy who was a great analyst and a very relaxed kind of person. Bob Fitts before he retired had became ambassador to Papua New Guinea [Ed: Fitts served as ambassador from September 2003 to October 2006]. He was a very energetic guy and he ended up building himself a 20-foot sailboat complete with portholes from ships that had sunk in the bay. He finished it about two weeks before he had left. He never got to see that sail once I think.

My wife worked with (Frank) Albert, who was the Public Affairs Officer and spent about a year doing that. The she got a job as a substitute and quickly became a permanent teacher in the third grade and she had had never taught before in her life. She was an American and so she was supposed to know how to play baseball so she became the baseball coach at the International School. She would come to me and ask, "What are the rules?" We were newly married and it was the first experience for my wife living overseas. She got pregnant and had a miscarriage and that was in a local hospital; even that had its up side; we were very close. The local hospital, there was no air conditioning

you just opened the screen and windows so the air would come through but there were these foreign doctors, Papua New Guinea residences who I think she thought they knew what they were doing but they were so shy she had to ask them to come over and do something. They would stand there. Then she got pregnant again apparently while we were in the Solomon Islands on the way home. On our way back from the Solomon Islands again we went to Naru, this little coral atoll in the middle of…a hundred miles from nowhere and then on to American Samoa and then Pago Pago, of course, Western Samoa.

Q: Gary, let's backtrack a little, how did your wife appear on the scene? What's her background?

MAYBARDUK: Well I had met my wife in Minnesota; she was in the same apartment building I was in. We met in the laundry room and we ended up folding sheets together. Still discreet to this day thirty plus years later we don't remember who asked who to fold sheets, but anyway then I went off to Argentina and pretty much decided that I was going to propose but I wasn't ready yet. My two years in Argentina were my Hemingway years; I had a lot of fun. But she came down after one year to visit and at this point I already knew that I was going to propose. We met in Ascension and visited it and came to Buenos Aires. Went to Montevideo by ferry. We had a rough night in a boat in Recife, got sea sick. Then went down to Bariloche, which is the ski resort in the Andes. It was winter so there weren't many people there, it's kind of like a mini Switzerland I guess with high mountains around, in the town of Bariloche there are chocolate shops everywhere and I had been there years earlier on the exchange program and always thought this is the place to propose to somebody. Bariloche is a lake and is about sixty miles long and it's got this island in the middle, heavily wooded island that's just gorgeous. Actually it had been a training park for the Argentine forest rangers but it had this log cabin lodge there. I had visited it in the summer but in the Argentine winter there was nobody there. We had the lodge to ourselves and I had planned to propose up on the highest point overlooking this wonderful blue lagoon but it was raining so instead about midnight I proposed in front of the fireplace because I thought it would be nice to propose in front of the fireplace.

Q: And she accepted?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, she thought about it for a minute or two. She said yes. Then she went back to the States and I spent another year in my wonderful Hemingway kind of life. Then after a year back in the States we got married. She was a parole and probation officer. She had a case of about 40-50 women half of which had murdered their husbands or boyfriends. Back in Minnesota at that time if you killed your wife it was a guaranteed thirty years but if you killed your husband or boyfriend about three years was the average. My wife explained it, "Well you know, everybody knew they had solved their problems doing that." I needed somebody like that to keep me in control. She was a Minnesota girl, but this was in Wisconsin immediately north of North Dakota but until she met me I think she had only been to the East Coast and had only seen the ocean once.

I took her to Fort Lauderdale and I just took this sweet, young Minnesota girl around the world for the next thirty years.

Q: Well then when you left Papua New Guinea near the end of 1978, what was your next assignment?

MAYBARDUK: We went back to the States. We both went to FSI for language training. I had what FSI called a typical Tex-Mex problem, it was my accent, it was all Argentine, but I had learned Spanish as much in the streets as in the classroom so I had become fluent but my grammar left a lot to be desired. So we spent a full twenty weeks at FSI.

Q: They co-corrected you?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah because trying to correct those habits is very hard. Well then I drove to Mexico City where I was going to be the assistant treasury attaché. We knew Sharon was pregnant at that point and she was working on her master's degree in criminology. She had started before we went to Papua New Guinea but she still hadn't finished her thesis. So she went home to Rochester, Minnesota, her hometown and finished her thesis. I drove down to Mexico and found a house and furniture, somebody had forgotten to ship our furniture or house effects out of Port Moresby and my parents had some old furniture with broken arms that they were going to give us which we shipped to Mexico but they got stopped at Mexican customs on the border and it didn't come for six or seven months. When Sharon came down she was about seven months pregnant and basically we were living in this very interesting house. I guess you would call it an art deco house because the embassy didn't provide furnished housing then. So somebody lent us a bed, a table and a couple old couches, it was a very nice house but with no furniture.

Q: This is early 1979 and you were going to be the assistant treasury attaché?

MAYBARDUK: That's right, but I was in Mexico only one year, approximately January to December 1978.

Q: OK, what was your portfolio like?

MAYBARDUK: It's worth going back for a minute to talk about how the job was created. Mexico went through a devaluation I think it was 1976 and Mexico had told the U.S. Treasury through the Treasury Attaché or maybe through a phone call, that they were doing to do it. Treasury had a habit of basically keeping all its information to itself. They had their own reporting channel and even though the rules are that all reporting is supposed to be seen by the ambassador, Treasury worked around that all the time. So when the devaluation came it was a major event. I don't remember why it was such a major event at the time but State was caught completely flat-footed and was very unhappy about it. So they proposed and Treasury accepted putting in an assistant treasury attaché position into Mexico and staffing it by a State Department person. Now when they recruited me for the job nobody mentioned a sinister role to me but when I was

going through the briefing period in Washington basically I was told by the Mexican desk in no uncertain terms I was supposed to keep track of what Treasury was doing.

Q: You were the designated spy?

MAYBARDUK: I was to be a spy; the term was actually used. Of course, the Treasury attaché in Mexico fully understood that, it was not a role I wanted to play in any event, but I went anyway trying to make the best of a situation. It looked to me like an excellent job. I had my PhD. in economics and now all of a sudden I could really use my economics. But it turned out to be a very problematical position. The Treasury attaché still kept his own council; most of his communications to Treasury went back by telephone or letter. He kept most of the principal contacts in the finance ministry and the central bank. He really left me out of much of the portfolio.

The DCM was delighted to have a PhD economist on the staff, although there was already another very well trained economist there, a guy by the name of Rosselo, who had this list of all sorts of projects for me to do. The trouble was that most of them were like term papers you had to do in college and it was a little hard to see how this would have any major policy impact. It required knowing a great deal about the economy, which takes time to learn. My first project was to write an evaluation of the Mexican government's five-year development plan. Well, I was naturally suspicious of any five-year plan but to really work through it and really understand where it came from and what it was about it took quite a bit of time, it took six weeks to do this thing. When I finished I ended up sitting in the office of the councilor of economic affairs and the Treasury attaché and they spent over an hour talking of the placement of commerce and both were bilingual English teachers. You can feel my frustration as to what was going on.

I forget what my next task was, but in the meanwhile I began to look at the money supply situation and noticed that Mexico was putting money at the rate of 30 percent increases every year and only reporting about ten to thirteen percent inflation. This didn't make any sense to me so I did some background checking and looked through it and I basically tried on my own to write a very short cable that said look at this increase in the money supply, there are reasons why the prices haven't gone up yet but we should know next year there will be a very significant increase of inflation in Mexico. The Treasury attaché said, "No, that's never going to happen." In the meantime the econ counselor backed him up. In the meantime, however, the DCM has picked this up too and sent it down and said, "How is this possible?" So I had him take a look at my three-paragraph short cable. Well, I was forced to write about a ten page one justifying all the things, going through everything, and I was the one who was making actually predictions which I didn't feel qualified to do, but I eventually did at thirty percent, plus or minus three percent. They didn't really believe that it was going to happen. Finally the cable went out, I don't know, it took two or three months to get it out and the embassy put at the bottom of the page they weren't necessarily endorsing it. But they let it go out and it continued on this way.

Sometime mid-year I went to Washington to sit in on a conference on Mexico, I met people and I expressed my unhappiness to people about the problem. Then in October, I think it was, I got a call from ARA, the Latin American bureau, wanting to know if I wanted a direct transfer to Nicaragua. The revolution had taken pace and my name had come up in a staff meeting. Well, I hemmed and hawed, which gave me time to think this through. So when I went home Sharon said she knew we were going, she could tell that I wanted it, and the DCM John Ferch tried to stop it, he liked to have me in Mexico City. But the executive officer at ARA called Ferch directly and said, "We need him in Nicaragua you better step out of the way." So I went down in December to Nicaragua on TDY and came back in December and then in January we moved to Nicaragua.

Q: How did you find…the internal politics of our embassy in Mexico City can be quite fierce can't they?

MAYBARDUK: It was terrible; it was terrible. John Ferch was our DCM, John was a smart guy but he never managed an office of more than seven people and he was now running one of the largest missions in the world. Our Ambassador was Patrick Lucey, who was the former governor of Wisconsin and later ran as a vice president candidate. He was totally out of his league, totally out of his league and the embassy, in many places, was run by some aide he brought with him. So the embassy wasn't functioning very well anyway.

You had an econ counselor who was scared of his shadow, a Treasury attaché who didn't want to be responsible to anybody but Treasury. We actually had a guy named Ozello, I can't remember his first name, who was actually the macro econ officer and he did a very good job, excellent, one of the very few who I met in the State Department who was really first rate. But the counselor wouldn't give him any freedom, he micro-managed almost everything and Ozello couldn't get any clearances. I ended up writing the, what do you call it, the economic trends report. This was an eleven member economic section plus an entirely separate commercial section. I got to the rating on the part about agriculture in Mexico and I went to the agricultural attaché, they had their own office with a staff of about three and they said there was going to be a huge grain imports into Mexico the following year from the U.S. I later talked to the transportation attaché who sat right across the hall from them and he said there was no way there could any major grain transport because the train system was in total chaos. They were across the hall from each other and they didn't communicate and that was the whole problem throughout the section.

Then over in the political section you had a political section that was fascinating. They never went out they reported everything from the newspapers.

Q: Wasn't Ambassador Lucy's wife was kind of known for being a problem.

MAYBARDUK: Yes, she was. I don't remember what the problems were but I remember she was a major problem apparently, a major problem.

The political counselor [William Pryce] who recently passed away, was later ambassador to Honduras and later the person on the National Security Council for Latin American Business Administration. I don't remember his name, a nice guy. But his section wasn't working. The only guy who would go out was John Glassman, another well-known name, I think. I liked Glassman, the two of us tried to do a few projects together. Glassman was a quick writer and at least he got out and was reporting. But I quickly discovered that Glassman was quite willing to write a cable with very little facts and drew up conclusions with very little facts, which made it uncomfortable for me. Of course, Glassman later got in trouble because it of his Salvador reporting. He was right in his reporting but a white paper came out and I think it was Sandinista involvement and lots of it turned out to be unjustified and he got in a lot of trouble. But that was typical of Glassman's reporting; but at least he was getting out and was trying to do things that nobody else was doing. It was a very frustrating year.

Q: Well then what happened to you? You were sort of forced into your prediction cable. What happened?

MAYBARDUK: About 18 months later, when I was in Nicaragua, the embassy in Mexico reported that inflation in Mexico that year had been 29.7 percent almost exactly what the embassy had predicted 18 months earlier; they didn't mention my name but I can't really claim a lot of credit but I mean I was right the price of inflation was going to increase but I have no reason to believe I was necessarily right as to the reasons why it was at 29 versus 25 or 40. That cable helped me get a job though as I found out later when I left Nicaragua and went to Washington because the petroleum attaché at the time, Glenn Ray who had been in my A-100 class and then was in the Office of Monetary Affairs and my name had come up as a candidate for that office. He went back and dug up the cable and the deputy director at the time said he had never seen anybody use the quantum theory of money to predict inflation before and get it right. He helped me get the job in the Office of Monetary Affairs later. This is one of the few times that hard economic analysis helped me get recognized.

Q: Well then you were in Nicaragua from when to when?

MAYBARDUK: Well, I went on TDY (temporary duty) in November of 1979. I was there a month; I did TDY in the economic section. That was a fascinating period because the Sandinistas had taken over in July and there was still an air of good feeling in the country. You'd go down the streets and the people would see Sandinista soldiers and yell "compenaro" (comrades). It didn't have much of a pejorative sense as comrade in English these days. The Sandinistas were still consolidating their power, they were still a council state with two non-Sandinista in the council.

My biggest event in that whole month was being shot at but that was by accident. But I was at a motel sort of a mile or so out of the city, in a forest on a mountain, which I thought looked down on the city. It was December 6th, Christinos, and we were told to stay indoors because they were throwing Nicaraguan firecrackers but there were a lot of guns around and they were shooting. I had stayed on the compound and I went for a swim

about 11:30 pm a quick swim and was heading back to the hotel and then all of a sudden it sounded like World War III went off. I mean it was just the fireworks at midnight. I thought I might be able to see downtown Managua from the perimeter road within the compound so I walked over to the perimeter road and all of a sudden I heard a zinging, there was someone else there too. Then another zing. I heard about five zings before I got back to my room. I told people I climbed under the bed; I didn't but almost did. I didn't tell my wife about that incident, by the way, until after we got back to Nicaragua in January and settled in and she was quite comfortable with it.

Q: OK, well let's take the first of the month you went there. What were you doing?

MAYBARDUK: When I went back to Managua in January the situation had changed considerably. Nobody was calling the Sandinistas "compenaros" anymore. This is just after two months. The comment then was "apiricuaco", which was, I never did figure out exactly what it meant but it was a derogatory term. The Sandinistas were basically trying to consolidate power, some of the abuses became more evident of the Sandinista regime. Later it was beginning more obvious. Being an economic officer I ended up mostly dealing with the private sector which was very scared. We were hearing on a regular basis their fears about takeovers. Properties were beginning to be taken over; the Sandinistas initially had taken over the Somoza properties and some of the properties of Somocista. By this time they were beginning to take other properties that had no connection with the Somocistas.

I started dealing almost immediately with properties taken from Americans.

Q: Was this takeover for electoral reasons or was this greed?

MAYBARDUK: It was a series of things actually. The Sandinistas kept saying they wanted a private sector, like Fidel. Castro had told them don't scare away the private sector. But the Sandinistas were a committee of nine; three different factions that at one time had contracts to kill each other until Fidel busted heads. There wasn't a lot of discipline and there would be about a year or more later when I was writing a cable on some of this stuff but my analysis was that they really didn't have control and once the property was taken at any level for any reason there was this dynamic that it couldn't be returned; that would be against the revolution. So there were a lot of abuses, enormous abuses. Some takeovers were ideological, some were somebody made an accusation, some were greed, some were resentful, there was a case of loss of a protected area where a series of cables went out on what happened there.

Q: What was that?

MAYBARDUK: That affected area was owned by an American and her Nicaraguan husband. Early in my stay there, it may not have been the first month, it may have been the first month, they came to see me. I think they came to see my boss but he was busy so I…during the civil war they had managed to keep their dairy open and delivering milk throughout the city. The wife had actually dressed like a pheasant woman and carried a

basket on her head to deliver the payroll to employees around the city. But this is their story anyway, after the revolution there was a real shortage of milk or most of the dairy herds had been slaughtered or had somehow migrated over to Honduras. They were proposing to mix milk with powdered milk to increase the supply in the country and there was to be a meeting with the government on it; the meeting was headed by Arturo Cruz who was a member of the Junta but was a democrat and a nice guy. On the other side was the chairman of the dairy board, the new Sandinista dairy board who opposed it for reasons I can't even remember what he said. But he had been a competitor to La Perfecta. His father had gone out of business and he was resentful and was trying again. So they put aside that issue and powdered milk was not imported and there was a real shortage. I don't remember all the various incidents; this thing went on for just over two years, this issue. At one point they finally become confiscated and they took it to the courts. The courts were pretty biased but the interesting thing they had won in the courts and the government appealed it was finally before the Supreme Court and the belief was, they believed they were actually going to win, and I think it was on the second anniversary of the revolution Daniel Ortega in his speech to the crowd announced the irrevocable takeover of La Perfecta. I later used this in a cable I wrote late in my two years there in which I pointed out that so much of what happens in a revolution is less planned than the result of a political structure that is incoherent and so that when things happen it can't reverse itself and La Perfecta was a perfect case for that. The family eventually got their property back but they had to wait until the Sandinistas left office.

Q: Well in the first place tell me a little bit about the structure of the embassy and your role in it.

MAYBARDUK: The embassy had about a four-man political section. Chuck Brayshaw was the political counselor, very good. Tom O'Donnell was the DCM, he was excellent and Larry Pezzullo was the ambassador and he was truly excellent. We really had an excellent embassy. There were good people all around.

John Curry was my boss and Econ Counselor of our two-man section. John had really been the first in the embassy to predict Samoa's downfall. He had good contacts throughout the society because he was dating a Nicaraguan woman whom he later married. He had a feel for the place better than anybody else did. He was one of the early ones to predict Somoza's downfall.

Pezzullo had come in basically to tell Somoza to leave; that was his job to leave to tell Somoza to leave. Pezzullo's a very smart guy he tends to think in big pictures, his staff meetings were like political science 541. I mean there was a great deal of discussion as to what's happening and the trends and so on. It was a kind of a very intellectual kind of atmosphere but at the same time he could be very direct and very sharp. He had asked Somoza to leave; we pushed Somoza out. A lot of the Sandinistas did too but we had a lot to do with it at least that was the story when I got there I wasn't there when it happened.

The big issue we were fighting at the time was, we had promised to give the Sandinistas $75 million or give it to the country to be spent by the private sector to regenerate itself;

but we were having a terrible time getting it through Congress. Within the embassy there was a real fight between the station chief and the rest of the embassy over the evaluation of who the Sandinistas were. Were they diehard Fidel Castro-type Communists or were they something else we could work with. So they had this battle going on, especially the agency chief actually thought that we should give them $75 million but there was a real fierce battle going on with Congress at the same time.

It was a fascinating tour and probably one of the two best assignments I had in the Foreign Service. I was pretty good in the job of dealing with the agricultural sector and got to know a whole lot of people very quickly. Frank Nandanya, an American from New York, who was half Nicaraguan and lived there, he went around wearing a New York Yankees baseball cap. Then there was Bolanos who was the last president of Nicaragua. Then there was Mr. Dreyfus who was head of the council of the private sector, COSEP (English: Superior Council of Private Businesses; Spanish Consejo Superior de la Emprea Privada), there were a whole lot of other people who had been prominent. The private sector had organized itself during the revolution against Somoza, the thing that really got it its start was in 1978 when the editor of La Prensa, the opposition newspaper was assassinated. It turned out he was not assassinated by Somoza's people but that only came out years later. But he was taken and condemned by Somoza and the private sector called a general strike. They paid their employees to stay home, which they don't. That was the first real cracks that lead two years later to the overthrow of the Sandinistas.

The Sandinista revolution really was a popular revolution. I think it was not a pro-Sandinista or anti American revolution. It was a popular revolution against Somoza in which virtually all members of society participated. The church, the opposition parties, the Sandinistas was the armed group but there were other armed groups as well. But some people in the private sector had immediately seen the danger of the Sandinistas and in both the cattle industry and in the coffee industry, I don't know if these organizations had been enlisted before, but they very quickly organized the cattle growers and even more importantly the coffee growers into an organization of cooperatives. Enough of them were very wealthy being connected to Somoza and left, but others went from the guys who had 200 "menzonas", which is about 400 acres down to the guy who has three. In a very egalitarian organization, organizing committees all over the country and it had been joined by Jorge Salazar and Franklin Knight. These became a real challenge to the government because they were organized everywhere. They were later joined by the small potato producers, the market sellers and the chamber of commerce and the cotton growers and the rice growers. They really organized as a permitable civic opposition. They were doing this; the American embassy had nothing to do with it at that point, by the way. Somewhere in there, I think maybe in November I actually met some of these guys and I began to meet more of them.

Then in March Frank and Alejandro Salazar invited me up to the annual coffee festival up in Matagalpa, it was the first annual coffee festival actually. So I went up with them and in a movie theatre they had a rally. There were a thousand seats and they were full. At this rally there were a lot of attacks on the government particularly by someone who had been a prominent radio critic of the Somoza regime. When we got outside I noticed

there were at least twice that number outside; those I couldn't count it was a depth and crowd thing. They marched, well actually a parade, through downtown Matagalpa. For a while I marched with them and then I realized that wasn't appropriate and I walked away from the crowd and sort of walked parallel a block down. The parade was lead by about a hundred or so people in a fairly organized contingent, an almost sort of military march which chanted, they didn't attack the Sandinistas directly, but essentially said, "Without bread we can't work." Other suggestions were implicitly critical of the government but the parade also had pretty good organization, coffee trucks you know. It started in town and you could look on the faces of the people in town and there was a great feeling of worry and trepidation. It wasn't sure on how to react to this. At one point they marched past the jail where a lot of political prisoners were being held. At one point there was a rally of Sandinistas going on at the same time and I literally watched from my vantage point that the organizers, all of whom were adults, would organize the kids and then attack the march throwing sticks and stones, whatever, and the crowd did not disperse they kept marching and the kids left. There was an instant change in the pact. All of a sudden you saw people joining the march coming out of the stores, coming out of homes and joining the march. While I'm not particularly good at counting people I later wrote the size of people marching to the edge of town at least doubled in the number. Actually, before the march there was a picnic, they had a picnic and then they marched. As they got to the end of the march and I didn't see anything but heard about it later but I could hear it; several shots were fired. Some Sandinista had shot and killed one farmer and there was a lot of hullabaloo about this.

Anyway, I went back to the embassy and there was a staff meeting going on and I broke into the staff meeting, the country team meeting, I wasn't on the country team but I thought they ought to hear it. I reported it and then wrote the cable saying, "The beginning of the end of the revolution," or something like that in a sense that his was the first real public demonstration against the Sandinistas.

Q: Well had you concluded by this time that the Sandinistas were unified or remained a disparate group?

MAYBARDUK: They never did become a single group at least not while I was there. While they became more and more of a group, you were confident there were differences. How much you never quite knew sometimes we had been fed information or if these were real. But there were reasons to believe and there are still reasons to believe that there was considerable dissention among them. But they were clearly trying to consolidate power.

Q: Well did you or some of your colleagues conclude that this was a move toward a Castro-like regime?

MAYBARDUK: Yes, but not all the way. This was different. Let's go back toward the end of my stay there I will talk about this more. There was always a sense in the embassy that we could find a way to work with this group. The Sandinistas themselves were a small party, unlike the Communist Party they did not take lots of members, they didn't

take more than a thousand members; there were also mass organizations. But a lot of things were different. They tried to form the local community to the defense of the revolution. I don't know what they call it anymore, that's what the Cubans call them, these block committees, and they didn't succeed. The Nicaraguan wouldn't have anything to do with them even in some of the poor "barrios" they just never really got these things off the ground. They would turn around and elect some opposition member and that kind of thing. But they never conceded.

The U.S. policy, this became essentially my job, was to keep the private sector in the country and a large number of them stayed unlike Cuba where everybody left. This meant you had a professional class who wasn't going away and since the government had made a decision it didn't want to appropriate everything, they couldn't appropriate everything; they quickly found they couldn't manage what they had. They needed to come up with some accommodation with the private sector. There were various things in this society that were making it hard and the Sandinistas themselves were completely unified and that made it more difficult. The other problem was they did not have control of the countryside. They eventually won the city; they never had control of the countryside. They fought private farmers and then there was a majority of farmers in Nicaragua were small farmers who owned their own land.

Q: This was not a case of a big multinational company owning large fruit growing plantations?

MAYBARDUK: No, no this is a country…I really wouldn't call them a middle class country, but you would have a very large middle class of small farmers. All through the mountains, and it is a very mountainous country, and a very large class of prosperous farmers, not hugely prosperous. For example, the president Bolanos, Enrique Bolanos, was probably the largest farmer I knew. He had about 2,000 acres and rented another 8,000 acres and did cotton. He also provided farm materials and he had crops on his land and so on. When the revolution was going on, he continued to plow cotton with the fight going on around him. He drove a ten-year old Mercedes that had bullet holes in it and lived in a house that would have been modest by middle class standards in Washington DC these days and yet it was clear he wasn't a Somoza. They ended up taking his property.

So these people really were…it was hard for them so there was always this feeling and the Sandinista always seemed to be with the Sandinistas, I mean our contact with them was a highly _____. He went and left for Harvard business school, I'm not sure what he is doing now, but there was a feeling at times that he was hearing us but he would take it back to the Nine and we would get in that kind of revolutionary setting of the Committee of Nine, but you would hear and believe that those who yelled the loudest carried the day. Those were the ones who considered themselves the most ideological pure, you know Tomás Borge.

How far the Sandinistas would go was clearly a major debate and clearly a debate between the ambassador and the station chief. The ambassador keep a positive view of

the Sandinistas; the station chief thought that their goal was to create a Cuban-like society. The minister didn't disagree or agree on policy. At one point I came across this manifesto that they were putting out. It basically said that they were going to take over and create a Cuban society. I gave it to the political section who sat on it until the agency reported it. Now I was really annoyed with them, I should have reported it but there was and this was interesting, the dynamics of an embassy and how it works vis-a-vis Washington. We did filter the information back to Washington. The ambassador, DCM and political counselor were very clear and they wanted the message to go back that it was still possible to deal with the Sandinistas and the term that they used was to create a pluralistic society. We didn't talk about democracy; we talked about pluralism. That meant that even the bad news gets watered down a little bit by comments at the end of the cable and so on. The reason for this was they were still trying to get the $75 million through. We were putting a lot of hope that giving aid but we were already giving aid, we had a lot of aid in the pipeline from the Somoza era and we were doing a great deal of aid; getting credit for some and not for others. In the ministry of education we gave jeeps to the literacy campaign that went on the first year and all the aid handshake things on jeeps and we went all over the country. Our jeeps were there for the literacy campaign.

We also gave a lot of jeeps to the ministry of health, which probably got used by Cuban doctors. Every time we turned around the decal was rubbed off and it would be no credit for that. So again you saw the difference between the ministry and the individuals and how we were treated and what we were doing.

Sometime around mid-year that first year, my boss the Econ Counselor left, he went off to be Econ Counselor in Salvador. I was at least two, if not three, ranks below that position. So there was a real fight in Washington and got me the job as econ counselor, chief of section. I was further joined by a junior officer and another person who was really working for somebody else in my section so I became, this is my third tour now, I'm now head of the economic section in a hot spot embassy. All my contacts of the private section at this point had become the real leader of the opposition far more than a party, the church was very strong, but the private sector was really the active opposition.

Q: Were you feeling the hot breath of people who would later become neocons, the conservatives, maybe visitors and Congress and all this. Were you getting any pressure…?

MAYBARDUK: Carter was still in office. We weren't getting pressure from Washington, not from the department, but in Congress.

Frankly I just don't, I remember the first six months I was a little bit isolated from that because I was the number two, I wasn't on the country team. It was in that time period though or maybe after I became, yes, right after I became counselor, Congress finally approved the $75 million. Now before that, two things that clearly happened to me; one, via the meat inspector, because Nicaragua shipped meat to McDonalds and Burger King in the States, I'd been told by somebody that ran a trucking company that the Sandinistas were getting arms from Algeria and went through the chain hearing from the Ag attaché

who was based in Guatemala and had got that from the guy who told me and then I ended up writing a cable on it and that cable got stopped. It got stopped as I was told this would really disrupt the situation Washington. They asked me to put it into a memo of conversation and send it to the desk, which I did. Patterson was the desk officer at the time, later ambassador. I also sent a file copy to the section chief. A couple months later a kid maybe 21 or 22, I don't know, came to the embassy and wanted to talk to the Political Counselor who was busy and he got sloughed off to me. He came in and he told me that all the rifles in the Sandinistas army, I forget what they were now, had been shipped to Salvador to the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) and told me how they could be identified; how they had actually cut out the serial numbers on the rifles, diamond sort of shaped cut. He had picked it up from a drunk officer in a bar. I wrote this up as a cable, didn't know if it was true at that point or not but I wrote it up as a cable. Again it got stopped and it ended up in…I hope they sent it out as a memo of conversation. I think it went out but in retrospect I'm not 100 percent sure.

Again a copy to the desk and to the section chief. They were getting a little upset because I was constantly scooping him but I was doing it not because I was going to be so special it was just that I had the contacts, the private sector was everywhere in the country and it was just coming to me. OK, then, so my timing may be off on this but in any event it wasn't three weeks later there was a report by some reporter traveling with the FMLN in Salvador that they had gotten a new rifle, he described them and they were the rifles. Later there was a lot of confirmation on this but at this time there wasn't so much. This is exactly what had happened. The Sandinistas, of course, were totally denying that they were given them money.

Part of the condition to the $75 million was that the Sandinistas not get involved in the affairs of their neighbors. The Sandinistas signed that agreement and actually signed the letter to give back the money if they violated the terms of the agreement. Before Washington agreed to it, so before we actually signed off there had to be a determination in Washington that this was in fact the case, that they were not involved and also to name very prominent people. I can't remember them all but you would recognize them if they signed off on it. Some with some disclaimers, Tony Gillespie basically wrote something that said to the effect of we know that you did it but we can't prove the top people involved. Covering himself both ways, he was at least the most honest of the group.

Well, it was maybe my second or third country team meeting and the ambassador had gone to Washington to sign the loan deal, or get the final approval for the loan deal. Then it dawned on me; it hadn't dawned on me before. The reason it hadn't dawned on me was because I hadn't been sitting in on all these country team meetings that we had an explosive situation here. We were going to sign off and give this $75 million to the Sandinistas and we were going to catch them by the sound of it. This was going to trigger a whole series of other events. I remember in a country team meeting just sort of really sort of pounding on the table saying we are heading for a disaster here. It is better not giving the $75 million than to give it to them and then find out later they cheated on us. The station chief who, of course, was much more senior than I was sitting there. I really didn't get a strong pushback by either the DCM or the Political Counselor except that this

was too late to stop, which was probably true. But, of course, it did come back to bite us when they had the so-called final offensive at the beginning of the next year. The evidence was all over the place that the Sandinistas were involved. We never did ask for the $75 million back and that is another whole story. So I really felt at that time I felt that I was really in the midst of things and was playing a real part of history.

In the meantime, I had gotten very close to the private sector. We had this nice house on South Highway kilometer ten and a half which was literally on a plateau which looked down on the valley into town, this time I could actually see it instead of…so you could have a wonderful view and very private. The people from the private sector, particularly the agriculture side, were regularly at my house. I mean we had a baby at the time, we were very happy, I was delighted with my work, my wife was happy with a young baby, and we both were enjoying it. We had a nice ranch-style house with a big back door covered patio with logs holding up the roof.

My wife was from the mid-west, lower middle-class family; I had grown up as a doctor's son and always had a housekeeper. My wife didn't want a housekeeper when we first went to Papua New Guinea. I think I've told this story, anyway we had one part time eventually she was twice a week. We got to Mexico she didn't want a full time maid well she had the baby and all of a sudden we had one six days a week. We got to Nicaragua and all of a sudden we had two maids to make sure everybody was covered. My wife got into it finally. But we had, it was really one of the happiest times of our life but I would later write at some point we were entertaining eight nights a week because people always showed up at the house after work. It got to that we just had extra food prepared and we just ended up spending night after night after night in that patio talking politics with whomever showed up and that would go on for the full next two years.

Q: What was the political atmosphere? Were people looking over their shoulder at that time?

MAYBARDUK: That I would later see in Cuba. The Sandinistas hadn't gotten that far in creating a network of spies, I don't think they ever got that far in creating an effective spy network because they couldn't get these committees set up. But we were getting a lot of criminal violence, several embassy households were held up at gunpoint. People were tied up, nobody was hurt and somebody's maid got raped in one of these robberies. So there was a lot of tension there. My contacts were worried about losing property; I mean they were losing property. They were upset there was no credit, they couldn't get agricultural credit, the government had nationalized the export of raw meat or agricultural commodities and it also nationalized the imports of fertilizers and seed and everything else. It turned out that the agricultural sector depended a lot on supplier credit especially the smaller farms, it didn't affect the banks, it affected the buyer. I got to know the guy from Shell whose job was bringing in agricultural fertilizers. The central bank was saying, Arturo Cruz was there, was saying we're giving more credits in real terms to the private farm sector than ever before. The banks were saying they were all nationalized at this point but a lot of the bankers were still from the old company, in fact there was a fairly large, everywhere in the State organization there were lots of people from the

company earlier and they were also giving more credit than ever. The farmers having a hard time. I eventually figured out that it was the supplier credit that dried up. Interesting because I think if you were to look at what happened in Salvador why Duarte eventually lost when the right wing came in rather than opposition wing came in from the agriculture sector he too at our encouragement had nationalized the export of commodities and the import of materials, supported by us at the time to win over the discontent of the left, the civic left. Why I don't know for sure I'm sure that's what happened. I feel very confident that it really looked bad and that was part of what happened and why the right eventually took over from Duarte.

But anyway in Nicaragua and this is one of the many tensions in the takeovers. They were constant meetings of these cooperatives. I was up in Matagalpa several times with Frank and Alejandro Salazar, another coffee grower, and occasionally Jorge Salazar was the head of it and also became head of the UPANIK, which was a farmers' organization. The people coming to my house would talk about this and their worries so you would hear it and hear it. They were trying to establish a dialogue with the government. The government was trying to figure out a way of governing and it came up with something, I forget the name of it, but it was essentially a fascist type organization, it was like the council of state, different from the original council of state. It was like an assembly in which people would be represented by mass organizations and by interest groups. It was sort of the things that made sure that their mass organizations and all their representatives had the majority, but most of the private sector organizations had representatives. So COSET and UPANIK had people, the other opposition parties had people and for a while this system worked. To create it they needed the private sector's cooperation and so they went through a series of very tense negotiations with the private sector, Enrique Davis who was head of the private sector was out of the country for some reason so they ended up negotiating it with Jorge Salazar who was the number two head of the agricultural organization. This is very important to the politics later. Finally, they agreed to build it and for seven months it worked fairly well, it was interesting. The government would propose legislation, there would be this huge debate in this assembly in which the opposition, especially the private sector, would show why this legislation couldn't work and the government would withdraw it. This was not unlike the period of Somoza. Somoza was not totalitarian he was a dictator but he was not totalitarian. There was always a certain amount of play in the system. The Sandinistas, and this will go back to your original question as to why they could afford to be different. It looked as if the Sandinistas were willing to have some of this play and so while the form was different in many ways the effect was not dissimilar.

Then came the crucial event that really broke things open. According to Salazar, during the revolution he had given refugee to one of the commandants or sub-commandants, it wasn't one of the nine but it was the next level down, hiding him from the Sandinistas. That general came to him with a proposal for a counter-revolutionary plot against the government. Salazar apparently had told us this, I was not part of it and did not know about it at the time which is again before I arrived.

Q: Salazar was what?

MAYBARDUK: He was the head of the coffee growers, he had formed this large coffee growers organization which by the way was in all the areas that later became home for the Contras, basically Matagalpa, prominent family, very nice, a young guy, very charismatic, wonderful smile. I think the Sandinistas saw him as a real threat. They had been busy and the one thing they had done which Somoza did not do until it got really nasty they were busy trying to knock off the real threats. So they finally killed Somoza himself in Paraguay and Commandante Sero was not one of the nine but was a hero in the revolution, fought in the southern front against the then Commandante Bravo who basically helped align the southern front throughout the entire revolution. Commandante Bravo was actually considered a very honest, Army officer and moved to Honduras. Commandante Sero got involved in a plot against the government and ambushed him and had him killed. So the Sandinistas were looking to get rid of any really charismatic opposition. So they kind of entrapped Jorge Salazar into this so called conspiracy along with his cousin Alejandro Salazar who had become a good friend of mine and head of the rice growers organization. I think this was before the final offensive in January of that year but it may have been after I just don't remember any more. He had been to my office the week before I was getting him a visa and things for a trip to Florida to talk to the annual meeting of the chambers of commerce Latin America in Miami. I saw him that morning a week later in his jeep driving around and he had been out to meet the conspirators up on the south highway about ten miles out of town. While he was there he was killed. Three service station workers up there would later testify that he was unarmed, the Sandinistas claim that they found guns in the back of his jeep which was kind of an old fashioned jeep station wagon. If it had been back there it obviously didn't make much sense. It was pretty obvious he was been assassinated. It was not clear whether the Sandinistas wanted him assassinated but somebody didn't go too far, it was a problem of control.

That lead to a big funeral almost the private sector went on strike. I sat in on all these meetings and they were eventually to scared to go on strike at this point. The Sandinistas had become stronger. They made a statement, well they didn't make one right away, there was a funeral procession, it was an emotional experience and I was really feeling part of it at the time.

That was the key break in the domestic political situation. I always wondered whether what happened in Nicaragua agreed with a Shakespearian tragedy, that it was destined to happened or whether there were key events that made it happen. If you take the Shakespearean tragedy in terms of domestic politics within Nicaragua with the killing of Jorge Salazar was the break of any attempted trust between the private sector and the government they would flee from the assembly, the assembly never really functioned after that, there was never any ability, I mean half the private sector got arrested eventually and I will talk about that later. So that was just a clear break.

Then the other key event was the so-called final offensive in Salvador in January of 1981, right after Reagan took power, two weeks before Reagan took power. They were clearly trying to have a coup in Salvador before Reagan got into office and of course it failed and

that really screwed up relations with the United States. So those were the two really key events. After that Enrique Bolognas, this very conservative, he had been politically neutral individual, became head of COSET, he become president of the country. Romero Gerian who was head of the banana growers became head of the UPANEK, and there was kind of a correct approach to the government but none of the attempted real cooperation that would have happened, maybe later on there was some again but it took years and it really broke the whole thing apart.

Enrique Bolognas we all thought was the wrong person because he was a person who worked on principal and didn't bend and we just never could see him as a politician. But he probably was the right leader at the time because there wasn't anything negotiable with the Sandinistas at this point and they needed somebody who was incorruptible, who couldn't be bought and so on. When he became president many years later his regime was probably the first really honest regime that the government had had for years but he almost got overthrown by the result of the assembly because he couldn't negotiate, he hadn't changed, he hadn't changed. So it was a fascinating period.

Q: Did you sense a change in American policy and the administration's attitude after the election of 1980?

MAYBARDK: Right. The embassy wasn't split; the embassy was basically in line with what he wanted to do. There was this feeling that we could try and make things work. A lot of us weren't happy with Jimmy Carter, weren't happy particularly with Ronald Reagan. I remember election eve we had an election eve party which we invited Nicaraguans to actually see how the process works and that was a very poignant point in which it was clear that Reagan had won and you could see Pezzullo's kids come over and hug him because Ambassador Pezzullo knew he was gone at that point.

But he didn't leave right way. Pezzullo made a very smart move. I mean most of his Central American team in the ARA Bureau was fired almost immediately. Pezzullo went up and talked to Tom Enders who was becoming the new assistant secretary for Latin America. He said, "Look Tom, I'm leaving in six months. I can leave tomorrow if you want and I will go without any fuss but I am leaving in six months, I'm going off for a diplomat in residence at the University of Georgia, I'm not going to be a problem for you. What I would like is to help you get through the next six months, the transition." He actually convinced Enders to make one more try at agreement with the Sandinista; it was called the Enders Initiative. I don't think the administration believed in it for a moment but I think they felt they were in a kind of difficult situation and they should try it and Enders at least was not an Elliott Abrams, somebody who is a reasonable guy. So we said we wanted to send down Thomas Enders to talk to the Sandinistas about where our relationship was going. The Sandinistas were disappointed at first, they wanted somebody more senior, they weren't sure this guy would have clout. Once they met Enders there was no question, Enders was six and a half feet tall and he looked like he was firmly in charge of everything. Enders basically said, "Look, if you want a good relationship with us you've got to cut the nonsense out with your neighbors. You've got to work with whoever is in the country." And he gave them a whole bunch of conditions.

The one thing we were never good on in this process not even Pezzullo, we were not good at listening to the Sandinistas. I found this that you tend to find this everywhere in our U.S. foreign policy, we are never good at listening, we are good at talking but we are not good at listening. So we never really addressed their concern that we were going to invade them because everybody in the country expected the U.S. to eventually invade, both sides. We had been involved in Nicaraguan politics so many times that it was almost taken for granted by everybody. So we never really addressed their concerns. Well, Enders went back and then Pezzullo left this would be about mid-1981 [Ed: Ambassador Pezzullo departed post on August 18, 1981. He has an oral history interview on file with ADST.]. Tom O'Donnell, the DCM, left and they sent in a new political counselor and Roger Gamble became the new DCM, this was kind of a new team. David Pfeiffer was the new political counselor. He had been in Portugal, at the Azores, as the Portuguese were adjusting to democratic government.

His first observation after two months of being in Nicaragua he said, "The problem with this country is it doesn't have any leaders, it doesn't have any natural leaders," which was absolutely true. It still is actually, it still is, and there aren't any real natural leaders in the country. There are people in power who had to leave but there were not. Of course people like Salazar who was a leader had been killed and Somoza was gone because Somoza was the leader.

The Enders Initiative settled with exchange of letters I think, well not an exchange but Enders sent a letter or two, which never got answered. Sometime, maybe three months later, Gamble decided to write a cable in which he said, "I think we have to assume the Enders Initiative has failed." Now for the old timers in the embassy, I was still a junior officer but also an old timer by this point, we knew this was going to be the end of a change or a major shift in policy. We didn't tell Gamble we opposed it, we could've objected a little bit. He sent the cable out and then we said, "This is going to lead to disaster." I went and told him we wanted to write a dissent cable. He was pretty upset, not because we wanted to write dissent cable because we hadn't warned him before he sent his cable; fair enough actually. We were all prepared to write the dissent cable, let the chips fall. We went back I don't know if it was the acting AID director's office or my office, I can't remember any more, and there was myself, the acting AID director, there was the USIS person who had been there before the revolution, the only one who had been there before the revolution, Bob Clarke, who was a junior political officer. We tried to draft the dissent cable; we said we had to keep trying. We spent several hours then because I was in charge of writing it, we couldn't write it. We all felt that somehow we could work this out. But there was nothing we could hang our hat on. The Sandinistas had broken their word to everybody and how do you deal with people who don't understand the need to keep their word. Even Fidel Castro keeps his, he doesn't make a promise very often but he does keep it when he makes. I don't think they understood that. So they had violated all the nasty ways with the private sector. They suddenly stopped the confiscations, but confiscations continued. They were harassing the church and they had the final offensive in Salvador and we didn't know how to write the cable with any kind of credibility, I don't know if I can do any better today but I couldn't do it then and nobody else could either.

So I mean after spending a good morning and maybe an early afternoon on it I finally went back and told Roger and told him why we weren't sending the cable and told him why. I've told the story since because I think it's important in that it goes back to the question you asked; there was this real sense that somehow we could work it out, it didn't have to come to what it became.

Q: Did you sense there was a group in Washington or maybe Congress which had been salivating to turn Nicaragua into something, which might have an agenda, and here is an issue.

MAYBARDUK: I don't think I could have articulated it that well at the time but we knew there were pressures in Washington. I don't think I could have and I'd never served in Washington and I was still pretty young and naïve so…

Q: What happened next?

MAYBARDUK: The embassy was not clued in on it. Well, we knew things were going to change we had a sense. We figured there would be something military but we didn't know what, or some sort of severe movement, we didn't know what it would be. Interestingly, it wasn't soon after this that we began to pick up, I began to pick up, reports of guerrillas in the hills. Again I was the principal reporter of this and again it was because of my contacts. I went up to Matagalpa and visited with the bishop up there who told me there were at least two hundred guerrillas in the hills and I started hearing it from others as well.

I actually just before I left I actually went fishing down on the Rio San Juan between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, probably in retrospect I shouldn't have been there. But I went down and went tarpon fishing, it was a new experience, there had been a fishing lodge down there, a company fish lodge. It had been destroyed during the revolution but I had met and I liked to fish, I had met the manger of that lodge and we agreed that I would give him my fifteen horse power motor or sell it to him for a low price, pay our expenses and we would fly down there and fish on the river. While I was down there you would see the Sandinistas in their canoes with AK-47s up and down the river. I didn't have any problem, there was already a southern front being organized by Commandante Sero who had left the Sandinistas by that point. As far as I know, the U.S. was not involved at this point.

Q: How did you and others who were savvy about a guerrilla situation feel? Did this seem a rational outcome?

MAYBARDUK: (pause) I'm not sure what others felt like. When I went back, when I finished my tour and went back, I was interviewed by the agency, I left in, I think it was, January of 1982 that was the same month that Reagan, as I've since learned, signed the finding that authorized U.S. support for the Contras. I was asked about what I would think of success with the guerrilla movement in Nicaragua by the analysts of the CIA,

which was a clue that OK we were involved or were about to be involved, but I don't think the embassy knew it. I may be wrong but I don't think the embassy knew it, maybe the agency station chief did but I don't think so not initially. I mean at this point the guerrillas were probably being financed by Argentina.

The guerrillas were probably financed by Argentina at first, from what I pieced together from the Iran-Contra affair. My answer was the problem I saw with that is you are going to end up fighting Cubans in Nicaraguan uniforms and I couldn't see Congress supporting it, the Vietnam guys, I just didn't see Congress supporting it. On the other hand, I said, "Yeah, there is enough opposition in the country that there could be some major movements and if the Cubans stayed out of it they could perhaps even win it regrettably." I did believe that but I didn't think it was practical and I thought there was…

I had a very different view, which was never really discussed in U.S. politics and everybody until today thinks it was ridiculous. We had an embassy that started out as an embassy full of liberal democrats; I wasn't a liberal Democrat, perhaps a liberal Republican. When I got there most of the embassy wanted the Sandinistas to succeed. Bill Hanson was the AID director. He had been in the Dominion Republic and elsewhere, he'd been a McCarthy supporter at one point I think and…

Q: You mean Minnesota Senator Eugene McCarthy?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, Eugene McCarthy. AID was getting Larry Harrison who is now at Harvard. He had left by then. By the time I left, if we decided to invade Nicaragua the embassy would have applauded, most of the same people. My thought at the time was if we were going to do something that was probably the best choice because the civil war was going to be extraordinary costly. That the Sandinistas were so disorganized that they wouldn't offer any real resistance and they were so unpopular in the countryside that they probably couldn't organize a resistance in the countryside. But nobody asked my opinion on that. If a guy is considered normally a diplomat I find that fascinating that I'd come to that conclusion. I still think that although we didn't understand the Soviet Union was about to collapse and that the Sandinistas threat would probably go away. That, of course, we didn't know, if I had known that…

Q: Well, how were we reading Cuba? I'm talking from the advantage of our embassy in Nicaragua?

MAYBARDUK: They were there, they were clearly there. Their embassy got very big. At one point before I left I saw two really tall black soldiers, just didn't look like any Nicaraguan I had ever seen white or black, very erect, clearly very soldier-like bearing and I looked at those guys and I said they've got to be Cuban. The Cubans were all over the place. I don't know if we had any evidence that they were really in the military that was my one observation. Up in the south highway there was a compound where a woman owned about 15 houses around a semi-circle she'd built over the year. I don't know how she collected them but anyway and that was the place where a lot of American embassy

people had lived and some other foreign diplomats or AID people from other countries and so on. As people moved out, those houses were increasingly taken over by East Germans, people from the Polisario guerrillas…

Q: Algeria.

MAYBARDUK: Algeria, you had virtually every revolutionary group in the world there as volunteers.

Q: Were they doing anything? They were pretty ineffective?

MAYBARDUK: I'm sure they were but they were getting into the ministries and so on. Yeah I think they were, my gut, does I don't know, I'm guessing they were ineffective not the East Germans because they along with the Cubans set up the security forces and trained the army but the rest of my sense was they clearly ineffective. But they were becoming more ever present.

Q: Did you see presence of American socialists, some of the European left-wing socialists…

MAYBARDUK: Some, but more of those came later. Not at that time, I think they came after I left, they became very prominent after I left. Yeah, but the Cuban influence was very much there. They had taken over the TV stations first and gradually took over the radio stations; I don't think they took them over completely. They took over most of them and sort of neutralized the others.

When I got there my son was six months old, I think his first words were mama and dada but followed soon after by "pagua" because out in the backyard he had to play in and "banano" (banana) because we had a banana tree, he loved bananas but, almost immediately after that, he learned "la revolution" (the revolution) from television and he would march around the house saying "la revolution, la revolution". Pretty soon he picked up "un solo ejercito", (one single army) and that was the Sandinista slogan because they were obviously trying to unify the various factions and so there was the slogan "un solo ejercito". So I had a son going around you know an American diplomats son going around "la revolution, la revolution", it was hilarious.

Q: Were you or others at the embassy aware that with the new Administration the American right-wing took over the ARA Bureau unlike anywhere else in the Department. This is sort of where the right wing was allowed the raw meat.

MAYBARDUK: Remember though that although I had a very prominent position in the embassy, I became after Ambassador Pezzullo left, chief analyst at the embassy, Pezzullo was his own analyst. I was still a junior officer, I was an O-5, I think. I think although I was definitely not under radar within the embassy and on the desk, I don't think I was as known in Washington at that point. At least I mean they recruited me to go next to Salvador as Econ Counselor, which was an FSO-1 position. I had just been promoted the

year I got back but I was still an O-5. I should have taken the job but it was pretty dangerous and I had a young son. If it hadn't been for the young son I would have jumped for it and it probably would have made my career. So I guess I was still OK with the powers that be.

Q: So did you find was there a change in the atmosphere in the embassy as far as Washington was concerned?

MAYBARDUK: Ambassador Pezzullo always considered Washington the enemy because he knew how things leaked in Washington that's why my cables didn't go out. He was always trying to shape the information to what he viewed as the Washington lens, a habit I picked up too by the way over the years. Correct or not, because one can argue it wasn't so much trying to distort the information as correcting the information from Washington astigmatism. DCM (Roger) Gamble was different, Gamble had come off the line, I think he was manager of the line?

May be he had experience in the Operations Center (S/S-O). He was more interested in just getting the information out. He would get tired of our long cables. He taught us all how to write cables in more of a talking point style. He was a good man, a lot of good people arrived. I fought with (Fisher?)_____ all the time but he was good too.

Q: Well did you feel you had support at least in others back in ARA back in Washington?

MAYBARDUK: As long as Anne Patterson was the desk officer. She later ended up as our temporary UN ambassador recently and head of several bureaus and she's Ambassador to Pakistan now, anyway a very good officer, excellent. She was replaced by a guy that had headed the ARA for a while, now ambassador to Argentina, although I don't know if he is still there. Can't think of his name. Cuban-American who was much more conservative. Didn't feel quite as friendly as it was with Anne. No things were changing, things were changing. But things are changing in Nicaragua too.

Q: What about the Ortega brothers, how did they fit into all this?

MAYBARDUK: We didn't think Daniel figured to be that strong, that wasn't our view of Daniel Ortega, he wasn't that strong. His brother Humberto was actually the stronger of the two, he was head of the army. Jaime Wheelock was the minister of agriculture and had primary contacts with the embassy. The bad guys, as far as we were concerned, were the Tomás Borge, I can't think of the other guy he was another "Commandante" who came out of the same tendency. Henry Ruiz was a mathematician but considered the real Marxist of the group he really studied Marxism. But we always felt that Daniel was basically having to mediate every day; he could have become the head somewhere along the way. We didn't have that sense at the time.

Q: Was there a significant body of intellectuals from the university or something more or supplying an ideological core to what it became?

MAYBARDUK: Well there was a tendency within the Sandinistas of what I would call the market socialists, the people who somewhere along the way had studied the comparative economic systems and had studied Yugoslavia prior to the breakup there was something not quite. Go back in the 1960s when you look at the studies of comparative economic systems Yugoslavia's system was where you had government control but there was a certain amount of flexibility.

OK, whether it was accurate or not what we were getting in the textbooks I don't know but when I heard people talk I recognized the stuff from these textbooks. The head of an organization that basically controlled the government owned industries, manufacturing was very much like that and elsewhere it was kind of idealistic, the thing to me it was not necessarily the party but the people that joined them were of two classes. They were the opportunists like the guy from the dairy man, people who are resentful of the governments and resentful of societies, had all their own grievances, saw the Sandinistas joining the bandwagon and be in the ascendency. This was my early impression actually, very early in my stay in Nicaragua. What surprised me was how simple and corrupt the revolution became so quickly. You had reports of Tomás Borge bringing in truckloads of cheeses and champagne. They confiscated all the nicest houses, lots of things like that in Nicaragua, but it was everywhere, it was everywhere.

Then you had young people. They put a sixteen year old in charge of ordering medicines for the state medical system, a combatant. And, of course, then they started ordering medicines from Cuba and the Soviet Union and they had no idea what they were doing and the doctors couldn't read the labels anyway and you very quickly got severe shortages of medicines. I asked, "What is the medical system like now compared to the Somoza period?" Nicaragua had at least three different medical systems under Somoza. One for the city a public health system mainly in the city, there was a system for the unions, there was a system for the army, there was one for everybody else. There was supposedly a rural one but that was the one that was really lacking. Many of those said "The main thing was we had to pay for our medicines and other things under Somoza, now it's free but there is no medicine, you can't even buy aspirin, it's true."

I spent a lot of time working with the attorney general on the property case, it was a piece of work but we had about one hundred American confiscated properties and we were trying to come up with some resolution but the other thing we were trying to do and I thought of this when I was working for Curry and then continued I said that someday we are going to settle this issue, it may be twenty years from now but we need them to give us a complete record of their property. We were very careful to establish really good files so that whenever the time came we'd have it. But I spent a lot of time trying to talk to the attorney general, Castillo, I couldn't get an appointment with him except when he wanted a visa and then he was always happy to see me. He had a young deputy attorney general, a young woman, who was maybe in her late twenties, very attractive and generally concerned and one of these academic types who joined that of idealism. She was pregnant and we had a lot of talks and I went back at some point to see her but couldn't get her. The attorney general was happy to see me because he wanted a visa. So I asked him where was senora whatever her name was. She had died. She had gone into the

hospital, got an infection and died. The hospital no longer had rubber gloves, it was that kind of problem, this is six months, a year into the revolution, I mean, the system collapsed very, very rapidly. I've often thought and I'm going to do it someday is try to get all my old cables together and try to write the history of how to destroy an economy out of a cable because one of the things we did was we documented over and over again the way the Sandinistas were messing up.

Q: Was this ineptitude or..?

MAYBARDUK: It was a combination of ideology and ineptitude. I think they generally did want to keep a certain amount of the private sector there but they couldn't control the take over from their own people, _____ was trying to stop all private investments. I mean I chronicled the exports of beef, which disappeared. Well, they couldn't have consumed all that beef but if you looked next door in Honduras beef exports were booming. Somehow basically a very large cattle herd managed to find its way across the frontier. Coffee production went down, they really depended on cotton a lot so they really did make an effort to keep the cotton growers happy, that's why Bolanos' property wasn't taken, but the government plantations died very quickly.

When I got there the stores were half empty but you could get a lot of things. Within the first year most stores were closed and then shelf after shelf after shelf of empty stock. The owner of our house was the manager of a supermarket chain; he owned it. The owner of the chain; actually I think his son had fought with the Sandinistas and he seemed to be one of those…there was a group of people whose sons had fought with the revolution helped finance it in one way or another. But in the private sector it seemed to be able to straddle the line, what the Chinese Communists called the good capitalism, this was back in the days before the Cultural Revolution they taught and read about this thing. They said it was a good capitalist and there seemed to be and _____ was one of them I guess. So Sharon was at a supermarket and she was just…nothing was there and it was hard to get, there were long lines and so on. Our landlord said, "Just give me your shopping list." So after a while she got home delivery of all our shopping. So we had a very good time. It got emptier, emptier and emptier and it wasn't as bad as we would later find in Cuba but it reminded me I had seen it before, I had been in Argentina and we've talked about it already and I had gone over to Chile for a quick visit just before, a few months before Allende overthrown and had walked through the stores in Chile and they were all empty. There was nothing to buy in Chile except copper and woolen goods and that is kind of what it was in Nicaragua although there were no woolen goods. I mean it was really pretty hard for people. I don't think the Sandinistas were popular at all, I think they had lost, I felt that if an election had been held in 1982, an honest election had been held in 1982 the Sandinistas would have lost big time.

Q: Well you left there when?

MAYBARDUK: I left in January of 1982. For our purposes here I could talk about Nicaragua forever.

Looking at the private sector I really felt that if I stayed here that I was working with some exceptional individuals I had ever worked with, many democrats with a small "d" who were putting themselves on the line. It was fascinating to see the place being taken over gradually as it was. It was fascinating to see how the U.S. government worked. We should talk about this, why I didn't continue to work with Nicaragua when I went back, because it was because of the questions you are asking which I guess I didn't even feel until I got back.

There were more adventures, more close family stories if you want to talk a little bit about family life was like there.

Q: All right we will do that in our next session.

OK, today is the 28th of January 2008. Gary let's talk about how did you find life there in this sort of revolutionary situation. I mean both family life but also what was happening as far as embassy people contact with what was happening during this difficult time.

MAYBARDUK: The difficult time was also one of the best times in our lives quite frankly, especially I think I told the story of getting shot at before I started my assignment. But anyway I came back in January of 1980, the Sandinista had taken power in 1979, with my family and found a house, a very nice house on Kilometer Ten and a half on the south highway overlooking a beautiful valley below and to the left was Managua. It was a one-story house, which was spread out with a beautiful back patio with a lodge with pillars and a roof with a black patio and the patio looked over toward the valley below. We had a six-month old baby and so we were set up to have a good time and I was, of course, delighted with the work. The work was difficult but it was exciting, I was in the middle of the action and I had hired a third tour officer really a second and a half tour officer, writing cables that were being read in Washington and just sort of…not read in Washington they were read at the White House so it was a very heady kind of experience.

Because I worked, as it developed in the first six months, I became the contact with the private sector and knew the private sector organization, organizations like UPANEK and COSEP which I mentioned before which represented various agricultural parts of the society and the various professional part of the society. They, of course, became very political and the chief of the opposition, the head of the principle opposition to the Sandinista. They were very upset and as I think I mentioned before but I was sort of…my job was to try to convince them to stay in the country and unlike what happened in Cuba where they left country.

Well in any event, what basically happened is that after a while they would come to the house to talk, they felt safe, sitting on the back patio where you didn't think anybody could listen, well maybe out in the backyard and so we had a situation where people would come every maybe three or four nights a week. My wife who started out, as I've told the story earlier, was a Minnesota girl who never had a housekeeper had gradually been seduced by me to get first one Papua New Guinea girl for a couple times a week to

one to six days a week in Mexico City and now we had two all of a sudden, two live-in maids. She could get help with the baby and so on, but living well. We ended up cooking dinner for anywhere from three to eight people on a moment's notice for later in the evening. People came by to talk and express their worries and discuss the situation. I've always felt the Foreign Service was really more of a life style than a career in that it is very hard to separate your family life and your recreation life from the work of the embassy because you are always learning about the country where you are doing your normal or participating in a country where you are doing your normal daily activities. That really became true in Nicaragua, the workday shifted into the evening, shifted back in the morning and your wife was part of that change, she was as busy raising the baby as I was. We had a wonderful time with the baby but she was part of the whole thing. It is hard to get spouses these days to do entertaining but back then it was expected and my wife was a classic Foreign Service spouse and always has been but it is really a two-person career.

Q: What were you picking up form the business community? Was the problem economic or was the problem political or social?

MAYBARDUK: It was everything. They were in constant danger of having their property expropriated, the private sector had initially lead the campaign against Somoza and it decided to play an equally political roles once the Sandinistas took power. That made them a target of the Sandinistas government, but they were also trying to keep production going and the government basically had taken over all exports and taken over all imports so the problem was getting raw materials produced, the problem of decent prices when they export, the problems of just trying to keep the economy going as a collective group and as individuals was a…and so when they would come over they would talk about anything from the latest speeches of one of the "Commandantes" to who's property has been confiscated to…I would have, very often , I would have the heads of the private sector come over for the evening to sit on the back porch and discuss what was going on in the country with everybody expressing their ideas.

In the embassy there was a lot of security problems very much like Larry Pezzullo the ambassador. But Pezzullo was very, very much focused on politics and our first regional security officer had fundamentally dedicating himself to protecting the ambassador so we really didn't have much protection in houses and homes. We had several home invasions, we had I think it was the ambassador's secretary, Edie Gastens, was held prisoner and her maid was raped.

Q: Who was doing this?

MAYBARDUK: It was just ordinary criminals. Several families were held up at gunpoint and it took a long time to get a second security officer. Pezzullo has to leave before we finally got attention paid to the security of families. I don't think it is as intolerable today, it should have been intolerable then, we never had any problems myself but it sure did cause a lot of worry.

Q: The business community seems to be the canary in the tunnel. Was the problem of government one of dedicated Marxists in classic terms or were these just greedy people or were they ill informed. One would think they would want to see the machinery work or were they more interested in having a Marxist state?

MAYBARDUK: I think we discussed this before, but in case we didn't let's go through that because it is very important. The Sandinistas were led by nine "commandantes"; representing three tendencies, but at various times before they were united against Somoza they were all separate guerrilla groups in the hills and at times had contracts out on each another, to kill each other. It was Fidel who bought them together. So within that group you had something like ten people who had actually studied Marxism and knew Marxism, such to the mathematician, to others who probably barely knew what Marxism was. You had those who ranged from two thumbs, like Tomás Borge, to others who were probably much more willing to work with everybody like Wheelock. So their decision making process at that point was much like you would expect out of a committee. They had decided, actually we understood at the suggestion of Fidel that they didn't want only to make the same mistake Fidel did, they did not want to drive out the professional class. They didn't want to take over all industry but the first acts were to take over any property owned by Somoza or people close to Somoza and very quickly anybody who had a grudge against anybody would level accusations that this person was a Sandinista or this person wasn't what they claimed for the good of the State, or the employee who could never get higher wages would demand that the government take something over. This inevitably led to another piece of property and another piece of property being taken over. It was a piecemeal operation and it wasn't a sweeping nationalization.

But what that did was that nobody had any incentive to invest. Somehow after the Sandinistas took power, the cattle stock of the country became reduced by may be some percent, I don't remember the exact numbers but it was like all the cattle just mysteriously disappeared.

Q: And this was a big cattle country?

MAYBARDUK: A big cattle country and it was like all the cattle mysteriously decided to immigrate over the border to Honduras and if you look at the trade statistics at the time all of a sudden Honduran meat exports just zoomed, huge but there are no cattle herds left in Nicaragua and cattle herds take a long time to rebuild.

The Central Bank's claim is they were given all the credit, more credit than ever in real terms to the private sector to produce and the private sector complained they were given very little credit. It seemed a real puzzle there for a while. What I eventually found out, and nobody could explain this to me until I asked a lot of questions, was that a lot of the credit didn't come from internal sources, it came from abroad, the same way the fertilizer companies on a handshake giving credit to the farmers, planning to get paid after the crops were in. When the government nationalized the import of all fertilizers and that sort of thing, that credit line dried up. Credit came from the exporters who were giving credit to the farmer on anticipation that he would get it back.

Q: This was the system prior to the Sandinistas?

MAYBARDUK: That was right, and once the Sandinistas took control of all imports and took control of all exports these kinds of credits dried up.

So this kind of informal lending basically goes on under the surface. Some day we are going to go back and look at Salvador where we had this similar kind of change to sort of pacify the left. I think the same thing happened with the farmers in Salvador and I think that's why they eventually turned to the right. That is more intuitive on my part that just knowledge.

So that was the problem and the other was the private sector really did take a key political role. They had helped bring down Somoza by their strikes and the government was very worried they might call a general strike against the government. When they did it against Somoza they actually paid their workers to stay home. They never did call a strike against the Sandinistas because they were afraid their property would be taken over but there was always that tension.

Q: Were you concerned about Sandinista agents infiltrating into your home parties, your private entertaining?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, yeah I mean there are always…there were two or three people I never really fully trusted even if they weren't actually agents there is one I always thought might be an agent, there were two others who were these type of individuals who tried to play both sides of the fence and I could easily see them maybe telling the other side what was being said simply as a way to ingratiate themselves on the other side.

Q: Were these kind of known to the other people you were meeting?

MAYBARDUK: I think a couple of them were probably suspected of that. There is one I don't know if he was suspected and I still don't know today if he was an agent or not. Let me say one more thing. He was the one who told me about that the Sandinistas were setting up, looked like they might be setting up a missile base on the north side of the island. It turned out that it was going to be an air force base. It caused a real panic in Washington when he told me that. So who knows, it is very hard for me to know.

Q: Well did you find that your activities aroused problems with the government?

MAYBARDUK: They were still being organized. I don't think they really understood the role I was playing at that point. They were clearly reporting the CIA agents and you know Phil Agee died recently, he really revealed all the agents in the embassy to the Nicaraguan government, all the known agents anyway, but all the ones that I knew as well. Somehow a lot of other people got named as well, not everybody was an agent. Interesting though only two of us were not named, myself and the political counselor and they got that right. Somehow and I think that probably gave me a certain amount of

protection because they were looking elsewhere, but in many ways I was the one who was bringing home the information more than the agency was at that point.

Q: Well did you find this caused conflict?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, it caused conflict within the embassy. Because I reported the first arms shipments to Nicaragua came from the Eastern Bloc and I reported the first arms movement across the border. The first time I gave the information to the station chief, the second time I was slow giving it to him and Washington heard about it before he reported it and he was furious. But most of the time we got along OK but it wasn't so much what I was doing; it was, I know we've talked about this before, it was that the private sector, of course, was everywhere in the country and they were picking things up everywhere and they would come in and tell me about it. That's how it happened, that's how I got the information all overt I mean I wasn't paying anybody or doing anything.

I want to go back to families for a minute because there were a few things that were reported what my wife was doing. After Jorge Salazar was killed, he was one of the leaders of one of the private sector, we had one of these round tables at my house with the private sector and we were talking about this. It may have been seven months later but it was still relatively close. They left my house about eleven o'clock and about three in the morning I got a call from one of their wives they were all being round up and arrested. That was kind of a shock, including to my wife who had gotten to know all these people, and then a few months later at Christmas we had all the wives, the men were still in jail, we had all the wives to our house for dinner or tea or something. It was…, I mean the spouses, if they were involved with their husbands in anyway shape or form, were suddenly affected by all this, they could not help but be affected.

Q: Among your contacts was Violeta Chamorro a figure at this time?

MAYBARDUK: When the Sandinistas took power they created, I think it was called, the Council of State which actually didn't have any of the "commandantes" in it, it had three officers, it had Violeta Chamorro, it had Arturo Cruz who was head of the Central Bank and well respected, it had a Sandinista civilian, can't think of who it was, and they were the nominal heads of State. In fact, the Sandinistas were running everything, so yes she was still around. I don't remember when she left the Council of State, I don't remember…

Q: She wasn't part of your social circle was she?

MAYBARDUK: She wasn't, she was in more of the ambassador's social circle. Of that group the only one who became part of my social circle was Arturo Cruz. Even there it wasn't quite as close as my other guest. We had a situation where it looked like the Sandinistas were trying to take over the banana industry. Not really maybe, but they were putting so much pressure on it that Cruz decided to leave. We didn't want the Cruz to leave. We wanted as much American influence there as possible and this was one of those things where I ended up calling Arturo Cruz late in the evening, met him at a party

and at 11:30 at night he was sitting down talking how we were going to get past this problem. I mean it is fascinating.

Q: Well, now what were you getting from the street? I realize this was still the early days but you say there were Contras up in the hills.

MAYBARDUK: That came at the very end of my assignment there.

Again, my sources were the private sector on that one. There were occasional reports of fighting in the hills but there wasn't a lot of information. The biggest information I got was from the bishop or the archbishop of Managua when I went up to visit him in Matagalpa. I went up there to Matagalpa and he told me, he said, "You know, there are now at least 200 guerrillas up in the hills fighting the Sandinistas." We were reporting this to Washington, Washington probably knew it by this point but the economic section was the still the people doing the most reporting and they seemed to be the ones who picked up the most information. We didn't know a lot about it, I think they were probably supported by the Argentine's at that point but we didn't know it at the time that came out much, much later. The opposition to the Sandinistas had definitely grown, I mean the whole country had shifted over by the time I left, large parts of the country. So you know it was quite easy at that time to believe this was an indigenous movement against the Sandinistas but later reports early on fingered the Argentinean. We knew that other Latin American countries were supporting the democratic opposition. COSEP got money I know from the Venezuelan's and the Costa Ricans were playing the game as well. I mean this idea of American intervention was laughable, you could clearly see that we weren't the only ones playing the game there. The Sandinistas had scared everybody.

Q: How about the…were you getting things from the Mexican government?

MAYBARDUK: No, it was interesting in many ways the Mexicans had the most to lose. To me the threat of the Sandinistas was always their support of the revolutionary movements in other countries and a clear lose there would have benefited (indistinct) in southern Mexico. As we saw later.

Q: What was the southern Mexican situation? How volatile?

MAYBARDUK: It could still go and I always felt it was never too well articulated by the press. But this was always where the biggest danger was. I had served in Mexico prior to coming to Nicaragua and I had been in southern Mexico and seen just how undeveloped and how wide and wooly some of the area was. Perfectly suited area to guerrilla operations in southern Mexico with the mountains and so on. One knew that the guerrilla movements that started in Mexico that that would create a panic in Mexico that would send millions of Mexicans headed toward the U.S. Of course, others arrived here for other reasons. Back then the idea of sending Mexicans into the country would have been very upsetting and they absorbed it pretty well certainly. I think that was the really major fear but the Mexicans I'm sure played their own game but the Mexicans very seldom played the game with the U.S. They played their own game whatever it was.

Q: OK, you left where when? And then what?

MAYBARDUK: I left Nicaragua in January of 1982. I came back to Washington and went to the Office of Monetary Affairs in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB/IFD/OMA) where I was…I was supposed to go back to work on Eastern Europe but I really needed a break after all that. So I think they got upset with me that I couldn't come to work the next day and I took a few weeks vacation in getting the family settled.

A friend of mine passed on that the East European job had gone to somebody else. This is the beginning of the East European debt crisis. I ended up, …I think they always had a person in the office who was to followed INF issues and I also had the Middle East and I had the Far East, East Asia regional for any economic problems that developed there. Most of them developed at the end of my tour.

Q: Well you were there from when to where?

MAYBARDUK: I was there from February or so of 1982 until summer of 1984 or something like that.

Q: Well in a way come back to Washington must have been a different paced job from heady Nicaragua.

MAYBARDUK: This was my first career crisis. This is my first midlife crisis. In Nicaragua I had gone in as the number two of the economic, six months later had become head of the economic section, I was still a junior officer, I was sitting there in all of the discussions about something that was of clear interest of the highest levels of the U.S. government. I was often the first to beat people to the punch in a lot of the really important reporting. Now I'm back in Washington in a big bureaucracy in an office of monetary affairs that was considered in some ways a premier economic office in the Economic Bureau but really played second fiddle to Treasury that my main job was to convince the rest of the State Department to go along with whatever Treasury wanted to do. It was a very frustrating, and the loss of a prestige, the loss of income I mean coming back to Washington and you had to face the fact that I was still…I had got promoted that fall to what is now called an FSO-3, I guess, but the income was low. My wife wasn't working, our second baby was born soon after we came back to Washington, we had trouble finding housing we could afford, we ended up living in Reston before all the highways were built. So it was very tough on the family, very tough on Sharon. We really had our very first fight in our marriage over where we were going to live because I wanted to spend more time looking and wanted to find something closer in. I didn't want to commute from out Reston. She finally found a house in Reston. One baby was sick and one was on the way. I wasn't ready to jump on it. This was the first real conflict in our marriage.

Q: What were the main issues the Office of Monetary Affairs dealt with?

MAYBARDUK: The main issue at that time became working with Congress and everybody was arguing over whether we increase the U.S. contribution to the IMF (International Monetary Fund), we called it the IMF quota increase issue. So that would be my job. Well, it was really Treasury's decision and Treasury at that time had nothing but contempt for the State Department. I think under Kissinger, this is before I got there and with Tom Enders the State Department had tried to assert much more control over international economic policies. And we did have a staff to do it. We were highly tempted to argue political arguments or bad economics to push for what were really political goals. But with Kissinger gone and Enders gone, we no longer had any clout and there were some very arrogant people in Treasury. So we really had this very weakened State. There was a very strong feeling in the Economics Bureau which has continued to this day and it is the reason I, as an economist, have never liked serving in the Economic Bureau was that the best way to deal with Treasury is not to confront them directly but to help them think through things. You never challenged Treasury because you won't get your way, very self-destructive, and I think it has weakened the Department for years. My job at that time was really going to all the meetings and reporting back. Then we had an assistant secretary in the economic bureau who was McCormick.

Q: Richard McCormick?

MAYBARDUK: Richard McCormick who was very weak, a political appointee and related to (Senator) Helms.

Q: Well he is more a professorial type anyway wasn't he? I met him.

MAYBARDUK: I don't remember him much but what I did remember is he could not go into a meeting with a visitor without a briefing paper. So two or three times a week I would have to write a briefing paper on where things stood on the IMF quota increase. It didn't change that much but his staff insisted on a fresh paper every time and I was going crazy just rewriting papers to satisfy this guy who clearly wasn't going to do anything more than be able to show that he knew about the issue when he went into these meetings. That first year there was very little job satisfaction. We also had a very strong Office Director and a very strong Deputy Director and anything really exciting they took for themselves anyway. So your face time with any senior people was very limited and all of it led to a real depression on my part. I mean real depression on my part besides the fact that my wife was under pressure, we were never quite sure how we were going to pay the bills, we now had two children, we were renting trying to find a house to buy but weren't sure how we were going to do it. It was an unhappy time.

Q: What was your impression of IMF at the time?

MAYBARDUK: Pretty good, a little bit self-serving, but pretty good. But my impression of Treasury was not that high actually. When I got to the office we were just beginning to have the first Mexican crisis, this is when the Mexican banks were clearly going under and it was threatening the U.S. banking system. I had been in Mexico earlier, of course, and had worked with the Treasury attaché there. I knew that he was not very good, knew

that he was not very competent. He eventually got fired, but many years later. It broke and it was handled not by me, but by somebody else in the office who had been the petroleum attaché in Mexico. He was a pretty good officer actually but some of the things from back in 1978 in Mexico really came to the forward very quickly.

The reason I got the job in OMA by the way, was that this gentleman had actually given my name to the Office Director and pointed out a cable which I had mentioned before where I had predicted the increase in rate of inflation in Mexico way before anybody else and got it right on the button and that cable impressed people. But anyway Glenn was, Glen Rafies (?) was his name, and he wasn't handling the Mexican side of the house. The Mexican government changed economic teams and the new team came in and was praised by Treasury for their acumen but going back to some stuff we discussed earlier when I was in Mexico I knew the names of this team because one of the economic officers in the embassy, Rozello, had basically long ago had told me earlier that these were the people who were very much of the kind of traditional (Raul) Prebisch Latin American school. So the first thing I noted as we were dealing with this problem is that it is a very complete misunderstanding, at least as I understand it, of the capabilities of the new Mexican team and nobody corrected it. Rozello retired in disgust and nobody saw through the Mexican team. Sure enough, I don't remember how long it took, it took six months to a year before the new team was ousted and they finally got a decent team in Mexico.

But in the mean time the other thing was we were part of that arrangement, State was part of that arrangement of the Mexican settlement where you sort of bailed them out and bailed our own banks out. One was we got the Mexican government to assume debt line ability of a lot of Mexican companies. This meant that the Mexican tax payer was going to be paying for this debt for years to come which was fundamentally wrong, we should have let these Mexican companies go bankrupt and then reorganize. It wasn't just a solvent debt issue like a big crisis. It was a private debt issue and the thinking was that much as the situation we have now the license for U.S. banks in Mexico was so large that it could threaten the solvency of the U.S. banks, the big banks Citibank and so on, so Treasury, which was headed by a former investment banker, wanted to make sure that they protected the U.S. banks, they weren't prepared to let these U.S. banks go under so there was some deal which secured these loans to the Mexican private sector so these banks wouldn't have to write these loans down was very important. So we were as much interested in saving U.S. banks, as we were anything else.

The other thing that had happened during that time which I thought was really terrible was the Mexican government had been offering dollar denominated savings accounts with good interest rates in Mexico that a lot of Americans had invested in, including a lot of retirees who were now living in Mexico. When I was in Mexico both myself and a Treasury attaché at one point had considered should we put some of our own money into these accounts simply because the interest was so high and they seemed secure they were supposedly guaranteed enough. We decided not to for ethical reasons or for not having the appearance of ethical problems but we really thought they were very secure. When the crisis came the Mexican government now seduced yet they were denominating in

dollars but they were ultimately always action peso effects. Nobody knew that. I think it was true I think it was in the law somewhere but in fact it wasn't advertised that way and nobody knew it. Well somebody told Beryl Sprinkel, who was the Undersecretary of Treasury at that time, that all the towns down there were helping Americans avoid income tax, American income tax. So we basically when we did the bailout taxes we never tried to save these accounts for American depositors. It came to thousands of American depositors most of whom we think were small depositors who lost their money, maybe their life savings and we bailed out the big banks, but we didn't help out the small American depositors they were totally abandoned in this whole thing. I guess there was a protest out of the embassy from the old Treasury attaché actually and he was told to shut up which he did and that was the end of it.

Now as I see it, I watched it happen, I was not part of it and in the end we did save the U.S. banks, in the end we did come up with the stabilization agreement that Mexico was paying off for years and I think slowed Mexican growth. But created the problem, which various U.S. treasury secretary's have talked about since, which is when you bail out the banks they have no particular reason to improve their lending practices the next time. Of course we've had two major international debt crises since then and now we have a domestic one, plus the earlier savings and loans.

Q: Which suggests the banks have enough clout that they can be basically saved from their ineptitude.

MAYBARDUK: Exactly. Exactly. I felt at the time, and I raised it at the time, and the basic answer that I got from my boss and from his boss was well Treasury is going to figure this out, we can't challenge Treasury. Now here I was a Ph.D. economist; I only once went back to the Economic Bureau I was so frustrated after these two years there for that kind of behavior.

But anyway, that happened while we were dealing with the Eastern European debt crisis at the same time. The question I was always asking at that time was, this was after the Poles and the Soviets cracked down on the dissidents, well we are not going to reschedule any of the loans to Poland, foreign loans. What do we think that the Polish government's choice was in terms of the crackdown? They were going to have to crack down or they are going to get invaded. In that kind of situation did we think the Poles were ever going to back down because we failed to reschedule their loan. That was our end game in getting out which virtually nobody had thought about back then, it was fascinating nobody had thought about that. I didn't follow it very closely afterward. Eventually we did resolve it but I think basically we only rescheduled loans after pressure from the Europeans who didn't see how this could continue to go on but it was an early lesson in how we sometimes do policies without thinking about the ending.

Q: Or for what looks good in the immediate circumstance but not really thinking it through.

MAYBARDUK: Before we move on, let me finish a little bit more. The first year was very frustrating. The Deputy Director left eventually and a new guy came in. I got a very good review from my first year and I had been promoted the previous fall. I still wasn't terribly happy there but near the end of the second half of that tour the Philippine debt crisis broke. Finally I had a debt; everybody else in the office was working on one major debt crisis or another and yours truly was sitting there reporting on IMF issues and then finally something broke in my area, the Philippine debt crisis. Marcos was still in power at this point so all of a sudden I now had my own big country in trouble. I don't remember a lot about it but there were several things of note

First of all the EAP, East Asian Bureau, had no experience with debt crisis and had no real economic office so they had no capability of dealing with these issues by themselves. So I still a junior officer ended up basically running from a State point of view, the U.S. side of how we dealt with this problem.

Q: What was the problem?

MAYBARDUK: Well, basically I think it was a solvent debt issue; it was they borrowed too much and they couldn't pay it back although I'm a little unclear about that now. There was a run on the Philippine peso. The financial officer in Manila had just won the economic reporting officer of the year award that year, because he had…remember this is the time we were just beginning to use computers. He had taken all the Philippine financial data and put it on computer in an easily accessible form so he got an award for reporting and for what he had done. We were getting cables out of the embassy saying, "You know we need $50 or $100 million in aid next week or something dire is going to happen." Exactly what dire was it wasn't at all clear but there were these sort of frantic cables out of the embassy. The U.S. military was very upset because we had all the bases there and they were a loss as to how to deal with it this was not kind of their issues either. So we had several large meetings where we had, Wolfowitz was the assistant secretary at that time [Ed: Wolfowitz was EAP Assistant Secretary from December 1982 to March 1986].

Yeah, Paul Wolfowitz was assistant secretary at that time and the Philippine Office Director at that time was John Maisto, who I met in my career later on [Ed: Ambassador Maisto has been interview by ADST.]. So we would have these round table meetings where we would have two two-star generals in the room and then there was yours truly the only one who could sit there and explain what was going on. When we got the last cable I remember calling the embassy and they said, "We are running out of foreign reserves." I asked whether the paper was still convertible I mean you can still go to the bank and get dollars for exchanging pesos or have they de-coupled the peso and the dollar? Nobody in the embassy knew that, it was the number one fundamental thing you had to know and nobody in the embassy knew that, well nobody in the economic section. I was pretty negative on the Department right now in people, but it was more than the Department because it really taught me how poorly the Department does in economic issues and how bad off we were. I can't remember how we solved this, I honestly don't, it is all a blur. It was a blur to me but I know I got a lot of good press out of it, although the

press was in the Department over it because it was eventually evaded; Marcos got overthrown for other reasons. I don't think we ever came up with that kind of money they were asking for. But at least for a while I had some excitement because I was really bored going out of my mind. I actually went to a career counselor outside the department during those two years.

Q: Were you thinking of a professorship or?

MARBARDUK: I was thinking of leaving the Department. I was trying to figure out what else I wanted to do because I was so frustrated. I actually went through reading What Color is Your Parachute and all that type of thing. I eventually decided yeah I was frustrated but I couldn't find anything else I would rather do, so I stayed.

Q: This is in a way one of the great strengths or problems of the Foreign Service. Essentially a lot of the jobs are a lot of fun. You can have some lousy jobs but if you look at the retention rate everybody talks about how bad the morale is of the Foreign Service yet any big corporation looking at the retention rate would salivate because the good people stay on.

MARBARDUK: If you have a real interest in foreign affairs, where else is there to be. You can become a Henry Kissinger and maybe get lucky and become the Secretary of State some day or you can go to the Hill and maybe get a job on the foreign relations committee and then hopefully keep your job when the parties change. But other than that to really work on foreign relations not just working on the third world but to work on foreign relations where else do you do it? Where else do you do it and it becomes like eating peanuts, it is addictive. So I did at various times and my career went through great frustrations. But then the next exciting problem came up.

Anyway the second year apparently a lot of people thought I did a good job. I had tried a few other things; I started a series of seminars on economic issues to try to bring to economic officers ideas in what was going on. A couple things like this, I got a lot of credit but it didn't last after I got to that office and didn't apply myself to keep it up. Al Larson tried to reconstitute it twenty years later but it didn't work then either. So I ended up getting promoted after two years. But in the meantime, and this goes back to something on the table I knew, I was looking for my next assignment and at one point I talked to John Glassman who became one of the president's man on Nicaragua who I had known in Mexico about a job in the special representative to Central America and Nicaragua, I forget what the office was. I looked about going back and working on those affairs and I had looked at going back to working for the Latin America bureau. I was occasionally interviewed; occasionally people would come over from the agency, from the Latin American bureau to ask me what I knew about certain things.

But Central American issues had become so ideological that even though I was certainly not pro-Sandinista in any way shape or form - I would have been quite happy to invade the place - there was an ideological rigidity that you would later see in this administration with Elliot Abrams still back in play, among others, but it just didn't seem like a

comfortable place to work. I mean they came to me and wanted to demonstrate that the Sandinistas were anti-Semitic and were driving the Jews out. I had been in Nicaragua and I'm half-Jewish. I had talked to a few Jewish families, maybe there were a half dozen left. Some had left with Somoza but there was no evidence to me that there was any Semitism but the administration was determined to make a case for that especially with disinformation. The Sandinistas were not particularly pro-Israel. I didn't want any part of it. I also got interviewed about Standard Fruit which eventually did leave Nicaragua. One of the reasons they wanted to leave was they wanted to claim they had been nationalized so they could get OPIC insurance, they had insured themselves with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. So I got interviewed in great depth by OPIC who was evaluating the claim. I think basically your life was miserable for any form of business working in the country but there was no evidence that the company at that time as I remembered it from all the details that Nicaragua wanted to take over the banana company or thought that they could run it. But that wasn't what people wanted to hear either. I just didn't want to go over there.

I remember one day Elliott Abrams walked through a corridor at the main entrance of State on C Street side, the nice entrance, and all the assistant secretaries Bill Walker (?), (Robert) Gelbard, they were walking in lock step. I mean it looked like just a physical motion to me looked like what was actually happening on the ground. I mean you were part of the team or you weren't part of the team and I didn't want to be part of that. I basically supported the Contras and knew a lot of the Contras, I wouldn't have particularly chosen that policy but I didn't necessarily think they were bad guys and I certainly didn't like the Sandinistas but I just didn't want to be part of this kind of line.

Q: So what happened to you?

MAYBARDUK: So instead, because I was working with all the bureaus with my IMF hat, the Economic Office of the African Bureau [Ed: AF/EPS, the Economic Policy Staff] recruited me. John Blaney, who later became ambassador to Liberia [Ed: serving from October 2002 to July 2005], encumbered a job when I arrived in summer 1985, which was really a fairly new job in the Department. It was a thinking job in which John would work half-time on key crucial economic issues in Africa, but they kept the minutia away from him. So it was a real effort to give him half-time to think and to write broad thought papers about what was coming, where the continent should go. This was a job created by (African Bureau Deputy Assistant Secretary) Princeton Lyman, one of my all time favorite people in the State Department. David Crouger(?) replaced John and then began probably one of my most fun and rewarding assignments in the Department.

We were now in the mid-1980s, we had gone through the two oil crises of the 1970s, a period when the IMF had made far too much money in Africa with little conditionality, today everybody complains about too much IMF conditionality, but there was little IMF conditionality at that time. These countries would fail on their IMF program and then get another one the next year and start the conditionality all over again and they accumulated way too much debt. Unlike Latin America this wasn't so much from the banks, it was solvent debt that was lent by either the World Bank or the IMF or the U.S. government.

Of course, that was as much the U.S. government's fault as anybody's because we were encouraging the IMF and the World Bank and everybody to lend money to help these countries through the oil crisis and their problems.

By the 1980s there was a situation where these African countries could no longer pay their IMF and World Bank debt, much less their U.S. debt. The INR Bureau (Intelligence and Research Bureau) had actually approached me several times in an earlier period [Ed: when Maybarduk was in OMA?] asking what the State Department would do on it. All I could tell them was that Treasury, it was always the same answer, Treasury is going to have to figure this out themselves. I didn't really fully appreciate it but even if I had at that time I wouldn't have been able to have done anything about it but I really didn't appreciate it fully. But when I go to the Africa Bureau I began to realize how serious it was and you had some very key countries that were considered important to the national interest. Liberia where we had listening assets, spying assets, we had the Voice of America station. We had other things floating around in Liberia and of course it had been essentially an American protectorate, we created the country forever.

In Sudan Nimeiry was in charge and we basically had the keys to the airport, it was the time because of the Middle East crisis we had decided to preposition supplies close to the Middle East and so we had all sorts of supplies for the U.S. military based around the airport and our planes used to fly in and out whenever we wanted. In both these countries we reached a point, it is complicated and I will try to keep it as simple as possible, we'd reached a point that they couldn't pay off the loans we'd made them. They couldn't pay the IMF loans off and under the system in place at the time the way to handle our debts would be to go the Paris Club where we would reschedule the debts. As long as you could reschedule the debts none of the parodies came up on the country that we would normally put the countries who don't pay debts. Under the Brooke Amendment, passed maybe in the 1950s or 1960s, countries that don't pay their debts to the U.S. after a year, a year in arrears, we have to cut off aid. We had been giving Liberia hundreds of millions of dollars a year and Sudan something of the same order. These countries are heavily dependent on us. Here we are getting ready to cut them off. There was a presidential waver but the president had never waved them before and Treasury was of the opinion we would not wave it again. So re-scheduling was the way to go but under the rules of the game you could not reschedule at the Paris Club unless there was an IMF agreement. You couldn't get an IMF agreement; in fact under the rules, IMF wouldn't even talk to the countries if they were in arrears to the IMF. So you couldn't get an IMF agreement…it was a catch-22 and if the catch-22 really affected U.S. interest and this was one of the jobs that got dumped in my lap when I came into that office (AF/EPS) at the time and I was trying to find a solution for it.

In the case of both Liberia and Sudan what we had been doing for the previous year and John Blaney had already identified the problem, we had been using AID (Agency for International Development) money to pay the countries' IMF debt. Of course, it's not the purpose of the AID money but it was the best we could do, but AID was resisting that. Besides which when I did the balance of payments analysis it was clear to me that we didn't have enough AID money to keep this going even if we wanted to. There wasn't

enough AID money to do this, so the question was how to find a solution. Eventually I did develop one solution for Sudan, which involved getting ourselves, and the Saudi's to pay off Sudan's debt to the IMF or the money coming due. Then getting the IMF to lend enough money so that there would be money to pay off other debt coming due for the next year or two. To do this Sudan was going to have to impose very strict conditions on its own economy real conditionality that would have to be held to. Not these things that they make a promise and they don't keep it. This meant breaking some of the rules because it meant the IMF had to start talking to the Sudanese government, which was according to the rules; they were not even allowed to talk to the Sudanese government at this point. You can imagine this was an enormous interagency problem. It took several months to get AID on board and we still needed to get Treasury on board. This is one of the most fascinating stories about how things go wrong by the lack of a nail in the shoe of a horse.

There was the annual IMF World Bank meeting and we were desperate trying to get (Secretary of State) Shultz to sign off on this policy, so we get Treasury to buy off on this policy and to get the Treasury secretary to talk to the Sudanese finance minister and the Sudanese Central Bank president who were going to be in town. So we could sell this policy to them. We sent a memo up to the Secretary who was getting ready for a trip, laying out what had to be done, asking him to make a phone call to the Treasury.

We were on a very tight schedule at this point. It wasn't that we delayed, I mean we had been fighting this for months. I can't remember that date any more but in any event it goes up and it gets bounced by some junior officer in S/S, the staff secretariat because of a lack of a punctuation mark in the title somewhere. It takes about 36 hours to come back to us. We fix it and by this time the secretary is traveling and this junior officer didn't know how to get in touch with the secretary and this kind of thing, he was new. By the time we got hold of Shultz the meetings in Washington were over and now we have to start all over again. This was about September, September of maybe 1984 or 1985 or maybe it was 1984. So we went through it all over again. At various times I represented State in meetings with the undersecretary of Treasury, again remember I'm still I think I had just gotten promoted to FSO-2 at this point.

Q: Which would be the equivalent of a lieutenant colonel.

MAYBARDUK: OK, About a lieutenant colonel; but you know in the State Department that's not as strong as a lieutenant colonel in the military, and I'm feeling very heady again I mean especially after those two years in EB. Here I have devised a policy and I am selling the policy to the administrator for AID, to the undersecretary for international economics in Treasury and so on and we finally put the policy together; although I don't think it was properly understood by many people but we put the policy together. We got Vice President Bush to go out to Sudan to sell the policy to the Sudanese government; he made a special trip out there [Ed: March 4, 1985]. Nimeiry accepted it and there was a kind of IMF program negotiated, I looked at it and I said, "Oh my God, there was no conditionality here at all, I mean this isn't going to work." But it was so far along and there was no way at that point that I could intervene in that. The best for Nimeiry was he

was going to get another year out of this. Nimeiry instituted some of the reforms, which was basically he had to raise government revenue, and keep government spending at par because they couldn't pay for their debt, they couldn't pay anything. So he announces an increase in bread prices and then leaves the country on vacation, this is around February or March. At this point I'm already basking in the glow of having pulled this off - thinking what a wonderful core evaluation report that I'm going to get that this junior mid-level officer all of a sudden had put together a policy literally from scratch that the whole U.S. government is pursuing. But Nimeiry raises the bread prices and then leaves the country and in the midst of bread riots and gets overthrown [Ed: 6 April 1985]. So much for the policy and of course this began the whole series of Islamic governments in Sudan that we've had ever since.

So nobody blamed me for it (laughter) but it wasn't the credit that I wanted either. You know in defense of myself I hadn't realized there was a major political danger but I wasn't an expert on Sudan and I actually sent out a cable to the embassy saying is this was doable and was this going to overthrow the government, please give us political guidance. The best the embassy could do was say; "Look if we don't do it we don't know what is going to happen so you better do it." That is all the guidance we got.

We had a similar problem in Liberia and again I came up with a solution there.

Q: Liberia was this still…was Doe there?

MAYBARDUK: Doe was still there, the Liberian civil war had not yet started. There had been a small civil war, which apparently Doe had put down very brutally. I don't remember the embassy fully reporting on that, on what happened at that point. There was a report on what happened to one of the coup conspirators who would have been essentially torn apart and shown half dead to the ambassador in Monrovia, Bill Swing. But I don't remember much reporting out of there, out of the provinces as to what…apparently terrible things had happened.

But there the IMF had given them too much money, Liberia still used the American dollar and the use of the American dollar had kind of constrained their other economic policies so that unlike the rest of Africa they had not destroyed their economy. They had in fact nationalized everything, they hadn't experienced great inflation, not that Doe was a great president but a lot of things over the years did not go on that badly. But Doe was spending too much money and he was beginning to mint more Liberian dollar coins and small change, which we were beginning to see a distinction in the difference between the value between the Liberian dollar, which was small change, and the U.S. dollar, they started issuing five Liberian dollar coins. A lot of I.O.Us from the government and things were beginning to come apart and we were getting in that same situation that catch-22 was coming into play and there was no other donor who was going to come in and help Liberia, it was either going to be us or nobody.

So I came up with a solution there looking at what we had done in the Caribbean in 1920. You know, basically suggesting we take over their finances, monitoring all their

expenditures, putting a team in to do it in exchange for getting them current in the IMF debt and Liberia had to go on to an IMF program. I don't know when I wrote this but I do remember saying that - this is probably now in 1984, but by February of 1985 or something I said, "There is not going to be enough money left to do it. The way things were going there was really a cutoff date in which you are not going to be able to do it." I'd got involved in this because a very good officer whose name I will think of in a minute, a desk officer for Liberia who is not an economist said, "The IMF keeps asking us to pay off the debt and they say if we pay off the debt then they can get things back in balance but," he said, "I don't think this is going to work. I'm not sure why it is not going to work but I don't think it's going to work." I was asked to look at it and that's how I got into it in the first place. This officer's instincts were correct. I'd actually wrote a paper, it was one of the few times that I'd actually had to use some serious economic training, my economic training. Actually I ended up writing a paper to the effect of what is money in Liberia as you had these I.O.U.s circulating around as debt and you had thousands of Liberian coins and you had different kinds of value instruments. I actually ended up writing a paper on what is money in Liberia and can you balance the budget if you pay off the IMF debt? Or if you balance the budget, can you pay off the IMF debt and my conclusion was no, you couldn't the IMF was saying you could.

Over several months we kept meeting with the IMF in this and they kept giving us numbers and every time we worked through the numbers we found that they seemed to leave something out. The IMF was lying to us, it was pure and simple they were lying to us. The head of the IMF team that dealt with Liberia had allowed too much money to be lent and was now trying to get us to cover his mistakes. It took a long time for us to convince Treasury of that but it became very clear to us.

My suggestion did not get accepted at the time. Princeton (Lyman), who I thought very highly of basically said, "I think the Liberians are hiding the money and there is enough money to make this work." By the time I left that office we didn't have an answer to that problem. But I'd been very clear about two things. One was by February of whatever year, probably 1985, it was going to be too late for the solution and two, any budget that you give to Liberia during this process had to give Doe some walking around money. The political structure in Liberia required that somebody like Doe be able to give money to his family and everything else and without it things weren't going to work, he would not follow the policies. We actually went out by the way at one point to discuss all of this with the Liberians and the IMF representative sat in on the meeting. He is currently now the acting secretary to the IMF, this gentleman, he said that the presentation that we give the Liberians is very much like the IMF team would give the Liberian. Talking through the issue in two days, three days, working late at night to sort of put things together, we were looking at their numbers and so on. About the second day we walked in and we had been burning the mid-night oil as expected and the Liberians apparently had been burning all the check records in the Finance Ministry that night. There was an accidental fire that burned all their records. Now you have an idea of what working with the Liberians was like. At the end of the three day meetings we had discussed all these Liberians would have to do and how we would help them and the minister gets up and he says, "Well thank you so much for all this, this has been a big help, we really appreciate this. Now

how is America, our father country (Liberians love talking about it America as the Father Country), but how is America, our father country, going to solve this problem?"

Q: So how did it come out?

MAYBARDUK: Well I left and went off to another job. Three years later I get to Sierra Leone as the DCM and find out that my ideas had been accepted and are now in place. The team in Liberia, the A Team, which was trying to administer the accounts, was being headed by the same guy at the IMF who had been lying to us before. Four years too late and no money had been given for Doe for walking around and of course the Liberians went around to find all sorts of ways to save themselves and it failed miserably. I would have never recommended it to them for four years later much less having them in charge. You know we ended up cutting our aid to Liberia and they went off and got no more World Bank funds, no more IMF funds, no more U.S. funds and how much I contributed to Doe's overthrow was probably not a lot but possible I contributed some.

Those weren't the only two things that happened those two years at AF/EPS, but I mean those were the two big country issues.

Q: Today is 4th of February 2008 we talked about Liberia, Sudan while you were in the Africa Bureau's Office of Economic Policy Staff. We need to cover Kenya and what else?

MAYBARDUK: Creation of the IMF cultural adjustment fund which came out of this whole experience and I think those are the two main issues.

Q: What was going on in Kenya?

MAYBARDUK: Kenya was interesting because it showed at that time the lack of coordination between the multilateral donors, even among themselves, and some of the real problems were developing there. Kenya was, of course, one of the more successful African nations, nevertheless, it had nowhere near the growth that one would have…at least it hadn't gone up to negative growth but had none of the positive growth that we had seen in Asia but people always thought it had the potential for it. So we went out to have policy discussions with the Kenyan government to try to encourage them to think of themselves as the future Asian tiger at least an African tiger, but move forward. I no longer remember all the issues but what strikes me looking back was in particularly, especially at the time, was that we wanted the government to get out of controlling agriculture. They had a private agricultural system but they had marketing boards that, I think particularly in corn, if I remember correctly…

It wasn't our corn and then maybe sorghum too, I don't remember. But basically what was going on was that the government would regulate the sale and AID had a very large, I think it was a $40-50 million loan they wanted to give, as the major part of our assistance to Kenya maybe the major largest trying to get the Kenyans to make it a more market oriented system. On the surface it looked great, this was the kind of thing you like to do. It went back to my job as an intern in the State Department many, many years

earlier where we were doing the same thing with Uruguay. But there were other things we were trying to do as well. So we had these discussions and I think I went out several times for the discussions. What I noted was this really major dispute between the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The IMF was basically saying that Kenya was doing quite well. The World Bank was saying it had to reform its agricultural sector, it had to reduce its tariffs on imports, things you thought the IMF would have supported, but the IMF was basically looking at the country's balance of payments issues, which were doing just fine. The World Bank was looking at growth and the two weren't talking. There had been an 800-page report done on Kenyan agriculture, I think it had been sponsored by the World Bank, who said they had to reform the agricultural sector. Our AID mission was fully in bed with the World Bank and the AID issue was becoming a major political problem between the U.S. and Kenya. Unlike Sudan Kenya was an important political country for us. So normally as an economist I'd be sitting there supporting the AID program and the World Bank. But it was striking to me that the World Bank and IMF were still so much apart and it became strikingly as it went on that they weren't talking to each other. It was common at the time. It was common at the time although I wasn't aware of it that much until I got…

Q: Was this sort of a bureaucratic thing? Each doing their own and all?

MAYBARDUK: Yes, very much so, very much so. Tying our aid to either the IMF or the World Bank was really becoming more common in part because if we ever had it we had rapidly lost our ability to do our own economical evaluation of countries. AID was reducing its number of economists, they just didn't have that many to begin with. So we were becoming more and more dependent on tying ourselves to the World Bank or the IMF, which in the 1960s made some sense with the 1970s because at one time our AID programs were very controversial. They were very intrusive into a countries political economy. Once we were tying ourselves to a so-called independent institution we made it less about us and more about the reform. It took the onus off us and put it in the IMF and the World Bank. It was very interesting if you looked at the states of the last ten years, I mean IMF and the World Bank because it was very interesting if you looked at the space of the last ten years, which is why I am getting into this a little bit. So anyway while I was there one of things I looked at was this 800-page report. It very quickly came clear to me is this 800-page report made a lot of good arguments but didn't back it up with a single statistic anywhere. So at the end you had no feeling as to if this was a really important issue, whether this was just something like our agriculture supports in the U.S. which is something that cost us something but isn't economy strong. I was actually never able to resolve that, but it seemed to me that as much as I was a free market economist we had a lot of political interest in Kenya and that we were in fact spending an awful lot of political capital on something that may or may not have been all that important. Because the Kenyans didn't run their system that badly, it wasn't good but it wasn't bad. It wasn't like some of the other African countries, which destroyed their agricultural system.

The reason I want to talk about Kenya a little bit was only because it sort of went back to the other issues and which is the question you asked. The question about whether or not this was a more generic problem across countries. One of the things that was going on at

the time and I don't remember if I mentioned before but when I first came into that office I replaced a fellow by the name of John Blaney who later became DCM in South Africa and his last post, which was fairly recently, was ambassador to Liberia. John had started a paper on why multilateral and IMF programs in Africa had failed. Why? Remember this is now in the 1980s, I mean this came back in the late 1990s, why these institutions had failed. He hadn't had time to finish that paper but he basically laid out the failure, he hadn't laid out very well the reasons for the failure but had laid out the failure. One of my jobs was to kind of finish that paper and I ended up having to rewrite it but it very quickly came to my attention that basically what had happened was in the 1970s we had in the light of the two oil crises, we had pushed a lot of aid in Africa to help them get through the oil crisis and we had pushed the international institutions to give a lot of aid. But the reforms conditionality which everybody complains about the IMF, I'm an economists unlike most everyone else, had basically said that you are going to have to devalue, you are going to have to stop inflation, you are going to have to do this that and the other. The countries that go on these programs borrow a lot of money and then they would fall off the program six months later and then you would spend a year renegotiating it and then get a new program. This would run on and on and on and they had built up an incredible amount of debt to the IMF and to a lesser extent the World Bank, which they were having trouble paying. This was, of course, what we talked about last week the problem in Liberia and Sudan. It was also a major problem for Sierra Leone and it was becoming a major problem for other countries, South America, Guyana had the same problem. There may have been some others as well but I was worrying about Africa.

But the program wasn't working and the result was you weren't getting any real economic reform; the African economy was a mess and had this arrears problem, which I talked about before. So the question is what to do about it. We kind of developed these individual case countries like Liberia and Sudan; nobody was going to spend any time on Sierra Leone, unfortunately. As I mentioned, I developed two rather elaborate plans for both countries neither of which succeeded for various reasons. It taught me a very important lesson, by the way, and that was in both cases I felt very heavy about myself and my accomplishments and then frustrated because we couldn't get as far as we wanted. What it really taught me was the difficulty of someone at a mid-level or probably even at an FSO-1 level to see a problem, develop a solution, a complicated solution, and then implement it. Even if you had the idea, even if you were good in the interagency process, which I think I was, at least I got credit for it; keeping all the various agencies on track as you work through a difficult problem is extraordinarily difficult if not impossible unless you are running it from the very top. It taught me a lesson that in some sense the IMF issues really belong to Treasury and maybe we should have left it with them and the Defense Department in the case of Sudan maybe they would have forced major changes in policy that got us into these situations rather than simply trying to deal with the country-by-country situation.

Anyway that was neither here nor there except as a lesson to sort of a story to look at the policy.

Q: What was your impression of the Sudanese officials?

MAYBARDUK: Well actually I spent a lot of time with the Sudanese central bank governor and the Sudanese finance minister; they were, of course, educated, they spoke excellent English. I don't know how much they understood but what struck me especially when I went to Sudan, I went to Sudan twice was the lethargy in the place. It seemed liked everything moved in slow motion and that you know it wasn't quite a "why me worry" kind of situation but it was just sort of a having an acceptance there was no energy, there was simply no energy. I may have mentioned before I can't remember what I talked about last time but I wasn't working on it but that was also the time we were trying to get food into Sudan because there was a huge drought in the west. Getting the Sudanese officials in Khartoum to worry about their own people, their own people in the west, was just almost non-existent. I remember at one point the problem of getting food to the west was that most of it went on trains but in the rainy season the trains don't run, that's just because they cost more to run the trains. So you only had a very short time horizon at that point to get the food out to the west where people were starving. We had food tied up in the port, I think it was Port Sudan I can't remember that needed to be moved and it was near Ramadan I guess, I forget the time of the year it was, but the end of Ramadan was celebrated with eating a lot of candy. So our trains were being stopped so they could move sugar through the ports to Khartoum to make the candy. Train after train of sugar and we couldn't get the food out to the west.

Q: West being the area where Darfur is?

MAYBARDUK: Darfur yes where Darfur is now. I mean I really came away from Sudan feeling this is a country that didn't care what happened outside of Khartoum at all. Outside of Sudan some of these people were very energetic, they earn a lot of money they send back and they are known as very educated but in Sudan itself you just have this feeling of an almost amoral society.

Q: Did you get a feel for the relations with the south? Was the civil war sort of going on then?

MAYBARDUK: The civil war was going on, of course, it had been solved once with what's his name Nimeiry was president and then he instituted Sharia law under pressure from others and the war started up again. But Gaafar Nimeiry was the one person that could settle the war in the south. Of course, pushing the IMF issue, we ended up overthrowing him by accident. But I want to go back to this economic thing, it is important. So we were dealing with these country-by-country cases but we saw a systemic problem. The Africa Bureau actually tried to get me interested in that when I was in the Economic Bureau and I must say I didn't pick up on it very well. Once I got there it became obviously how difficult the problem was and how it was affecting everything we were doing in Africa. We couldn't get Treasury to change its policies which really needed to get done otherwise you had these catch-22 positions which I talked about last time. You could not get them to change their policy even if it was clear

that some of these countries would never be able to pay the IMF off. They would not change.

The IMF years earlier had sold some of its gold reserves and lent it at very low interest rates to the poorer countries of the world. Now this money was coming due and it was being paid back and the IMF was going to have, if I remember correctly, $3-4 extra billion. It was a lot of money at the time, that would go back in the reserves and some use needed to be found for it. Looking at these problems I wrote a paper…first I finished the other paper that John Blaney had started explaining what happened in the 1970s and early 1980s. We tried to send it up to the secretary and the Economic Bureau stopped it, they would never engage in discussions on it they just would never approve it. It was the way the Economic Bureau often worked, if it wasn't invented by them or one part was invented by treasury nothing went up on economics to the secretary. Eventually I ended up writing a two-page memo on it which Chet Crocker, our assistant secretary, literally took up and handed it at one of the morning meetings with the secretary and officials. He said, "Look, here are the problems we face." He couldn't get it cleared anywhere; he had to hand-carry it up.

Anyway at some point I wrote a paper, which said this money is coming back to the IMF from its gold tranche that had lent money ten years earlier or so. Here is the opportunity to do something new. Let's create a fund in coordination with the World Bank that will lend money to these countries that will do more than just hit the normal stuff we do about exchange rates and inflation but will also grow in some of the key development problems. By using it with the World Bank we will force the IMF and the World Bank to work together as well. Half of them thought it was a lovely idea. The Senate talked about it to the Economic Bureau, they again it was like talking to a stonewall; there was no way, whatsoever.

Q: What would you ascribe this lack of action to?

MAYBARDUK: The Economic Bureau has for years been led by people who are either not economists or were not very good economists. They seemed to have very little faith in their own staff. They felt that they didn't have the talents to oppose Treasury in anything and developed this mentality which was openly talked about and openly used for the last oh past thirty years I've been in the Foreign Service: you don't challenge Treasury directly. You help them think through their problems, you kind of help them implement it but you never choose, you want to maintain influence and therefore you don't challenge Treasury directly which in my view and it's always been that it is absolutely the wrong way to go about this. But it's been there my entire career and that's why I talk about it because it was so frustrating. The Economic Bureau was where I was expected to do most of my work in the Foreign Service and the inability to do good economics in the Economic Bureau has forever frustrated me.

Q: Did you feel that Treasury or may be Defense had a better economic staff?

MAYBARDUK: Actually around 1982 when the debt crisis came we actually had some good economists in the economic bureau, not a lot but we had some good ones, much more than we have now. We really are out of luck now but we really had some good people. No, Defense didn't have any. But we could and at times we did have the power in the economic bureau true at times really shook Treasury when it was wrong or needed to rethink things. That was on when (Richard) McCormack was assistant secretary [Ed: serving from February 1983 to February 1985] and he was afraid of his own shadow. Eleanor Constable was the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, and she would regularly go around McCormack, but she also did not go around on many of the issues dealing with Treasury. Her technique and I don't know if she developed this but she certainly perfected it was that you simply…the way you dealt with the regional bureau is you simply would refuse to clear their memo and you really didn't engage in discussion with them. You just refuse to clear their memos and usually they gave up.

Anyway so we couldn't get EB to act and we didn't quite know how to handle this memo so what eventually what we did is I gave it to several people over in Treasury. Again we also understood you couldn't hit Treasury directly on this, particularly in this issue where Charles De Lara was our executive director at DINS and also the assistant secretary. [Ed: the tape is not clear but he may be talking about Charles Dallara, who Wikipedia identifies as U.S. Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund (1984-1989), and concurrently as Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Economic Policy (1985-1988); Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Monetary Affairs (1983-1985).] So we gave it to Nate Runsinger and a couple other people and it sat there. We didn't know what would happen but we continued to work on other issues. About five months later, three to five months later, after we had been fighting over Sudan, after we had been fighting over Liberia, having these really tough fights Charles Da Lara calls Princeton Lyman and says, "We have an idea for using these gold trust reflows at the IMF and we would like to talk to you about it." Charles' idea was very, very close to what I had written, whether I had many good ideas the time had come it was developed separately or whether it came out somebody suggesting it from my paper to this day I don't know, although I'd love to take credit but I really don't know. But what ended up happening is Treasury and the Africa Bureau developed steps that were justified. Charles had done something but I didn't know it was possible and he did a very good job at it. I'd called him crazy Charles because he often drove me crazy but in this case we actually got China and India to say they wouldn't draw on these funds because they would have taken two-thirds of the money. It wasn't a lot of money for them, but it was a lot of money for Africa and that made the whole thing much more appealing. So the Africa Bureau and Treasury worked up this whole proposal. Then Treasury went to the Economic Bureau, the Economic Bureau never knew what had happened. The proposal for these steps were justified. I just thought the exercise was an interesting because it was trying to solve the problems at the time, the coordination, the broader economic reforms you didn't just focus on one thing and then everything else would kind of collapse and to get more money to Africa. So we got it passed and the IMF approved it. They later expanded it. I was never part of implementation and it's become very controversial over the years but I think the concept was a good idea. I've done some

of the reading evaluation on it and I mean it seems to me it has worked, but of course there's been a huge outcry about it.

Q: Well then after these battles where did you go?

MAYBARDUK: I had one more battle. Princeton Lyman had worked with the finance minister of Senegal and I think the president. The Organization of African Unity wanted the UN to address the issues of the declining incomes in Africa. So the UN General Assembly was going to have a special session on the economic problems of Africa. We had told the Senegalese which was head of the Organization of African Unity at the time that we would try to work with them. So my last six months, eight months, in that job was working with the UN and with the Africans negotiating this conference. What we looked for and what we told the Africans is AID funds are declining. All through the Reagan era we had managed to have major increases of aid to Africa even while other parts of the aid budget were being cut, but it was becoming more and more difficult. So what we wanted was a statement endorsing structural reforms and stuff and endorsing all these economic reforms, which we had given Africa and then pledging to do our best to get more money for Africa. Anyway, it went on for six months at what they call the preparatory sessions and I would go up for two days of meetings and sometimes end up spending five or six days, the family saw me very little at that time. I should have lived in New York but they hadn't raised per diem yet so I ended up losing a couple thousand dollars in expenses before it was all over. I was kind of the deputy negotiator; the economic counselor of the embassy was the main negotiator. It went on as I say for about six months we made almost no progress. We went through several special apertures and…

Q: Well was the problem was this a UN bureaucratic problem?

MAYBARDUK: It was the G-77 problem of the developing nations, who, from the UN delegate side, were used to voting against anything about what the West wants particularly in economics and weren't willing to make any kind of commitments and we got a series of repertoires, the people who sort of chair these preparatory meetings, who just weren't up for the job and didn't understand it. We got into the last preparatory session just as the General Assembly was taking place, all the finance and foreign ministers and some of the presidents were coming in we really had not made any progress at all. After one particularly discouraging preparatory session I think it was the Senegalese foreign minister spoke and he said, "People we've just got to get something done, the needs are desperate." It was just a stalemate. When he finished nobody said anything, no one had anything to say and I walked up to one of his deputies and I said, "I think it's time we get together and talk, just Senegal and the United States." So we went into a meeting just with them and they bought our entire proposal, all our language, all the language we had worked on, the entire thing. The foreign minister went out for the next session and announced the agreement, which was essentially every we had asked for and more..

Q: What were we asking for?

MAYBARDUK: We were asking for a statement that basically admitted Africa made some mistakes but they had undertaken a major effort to rectify those mistakes, which the UN recognized, and that the industrialized countries should substantially increase their aid to Africa. Now what the Africans wanted was to put a number on it, which we never do in that kind of situation and no American administration would do because we don't guarantee what Congress is going to do. So the best we could do is told them, we told them over and over that if we had this resolution we will take it to Congress and try to get more aid. When they announced it I mean the delegates exploded, they had never had the G77 accept these kinds of points before. One guy got down on his knees and say, "You can't force us to do this it's going to destroy us." It really was an enormous change.

Q: Was this just the fact that they were admitting errors? This was not essentially an economic matter?

MAYBARDUK: Right, it was admitting errors. It was the fact that for a generation the problems in Africa had been blamed on the colonial experience. Things were changing rapidly in Africa but there was no willingness at the UN to admit that this had happened. The final declaration came out and said something to the effect that Africa's problems were bad and had been worsening as a result of the mistakes of the colonial period and the post-colonial period. It wasn't a big huge mea culpa; it was just a fairly simple thing. It's amazing how many months you can spend getting something like that.

OK, there was a sidebar to this. The eastern bloc never wanted to blame anything except on the colonial powers, the Soviets and the allies. You could see that they went into shock. If you took a corner of the room you could see all the eastern delegates sort of sitting there thinking why are we into this. But we got through; we made a few changes, made a few change. The Europeans actually were surprised how much we had gotten and they weren't going to buy it all, the Canadian repertoire was very upset he couldn't believe he was one of these left wing Canadians who couldn't believe it had gone this direction. He actually got in the way of getting this but the Senegalese held firm, it was clearly the president of Senegal knew it was time for a change and he was the one at the Organization of African Unity and he was going to carry it through in a disciplined manner. It was the first time there was a break in the G-77 in which the Africans voted separately from most of the rest of the G-77.

Q: The G-77 being what?

MAYBARDUK: With a conglomeration of countries basically the third world countries who wanted to have a neutral course between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, often they sided with the Soviet Union, led by India, Egypt, with Nasser and Gandhi and the whole thing, Nehru. It still exists today but it was a very strong block of the General Assembly. So this was the first time that anybody can remember that we actually broke it. This was the first time that anything at the UN was blamed on anything other than the colonial admitted at the time and we got passed all the way through. We worked, the Assembly finished on a Friday, I don't remember, but when everybody had finished we worked

until four or five in the morning of the last day to finally get the language up which was then taken to the ministers who just approved it, they didn't change anything. I mean at that point I'd worked at least 24-hours solid maybe longer, everybody was exhausted but we got it through. I think a lot of stuff at the UN happens that way.

The nice thing about it was afterwards George Shultz was so impressed he did take it to Congress at a time when every other part of the world was getting its aid hit we got a substantial boost of aid for Africa. So we were able to come through with a large part of the deal. There's been two special follow-up sessions since and nobody's been around who had done that first one and so they've never been done what we managed to do that first time. It really was a very nice breakthrough. This is what was so good about that two-year experience, we accomplished so much we moved so many things, we failed in some areas. But I really came out of those two years feeling we'd done a lot of good. It was possible and I think to this day I'm convinced that Treasury treated us, the Africa Bureau, with respect, even though we fought battle after battle after battle with it. I've always felt it was a perfect example of why what the Economic Bureau does isn't the way to go and it's one of the reasons its' been so weak over the years. Well that concludes that job. It took a lot of time but it was needed to get that out.

Q: You have illustrated the dynamics of the various departments, bureaus and all that. After EB where did you go in the summer of 1986?

MAYBARDUK: In the summer of 1986. I had been given a Pearson Fellowship. Pearson Fellowship's tend to be responsible for about a half a dozen mid-level Foreign Service officers a chance to spend a year on the Hill working for Congressional staff. The assistant administrator of AID for Africa had gotten to know me pretty well by this point but he at one time worked for Senator Danforth, a Republican from Missouri, so he got me a job on Senator Danforth's staff.

Q: Still prominent today, he was an Episcopalian minister, or teacher.

MAYBARDUK: He was an Episcopalian minister; he also had a law degree and divinity and law, a fascinating fellow. He had been interested in Africa. So I had a job on his staff as his principal advisor on foreign and military affairs. Of course what I knew about military affairs was relatively small at that point. I got over there I think it was in August of 1986 just a couple weeks before the August recess and got handed of this portfolio. Well, and this was quite a change as you can imagine. Luckily Danforth always hired first-rate staff so I got a lot of help and what you do in these recesses is you learn about the issues coming up. Senators would normally send around letters to their colleagues saying I'm going to bring up this issue or that issue or this amendment and I would like your support. That gives you kind of a heads up that something is coming. Then lobbyists like coming around or congressional liaison officers from DOD. We worked with them in Africa all the time; DOD was always present bringing their issues on what they think are coming up and what's important to them. They taught me what the value of a lobbyist is because it really did help you focus on what issues were coming up they were also very good about providing you with lots of background information so you get a place to start.

One of the things I learned was that office space on the Hill, I was in the Senate Russell building, was at a premium. I mean there were I think three of us in a room that normally certainly larger than a State Department office for which one person would have but we had three and books and papers were stashed. At that point they hadn't started televising Congress yet, it was still the radio and the radio blared continuously. It was from the Floor so you would listen to the radio for what was coming on the Floor while you were both meeting with lobbyists and you were doing research on various issues. Normally you would meet a couple times with the Senator, you would talk about the issues coming up, trying to see where he might want to go on some of these issues. Danforth very much liked to be consistent so we had a record of his voting record in all the issues that had come up in the past and many of them come up year-end and year-out. So you had a guy for that who collected whatever speeches he made and so on. So I spent all of August and early September just reading in, just trying to figure out how to get from one place to another, reading in and learning about the issues.

We went back into session sometime after Labor Day and my issues came up first. We had several things going on. We had a Defense authorization bill and all the issues that would go with Defense and that included such things as nuclear test ban treaties, various weapons systems, star wars, and much later in that at the beginning of winter we had Defense an appropriation bill which are the same issues now that we go back to and you actually need to come up with the money again.

The other issues we had were aid to the Contras, we had sanctions on South Africans, this was a time when we were trying to get sanctions on South Africa. What was another big issue? Anyway, over that next three months there were over 350 roll call votes on issues that I was dealing with.

Q: Good heavens.

MAYBARDUK: This is also the time of an extensive tax reform bill, an important tax reform that that we hadn't had in thirty years and haven't had anything like it since where the Senate finance committee, Democrats and Republicans, basically ignored all the lobbyists, went into closed session, wouldn't talk to anybody and completely simplified the tax system, a very important bill. I've done a lot of important stuff over the ears but the tax forms are a lot simpler today, as bad as they are, a lot simpler today than they would have been if we hadn't done that. I wasn't part of that but Danforth was on the committee and they were meeting continuously often late into the night. So normally the Senate doesn't get going until early afternoon even though it starts in the morning nothing really happens. It is really mid-afternoon before anything starts happening. They would call roll call votes and if I had had a chance to brief him on it and things often came up that he didn't know about, you didn't know when they were going to come up. When they called the roll call vote I would usually walk over to the Senate door, the front door of the Senate, where Senator Danforth entered and I would normally have 45 seconds to brief him what this vote was on, the key issues, tell him how he had voted before, if he had voted before, maybe to bring in any personalities in the debate. It was

really a kind of elevator speech, we had about 45 seconds to really get it out and he would go in and vote. Sometimes I would be on the Senate floor on the couches. If you look at the Senate on TV, in the back and you'll see the couches and that's where the staffers can sit. Once the vote is called and counting is in progress you can't go in. The staffers could sit there and stay there if they were already there and sometimes that's why I would be there.

The nice thing about the Hill is a) you get a parking spot and b) you don't have to come in until after rush hour, but then c) during these August recesses you don't have that kind of pressure. But then when things start up again, all of a sudden you find yourself at four in the morning under pressure.

Q: How would you describe the attitude of the Senate at that time? Certainly the last decade it has been poisonous.

MAYBARDUK: It was not poisonous then. This is the period when you had Reagan as President; you had Tip O'Neill (as Speaker) in the House (of Representatives). There was plenty of controversy. The first half of my time on the Hill, the Senate was controlled by the Republicans. You had people like Danforth, but you also had people like Baker and Kassebaum, I forget who was the guy that set up the finance committee. These were guys who were all moderate Republicans and they really were the moderating force. In many ways they were what made government succeed during that period because they would take the Reagan proposals that were often far out and the Democratic house could not pass anything that was highly partisan. Then that got resolved in the Senate, you had some good Democrats too I mean they were and they'd get it resolved in the Senate.

People also talk about how the (House) speaker Tip O'Neil and the president managed to always transcend partisanship. Maybe they did, I didn't see the House that much, but my reading at the time was that it was the Senate that was the broker, it was the Senate that did appropriate things.

It was fascinating in the election that fall the Republicans lost the Senate. The other Senate seat in Missouri was held by (Democrat) Tom Eagleton, who was McGovern's vice presidential candidate but had to quite when it was found out that he had had psychiatric treatment. He was retiring. Now he and Senator Danforth disagreed on almost over anything but after it was over he called Danforth and said, "Look," he had been the senior Senator but now Danforth was to become the senior senator. He said, "I still have Harry Truman's desk when he was in the Senate." He said, "I think it should go to you as the senior Senator," it had always been held by the Democrats before that day. So Danforth got Harry Truman's desk. It was that kind of congeniality, which you didn't see in the House; that really made things work.

The issues are also fascinating and I really saw a lot of things. First of all you saw who the good lobbyist was, Carla Hills who had been a former U.S. trade representative was a lobbyist at that point. She was representing I think it was Chevron or Gulf with their oil facilities off Angola because we had this strange world in which the Senate and Congress

had told the administration it should support UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) and give aid to this rebel group in Angola but at the same time our oil companies are off the coast making lots of money both for the Angolan government and themselves.

Q: And also the Cuban military was involved.

MAYBARDUK: It was totally weird experience, but anyway she came in to talk about them and she was great. She understood that they need to go not just to the Congressman or Senator you need to go to his staff and she was despite her experience had no problem going to the staff. She would come in and stroke through the issue, she would leave you a one-page set of talking points, she knew how these things worked. You would pull out of your file, you'd run up to the seventh floor and say, Senator I think we should vote this way because of A, B, C, D and F. She would do a two or three page thing that you could use as a basis for a memo and then give you 50 or 100 pages of background material, if you wanted to do more. She really had it and very few people did, she really understand where to go to get issues talked about, she was very, very good.

The big fight we had, there were several fights, we had a big fight over Star Wars. I had written a paper in college, back in the 1960s now, on ABM (anti-ballistic missile) systems. I think I had mentioned earlier in one of our interview one of these Dr. Strangelove characters Mike Kagel talked about probability and thermonuclear war was his book. I basically had decided in the paper that this made no sense from a strategic point of view. It would always be defeated by the other side simply building more missiles and, in fact, it could make life even more dangerous. But maybe it made a little sense in the case of a missile going off accidentally or in case anybody else like North Korea…small countries kind of thing. The same thing could happen today, right? It is exactly the same as the debate we are having today.

In the 1960s and 1970s there was also a major debate, we could actually build an anti-ballistic missile system, they never worked. We only built two stations; the Soviets I think only built one. We spent lots of money it and we had this debate and now here we are in the 1980s having the same debate again and it was fascinating because each side remembered the earlier debate. Yet the whole thing was being replayed and the arguments turned out to be exactly the same; I don't remember how bad it was but anyway I got into that.

McDonnell Douglas was based in Missouri and they were going to build the new C-7 cargo plane. It was a big cargo plane that had a sort of funny bottom, it could carry tanks although it only ended up being able to carry one tank when originally it was supposed to carry two tanks. And it's still in use today and we thank them for that, that was jobs.

Q: How did you find the lobbying of the aircraft industry and the military? Were they all over you?

MAYBARDUK: Well, McDonnell Douglas was around but didn't have to work very hard on us. They had a light touch, because they knew Danforth was going to support jobs in Missouri. But I got invited to a few lunches, I got some very nice model planes, which I gave to my son. They were expensive models. Of course, he had a wonderful time destroying them. I had a nice collection of model planes, really well done model planes but not anymore. I got taken out to lunch and everything else but really there was no conflict of interest because we knew where the Senator was going to go on this stuff; it was really a matter of giving me the information I needed to support the Senators view on this and I never did see an objection to these systems anyway so it was relatively easy.

The military on missile defense was well prepared. They had offices, of course, in the Congressional office building and you could call them and they would be up in 15 minutes and have a colonel up in 15 minutes or at the most half a day to be able to sit down and answer your questions. They weren't supposed to lobby, all they were supposed to do is answer the questions but obviously you knew where they were coming out on these issues. But all these resources are very important for the staff because you need to be able to talk to lots of people. I felt comfortable calling the State Department on these issues and asking desk officers but State wasn't doing anything the same kind of contact work.

Q: How did you find relations with State when you were there?

MAYBARDUK: Well, we'll get into that more when we talk about the next job but I found when you called State officials from Congress. There was a great deal of reluctance to talk, go too far I think, they were afraid of getting burned or something. We found there were a number of Congressional staffers who thought State officers were arrogant. That was the great thing about the Pearson Fellow, there was also a Congressional internship as well, which brought another half dozen State people on the Hill. In fact that really helped to getting to know each other. It was one of the most important jobs I ever had in terms of my many jobs. I really felt very comfortable working with Congress after that.

We had the budget, State budget. (Secretary) Shultz was really begging Congress for more money, pointing out how short we were for money. I called the people who do the budget for State and said give me some talking points. Danforth was on the budget committee, give me some talking points I can use and all they could do was the most anodyne kind of talking points. There was no meat, there was nothing that said if we don't get this we can't do this, there was none of that. I called about three times and I couldn't get anything. I really was unable to do much to help the State budget because they never got, I could tell the Senator myself but I didn't have any meat; State, couldn't provide it and yet Shultz was going up and calling and saying how important this was but there was no one in the Department to back it up with the kind of information that Carla Hills would do in one of her presentations or what Defense would do.

Q: Defense can say OK if you don't give us this money we'll cut out one carrier group or something like that. The State Department has a tradition of "well gee we would like more help but we'll do the job with less."

MAYBARDUK: That may be it, but it was also, well we will get more into this with my next job. But it really is I think it is the people in each group, congressional relations you know, a lot of political appointees at staff level in the Congressional Relations Bureau (H) and they often have jobs that are totally unrelated to anything they had done before. So even if it's a Foreign Service officer whose covering Africa even though he'd never served in Africa. So there was no matching of expertise. The other problem is the H Bureau really works for the Secretary, it doesn't work for the bureaus, which means H staffers get separated from the regional bureaus where most budget decisions are made, not by the Secretary's office. When you are a Hill staffer you talk to somebody from the Congressional Relations bureau; they aren't going to be able to answer your questions, they've got to go back and get somebody to come up and brief and that takes time. A lot of them weren't very good about getting back to you very quickly.

Q: Well did you find you just say forget the H bureau and deal with the regional bureaus?

MAYBARDUK: I did, I would speak to the desk officers or I eventually did because I couldn't get any support. Other issues? South African sanctions. Fascinating, this was, of course, a major watershed in U.S. relations to Africa. I spent two years in the Africa Bureau and I knew Chet Crocker was totally opposed to sanctions. Crocker was a wonderful Assistant Secretary and you would have thought the Democrats would have loved him but because of this issue there was enormous tension. Crocker was dismissive of Congress; he clearly didn't like Congress. Anyway Danforth decided he was of two views. One was defeating the sanctions, I think it went back to advance on grain sales to the Soviet Union, which hurt his state. But he developed a policy over the years that he didn't like sanctions, he didn't think they worked. But Danforth with his Episcopal collar and his political collar and his lawyer collar, you were never sure which one he was going to go on an issue. It was like three different voices. He almost had three different voices. Even people who had been with him all their lives the director of his office had been born in the same hospital as Danforth a day or two a part and had been with him forever. It was always very hard to predict where Danforth would go on a vote unless he voted on it many times in the same way. You did your recommendations but you couldn't get too upset if he didn't take them because…nobody had a real in on that.

Anyway, Danforth decided that he was going to vote for sanctions. He went up on the Hill and he said to the Senate, "I don't believe in sanctions, I don't believe they are going to work. But this isn't really about sanctions, this is a civil rights act of the 1980s, either you are for apartheid or against apartheid and since I am against apartheid I'm going to vote for this even though I don't think it'll work, even though I don't like it, this is what the vote is all about whether you are for or against apartheid. I wish there was another vehicle but this is it." Then he advised his colleagues he thought that they should just

pass the bill and get on with it, don't amend it. Well, there were a million amendments with the bill.

We got to one on banning textiles; the original legislation did not ban textiles, textile sales to the U.S., textiles and shoes. Now Danforth is also a free trader and there had just been a big fight for some trade legislation, which he had voted against limitations on textiles and shoe imports into the U.S. Then he got fairly principal vote as Missouri was a big shoe manufacture and there were a lot of textiles too, so he was ready to take a hit on this particular issue back home; but he had voted against it on the earlier bill. So out comes this provision including in the act textiles and shoes from South Africa. I thought this was going to be an easy one I went up and met him on the Hill. I said, "All right this is about adding to the bill textiles and shoes and so on." I said, "Now consistent with your statement at the beginning about you know you should vote for the bill and not for amendments," if you felt that way, I said, "and consistent with your view on free trade I recommend you vote against this amendment." He kind of had this sneaky look and he looked up and he said, "You know I haven't done anything for my shoe or textile constituents in my state in a long, long time."

Then there was another one in the defense field actually about yarmulkes. For years the U.S. army had allowed Orthodox Jews to wear yarmulkes under their helmets or whatever.

Q: This is a small skull cap. It is like a doily practically.

MAYBARDUK: Practically. But there was a regulation against it but nobody bothered that right. Some stupid colonel decided to enforce it. So now it's gone to through the courts and the yarmulke has lost; so there is this bill on the Senate floor to turn this around to allow yarmulke's to be worn. The military's objection wasn't the yarmulke it was worried about Sikhs with turbans and everything else and this was a Pandora's Box. Now Danforth was very tight with the Jewish lobbyists at this stage. I mean he was very pro-Israel, embarrassingly so sometimes. So this again looked to me like an easy one so I went to the floor and I said, "Alright, this is about the yarmulke's and I think we should vote for it because it doesn't make any real difference…" and he went to the well, to the floor to vote where Goldwater met him. He liked that, but everybody in the Senate liked Barry Goldwater, it was very interesting to see how in 1964 he seemed like such a demon but he was well respected and well liked in the Senate. Goldwater asked him to vote the other way and he did as a favor to Goldwater, he said, "I really did this for Barry," and the thing lost by one vote. It's been voted on for twenty years since and it's never come close to coming as close as that time. It was just that personal relationship sort of thing that offered to turn it around.

Anyway we got sanctions passed, what were the other issues? Contra aid. When I served in Nicaragua and I wasn't terribly fond of our policies of supporting the Contras but I also knew the Sandinistas were so-and-sos and I had friends who were in the Contras. I mean I know Adolfo Calero who was the head of the Contras at that point, even the Coca Cola man in Nicaragua and heads of the conservative parties. So I didn't dislike the

Contras, I just wasn't terribly excited about the policy but Danforth was all for the policy and so there was no doubt as to which way we were going to vote. But I listened to the other side and Latin American Human Rights Watch came in and talked about all these horrible things the Contras were doing and I do believe in human rights so I listened to him and I asked him, do they have some stuff, and I read…they gave me a whole book. But I, of course, had served in Nicaragua the first two years when the Sandinistas were in power and as I read the book they claimed to be bipartisan and they attacked the faults of the Sandinista government. But over and over as I read this book I saw everything that the Sandinista had done many of these things I knew about they were white washing it and it kind of destroyed the credibility of what they were doing when they came back to talk to me again. I said, "You've just destroyed their credibility." I said, "You know, you want to do human rights that's fine but you can't be partisan about it." Not so much anymore but I think a lot of the human rights people back in that period lost because they really supported "reckless movements" whatever that was and they lost credibility by not being able to…

Anyway, one day during a period at the end of my stay, we passed Contra aid and I was ready to go on to something else. In fact, my replacement was in the office. He was hired out of the private sector. We got a phone call like at three in the afternoon, would Senator Danforth like to come up and debate Contra aid on Nightline against Senator Dodd?

Q: Senator Dodd being a liberal democrat.

MAYBARDUK: A liberal democrat, who had been in the Peace Corp in Latin America, had been a total opponent of aid to the Contras and of aid to Salvador who knew the issues very, very well. Danforth on the other hand was not all that up on the issues, he knew where he was in that sense. If I had to choose between the two I was quite happy to choose Danforth over Dodd's position. I really felt Dodd was being a bit of a demigod on these issues. So we spent the afternoon preparing Danforth for this session and I was really kind of worried. We went over to his house and picked up his wife and went down to the ABC (American Broadcast Company) newsroom where they were going to have this Nightline session. Dodd was there with some very attractive young female but frankly I wasn't paying too much attention to her and neither was the other guy we were too busy worrying about what was going to happen. So he went on and the debate went back and forth and then Dodd said something that just I don't even remember what it was but it somehow denigrated something about U.S. interest and Danforth took it and just destroyed Dodd. It really wasn't about the issue, it was about one of these things of who's the better debater I guess.

On the way home back to Danforth's house we were in the car, Mrs. Danforth had come with us, a very nice lady, they were both in their 50s or 40s, 50s I guess it was pretty much as you would expect of her a traditional 50 year old woman who I don't think had a career herself was smart and bright and at some point she commented on Dodd's date. Dodd was a player, he was not married and he was known to like the ladies. She said, "Did you notice anything about her?" I didn't and the other guy who was single hadn't noticed anything about her. She said, "She wasn't wearing any panties." (laughter)

I very much liked working with Senator Danforth and his wife they were very nice people. They had their own children and they also adopted a couple children and an amount of time his vote was very principled but he had to be a politician from time to time.

I'm sure I'm forgetting something of very…it's such a fascinating… At one point he asked us for new ideas for the new session and we were busy looking around for something. Now, Danforth was pro-life, he wasn't some table pounder about it…

Q: I might mention here that "pro-life" is the term that's used for those opposed to abortion.

MAYBARDUK: I guess I was basically pro-life too, although there is certainly another side and I wondered if there was something we could do in between. I always thought we ought to be pushing abortion more so I went over to talk to the National Council for Adoption. That was adoption not abortion. I found there it amazing, that there was no coordination between the States; there was no central registry whereby somebody looking for an idea in Texas could find out what was available in Massachusetts. The National Council, they spent a lot of time with me, pointed out that one of the big problems was that babies were being adopted all the time, even black babies, they said white babies are adopted in two weeks and maybe six weeks for a black babies; but babies were adopted. The problem was really older children and particularly the policies around the country on black children some of which insisted on placing them in a black home. The result was that they often don't get adopted, even when a white home would take them. So anyway I went back to Danforth with this and I thought this would be a great issue for him because he was a moderate, to sort of promote something on adoption. He had adopted two kids in addition to his own. I could never get him interested in it; I never could get him interested in it. About ten years later he got on to it but I couldn't at that time get him interested in it.

There were some other issues too; it was a very big year. Oh, the other thing that year there was a proposal by Kasten and Kassebaum to redesign the aid program for Africa. We wanted to create an earmark that blocked off a large, so it couldn't be stolen later on. You know if you go through a year and all of a sudden you need some money for some Middle East crisis or something you take money out of or away from the Ivory Coast and you give it to Turkey or something. So, the objective was to create an earmark that would protect African aid at this time of declining aid. They also wanted to get rid of all of the restrictions we had on aid; you know it would have to be buy American products and they would have to do so much in this category and so much in this category. AID was given so much of the matter of looking at a spreadsheet and making sure that all of these various Congressional mandates rather than looking at what is best for the country and what should be the highest priority in that country at the time. So it was a good bill and I got Danforth to support it but it was done on an appropriations bill and when it came up on the Senate floor somebody objected because it had not been done in the authorization legislation that they didn't want it passed because you weren't supposed to appropriate

money unless it had been authorized. It happens all the time but if somebody raises an objection then you have a point of procedure, so it got lost that time but we got it the next year, which is what I want to talk about, we got it for next year.

I may come back with other stories but I think that pretty much covers that year.

Q: Well then let's move on at the end of your Pearson in the summer of 1987 whither?

MAYBARDUK: Well I had tried for a DCMship, a Deputy Chief of Mission position in that assignment cycle and one just hadn't come up. I was a little disappointed, I was disappointed with the Africa Bureau because I had done quite a bit of good, I had gotten great reviews from everybody there. So I was trying to decide what I was going to do when I get a phone call from Deputy Assistant Secretary Princeton Lyman who went out to South Africa at that point, he may have gone to Nigeria, I can't remember which one he went to first, saying that Chet Crocker wanted his own Congressional relations person. He could not stand the Congressional Relation's Bureau that was basically headed at that point by a fairly strong right-wing conservative. He couldn't get his stuff through and he was really unhappy with having lost sanctions and wanted somebody who could represent the bureau working for him not for the Congressional Relations bureau and would I be interested. I said, "Sure," and I said, "but how about guaranteeing me a DCMship in the future?" He said he would do his very best. So I was set.

So, I go through this transition period in Danforth's office of turning over my portfolio and I go over to the Africa Bureau. Almost the first thing that happened was actually back in the Senate with Danforth. There was a bill for aid to Mozambique. Now Mozambique at that time was in the midst of a civil war. It had a government that had been Marxist. All through Africa we had had some success basically converting these governments over to something different, weeding them away from the Marxist thing. But you had this guerrilla movement sponsored by South Africa called RENAMO (The Mozambique National Resistance), which was really a horrible movement I mean they were killing everybody in sight, indiscriminate killings of the kind of killing we now have since then in Africa. It wasn't unprecedented but it was unusual at that time. But Jesse Helms and Dan Burton, Burton in the House and Jessie in the Senate, were basically all opposed to Marxist governments and were supporting RENAMO. To this day I don't understand how you can, you know, just laugh at human rights. Danforth and I had taken a couple strolls along the Capital and Danforth was very annoyed by the way Congress was trying to micromanage foreign policy; he didn't like it. He had actually back during the time of the famine in Ethiopia had been very involved in the food aid to Africa. So he had some knowledge, it wasn't a major interest it was just enough of an interest that he had some credibility on it. So there was this proposal to take aid to Africa, it wasn't added to the foreign aid bill by Jessie Helms. It came during the world series when St. Louis was playing whomever and aside from his interest in politics and fly fishing Danforth had an enormous love of baseball and he expected to fly back that night when this came up on the floor to be with friends and watch the game, the World Series game. As the debate went on it became obvious he wasn't going to make the flight, I wasn't there I had left and I had gotten the story later. The debate continued until it

became obvious…so he invited some friends over to see it at his house and watch it on television in Washington and as the debate went on it was clear he was going to miss it on television too. So he got really upset and he went to the floor of the Senate and asked to speak and he got up and he said, "This is the last thing the Senate should be doing. We should be letting the administration run foreign policy and we shouldn't be taking up our time dealing micromanaging foreign affairs for this…I've been to Mozambique and we should not be micromanaging foreign aid for this piss poor country," and he moved to recommit. You go to recommit you get a vote, it's a procedural vote but if you vote for it kills the amendment and it gets priority. You can't filibuster a bill, if you recommit. He hit a responsive chord because the Senate ginned in and they voted Helms amendment down completely. Helms was furious.

But Secretary Shultz heard about this and he was delighted. Shultz thought this was the beginning of a new era in Congressional Relations. This was showing a great sense of bipartisanship; this was when the Democrats controlled the Senate, although it was a motion by Danforth. He said, "Maybe we can really do something; maybe we can create a new spirit that we had during World War II and the beginnings of the Cold War." So he invited all these Senators over to State and these interviews would come over all the Senators and they had a couple lunches and talked about how they could do things and so on. A lot of people who knew I had worked for Danforth came over and congratulated me for what I had done although I had talked about these issues I hadn't done anything. There was this great era of good feeling but the whole thing was about baseball and…it was reported in the Washington Post but the story behind it was all about baseball.

These were the kind of funny story we had on the Hill. I actually came away from my experience of that year having enormous respect for the U.S. Senate. A lot of garbage goes in but the process is very good about getting rid of the garbage before it ever happens. Occasionally, they pass some real garbage, a good part of the time the committee system is back and forth and so on and eliminates an awful lot of it. I found that Senate staffers generally work very well together, I worked with Byrd's staff who has been the majority leader, I worked with Kennedy's staff, I worked with Kasten's staff who was very conservative, half the time you don't even do it over the telephone, you could talk further to one another, they could see who you were and there was the nuclear test ban treaty too I could talk about. But over all I really feel it was a congenial close and a lot of good work got done. I was very, very, very impressed.

So before I go on to my next job let me finish one other story about this Danforth period. Danforth always supported nuclear test ban treaties which for a Senator who was always asking for more money for Defense was a little strange but it was a fact; his constant support for nuclear test ban treaties immunized in the reserve from all those who normally would depose the defense. He was very popular because of that. So we'd have these big groups of people who would normally be very liberal in everything else come in just absolutely gaga about the Danforth because of the nuclear test ban treaty. But of course we're never really going to get a nuclear test ban treaty at that point, or an underground ban guess it was, I don't remember any more, but anyway. We ended up co-sponsoring a bill with Kennedy on that. There was mistrust between Reagan and, of

course, a lot of Democrats especially on defense issues and this bill was written in such a way that the Russians could have driven a ten-ton tank through it. There were all sorts of conditions on the administration before they could say the Russians had violated it. I looked at it and in the back of my mind somewhere from college I remembered the statistics of a type one and a type two error. Type one being you want to avoid committing a mistake and type two is you don't recognize the mistake when it happens. I contemplated this problem because the bill actually used the statistics because it went through earthquake testing and that sort of thing. I went through my staff book and I looked through it and we learned a bunch of statistics and called them back and I said, "I don't think we should sign on to this because it basically says you trust the Russians more than the American administration." I got that changed in the bill and it wasn't going to pass anyway, even though it was kind of fun.

The other thing and I'm sorry to keep going back to Danforth, was the Israeli lobby. Danforth always supported Israel and I'm half Jewish so I mean generally at one point anyway we would have come across in a similar kind of vein again. So there really wasn't any problem for Danforth to support anything on Israel. Always during the never ceremonies at the Capitol Hill we would never give or allow another Holocaust, he was always a speaker and so on. But I must say I was very taken aback by the lobbying done by AIPAC (American Israeli Political Action Committee).

There's recently been a book out about them and it is true. At one point they were bringing in a bunch of people from Missouri and lobbyists came over and they said they are going to be here on Tuesday at such and such a time, please make an appointment. I looked at the Senate calendar and he was busy. I said, "Can we make it another time?" "No, that is the only time they can do it." Very insistent, so I said all right I would get back to him. Sure enough we cleared the calendar for him. But I mean he was demanding it, he wasn't asking, he was demanding that the Senator meet with his people at that specific time no matter what else the Senator was doing. I mean no other lobbyist had ever done that when I was there. When they came in, they had huge rolls of cash, these were his donations and they were showing it to me, wanted me to take it. Now one thing I had definitely learned I mean in my job up there I was still a government employee, I wasn't working for the Senate, I wasn't a political appointee, I was a government employee and I just said, "I can't handle this." But Danforth's number two was in charge of campaign funds or whatever, I mean they all have somebody up there you know and one or two people basically comes with their political people so he took the money as a campaign donation. Danforth wouldn't have voted any other way but the effrontery of it, the absolute arrogance of it and I never saw I with any other lobbyist, like I saw with that group. I was very offended.

Q: But anyway pointing out the power of this lobby. In my interviewing for this program it seems it's absolutely true that the Israeli lobby probably has had a pernicious effect upon Israel and the United States. Getting us more involved in an issue where we've then exacerbated the relationship and kept the Israelis from reaching a settlement with the Palestinians, which could have happened.

MAYBARDUK: Absolutely. The book got criticized because it said it was the Israeli lobby that basically pushed us into war with Iraq. The book has been criticized because I don't know what position AIPAC took on it but of course polls of the Jewish committee at the time said the Jewish community was opposed to the war. But, my own view is look , where are the neo-con's coming from. They are people like Elliott Abrams..;

Q: Elliott Abrams, Paul Wolfowitz. I mean this…

MAYBARDUK: They took a lot of responsibility…Of course, my father, for the record, was a New York Jew, so…

You have a very nasty political element, yeah, and very dedicated. I think the real story on this is that they, in fact, have people who are putting Israeli interest, what they thought were Israeli interest, above that of the U.S. at the highest level. I don't have any proof of that, it's just a sense.

Q: This is Tape 6, Side 1, now what comes after this Africa Bureau assignment?

MAYBARDUK: I have one more story about this because it relates to the next job I had but it's fascinating.

Mozambique, again. (Ed: garbled proper name) winning in Mozambique was getting some support of at least some conservatives including Senator Kasten who was I think the Republican chairman of the appropriations subcommittee on foreign aid. The Africa bureau to get his support went to the Israeli's and asked the Israeli's to lobby for it; that's how they got Kasten's support on aid to Mozambique and I think a few other things. I think this is totally illegal what they did, but it goes to show you the power that exists up there.

Q: There interviews are useful in demonstrating the role of groups which Teddy Roosevelt called hyphenated Americans. I served four years in Greece as consul general in Athens and the Greek lobby, you know they did everything they could to screw up our relationship with Turkey, while Turkey was far more important than Greece in our confrontations with the Soviet Union.

MAYBARDUK: You know on the Greek thing you mentioned the Greek thing; I never really worked on it much but I was old enough at the time when you had the war on Cyprus. I just remember seeing those horrible pictures of what the Greeks did to the Turks on Cyprus. Yet it continues to be blamed, the division of Cyprus continues to be blamed on the Turkish government to this day pretty much because of the Greek lobby. One of my very first images to be politically aware was this picture of a Greek woman and her child dead in a bathtub. It's still in my mind.

Q: But these political movements are really unhelpful and also they are unhelpful to countries that they are supposedly trying to help because they just perpetuate the age-old hatreds.

MAYBARDUK: Yes, I agree that's very destructive and interestingly it doesn't have anything to do with Israeli interest.

Q: God help us when the Koreans and the Indians start exercising émigrés start exercising their power.

MAYBARDUK: I only mentioned it I think because a) I was on the Hill; b) to me at that time it was offensive and because I am part Jewish and it just offended me.

Q: Well, let's move to 1987 when you were in the African Bureau to be Chet Crocker's Congressional relations person. This was a unique job, what's its origins

MAYBARDUK: The year before the Africa Bureau in the Reagan administration, had lost the fight in Congress over sanctions on South Africa. Chet Crocker who was the Assistant Secretary was a strong believer that engagement was the best way to bring South Africa out of its apartheid era. It had been trying to find an end to war in Angola and Namibia and felt that sanctions had been not productive. It had been a big battle and we had lost in a number of ways.

Q: In what way who won…

MAYBARDUK: Well sanctions were passed and Crocker to a large extent blamed H, the Congressional Relations Bureau, and he felt that the Congressional Relations bureau did not adequately represent the Africa bureau. It is interesting because if anything the head of the Africa relation's bureau was far to the right of Chester Crocker. He was very much in the camp of the most eight-wing part of the administration but I guess he really felt that it was incompetence in the Congressional Relations Bureau and it wasn't getting the job done and he wanted his own person. He knew me because as we talked earlier I had done or was the senior economist in the bureau, then I went to Hill to work for Danforth and we had had some success while we got there ruling the African agenda. So basically, I got a call from Morris Stacey who was the DAS who had replaced Princeton Lyman, and he said, "Gary, would you be interested in doing this?" I said, "Well, sure I'd love to do that." So I came on board.

Q: Well tell me you know when you talk about Crocker how was he viewed at the time? Was this a right wing vs. left wing sort of thing where the left wing wanted sanctions and the right wing South Africa wanted trade?

MAYBARDUK: No, I mean, Crocker can speak for himself but my perception was he was trying to move Africa from its kind of Marxist orientation of a that it happened since pre-independence, since the independence period. But he was also trying to settle the war for Namibian independence and there was a real commitment within the bureau to try to substantially improve the economic situation in Africa versus the money which had gone in as foreign aid for Africa. Most of the work we were doing was not fighting communism it was really just trying to get nations to begin to get their economies going

and to begin to handle the problems of Africa. When we did that the other kind of problems kind of sorted themselves out.

So, but he really felt very strongly even when he was working with the South Africans for a long time he really felt there had been a banking crisis earlier in South Africa that had really shocked the South Africans, or the white South Africans, and had really left them realizing how vulnerable they were on the international scene. He felt that that shock had already done a lot of the work and that the South African's needed a friend to help them negotiate through the changes rather than another of the multitude beating them over the head. That, of course, was not accepted in Congress and had become and Danforth has said the civil rights issue of the decade and Crocker was vilified in many ways on the Hill and he lost the battle. In fact, I might say he ended up on the other side of the battle and voted for more sanctions.

It was fascinating because within the State Department Crocker had enormous respect. He had the complete confidence of George Shultz he was the only assistant secretary who survived the full eight years of the Reagan administration. He had support of the White House and he had put together a wonderful team in the Africa bureau and I still think it was probably the best bureau I ever served in at that time and the best people and the most active and energized and happy place to work.

Q: What was it about Crocker and the policy which gained the support of the Foreign Service which might normally be opposed to South African apartheid?

MAYBARDUK: There was, in fact, a reasonable amount of dissention within the bureau over the policy in South Africa, not everybody agreed. It was actually interesting was the one policy, the one country, and the one issue, that Crocker held very close to his chest. There was another political appointee that he had brought in. I forgot his name at the moment but it's pretty well known in those days. You know who was doing what and going back and forth one, flying out there talking and coming back and so on. But elsewhere I mean they really were problem solving. We had Princeton Lyman; you had the China expert who was later ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Chas. Freeman.

You had Ken Brown; you had (Jeffery) Davidow who was the Director of the Office of Southern Africa Affairs [Ed: Davidow was Director from 1984 to 1986 and has an oral history interview on file with ADST.]. You had a lot of other good people, lots of ambassadors came over. It was a good shop and we were doing a lot of things. I was mostly interested in the economic side; we were getting economic reform after years of not getting aid. The government had been very pro-Marxist because the Soviet Union hadn't collapsed yet but it was clearly blasted and wasn't doing well and everything else was going wrong and people were seeing that what they had seen before hadn't worked so it was a real sense of movement and accomplishment plus the fact key to the leadership was decentralization. They gave a lot of power to the officer's in the bureau to get things done themselves and to take initiative. There were awards for people that would take any initiative and work it. Just altogether it wasn't ideological in the sense that it wasn't…it sounded but it really wasn't, it was problem solving. There was an

ideology behind it - free markets and so on - but it was a problem solving. Princeton Lyman had worked to get the Falashas out of Ethiopia, the Jews out of Ethiopia to Israel.

Q: These were Ethiopian Jews supposedly descended from King Solomon's time.

MAYBARDUK: Right, and you know Ethiopia was a terrible place at the time. Mengistu was still in charge, I think. Lyman managed to negotiate a quiet secret exodus, actually. Sudan was involved as well. Yeah and getting the Jews out. We were working on all the famine in Ethiopia and Sudan and other places.

This was a place to be if you were idealistic because you were working on things that you could easily believe in, in which you could actually do something and I guess the other secret was that Crocker had almost total autonomy so you'd get, except when he was trying to get extra money for something which is what I was always dealing with. You really didn't have to deal with the rest of the U.S. bureaucracy. Basically you didn't have to go to the White House and everything or the secretary and everything. Crocker had the ability to just make decisions and the people around him could make decisions. So it was great leadership not only through Crocker but he chose good people and the bureau was working. Everybody I've ever talked to who served in the bureau at that time will tell you what a great bureau it was. It is what the Foreign Service should really be about at least in Washington.

Q: Well let's get down to you. What were you up to and what issues were you dealing with?

MAYBARDUK: Well, the sanctions debate was over having been passed. But Crocker was…there was still talk of more sanctions and so one of my jobs was to make sure that no further sanctions appeared.

Q: What type of sanctions are we talking about?

MAYBARDUK: Oh I mean most South African's exports were banned from the U.S. South African Airways could not fly to the U.S. I remember when that vote came in the Senate, I was still working in the Senate. It came up on amendment on the floor and it passed unanimously and I was sitting there watching this thing go on and I said to myself, "I don't think anybody on the Senate Floor understands this vote will destroy the Cape Verde economy." The flights were all through Cape Verde. It was their major industry don't you know. I'm sure nobody knew in this whole place knows what they just did to a small African country.

So anyway, I forget what the new sanctions being proposed were but there were additions; some things had been left off and so there were proposals for the new sanctions. Crocker felt very strongly that he needed all the leverage he could get to get a solution in Namibia. So he wanted me to follow sanctions and there were lots of aid issues; I mean, here Crocker was being attacked by the left, but he was also attacked by the right. Jesse Helms and Dan Burton couldn't stand him and he had problems with

Volpe on the left. Dan Burton was in the House; he was the senior Republican on the African subcommittee along with that crazy representative from California? He was eventually defeated. Then you had Volpe who was head of the African subcommittee who, he was a nasty person, he really didn't like Crocker and did everything he could to humiliate him. So it was very difficult situation. So we had fights over, which I will get to later, of aid to Mozambique, we had the whole issue of preventing sanctions, we had ambassadors were being held up for quite a while. Ambassadors were taking forever to get Senate approval, including, I think, Ken Brown but I'm not sure.

So my job was really to improve relations with the Hill. The first difficulty I encountered is, of course, that I wasn't supposed to be doing this, this was supposed to be the job of the Congressional Relations bureau who had its own person who was supposed to handle U.S. relations for the Africa bureau. This is a very important point worth mentioning for history books, I think. My view of the Department's troubles in Congressional Relations is the Congressional Relations person representing the regional bureau that is supposed to manage the policy, should have experience in the area. For example, my counterpart in the Congressional Relations Bureau had been somebody who had managed to get into the Foreign Service through a political appointment and managed to slip into the service somehow. I think he was still untenured but I think he slipped in. He had one overseas assignment, which was in Spain, and he knew nothing about Africa. His main qualification was he had worked as an aide to a Republican Congressman before he got his political appointment. He was a nice enough guy actually but he was totally out of his league. But he kept insisting that he was being pressed by his assistant secretary that "you take control of Congressional Relations for Africa." Crocker didn't want to deal at all with H, the Congressional Relations Bureau, so I was being told to keep them out of it. Here you got this really severe tension which continued all year. I felt kind of guilty a little bit about this. Hal was his name I can't remember his last name. I tried to get Hal into it as much as I could. He knew the House; I didn't know the House. I knew the Senate. At one point proposed we just kind of split it that way although that was probably a bad idea because Crocker wouldn't have liked that and luckily his bureau turned that down. They would not compromise at all and so basically for the entire year we made end runs around it. We kind of let them do some routine stuff which they usually messed up too and all the substantive stuff came to me.

Q: This is a unique job available but what did you do actually?

MAYBARDUK: Well the nice thing about the situation was because I had served in the Pearson Program on the Hill for a year and because I had worked on African issues on the Hill I knew most of the foreign affairs advisors to the other Senators, especially in the Foreign Relations Committee. So I already had a good relationship with them. We worked on this bill to create a special fund for Africa to get it passed otherwise declining aid package. Actually we didn't pass it that year but it was passed the next year. I don't know I had to sat down with the staffer from Senator Kennedy's office, Kasten's who's a conservative Republican, Kassebaum, and Byrd, oh and Simons. It was a diverse collection of Senators, a very political…we sat down and we had written the bill, which was passed the next year, so I had credibility.

The other thing was this was a very basic principal like when somebody called me I'd get back to them the same day, which the Congressional Relations bureau almost never did. A key concern some of the Congressional staffers particularly Byrd who was the majority leader and Simon, I think it was Simon, who head of the African subcommittee in the Senate was following what was going on in Namibian negotiations and what was going on in Angola. They felt that the Africa Bureau just hadn't talked to them, was hostile and so there was hostility in return. So I managed to get them my regular briefings from the bureau on what was going on in those areas and that made an enormous difference. Although they kept talking about sanctions in Namibia, as long as they were getting their briefings they were not pushing it, which made Crocker very happy, made them very happy, and basically vastly improved relations.

We continued to push, but a lot of what was going on mechanically are Congressional staffers having questions or they want a briefing on something. They call the H bureau, until they learned about me and started calling me directly, and asked for briefings and you had two troubles. One was there is a real fear among FSOs to talk to Congress. It's probably less now than it used to be but it goes back to the McCarthy period, way back. So State Department people could be very guarded when they talk to Congressional staffers, very guarded but what I learned on the Hill was the one thing you learn very quickly is that a good staffer on the Hill keeps confidentiality, doesn't burn his backers, keeps his word. So, somebody on Helms staff could actually work with some liberal Senators and got things done because you have that understanding. If you don't keep your word, if you burn somebody, nobody is going to work with you again. So there is a great sense of trust there and that I don't think was understood in the State Department level and on the Hill aides usually thought State Department FSOs as arrogant, to a great extent it was caution. Because I served on the Hill because I was now working in the African bureau I could break that down.

Q: You also didn't have to get all this clearance stuff because collecting clearances stops everything.

MAYBARDUK: No, no, I could get answers back to them in the same day. I would regularly two or three times a week I would walk through every office in the bureau and ask what was going on, was there anything that might be coming up that I need to know about, and so on. So actually I could often answer the questions directly without any further ado when we got a call, or I could get an answer back quickly. When the questions went to my counterpart in H I mean it took forever to get an answer back. Very quickly the chief staffers who weren't interested in Africa learned where they need to go and that was to me. That too included briefings and coming up to talk to them on the Hill. I'd actually forgotten a lot of issues we had to deal with that year.

Q: Let's talk about Mozambique. What was the situation when you arrived and what was happening?

MAYBARDUK: First of all we had RENAMO in Mozambique. RENAMO was almost genocidal. It was a really nasty movement. It was a sort of predecessor to things like what happened in Rwanda and elsewhere; I mean, this was sponsored by the South Africans. The president of Mozambique had been a Marxist for years, an independence leader, (Joaquim Alberto) Chissano. He was seeing this hadn't worked and was beginning to do economic reform, political liberalization wasn't going very fast, but there was some political liberalization. We were getting the right votes in the General Assembly from them all of a sudden and we were giving them aid and we wanted to give them more aid. Jesse Helms said this is a Marxist government we can't give them aid and Dan Burton was apoplectic about this. Doran, who was the Congressman from California was just wild and Burton was a demigod, he was probably corrupt, it's just my view.

Q: Was there a feeling that South African money was getting in some parts of Congress?

MAYBARDUK: I can't say that, I don't have any knowledge of that. I've had some feelings with people close to Burton since then suggest to me that he can be bought but I don't have any proof. If I had any proof I would have gone to somebody.

I found other people; I've since worked with people in Washington who feel the same way. But in any event he could be just so abusive in hearings, just terribly abusive in hearings and they were totally opposed to aid to Mozambique. Nevertheless, we got aid to Mozambique through the House. The Democrats were in control, Volpe from Wisconsin who disliked Crocker but agreed on this issue, supported it and we got it through the House. This was near the end of my tenure when it finally came up and we got it through committee in the Senate, appropriations, it was foreign affairs aid authorization bill passed I don't think it's still have been passed. It's been thirty years since it was ….the aid authorization bill had been passed; everything was done in an appropriations bill. But Helms was going to fight it. It came right up to the final debate on the foreign aid appropriations bill the night of. By this time relations with our bureau and the Congressional Relations bureau were very extremely hostile at the senior level between the two assistant secretaries. Although I had tried to work with Hal who was a nice enough guy, although he was not very competent it affected our relationship as well.

Nevertheless they were clear that in this bill they did not want any of the regional bureau people anywhere near Congress that night and they would take care of our issues. We brought Hal in and we briefed him on it and that this was very important that we get the aid to Mozambique and so I didn't go to Hill that night, I stayed home. When you work on the Hill you spend lots of hours there late at night. I don't remember the details but some "compromise" was worked over a lot of different issues that night. Hal did not go to the Hill that night, he stayed home and the Congressional Relations bureau gave away our position on Mozambique. Crocker was livid, deservedly so and so was I. I was not blamed for it, but you know my job became to get that money back.

Now at this point Congressional Relations had made their deal they didn't want to break their deal and the way to get it back was through the conference committee where you solve the differences between the House and the Senate. This became weeks of kind of

lobbying these are the kind of alliances you make in Hell. Remember you have the Black Caucus, the Black Caucus was totally opposed to Crocker most of the time and now we were working with them. I was working with Representative Gray's office; I think it was some of the other Black Caucus people were working with Dymally, that's an interesting story that I will come back to. I remember Randall Robinson was the head of Tran-Africa one of the really biggest critics of the administration and really strong on sanctions but I was working with his wife who worked if not with Gray then with one of the other senior Black ones, to get the aid for Mozambique. The two of them were on the appropriations subcommittee, which was going to be on the conference committee, they were going to try and resolve the issue. So we met sometimes daily and finally they get to the conference committee, again this was at midnight going on and I am on the Hill, so was Hal, so was Mark Johnson, a very good man who had become senior FSO in Congressional Relations on the Senate side. They are talking to their people and we are talking to our people and here we are this is the administration basically fighting against itself and using Congress to resolve issues. We could see each other down the hall corridor and we won. I was hugging and kissing Randal Robinson's wife and God knows whom else in celebration. You could just see the people down at the other end just steaming, just steaming.

Crocker's strength was he could protect us through that kind of thing. I mean this was totally, I mean this was totally out of bounds to have this kind of thing going on and yet Crocker got away with it and was delighted that I was doing it.

Q: Well weren't you concerned that Jesse Helms staff did not take many prisoners. I mean they at least had the reputation of being a very nasty crew and long memories so that…

MAYBARDUK: Bill Christianson was on his staff at that time.

Q: Did you have or were you concerned that you that congressmen would take their revenge in due course, putting down markers against you?

MAYBARDUK: I guess I was worried more about the short-term consequences than the long term but I mean I knew we were in a dangerous position. I know I was very much in danger. What made it easier was that I told Croker what we were doing. I mean I really did believe I wasn't sure I agreed with Crocker on sanctions on South Africa but I had been to South Africa a couple times in my previous job as a senior economist with the bureau and I saw Crocker's point. So I understood it because I could see how the impasse of the sanction crisis, financial crisis had changed things and I could see despite the fact that whites and blacks are supposed to live in different areas, in fact you had housing arrangement that there was already mixed housing going on in parts of Johannesburg. Things were breaking down, the whole system was beginning to break down and you could see it, physically on the ground. This was before sanctions arrived. So I could understand Crocker's point of view, but on things like Mozambique and trying to create the economic reform in Africa and the whole thing I believe in this wholeheartedly and

RENAMO was just like the guys who just killed all those Hutu's in Rwanda. I mean this was a really, it wasn't ethnically based but it was a really nasty, nasty, nasty…

Q: Were we at that time doing something to stop the support for RENAMO?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, we were doing our best. Bob Grossoni who was known for his reporting on human rights violations around the world whom I had met earlier in Uganda, I think I have mentioned the issue with Elliott Abrams, the bureau commissioned him to go to Mozambique to do a report. He did a devastating report on what was happening. Interesting this is a guy who worked for Elliott Abrams at one point. He was right wing but it was fascinating in Africa how the ideological divide changed rather rapidly. The fact is every Republican administration has done more for Africa than any Democratic administration even now, it's just a funny set of world.

Yeah I was worried but the next day after this I was having lunch with a lobbyist from the Heritage Foundation, a super conservative organization. We were discussing strategy to make sure that no additional sanctions were enforced. This is kind of the way things work on the Hill to some extent. Now, I did not know at the time that what I was probably doing and working with lobbyists outside of Congress I was breaking the law in all sorts of ways and government officials weren't supposed to lobby Congress. You were supposed to provide information. Now when you provide information you do lobby, I mean, but you know but I was ahead of the curve on that and I understand now you aren't ever supposed to go to non-governmental lobbying organizations and basically work with them. But I was foolish; I never had a briefing on the law because I hadn't gone to the congressional relations class. Would I have done things differently if I had known what the law was? I don't know, I might not have actually but we were playing rough and tumble politics, I mean I think I told you once before I understood how the guys that got in trouble in Nicaragua, a colonel, I could understand how he got himself in that position. This was when the Cold War was still on and the issues seemed great and Congress and the Executive were in constant battle and it's very easy to see how people go over the line and I'm sure I did at that point although I didn't fully know it that I was doing anything illegal until later.

I didn't remember what I talked about exactly with the Heritage person. I may have been exchanging information for all I know I can't remember any more. But it was just…other things too. I've just lost track, autumn was a very busy year. One thing was the problem of our ambassadors; they were waiting months to get approved and the main problem was getting hearings. Congress was very slow to grant the hearings.

Q: Wasn't this deliberate on Jesse Helms' part, trying to…

MAYBARDUK: No, this was mostly the Democrats were in power and most of these were not Jesse Helms block. Most of these appointees were career people, in fact. A lot of the problem is that all ambassadorial confirmations were handled by one or two people in the Congressional Relations Bureau and they just didn't show any urgency to get it done. I had, of course, developed good relations on the Hill. So again we went around the

Congressional Relations Bureau and I went in and I talked to Nancy Stetson who worked with Simon and Janet somebody who worked for Byrd and I said, "Can we speed this up?" They figured they owed me favors, you know, and they speeded it up, they moved it ahead. I came back and let all these ambassadors know that when their hearings were going to be in a month or two. About two weeks before the hearings, a month after I'd told the ambassadors, Hal comes down excitedly and says call all the ambassadors to tell them that the Congressional Relations Bureau had gotten them their hearings. It was just how bad off, they didn't even know what was happening up there much less doing any lobbying although they tried to take the credit for it. We got all I mean there were seven ambassadors got out to post at least a month or two earlier than they were because what we did.

Q: What was the problem with Congressional Relations? Was it that the Bureau wasn't tied to the issues, or had no sense of urgency?

MAYBARDUK. Not all of them were political appointees, who had experience on the Hill and should have done well. But to be effective in congressional relations, you have to know both Congress and the organization you represent. Some, like Mark Johnson, did very well. But others didn't know the State Department and didn't know the issues. So they could not answer the question right off, they had to go back to the Department and find someone to brief them. That took time, they also had to go through a staff meeting in the morning and another in the afternoon. They often got pulled away to do the priority of whatever the Secretary wanted. They had to clear everything with their bosses, it just was very bureaucratic and slowed them down and they didn't have the expertise.

Now a State Department person up there who had never served in Congress, and there were some of those, would have an equally difficult problem the other way. We had both problems so this was a continuing problem I mean forever with Congressional Relations and it doesn't work. The whole system is fundamentally flawed. What you need to have up there…you need to be grabbing those people who have been up there on Congressional fellowships or Pearson Fellowships and they need to come back to the bureau, they need to be sponsored by the bureau when you go to the Hill in the first place so they have the confidence of the bureau. They need to come back to the bureau and then so you don't get the kind of problem we had, we also lobbied on the whole aid package and we needed more money than the other bureaus needed. We lobbied to get what we did but we lobbied to get more money than the State Department had allocated to us for the next year on foreign aid. You can't have the bureaus doing that, I mean it makes chaos. But we didn't have the kind of coordination so it was really handy to have these Congressional Relations people based in the bureau and the full support of the bureau but also working with Congressional Relations, which to me they didn't really push for centralization as well. My solution has always been is let the bureau do the efficiency reports on their Congressional Relations representative but let the Congressional Relations bureau do the review statement. Some such things say you make the Congressional Relations person a panel with a vote; it's a tricky business but you have to be accountable to vote otherwise you get this situation that I was in, and actually

admittedly enjoyed playing, but it was definitely one in which you were basically fighting among you, among yourselves…

Q: This is one year tour, so what happens in the summer of 1988?

MAYBARDUK: It was just one year but I have at least one more story to tell.

We were the worst case, in the sense of the conflict, but the dissatisfaction was that the Congressional Relations bureau was wide spread. At some point a memo goes to the secretary from H basically asking them to instruct the bureaus, that the bureaus relations representatives are just simply to coordinate between H and the bureau, not between the regional bureaus and Congress and should not go to the Hill. It was to be a directive from the secretary downward. Of course, this went up without anybody knowing about it but somebody found out and I don't know how the hell he found out. So I wrote a memo from our Assistant Secretary to the Secretary pointing out why this wouldn't work and I started calling my colleagues in the other bureaus. Within one day I got that memo cleared I think by about eight or nine bureaus or signed on to by eight or nine bureaus and anyone who's worked in the Department knows to get nine assistant secretaries or however many I got to sign on to anything is normally a six month project. We got that signed and up to the Secretary in one day, which is how strongly, everybody felt and we killed the idea. I was really proud of that. I came home very proud of that until I kind of realized you know you start viewing your accomplishments by getting a piece of paper signed by a lot of people in one day; it was time to get out of it. I remember thinking about that very clearly. First being very proud and then realizing, oh my God, what am I thinking.

Q: I was a consular officer by profession and I remember coming back to Washington and listening to one of my colleagues saying, "Well I got this cleared up through the assistant secretary." I thought, "Yeah, everyday I'm issuing a visa or getting somebody out of jail." In other words, paper movement is important and you can't denigrate it; it is advancing the process.

MAYBARDUK: I know, I know and that's why I have trouble walking back in the State Department building any more after all these years. It's just too painful after…at times you enjoy it. Sometimes you thoroughly get into it but …

Q: Moving right along, 1988 whither?

MAYBARDUK: Well, the other thing that was interesting was kind of a personal note. I had finally gotten my own personal computer; nobody in this room will understand what it was like to get the first computer back then. It was on the leading edge, it was the first real successful clone in the IBM at about one-third the cost. My kids were young and I'm a storyteller, I mean my kids liked to be told stories and I do a pretty good job of both writing children's stories and telling children's stories. I decided to…and I could never type and my handwriting was atrocious so getting a home computer was a liberating experience, absolutely liberating in terms of writing. So I was when you are writing

children's stories you have a grand time of it in my spare time which wasn't much but every Friday in the Africa Bureau we sent up a memo to the Secretary, the whole bureau did, what were you doing. This was kind of an uncleared, every desk officer could say his own piece, uncleared, and give the Secretary a short summary of what was going on in their country or region or whatever.

So I started writing something called The Week In Congress, which was what's going on. I was going from early in the morning until late in the evening most days and never in my office except to check in with everybody and see what was happening. Then I was out to get things done. I never had any time to write except Thursday night. So Thursday night after the kids were in bed I would go down in the basement, light the fire and would sit and write this report and I had oodles of fun with it. I mean this was a relatively private document and it was classified and I could be quite frank about it and I would talk about what was going on the Hill. I think I got quite literary and I got quite imaginative and Crocker never did get over his contempt of Congress and so quite frankly it was easy for me to talk about the silly things that were happening on Congress being cynical myself. So I was writing until about 2:00 in the morning, three in the morning, that was before spell checkers or anything else so I'd bring it in the next morning and I'd give it to my office director, David Passage, who was a very good man, to clean it up. Sometimes he'd take some of my most offensive comments out of it. But I really thought I did a very good job for a year becoming a literary writer. Chas Freeman a couple times said that I should have been writing for The New Yorker. Chas is a wonderful writer so that was a nice compliment. It just clicked; this was the year everything was clicking for me. I've been trying to write an Op-Ed on Cuba right now for the last two months for the Washington Post and I'm on my 15th version and I still don't have it right. Sometimes things click and some things don't but this was just clicking so that was one thing that was going on.

A couple other anecdotes, oh interestingly this is my way of solving my conscience with Hal. We did give Hal, every week, what was going on in the bureau, we gave him this document and my thing was always in the back. So he if he wanted to know what I was doing all he had to do was read what I wrote. But obviously he never read what was going on in the bureau, we'd give him the documents but he never got it.

He was their Congressional Relations person for our purpose in the international relations bureau. Anyway a couple other little sort of vignettes. We were having trouble, most of the time the Black Caucus was not interested in Africa; it was very discouraging actually. We'd get past the South African issue you really couldn't get them engaged; you couldn't get them engaged on money issues, you really couldn't get them engaged on anything. I mean the real people interested in Africa in the Senate were Kassebaum, and Kasten and Kennedy and Simon, Danforth to some extent and in the House the only people interested were Volpe and these two right-wing idiots on the other side. You just couldn't get the Black Caucus involved, it was really annoying but we were trying to get their helpers something, other than Mozambique, I don't remember what it was, it may have been something to do with Angola and oil because again here we were supporting Savimbi in Angola which was really pushed on Crocker by the Senate. It wasn't Crocker's idea to

support UNITA in Angola; it was Congress's idea pushed on them by the Senate. I don't think we opposed it but it wasn't his idea or his goal. Then at the same time there we were Chevron, originally Gulf, is pouring oil out of Angola and there was this constant thing that I worked on the year everybody put sanctions on oil for Angola or something, I don't remember the issue exactly. But in any event at some point we needed helped and we went to (Mervyn) Dymally. Dymally at this point was a representative in the House.

Q: From what state do you remember?

MAYBARDUK: California and I think I mentioned him back when I first talked about my first post. Dymally was the Lieutenant Governor of California [Ed: elected 1974], had come out to Papua New Guinea when I had been there about a week or two and I had to escort him around Port Moresby. It was very funny because you went up to all these tourist spots and he and his wife would never get out of the car; but they did work. He met with all the people in the business delegation and they weren't particularly out there to gad about and see a lot of things although we made sure they did. Dymally went back home and got some criticism in the press for taking a junket to Papua New Guinea. (laughter) Well I figure some people did, I mean it was a fantastic place to go visit. Mary Olmstead, the ambassador, wrote a letter to one of the newspapers in California, pointing out the things that he had done and that this was definitely not a junket. When Bell (?) went in to see Dymally and I think they went in with Morris Stacy who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for, maybe it was Chet Crocker himself, and I just mentioned to him where we had met. I didn't mention anything else just where we had met, he said, "You know I've always been extremely grateful on the help you gave us afterward, extremely grateful," and whatever issue we were asking his help on he gave us a lot of help, a lot of help. Now this is how something I did in 1976 comes back in 1987 ten years later in a good way. It was just kind of a good thing.

The other thing I wanted to mention was how bad things can get. We had the problem with the right in the House but we had this problem with Volpe. Volpe put a hold on all hearings on South Africa and demanded that Crocker come up and they would leave Crocker sitting for two hours in the meeting room while he did something else. It was really a very…and Volpe's staff was equally nasty. The arrogance of power that was going on in the House at that time, Democrats had been in control forever as I saw it, I didn't normally work much with the House, was just ridiculous. I mean there are a few members of the House who didn't like Volpe too. But that kind of marriage reflected in every way. When the Republicans finally won the house it was more of the same even if it was for a short period. That arrogance was everywhere and that was a really difficult place to deal with.

Anyway I think those were the major things I can remember about that period. That was a good period.

Q: Whither?

MAYBARDUK: Whither? Well when I had made the deal to go over to Congressional Relations Bureau I had mentioned that the previous year I had hoped to get a DCMship, a deputy chief of mission job at an embassy. I was led to believe I would get help after a year and I did, they got me a DCMship. Fortunately, or unfortunately, I was now an FSO-2 which is the equivalent of Lieutenant Colonel actually. There were only a few FSO-2 jobs in an embassy around the world that are open to FSO-2s mostly in Africa, they are mostly small posts and this is very competitive. This is for the sort of people who look like they may be on their way out; it's a free way to move up. There were six of them that year open in Africa. Five of them, which is probably figuring nine in the world and only six were open. Unfortunately, five of them were all French speaking and the ambassadors were not fluent in French and they all wanted a DCM who was. So I got the other, which was Sierra Leone.

Q: You were in Sierra Leone form when to when?

MAYBARDUK: I got there in 1988 in the fall I think and stayed until 1991, for three years.

Q: What was the situation there at the time?

MAYBARDUK: Let me tell you a little personal story first, you said you wanted what life was like in the Foreign Service. Our younger son was just finishing up kindergarten, this was the beginning of summer, and his teacher suggested that he was a little immature and maybe we should hold him back for a year. Well holding him back kind of bothered us a little bit when his very bright brother was moving ahead and we wondered how this would work out. So we decided all right we would investigate this and got him tested. We got some educational testing done on him. The results didn't come back until about a week before we were ready to leave. It came back that he had a learning disability, a bit of dyslexia but not the normal kind, not the kind you think backwards and that he might need a lot of help and it was going to be tough for him learning to read. We learned this about a week before heading off into one of the least developed countries in the world. This was of immense concern. We delayed our departure a week or two, talked to the experts we could find, got all the materials we could get on how to teach dyslexic children. We didn't want to give up the assignment, I mean this was my chance to really move ahead, so I thought. Eventually we left, worried, concerned and thinking we might have to come back after a year. It really was a small American school there, we didn't know much about it.

So we went off to Sierra Leone with that kind of anxiety in the back of our minds. I've got some other funny stories but probably not worth telling here, funny stories on our trip too, but anyway. Our relations to Sierra Leone were proper, indifferent. Sierra Leone was a former English territory. It had been run by a dictator who had taken one of the more prosperous countries in Africa and destroyed its economy. One that had started start out in the first couple years of independence in a really democratic system that had been destroyed. But it was only four million people, our only economic interest there was a rutile mine, rutile is this titanium dioxide, which makes white paint opaque, and it

actually was the largest rutile mine in the world, most of it comes from Australia. Sierra Rutile was the company and other than that we had no great economic interest. Nobody was really aware of any kind of major connections to the U.S. otherwise and I was going off really to get the management check to my career, no particular issue between the two countries and boy was I wrong.

So I arrived about early fall of 1988. Our ambassador was a political ambassador, an Afro-American female [Ed: Cynthia Perry served as ambassador from July 1986 to August 1989] who had a series of political appointments in the Reagan administration; she was a Republican and came from Texas and had connections in Indiana, so she had connections to both Bush and to Quail. I had been warned about her before I went out. She had had trouble with the two previous DCMs, I didn't hear about this until later until I had taken the job. But she had trouble with two previous DCMs, a lot of problems with staff, the office director for West Africa had gone out there and came back and told me that she really thought it was the DCM fault, not the ambassador's fault. The desk officer told me they thought, Gary you can handle Cynthia and you are probably just the right personality to handle Cynthia.

OK, I go out realizing this wasn't like roses but not necessarily in any way terribly worried about it either. What I discovered was a post in total disarray, total and complete disarray. It had been inspected two years earlier and the inspectors had said it was one of the worst posts they had ever inspected. I read the inspection report and couldn't see anything had changed. I had never been in an embassy where 95 percent of the embassy's time was spent managing itself. The ambassador was very conscience of her status, wanted to create the perfect ambassadorial estate, residence. It was on a hill, a steep hill, and she wanted a falling water garden so had the embassy build this for her; it leaked. Freetown had very little electricity or all our homes had generators and because of a lack of electricity a lot of the homes did not get running water. So we had a water truck that took water to all the houses and filled the tanks, we also had another truck full of diesel to keep the generators going. Well it was making several trips a day out to her house dropping off water to keep this thing going. Well, some of the families weren't getting enough water every day. The entire embassy's admin section was devoted to the ambassador. I inspected some of the embassy housing we had, some was good I had a decent house, we had an apartment house that about eight individuals could live in and that was in fair shape but we had some of our younger people in these detached houses. One I remember very distinctly the yard was full of rocks and we had cobras there. The yard was full of cobras and they had young kids. There was a bunch of houses like this.

The admin officer had seen me before I left and told me all these horror stories about the ambassador and just for the record he was African-American too so this was not a racial thing. It was only a racial thing to the extent that the ambassador used her Black Republican status as a key to getting her appointments. So I arrived in this mess and the first thing I was told is don't come down too heavy on anybody just sort of take it nice and easy and do what she tells me. I'm a kind of take charge kind of guy but OK she didn't know that so I sort of backed off and I started seeing what's going on. I also see the admin officer who told me these bad things about the ambassador wasn't doing his

job very well. We had a general services officer who had come on the "Mustang" program, which is the program where you get Foreign Service secretaries or staff who converted to FSOs and she was terrible. I mean she was nasty and she was incompetent. The admin officer was the supervisor. The embassy had been doing business…there was no reporting officer in the embassy, that was the DCMs job and I looked and the embassy hadn't done any reporting in ages, the ambassador was doing the reporting. So there we were.

So I slowly tried to work things out. Then we had an inspection coming. Remember I learned earlier that we were one of the worst embassies they had ever inspected and now we have an inspection coming and I'd taken the DCM course and they had told us one of the things to do was to get a property inspection questionnaire and go through it and see how you answer the questions before they get there. Some questions you have to answer others you know they aren't going to ask me. I started going through the list and I mean nothing has been done, I mean none of our inventory controls were in place; this is a country everybody's a kleptomaniac. There are no inventory controls, there is nothing. We'd had a GSO, General Services Officer, who was supposed to do these kinds of things previously. I didn't know had been a retired Army Colonel and he had currently gotten the place in pretty good shape but he was replaced by Naomi and there was a gap and you never want a gap in a place like Sierra Leone because so much of the staff is involved in systematic corruption they are going to take over and records are going to disappear which they did and Naomi knew nothing about computers, she didn't know anything about record-keeping she just…her previous job was managing the car pool in Mexico City and I found out she was a disaster there.

So I mean so the records weren't in shape, I mean nothing was in place, no reporting plans nothing. Well, the ambassador wasn't about to have a bad report on her embassy. So all of a sudden we're in this one-month mode of getting everything in shape. So we finally established inventory records, but there was no system to it. I mean you just knew it was going to fall apart the minute after the inspectors left, it was a Potemkin type situation that had been created. We tried to do a bunch of other things. I, in the meantime, was trying to move people out to better housing. I figured that was one of the first things we had to do, first it was safety issues and the second was just basic concern, morale.

Another thing was our wages of our employees. The admin officer who was a personnel officer had apparently mis-done the wage surveys. You get to do a wage survey at a post to find out what other firms or embassies are paying so you can establish a comparable wage rate for embassy employees. They had been rejected by Washington several months before I got there because it was improperly done and no attempt had been made to do another one. So embassy wages hadn't been adjusted in a couple years and inflation was running at like one hundred percent at the time. So most of our employees were making less than fifteen dollars a month. Soon after I arrived, there was a funeral for one of the employees, I was beginning to learn what poverty was really like. In Sierra Leone most people rent a coffin for this kind of ceremony. You take the deceased to the burial ground and the coffin is retreated in various sheets or something and that is the funeral. I found out he died because he couldn't buy the medicine. I'm still trying to piece all of it

together, I hadn't pieced it all together yet but I'm beginning to see all this. This was also true for most Sierra Leoneans in general but these are American embassy employees. There was no help for them. You know we used to do those things, we used to have pensions and health plans and everything for our employees but sometime in the 1970s we got rid of all of that and those people who had a pension we often gave them a single cash buy out which most of them took and then, of course, they had no pensions or anything like that when they retired twenty years later. I mean the way we treated our Foreign Service nationals was just atrocious. Life can be atrocious we abolished it everywhere because at some time you get social security systems nobody had social security. I'd love to know the history of why we did that but I'd probably shoot them if I did.

Anyway we had the inspection and the inspectors saw through most of it, not all of it. They suspected the ambassador of corruption but they weren't allowed to pursue it in Washington. I learned this much later and I think there probably was a real corruption there. She helped create the American school, which was good. She and her husband were both educators. She made her husband head of the American school which created a nepotism issue. There were some bad payments and so on so there was a question about all this, but basically when the inspectors went back to Washington, I learned this much later, they were told leave it alone. But she was also making improvements to her residence that was not authorized. One thing is repairs, but improvements to an ambassadorial residence require Washington's approval, a lot of improvements were being done under a category of repairs. Remember the DCM is the person in the embassy who is responsible for controls, corruption and malfeasance and making sure that everything is hunky-dory. Anyway the inspection takes place, the report comes out and they said, "Well you know something to the effect that the DCM is probably the remaining reporting officer because the ambassador likes to manage her own embassy and things…" they didn't blame me for anything, but left me uncomfortable. They read the ambassador right.

Somewhere in all of this we get our first crisis with AID. We had one AID person in the country.

Q: OK, today is the 29th of February, the once every four years day, 2008. Gary, we've just started talking about your tour in Sierra Leone, fall 1988 to 1991. The politically appointed ambassador was not one of your favorite people.

MAYBARDUK: Unfortunately, in fact at the end of the first year she wrote an efficiency report on me that was the only negative one that I've ever had. It wasn't substantiated, it was completely unfair and I would later grieve it and it would later be tossed out completely.

Q: I think actually I've interviewed her at one point down in Texas [Ed: Ambassador Perry's oral history is posted on the ADST website, adst.org].

MAYBARDUK: I mean she had previously sent one DCM home before I got there, sent home a general services officer, sent home an admin officer, sent home a Peace Corp director. I didn't recognize it until the end it was interesting that they were all men, didn't matter if they were black or white, they were all men. We had a general services officer when I was there who I would have sent home he was so incompetent. I think that's in fact what got me in the end in trouble with the ambassador, who was totally incompetent. When I recommended that maybe we needed to get rid of the GSO - and I felt safe doing this as she had gotten rid of everybody else - she reacted very, very strongly. Well, the GSO was a woman. The ambassador once asked me did I think this woman was Black or White and frankly I couldn't care; I hadn't even thought about the question. But she did. The problem with this general services officer was complete incompetence and not even pleasant incompetence but nasty incompetent. The ambassador at one point, which I give her good credit actually spent about a week trying to take her under her the wing and help her out and got basically rejected continuously. I mean I'd never seen an ambassador take someone under the wing like that, so intensely and I admired her for it at the time but I didn't put two and two together until the very end.

But anyway I ended up as Chargé when she left, I may be skipping some things but anyway [Ed: Ambassador Perry departed post August 30, 1989, and career Ambassador Johnny Young presented his credentials on November 29, 1989].

Q: Were there any other problems at the embassy during Ambassador Perry's time that we haven't mentioned?

MAYBARDUK: We've covered housing, water, cobras, and pay issues. So I mean it was just all of these things you had to try and clean up on. We had a small crisis at AID; it wasn't small. My idea is that the AID office should have dealt with it, but the problem was we shipped in PL-480 rice. These were a combination of a farm program but an AID program, right. We shipped the rice over, the government basically got it for free or they got it for fifty years at one percent interest, I don't remember the details. They got to resell the rice and they were supposed to use the proceeds from the sale of the rice for development purposes in local currency and they could use it for developmental purposes. When the rice would arrive, it basically went to a company that was owned by the nephew of the president. Basically he did get a good price on it from the government and there was such a shortage of rice in the country that he could mark it up a pretty high price. The reports just kept coming in about this. The PL-480 program had been going on for so long and the country itself had such a total problem with corruption that there was no credibility in any institution in the country. So we were regularly getting reports of rice being sold to Guinea or Liberia, to Burkina Faso. Every time a truck went upcountry with rice it was being taken out of the country and we got a report that it was illegal. Well, it wasn't all illegal. A lot of it was going up country and that's where it needed to go. But a combination of all those reports in a system that's just kind of fell apart, a badly designed system, caused us perpetual problems. I actually forget now the crisis that occurred at that time. There was something going on and she and the AID officer kind of worked on it. I remember now that I didn't think the system would work, but in any event I wasn't involved and maybe that's why my senior memory is failing me in this case.

During this period AID packed out and left. AID had a desire to get out of the small countries. They thought they were in too many countries so they basically decided to pull out of these small countries. The AID program was dropping down to half million-dollar grants to a program for micro loans to an organization run by the Reverend Sullivan who is famous also for the Sullivan principles and apartheid in South Africa. I think it was a half million grant and the PL-480 program. When they took out the AID officer that meant that the embassy had to run it. The ambassador was so angry about it that she basically told me to just ignore the AID program. She had nobody else to follow it; it was going to be run from Monrovia, just ignore it. Well we had just gone through one crisis and when I came to the country I'd been, as I previously discussed, I had been right there in the forefront of the whole AID to Africa issue and economic adjustment. So the thing is I have to admit I had a sort of my own agenda.

So very early I had managed to arrange to give a speech to the chamber of commerce, which the finance minister showed up to. It was a very small country and even though we had relatively small aid they were hardly getting any from anybody else either, which just sort of magnified our presence. So I think even the finance minister showed up for this, and the press, and a lot of other people. I basically discussed what were the criteria for giving aid around the world. I never mentioned Sierra Leone's programs, but I talked about IMF programs and World Bank programs and the need for economic conditionality and what this special session of the UN had done on the serious economic crisis in Africa had basically endorsed the need for economic reform. I basically drove home the message that if countries don't take this they cannot get on the program they cannot expect assistance, economic assistance from anybody.

Anyway the issue came up, as it often did, that in addition to our five or ten million dollar normal program, all of a sudden not all the rice had been allocated for the year, and we had the opportunity to give another $5 million worth of rice. Oh, and we also had the possibility of giving another $5 million in free rice, I forgot about that point. Let me go back a bit. My sequencing may be wrong here but in any evident PL-480 had both this AID kind of program but it also had a humanitarian side where it gave the rice away. So two things had happened, one is that we became eligible to give another $5 million under the normal program and $5 million under the humanitarian program.

At this time, there was an informal House caucus on hunger lead by Representative Tony Hall. He came out to look at the situation. He had been reading all the reports, mostly which came out from the CIA who will report anything that is told them. They don't have to say it's right or wrong; they simply say the source is reliable and this is the information. There was concern about management of the program or misallocation or misuse of the AID money. Apparently Tony's staff had read all these reports so he came out very much interested in helping Sierra Leone but he didn't want any corruption in the program. It sounded like he wanted to give it away to the poor, everybody was poor in Sierra Leone, but he wanted to give it away and instead of the government he wanted to use the local voluntary organizations. Now we had very few non-governmental

organizations in Sierra Leone, we really just had two; we had CARE and we had Catholic Relief Services.

When this first came up the priest who runs Catholic Relief Services had told us he didn't want anything to do with it, as did CARE. When Tony Hall came the priest changed his mind and he said, "Yes," he told Tony Hall. The ambassador I don't know where she was in all of this, but I argued that the worst thing you could do is give rice away free in the country because everybody would then resell it and it would just cause you enormous grief. He did not hear it, he would absolutely not hear…he thought the previous program was so bad. But at a meeting, I think it was at the ambassador's residence, this priest from CRS, Catholic Relief Services, said, "Oh, yes, we can distribute it," completely leaving egg on our face at the embassy, particularly myself, but I think the ambassador and I were in agreement on this. I mean I couldn't say anything, I would never say anything the ambassador wasn't in agreement with because I was a very loyal DCM, although it wasn't returned. So we had egg on our face and the program went ahead with Catholic Relief Services.

Well as soon as it got approved the first thing that happened is this priest comes into my office and says, "What do I do now?" He said, "This is going to be a disaster." But anyway we get the $5 million in rice, we gave it to, CARE would never touch it, we gave it to Catholic Relief Services to distribute. Immediately the report came back everybody was selling it. Catholic Relief Services' staff was selling it; I guess they were 50-kilo bags of rice, 110 pounds. Sure enough it turned out that they were. CRS, who had some of these employees for 20 years, was going to fire their the entire staff over it. It was really just too much of a temptation; I mean these bags were worth $15-30 and they probably weren't making more than $30 a month, maybe only $15 and you just couldn't put that kind of temptation in front of these very poor people in a society where corruption is ramped in which it isn't that these are bad people, these are people who are simply trying to feed their family, and typically in Sierra Leone their extended family.

Then it came back and I made sure that if we were going to do it this way, I was still fighting the embassy wages issue which by the time I got there were under $15 a month. Remember my story that right after I got there we had a funeral for one of the embassy employees who had died from lack of medicine. He was buried in a rented coffin. You actually buried them in a sheet and then give the coffin back for the next funeral. I was so moved by that I made sure that if we were going to give free food throughout the country then our employees had reached a stage that they should get a bag or two each as well. Well that got back to Washington and became a question of had I violated my fiduciary responsibility of oversight and offered special treatment. They may have backed off in Washington because I had sent so many cables back at that point saying we've got to do something about this wage situation that had a pretty good track record that our people were just as desperate as everybody else in the country. So they backed off. But we ended up destroying Catholic Relief Services and we didn't hear anything more from Tony Hall after that.

So in the meantime we're also working on the next $5 million trounce of rice that we would go through the normal procedures of sale and so on. The ambassador at that point was trying to get her next ambassadorship and was totally disengaged at this time. So I went in and I talked to the finance minister; I think I talked to the permanent secretary at foreign affairs. I don't know who else I talked to and basically I was on my own at this point to be honest. I basically said the embassy cannot approve this, we cannot go ahead with this, under the current situation, it just isn't working. I mean you can bring the rice in and you can sell it but you can't sell it at a discount you have to sell it at the market price to whatever company you get to distribute it. You can make a normal profit but they can't get the excessive profit. I also said the whole system is broken down. The government basically controls the importation of rice and it originally got it twenty years earlier because then they had money and it was a way of getting cheap, subsidized rice to the people of the capital. Well they could no long subsidize now; they had no money to do it. When I arrived in September during the "hunger" season, which is actually the rainy season. The rice crop is not in, people have consumed their rice and people are really hungry. I very quickly found out that the guards at the house were hungry. We had to feed the guards dinner every night and ended up giving them a bag of rice once a month just to feed their families, because they were making under $15 a month. I did it for my driver, I did it for my household staff, and everybody got a bag of rice a month. But you could see the hunger and we got up and visited a Peace Corps village. Actually I got to swear in a whole new class of Peace Corps. Anyway, one of the volunteers there started telling me about infanticide, the killing of infants as a type of family planning. It happens all the time because people can't support their families so they kill or at least when one of the children gets sick, you let the child die, you don't feed them. We later had a case ourselves of that.

But the country had foreign exchange; it had diamonds. Most of the diamonds were smuggled out and a lot of that money came back as you had to pay the miners who had to mine them. So I basically argued and said, "Look you are going to have to allow the private importation of rice and you are going to stop asking questions as to where they get the money from," because that was the only foreign exchange that they could have the diamonds. They agreed to it. I was surprised but they agreed to it. It was about a year after I arrived and the ambassador had been gone by that point, when that PL-480 rice arrived. We went down to greet the ship; we always go down to greet the ships and get to go on American ships that had rice and had great ice cream. There were six rice ships in port only one was ours. The price of rice was the same as the year before in the market even though all the other prices in the country went up 100 percent which was a measure of how scarce it had been and how rapidly easy the problem was to solve because once you allowed private imports and you allow and didn't ask where the money came from there was enough money around to import this rice. It was one of my most satisfying accomplishments in my career because a lot of people probably saved a lot of lives.

Q: Well tell me Sierra Leone was formally a British dependency, wasn't it? What were the Brits doing?

MAYBARDUK: The Brits were washing their hands of the place. They had a small high commission because it was part of the Commonwealth, they had a very small aid program, most of the money that the Europeans gave was through the European Union, the European Commission. But the country had failed to perform in any way for so long, this was a country at independence, it had televisions, it had radio, it had the best university in Africa. In fact, most professors of other African universities were trained in Sierra Leone at the time and for 1978 did fairly well and then just complete mismanagement had driven it to it now ranked second to the bottom of skill development in the UN survey. Niger was one step below them.

It had been so badly mismanaged. It wasn't terribly violent, that wasn't the problem. It had become such a corrupt government and it had fallen on such bad times. It had happened all throughout Africa, it was just sort of the archetype. But it wasn't strategically important, at least we didn't think it was strategically important. So it was easy to ignore and with AID's policy it's only starting to give money to countries that were performing and getting out of the smaller non-performing countries. If they were in arrears to the IMF then the IMF couldn't support them and if the figures of reason the IMF. The World Bank wouldn't come in. So there was no money coming in, there was no foreign aid money a small European Commission program, which was technical assistance mostly. The Italians were building a dam in the middle of nowhere which was the typical Italian aid program that was really designed to provide assistance to their construction companies. Whoever was in power was awarded the construction companies who were their patrons, which is typical of Italian aid programs everywhere. They are building a very big dam and it actually still is not finished, I'm told. So, you know there is a bit of leverage with that aid because there was so little else going around.

Q: I find it hard to believe that the European Union, say Britain and other countries couldn't see that there was this food shortage and weren't responding to this. Were they saying let the Americans do it?

MAYBARDUK: This was not kind of a natural disaster kind of thing that sort of took place after a famine or a drought or something like this. This was kind of a chronic situation in which for about three months of the year people got very hungry, most survived, but if you were sick, or you were weak, or you were a small child and weren't favored by the family or so on, you died. Two years later, I'll tell the story now because it fits and then I'll go back. Two years later we had a steward, a kind of a houseboy, we called them stewards in this area, Mr. Kumar, and my wife was talking to Mr. Kumar one day and asking how his children are. He mentioned that one of his children is very, very sick and he was going to die. My wife wasn't going to take that. She said, "Have you been to a doctor?" He said, "No, no, no." So my wife gets in our Toyota Land Cruiser and puts Mr. Kumar in the car and drives up some big, long, tall hill with no road; climbs the muddy hill, finds the child and says, "OK I'll take him to the hospital and do the best we can for him." Takes him to the hospital, pays the money herself and he's totally dehydrated and not been properly nourished, but they think they can save him; they just have to re-hydrate and so on. She checks on him once, leaves him for a day but as far as she knows the hospital is taking care of it. She goes back the next day, this is day three,

and she finds the mother has come and taken the child home and the next thing we hear is the child has died. I mean it was clear to us, perhaps it wasn't to others, but it was clear to us that this was a case similar to what we heard about in the Peace Corps village. They have seven or eight children and they decided they couldn't afford to feed them all.

Now mind you we were paying, it doesn't sound like much, it's kind of embarrassing, we were paying about $100 month to our staff each but that was about six or seven times what the standard rate of pay was. I mean by Sierra Leone standards this was very good pay and they were getting a bag of rice that we paid for and so on. I mean by Sierra Leone standards they were fairly well off. You know that was quite a shock to us, that really hurt but that's how bad the situation was. It was one out of seven so you didn't see people die in the streets. It was just a kind of quiet death that went on. But that must have been happening all over the country. By getting this reform in I think you really probably saved a great number of lives. This is one of the things that I was really proud of.

Q: Well what about later on things the political situation really turned sour didn't it?

MAYBARDUK: Well yeah but let's finish up. I guess this was probably the major crisis we had to deal with and then, of course, the accusations of having given rice out. Well anyway we got to the end of the first year or about two-thirds of the way through the first year and I got my efficiency report from the ambassador. One of the things that she absolutely slammed me on was my involvement in the AID program that she didn't want that, you shouldn't be doing. She was upset with my recommendation that we send home this general services officer and just everything. But a lot of what she complained about was just nonsense, it wasn't even true and …

Q: Why didn't she get rid of you?

MAYBARDUK: She tried. I didn't know it, but apparently she had tried. Only after she left did I find a cable from the Africa Bureau saying give Gary a chance. The Africa Bureau knew me well at that point, I had done the Congressional Relations for Crocker and I think I was one of the favorite boys of the Africa Bureau at that point. I think that she sent so many people home that everybody was pretty much fed up. She was also a political appointee in AID before that but she was put in charge of an office. She got rid of all the men and anybody who was white, completely built a completely black office.

Q: Her background again was education was it?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, she had worked for the UN, done a lot of overseas work. The AID director in Monrovia had known her when she had been with the UN in and then with AID in Ethiopia. He said she was a pain in the ass then too, but she was well connected, she was smart enough to join the Republican party, came from Indiana, Quayle was from Indiana but also had strong Texas connections and knew the Bush family.

Q: She retired in Houston. that's where I interviewed her.

MAYBARDUK: Because she went back and was the USAID executive director at the EXIM Development Bank for a while. I don't know if that was before or after Namibia. She was gone all during the Clinton years but came back in the second Bush years. So anyway she left, I had gone home for R&R (rest and relaxation leave) and I knew I was in trouble. I looked up the new Ambassador Johnny Young, briefed him on the country, and did not mention my problems with the ambassador at all. He asked me about it and I was non-committal and he pushed and I gave him a little bit of information, but I let him drag it out of me because I did not want to be seen to be disloyal. To an ambassador you have to be loyal. In fact, I really was, I never said a bad word about her back in Washington at any point. But he seemed to be impressed about how much I knew and decided he would give me a chance. So I went back and knew that I really needed to take charge and get things moving and I think that really annoyed her because she realized that all of a sudden I wasn't leaving and she was. I sort of perhaps exerted more control over the embassy than I'd allowed myself to do before.

She left and I was Chargé I guess for about two months. We got a new admin officer. This is all sounding terrible when I talk about race, but I need to tell it as it is so much a part of the whole thing. The new officer was a Black female and this is when it finally dawned on me what had been happening. The new admin officer arrived a week before the ambassador left and she took this new officer under her wing and just sort of briefed her and spent time with her and did everything she could to build her up. Anybody except the GSO and it finally dawned on me what I was dealing with that I really hadn't understood before. Anyway the new admin officer was very good and she took charge of the GSO, not with much success but at least made sure things got done even if the new GSO didn't get it right. I didn't have to read the GSOs cables anymore you know, emergency order for paper clips from Monrovia, we had these kinds of things going out. We need paperclips, you get them from Monrovia, spend several hundred dollars when you could go down to the store and buy it.

Anyway, the ambassador's residence was in perfect shape, of course, so we spent time on the embassy got it painted, got the new cars ordered. I'd been trying to order for a year and tried to get things in order, that kind of thing. During this period two things happened. One, she had gone back to Washington and apparently really told everybody horrible things about me and the number two on the Nigerian desk also covered Sierra Leone came out for a visit. I could guess; he didn't tell me why he was coming but it took me ten seconds to guess. So when he arrived I had him sort of work his way through the embassy before he came up to my office instead of going down to greet and brief him. I didn't want to talk to him right away I let him just go down to talk to the consular officer, talk to the new admin officer, talk to the public affairs officer and by mid-afternoon he finally made it to my office, I was Chargé at the time. He walked in and he said, "Gary, I have an apology." He said, "You know I was sent out here for this but after talking to the staff it's obviously what was going on here. You have an incredibly enthusiastic staff, very supportive of you, and the stories about the old ambassador are pretty bad." So, you know, helped me with Washington but you never get over an efficiency report, it's sad that you have to take that on your record but at least there was some vindication there.

Anyway the big thing during this time in addition to getting the embassy cleaned up was the visit of the Gullah. Sierra Leone, of course, is the home of many African Americans; it is their ancestral home. There was a slave fort in the port. We had had to arrange the embassy, for a visit of Gullah and also a couple of Black Seminole's to come out to visit the slave fort. I remember the first return of African-Americans to Sierra Leone in any kind of formal way. Actually my wife picked up and did a lot of the organizing for it. She was very helpful. Bunce Island, a team of reporters came out, Sam Ford from WJLA Channel Seven, the ABC affiliate in Washington, D.C., came out and did a documentary on Bunce Island. We tried to get the new ambassador to get there, but we couldn't delay things any longer so the day he arrived, we ended up having a ceremony down at the fort.

Q: Was this a Portuguese fort?

MAYBARDUK: Well the Portuguese discovered it, but it may have been Portuguese for a while. English would have made it a slave trading at that point in the early stages. In fact, there was correspondence between an English businessman and one of the signers of our constitution who were partners in the slave trade from Sierra Leone. The fort is an amazing place, I mean it is such a sad place. You can't help it but it is all over grown with vines and everything else. You can imagine what it was like in its hay day with a nice mansion at every…parties were being help while slaves were being down there in this open walled areas you could see the horror of it, just the horror how it comes through. Now it's almost more evil now that it's kind of run down and the vines are all over the place. But there was a ceremony in honor of all those who had died and passed through there. A libation you kind of take a whiskey and you pour it in the ground and so on. It was a very emotional experience. The embassy had a boat and we had come out by ferry, in fact we hijacked the ferry at the airport for this event. Once it was over, and I appreciated this, once it was over I hopped in the embassy speedboat, went back home, changed my clothes, and took the speedboat across the bay again to meet the new ambassador who was coming into the airport.

Q: This was Johnny Young?

MAYBARDUK: Johnny Young. It turned out Johnny Young was an absolutely wonderful man.

Q: I've had a series of interviews. He's a delightful person. [Ed: See adst.org for Ambassador Young's oral History interview.]

MAYBARDUK: He is. He's one of the most popular people in the Foreign Service and his wife is great too. It turned out he was a Gullah, but he didn't know it, he didn't know the connection of Sierra Leone at the time; he was raised by his grandmother in Philadelphia, dirt poor.

Q: His story is something. He grew in Savannah and was befriended by a Jewish grocer.

MAYBARDUK: I've met him; I've met the grocer.

Q: He became an accountant; the interesting thing and really emotional thing was, when he told me he went to a high school in Philadelphia, which was a technical high school for poor kids to learn a trade and is where he learned accounting. His third appointment to be ambassador to, I think, Slovenia he had the ceremony at his high school to show the people who came out of this school you too can make it; a remarkable person.

MAYBARDUK: And he is so modest. I mean he had no pretensions. This is a guy who is very good; he actually is very good. He isn't somebody who made it to the top because he was good but he is so modest, he is totally amazed. He said this and I totally believe it, he is totally amazed himself at what he accomplished. So anyway I met Johnny and by this time he had studied and had realized that he had this heritage, this Sierra Leone heritage.

Anyway the next day was Thanksgiving so we had the kind of Thanksgiving thing at the Marine House and we had all the missionaries, there were a lot of missionaries in the country. We had the American community, any Americans were in area, it was kind of a potluck thing, we didn't have any money to put these on ourselves but it was a potluck kind of thing and we had the Gullah. Since I was, Johnny had not yet presented his credentials; I was still officially the spokesman of the embassy. So I spoke that day and I was able to point it out that here we were celebrating Thanksgiving at a time when descendants to those slaves were back here. We had the Black Seminole's there, the old Trail of Tears, you could look at the pictures of the paintings of the Seminole Indian warriors, and half the people were Black.

Q: Many of them were essentially runaway slaves who disappeared essentially into the swamps of Florida and…

MAYBARDUK: And adopted by the Seminole's and became part of the Seminole Nation. It was the only American tribe who fought the U.S. Army to a draw. I mean they never surrendered.

Later on, I believe, some of the Black Seminole's became the Buffalo Soldiers and the Buffalo scouts for the U.S. Army. So I was able to tell this history and with the Gullahs there, I was able to introduce the new ambassador and point out that here is a man who had made it to the top of the Foreign Service because of who he was, not from where he had come from. He didn't even know about the connection between Sierra Leone until after he got the ambassadorial appointment. We really had a Gullah as ambassador to Sierra Leone. I was moved and so was everybody else, it was actually a wonderful, wonderful introduction to Johnny's arrival in Sierra Leone.

At that point he took over and he seemed to be very pleased with the way the embassy was going. I wasn't because there were still lots of problems but it was…so we had a short honeymoon. By this time we had gotten the employee wages up, we saw a 700 percent increase in wages. A survey team had come out, they had seen our cables and they finally came out early; we weren't scheduled for another year. Our previous admin

officer had made a mess of the previous survey and it had been rejected and neither he nor the ambassador had done anything since that is how the wages had gotten so low. So we had like a 700 percent increase for the employees. I announced it at an employee meeting with the staff and, of course, everyone was delighted. One driver spoke up and said, "Oh, wonderful, now we don't have to steal gas anymore." I put my head on the podium; I didn't want to know who said that. I didn't want to know who was stealing gas on the side. Anyway, so Johnny came. We still had the GSO who was a constant pain in my existence because every time I turned around there was a problem with her operation but at least we had an admin officer, Johney Brooks, who was at least trying to stay on top of it and things were really improving.

But things in the meantime were beginning to go south in Liberia. Charles Taylor had begun his war. It hadn't reached Monrovia yet but was making progress. We were dithering back and forth about whether to support Doe, what do we do? Trying to get a compromise…

Q: Samuel Doe was the man who staged the coup that had taken over.

MAYBARDUK: Right, had taken over and had taken the ministers out on the beach and shot them. One of the ministers who he shot was the son-in-law of the president of Burkina Faso. This becomes important because Burkina Faso along with Libya that provided all the support for Charles Taylor. So that was beginning to develop. But I was finally going to be able to get some real leave time because what you really want to do in a situation like that is let the ambassador just take charge for a month to make it his own embassy. In a well run embassy when everything works right when a new DCM comes into town in a few weeks the ambassador takes off for leave and the DCM, deputy chief of mission, takes charge and makes it his own embassy and when a new ambassador comes in it is just in reverse. So both people develop their own authority, their own style and so on. Cynthia Perry never gave me that opportunity. But if I hadn't given it he would have taken it anyway so that was…

So anyway I took my family and kids off to Kenya for two weeks there. A wonderful safari off in Kenya and all of that but in the beginning we had trouble almost immediately. From the very first day we couldn't fly through Liberia because all of a sudden the airports were under attack. We had to divert our whole trip through Ghana, both ways going back and forth, we still were scheduled to land in Monrovia on the way back and again we got diverted because of the problems. So by the time I got back from this trip, this was I don't remember the dates here unfortunately, but this would have been in late 1989, things were getting bad in Liberia. We kept sending to the embassy in Liberia requests for copies of their emergency evacuation plan and offered to sort of what do we do to sort of help out in case it needs to evacuate…we thought that in an emergency they might just try to come by land and the road was very bad, the road was very bad, it was just kind of coordinating…they didn't have their act together yet. But it very quickly went from bad to worse and we started the evacuation. The ambassador was on leave at that time actually. The cable comes in and it's like seventeen pages requesting all this information for a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) to come in. That's a unit of

about 2,000 Marines in five ships to stand off the coast; we had a helicopter carrier, which could evacuate people by helicopter. This 17-page cable, I still remember it. The decoding problem wasn't in the decoding from the secret codes it was all these military acronyms and I really didn't have anybody in the embassy who knew these acronyms.

Q: It is a different language.

MAYBARDUK: It made me feel like the Japanese diplomats in Washington at the start of World War II who got the message that Japan was declaring war and they were trying to get the documents prepared to deliver before the attack but failed. I kind of felt I'd failed about this damn cable. But anyway we got it and the plan was initially for, I remember the Ivory Coast, Cote d'Ivoire, to handle it and they came back and said they couldn't handle the evacuation.

Q: It's a much bigger embassy I mean it's a much bigger and wealthier country than Sierra Leone.

MAYBARDUK: They said they couldn't handle it but eventually they did take the first flight out of embassy employees and I guess at that point they couldn't handle it. Well we stepped up to the plate and said, "Yeah, we'll take this on." So then the evacuation began coming through Sierra Leone and it would come out of Monrovia, helicopters from out of Monrovia, to the Fleet, and then to Freetown. So the ambassador was back by then but he was still new. The nice thing about Johnny is he had no problem delegating authority, he didn't have to be in charge because I had been there a year, had been through a lot already, he basically left me in charge of it. So we had to set up a base when they arrived, we had to set space up for the helicopter pilots, we had to set up for these guys who basically supply the Fleet from shore and handle the things on the ship, they are all reservists and they had to get a place.

We had decided that if Doe, President Doe of Liberia, had wanted to leave we would help get him out. For reasons I had never understood, we weren't willing to push Doe out, which would have been the smart thing to do but instead we took this very neutral view of the whole thing but offered to take Doe out if he needed it. To do this we put a company of Marines out at the airport. Let me set the geography of this, this is a very big harbor. During the Falklands war the Brits assembled their fleet in Freetown, in that harbor; it's a very big harbor. In World War II when you had the convoys across the Atlantic they often went to Freetown first and then up to safety. They are very protected and very big and also nobody is there so nobody knows what is going on, that always impressed me. Anyway so it took a lot of time to get back and forth across the harbor. So out at the airport there was this whole company of Marines that moved into a motel out there. For a year they sat out there eating K-rations because the captain didn't want anybody to get sick if they had to move quickly. They had two C-130s, which are transport planes, ready to move at any time. There was this big operation just sitting there. In the meantime I'd gotten the helicopters to come in to the Freetown side of the port rather than the airport. Oh and as this cable came in the ambassador wasn't there I had to get permission from the Sierra Leone government to use these facilities. I got hold

of the minister of foreign affairs and he said fine and I went over to the head of the army and he said fine, subject to the presidential approval. I couldn't get hold of the president until that evening when I was called and was invited over to his home. Well, he met me in one of these kinds of nightgowns that you wear in Africa; I used to wear one myself at home, it is sort of like women wearing dresses, it is very comfortable. We talked for several hours, it was a great conversation, covered the MEU, and we got the approval in one day. In the meantime, Johnny had hurried back from his leave and we got the approval.

Anyway, so the operation began and the operation went on for 18 months. At the time the military called it Operation SHARP EDGE. I think because the Cold War ended so they needed something to keep themselves sharp. They couldn't handle this operation without having this small fleet there. A ship came in, I think it was the USS Harlan County, the same ship that came into Haiti, or its sister ship. I know the Harlan County was there at one point. Any rate, just before the MEU arrived, we had a regular ship visit and we had gone through all the ceremonies, cocktail parties. And bought ice cream and all the extras that you could sell to the Embassy on the spot.

This ship it was trying to get the hell out of there before it was noted by the in-coming MEU. The ships were under two different commands. One command didn't know what the other was doing. But they got spotted by the incoming Fleet and quickly they got two cables. The ship had been at sea for a year and the ship all of a sudden got added to the Fleet, these guys never got home for another year.

The other thing was we had these ship visits and they would do all sorts of things, make harbor depths and collect all this information in case the Navy ever needed it. Well in this 17-page cable was a request for all this information again. That's when I discovered the various commands of the armed forces don't talk to each other either. They can't retrieve their own information. It was fascinating, a little thing about why the U.S. government doesn't work very well sometimes. So anyway we had fleet off and finally after the first planeload of people making it into, there were a helicopter load of people, make it into the Ivory Coast; the Ivory Coast said they couldn't handle it. So now they are coming our way and it went on for 18 months. Sometime in the midst of it the crowd was in Iraq when Kuwait developed and you had Desert Shield to protect Saudi Arabia and the pressure came to remove the ships. I think they finally did remove all the ships, except the helicopter carrier. As Desert Storm came, they finally took the helicopter carrier away but that's the long range helicopters that operated from a point in the Freetown side of the port.

Q: Well just to get a feel for this. I mean if you are evacuating an embassy you are evacuating an embassy and why was the military there for 18 months?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, well OK. We didn't evacuate the embassy, we had a draw down. First we evacuated non-essential personnel, the first load went to Cote d'Ivoire and then the second load came to us. We got families and we got a lot of the people who were now declared non-essential. Now who was head of the evacuated mission? Ambassador

Bishop had left. Bishop left just as things were breaking. He ended up head of the task force in Washington and I forgot who the DCM was, he was very good, he was an ambassador himself.

Anyway Ambassador De Vos came out though. He was the new ambassador but he was having trouble getting cleared so we had this ambassador to Liberia sitting as our houseguest in Freetown for at least two months, De Vos. But in the meantime the evacuations going on, we took out the first two loads out of the embassy. The Navy had a policy that we don't evacuate pets. Well, the embassy in Monrovia wouldn't tolerate that. So they got diplomatic pouches and they threw all the pets in diplomatic pouches and they arrived at the Fleet and the Fleet had a conniption. But it was a done deal; they weren't going to throw them overboard so they moved them on to Freetown. Now in Freetown again we had this embassy that was very small and had all these problems of surviving itself, we had one consular officer and we had these hundreds of people. We had to get them on planes to the U.S.

Q: I mean basically the idea was you were the first point of refuge and then you would be filtrating them on to commercial airlines to leave?

MAYBARDUK: Right, right. So with the embassy people it wasn't that hard the only annoyance was that people were stressed out tired and lost a lot of their homes and everything. So we scheduled a barbecue at the beach and had a nice time with our comrades and then the people in Washington said, "Don't fool around get them on the first plane." People were really upset, it was a paranoid to handle people who are…I hope they learned in Washington because…two years later we had seventeen evacuations out of Africa but they didn't handle it so well. But anyway we did our best they got back. Alan Latimer was the consular officer and he did a great job, he did a really great job. Then we got no help from Washington, it took us forever to get another body out there to help Allen. I was busy sending out cables saying we needed staff.

We got that group off but then others started coming. One day we had 800 people. The reason it took 18-months is because a lot of Americans got trapped behind the lines. Of course, a lot of Americans were really Liberian's who had visited the States once and had gotten citizenship with or the children had gotten citizenship. They would make sure they had a child born in the U.S. So the child was an American citizen and the child, of course, if it was a young child had a right to bring some sort of parent along. So a lot of the people hadn't been in the States in years but they were still Americans and they still had a right to be evacuated. Of course, they arrived in Freetown with no money, but first they had to get through the lines of fighting, they had to get to the embassy in Monrovia and from Monrovia they would then be picked up by helicopter, brought to Freetown where we would process them. This included all the things about getting their promissory notes to pay their onward transportation, because they didn't have any money to be repatriated. The pressure from Washington was to move, move, move and Allen was saying we are going to have a horrible situation here. We can't process the paperwork fast enough. We are going to be years trying to sort out the monetary consequences of this and he was right, but we also couldn't keep them there. Allen and I had a couple arguments over this

but he was absolutely right. But we also knew how to get them moving. So we had 800 come in one day and that 800 actually included numbers of non-Americans. We had Indian's, we had Pakistani's and we had Brits and French and Germans and all the nationalities we normally help out in this kind of things. But then after that it was mostly Americans and they would come over in twos and threes and fives and tens almost daily for a while. Then after time it was once a week or whatever.

Eventually the Fleet was there almost a year before it left and those guys were on ship the whole time, the Marines were on ship the whole time. I don't even know if they went to Iraq, they didn't go home. Towards the end we had a situation in which we had to do it ourselves now. Sierra Leone had no civil aircraft, none. It was terrible to come in to Sierra Leone, they had small airports around the country but there was no internal aviation service at all, there was no airline, no private planes.

Not even the missionaries had planes. No private, nothing none. The only small aircraft in the country was the president's helicopter oh and there was a helicopter service that took people to and from the airport. But with the fighting in Liberia some of the small aircraft from Liberia came to Freetown. There were about three planes in Freetown, a couple of them with bullet holes in them. But we had no aviation gas. Aviation gas is not jet fuel, it's…

Q: It's higher octane or something.

MAYBARDUK: Something yeah and we didn't have any and this place needed aviation fuel, which we didn't have. The big airport in Monrovia had been seized by the rebels and by this time the city was under complete siege and you had Charles Taylor in part of the city and you had Prince, he broke off from Taylor, Prince something or other. He had his own group and those people were in a relatively small part of the city. There was a military base that was completely isolated; they supplied themselves in the main city through a swamp at night. If Taylor had been smart and allowed an exit for the Doe army they probably would have all disappeared but he boxed them in and then when boxed in and had no place to go then they learned how to fight, they couldn't fight before then but then they learned how to fight and they held out forever.

So to get people out, there was a small downtown airport and all the fighting went on around that airport. So people had to make their way to the embassy, if they made their way to the embassy then the embassy in Monrovia would send out a local employee to kind of scout the situation out and if the fighting is down and the airport seemed safe they would roll out a couple of 55 gallon drums of aviation fuel in the downtown airport. The message would come to us and we would send a plane to pick people up.

First we used a small little Cessna of some type that sat three or four people and I can't remember why we couldn't keep using that but it was an impressive operation, it had bullet holes in it. There was, however, another plane and this was a short take off and landing plane and I think it could sit up to 40 people, I'm not sure. It was Russian; it had two Russian crews, which the embassy managed to rescue from a hotel in Monrovia

where they were trapped. It was wet leased to a South African firm. So it was a Soviet plane, a Russian plane at this point, wet leased to a South African company with an Israeli business manager, I always thought this was a great combination. But obviously these guys had been in the smuggling diamond trade and other nefarious kinds of things; I mean that is obviously what they were all about. But anyway we tried to lease it from them and they wanted something like $40 thousand a flight and they weren't going to budge until it turned out serendipitously the embassy in Monrovia managed to free the other crew from the hotel and then they were grateful and I think then we got it down to $20 thousand a flight.

So we were negotiating for this plane, there weren't too many people backed up at this point so it wasn't a crisis at that point and Medecins Sans Frontieres was there and in all over Monrovia there was just one small medical clinic operating by a Liberian doctor, I think he was Liberian, and MSF, Medecins Sans Frontieres, was sending supplies to them. So I remember one day, who was it, and maybe it was the Russian planes at this point. I remember one day we were trying to deal with this with whoever owned this airplane, and I felt like I was dealing with a carpet salesman, maybe he was a Lebanese at this point the guy that I was talking too. You know I finally kind of just flat moved out of the room and said, "You take over, I'm having a terrible time dealing with this." But in state of time I met this young woman who had to be in her early twenties or mid-twenties maybe, a French woman, young, full of energy and she was out there negotiating with the plane too and how much the embassy should pay and how much MSF should pay and so on. Why we didn't just pay it all I don't know or can't remember anymore.

But anyway, the reason I mentioned this woman actually is because a couple months later we had a helicopter crash over the bay and she was killed.

Q: Oh how sad.

MAYBARDUK: I still remember that.

Q: OK, today is the 21st of March, Good Friday, 2008. Gary, we are in Sierra Leone?

MAYBARDUK: Yes sir and it sounds like we are still in the midst of the evacuation.

Q: You are still in the midst of the evacuation so I'll let you take off from there.

MAYBARDUK: At some point in the evacuation the U.S. Navy left, moving from Desert Shield to Desert Storm they had been pressured for months to take their Fleet out or the Marine Expeditionary Unit which had six ships actually, it's a funny story there, I don't think I've told it yet. The Harlan County was a troop transport essentially, but it later got fame in Haiti.

But it typically came out or one of its sister ships would visit West Africa from time to time and so it had come to Freetown for a visit, this was one of these traditional visits which were always very nice. So anyway ships come in and you have this nice reception

aboard ship and you usually get, if not the president, then at least the foreign minister of defense and head of the defense force and a lot of other politicians to come and chat, besides which they had this provision that they always had these well stocked commissaries on board and in a place like Sierra Leone where we had to order our frozen food from the States and wait six months for it each time this was a great opportunity to stock up and particularly on ice cream, you just bought gallons of ice cream. We all had three freezers for this supplied by the government.

So it came in but it left quickly because it found out the Fleet was coming in and it was afraid that it was going to get hijacked to be part of the Fleet. Well, they didn't escape in time. They were from Southern Command I guess, this ship, and the Fleet was from Northern Command so they didn't really talk to each other. But the MEU spotted the Harlan County, sent a quick cable to Washington and all of a sudden the Harlan County got attached and spent another eight months out there instead of the one-year tour at sea, they spent two, essentially.

Anyway, this French woman, a young women she was in her twenties, I wish I remembered her name. She came in, she was trying…the boats had left, then the helicopters left and now we were down to using private planes to get into Monrovia and bring people out. This was quite a job because first of all Freetown had become so poor there was no civil aviation in the country at all. The only small aircraft in the country was the president's helicopter. So we didn't even have gas in these small planes but several had come over from Monrovia, escaping from Monrovia and were now based in Freetown. So we were happy to get a plane to fly over into Monrovia. At first what happened is the embassy in Monrovia would send out a local employee to scout the terrain to see if there was no fighting around the downtown airport, the major international airport had been taken over by Charles Taylor's people a long time earlier. If it was open, they would send a quick radio message to us and we would get the plane going. In the meantime, they would roll out a 55-gallon drum of aviation gas, which we never had in Freetown so the plan could refuel to get back and have fuel for the next trip over. Then anybody who wanted to evacuate would get to the small airport, get them on the plane, the plane's engine would never stop, and they would pile them in and take off.

So this woman comes in and she was with the Medecins Sans Frontieres in the Doctors Without Borders group, a very impressive group. They were trying to get medicines into Monrovia, there was one clinic still open operated by one doctor, essentially that was it for the whole country as far as we knew and she needed to get medical supplies there. She came in and she wanted basically to see if she could use one of the planes we were using and we ended up negotiating price, I'm ashamed of the fact that we didn't just say yes. Even the U.S. government was supposed to get cost recovery of these things. She did a good job and I was really just impressed with her, this young woman working so hard. Anyway, we worked it out and she, at this point, had made one or two trips into Monrovia to take the medicines with her to give to the people. Anyway it was soon after that that she was flying across the bay in a helicopter, a commercial helicopter and the copter went down and ten people were lost in it. We tried to get the Navy to search at least for the bodies and initially there was resistance. I sent a really steaming telegram off

to Washington stating that the Sierra Leoneans had given us their airport, all their facilities, everything else and the least we could do is try to help find the bodies. I got an immediate response. I mean for the next two weeks they had divers looking for her but they never found her, of course. But I've always been bothered by that. I sent a message to her parents through the French embassy; I never got a reply. I hope they got the letter because it really affected me a lot. This is a situation in which lots of people were dying but this is one of those little ones that you just sort of personally had a connection with.

So I don't know if I mentioned the Russian plane we were using as well. We started out using a small Cessna or Beech Craft something like that but we found that there was a Russian plane that carried about forty people, short take-off and landing that had come out of Monrovia. It turned out to be a Russian plane with two Russian crews one of which was trapped in a motel in Monrovia still. Wet-leased to a South African firm and with an Israeli business manager. A sort of the Wild West that you have out there and it obviously had been involved in diamonds or something else at some point. But in any event, they tried to charge us like $40,000 a flight. We were negotiating at one point and I sort of walked out and told somebody, "You know, I'm not prepared to negotiate with this rug merchant." Anyway, I think we probably did pay $40,000 for the first flight but then in Monrovia we managed to rescue the other crew and all of a sudden they became grateful and it was after that we got half price or something. But for months that's how we got people in and out of Monrovia through those small planes with the refueling and the whole…and at times there was fighting around the in-town airport, you couldn't get…

Q: Was there spill over from the civil war getting into Sierra Leone at that time?

MAYBARDUK: I have to get the exact time sequence down, but initially no. Well with the beginning of the refugees there was some casual estimate of a hundred thousand refugees that could flee across the border from Liberia and our first concern was getting them relief, getting help for them and feeding them and so on. We had just two non-profit international agencies in the country. One was Catholic Relief Services, I think I've already told the story about the free rice and how they ended up destroying the organizational for those free rice distributions. So the other one that was really functioning at the moment was CARE. They weren't really equipped to handle refugees but if I remember correctly they did help in the end. So when 100,000 people came across and maybe more, I mean, first of all we didn't know where they were, I mean, it wasn't like you could just pick up a telephone and find out how many in each city. The phones didn't work, the roads were bad, and it was just hard. But what amazed me was that for the large part most of these people were taken into other Sierra Leonean homes. If you look at it in terms of the numbers, a country of four million people taking in 100,000. You take that today with the U.S. population of 300 million you would be 70 times more than that, that would be what seven and a half million people? You just wonder if seven and a half million people crossed the Mexican border or crossed the Canadian border would we have people take that many people into their homes and these are very extremely poor people.

As time came on, the Sierra Leoneans themselves got organized. The Sierra Leonean Red Cross, and to me this was amazing, assumptions that had been made about the country got changed quite a bit during this period because here was a country where the army doesn't work, the government doesn't work and yet somehow not a lot of these people get paid for sharing their homes but then when refugee camps are set up and it is all done by the Sierra Leone Red Cross which is run by a banker who was somebody I knew and had known in my years in trying to follow the economy. I assumed incompetence but it just to me it made me think of a country that couldn't put anything else together could put this together and got it together fairly well with very little help. They had three or four people who came in from the Dutch Red Cross to give advice but that's not a lot of people and they set it up. We in the meantime, our job was to get a lot of food in, and we had the International Food Organization [Ed: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations]…

Q: I'm not sure of the acronym.

MAYBARDUK: I'm not sure of the acronym, anymore. But it's the organization that's responsible in these things, which pulling food together. UNHCR was there, that's the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. So they were trying to coordinate but they didn't have many people; I think there was one representative from the UNHCR staff. But they started bringing food in and most of it was U.S. food, of course, we were the primary donor of foodstuffs. We were having about weekly meetings with them and at one point we were talking about how much food is in the country. We were being assured there was plenty of food and I just sort of made a little, it just depends on what you can do if you just keep your mind open. I just made a little back of the envelope calculation, how many people we were feeding and how many was it a half pound or three-quarters a pound of rice a day and each one needed I can't remember exactly the number of the feeding was. All of a sudden I said, "If my numbers are right, you got like two or three weeks worth of food at the maximum for these people and no ship on the way at the moment." So off went another cable this time to Rome where the food organization is and to Washington. That's it, the Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome.

Well that stirred up another controversy, but they literally stopped a ship in mid-ocean and turned it around and sent it to Sierra Leone. I felt good about that because if I hadn't caught that, we would have run out of food and then somebody would have done something. But you know it was one of those nice situations where because it's a very small organization, just one-person just sort of catching something could make a big difference. It wasn't the first time, or the last in Sierra Leone.

In the meantime, we had actually gone back to the U.S. European Command, this was, of course, the end of the Cold War, which had a lot of surplus equipment and they had been offering it to Third World Countries. We had a very small AID program, anytime anything was offered free like that we were the first embassy to get on board and request it for our country. So we had gotten all this earth moving equipment in which was already there; but we had this problem getting food to areas where the refugees where the roads

were so bad. There was one particular road that went into Liberia. Under the PL-480 Food Program, we gave food to the country, the government sold it, the government kept the local currency and used it for development purposes. I suggested they use the counterpart funds, we called it, to buy us supplies to use with and spare parts, if necessary, to use with our construction equipment to fix that road. The Army was delighted; it didn't have anything to do. All of a sudden these engineers who had been sitting on their hands for years had a chance to build a road and they'd gone right through it. They basically, the first time in probably twenty years, that road became passable by something other than a jeep with a couple of jacks and spare wheels just to get their way through and that got food moving.

The other problem we had was up in the, I think it was called the Kailahun area; it is a little peninsula that goes up between Liberia and Guinea. I was afraid there were people up there and we had no contact with that area at all. UNHCR assured me that no they had been up there and there were no refugees up there. Well I can't remember what had happened but eventually we found out that there were and I was pretty upset because I had I think I had talked about this earlier I had been visiting Ethiopia during the time of that terrible famine there and how it went on for months before anybody realized it was happening. I always said never on my watch would I allow something like that to happen. We never had the people in the embassy go up there and they had 21 people, Americans of whom seven were Marines and one was a security officer who couldn't leave, that took it down to 13 or something. That included the consular officer, the communicators. There is no political officer, no economic officer. I had some very good FSNs but I was reluctant to send them up in a dangerous area like that and we really needed somebody with good eyes so I said I didn't have anybody and couldn't get anyone out of Washington. Well then we discovered that there were 20 or 30 thousand people up there hadn't been getting any food. I don't know if we ever got any food to them frankly because it was about that time when the war did spill over into Sierra Leone.

I can't give you the dates but if I went back maybe I could figure them out but the war had been going on in Liberia for about a year. We had been running full steam in Freetown the entire time. Between doing the evacuations, getting the people out which was still going on, the war would go on for another six or eight months, and dealing with the refugee situation and then, of course, Freetown just trying to survive. My driver was logging 90 hour weeks regularly, the overtime sheet I was always signing off on. He was always with me, sometimes I might have been home for a little bit but for lunch or nap but that was the kind of situation we were in.

Then one day I looked at my desk, my in box and it's empty. I can't remember any time in my Foreign Service career I had an empty in-box including the first day I arrived at an office there was always something waiting for me. But if you want to get something done you give it to a busy man, well we had both what had been going on. We had cleared the deck. Anyway I walked up to the ambassador's office. I said, "Johnny, there is something wrong, I have an empty in-box. Have you been grabbing work that was supposed to have gone to me or something?" He said, "Gary, no," he said, "I just noticed the same thing." He said, "If you don't send it to me I don't see it and I've got an empty in-box too." We

were both shocked. We both missed vacation and leave and everything else, so we said, "Let's go home early today." Most of that week we were home early, very pleasant.

The next week the rebels, what they called the rebels; they were really Charles Taylor's people at that point came across the border. That started another year of intense work.

Q: What about when these rebels, were they dominating at the time both the Liberian and aiming for the diamond fields or what?

MAYBARDUK: Well in Liberia they basically controlled most of the country, not all of it, there were some pockets but I don't know when Doe died but I think Doe was probably still in Monrovia at that point. You had Prince Johnson who was a break-off from the Charles Taylor group who actually broke off and got to Monrovia first but he was the one who eventually captured and killed Doe. So you had Monrovia divided into three parts. Doe's army was keeping it until Doe was killed, it was never defeated it held. You had Prince Johnson's group and you had Charles Taylor. If over in the north in parts of the frontier of Sierra Leone there was a third battalion, you had part of the Liberian army but basically they never fought, they just got the hell out of there. They just went over to Sierra Leone and were initially disarmed and kept sort of under protective custody of the Sierra Leone armed forces but there may have been some still floating around up there, we weren't sure.

But what happened was, the first incident was, on the frontier a group of Charles Taylor's forces came across and attacked a small Sierra Leone army post. I think it may have killed one soldier I'm not remembering any more. They captured a jeep with supplies and went back across the border and about the same time in the Pujehun area, which is the area near the coast between the two countries they also came across and they seized a diamond mine. In Freetown it became a big thing among the Lebanese community because it was run by the son of a prominent Lebanese businessman who was soon kidnapped. Thousands of other people were dying but a Lebanese was one of their own and it became a cause célèbre. About a week later the lieutenant who commanded the small army post that had been attacked who had been IMET trained. As you know under IMET, the International Military Educational and Training Program of the U.S. government, we bring the soldiers and officers from various armies for training in the U.S. of all types of training, from basic officers courses to learning how to fly jet planes, remember there were no planes in Sierra Leone that wasn't Sierra Leone's program, but it was military training. He organized his forces without authorization from Freetown, went back across the border and hit back. Got back his equipment and apparently killed a small number of Charles Taylor's forces. He captured among other things two ammunition boxes which a week later Major General Tarawally who was the commander of the armed forces, I went to see him and he actually gave me one, I have one in my home now. These are the wooden army ammunition boxes and they are marked Libya, they were Libyan. This is where a lot of the support for Charles Taylor came from, through Burkina Faso, into Liberia and through Guinea and then on. This was a bit of evidence of the Libyan involvement.

After that things got kind of vague but I mean after that more and more of Charles Taylor forces who were now being called the rebels and being given the status of being a rebel group within Sierra Leone more came across the border and took large parts of the country.

The Sierra Leone army I think I mentioned had 2,300 members and had managed to put together one combat company, which was sitting in Monrovia as part of the ECOWAT Peacekeeping force. They just didn't have any kind of fighting capability. When it began to try to mobilize to fight this invading force they dug out their guns, which had been kept in storage, they always kept their guns in storage because the previous president had been afraid the guns might be used in a coup against him so they had almost no weapons. They almost got no practice firing weapons. Well it turned out most of them were rusty and not operating and they didn't have any ammunition. So their ability to resist was close to zero. You know an interesting thing from just looking at it from a, I don't know if it is mistakes, but certainly from a lack of understanding on our part for the quite many years, was we overrated the Sierra Leonean army, not that we thought it was a great army but when our military attachés came to visit, he was usually based in Liberia, they were always impressed that this was an army unlike any other West African army, almost any other, who when they said they were going to be there at one o'clock would be there at one o'clock. Who could do a darn good parade, whose officers when you talked to them they liked to talk about military, their profession, instead of say beer drinking and chasing women, which was typical of so many of other armies. So there was a feeling of a sense of confidence in this that had been a British trained army. But it really turned out to be a parade ground army in that it just couldn't fight. The rebels in the meantime took no prisoners; they were really very nasty people.

Q: Were they doing this cutting off hands of children?

MAYBARDUK: Not at that time at least none that we had heard about. But some of that had gone on in Liberia. Our information was scarce; it was very hard to get information from the rebel areas.

We evacuated the Peace Corps out of the southern half of the country for those we could find jobs for and we kept some of them. We actually we were not able to relocate everybody at first, I can't remember, but the Peace Corps policy is if you evacuate for more than two weeks you have to send the volunteers home. Their entire assignment was cut. We managed to get some of them back in in the northern part of the country back to their jobs and came up with a few more positions but a lot of Peace Corps volunteers ended up with their experience cut off and having to go home. Later I don't remember when exactly who evacuated all the Peace Corps.

Anyway, so the rebels came across, the Sierra Leoneans were in no condition to fight and they basically just fell back all along the place. Up near Kenema they had a military fort, barracks, I can't think of the name of it at the moment, which they held and they decided they wanted to hold that barracks and they did that. But they got themselves pinned down they couldn't sort of take any offensive action out of that barracks. They basically were

pinned. As I later learned at the War College you fix the enemy positions. It didn't take many rebels to occasionally shoot at this fort or barracks to keep everybody inside. So they took over most of the Pujehun. We now had our own evacuation going on, we now had American missionaries primarily those who lived in that part of the country were now coming out of that area.

There was the missionary radio network; they were independently initially keeping in touch with Freetown so this is how we got our information. The Center for Disease Control had a project near Kenema to study Lhasa fever and a gentleman by the name of Dembia can't remember his first name at the moment, a Sierra Leonean, really competent guy, was in charge when the Americans had left and between him and between the missionaries I had more information of what was going on in the war than did the army, the Sierra Leonean army who we discovered through the communications and the telegraph and they were using Morse code. That was how we were communicating with Morse code.

So I would go over every morning over to army headquarters and meet with Major General Tarawally who had become a good friend by this point, he was head of the army. I would tell him the information we had and he would tell me what information they had, we would get a map out and we'd plot all this out. This became the basis of our situation reports back to Washington every day. All of this would be classified and everyday they'd get our situation reports in and I was putting down the map coordinates from what we were getting and so on. Luckily I had traveled the country and I was able to ask a lot of questions that sort of other people hadn't thought about.

In the Pujehun area you had two major rivers that are hard to cross, except by canoe I guess. They are deep, deep rivers. In one place it is crossed by a ferry and in another place it is crossed by a bridge. Well I asked the general had they cut the ferry off and had they guarded the bridge because the field had come right into the center of the country. He said, "You know, that's a good idea," so he disabled the ferry. I rarely got up to the bridge; it was guarded by, I don't know, four or five soldiers and a bunch of police, they had brought the police in to help out, that's about all they could muster, but it held, the bridge held. Of course, on the Guinea side there was another ferry or bridge that they needed to do as well. So I mean it was basic stuff to get them to do basic stuff.

In the meantime, we started trying to get them arms and supplies which for some reason Washington took forever to think about. They didn't want to supply lethal supplies for reasons I don't know. Just before I left, a year later we finally managed to get them a bunch of trucks and radios and other equipment. We went through a normal screening; they had very few maps of the country themselves and with the help of the British we managed to get them a couple hundred or maybe a hundred Shell (gas station) maps of the country, old but they still listed the roads and so on which I gave to a colonel over there. Months later a lieutenant who was often our liaison officer said they still didn't have any maps. I said, "I gave them to the colonel so and so." He said, "What?" I was at the army headquarters and he went over to the colonels' office, the colonel wasn't there

and he looked around his office and found them sitting up on his shelf. This is the way; this is the kind of situation that you went through in these days.

Q: Well looking at the other side of the hill how about the Charles Taylor forces? Were they I mean they had been fighting for a while so were they more organized?

MAYBARDUK: They knew how to fight. But we didn't know much about their organization. We had almost no information from behind the Charles Taylor line. It was at this point or perhaps earlier we got an airplane in there that could listen to radio communications, it was hush, hush but you know, but its public now. That was one of the many different groups we had coming in and out of Freetown based in Freetown but they took very little because most of this stuff was being carried by hand, even the photographs weren't very good. We were really blind I mean in this whole thing because all the missionaries eventually left. I went once a week, sometimes twice a week, at the worse part when they really took over the Pujehun completely daily we'd have a meeting with all the missionaries and all the other groups that were interested and I felt I was giving one of these military briefings you see when they are doing it in Iraq or other places and they are waiting for the spokesman to come out and give everybody a briefing as to where we knew where the rebels were. I got the information before everybody else did and we told them what we were doing, to reassure the community and I guess we evacuated some people as well. I mean there were commercial airlines out of Freetown so you didn't really need to get an evacuation plane for the missionaries but there were some who didn't have any money. Some Sierra Leone-Americans who really didn't have any money so my consular officer was once again having to process all these people leaving back to the States and having to lend them the money.

In the meantime, we got more displaced people, now we had not only the refugees from Liberia we had several hundred thousand Sierra Leoneans who were moving out of this area into and around Freetown looking for camps and refuge.

Q: I mean this being a former British territory were the British doing anything? With supplies or anything?

MAYBARDUK: Not really. I have a good friend who was the deputy high commission of the British Mission and he was very frustrated. The Brits had basically washed their hands of Sierra Leone years earlier. They just weren't interested so initially they provided a little bit of training for the police and that was about the extent of their assistance and they helped provide textbooks. They had some program in the Commonwealth countries they would often help provide textbooks for the schools. So they had some aid programs. But the day after I left it was in fact the British who came in and helped stabilize it but it took the Brits even longer than we did to get their act together. They never really got their act together.

I can't say how that year past because it's never stopped, I mean, they never took Kenema, they never took the second largest city Bo which is on the road between Kenema and Freetown but we had to get more assistance in there. We started seeing

NGOs coming in looking to help out. I learned that earlier but when everybody came home with so many non-government relief organizations are really kind of almost businesses looking for jobs but look at the prices they come in. Some do good work but usually never as good as the organizations that had been there all along.

Q: Why given the state of the Sierra Leonean armed forces and all, why didn't the Taylor group make more progress?

MARBARDUK: They may have had their own logistics problem, I'm not sure what is the real answer but they may well have had their own logistics problems at that point. We are talking about…they were using a road that I had had helped get paved and then fixed. Right, one of those things of no good deed goes unpunished so I wasn't punished for it, but a lot of Sierra Leoneans were because they'd built this road to help refugees and now all of a sudden it was being used by Taylor's forces. But the rivers, the bridge were real impediments and then in the meantime and it took us a while to discover this, Tarawally didn't tell me this; we sort of discovered it ourselves.

We had a military attaché who was coming over now regularly from Liberia. It was interesting they kept the military attaché in Liberia, it was hard to get in and out of but he was there and he would come over every so often to serve Sierra Leone. It was a Marine colonel at this point and he went up to Kenema and to, I wish I could think of the name of the fort up there, but he went up to the fort up there and came back, he apparently went right to the front lines, came back and told me that the Liberians were now fighting with the Sierra Leoneans. Somehow we had missed this and what happened is third battalion of whatever group it was that had been based in northern Liberia that had when Charles Taylor over ran the country they just sort of packed up and moved into Sierra Leone.

Essentially the Sierra Leoneans had reactivated them and these guys were ready to fight and then they moved up into the Kenema area and started hitting back at the rebels and maybe even did some cross border raids into Liberia. So them and a few Sierra Leonean soldiers who they managed to put together led by this major who had these yellow eyes, these very yellow eyes, he had a drug or something. When I met him, when I went up to the fort myself, at some point, this guy was scary. This guy was really scary, I can't even think of his name but apparently they knew how to fight and so he and the Liberians and a few of the Sierra Leone soldiers were basically holding the rebels at bay up in that part of the country and it began some sort offensive action.

I did go up I mean after I got this report from the military attaché and I confirmed it with Tarawally who seemed to be embarrassed that he hadn't told me this. But anyway I eventually did go up myself and it was a little fool hardy I think going up there because the roads were not safe but I just drove up there with my driver in an embassy Suburban. It was a strange war because most of the time we couldn't see it going on and yet it was there. I met with the Liberians, I met with this major, I visited the fort and I went out to the base where these Liberians and the major were operating. I think it was a Liberian who showed me around, we literally drove through the jungle I mean it was the training base and apparently we were very close to whatever the front lines are in that kind of war,

it was a really tough kind of jungle kind of area. At one point on this dirt road this guy in camouflage steps out from the trees and I swear I couldn't have told you he was there, I mean he was well camouflaged and stopped our car and he was on our side thank God. But it made me realize just how close to the front lines we must be, I mean there was no shooting going on.

Anyway, pretty soon we left, I said goodbye and got back in the car and we started back to Freetown I noticed that there was something rolling in the floor of the car and I told my driver to stop for a minute. I picked it up and opened the door and walked over and handed it to the general, colonel or whatever his rank was and said, "Sir, I think you lost a hand grenade." It had dropped off his belt. For a natural born civilian these were quite extreme experiences. I got back to Freetown safely.

Q: Were you given any reports of what the Taylor forces were doing in the areas that were taken over?

MAYBARDUK: Well we got one report up in the Pujehun area, the area I mentioned before that we had not seen, we had never gotten up to and now we couldn't get up to it. They were taking the elders of the village hostage and we sent a message to Monrovia to pass to Charles Taylor that we held him responsible if anything were to happen to these people. I never heard what happened to those people, but no I mean there were definitely some killings going on. I remember hearing more from the Liberians. I remember talking to one Liberian woman whose husband had been a police officer and they were stopped as they were trying to get out when Taylor's forces…she was pulled away and he was pulled away and then they just pulled out a pistol and just shot him right in the head. The cables out of Monrovia were horrendous about what was happening. We had surprisingly less knowledge. We just didn't have time to collect it but it wasn't good; they were clearly after diamonds, we knew that.

Q: What was the view of the Sierra Leonean government on Taylor's activities? Or was even Taylor the problem?

MAYBARDUK: Well, what we learned later was that apparently when Taylor decided to go back into Liberia it had the support of the Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso he and a small group had trained in Libya and had been some Sierra Leoneans and Guinean's with them. Kind of there was a commitment that first Liberia and then in the other countries so there had been kind of a promise. We never had a good feeling initially how large the force, the composition of the forces, in Sierra Leone was. It was led by this Foli Sekoo, I guess, but apparently he had been a photographer at the embassy in Freetown at one point. Six months into this somebody in the embassy tells me this, he had been a photographer at the embassy once but nobody knew much about him.

We never had any sense as to what the political program was, we never had any sense of ideology, and we never had any sense of purpose. Yeah, it was to take over the government that I think was clear, but they didn't put out any propaganda. There was no radio broadcast. There was no literature being handed out. So, we were kind of operating

in the dark. There may have been something known in Washington earlier because we got a critique after the first the first year why we hadn't included any dissident groups in our reporting. Well, there were no dissident groups that we knew of. Apparently our desk officer talked to someone but he never bothered to report back to us, she never did anything but, she was a very bad desk officer; we had no clue as to this. None, none whatsoever, we were finding out about where these guys were coming from in the history as the war went on. We were totally clueless. I don't know necessarily how much the Sierra Leoneans knew either. I don't have a sense they knew a lot but they may have known something.

Q: Well this brings up you mentioned the desk officer and all. Did you feel that Washington cared or…?

MAYBARDUK: We made them care.

Q: OK, how do you make them care?

MAYBARDUK: You send a lot of cables, in which you basically tell people what is going on, telling them that people are dying, what are we going to do about it? You make it or you write it in such a way that nobody wants to put his name on anything that says we aren't going to help. You learn that after you've been in Washington a long time, you can phrase it in such a way to make it difficult for people to do anything but to try to help. We started out with a terribly incompetent desk officer; she was eventually removed from that position and replaced by another one who wasn't much better. That was a problem the whole three years I was on that job.

Q: Was it a matter of that you think of Sierra Leone being far down the feeding chain in the rank order in the African Bureau that you…

MAYBARDUK: … couldn't get good people in the job? That may have been it, that may have been it but it wasn't just that they were junior officers, it was just that they weren't competent and didn't do their job. Apparently, the Deputy Director and the Director carried a lot of the load. We were well down the food chain so we had no classified computers. Technically we were supposed to do all our classified cables on a typewriter, which obviously did not happen because we were just that busy. Usually we sent our four or five cables, we would usually just dictate them to the secretary who would then type them on the computer and then we would put confidential on the cables later.

We had been trying to get more hand-held radios, we had been trying to get some of our vehicles replaced, and we had been trying to get relays for the hand-held radios. Once it started and we were evacuating people, then we started sending out cables saying we need this to help evacuate people. We need this to protect American citizens and all of a sudden things started arriving. I mean at the end of the first year of the war even before we got invaded, we had everything a modern embassy should have in the way of equipment. It solved a lot of my logistical problems that had been faced the first year because of the war I mean in terms of the equipment.

But there were real problems in staffing. I mean we needed another consular officer. We had one consular officer and he was very good but we really needed a second and occasionally they would send out some help but a good part of the time he didn't have any help. I needed a reporting officer; we didn't have a reporting officer. I was the embassy reporting officer, I was DCM, I was the AID officer, I was the reporting officer and essentially the military attaché as well. We kept asking for help in that. We used to have a guy, we had one TDYer that came in and the first question he asked was, "Will I be able to get home for Christmas?" I wanted to send him home immediately, this wasn't the kind of help we needed. The consular officer was named Allan Latimer and he was very good. AID managed to get us a little bit of help from time to time. We now had on the relief efforts we really had two types of people. We had the displaced and we had refugees. Under the U.S. government system aid for refugees is really handled through the UN, the UNHCR. We give them money but that's supposed to handle all the refugee problems, that's why they did send someone down there. Displaced people which is a Sierra Leonean who had to move was handled directly ourselves within the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (AID/OFDA) and there, unlike the refugee affairs, they do have people. A good part of the time we did have one person from that office and that was a big help, they had very good people. They would come in and out and they would help with the refugees, as they were supposed to, as well as the displaced.

At one point I really thought I had to give our admin officer some leave, she was stressed, she was very good but she was really stressed. We tried to get everybody…the only people who didn't get any leave were the ambassador and myself. Basically everybody else got to leave because we thought that was good for morale. The second year I was there and the first year of the war we had this general services officer who was just incompetent and so we couldn't let her take over the admin position, we couldn't, we had to bring in a new admin officer to basically take in the job while the admin officer was getting her leave. We had immediate problems with the general services officer as well; I mean basically we worked around her for that whole year, as she wasn't up to it. So we did get help on the admin side, the attitude there was actually very good about providing money and administrative assistance, they have to be for their continent because there are so many countries with problems all the time that they have to be able to provide that kind of assistance. They did give us good administrative help, we couldn't complain about the administrative help but we could not get a reporting officer and I mean that's one of the reasons we never got an accounting on this, it's part of the reason…

Q: I would have thought this would have been an ideal place to put sort of a young eager officer to get both experience in the continent, it's a great training ground.

MAYBARDUK: Well we got, thank you for asking that question, because I had forgotten this. We had been pushing for a reporting position and we were on a small embassy program designed to keep it as small as possible but when this was happening they agreed to establish an econ officer position at the embassy. It took them forever to get them to get somebody for it. Then this person refused to come. He had been an assistant to our ambassador in Israel and thought the world of himself and somehow thought that

he deserved some super position somewhere else. He turned down several others and the department finally told him you are going to Freetown. Now, of course, in the Foreign Service we all agreed to serve anywhere, anytime. I called the guy and tried to tell him what a great job this was. I was DCM but if I wasn't DCM at my rank, and I was two or three ranks above him, I said that I would be happy to take this job. I said you could not have a better job in the Foreign Service at that point. He told me he wasn't coming and that said that he was going to get a medical excuse or something. He was actually rude. He was actually quite rude which these people don't normally come into the Service. I mean if people call me and ask me if I want a job and I don't want it I say, "Well thank you, I really appreciate this," and so on but he was rude.

I got back to Washington after all this was all over and about a year into it there was a hearing, the first time in the departments history they actually fired an officer and forced him out of the service because he refused to take a position. I testified in the Labor Relations Council on him but because he wouldn't go and because the department was fighting this with him they weren't prepared to find someone else for the position. They never got it filled, they never got it filled.

I mean basically that is how I spent my days, I can tell you how I spent my days that third year but it never, never stopped.

Q: Well by the time you were getting ready to leave how stood the situation?

MAYBARDUK: It was kind of at a stalemate. The rebels had much of the Pujehun area, they had much of the area around Kenema, Kenema by the way was the diamond area. But they didn't have the fort, they didn't have Kenema, they didn't have any of the major cities except the one in the Pujehun. The Liberians were still working for Sierra Leoneans in the Inparto country. The army was getting in a position now to recruit more soldiers. They had decided to build up to 15,000 men, remember they had gone up from 1,300 that couldn't fight to 15,000. We recommended against it for a lot of reasons. One, they couldn't pay them. While this was going on we had some successes elsewhere. We ended up giving them another IMF program. I think I started this early discussion about how this country has gone off the wagon and had become and international pariah in terms of nobody wanted to hand them money. All during the three years I would work when the IMF teams would come into town I would work with them. They were happy to talk to me, I was an economist and I guess they decided I was a decent economist. Plus we had a 25-foot Boston whaler out there in the bay and I made sure I took them out on the fishing trip in the bay from time to time. You sort of hit them in all directions you know.

I ought to go back to that. Anyway, (a) they couldn't afford it, (b) they didn't have the officers, they didn't have the non-commissioned officers, which is very important, and the British and in the American systems the non-commissioned officers are a very important part of the way you design an army. That isn't true at all on this and it wasn't true in the Russian army for example. They had a lot of older ones who had been trained by the British thirty years earlier but they just didn't have enough to build up like that.

General Tarawally told me he agreed, but his cabinet was determined to build. I would go out to the headquarters there were huge lines of young men trying to sign up.

This was the same problem after I left when the government of Momoh was actually overthrown by parts of the army in part because they hadn't been paid. Back in 1967 there had been an enlisted men's coup against the officers and everybody had learned a lesson by then. The one thing the government had to do even when they couldn't do anything else is pay the men their wages and it gave them two 110 pound bags of rice. One of which was to feed their family and the other was usually sold to raise cash and they all managed to pay the army. Well when they stopped…

The story I heard later as I had been gone a year but it was a food thing is that they couldn't pay; they weren't paying the troops, the Sierra Leonean troops from up around Kenema including this guy with the yellow eyes came into town to ask to be paid. They approached the presidential offices, which were just across the street from the embassy, and the guard there thinking that they were hostile fired at them and they got into a firefight. This was reported back to the president all on hand-held radio's everybody in town could listen to everybody else's conversations. Momoh is reported to have said, Momoh was the president you know, "Well we'll take care of these rebels." Well the one thing the Sierra Leoneans don't want to be is a rebel because anybody involved in a coup will get a fair trial and you can get fair trials and then get hung. They just decided a long time ago it is the only way to prevent dissent. So the guy who had come in asking for wages all of a sudden thought, we are really in hot soup now so the only thing we can do now to save ourselves is to take over the governments, which they did and mobilize all over the country.

Q: I'm going to stop you here. We will pick this up the next time as sort of the end game for you. We've talked about the aftermath of this coup when you weren't there but what happened but how about for you? Is there anything else we should discuss?

MAYBARDUK: Well I want to discuss a little bit about the economy. This is really a great success despite all of the disasters it was a very nice success and a personal one too for me a combination of years of work. I need to talk a little about the naval boat, that was a continuing problem for years I guess that's about it.

Q: OK, so we'll pick this up then sort of at the end game on Sierra Leone in 1991.

MAYBARDUK: OK.

Q: OK. Today is the 21st of May 2008, Gary, what were we talking about last time?

MAYBARDUK: Well I'm not 100 percent sure but I think we've gone through two wars in Sierra Leone, the war in Liberia and the war in Sierra Leone, hopefully the evacuations and the AID, I'm not sure if we did the aid or not. It's interesting how you can help people just by being at the right place at the right time and asking one question. One of

the issues we faced in Sierra Leone was feeding first the refugees and then the displaced refugees from Liberia and displaced Sierra Leoneans because we didn't really have any NGOs (non-government organizations) in the country to speak of. We had Catholic Relief Services which I think I reported on. With help of a certain Congressman we ended up nearly destroying the organization, and CARE, which was doing wells and war and so on. CARE did not want to pick up much of the relief effort at this time, it felt that it was strained although it did do some, it just felt that it was strained beyond its capacity as it was. So most of it fell to the Red Cross but the food came from the World Food Program. I may have already told the story anyway but we regularly met with the Deputy High Commissioner, and five or six of the DCMs at posts in the country as a group to discuss things. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, a woman whose name I don't remember, but she actually was a representative and she actually became head of it and the World Food Program guy. I was at one of the meetings and we were talking about was there enough food present and I got assured by everybody that there was. Then I just did a back of the envelope calculation of how much food was in the pipeline and how much food was in the country and the number of refugees and allocated each refugee a half pound of rice a day and I figured out we were about to run out in two weeks in spite of what everybody said. So we sent a sharp cable to Washington and also, of course, to the representative at the World Food Program and they literally turned the ship around in mid-ocean to get there to make sure we did not have an unbroken chain of food.

I guess at the end of our last time I talked a little bit about the ship, the Farendougou. This was an interesting project that started years earlier before I got there as part of the, I forget the name of the program but it was the West African fisheries. We gave training to the navies or coast guards of the region and in the case of Sierra Leone we gave them a 90 or 110 foot patrol boat that was used but had been refurbished which they called the Farendougou after a lake in Sierra Leone, I think it was after a lake in Sierra Leone, I can't remember any more.

This had taken forever to get there I mean it had gone through several deputy chiefs of mission trying to get this program going and so on. It actually arrived while I was there and we had problems with one of the three engines, it was always leaking oil but the nice thing about it was when the war came the Farendougou became extraordinarily important. It provided supplies to army depots, it brought refugees out and I'm told even today it is still chugging along. We've spent probably a fortune trying to get one engine fixed and we should have replaced it a long time ago but it is one of our small aid programs that actually provided a lot of support during the war for relief and so on. I don't know if it ever caught any illegal fishing boats.

Q: Well the area all of that West coast of Africa was crowded with illegal fishing boats who were basically poaching on these poor nations which couldn't afford to either fish or police the areas?

MAYBARDUK: The Spanish, the Portuguese, the Taiwanese and the Koreans, you know, they boats were all off the coast. You could turn on radar and just see them out there, just see them out there. Well, anyway let's finish up on Sierra Leone.

As we got close to the end, we had requested non-lethal assistance. We actually preferred lethal assistance but non-lethal assistance to the Sierra Leone army and it actually showed up before I left. There were 20-30 trucks and radios and batteries and I don't know, tents and other things. They had a big parade through Freetown which was very well received. Toward the end two things happened, one, the Sierra Leone army was very grateful for the work I had done and so the general staff or the officer staff, not the two generals, but the headquarters staff, held a banquet in my honor at the officer's mess. Again that was the first time they had ever done it, they had done it before but it was the first time they had ever done it for a diplomat. I got a present and pictures and everything else, I was very touched, I was very touched and the ambassador was very impressed too.

The other thing was, well there were two other things. President (Joseph Saidu) Momoh asked to say goodbye to me so I went over with the ambassador to say good-bye to him. I was anxious to talk to him but I had the ambassador with me and it was a very difficult situation because I had been very concerned that he had not been going out to visit his troops. I had been out visiting his troops, the war was going on and he had never left the city. General Tarawally, Major General Tarawally the head of the army had only been out once and I had talked to Tarawally about this and he said he wasn't sure why Momoh wouldn't go out and I really wanted to talk to him about that. But the ambassador didn't bring it up and I just didn't feel that I could ask for a private meeting with him just to say that. I wish I had because there eventually was a coup that overthrew him and I think that it could have been prevented. If I had stayed I would have tried to find another way of getting that message to him, but I didn't..

Then the other thing was during this period the Liberians had been seen coming to my house. I may have mentioned this before the Liberian ambassador and some people from, I think it was the third brigade or battalion that had come over from Liberia and then in turn ended up fighting for the Sierra Leoneans and they were starting a counter movement to go back into and fight within Liberia against Charles Taylor. It was basically Krahn based, Krahn was the tribe that Charles dealt with at all. I forget what originally brought them over but they started coming at a regular basis and I had two messages for them.

One was you can't expect U.S. support. We never told Washington who we were talking to them because we were afraid Washington would tell us to stop talking to them and I felt that it was important to talk to them. So one was to say don't expect Washington support, but if you didn't want to earn Washington's enmity you had to watch the human rights situation. Everybody in Liberia was practicing genocide against every other group and you know you could not do that and expect any support from anywhere. I think they listened a little bit, I don't know. In the end they ended up fighting among themselves and most of the people ended up getting killed. But in my last night, they would usually come at the door at ten or eleven o'clock at night to talk. Literally my last night in the country they came about that time and this time there was a big group of them. They proceeded to make me an honorary Krahn chief, a paramount chief. So I have my gown from that.

So anyway, I can't remember what month, but it was 1991 I guess. But I left before the coup that overthrew Momoh, that came a little later. It was an accidental coup as it turned out. I'm going to discuss that a little bit. When I left the group called the rebels, what we will call the rebels but was primarily and the evidence is still coming out was primarily organized by Charles Taylor, there was something in the press about it yesterday I think. They controlled a large part of southern Sierra Leone, the Pujehun area, had not taken any of the major cities and was basically a stalemate. The Sierra Leone army had held at the bridges crossing the gorges where the ferries had been disconnected and they held the three major cities, the northern part was generally unaffected by the fighting.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you left?

MAYBARDUK: A great guy, Johnny Young, a great ambassador [Ed: Ambassador Young served from November 1989 to July 1992. His interview is on file with ADST.]. Johnny came in as his first ambassadorship. Johnny, an African American who, I think I told this story earlier about who was actually distantly related to the peoples of Sierra Leone. Well, he didn't know it until after he had gotten his assignment, but grew up poor as a church mouse, raised by his grandmother who was born in the Sea Islands, raised by his grandmother in Philadelphia but mentored, supported and helped through college by a Jewish grocer who came to at least one or more of his swearing in as Ambassador. I think he had three or four ambassadorships, a very nice man. So he came in and we had a great relationship, a great relationship, because I had been there a year and I had traveled the country, which he didn't get a chance to do.

Q: Well, how did he treat the fact that you had all these connections and all? After all, you had these problems with the previous Ambassador Cynthia Perry.

MAYBARDUK: It didn't bother him at all.

Q: I mean this often is a real problem for the DCM but how did you find Johnny Young?

MAYBARDUK: I really did not have any problems at all right from the beginning. He knew I had problems with Cynthia Perry but was willing to keep me on and give me a chance. I think I mentioned earlier, once Perry had left we spent the time in clearing up the embassy. We really made it nice looking and we solved an enormous amount of problems once she left that we couldn't solve when she was there. So when he got there I think he was impressed with what he found, I think he expected a lot worse.

But there were two things. He was an admin officer and he did not want to do admin work so he was quite happy to let me run the embassy, which is both good and bad because he had been, and the work in that embassy was a constant thing. But he hadn't done much political work himself and he wanted to do more. I had established lots of contacts because as the DCM at a small post I was also the political officer, the economic officer, the AID officer, and the military attaché, I mean I did it all; and I traveled the entire country. When he first got there we were not in any particular problems. I can't remember now when the real war started anymore, I will have to go back and look and

maybe I mentioned it earlier but it happened fairly soon after he arrived, within a few months after he arrived. So as his political and economic officer as well as the DCM and the aid officer, I discussed everything with him always and we were generally right on, we were in agreement on everything pretty much.

Q: OK, in 1991, where did you go?

MAYBARDUK: Well because of my problem with Cynthia Perry I hadn't gotten my promotion so I was still an FSO-2. I believe my problem with her delayed my promotion by two years. So I'm looking around for FSO-2 jobs. Meanwhile my wife wanted to go back home and one of the children was reaching junior high school years; so I was offered the counselor job in Bilbao, Spain. But for family reasons and the schooling issue it meant that I couldn't look for a lot of DCMs in Africa which didn't have anything beyond elementary school for kids. And I was tired. I mean this had been three extraordinary…the first year with Perry was difficult in itself and then two years of war. But eventually I ended up with and having done all that I really wasn't anxious to be a desk officer. I had essentially been running a big operation for three years and finally I landed a Deputy Director job in the Planning and Economic Analysis Staff of the Economic Bureau (EB/PAS). I took it with some trepidation because I had worked in the Economic Bureau before and I couldn't see what this office did, I didn't think that it really functioned well within the Department. But the ambassador made some calls for me and was assured by several people that the new director was very sharp, had a lot of good bureaucratic instincts and that the office was going to take a new turn or had taken a new turn. So I put my disquiet behind me and instead looked at the possibility - well here I'm going to get an FSO-1 job even though I am still and FSO-2 and I took the job, which turned out to be a big mistake. But anyway…

Q: You took it from when to when?

MAYBARDUK: It would have been sometime in the fall of 1991 to I guess about the summer or fall of 1993, two years.

Q: What was the job?

MAYBARDUK: Well the job was Deputy Director in the Planning and Economic Analysis Staff. When I got back I discovered things that hadn't been told me before. The job had been created, I think, back when Thomas Enders was the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs and Henry Kissinger was still the Secretary of State. It had been created because Enders wanted some economists to advise him on issues and so on and he couldn't find them in the normal staffing in the department. The office had both FSOs with some economic background of varying degrees and had developed I think not under Enders but later on with George Shultz had developed where they started bringing in visiting economists as well. George Shultz, who had always gone in and out of academia and government service in and out of his life back and forth, really felt that this was a very good mixture. So he felt that this office ought to bring in economists from the academia to stay a year or two. So the office really had two types of people. It had these

visiting economists, it had FSOs and it had a couple of about three permanent civil service economists as well although one turned out to know more about energy than economics but he had been hired at a time because they wanted at the time to deal with energy issues. So there was a staff of about nine people or ten people.

When I got back I found that the previous Deputy Director who was a civil servant and a very good economist built a wall, had not been able to get along with the office Director so he was still in the office but had quit as Deputy Director. The office was divided between the academic economists and the civil service economists with a couple of FSOs somewhere in between. The new office direction very much favoring the academics and I ended up getting tossed into the middle of this, which continued the entire two years I was there.

The problem was further exasperated by the Assistant Secretary Eugene McAllister who was incompetent. A political appointee.

Q: The top economist in the State Department.

MAYBARDUK: He was the head of the Economic Bureau. I don't think anybody would have…nobody would have accused him…he wouldn't have accused himself of being an economist, I don't think.

Someone like McCormack who I had discussed back on my first tour in EB, Economic Bureau. He was a bit scared of his own shadow, had no confidence in the people around him and he basically told our office to stay out of the affairs of the regional bureaus particularly the one place that would have been very interesting to work would have been on the issues of the emerging Russia. What he was having everybody in the bureau doing was constantly keeping up to date an economic fact sheet on all the various countries in the world.

Q: Sounds like the national intelligence estimate.

MAYBARDUK: Well, it wasn't that good.

Q: No, but I mean when you strive to get something encyclopedic it doesn't work.

MAYBARDUK: No, and about two-thirds or three-quarters of the economic office in the Economic Bureau couldn't write it because they didn't understand enough economics to get it right. There was only about a two page fact sheet, it was not a big thing. But a good part of our time, after they wrote it and send it down to us, we would check it and rewrite it. It was hardly anyway to have a Ph.D. economist which is what most of the staff was except for the FSOs but I was a Ph.D. too, of course.

Then we had one fellow who would write under Shultz, before I got there, although I didn't know it and I didn't see it apparently the office was very happy because Shultz didn't really use the office much for the State Department he used it as his own Council

of Economic Advisers when he went over to Cabinet meetings to talk about the economy because he had been a former Treasury Secretary as well. With Baker there was no interest in that even though Baker had been a Treasury Secretary. So the office didn't have any real anybody at the top. About once a month we gave him a kind of state of the economy and where we thought it was going which was always a painful experience because the person in charge of it, a guy who is still a friend but is kind of a twelve-handed economist.

Q: On one hand…

MAYBARDUK: On the other hand and so on and therefore really was never willing to kind of come to grips and make a prediction or come to a firm conclusion because upstairs wanted it and the boss wanted it and for me it was like pulling teeth, I couldn't get it out of him. So I would normally take his work and have to rewrite it myself or parts of it at which point he would ask his name to be taken off of it because I had basically gone farther than he thought he would want to go.

We got into a stupid fight; gosh it was terrible, about hyphenated adverbs. When you hyphenate adjectives, I can't think of an example at the moment, and I guess proper English grammar is to hyphenate these things but the office director thought that was archaic and the guy who was writing these things insisted on it. I mean it just went round and round and round for the two years over this. Mike would send me the things and I would take them out and then he would get upset and if I left them in then Sandra O'Leary was her name the office director, she would get upset. I was coming from a place where I was dealing with life and death issues and all of a sudden I was dealing with hyphens, it was just totally crazy.

Sandra turned out to be yes a good bureaucrat, reasonably good policy sense, got personally very much involved in one of the various whatever peace process was going on in the Middle East at the time and how we would provide aid to the Palestinian state but she was a good bureaucrat for herself. She didn't do anything for the office so nothing got pushed out of the office. The office was sitting there, just bright people essentially doing no significant work whatsoever and everybody frustrated and everybody angry at each other. The office director favored particularly this one academic economist who was in my view only a so-so economist but she thought he was very smart and he could write very quickly and with great eloquence. But unlike Mike who couldn't decide between his twelve hands the other fellow would choose one very quickly and often the wrong one and make very forward statements that I couldn't feel was adequate but I couldn't do anything about it because Sandra liked him. So it I mean it was just a mess.

Anyway, eventually two things happened. We had a new academic economist come in and I got to try out what I always wanted and thought was the way these very functional offices should work which was essentially to find her a relationship with a regional economic office, in this case the Latin American bureau. She had written on the Mexican debt crisis years ago earlier and she basically ended up spending most of her time over at the regional economic office of the Latin American bureau the ARA now WHA and did

develop a very good relationship and she actually got some productive work done and worked on considerations about NAFTAs effect on Central America and so on.

During this time I recruited someone else; I would go to the American Economic Association meetings. I recruited a new economist, who came in the second year and I got her working with the international finance staff, I think she worked in the office of development finance. She ended up staying about 15 years, she converted over, managed to convert over and ended up working for Al Larson as undersecretary for many years so that turned out to be a success story.

The other economist is now teaching at Georgetown and teaches Latin American economics at Georgetown. I also for the third year hired, which would have been the third year, I hired two economists, two very good ones, economists I thought, one out of what's a very good private school in Maine, there are several but…

Q: What level?

MAYBARDUK: College. Southern Maine somewhere. There's Bates, Colby and a third one. [Bowdoin?]

Q: Yeah. Well anyway you can fill it in later.

MAYBARDUK: OK and the other out of North Carolina. The guy coming out of the one in Maine was actually taking a sabbatical, the other was a brand new graduate student recommended to me by the person who would later become the chief economist for the IMF.

Q: Well did you feel guilty? Here you were in a place that was dysfunctional…

MAYBARDUK: I did feel guilty, but I gave them warning but I also in both cases felt that these people would fit in well as the person hired the year before, really felt they would fit in well because I could place them much as I placed the other two. So they really wouldn't be stuck in the mess we were in. This was when Gore was reinventing government and we were cutting back.

Q: You're talking about the Clinton administration?

MAYBARDUK: Right and McAllister left and I forget the guy who came in after McAllister, he was a labor lawyer and was possibly unsuited for the job. [Ed: Daniel Tarullo served as EB Assistant Secretary from July 1993 to March 1996.] He came in with a view that free trade agreement was probably a bad idea. The administration was supposedly for free trade.

He later went over to the domestic council of economic, the domestic committee of economic advisors, the economic equivalent of the NSC and he ended up being over

there, which was one of the reasons why the Clinton administration could never get its trade policy straight because of the fights within itself.

Anyway these guys show up and I had been told by the, well I had been told by everybody that my pick of new economists hires were OK. But I still didn't have the final word. The new hires had asked me and the executive officer for economics said yes and so on. Well they show up the same week, a little bit earlier than I had expected and I was told we can't hire them.

Q: Oh dear.

MAYBARDUK: Now one has already given up his job for a year on a sabbatical and the other has given up a job at the IMF to come work for us. I could not get anybody to back me up; I had gone all the way to the top, not to the director general but just under it. I said, "We promised these guys, I got a letter promising these guys, it got signed off on." We never did give them the job. They both had to…now one of them got a teaching job and is now back at school in Maine and the other one ended up going to Treasury and is now one of our senior people at Treasury. I mean in the meantime Bill Dewald who was the previous Deputy Director and a very good economist, had a lot of publications to his name, had taught at Ohio State, a major university and was recognized in the field, and was already disgusted, and he is now even more disgusted so he leaves us and goes off to become the director of research at the St. Louis Federal Reserve, one of the most prestigious jobs in the country and we lose him. You know, it's just…anyway the end result at the end of the two years I was busy closing the office. Sandra had gone off, she was still around but she was heavily involved in the Middle East stuff so it was my job to close the office, try to find jobs for the permanent staff, say goodbye to the guys who would…it was a very discouraging period.

Q: Well where did you go?

MAYBARDUK: I hadn't been assigned yet but I had arranged to go over as the Deputy to the Latin American bureaus economic policy staff. Actually I think it's the Office of Economic Policy ARA/ECP. But before that happened I got nominated to go to the National War College. Johnny Young had become head of senior assignments and I had gotten my promotion in the fall the year I arrived at the EB job. So I was a new FSO-1, so the next year I was given an opportunity to go to the National War College.

Q: You were there…that would be a year's assignment, so this would be summer 1993 to summer 1994?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, for a year, a wonderful year. I went to the National War College the one here in Washington, D.C., Fort McNair, which was a joint war college, its run by State and the U.S. Army, the U.S. Department of Defense. There were about 15 other State Department officers.

Q: So tell me a bit about your experiences there, what did you gain from it?

MAYBARDUK: Well it was seminar type teaching; it's mostly learning from each other and your fellow students. The National War College has the advantage over the other war colleges as it can easily get speakers from Washington, the government. So most mornings we had a major speaker, followed by our reading, which was probably 50-80 pages a day we had to read, 3-hour seminars in the morning and 2 1/2 depending on the lecture. We would sit around and discuss the material maybe the professor's talk. We had several electives during the year. I guess during the year too I took a yearlong course in war gaming, I wrote several papers. My son by this time was in about eighth grade, ninth grade, and my other son was maybe entering junior high I can't remember exactly and I'm after both of them to write their darn papers you know and I find one night after I'd lectured them I said, "Now I've got to write my own term paper which was due the next week." So I had to pull an all-nighter. I hadn't done that in a long, long time.

I wrote on (President Charles) de Gaulle and the U.S., was de Gaulle really a friend of the U.S. or no? Anyway, I got an award for the paper; I forget how I got it. I managed to write it overnight. But we would write papers every few weeks we would have to write a paper. But I mean what I really got out of the school and some of it was going back to what I'd learned in graduate school about how to think strategically, about national security strategy which I'd been introduced to before but, of course, now I was fifteen or twenty years older and had been through a lot of this so I had a much greater appreciation of it and, of course, my fellow students did so too.

In the class we had two FSOs, we had one person from USIA, or maybe it was only two of us. I think we had somebody from AID. Oh yes, we had someone from AID because when I first met him I found out he had been in Rwanda with Cynthia Perry after she had gone to Rwanda. He comes over to me and says you know a Cynthia Perry? I said, "I'm so sorry." About six months later I'm in the department somewhere and the DCM who had been with Cynthia Perry in Rwanda was with him in the hallway and the AID officer introduced me. The guy came over and just gave me a big hug; she had been cruel to everybody. But I shared a library carrel with this one Marine officer, a guy named Jim Mattis, you probably hear about him every so often. Jim is now a three-star general and could be the next Commandant of the Marine Corps. He also has a habit of sticking his foot in his mouth every so often and saying things like, well he introduced himself to me, he said, "Hi, I'm Jim Mattis, I'm a Marine, my job is to kill people." Somewhere along he said that recently and it got in the press and he got criticized for it. He was involved in both Iraq wars and in the second one he actually fired one of the generals, one of his commanders in the middle of the war because it wasn't moving fast enough.

Jim was a real Marine but he was very smart and I really had great respect for him because if we talked about the first Iraq war he talked about going into Kuwait City and told us the story about some very brave Iraqi's who were sitting there trying to take out a tank with a machinegun until the tank ran over them. Then he said, "I felt sorry for these guys but I was really angry at their officers to just waste their men like this." So, tough as nails but also in some ways a compassionate guy. I mean if I'd ever been a soldier I

would have liked to have worked for him I think it would have been… So you know, really exceptional people.

Q: How did you feel the military was looking at things at that time because we were just coming out of the Gulf War which had been a great success? Prior to that we were sort of looking at what went wrong in Vietnam. Did you feel that you were really looking at a rejuvenated military?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, oh yeah. I think so. Actually it was interesting, what were the issues at the time? Gays in the military?

Q: Gays in the military?

MAYBARDUK: That was a big issue. I can tell you that there was no sport of it whatsoever. They did not like Clinton; there was a strong reaction against Clinton. I can't remember if we started intervening in Yugoslavia.

Q: Bosnia really hadn't come up by that time had it?

MAYBARDUK: No, it hadn't I can't remember.

Q: This year was designed for the military to train the people who were going to be general. Were they beginning to look not at what the Soviet Union was up to which was now defunct, but what was going to happen in a messy world where all sorts of…

MAYBARDUK: Let's talk about it. It's interesting, I can't remember very well about that. There was still opposition to going into peacekeeping kind of stuff, it was not, I mean there were mixed feelings about it but it wasn't accepted. I mean years later when I was teaching at the Army War College it was accepted. But it really wasn't accepted at this point.

Q: Did you get any feel for the outlook of the Army, Air Force or Marine's differentiation?

MAYBARDUK: Oh yeah, that was the nice thing about the war college is you began to see…for me I began to see how different the services were. I mean you know with this idea that State and the military don't speak the same language but it was clear that the services didn't speak the same languages either. Goldwater-Nichols Act, which was calling for the integration had passed a few years earlier. The Act was an act to make things joint, to require that officers serve with other branches of the military and so we had a class that was divided between the Air Force, Navy and Marines. I mean we had all branches in there and they were getting to know each other too. I mean it was…by the time I got to the Army War College ten years later I felt that the jointness had gotten much better, they were much more comfortable with each other. But I remember it as much in terms of the jokes that went on I mean everybody made fun of the Air Force, you

know, before you built the air base you built a golf course, which I think is true actually. Oh, this was the time of the tail hook scandal, with the Navy, right?

Q: Navy fliers sexually harassed other female Navy fliers.

MAYBARDUK: Swear to God I carpooled with one Naval aviator and there were others around, I swear to God they never did get it. They never did get it; they were embarrassed by it but only in the sense that they got caught. You know there were other things; the interesting thing that struck me I thought the sharpest officers there were the Marines.

Q: You know, everybody I've ever talked to says this because the stereotype is the Marines charge up a hill, but I think at the senior leadership levels everybody acknowledges Marine talents.

MAYBARDUK: There were one or two Marines who fit the stereotype but as strategic thinkers as sharp people who could see past the military to the politics, the Marines were well ahead of everybody. I think it is because of the nature of their service in what they do, which is small operations often in support of embassies and elsewhere, support of political goals. Some very sharp people in the Navy and Army I couldn't tell you there was very much difference between them, just different. In my particular group I think the Navy was somewhat ahead of the Army but I don't think that was true in all the groups and definitely last was the Air Force. If there were any bright heads in the Air Force I didn't meet them when I was there.

Q: Well then we're talking about 1993-1994. In the summer of 1994 what was your next assignment?

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, I found in my own training…I found that the war-gaming course was very frustrating. I didn't understand what goes on in war-gaming courses and I really felt they were always looking to achieve a result. It's more about processing as results, I've now learned that and I've learned to appreciate that but at the time I didn't. So I ended up playing POLAD (Political Advisor) several times in various war game scenarios.

Including the political adviser to North Korea when we played all the other war colleges down at Maxwell Air Force Base. I came up with a brilliant strategy for beating the other side but the game wouldn't allow us to win it because you had to end up in a nuclear confrontation, that is how the game was set up but we had loads of fun. It was kind of frustrating but it was good training actually, it was very good training for whatever happened.

Q: Oh sure it goes through as you say the process.

MAYBARDUK: The process. I took a course in Central Asia, which actually turned into mainly a study of where my family name may have come from. I can't remember what

else I took. But I just came away…you know I had already worked a lot with the military in Sierra Leone.

So that made me comfortable and this made me more comfortable but it would have been nice to have done this before the other; I would have done a better job at it. But it was nice synergy and I didn't think I would ever have to use that material again. It turns out I did, but I didn't know it at the time.

That was also a year on a personal side that my son really was in trouble, my older son just serious psychological difficulty as a 15-year old.

Q: Think this had any roots in the traveling around?

MAYBARDUK: Oh yes, well we came back from…and this is important, only because it will tell a little bit about the Foreign Service experience. He's a very bright kid with IQs in the lower 160s somewhere and reasonably athletic and a nice outgoing personality. We were overseas in Sierra Leone, at the American International School and of maybe 60 kids he's doing very well in the school academically, he leads the school academically, he kind of leads it…he's a leader of the school, he's teaching everybody baseball along with the admin officers son. His father is the deputy chief of mission of the American embassy and even though it's a small mission and in the great scheme of things it isn't that important in Sierra Leone that is like being close to God. We come back to Reston and he starts junior high in a big American junior high school which has all its racial problems and everything else and we come from one of the poorest countries in the world to a place where everyone is worried about the labels on their blue jeans. It just didn't compute to him and the first two years he had trouble at first academically and then caught on and did fine, but socially he felt very isolated even thought he had friends back from elementary school were still there. He just felt very alienated.

Then when I went off to the Army War College he got accepted to Thomas Jefferson as a technology school. I would have killed as a high school student to go to that school. I mean I visited and it was everything that I would have ever wanted in a school when I was interested in science back then. But Peter, I think more because of his emotional difficulties, didn't do very well there either. Academically he no longer found out he was not tops socially but he was no longer in the top academically and he just fell apart. The day I graduated I went from my graduation from the war college, did not stay for the reception afterward because I had to go home and hospitalize my son.

Q: How did that come out?

MAYBARDUK: Well, he's now a graduate of Berkley law and is busy running around Latin America helping countries get cheap medicines for the poor. So, yeah, but it was about a five year period there that I think I aged 15 years. It was a very difficult period and that was going on so that went on my first two years back when I was going through difficulties in that economic job in the Economic Bureau and it continued because my

younger son then started having problems too really through most of my Washington tour. A very difficult time.

I have a story first about my son before we go on. I just thought of it. In addition to working on essential medicines right now Peter is part of a small group that will be going to Sierra Leone in about a month. He's already talked a couple times with the foreign minister, they are going over to explore the possibilities that about three, four or five of them will go over for a couple years and actually help work with the government. I actually don't think he should do it, I don't think that he is going to accomplish that much but things seemed to have turned out well.

Q: What was your next assignment after the War College?

MAYBARDUK: When I left the War College I became Deputy Director for Central America with the help of Anne Patterson who had known me from Nicaragua days. It was the largest office in the Latin American bureau; I think we had 13 officers and four secretaries or something. We actually had three Deputy Directors, one was being demoted because Panama was no longer important, but that still left two full time Deputy Directors. Anne was the Deputy Assistant Secretary and I'll think in a minute who was the office director, Hamilton, John Hamilton. So I ended up picking up supervising the Nicaraguan, Costa Rican, Honduran part of ARA/CEN's portfolio.

Q: You were in Central America; you were doing this from when to when?

MAYBARDUK: From 1994 to 1996 I guess. I was in direct charge of the Honduras, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, desks.

Q: OK well let's start with Costa Rica. One rarely hears about Costa Rica.

MAYBARDUK: Costa Rica…the biggest problem with Costa Rica is there were two problems. One was trade issues and the other was some nationalized property. Compensation had been going on for years and the Costa Ricans always said they were going to pay for it, there was never any question they were going to pay for it but somehow it never happened. We had meeting and meeting and meeting after this and it was going through the courts so there was some kind of arbitration. I mean every case was different there was no…you couldn't lump the cases together and you know, but somehow it just didn't…

Q: Is this the way of dealing with it?

MAYBARDUK: I don't know, I don't know but eventually I had a meeting with the Costa Rican ambassador and I told her I said, "You know, we have a verb in the State Department these days, it's called being "Titoed. I said, "It refers to the fact that you promise something and then it never happens." I said, "You know our relations with your country are very good but when your country becomes a verb you've really got to start

thinking." I think they eventually solved one before I left and they said they were almost ready to solve the other two. A few years later I learned they hadn't been solved.

The other issue we had with Costa Rica was well there were always some trade issues and so on but the big one was the banana issue. This was the fight between the U.S. and the EU (European Union) over bananas.

Q: God, this was a war that's been going on…

MAYBARDUK: Forever. USTR (U.S. Trade Representative) at some point, I forget the dates…Costa Rica ended up siding with the Europeans not because it wanted to side with the Europeans but because if it didn't side with the Europeans it would have lost its European market. We were making no headway with the Europeans, you know. As I remember correctly before the WTO (World Trade Organization) the findings in the GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs) weren't all that binding to force the issue and so on.

The issue was, if I remember correctly, it's been a few years, the Europeans give preferential treatment to bananas coming from their former colonies – Africa and the Caribbean Islands. Was it Dole or Standard Fruit? I can't remember, it may have been Standard Fruit wasn't happy about this because it didn't have much in the way of operations in any of these places so its fruit couldn't compete in the European markets. It had been a heavy (political) contributor to President Clinton and to (Senator) Dole and the pressure was on to really help this company. I still can't remember if it was Standard Fruit or Dole. But, whatever, the case was an interesting one, it didn't affect U.S. producers, it only affected U.S. investment overseas because the U.S. doesn't produce bananas. It was never clear what our standing was although I guess we eventually won the cases. But poor Costa Rica, which was not the guilty party, ended up siding with the Europeans only to protect its own market and the U.S. trade representative was not happy with this and we threatened to put sanctions on Costa Rica. I mean this was like, I kept thinking about the Peloponnesian War, the Flaccidities of the Peloponnesian War when there was this small city state tried to stay neutral in the war between Athens and Sparta.

Because it wanted to stay neutral, Athens democracy destroyed this tiny state. I learned that in high school somehow and somehow it came back to me after all these years later and I kept saying did anyone remember Flaccidities? Essentially what we were doing you know we were going to drop the boom on Costa Rica and its textiles and everything else simply as it managed to defend itself, find a survival place between ourselves and the European Union. Actually Costa Rica held its ground, threatened to take us to the GATT, I think it was the GATT at the time, I don't think the deal had been passed yet and we initially backed down but it was tense for a while. I was very unhappy about it, as it was just totally inappropriate. We were all doing this basically because the son of the owner of the company had lost a lot of money somewhere and the father needed to take back the company and make it up. We were going to do our best to put a couple million Costa Ricans in real problems because…I mean the Europeans were not blameless in this but

we needed to go after the Europeans not the middle states. So those were the two Costa Rican issues.

Q: Nicaragua then.

MAYBARDUK: Well since I had been in Nicaragua before the beginning of the Sandinista period I had cataloged the first hundred or so expropriations of American property. Nicaragua had had elections and the Sandinistas had lost. Violeta Chamorro had won; she was the wife of the newspaper editor whose assassination triggered the fight against Somoza. She was now president and she was very much a balancing figure, I mean maybe it was what the country needed at the time but she wasn't really willing to go after the vested Sandinista influence in the army and the police and every place which was frustrating the heck out of all of us who had worked so hard to get rid of the Sandinistas but they were….so we had a history on several issues.

One, was elections were coming up, we wanted to make sure that they were fair elections these were, I guess, parliamentary elections I can't remember. Roger Noriega on Jessie Helms staff was convinced that AID was sympathetic to the Sandinistas and had not been giving either proper relief aid or guaranteeing the elections to a demobilization process for the Contras and they were very unhappy with AID.

Q: I'm surprised because the Sandinistas had such a bad reputation politically and all that AID taking their side would seem to be rather peculiar.

MAYBARDUK: It was mostly the appearance but not completely. The head of AID then was Mark Schneider. Anyway he came out of Kennedy's staff and I think he was in fact not very sympathetic to the Contras although as far as I could see we did an adequate job. (Senator) Helms staff was also pushing very hard to get compensation for all of the people whose properties had been seized, which were being settled on an excruciatingly slow one by one case. They had actually gotten some legislation that if it was not…we had to certify every six months that satisfactory progress was being made. The legislation covered all confiscated property. It wasn't just property confiscated from Americans, people who were American citizens at the time of the confiscation, but Nicaraguans who became naturalized American citizens. This, of course, was not international law. Our view and the State Departments view of the International Law was yes we have a right and an obligation almost to support American individuals' property that was confiscated but that does not extend to nationals of other countries; but that's not what Helms wanted. So we had this constant pressure from Helms and hearings and everything about it; why haven't we pushed hard enough. Nicaraguans, they were making an effort but it was so slow and there was property held by some of the commandantes that made things worse. So this was a continuing issue over the two years.

I was once over at Noriega's office about something and he just tore me apart verbally about the lack of support for the demilitarized Contra's. I was sympathetic to the Contra's, I had worked in Nicaragua, I was very sympathetic toward them but Roger Noriega was known for his temper and still known for his temper. So there was a delicate

balancing act for two years dealing with the Helms staff. Luckily I'd had congressional relations before and that made me, I think we talked about that earlier my working for Danforth and then the Africa bureau, that gave me a real ability to deal with some of this situation.

Q: Helms staff also included Debra something who was married to a Honduran.

MAYBARDUK: He was going to be a presidential candidate and lost.

Q: He was very much involved in that. Was she a figure while you were there?

MAYBARDUK: Yes, she was there and so was the guy who is now the National Security Adviser for Latin America. Oh yes, the whole staff was there and it was very difficult. So basically those were the two issues of Nicaragua and I'm not sure we accomplished very much. We did have decent elections and I think things were held properly. Oh, I had a big fight with a general you would recognize. He was in the Gulf War; he was head of SouthCom at the time, McCaffrey.

He was the general who was insulted by the Clinton staffer early on. McCaffrey was, you know, kind of a hard-charging kind of guy as most commanders are and John Mason was our ambassador to Nicaragua. I had first met John earlier, I may have mentioned that earlier when I was at the Office of Monetary Affairs and he was the Deputy Director for the Philippines and the debt crisis, so we had a good relationship. But we were trying to bring the Sandinista army back into the fold and there was some exercise that came around going on in the Gulf between El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. All the naval forces of Central America were involved in and with some U.S. help, some sort of joint exercise. Mason suggested that the Nicaraguan's be allowed to send observers and McCaffrey was totally against it. I spent a day on the phone running about an hour ahead of McCaffrey and each time talking to everyone of our ambassador's for Central America to get them on board. So that when McCaffrey called our acting assistant secretary for Latin America about five in the afternoon over the issue, I had managed to get everyone of our ambassador's on board and even managed to convince McCaffrey's number two, who, of course, couldn't say anything, but I kind of won that battle, I felt good about that.

So I think those were the issues about Nicaragua. I went down there once and saw some old friends.

Q: Had we…I mean in Central America as we are looking had we built these oversized, over fortified embassies and things?

MAYBARDUK: Oh yes. I later became office director for the whole office and I want to talk about the other countries as well. But yes, we had, and, in fact, we had built this huge AID mission in Costa Rica, one of the biggest AID missions in the world, which we never occupied. Since the Central American wars were over we cut the AID program to Costa Rica and we just turned over to Costa Rica this great big office complex. We had built this fort of an embassy in Salvador, probably like what we are building in Baghdad

these days, I don't know, I've never been to Baghdad. When the war was over we cut our staff to a fraction of what it had been. So the other country was Honduras, oh, there was a lot going on in that region.

We were involved in declassifying all these papers from the Central American war; mostly it was materials that the media wanted, except in the case of Nicaragua and Panama where Helms wanted them. Helms wanted them as much as anything to derail the ambassadorship of Bob Pastor to Panama. Pastor had been involved in the negotiations in the White House when Carter returned the Panama Canal. We actually hadn't turned it over yet that was happening during this time too. But he had been nominated to be ambassador and Helms was determined to stop it and so one of the things he did was insist that we went through all the files and declassify everything we could about Nicaragua and Panama and Honduras. Honduras came from a Baltimore Sun request who heard that Negroponte who was now head of intelligence, had been negligent or even conspiring human rights violations in Honduras, during a fight. When I got there we had just declassified Salvador and we were now also in the process of doing Guatemala, which I was not involved in, thank God, because that became the nastiest one.

So over that period I basically read every cable…I am the desk officer responsible for it but I had to check it all and I ended up reading all the cables I had written out of Managua. When we discussed Managua earlier I had mentioned there were two memos, one about Nicaragua receiving arms from Eastern Europe, which I had written, but couldn't get out as a cable, we had to send it back channel to the desk officer, Anne Patterson and to the agency as well. The next one about arms transfers from Nicaragua to Salvador, which I wrote, I picked up the information and wrote about it just before we approved the $75 million grant which wasn't supposed to be approved if we had proof that the Nicaraguans were giving aid to Salvador. So I was really curious were these memos going to reappear when I started declassifying and what do we do about them because they pretty much indicated the Carter administration had lied. They weren't anywhere to be found and probably somebody just bothered to make sure that they didn't get into the files.

There was no really embarrassing stuff in Nicaragua. It was quite clear when they made the finding that the Sandinistas in Nicaragua were involved, that they were looking the other way as best they could but Helms didn't pick up on that and Pastor never got his nomination because Helms just put a hold on it and just never let it out of committee.

The Honduran one was difficult because the Baltimore Sun guy was absolutely determined that there was something that we were hiding and there were several issues. There was a unit of the Honduran army, I can't remember the number it had a number to it something like 301 or something that became involved in counter terrorism, probably engaged in torture and probably engaged in eliminating people. Then there was the U.S. priest that disappeared and the question had come up that we knew about it or something about it and at least one other case.

Sort of a leftist priest who had been traveling with the guerrillas when the guerrillas got ambushed. One of the stories gave that he had been wounded and died in the jungle later. I don't know if we ever cleared up the story. The files were pretty clean. We didn't find anything to show that we even knew about this unit, its activities, Father Carney I think was his name. We tried to find Father Carney but there was no information that we ever knew what happened to him. I forget what the other case was.

There was just one little handwritten note which somebody, from one of our ambassadors I can't remember which one now, can we put this Father Carney case to bed now? It was a little handwritten note, which raised all sorts of questions again. We got this from Negroponte; I think it was Negroponte.

So this was, we were doing this during the time remember when the government ran out of money, the U.S. government and I was declared to be one of the essential people so this office of 13, there were two or three of us total now. This coup went over Christmas. I actually had to talk to the Director General at one point, nothing was going on so I took the phone and called anybody at that point because they happened to be around and to get his help to give us more staffing on this because we couldn't do it. I did a lot of handholding with Baltimore Sun reporter telling him exactly what we were doing, I called him and let him know what we were doing and how far we had gotten and waiting for the stuff from the CIA so I thought I handled it pretty well. He was unhappy but he didn't make a big fuss over it because he was constantly informed of the progress including the fact that I had to go to the Director General to get more manpower because this was such a slow process. So we came out clean. We did not come out clean in Guatemala, which was not my responsibility, and it became a real mess.

Before we get there let me see if I can finish with these three countries because I think these were the major issues in the three countries. What I didn't mention was I actually spent my first three months in that office with something very different; I'll come back to it later. I got involved in the Haiti invasion so we should come back to that at some point. Anyway about at the end of the first year Anne Patterson became the Principal DAS and I actually think she actually was acting secretary and John Hamilton moved up to a Deputy Assistant Secretary position and I was made acting Office Director. I served for almost a year as that office's director and the other deputy director became my deputy now which didn't cause a lot of friction but it could have been better. So now all of a sudden I was still an FSO-1 but in charge of the largest office in the Latin American bureau. We had six or seven countries there and we had just constant problems. It had been a somewhat frustrating year by the way, the whole time it was a frustrating year because John Hamilton had been working for 13 years on Central American in one way or another, I was the office director. He knew every country better than his office directors did and so when any sexy issue came up John took it to the top. He flew down to Latin America with Hillary Clinton.

A funny story that Hillary Clinton and I think President Clinton neither had any conception of Latin America. John reported back when they got to Buenos Aires they had no conception there were cities that big in Latin America, the whole Clinton policy on

trade was focused on Asia and no understanding of the markets and what was in the region at all. Later, they went to the Summit of the Americas and so on then the administration turned around, but it was interesting just we talk about getting an experienced president but we had one who had never been on the continent until…the concept of it and neither did Hillary

The other issues facing that office, one of them was textiles.

Let's first talk about the documents declassification in Guatemala. Guatemala is always a pain. Guatemala is always got these death squad issues even as of today UNITAS getting killed and so on. But the Guatemalan declassification was in part driven by Jennifer Harbury, a woman who claimed to be married to a Guatemalan guerrilla leader who was captured by the Guatemalan army and disappeared. She was making a very, very, very difficult time for us publicly and so on wanting to know what happened to her husband, claiming we obviously had the information and so on. Well we didn't have any information; we didn't think we had information. We looked under his name, they searched all our files, and they searched the CA (consular affairs) files as well, and no information. Then six months into it somebody decides to check his name under a nom de guerre, a commandante so and so, and up he pops. So we now have a cable, either a State or CIA cable. So one of our DASs who was a political appointee and I can't remember his name either [Ed: Richard Nuccio]. All these names will come to me eventually. He picked up the cable, and we were getting grief not only from Harbury but also the senator from New Jersey who was corrupt and involved…Torricelli, Torricelli was one of our big pushers on us.

He (Nuccio) picked up the cable and he carried it over to Torricelli's office without getting it cleared. You know, it was still a secret cable and hadn't gone through the review process yet. So all of a sudden now we were hiding stuff, now we were hiding stuff. The DAS lost his security clearance [Ed: an action taken by then-CIA Director John Deutch], and was eventually forced out; he is still bitter about it today I've heard him speak. But he screwed up. But as far as I can determine I was not involved, I was sitting off to the side I had enough problems on my hands, but anybody working in the Guatemalan office got sued by Harbury. There is still a suit pending that has never gotten very far but she keeps raising it every so often. Some or all of them have left the government but there is still a private suit against them.

Luckily my name never appeared; I stayed below the horizon. I was watching this and the end result of this was either an executive decree or a law…well it turned out even though we were giving no aid to the Guatemalan army during this time, the CIA still had contacts and may have been giving aid to the Guatemalan intelligence services. So this became a big scandal and we ended up passing a law, pushed by the NSC, saying the CIA could no longer use bad guys as their agents.

Q: Could no longer use what?

MAYBARDUK: Bad guys as their agents. So we couldn't use anybody in al-Qaeda as our agent. We disclosed the name of everyone of our Guatemalan agents and we ended up releasing all the documents leading to all the Department discussion memoranda; things that are supposedly protected so we could have free internal discussion. We gave everything away.

I mean, you know, one of the things that happened during that period is that I wrote some notes, for instance, on how to handle the confiscated property cases in Nicaragua. These were internal notes, internal memorandum of how we might approach it. I ended up writing that this was, there is a term of art [Ed: deliberative materials] for it these kinds of documents for internal discussion only. They are supposed to protect you. So I ended up making that explicit at the top, only made one copy and then asked that Anne Patterson return it to me when it was done and I destroyed it and other people were doing some of the same things. So there is going to be a period there in the diplomatic record there is going to be a lot of documents missing, because you couldn't protect anything. You could not protect anything. This was just a very tough time.

I can't go into much more but there is also evidence that Harbury was actually an agent of the Guatemalan guerrillas and that she was used to push the peace process to negotiations. She was revved up every time she was needed to. I don't know if there was positive proof but there was evidence. So the whole thing…there was no evidence that she ever married the guy. There are no pictures of them together, there is a marriage license from Texas but it was one where you post something on the board saying I was married to so and so and if there is no objection then this marriage will become effective after a certain date. What her real relationship with this guerrilla was and so on is still murky to me. It was a terrible, terrible period.

In the meantime with Panama there are elections going on and a whole ball of things. Panama, we were getting ready to turn over the canal. There were issues of how to dispose of the bases. The Panamanians were willing to let us keep one base if we would pay rent on it. As a matter of principal, for some reason, Washington didn't want to pay rent on the base. We tried to get McCaffrey to say that we needed that base for drug interdiction purposes. To use it to fly out of Panama there to search for drug planes and stuff and so on. He was arguing for the base but he wouldn't say that and we ended up giving up the base. Then of course, as drugs are he was busy looking for bases to establish things again and go back in because we could have had the base, we could have had it. The Panamanians didn't want us to leave; they just wanted some principal paying for it. We also had a case there; there was a road that was being built by the U.S. military through Panama and going through some village. Somebody raised some ecological problems with the road; the roads were to a very isolated village and related to the president somehow. But it was going to divide a rain forest even though it was a dirt road and there was some question about species that they put a road through and so on. Basically, the DCM took a position opposite the ambassador who is a former congressman, and the AID director and I think they both ended up getting fired. Again I wasn't terribly involved in it but it was going on at the time.

The other issue was…I'm probably missing fifty issues. In fact, it was not a period of major crisis; it was just a lot of ordinary stuff following a very difficult political period of the Central American wars, cleaning up after.

One issue I did get involve in though was the textiles. Kathy Griffin or somebody had come up with the fact that there were 15 year olds working in textile plants in Honduras.

Accusations were being made that pregnant workers were being fired in Salvador before they gave birth so the company didn't have to pay all the benefits. In Guatemala labor union leaders were getting killed and this was coming as we were talking about getting a Central American free trade area. It hadn't happened yet, but they were talking about it. So it was finally decided to send a U.S. delegation down to investigate all this. Anne Patterson called me up and asked me to be the adult on the team, give the team adult supervision. It had an actually very good person from the Department of Labor and a friend Jorge Paris Lopez, a friend, and we had a good time. We had a representative of the Overseas Manufactures of Textiles Association. We had a representative of the textile workers, we had somebody from the AFL/CIO (American Federation of Labor/Congress of Industrial Organizations) and were met down there by their regional labor attaché, a representative, he wasn't the attaché, they have a kind of strange arrangement down there. Somebody from an NGO in Chicago that was all for Guatemalan human rights problems, so it was quite a mixed delegation.

We went first to Honduras, then to Salvador and then to Guatemala. In Guatemala and Honduras our job was to look whether there were underage people working there. We also heard that in especially the Korean factories they locked the doors and workers were beaten with canes if they didn't produce or whatever. So we met with the Honduran ministry of labor, we talked about the problems. They said they have inspectors going because they can't be everywhere all the time but they do have easy access. We talked about that maybe they needed to get more inspectors. We didn't know really what the problems were; we were just going through motions. We had a labor attaché down there, basically we got told there were lots of 15 year olds working in there but there was a procedure by which 15 year olds have to have either their parents' permission or if they don't have parents they have to get the ministry of labor's permission. Then we went and visited a couple of the plants and we did a surprise inspection on one, we just sort of walked in. Sure enough there were lots of 15 year olds, not a lot but there were some who looked younger. We were able to talk to them. Some had the permission and some said they had signed their parent's name. If you looked at the plants, I quickly came up with my own test about conditions. Would I rather work in one of those plants or would I rather work in the backroom of an American dry cleaning establishment? These plants were well lighted, they had fans, they weren't necessarily air conditioned, doors were not locked. There were restrictions on bathroom times so it gets in the way of production flow. I couldn't come away from that feeling that given what I knew about life in the third world these were particularly bad places to work buy there are about 30 or 40 factories and we visited three so there was no way of telling if we had been given a Potemkin kind of village experience or not. In the meantime, both the labor unions and the business sector there were very concerned that we were really down there as

protectionist measure to take the ability of their right to sell fabrics and send them to the U.S. Somehow we got through Honduras relatively OK.

We get to Salvador and there is a war going on - over us. Demonstrations in front of the embassy fearing we were coming down to take jobs away from the Salvadorians. The first night we talked to the workers who were complaining about being fired from this shirt factory, it was a Hathaway or I can't remember anymore of how their jobs were taken away because they were pregnant and so on. The company didn't like unions and so on and so forth. The next day we go to the factory, I get ambushed the TV press from all over Latin America and the U.S. Spanish news is all there. Somehow I get picked out about 30 or 40 workers surround me wanting to know why we wanted to take their jobs and so on. People tell me they saw me on TV back here; I never saw it. What we found was a factory that had plenty of pregnant women in it; I mean half the women in it were pregnant. They told a story about how these people who were fired were part of a labor union who came in with clubs to drive people out and there was a fight and so on.

We could never come up…you know the story, we visited several other plants. The bottom line was the same, they all met my own test this dry cleaners test. It became pretty evident at this point that there is no way a U.S. mission coming down there even a single labor attaché can determine what labor conditions are like in the country, or what violations were happening. I mean you would need a court system for this. These countries had court systems, if they worked or not but…It was interesting by this time we had…the group stayed together despite their diverse interests. The whole group was coming together because we were feeling siege by all sides.

Then we hit Guatemala and the labor people go off to talk to the Guatemala unions to ask them to tone it down and have an intelligent debate about the issues. The guy from the manufacturing group went over to talk to the business people and tell them the same thing. We go into a meeting with the labor union first and we are denounced at length, including wanting to take the jobs away, still talking about labor union leaders getting killed, but we are trying to take their jobs away and so on, right? We could not have a rationale discussion they were so angry. Then we go over and talk to the manufacturers and we get the same thing. However, they are fighting each other and why it became clear to me is that there is a lot of fighting between unions going on, they could not figure out who killed whom. In Guatemala it's almost impossible to figure who killed who because it is all issues in Guatemala and it is settled by killing each other and nobody ever gets prosecuted for it; so there was no way to determine the truth. Actually it is a relatively unionized country and all these countries have fairly strong labor laws; whether they are always enforced or not is something else. So we all agreed that we were not in a position to determine the truth of all things and we probably would never be.

Nevertheless, when we got back that night and we needed a position the labor conditions were terrible and the guy from Guatemalan, the NGO the Guatemalan or the NGO in Chicago well it turns out he only has about fifteen people supporting him with old ladies giving him a lot of money. They couldn't do anything else but write about how bad

things were. So that was my adventures in textiles and my cynicism ever since about the whole issue about workers rights.

Q: Well how did we come out?

MAYBARDUK: Well we made our report, which was Honduras needed some more labor inspectors. I don't remember what we decided about Salvador, we didn't improve anything in Salvador either one way or the other. Guatemala we didn't need to do more to protect its labor union leaders. But I mean I don't think very much came from it except there wasn't a delegation there for quite some time and I think everybody felt we had done what we could. The battle continued in the Congress; they later came up about this orphan that was working in the Regis or somebody and it turned out she too was an orphan and she had gotten permission from the ministry of labor. You know for a 15 year old in a place like Honduras there are not a lot of opportunities.

It's not necessarily like leaving high school; this would be like out working the streets or pulling potatoes or cutting sugarcane. I think that was one of the key Central American issues and I don't know-how we are doing on time because I do need to say something about Haiti.

Q: OK, today is the 28th of May 2008. We're returning to our conversation with Gary Maybarduk. We've talked basically about mainly Central America from 1994 to 1996, but now we want to cover Haiti. What were the issues and what were you doing?

MAYBARDUK: Well I guess I came to Central American affairs as Deputy Director I guess in the fall of 1994 at which time the Clinton administration was putting pressure on the military government of Haiti to leave and put Aristide back into power.

I wasn't really part of that initial phase, I sort of watched it with a certain disbelief but I would sit in off and on the staff meeting in the Latin American bureau and it was quite clear that the Latin American bureau did not agree with this policy at all. The policy had started, if I remember correctly, when we began to allow Haitians that landed on U.S. soil to have the same treatment as Cubans who landed on U.S. soil and as soon as that was discovered the migration out of Haiti sort of boomed. I can't remember all the details but the Clinton administration kind of flip-flopped and then started to deny people, but that was brought up on charges that it was treating the Cubans and Haitians differently.

Which we were and which we still do. So at some point the focus turned on attacking the problem that caused the migration. Since we weren't about to change economic conditions in Haiti, in fact, we had put sanctions on Haiti, which would make the situation much worse. At one point Haiti had about 60,000 people working in the assembly plants that made American baseballs and tee shirts and everything else and with the various sanctions this went down to a few thousand workers. All our sanctions did was basically make the situation worse; it didn't affect the Junta at all, which was sort of immune from that kind of thing.

Q: This, of course, was always the problem with sanctions I mean, at certain times something's can be carefully crafted but essentially it's just the poor slobs who don't belong to the real elite who get hurt.

MAYBARDUK: They get hurt that's definitely true. The Clinton administration went back and forth, it was a very embarrassing time to be an American diplomat on this whole issue. We wanted to invade and yet we didn't. At some point we sent this group of engineers in on the landing craft, the USS Harlan County. Interestingly it had also visited Sierra Leone a couple times earlier when I was stationed there so I had a couple of Harlan County baseball caps. But anyway there was an angry mob at the port which was probably organized by the government and we changed our mind and turned tail. It was kind of even more embarrassing. Eventually the administration got its spine together and backed its spine up and decided that it was going to go in. If the Junta was not going to return Aristide who had been the elected president then we were going to force them out. Of course, there was major controversy about this in the States because if I remember correctly the CIA and I think maybe the DIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, but I knew the CIA were reporting that Aristide was also a killer and not the nice guy that he was being made out to be, but he certainly had the support of the Black Caucus in Congress.

So eventually we went in. About a week before we went in, I was called up to the front office. Anne Patterson at this point was still our Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Caribbean and Central America portfolio. She said that she needed help because AID was planning for the post-invasion period and had already had plans to spend $200 million a year for the next five or six years in aid. She figured we had maybe $200 million for the first year but nothing like that for following years. She said that, the first time she used this term, she said that AID needed adult supervision and asked me to sort of represent the bureau with AID on development plans and actually to take over the position as the chief economist on what was called the Haiti working group at that time. The Haiti working group, at that time, was lead by Congressman, I want to say Congressman Gray, former Congressman Gray and…

Q: He was the leader of the Black Caucus.

MAYBARDUK: He was the leader of the Black Caucus, I think it was Gray and his number two was James Dobbins, who by the way knew nothing about Latin America and never served in Latin or Central America or the Caribbean. Anyway, he was considered because…

Q: He's a Russian hand.

MAYBARDUK: Right, he was heavily involved in the hullabaloo in Bosnia, I think, and he is a very difficult man to work for.

Q: I've interviewed him he's fine.

MAYBARDUK: But I mean one of the problems he was having was keeping a secretary, he was having trouble keeping a personal assistant. But in any event, he was the head of it but he sort of ran at a different level than everybody else, he sort of ran congressional interference and White House interference so the working group was headed by three people really and I can't think of the first one. But Mike Kozak was there, Mike had been the former, I think, assistant secretary of legal affairs and was an old Cuba hand and later became my boss when I went to Cuba and I will think of the other guy in a minute. In any event, they were doing the grunt work and a lot of the planning for it. I ended up head of the economic group, which was really a group of one at that point. Anyway, so anyway we get ready to invade. President Carter went down, he basically negotiated the departure of the…

Q: Well Colin Powell and I think somebody else too.

MAYBARDUK: Yes, Colin Powell and Carter. Carter I think just believed we weren't listening to the other side and we just needed to talk to the other side. But Carter generally believes in these issues and in this case he was probably right. He did manage to get the Junta to leave just before we…

Q: The 82nd Airborne was on its way.

MAYBARDUK: So he probably saved a few lives not that the outcome would have been any different but Carter probably did save a few lives and Aristide was brought back. Well, in the meantime, I was an observer to this, but in the meantime I started going to AID meetings and looking at what their aid program was and I became appalled very quickly…or what I found was appalling is a better way of putting it. There was no coherency in the AID program. They were going to do everything from send people out to villages in pantomime groups to teach about democracy, to do reforestation which the country needs but we'd been doing for years as the trees get chopped down as fast as they grow up. I think there was something in radio, but they were all over the place and they really were planning all the programs sort of envisioned each one having maybe having $40 million apiece for the next five years which was, you know, would have destroyed the AID budget for the rest of Latin America and we weren't likely to get that kind of extra money. It just wasn't coherent and then when I read the individual programs they were very nebulous, I mean there was clearly no serious thought being given to any of this stuff. It was how quickly can you write a proposal kind of thing.

So I started objecting at the meetings and started just pointing this out. Mark Schneider was the Assistant Administrator for AID at the time and I think he got clearly embarrassed by it. I mean this went on for six months but by the end of the six months I mean he had replaced most of the leaders of the staff in Washington dealing with Haiti and a few in the field although we couldn't do as much in the field because he would not replace the AID director who was a loose cannon. The AID director's name I don't remember had been brought in by Larry Pezzullo, who before Graves had been the coordinator.

Pezzullo, of course, I worked for in Nicaragua many years earlier and I have great respect for him but this was the time we were trying to get the Junta out and so the AID director they brought in at that time was someone who had supported the Afghan resistance during the Soviet era so it was a cowboy who knew how to get money out to whomever was going to make life the most difficult for the Junta. But he was totally the wrong person for this operation and I went down there and found out that…and I talked to all the people in the various projects and again it was clear that some of the fundamental problems in AID and we've had people that hired for agriculture or people they'd hired for education many years earlier and they weren't doing that kinds of programs anymore so they turned them into loan officers and they would try to do other things. They really as a whole weren't up to the task.

Q: You know looking at this as a system was there anybody an equivalent of policy planning or policy coordination?

MAYBARDUK: Policy planning was supposed to be done by the Haiti working group. But AID, of course, always runs its own shop anyway or it did back then and I think it is hard to say what has happened to AID now, as it fairly exists. But an AID director wasn't taking any advice from anybody. More to the point every time someone would give him advice he tended to move in the other direction as a reaction. He was going to run his own shop and said if anybody tried to intervene he was going to fight them. But anyway back in Washington where the decisions about the money was being made, when I would make these objections and point out the inconsistencies or the lack of planning and everything else it did have an effect and it did have an effect because Mark Schneider was there and was tired of being embarrassed. Mark is actually very efficient at conducting meetings. More than once he managed to effectively cut me off or change the subject but nevertheless I say within six months he replaced most of his staff and the program had definitely improved but it was a tough program.

Q*: But were you able to sit down with Schneider man-to-man and say you what you can't say that at a meeting?*

MAYBARDUK: I don't know if I ever had a talk with him. If I didn't I should have but if I had that kind of really sit down but I certainly talked to Mark privately in the corridors on other things from time-to-time and tried to point some of this out. But other things started to happen in the meantime.

Q: What sort of support were you getting from your bureau?

MAYBARDUK: They were very supportive they were very supportive. Anne Patterson really wanted me there and really wanted somebody to take charge of this.

Q: Well you know I heard a lot of controversy about Aristide. He was a fairly nasty person but there is also talk about his mental stability. Was this a subject of concern?

MAYBARDUK: I don't remember discussions of his mental stability but I do remember we were already finding how difficult he really was. As time went on what I didn't discover but other's discovered was that probably the most needed thing needed in Haiti was in fact a police force that worked. The previous police force reported all these extra judicious killings and that was part of the human rights effort to replace the Junta. Basically we dissolved the entire police force but you now it takes a lot of men to provide a police force and you needed to speak French and everything else so that only works so far. So there was a desire to really build a professional police force, which included only hiring people who had finished high school, which is a relatively small group for Haiti, totally retrain and totally build up this group. In the end that absorbed most of our AID money, it first took money out of the justice account, which was run by another bureau, but if I remember correctly it ended up taking a lot of the AID money. In the first year or first two years it cost a half a million dollars, just that program because we trained, equipped, did everything. Somewhere in that process we then discovered late in that process we discovered one of the problems was there were no jails to hold the prisoners. We had to send a cable that when somebody visited one of the jails, found it deserted nobody was there. It turned out that one of the reasons the police conducted extra judicial shootings was because if they arrested somebody, he was eventually let go. So then they had to develop a program to build prisons.

Now we understand that these days it's been interesting as I worked later on in the office of construction and stabilization that's not well understood but I think that was the first time that we had actually confronted the fact that one of these failed societies is not just the police, it is the judicial system, which was also a problem, and jails. So we ended up working on all three. This was not my job, this became Kozak's, Mike Kozak was really the specialist on this. He really stayed stateside on all this. If you haven't interviewed Mike Kozak you really should.

Q: Well where is he? Is he still in business?

MAYBARDUK: He's still in this business. He is still at the NSC and probably will be until the next administration. I suspect that half of the current administration will be gone but Mike has been everywhere and has done everything and would be a wonderful person to interview.

So that is going on and in the meantime someone, I think from the Undersecretary's office of economic affairs, had mentioned to me the problem of these assembly industries. This was fairly early in the process so I sort of decided to take a look at that. What I discovered was a labor force which I was told had 60 thousand workers, but I never confirmed that. It was probably down to well under ten, probably 5,000-assembly industries. These provided very good wages by Haiti standards to produce major league baseballs; they did all sorts of things. We needed to get them back to work. Well that turned out to be far more difficult than I anticipated and I think anybody anticipated. Once they had moved and most of these firms were foreign owned, American owned, some were Koreans and others. They were the kind of operations you could pick up and move fairly easy even if you have to leave your sewing machines behind. You can put up

a prefabricated building in a lot of countries, buy more sewing machines and go to work in Central America and elsewhere. So a lot had moved and were satisfied and weren't coming back. Others had basically gone bankrupt or close to bankruptcy and needed capital to get started again. So we got rid of the sanctions, of course, and the next thing was to get capital. I talked to a lot of these and they all said they had trouble borrowing from the banks and they wanted to get government guarantees or loans. The only real place to do that was the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

So I spent a lot of that six months trying to work with OPIC, Citibank and others; the idea being maybe get Citibank to lend the money and OPIC to guarantee it. OPIC was very resistant because, if I remember it correctly, they have a certain risk standards they've got to meet and so on and there may have been other problems as well. I managed to get a lot of pressure put on OPIC from Gray, from Dobbins, I think from the White House. There was a vice president of OPIC by the name of Morningstar, I can't remember his first name, he was a political appointee. The end result of this was a government committee was formed to look at all these issues and Morningstar got to be head of it. But it never worked; it just never worked. We did our best and we finally got OPIC almost all the way there but Citibank wanted a one hundred percent guarantee, it didn't want a 90 percent guarantee, it wanted a hundred percent guarantee. It didn't want to lose its extra 10 percent if it made a bad loan.

So then there was some talk of, I don't know if it was grants or something else, which to me was a terrible idea. In the meantime Congressman Gilman from New York, Congressman Gilman from New York was either the chief minority or majority or he was the leader of the House committee on Latin American affairs. He wanted help for some of his constituents who had lost factories in Haiti. So we were getting a lot of pressure from Gilman's staff including if I remember Roger Noriega who later became assistant secretary for Latin America was on his staff at the time and Roger is a very insistent type of individual.

Anyway I did my best, we got close to a deputies meeting. This would be a meeting at the deputies' level from various departments in government. But it was a fairly large one and it was at the White House or the NSC, or the White House I think it was a conference at the White House in which this came up and I had done my best but I had also talked to these New York firms. When it became obvious to me in those conversations and, in fact, it was very explicit I wasn't at all sure that they were going to go back to Haiti they wanted the money to pay off their debts and to pay out something to their shareholders and then maybe they would go back to Haiti. I think Dobbins was running the meeting but I'm not sure and this idea was being pushed forward. I finally stood up even though I was more of an observer in the meeting than a participant and I said, "We can't do it, it's illegal." That didn't go down well, as you can imagine. I said, "I talked to these firms in New York and this is exactly what they told me and if we did this this would be illegal." There were only about 100 people in the room or 75 people in the room. The head of the office of Haitian or the Haiti working group, whose name I still can't remember at the moment, would later write in my EER [Ed: the annual Employee Efficiency Report], well he would tell people that I almost got myself thrown out of the meeting.

It was Leonard, what was his name, but I killed the proposal. I mean once you've said it in front of 75 people that what we were doing was illegal it was a direct subsidy to a U.S. firm for non-development purposes, they just couldn't do it. I mean there was no way they could do it, there was no way somebody was going to take the risk of having been told it was illegal to go up and try to do it. So that killed that proposal. I wasn't making a lot of friends either with AID or Dobbins. I did meet with Dobbins several times and was amazing to me that Dobbins was absolutely determined to do it; to give Gilman what he wanted; to give the Black Caucus what he wanted and absolutely unwilling to listen to anything reasonable on the realm, just totally inflexible. Dobbins has a kind of good reputation in Bosnia and maybe elsewhere but in this operation he was considered a huge hindrance because he simply wouldn't listen. He simply was insistent that whatever the political powers wanted we should deliver and we couldn't in a lot of different cases it was impossible and he just never accepted a no for an answer…never accepted a reasonable no, a reasonable explanation as an answer.

So a lot of things I tried to accomplish did not happen. We did not get the assistance for the assembly plant workers and a few years later I think the number finally rose to 12 or 20,000 hired but we never really get the economy back. We did permanent damage to the Haitian economy with our sanctions. We did get some IMF help, I forget all the details but we got some IMF help. The AID program did not go off on its 17 different directions but ended up instead focusing primarily on the legal-judicial-police system.

In the meantime, by the time we got the police trained and we tried to get them new offices Aristide started appointing old cronies including people with bad human rights records to head the police. Even before I left working on the Haiti, I worked on the Haiti thing for about six months; we were starting to get again extra judicious or assassinations probably done by some of Aristide's people against his opponents. I never had proof that Aristide was involved but it was sort of the belief that a lot of his people were. So the police force on which we had spent all this money was being corrupted almost as soon as we got it into place.

Anyway after about six months I got a lot of praise from the bureau, the bureau was very happy for what I had done. I also remember we also had a donor's meeting and we really did not have the money for what needed to be done in Haiti and the French were always very interested in Haiti and so this donor's meeting was in Paris, I believe. Though I don't remember all the details we wanted to get the French particularly and the Canadians involved in putting in more money and they were interested in doing so. The issue came up as to what they could do to help the police-judicial-prison system. They were being very nice but at some point the AID director who just didn't want anybody else in his pie gets up and says, "Well then you better get on board right away because we are seriously thinking we need to change the whole legal system from the French system to the English system," leaving the French just absolutely speechless and this was something that had never been discussed, ever discussed. He left the meeting soon after that and I spent the rest of the meeting trying to get the French calmed down. In fact, at this point I did talk to Mark Schneider, the AID administrator.

I said, "You have an absolutely loose cannon down there. He doesn't want to get with the program, he won't admit anything is wrong, he keeps changing his mind, he doesn't have anything…he's out of control." Mark didn't have a lot to say but they didn't change the AID administration. I also talked to, I think, Bill Swing was the ambassador, if I remember correctly and Ricky Huddleston, the DCM, and they obviously had no control over the AID director and obviously weren't about to take any action. The econ officer was up to his wits end because he clearly saw what was going on and he couldn't do anything about it. So it was an interesting experience in the difficulties of coordination of agencies and getting coherent government position on anything and bringing the U.S. government together or failing to bring the U.S. government together. Even if it's something the president considered a vital importance.

Q: Was there anybody who could kink of knock heads up at the top or…?

MAYBARDUK: That should have been Dobbins, but Dobbins was off in the wrong direction. But no, the answer is no, because even if Dobbins wanted to, OPIC wasn't going to go along. It was an independent organization. AID there is a lot of passive aggressive behavior and people just not doing what they are asked to do, but always-giving excuses. I don't think we ever…the eventual decision which I don't know how it was made to focus on the police and judicial system and prisons I think brought a lot of people together because that's where the people all agree and often come together not in a lot of other areas. Of course, essential your whole mission in Haiti failed I mean Aristide was not a good president, the economy did not recover, human rights situation just got worse again and, of course, guys like Gilman's assistant who later became an assistant secretary. Well, the assistant secretary under this current administration or the previous one remembered all this and when they got in office, they went out of their way to shove Aristide out, which we did.

Whether it's for…I think it was for the better, I don't know. I think we are doing a little better now I don't know I'm not sure but it really was an interesting example about how difficult it is to bring an interagency process together.

Q: Well Aristide had the attention of a group in Congress.

MAYBARDUK: And he was very much pushed by the Black Caucus, very much. It was interesting because I had worked in Africa for several years and always felt that it was very hard to get the Black Caucus to really pay attention to African issues and foreign issues in general, but they definitely picked up on this one.

Q: Well, of course, there was both in New York and in Florida Haitian constituents.

MAYBARDUK: There was another issue in this whole thing that is worth discussing. Give me a second because there was another issue.

Q: OK, what are you thinking of?

MAYBARDUK: Well we can talk a little bit about the interagency group. It would be kind of useful if anybody ever reads this someday. That is that in courses in international relations or national security strategy there is usually a section on the interagency process where sometimes they talk about when you first start studying foreign relations you talk about single act or Marxist, as if the United States was a single entity or if Canada was a single entity. But then when you get down further into the weeds, you find out that the policy process in those kinds of countries are not done by single actors they are all done as part of a complex. The process in Canada, for example, each of the provinces has a certain abilities that in managing foreign affairs or foreign trade that the U.S. belongs to the central government belongs in the central provinces of Canada and makes life very difficult in negotiating with Canada sometimes.

Well, in the U.S. the interagency process is a very difficult one. One of the problems is, I don't think I could have articulated it at the time in Haiti but I later learned to articulate it, that if you look at who knocks heads, who has control over the process, the answer is no one but the president. There is no single person in charge of all aspects of our foreign relations and bringing all the agencies together between the president, who reigns but has trouble ruling, and the ambassador and the country team, where the ambassador in theory has and to some extent in practice does, in fact, exert control over the agencies under him at a given embassy or mission. But even the ambassador does not have control over how much money or the staffing that is brought in to support that function. He has to have a negative ability to throw somebody out of the country if they are not doing what he wants, but he can't control the allocation of money, which comes from Washington through the various agencies in Washington and from Congress. That system of government makes the coordination process extraordinarily difficult. We saw it in Haiti where we were unable to get a firm grip on AID, the conflicting strains back in Washington or ways of addressing the assembly plant worker problem. I guess we did come together and adjust this problem and just a whole attitude of how we handled Aristide became a very difficult problem. It is really a good case study of the difficulties of making foreign policy.

Q: Well then, moving on from Haiti.

MAYBARDUK: So leaving Haiti; Haiti basically took my first six months in Central American affairs and eventually Anne Patterson called me back and said, "Gary, you need to start focusing specifically on Central American affairs," which I've already discussed.

Q: So then what?

MAYBARDUK: Well from Central American affairs we went to…I was trying to get another DCMship and actually the DCM committee listed my name for 13 DCMships. I had impressed the Bureau; they had said good things to the Director General but none of them turned out. I don't know what I was doing wrong or if it was just bad luck but virtually none of them turned out. In the mean time, I was offered the Deputy

Directorship of the Southern Cone Affairs: Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay. I was recruited for that so I was planning to go there until Davidow's secretary called me up and said, "Gary, I need somebody to rebuild the economic policy staff office," which had fallen on bad days. It had become nonfunctioning, which I would have jumped for except he said we are going to combine that with the new office of summit coordination. He said that would give it a lot more clout than the U.S. government because the office of summit coordination has direct interest to the presidency.

Well, under the Clinton administration we started having every four years summit meetings of all the Latin American and North American countries, which was a good idea actually it was hard to come up with an agenda with those but actually it got everybody together once every four years. So we've done it once and the idea was to now do it a second time. I resisted this at first because I was happy to become the office director, I really wasn't sure I wanted to become the Deputy Director of that office at that particular time. I didn't have full authority, he wanted me to rebuild the office pretty much from scratch and I kind of wanted authority and I didn't get that so I hemmed and hawed.

I basically got an agreement though that I would get a decent DCMship afterwards so I took the job. The new head of the new expanded office was Ambassador Richard Brown, who had been ambassador to Uruguay [Ed: serving from 1990-1993]. He knew nothing about economics and was not prepared to have me sit in on the WHA (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, successor to ARA) staff meetings which I thought was very important and who really wanted to be the interface between myself and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, the new one coming in. I really should not have taken it because it really was stacked against giving the job done, but I took it anyway. It was an office that I had always wanted to serve in. I had previously been scheduled to become the deputy director of the economic office much earlier when something else came up.

So I took it and I only took it for one year though because I was up against the six-year rule, six years in Washington is the maximum. I figured I was beginning to get a little long in the tooth to make it to the senior Foreign Service and I needed something that was going to helped, this job in Central America definitely helped but I needed something to give me a boost. So I took it for the one year. The bureau was quite happy to approve an extension for two years but I just wasn't sure how it was going to work so I took it for one year and it didn't work well enough that I wanted to stay a second year as it turned out.

In any event, my job was how to rebuild this office and it was a very difficult job because it really ceased to function. It was a shame because there were some very good people left. A gentleman named Thompson, I can't remember his first name, he was an old Latin American hand and fairly good economist, he was very good, there was a WAE, former State Department official who retired early and worked about three days a week and she was very good. But after that things sort of fell apart rather quickly and we really had a very weak staff. Thompson was good, but he was trying to manage this office, it hadn't had a director in several years. It had one actually it had one from Commerce who had

come over from USTR, a woman who was also pretty good but she wasn't familiar with the State bureaucracy and couldn't really fit in.

So I came in on top of this, she's leaving, Thompson is still there and he would have been my deputy if I had a deputy, this is the office that was being combined. We got one new officer who was reasonably competent and so what do we do with this office? What function was it going to serve? Well, one was to do trade and trade negotiations. We had a new deputy assistant secretary for EB, whose name I can't remember, who was an expert on trade issues. But I didn't know trade issues and I made that clear when I came in. I had gone over to see him and he was in EB and told him I was not an expert in trade negotiations, Thompson was not an expert in trade negotiations, Janina Slattery who was the WAE did know trade but she was only three days a week, she knew the Caribbean.

Q: WAE means somebody who's been retired but brought back in When Actually Employed (WAE) status.

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, it's a way you bring back retired Foreign Service officers and using their skills but they can only work a certain number of days a week or a month. So I was really OK on the financial side, which nobody else in the bureau knew anything about, but our two or three trade people were people who essentially retired in place and either were not very competent or just didn't show a lot of energy. One in fact, had just been in an accident and was partially disabled, he couldn't work very well and one was so bad that anything I gave him he made such a mess of. I tried, I tried very hard to give him things to do but every time he did it; it was a disaster and it reflected badly on me and got my bosses angry.

So my job started out to be recruiting new people for the following year and to try to make us relevant. What I did was basically I did what I had done previously when I was deputy in economic policy and staffing the economic bureau, I started assigning the officers I could effectively assign to some of the desk officers. So one would work with the Argentine-Brazilian, Uruguay-Paraguay desk, others would work with the Andean affairs to attend their staff meetings, to see where their problems were and seeing how we could approach and help them. That worked. We actually began to take this very serious role involving Andean and Southern Cone affairs, although the Southern Cone had a couple of ambitious officers who were a little worried about our involvement.

Nonetheless, there was, remember, there was a major crisis in Ecuador and because we had gotten deeply involved in understanding Ecuador we were able to step in and provide guidance both to the Andean country desk and to Treasury. We were able to answer all their questions. This was the first time and there was a fellow by the name of another Brown, I can't remember his first name either, a fairly junior officer who understood the Internet which most of us did not, I mean we are talking back in 1997, 1998, I guess, or 1996, 1997 I guess. He knew how to dig up information better than any of us and at this point nonetheless none of us really knew. He was able to read the Ecuadorian papers that were on the net. It opened my eyes and it opened a lot of people's eyes to the fact that we actually had more information than the embassy was reporting. It made me realize that

the world had changed but it was still fairly new in the Department at this point. So we were able to keep really on top of that and I think there was a crisis in the Southern Cone as well I can't remember what it was but we did the same thing. We were also just able to assure…at that point we could assure people that Argentina was not yet heading for a crisis, because it did become a crisis but at that point we looked at all the indicators including the fact that the Argentine debt was not particularly high proportion of their GNP (gross national product) or the budget better than the U.S. therefore it looked like it was relatively secure although both Brown and Thompson would point out to me that there were problems that the country could not get hold of its debt being generated by the provinces that the government was responsible for but couldn't control. It is also a problem in Brazil or a similar type of problem in Brazil. Brazil had never become a serious problem. In Argentina it was in fact a problem back in 1999 or whenever Argentina collapsed.

It's collapsed so many times. But when it did collapse again, I think in the early 2000, that was, in fact, one of the major approximate causes which my staff, I didn't, but my staff identified fairly early. But at the time we were able to say it was not a problem an immediate problem although it became so. So we ended up really coming back as a player in that and the other area we became a player in was in getting a NAFTA parity for Central America. We had worked on this a little bit when I was in Central American affairs but what NAFTA (North American Free Trade Association) had done to some extent invalidated some studies that had been done when I was running the policy and analysis staff of EB where we had said it probably shouldn't have a major impact on Central America. It turned out it was. Mexican fruits and vegetables were taking away Central American markets, the assembly plants along the Mexican border were taking away textile jobs in Central American because Mexico had made their preferences that all of Central America had preferences as well it wasn't as great.

And they were closer. Although Central America is pretty close actually if you look at the geography at the way it curves around it actually isn't that hard to get up there; but it was closer. So we were trying to find some way to offer parity or at least give some benefits to Central America to help compensate for this. The White House had talked about this and I think when I was still in Central America affairs had authorized the secretary of State, Warren Christopher, to go down and support parity and even as he was literally making speeches on this, the White House was undercutting him, the White House Economic Council was undercutting him. Dan Tarullo, I think was his name, had been the assistant secretary of EB in the second half of my stay in policy analysis staff. He had been a labor lawyer and he had moved from the Economic Bureau at State where he was very ineffective to the National Economic Council where he was effective but basically he was pushing labor issues from the perspective of labor unions. So we had a situation of one part of the administration fighting another - a difficult sport.

Nevertheless, it remained U.S. policy that we wanted NAFTA parity but the U.S. Trade Representative's (USTR) office essentially gave up on it, just saying that it was not feasible politically. But we kept pushing forward and two things happened. One, I attended a meeting of the manufacturing association that represented the companies that

tended to have offices in Central American – essentially making textiles in Central America – and I had talked to staff members on the Hill. Congressman Archer's staff and some of the others who were free traders. I attended the meeting of the manufacturers and I basically said, "Look, the Congressional staff seems to believe this is possible, but they really need a push and they need a push from you." So they got really involved and started to push, they hadn't been before. And I had met off and on with the Central American ambassadors who now got involved. So we actually got a nice coalition going there, the Central American ambassadors, the manufacturers association, again I'm not sure all of this was legal from the point of view of my lobbying the Hill and Congressional staff aides but at least it was in terms of U.S. policy it was the stated direction of U.S. policy.

Just before I left the office at the end of the year we actually got legislation in the House and in the Senate. There was a difference in the language between the two that would have to go to the reconciliation committee, which sort of reconciles these things. But we actually got legislation which would have given NAFTA parity to Central America and it died after I left because Senator Roth of Delaware, I think it was Roth, wanted something about railway unions and wanted to make a deal with the White House but the White House wouldn't make a deal. So it got lost after I left; but it came very close and it was several years before we got anything like it after that. But at the time when I left we were still pretty proud of ourselves because virtually with an administration who was essentially a nerd on the issue we had managed to push it that far and my experience back working with Congressional relations earlier had helped in that process.

Just before this crisis at some point the Central American ambassador's had a meeting and asked me to it which was kind of an interesting position to be as I was not the office director of anything, I was the deputy office director and I was not USTR but they asked me to it. They basically said, "Look, we've been thinking about this," and this was everybody including the Dominican Republic, "and while parity with NAFTA is nice we think we want a similar arrangement that Mexico has and our countries would be willing to negotiate a Central American free trade association and we would be willing to take on the responsibilities Mexico has taken on in reforming and granting recessions back to the U.S." This was where we really wanted to go and this was the beginning of the whole sense of the American Free Trade Association. There wasn't much you could do with what their proposal was at the time because the Clinton administration clearly wasn't ready for it and our best hope of getting anything was with getting NAFTA parity. Of course, neither happened right away but eventually the Central American free trade association had been approved finally.

It took a number of years or so but that was the beginning of it right there in that kind of meeting because the Central Americans had decided this was getting very tough and maybe they just ought to make the willingness to commit to their own reforms in exchange for getting it.

Q: Well you get strong union opposition to a lot of these.

MAYBARDUK: That was the main opposition because you had the textile workers union as being the main opposition. In South Carolina, they were constantly losing jobs to these assembly factories in Central America, even though some complex rules were in place to save American jobs. I mean basically what happened is you could assembly shirts and tee-shirts and pants and so on, if you used material that had been already cut, cut so that the various panels of the shirt, cut in the United States using material made in the United States or if the material had not been made in the United States using thread that had been made in the United States. Each one of these was different, I mean for each textile product the rules were different but it was all designed to try to keep as many jobs in the U.S. as possible while at the same time accepting the fact that if you didn't allow at least some of the manufacturing in the U.S. you eventually would be taken over by imports from China and elsewhere which our other agreements were going to come anyway.

The Central American's had decided that they were willing to go all the way because they wanted to beat China before it become part of the WTO. They knew that once China became part of the WTO the Chinese textiles were going to just swamp the U.S. market. But they had an advantage and this was geography. China to ship textiles to the U.S. would generally do it by ship and it would take several weeks. The U.S. textile market, the U.S. fashion market had changed. You no longer had four seasons you had sub seasons. You had fashion trends develop what was popular that you needed to change mid-season and you needed people who could do it and sometimes in small lots. The Central Americans being closer, having a better understanding of the U.S. market, having the ability of turning around quickly these productions because it wasn't that expensive to fly shirts from Costa Rica to New York and if you do it quickly had a niche on the market that they thought at least overcome the Chinese cost advantage if they could develop the markets and keep the markets so that was why they were anxious to move and make sacrifices in other areas to move quickly to really keep themselves established and increase their penetration of the market. So that was kind of the economics behind that.

Q: Then where did you go after this year?

MAYBARDUK: Well there were two other issues before we finish this. One was the banana issue continued. I had discussed this issue with Costa Rica. We got deeply involved in bananas. A paper was done by somebody in Australia which really laid out the issues in a way that we began to understand them because it was so complex and then Janina Slattery did a paper which was also very good she was on our staff and did it really good which rally laid out the issues. It really gave the State Department a much better understanding of the issues and where we were coming down, dealing with the USTR and dealing with the Europeans and the WTO. So our office played a much more important role in that although we didn't come to any conclusion although we didn't get any resolution on that time. It is still going on eight years later, ten years later, 12 years later but some resolutions eventually did occur and we were helpful in that.

The other issue was the generalized system of preferences (GSP) which was the system by which we give preferences to less developed nations for certain types of goods which we basically genuinely don't produce in the U.S. anyway. The Economic Bureau in one

of its few, I feel sorry about this, one of its few occasions when it actually took the lead in a new idea was proposing that we cut general system preferences for countries like Brazil who were doing quite well and probably didn't need it that much so we could give still greater preference to African textiles and African fruits and vegetables and we generally tried to help Africa. That was a decent initiative, which I was pretty sympathetic toward but which Davidow said, "We're not going to cut anything from Brazil." So I had to basically do what I didn't like doing but was use EB.s own tact, since I had served in EB ten years earlier or more had noted that EB had developed to an art which was this practice of not ever really saying no to anything but simply refusing to sign off on my notes to the secretary.

Q: Sort of a veto type of…pocket veto.

MAYBARDUK: A pocket veto without really putting yourself in a position saying no, just a pocket veto. Then EB, economic bureau had developed this to a great art and basically it didn't want any of the regional bureaus to come up with a new idea of their own, because they didn't want to confront Treasury or the USTR. It was a long-standing practice; it was sort of a doctrine in economics. It was really a nonproductive way of operating. But all of a sudden we were doing it to them, which made me feel uncomfortable, a certain satisfaction, but then comfortable but I tried to get deeper into it to see what was the problem giving these preferences to Africa. It turned out it wasn't the numbers, it wasn't the budgetary issues, it was other issues which I confirmed by talking to the people on the Hill and then talking to our own people in the Congressional Relations bureau. I was able to come back and simply point out to WHA the budgetary issue was not the issue, I don't remember what was the issue but it wasn't the budgetary issue. That was not taken kindly by EB or Shaun Donnelly who was very good in person, by the way. I really felt sorry for the officer who had shown the initiative, but we basically killed that. It probably came back later to hurt me when I was looking for assignments a few years later as a role I wasn't comfortable playing; but I do think that we ended up on the right side of the decision and eventually they got the preferences for Africa anyway without taking away from Brazil. So I think we ended up on the right side of the issue but it was not one of the more pleasant issues.

So where did I go after that? Well I seemed to be doing very well being offered assignments in Washington but I was really having trouble getting assignments overseas as deputy chief of mission. Davidow had promised to help me but there weren't any DCM jobs open in Latin America in my rank and the only one really open was Guatemala where they were having trouble coming up with a DCM. But I knew the ambassador, I had kind of worked with the ambassador and I didn't want to serve under him.

Q: Who was that?

MAYBARDUK: Don Planty. He had been an office director in the Latin American bureau but he was just a difficult guy to work for. I ended up talking to the person who ended up as his DCM and she said it was a very difficult experience and I had already

served under one difficult ambassador as DCM in Freetown and I did not want to do that again. So that was the only job opening and I was too naïve to understand at the time that I should have asked Davidow to help me get jobs in the bureau elsewhere, talk to the director general and the DCM elsewhere. I didn't think to ask him that.

So, the bureau put me forward, the bureau wanted me to stay as the deputy director of the new office of Summit Coordination and Economic Policy but it had been a very difficult year. Brown continued to assist both me and the deputy assistant secretary who turned out to be a very difficult guy to deal with. He knew his trade issues very, very well but was insecure in his job and very tense. One of the few times in my career I ever got yelled at was in this job.

There was an issue of negotiations on tariffs for white liquor or dark liquor, it was essentially rum. In some of the negotiations and some of the trade areas somewhere the issue was basically Brazil got a very large allotment to export rum. Brazil can produce rum very cheaply because it grew all the sugar for this ethanol operation and that has meant that it has become a major producer of sugar worldwide and that hurt other sugar producers and that hurt the Central American countries, the Caribbean countries did very well with specialty rums and we didn't catch it. Well, I know this issue existed and, of course, I had told him it wasn't a trade export in the beginning and the trade person I had in my office didn't catch it and so I got really dressed down which I don't think was fair and I got an apology from the assistant secretary over it but it didn't make life very pleasant. My direct boss defended me too but it was inappropriate and it was inappropriate he was just insecure in his job the deputy assistant secretary and so…

Anyway, so I wasn't particularly interested in staying and so I started looking and I also needed to get a promotion I didn't know if that would lead me into a promotion. Eventually I ended up going to Havana as the Political-Economic Counselor Under Kozak who liked me but wanted somebody else because he wanted a political officer. The bureau insisted and I got that job and Kozak was later gracious and said he was happy to have had me and we did a great job together. So off I went to Havana.

Q: So you were in Havana from when to when?

MAYBARDUK: 1997-1999. It was actually about 22 months, it didn't even end up a full two years and that was one of my better assignments. It was a strange assignment but it was one of my better ones.

Q: OK, today is the 4th of June 2008. You are going to Cuba. Let's talk about how stood matters between the United States and Cuba in 1997?

MAYBARDUK: As they had for the previous forty years. Basically many Americans don't realize we have a sort of diplomatic relations with Cuba. We don't call it diplomatic relations but we have a U.S. Interest Section as part of the Swiss embassy which is kind of a fictitious idea because although we would use Swiss stationary when we sent memos to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs we were back in our old building, built and finished

just before the revolution at a $30 million renovation. Just recently we had a $30 million renovation and it's considered an architecturally interesting building. We actually had 50 Americans in that embassy making, the Mission, which made it the largest diplomatic mission in the city.

We could talk regularly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; they were usually very good about meeting with us quickly when we had a request. They didn't often answer us quickly and sometimes they didn't answer us at all, but they would at least talk to us. But we had no ability to talk to any other Cuban officials. The reason was that the U.S. government had put restrictions on the Cuban Interest Section here in Washington saying that it could not talk to any other U.S. government officials without permission of the State Department and with a State Department person present. I don't know if they ever bothered to ask here but we did ask and it went unanswered in Cuba. So basically in Cuba, and it was much worse for us than the Cubans because virtually everybody in Cuba works for the executive branch of the Cuban government, almost everybody. Cuban officials here can talk to Congress which is a different branch of government and in theory we could talk to their legislature as well and usually we would talk to (Ricardo) Alarcón (de Quesada), who was head of it, a member of the Politburo and so on.

So contact was very limited, relations were never good; there had been small improvements in relations. We had cooperation between our Coast Guard and the Cuban Coast Guard on narcotics, they did cooperate some but not as much as we would have liked but then we wouldn't give them any intel about who's coming and where they are coming from either; it was kind of a one-way relationship and the Cubans and they reacted accordingly. Nevertheless we had some cooperation and the American Coast Guard officials went down and were always welcomed, much more than embassy people.

Q: Who was the head of our interest section when you were there?

MAYBARDUK: It was Mike Kozak [Ed: serving from 1996 to1999]. Mike had been, I think by that time he had been assistant secretary for legal affairs, a Berkeley trained lawyer when he came into the State Department. A Berkeley trained lawyer who through college and graduate school was a member of a pit crew for class one car racing, a car fanatic, a very smart guy.

Q: Well OK, we've got 50 people there. What could you do, if you couldn't talk to anyone?

MAYBARDUK: Mostly it was visa issues. We had an agreement with the Cubans coming out of the mass migrations that had occurred after Mariel [Ed: boat lift of April to October 1980] and then the rafter crisis of 1994. We had an agreement with the Cubans that we would take 20 thousand immigrants a year, immigrants not tourist visas and processing an immigrant visa is a laborious task; lots of investigations; lots of back and forth to Washington. So a large part of the embassy was processing immigrant visas. There was also a reasonable size consular section to deal with Cubans who were looking for tourist visas to the United States, which we granted relatively few but it didn't stop

the lines from circling the mission some days. I say "mission" as a diplomatic terms of art. We didn't fly the flag, so we can't call it an embassy. Kozak was the chief of mission, or the principal officer, he was not the ambassador.

So that was most of it. There was no trade, of course, there was no agriculture. I was chief of the combined economic and political sections normally they are called the Political-Economic sections but I was an economic officer so I renamed it economic-political. We shared a secretary with the DCM whose name escapes me but was a very good man, an excellent staff, a superb staff. Then I had two officers working for me.

Q: If you can only talk to the foreign ministry how about on the economic side, for example, how did you figure in it?

MAYBARDUK: Actually, lack of contacts made it in some ways one of the easiest embassies I'd ever worked at. I mean by 5:30 pm most of us were out the door including the Principal Officer and the Deputy Principal Officer (John Boardman). I can't think of any other embassy that I got to leave at 5:00 every day, or any Washington job that I got to leave at 5:00 every day. We divided up certain portfolios. We had a human rights officer and Tim, I can't remember his last name, I guess, was very good and his job was to talk to all the dissidents. So he was very busy, Tim was probably the busiest person in the embassy because the dissidents wanted to talk to us and we always wanted to talk to them. He had a tough life because the Cubans were all over him, they tailed him, he got roughed up once at a church, he would go on leave back to the States and come back and find his apartment had been thoroughly searched. They let him know it because his underwear drawer would be all messed up. There was no…they were playing hardball there.

The other officer was a junior officer, a Princeton grad I think he was in his second or third tour and his basic job was to keep in touch with the other embassies and the foreign business community, which wasn't large, but it was there. There were the Swiss and the Brits and the Dutch. He did a lot of his contacts over the tennis court but in any event he brought a lot of good information in.

I handled the economy and a lot of the government-to-government contacts and developing contacts was very difficult. For some reason they allowed us to have a contact with the economic research institute so I did talk to an economist over there from time-to-time. I could talk to my neighbors although you had to figure at least one of those neighbors was spying on us. I talk to people in the streets. I actually spent a lot of time talking to our Cuban employees at the embassy themselves because they knew an awful lot and just talking to them we gained a lot of information.

Q: Did they have the usual thing that they were called into the police from time-to-time to be debriefed?

MAYBARDUK: Well, I assumed they were. The government basically supplied them to us in the first place. They officially worked for the government and they rented them

from the government although the government paid them maybe $15-$20 a month and we openly under the table paid them $300-$400 a month which made them basically the best-paid Cubans in the country.

But I wrote a cable on the structure of the Cuban agriculture on what kinds of farms there were; most were owned by the government, but not all. Some were cooperatives and some were actually private farms in Cuba too. It turned out to be a very complex structure so I actually did a cable on this. It took me quite a bit of time. I met a few farmers on trips around the country and got a little bit of information but basically I got most of it out of talking to people on the staff one who had a mother who still had a private farm and others, plus I did some reading; something you don't normally do in the Foreign Service. academic stuff, but something…

Q: How was Cuba surviving at that time since the subsidies from the Soviet Union were over?

MAYBARDUK: The Soviet Union subsidies ended about 1990-1991 and Cuba went into what they call the special category. When it first happened I mean they were completely flat-footed, they had very little foreign exchange of their own, they lost money on sugar, they had nickel but the nickel prices were down, minimal tourism and the Soviets had been contributing somewhere between $6 and $10 billion a year, it was actually about the size of their entire economy. Critically the Soviets provided the oil and now all of a sudden they had to buy their own oil and they didn't have the money to do it. So the first thing they did, or one of the first things they did is they imported a million bicycles from China and this is not a common thing at the time, but everybody in the country learned to pedal a bicycle, grandmothers, children, everybody. Apparently it really brought the country together in some sense I mean everybody was in the same boat. My predecessor said he used to sit on the front porch of the house that he and I occupied and said it was very quiet, there was no traffic. By the time I got there there was some traffic. It was just all bicycles.

People were hungry people were very hungry. They couldn't supply their own food and they didn't have the money to buy it. In a normal Cuban sort of way under Fidel they occasionally managed to get somebody to give them a loan, which they absolutely never paid back. But calorie consumption, I think, fell to below something like 1900-1700 calories per person which is, of course, what most of us should be on for dieting purposes. But in any event Americans produce about 2,000-2,500 calories a day or something like that.

I talked to one priest and that was another source of contacts. I actually took a couple tours of the country, I talked to priests on one of the trips and he pointed out to me that the children that he taught were maybe a foot shorter than the ones he had taught maybe 20 years earlier and lack of nutrition was showing. A Cuban who was the embassy doctor told me privately, he said that "you know our older people are in pretty good shape with preventive care and so on. They are doing pretty well but when the next generation comes along we are going to have really serious problems because the people couldn't get the

critical nutrition they needed as children. They are not going to have the strong constitution that the elderly had." I'm a big guy, I wasn't quite so big then but I'm a big guy. There was something happening to me twice in Cuba essentially that had never happened any other place in the world. I'm on the street and some woman says, "Usted es gordo." (You're fat) She said it several times. With the second incident I thought it was indicative that people were hungry. They resented fat foreigners.

Q: There the thought that almost every embargo impacts on the people as opposed to the leadership and in a way is counterproductive. What was the feeling in the embassy about our embargo?

MAYBARDUK: There were varying feelings in the embassy about the embargo. My feeling now, which was probably developed while I was there, was that I wouldn't have put the embargo on if we were doing it then because basically the Cubans got around it pretty effectively. But I wouldn't take it off now, given it's there because I think it will be a very useful lever as Cuba begins to make a transition and I really should stop me from saying that I am trying to write a book about what the Cuban transition is going to look like. I've read several articles on it now that I'm out of the government I've been critical of the administration on some of this stuff but not particularly on the embargo. The Cubans got around the embargo on all sorts of ways.

Q: May be they are getting around the embargo, but you just mentioned the health effects on the younger population, a foot shorter and all.

MAYBARDUK: Well the problem is not the embargo; the embargo makes things more expensive in Cuba, more expensive for the government to buy. It also cost them some income particularly American tourism but if there were no embargo, if we lifted the embargo tomorrow completely, well if we lifted it before Venezuela popped in and started providing them a lot of money the Cubans would have bought very little from us except food which was cheaper because of transport costs because they didn't have the money to do so. The shortages that were there were much more a reflection of a failure of government policy.

One of the big issues that was going on that the Cubans were blaming us for at the time was the lack of medicines in the country, there was a severe shortage of medicines. I did some investigation on that because we had no embargo on this, we required licensing of medicines but they were supposed to be granted relatively routinely as long as they were not being used for re-export or for torture, no drugs were to be used for torture.

Cubans never asked, the Cubans never asked and I must admit f they had asked I think the attitude of the people running that whole program would be to delay and so on, but they never asked and they didn't need to buy that much from the U.S. because they had, now we will talk for a minute about what the Cubans did to sort of recover from the loss of Soviet aid. But they had dollar pharmacies for foreigners and Cubans with dollars could go and buy medicines and those were well stocked and mostly they were well stocked with drugs produced in Argentina. Argentina does not follow world patent laws

on medicine and produces lots of copycat medicines. It's a big issue between ourselves and them, even back in the days of our great relations with Argentina. It was the one thing we simply could not resolve with the Argentineans was the one-year patent protection and they were a fraction of U.S. medicine prices. So I mean a foreigner could get most medicines and they were made in Argentina, they were good high quality and they were available from the dollar pharmacies. The problem was that most people didn't have dollars and actually after I left Castro prohibited Cubans from buying at dollar pharmacies. Cuba dropped its importations of medicines in this special period from about $50-60 million a year to less than $17 million. So it was really a lack of money rather than priorities.

Q: Other issues aside, most people think the Castro regime it has really done very well in the medical field, Cuban doctors are all over the place.

MAYBARDUK: Well on a per capita basis I think they probably have more doctors than anybody else in the world and they produce lots of doctors. There are arguments about the quality. I don't know this, but I suspect this, that the quality is highly variable. Some of the medical schools know more than basically teaching people to be paramedics. Others who are first class doctors, a few Cubans get to study overseas too and you knew the ruling class, there was a special hospital for the ruling class where they had great doctors and good equipment and foreigners could use it. One of the things that Cuba exports is actually the medical services. People come to Cuba to get serviced, medical treatment that they don't think they can get in their own country, but can't get as cheaply in their own country. Lots of doctors, a reasonable number of nurses, a reasonable number of hospitals, hospitals are very rundown, very rundown, a severe shortage of equipment and a severe shortage of medicines.

Q: Were we tagged by Cubans as being responsible for the rundown state of affairs?

MAYBARDUK: I think it depends on the individual Cuban, but I think most Cubans probably realized their own mistakes were largely responsible. Even those who supported the government and a surprisingly number did support the government. I think most were well aware that it was a lot to do with their government.

Q: As part of the group which was dealing with the government, what was your feeling toward Castro at that time?

MAYBARDUK: That there was nothing we could do to change Castro's opinions or policies and that any gestures of good will toward the Cuban government were likely to be met by even more hostile reactions to the U.S. Two that came to mind was we did loosen the embargo a little bit this was during the Clinton Administration on food, not as much as Bush did later. I think we got rid of the licensing on medicines or at least substantially loosened it. Castro just got even more vicious on his attacks on the U.S. The other thing was the Elian case, which came late after I had gone. He was the little boy whose mother drowned trying to escape to the U.S. He was saved and the father wanted him back and the administration basically supported the Cuban governments view on that

and probably cost them Florida votes. But Fidel used the thing to just generate huge demonstrations against the U.S. and for the first time in years those demonstrations were directed at the Interest Section. The Cubans were always good to make sure that we were always protected. It drove us crazy often but they always made sure that we were protected. Demonstrations did not normally happen in front of the Interest Section and there were huge demonstrations. So there are two examples in which attempts to liberalize were met by hostility.

Now others would point that after we were reestablished missions in 1977 I think it was when we reopened our mission there after it had been closed for ten years or more. That is when the Cubans started going into Africa. So there is this lore in the State Department, and it is a critical issue here, there is this lore in the State Department that anytime that we make a positive gesture to Cuba Fidel did not want good relations with us and found some way to cause trouble.

Q: In many ways American public hostility and actual hostility has been a major problem for the Castro regime over the years.

MAYBARDUK: Yes, but I'm saying that when we tried to loosen relations he did not want that. He acted as if he did not want that. Now so this is the standard State Department lore. I don't know if it is completely correct. The Elian case was a classic case of…

Q: This is the little boy.

MAYBARDUK: The little boy that was a classic case of him doing just what everybody says he is going to do. But on the case of the loosening of sanctions in the Clinton years, this required congressional legislation. To get through Congress the bill was laden with language expressing hopes of eventually freeing Cuba from eventual dictatorship and so on and so forth and that these measures would do well to hasten the regime's demise. So we have that kind of language on the bill that actually loosens sanctions and it's not surprising to me that he would read the language and not worry so much about what the bill actually did.

Q: There is the argument that dictators stay in power by keeping tension up.

MAYBARDUK: Right. I also think though, and this was what everybody else thought too and I still believe, that a lot of Fidel was psychological, he had a psychological deep-seated hatred of the U.S. and he saw everything through those blinders. I never felt, and still do not feel, that as long as he is in power that there is any real chance of improving relations.

Q: Were you there when the Helms-Burton Bill was passed?

MAYBARDUK: No, I worked a lot on the Helms-Burton Bill by the way, but I was the director of Central American affairs when this passed.

Q: Let's talk about what you saw in Cuba as a result of Helms-Burton. First, could you explain what the Helms-Burton Bill was and then we will talk about what you were seeing.

MAYBARDUK: Helms-Burton passed in the wake of the shoot down of a couple of aircraft off the Cuban coast in 1994? [Ed: On February 24, 1996, two of the Brothers to the Rescue Cessna Skymasters involved in releasing leaflets on Cuban territory were shot down. Helms-Burton was passed by the 104th United States Congress on March 6, 1996] The were planes flown by Brothers to the Rescue whose nominal job was to fly over the straits and see people who were trying to migrate by raft and so on who might be in trouble and make sure they got rescued. It was a volunteer organization but it was also an anti-Castro organization and they occasionally flew over Cuba and dropped leaflets, which infuriated Fidel. So they finally decided to shoot two of them down and that caused just a huge uproar, such a huge uproar. Jesse Helms, the senator from North Carolina the Joseph McCarthy of our day, and Dan Burton once voted by Congressional staffers as the stupidest congressman on the Hill and a complete right-wing demigod teamed up to produce the Helms-Burton Bill, which basically was also driven by hostility between Helms and President Clinton. Helms did not believe that Clinton could be trusted in anything. So it was basically designed to tighten up the embargo and also because Cuba had now, and again we need to talk about this about the opening that Cuba did as a result of the Soviet crackdown on canceling aid, wanted to stop foreign investment to Cuba. So it included a provision that said that if any firm invests in Cuba and uses confiscated property, property confiscated from Americans, no distinguishing them between whether they were American properties confiscated or they were Cubans then and became Americans, any confiscated property. The executives were further banned from coming to the U.S. and there is a bunch of other punitive measures.

Q: I mean including businessmen's families too.

MAYBARDUK: Yeah including families and there were other penalties; it was very punitive. The State Department had recommended against it and Treasury had recommended against this bill but after the shoot down of the airplanes over the weekend I think it occurred on a weekend Clinton apparently decided he needed Florida votes he agreed to Helm-Burton. Over the weekend his staff and Helms-Burton staff sat down and made a few changes in the bill and said the administration approved it and it passed. On Monday morning Jeff Davidow, who was our assistant secretary for the western hemisphere came into the morning staff meeting, and he had the morning newspaper in front of him on Helms-Burton, and he said, "Don't ask, the first I learned about this was when I read about it in the newspaper this morning." It was a purely political decision. Anyway that was Helms-Burton. As we had to live with it and the provisions of it were suspended because our allies were just furious.

Q: Well there were an awful lot of Canadian firms who were there.

MAYBARDUK: Right, but there were other parts that were not. For example there was Sherwood, it's a large Canadian firm that took over one of the confiscated nickel mines and built hotels and does power and also runs a large part of the citrus industry in the country. Well, now I think that's somebody else, that's an Israeli with business interests. Anyway, this drives the U.S. crazy and none of those executives travel to the U.S. They have thousands of acres of citrus that were planted long before the revolution but were being slowly replanted and so on. That was given over to an Israeli company. Now Israeli always votes for us in resolutions against Cuba at the UN and we regularly lose the vote about lifting sanctions from Cuba. Normally it is like 162 or 163 aside from the U.S. voting against it in the general assembly the Israeli's always vote against it as well. So right after one of these votes we put sanctions on an Israeli firm. Somebody made the crack, "You know if that's what you do to people who support you what are you going to do to anyone else?" It turns out, a little piece of history though, the manager of the Israeli firm in Cuba had been the handler for the Israeli spy Joseph Pollard.

Pollard, he was the Israeli spy in the U.S. government. This guy had been handler for him; he wasn't getting back into the country anyway; just an interesting twist of history of how these things work out. So we had to worry about that. Occasionally we get letters from Cubans in the states asking us, "Can you tell us how our property is?" I wasn't prepared to do a lot of that because…I might go if the embassy was prepared to find a way to establish communication with the Cubans but on weekends I would occasionally take these and drive around town and see if I could figure out where these properties were. Streets had been renamed, places where the house should have been there was no house anymore, I couldn't even find the old branch of Citibank, which apparently was a prominent building at one time. So that was not very encouraging.

Let me talk a little bit about my own role first of all. Well I had no favorable brief toward the Cuban government whatsoever. I never felt our policy toward the dissidents was doing any good. I thought that the policy was stagnant and that we were very likely to miss any openings that the Cubans ever wanted to have an opening. The U.S. politics of the situation and I guess our general principals we'd talk to anybody meant that I wasn't going to change anything talking to the dissidents or our constant meetings with dissidents which I let Tim do. I occasionally met with them when they came to the principal offices resident and when Tim left I actually threw a party for him and all the dissidents which is the first time the government began to give me a little trouble, not much but a little. But I thought Tim is out there working with the dissidents all the time, I don't need to do that. I want to try to talk to the government in case there is anything I can find that might work. It meant that I was not hassled, whether because they considered me harmless or incompetent.

Q: How would they hassle those that they wanted to hassle?

MAYBARDUK: Well, Tim would have his car followed by another car two feet behind him waiting for an accident to happen very often and did the same to his wife. People would stand outside his house and as I said, at time when he was gone he'd come back and find that his house had been gone through, searched. The Cuban government accused

him of actually trying to get the church to lead protests, which would not have been in Tim's brief. He could have done it though but I don't know. He said he did not. They jostled him, pushed him around a little bit, the crowd whatever that was. The guys were civilian dressed but they were the goons of the regime and there were a lot of them.

So Tim was going to a church that night on I don't know what the celebration was, a religious holiday and I felt as a matter of solidarity I ought to go with him, a couple of us went. Well we got there and the first thing that starts happening was he meets some friends there and he starts talking to them and pretty soon guys come up with cameras, video cameras, and they literally have them in our face everywhere we turn these things are in our face. There was no pushing and shoving, at least not initially, but it was just this "Hey we are here, we are present don't try anything any why don't you go back to your homes" kind of thing. We stuck it out but at some point somebody did grab or push Tim's wife. Somebody picked my pocket too it annoyed the hell out of me. Whether it was the Cuban government or somebody else I don't know but they picked my pocket. So, it was a kind of unpleasant evening, although we stuck through it.

The next day or two I went over and I complained to the Foreign Ministry, I sat down with the head of the Americas branch; they are pretty civilized people at the Foreign Ministry or at least they act like civilized people unlike the agents on the streets. They basically said well Tim had been doing this, they didn't believe his denial; they knew that he had been doing all these things to stir up trouble. But they did apologize for having touched his wife that was interesting. They did apologize for that.

In any event, I was not generally hassled and normally in our meetings with Cuban officials they would send two Cubans and we would send two people so we all could check on what each other said but they would meet with me one-on-one. I actually invited the people from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the economists were allowed to talk to us from the research institute at my home. I actually had nice lunches over with them on a one-to-one basis, which no one else got. I can't say I got any significant information out of that to make it all worthwhile. I can't say my strategy did any good but it was,…well actually it may have done some good when I will come back to at a much later date but nothing noticeable at the time.

I'm just full of stories. Right after I got there Armstrong, Fulton Armstrong, came down. Fulton had been the first CIA station chief in Cuba after we opened up. He was now the national security or national intelligence analysis for Latin America and particularly Cuba at the agency. The Cubans knew who he was; there was no question who he was. So Fulton came down about two weeks after I had been there and he wanted to go to some of his old favorite haunts so I went with him. It was funny, we were followed by this little Lada [Ed: Russian manufactured automobile] the entire time and then we went out to the provinces past the sugar mill and some other places. You get on these back country roads and it's like Kansas, it is about miles of flat roads, flat territory and roads crossing here and there intersections, two-lane roads. We went into a town and looking around and so on and so we might have lost it, we weren't trying to get lost. So we left the town and we were heading down in another direction and we saw a lot of…we crossed an intersection

we were going that way and it came this way. So we stopped, they stopped, and we waved to them, this way fellas and off we went.

Now Fulton Armstrong comes to mind because he had very strong opinions on Cuba, not necessarily the Administration's by the way, but I won't tell tales on him. Let's say he was less of a hawk than some people. Well, John Bolton, who was our ambassador to the UN, whom we all know as a hard-line right winger, and Fulton as reported in the press had a lot of head-to-head confrontations and I could just imagine those scenes because Bolton almost never gave in on anything and neither did Fulton. If there was a good match for both it would have been with Fulton. Anyway, we got a lot of CIA analysis to come down when I was there. They would come down for two or three months, they would help us out. They generally didn't do much contact work, they were analysis' not spies. But they had this long historical perspective on Cuba, which most of us did not, and it was always useful to talk to them and so on.

I was there for John Paul II's visit to Cuba [Ed: January 21-25, 1998]. This was considered to be a big thing, this was a big opening or something. So we got an extra three or four officers from Washington to come down, we asked for more but the Cubans approved only three or four to cover it. I was in charge so I assigned two people, we went to three cities, so I assigned two people to go to each cities and I and the Defense Intelligence Agency analysis stayed in Havana, what's her name now? She had come down early and she stayed late and we had many late discussions of what she thought what she believed. She actually believed she was an early proponent of the belief that Raul was an economic reformer, which is a common belief in the CIA, not everybody and not at State, but at CIA. She had written a report earlier a year or two earlier for the U.S. military as to the military threat from Cuba and basically said there wasn't a military threat from Cuba. So we had big discussions. During the visit I lost her at a big ceremony at the monument to the revolution, saw her in the distance talking to a bunch of folks and they looked like old friends but got mixed in the crowd. I kind of had a nagging feeling about that but I put it beside me. At the end before she left we had another long discussion about Cuba and so on, a very smart woman, and I asked her do you see all of our cables? Do I need to mark our cables in any way to make sure you get them? She said, "Oh no Gary, don't worry about it, I see everything." You could already tell where the punch line was going to come. Two or three years later she was arrested as being a top Cuban spy in the U.S. government. [Ed: On September 21, 2001, Ana Belén Montes, a DIA employee, was arrested and subsequently charged with conspiracy to commit espionage for Cuba. Montes eventually pleaded guilty to spying and in October 2002, was sentenced to a 25-year prison term followed by five years' probation.]

I can't remember her name at the moment but I will definitely think it. So you know we had all this security in place; I think that is one of reasons that the Cubans didn't bother me though was because in my discussions with her I already told her I didn't see it was my job to stir up revolutions, I said my job was to stir up communications. It may have been one of the reasons why they pretty much left me alone.

Q: What about the Cuban-Americans? Did you feel any influence from them?

MAYBARDUK: Oh yes, oh yes, we would write analytical cables back to Washington about something that was going on and it was clear to us it would take Washington a week or two to read them, if they ever read them, unless we asked them about them. But if anything happened to a dissident or there were rumors of anything happening to a dissident in Miami, Washington started getting phone calls from the Miami Cuban community. Washington would immediately send queries to us as to what was going on.

So most of our reporting out of Cuba was never urgent, it was just mostly reflective pieces. The one exception was anything about the dissidents and Tim would spend many late nights writing about the dissidents because what Washington needed to know was all the information on what was happening so they could answer the questions from Miami.

The Cuban desk in the State Department is really…its main job is to keep Cuban-Americans happy; not run Cuban-American affairs.

Q: Was anybody looking at the political structure of the Cuban-American community, of the generational differences among when Cubans came to the U.S.?

MAYBARDUK: Well there is a generational difference, but also a difference between when they came. The early Cuban arrivals after the revolution tend to be the one who are the most hostile to the regime. They suffered the immediate seizures of property, they saw the executions, they saw their families executed, they are the most hostile and sometimes their children are too, but not all. But those who came with Mariel and made the rafters crisis primarily came for economic reasons and I think are generally less hostile. Then the other people, of course, there is a generational divide as well. I think it was somewhat apparent, now we are talking somewhere back in 1997-1999, it was somewhat apparent then. I continue to work with Cuban-Americans now in retirement and I think it is much different now. I think it is a major change in the Cuban-American refugee thinking.

Q: Sort of looking at what happens with Mexican-Americans after certainly the third generation they no longer speak Spanish, they intermarry, they absorb the process of the United States.

MAYBARDUK: It's tremendous but Cuban-Americans I think are much more likely to still speak Spanish in the third generation. A surprising number have never gotten U.S. citizenship. I don't know what the percentages are, but I've been told that. There is quite a nationalistic feeling among the Cubans, both in the island and in the U.S. I mean the Cubans are nationalists. So, if Cuba moved to a free-market democracy tomorrow I think relatively few Cubans would return on a permanent basis.

But the feelings are still strong. One of the issues we had to face is that there's also a particular group that seems to know how to intimidate the U.S. government using key Congressmen like Burton and ones out of Florida, Burton is from Indiana of all places but ones out of Florida. We have these AID programs to help promote Cuban democracy,

which tends to be money we give to non-government organizations in Florida. We try to send propaganda and everything else to Cuba. But it does no good, it reaches almost no one, it is totally throwing money away but we keep doing it.

Q: I've talked to people who work for USIA and they are very critical of this TV Marti, yet, I think it is still going isn't it?

MAYBARDUK: Oh yeah, we spend hundreds of millions of dollars on Radio Marti.

Q: Yeah, but TV Marti doesn't get through.

MAYBARDUK: You can't receive it on the island. At one point we even had a team go down there. I don't know why the Cubans let them in maybe they didn't know who they were but who went around parts of the island with hidden TV antennas and modern equipment and they couldn't pick it up anywhere. Now we have it broadcast from an airplane or something but it only broadcasts at night on one channel and there are reports of people occasionally getting it but it's…

Q: Unlike radio, TV does not transmit easily and over long distances and occasionally would be blocked. By the way I want to note that we have our ADST interns who are sitting here listening to us. It appears Cuban policy has been run by a relatively small group with tremendous influence in Florida, which is a key state politically and the election of 2000 showed it can be critical.

MAYBARDUK: We have corn ethanol because the first primary is in Iowa and we have Cuban policy because Florida is an important swing state. I actually while I was there did my best to stay away from Cuban-Americans. I did not want visibility, because it was a kind of group that you help them one day and then you cross them the next and they view you as a mortal enemy; so you can't win with the group. Tim was very happy to talk to them and even occasionally when he went to the States he would see them in Miami. I stayed away; while very involved in policy, I stayed away from them at that time.

Q: Well let's talk about the dissidents. In Soviet policy they proved to be a fairly important element. It was one of the wedges that got in there along with the Helsinki Accords and all. But did the…

MAYBARDUK: I talked to somebody about that the other day, who argued that dissidents were not important in the Soviet Union, they were important in the Eastern Bloc, but not in the Soviet Union. I don't know if that is true or not.

Q: I don't know that either but it did represent something that kept things going there that later on bore fruit in the early days. But how did we view the dissidents in Cuba?

MAYBARDUK: Well, first of all you had to view the dissidents because you had to keep the Cuban-Americans happy. Second, there was no doubt that there were a lot of brave people, there were really committed democrats among the dissidents who put their lives

on the line, prepared to spend twenty years, thirty years in jail. So in a sense you wanted to be supportive. Now it is general U.S. government policy, which we occasionally ignore to our great imperil like in Iran with the Shah, that we will talk to anybody, an embassy will talk to anybody and that we don't let the host government tell us who we can and cannot talk to. That's a good policy. So we talked to them and Tim did more than talk to them. Tim went out and would meet with them in all sorts of places. Actually Mike Kozak went out, they had a meeting of dissidents. Tim and Mike went out and after that the Cuban government arrested a lot of the dissidents and kept them in jail for years afterwards and kept on showing pictures on TV of how the U.S. embassy officials were encouraging this movement and these guys were really nothing more than agents of the U.S. government. The embassy, however, gave the dissidents neither a dime nor a pad of paper or a pencil because if they wanted to talk to us that was great. We always reported to Washington, we always gave them morale support when they were thrown in jail but we wanted to avoid any image that we were actually the instigators of the movement which would give the Cubans the opportunity to start something.

Right after that, after we left, the next principal officer Vicki Huddleston changed that policy [Ed: Huddleston was in Havana from October 1999 until she took up an ambassadorship to Mali in October 2002]. We started giving computers and copy machines and that meant that even more dissidents were in jail and the equipment never got more than a few blocks from the embassy before it were confiscated. It was a terrible policy.

Q: Was this under Bush?

MAYBARDUK: Was this under Bush? I don't know when she changed the policy but she came in under Clinton but it was under Bush too. Since then we've become even more intrusive and my own view is that this doesn't help the dissidents at all because the dissidents aren't seen as an indigenous force, they are seen as agents of the U.S. government whether they are or not. Now I can't tell you how things are going to end in Cuba and I can't tell you what role dissidents will play in all of this. There was no sense when I was there that any of these dissidents had any kind of national following in Cuba or even known by most people in Cuba. In fact, at one point they arrested three of the most prominent dissidents, put them on public trial and our impression was a lot of Cubans who told us this was the first time they had heard of these guys. They couldn't understand why Castro had put them on trial, public television trial. One was the son of a hero of the revolution Vladimir Lopez. His father was a jet pilot and did all sorts of things for the Cuban revolution fighting in foreign wars and so on. His son had become a dissident and to have him up there was probably a bit of a shock. We really thought the Cubans were shooting themselves in the foot but…

Q: Did we see at that time any consequences of bringing the Cuban troops home from Africa? I mean they had a considerable Cuban military force in Africa and then I guess after the fall of the Soviet Union the Cubans left Africa.

MAYBARDUK: I don't think that we saw any great impact of it but before I went, I don't remember the dates, in the early1990s I guess the Cuban military was involved in smuggling drugs to the U.S. the famous Ochoa affair. General Ochoa was a hero of the revolution, had led Cuban troops in Angola and elsewhere, had beaten the South Africans in a famous battle in Angola which the Cuban's credit, I don't know what the truth of the matter is, with showing the South Africans they need to change their policies.

So he was considered a real hero but about the time the Soviet aid disappeared our evidence we had about Cuban involvement in the drug trade was becoming greater and greater. Then Ochoa and a bunch of other officers and civilians were arrested, put on trial for the drug trade, and several of the Ochoa were executed. There are a lot of people who believe that Ochoa and company would not have been involved in this without Fidel's permission in the first place. That's almost inconceivable in the first place that he would do something like that without Fidel's knowledge and permission. Ochoa was probably the first and only real known popular figure in Cuba other than Fidel himself and, of course, this is not a particularly easy sustainable situation. He had his own independent following including the military so there are books written on this why was he killed, and so on. Was it because he was a threat, was he really involved in a drug trade where nobody else was? Whatever the reason. Everybody says this was a great shock to the Cubans, this was a real…and to many supporters to Fidel this really equated a divide because…One of the French poets who writes about Fidel came down to try and intervene in this case and lots of things happened.

We had no part in any of it, we just watched from a distance. It was after that though that the Cubans made an agreement with us to conduct surveillance for drugs and so on. Interestingly a book about that says that the radio station used to communicate with the drug smugglers was a small military radio station located in the area of town in which I lived. Well, there was such a station right behind our house (laughter). I don't know if it was the same station but there was clearly a radio station back there. So you had that, you had the very difficult economic circumstances going on in the country. You actually had food demonstrations; you had real hunger, people going without meals, no distended bellies that I knew about. Normal people like ourselves all of a sudden eating five or six hundred calories a day less or more and losing weight. They got a lot more exercise riding a lot more bicycles. The country hasn't had for years a decent public transport system, but without the gas and the Soviet supplies, all of a sudden it really got tough.

This reminds me of Cuba, these lights going off and power going off. For the listener on the tape the rain outside and lights are going on and off in the room it does remind me though of Cuba because the power shortages in Cuba were tremendous and it also reminds me of the hurricanes in Cuba. The power shortages are always going off so all the houses had generators and so we had a generator. I always felt sorry for our neighbors who couldn't use our generator although they occasionally stole power from us but when it went on it I mean it could keep anybody awake all night if you were near it. So we would have all the lights and making all the noise.

Anyway so you had this severe economic situation within Cuba and a great deal of unrest and the regime had to react to it. So they went into what they called this special period and the special period basically began to see a lot of economic reforms. They allowed small businesses to operate. A small business would be a business in which the only employees could be members of your family; often they are one-man businesses. You know what we call those disposable cigarette lighters, the little butane one use, well in Cuba they get used a lot and you'd have people sitting on the streets who knew how to fix them as well as refuel them. That wasn't allowed before but now that was allowed. Bicycle tire repair, later automobile tire repair, became a little private business. You would see on the side of the street somewhere sometimes in someone's garage, sometimes just on the street corner we fix "la llanta" (tires).

They had the opening of the famous "Paladares"; these were private restaurants, which were never allowed before. I think they were allowed as long as they couldn't seat more than 14 people I think. Most Cubans couldn't afford the "Paladares" but some could, foreigners definitely enjoyed the change in food variety although it is all rice, beans and pork in Cuba anyway. But they spread out all over the place and got a lot of interest as private enterprise being allowed and perhaps most importantly the farmers were allowed to sell part of their produce on farmers markets. Farmers markets had been tried in the 1980s and the regime, which I assume to mean Fidel, felt that the farmers were making too much money. People accumulating bank accounts of five, six, seven, eight, nine thousand dollars or a day's equivalence and that was considered far too much money it was creating a new class. So at some point in the 1980s they were all closed down. Well in the 1990s they allowed them to open again and that caused a plethora of food to come on the market, which just wasn't making it. The collectivized farm system (a) they didn't produce much; (b) what it did produce had to be sold to the state at a very low price and was carried to market by state trucking firms who often had no relation to the farm. So if you had a farmer in Kansas who's got tomatoes and knows he's got to get them to the market the same day or they are going to rot his truck breaks down he will do whatever he can to get that thing fixed in a couple of hours so he can get that food to market. In Cuba there was no such incentive to the drivers so apparently huge amounts of food were lost in transportation to spoilage.

Q: This was the pattern that in the Soviet Union and I've heard up to 20-30 percent of all the food that was produced there died in the storage or rotted in storage.

MAYBARDUK: I don't know but I heard of similar percentages being used in Cuba. Now all of a sudden the farmers could make money themselves or the collective farms could make money themselves and they managed to get food to the markets so it was a major force in feeding the population and quickly restored if not all the calories a large number of the calories. One Communist official, I think he was a member of the government, told me he said, "You know I am a Communist. I really do believe in a Communist system," he said, "but I've got to admit almost the first time I tasted fruit was after these markets were established. He said, "They really do provide a lot of things we couldn't get before." So these were all changes and then he began letting in private investment as well, this is when the Canadian firm came in, the Israeli firm, hundreds and

hundreds of businessmen from around the world came into Cuba looking to create, being the vanguard of change. Nestles had an ice cream factory were there. Most of these businessmen's efforts came to naught, I mean, basically the regime was still not interested in having a lot of foreign presence in the country, they were really interested in enclave projects which would earn foreign exchange and limit the number of Cubans who would have to come in contact with foreigners. So the nickel mines were great they were down in the far eastern end of Cuba and had been contained off. The workers at the mines, of course, get paid more than most others but it's kind of isolated. Oil drilling becomes the same thing kind of thing. Nestles was kind of a bit of surprise but Nestles wanted substantially to increase their production and open new plants.

Q: And they were near sugar too weren't they?

MAYBARDUK: Right, right and the government wouldn't let them. The British commercial officer said this is one of our busiest posts in the world next only to San Francisco or something and one other place in Argentina in terms of the number of visitors. He said, "We have 6-700 visitors a year but no business."

Q: Well what about the role of other embassies particularly number one which would be the Canadians? It has always struck me that Cuban policy was the one place where we seem to be on diversion courses. Did you find this?

MAYBARDUK: Well we had good relations with Eastern European embassies many of who were staffed by former dissidents in their own countries. The Romanians were fascinating; we have this view of the Romanian regime, Ceausescu, as being one of the more brutal and one of the most repressed regimes. To a man every one of the Romanians who came in would all say the same thing that Castro had much tighter control and it was a much stricter regime than they ever had in Romania. It was fascinating to hear that kind of perspective.

Now the U.S. and Canadians generally do well around the world I mean we more or less understand each other, they are a little strange at times and we often help the Canadians out because they have usually much smaller embassies than we do and so on. But you are right, because they are not American and because nobody fears Canadians they are often more popular around the world. I worked at the UN for a short period once and somebody there said, "You know, ask me what's the difference between Canadians and yogurt and the answer was at least yogurt has culture." My sister by the way is a ballerina and dances for the National Ballet Company of Canada so that is not a fair statement but I enjoy using that joke on her. But there is this feeling with Canadians that they are peacekeepers and they are always kind of neutral so and then, of course, they have the largest foreign investment in the country which was this Canadian firm which didn't make things all that pleasant. The Canadian ambassador when I was there though really believed that he could influence the Cuban government and, therefore, wanted minimal contact with us.

In many countries there is this reciprocal social arrangement between the U.S. and Canadian embassies, the Marines regularly threw a TGIF (Thank God it's Friday). Then on the alternative week, I forget the name the Canadians call it, but they have a similar sort of thing and that had been going on in Havana and he tried to stop it and his staff rebelled because his staff was very friendly to us. So there was actually a lot of tension in the Canadian embassy about what their relations were to the American embassy.

Q: But I don't think it was during your time, I think it was later, but the Prime Minister of Canada Chretien, made a big deal about going and visiting with Castro [Ed: April 1998] He had a wish list that everybody knew about and he didn't get anything.

MAYBARDUK: I think that happened just after I left, but it may have happened when I was there. I do remember the incident very much and I was going to mention it actually. I mean to us in the embassy that was typical. The Cubans operate on some very basic principles (1) nobody was going to tell them what to do; and (2) they were not going to do anything that threatened the regime. So it didn't matter who you were, what government, what help you had given or anything else there were something's they were not going to budge on. It seemed to take a lot of ambassadors, the Spanish ambassador, the Canadian ambassador, it took a lot of ambassadors some time to learn that and they always ended up disappointed. Our view of "you really can't talk to the Cubans so why bother" I think was to a large extent validated during that period.

Q: But you know you are going against the real American trait and it is don't stand there do something. We are activists and to go and be in a place and say it don't make no difference what we tried to do we're not going to get anywhere is sort of almost un-American.

MAYBARDUK: It was definitely a strange embassy; it was definitely a strange mission. I mean we would have our morning staff meetings and we would have it in the bubble, I don't think bubbles are a secret are they?

Q: Well the bubble is a plastic room within a room where you have built in devices so that supposedly nobody can…

MAYBARDUK: No electronic eaves dropping and so on, often hot. Cramped and stark. But in Havana, of course, we had to do all of the classified in the room too because you couldn't do it at your desk, it all had to be done in the room, which substantially reduced production of literary output for Miami. You know we didn't have regular computers either, we had the old classified Wang's, the Wang computer was an early attempt at creating a network system of computers. The Department back in the 1980s, I guess, spent hundreds of millions of dollars installing this system only to have it obsolete by the time it was half finished and ordered IBM stuff. But the Department had moved IBM's up in Havana because you really couldn't get this stuff in, it didn't fit in the pouch so we basically had to deal with what we had with these old systems which didn't "save" automatically either. So you would be working away and there would be a power failure and you know we were used to the hours that we had to work. Eventually they got us in

some laptops, classified laptops, which still had to work with the old Wang system and it was a very unpleasant way to prepare cables.

But anyway, there would be a meeting every morning, discuss what was happening which usually wasn't much and we would sit around telling stories or making jokes about the Cubans or something. I mean it was very strange staff meetings and it was actually kind of fun. Nobody was feeling pressed for time; there were a bunch of bright people. Kozak was from Berkeley; our DPO was a Ph.D. graduate in American history from Yale. I had been at MIT and got a Ph.D. in economics and the rest of the staff and the country team was all very highly intelligent, professional people. They chose people very carefully as this was the kind of place where you can be compromised very easily and you have to be extremely careful what you say and the Cubans are always trying to use sex and other things to entice you.

Q: Sort of like the KGB in the Soviet Union trying to get not only singles but other in sexual traps, pictures and all that sort of thing?

MAYBARDUK: Before I got there we had one female political officer who had a Danish or some sort of boyfriend, right, and the Cubans or someone tried to blackmail them with pictures in her own bedroom. We sent home, I think, two secretaries while I was there who had Latin husbands and the husbands started having affairs around and they had to be sent home. We had a no fraternization policy, you could not, single or married, you could not have an affair with a local person.

Q: These were manufactured affairs for the most part.

MAYBARDUK: Not necessarily, people talk about Havana at the time Castro took over it's the kind of place that had the gambling, drugs, and women. The women were still there and in a country where an average wage is about $11 a month and then you have a "labreta", a labreta was a ration card that provided for a family maybe a week's worth of necessities. We get a tube of toothpaste maybe every two months, you get a liter of oil once a month if it were available; otherwise it wasn't always available. You get so many potatoes, you get six eggs per person per month, a half a pound or a pound of chicken, a half a pound for lactating mothers and mothers to-be, but it wasn't enough to make ends meet. So you would sleep with a foreigner and get I think the going rate was $50 and some would have been a lot cheaper. I sometimes wondered if there was any woman in the country that could not be bought. For my exercise I used to walk about three miles at night along Quinta Avenue which was their 5th Avenue, a nice big boulevard and attractive street, and I would be hit four or five times in a walk. I, at some point, made a friendship I don't know how it happened with this forty or fifty year old woman who basically was a night guard at a nursery school and a couple times you could see she was almost thinking of propositioning me.

Initially I went down early, my family came after Christmas, my wife and my youngest son who was actually in boarding school came down for a couple weeks and the first day I took them out sightseeing. I took them to old Havana and we went to see the old castle

fort, a prime tourist destination, and coming out of the fort was a place where everybody was trying to sell you something. They first propositioned me, then my son and then my wife; they offered my wife another woman, you want a man? As we were moving along somebody else came along and they said, "I can get you a woman." I said, "Thank you very much but here is my wife," and he said, "Oh, well can I get you cigars or lobsters?" These were all things on the black market; he didn't even miss a beat. But sex was essentially free and it was everywhere. There was a huge sex industry.

Q: I was going to ask, Thailand got the reputation, deservedly so of having this sort of sex tourism. Was this sort of thing happening in Cuba?

MARBARDUK: Yes, the Spanish and the Italians, exactly the same thing. In fact, in briefings to American groups I would talk about Havana being the Bangkok of the Caribbean. Those kinds of things get back to Fidel and at some point he actually cracked down on it. You always knew in the embassy that anything you said would get back to Fidel; it was a way of sending messages to him, it was fascinating.

We started pointing out that infant mortality rates in Cuba although were very good they had also been very good under Batista. That after the U.S. and Canada, Cuba was third in infant mortality rates in the whole region as it was today. They were at that point it was like six or seven per thousand births. In the 1950s it was like the U.S. was 29 and Canada was 31 and Cuba was 32. Well within a few months after us beginning to point that out the Cubans started talking about the death rate back before he took power was 68 deaths per thousand. I was using UN data but somebody in the embassy had for a few years collected a lot of Cuban books and for some reason we had stopped doing it. We had this old misty library down there that had a lot of Cuban publications so I went down and I looked at the publications from the1960s and 1970s and the Cubans were 32 or 33; you know it was that kind of response you would get from the Cuban government. I'm sorry I guess this was a diversion from what I was talking about.

Q: What about social life, was it pretty much intra-embassies or what?

MAYBARDUK: There wasn't much, yeah, it was intra-embassies or inter-embassies; there wasn't much social life. I have one more story and then we'll end. My first or second weekend I'm in the country and my sponsoring couple in the embassy invites me to go to the beach with them; these are the beaches are on the eastern side of Havana or across from the bay. There are a whole series of beaches there some are just for Cubans, some are just for foreigners; there is not supposed to be any mix except I guess the one we ended up at, as they were fairly new too and they hadn't been at any of these beaches, was the wrong beach. So we parked the car and took our towels and we head down to the beach. There are several hundred young women with bikini's, which would be shameful in Rio and maybe 100-150 men, all middle-aged, overweight men; I sympathize with them. Each with at least one woman and if maybe not two laying on the beach and these were clearly the Spanish or the Italians who had come down for exactly this purpose; there was a hotel down the beach where apparently they were staying and so they could easily bring their girlfriends back to the hotel with them. Anyway we put our beach

towels down and there was this sense that we had several hundred pairs of eyes looking at us. We weren't quite sure what to do but we just sort of settled in. Pretty soon young women started walking past us in twos usually again hardly anything left to the imagination and when Cuban women look at you they really do look you straight in the eye, there is no question what they are asking. Finally, two young women, I guess they were around nineteen, walked by us, smiled and they came back again. They asked the wife of the pair, "Are you the wife? She said, "Yes." She said, "You aren't supposed to be here." That's what the girl said. Anyway they were having a nice discussion and these two girls were the same age as her daughter but that's Cuba.

Q: Sort of an aspect…I'm surprised you think of the Cuban revolution I mean the Communists are pretty damn prudish but…

MAYBARDUK: You know this is Cuba, it probably goes back probably to the days of the slaves and it goes back to when sex was a commodity. I think there was basically just an entirely different attitude toward sex. But I say Castro, during my last three or four months, did really clamp down. Actually prostitution is not illegal in Cuba and it's not illegal in most of Latin America. Being a pimp was illegal, running a brothel was illegal but prostitution itself was not illegal. Nonetheless, toward the end he decided he had had enough of this and being embarrassed by it he rounded up about 7,000 young women and put them in detention camps, reeducation camps. But within two months certain parts of town probably with police permission because the police were quite evident and you began to see some of the young women out there again and then it was all back to what it was. The Cubans told me this was a periodic thing and that he would crack down every few years.

Q: Did you get any feel for the university system and the teaching of Communism because by this time Communism is practically a dead letter?

MAYBARDUK: We weren't allowed to go on the university campus but my sons came down for the summer holidays and I enrolled them in the English-Spanish language program at the university, which is for foreigners. So that gave me a chance to go on campus to pick them up, drive around and it looked like a normal campus, it was a nice campus. You see students walking around with books and the students were generally better dressed than most of the population. The population of Cuba is very poorly dressed. They still have a spandex factory at some point and so it's amazing how many people wear spandex.

But one economist I talked to on a regular basis I talked to him about what they teach in economics. He said, "Oh, we definitely teach western economic thought, you know, (Paul) Samuelson and the like." he says, "We just teach it in our classes as the history of economic life." So that's how they teach western economics. [Ed: Samuelson is considered to be one of the founders of neo-Keynesian economics and a seminal figure in the development of neoclassical economics. His book Foundations of Economic Analysis (1947) is considered the best-selling economics textbook in history.]

Q: Well, did you get any feeling, you being an economist, whether Marxism was alive?

MAYBARDUK: It wasn't obvious. The Cuban approach to Marxism was a lie. I don't believe they had reached a picture of true Communism yet. Centralized control; central planning although in the special period they decentralized a little bit and they allowed prices to begin to work a little bit. They had had no accountants in the country for a generation, they stopped training accountants so during the special period and they realized that they had to do this to increase efficiency they still didn't train accountants. They had no way to way to trace what was going on in their firms because there were no books. So just like in the Soviet Union firms traded with each other for I'll give you so many sheets of steel and you give me 150 cases of vegetables or canned fruit which we'll give out to pay our workers with that. I mean somebody believed it, at least Fidel believed it and the few people around him believed it. But I didn't see Marxism per se as a great ideology in the country it was really about "socialismo armorte".

Q: Socialists for death.

MAYBARDUK: Signs like that were around the city.

Q: What about the newspapers? Were they full of Communist jargon?

MAYBARDUK: First of all they repeated verbatim all of Fidel's speeches so on a given week a lot of pages would be taken up with that. Yeah, they reported news but it was the news of such and such a factory increased production by so much or the new goals for the year are such and such or Commandante Efie said this or Raul said this. No crime reporting, almost no crime reporting. Occasionally some reporting on social conditions occasionally if there were a problem they actually might report on that a little bit carefully. I saw NPR talking the other day about newspapers are being a little bit more critical of government or investigatory of problems and every so often the papers will do that it is not totally new. But it wasn't a daily thing by any means. Of course, I had always told people that the great things in the Foreign Service is the one job in the world where you get paid to read the newspapers every morning and to go out and have coffee with somebody and talk about politics which is what you would do anyway.

But reading newspapers in Cuba was not that much fun and neither was listening to Fidel's speeches. I mean, when I first got there I thought well heck I'm in charge of the embassy's reporting I need to listen to his speeches. They normally started at nine o'clock at night and they usually went till three or four in the morning. I actually did that for several months until I decided it would be nice to show up for work rested for a change and so I started reading them in the paper like everyone else. But he was fascinating to listen to in his speeches because he is an enormously unique and fascinating character.

He's got this ability to talk about one thing and then go off on a diverse topic maybe explaining something and he would be a teacher. He's very much a teacher in his own way and almost every speech was about a half-hour to an hour about the U.S. trying to

kill him. I mean everybody in Cuba knew this speech by heart but he was never up late until midnight or so and I was actually asleep in my chair almost and all of a sudden he starts talking about the international monetary system, which as a good economist I actually wake up; it would definitely put my wife to sleep, but I actually woke up. He goes on for about an hour discussing how the international monetary system works. He goes back to the dollar crisis at various times and he shows that at each crisis the U.S. dollar becomes more and more important as the world currency. He talks about how because the U.S. could print money for everybody else automatically the U.S. benefits from it. This is a man who is not supposed to know anything about economics, he says he doesn't know about economics himself but it was like a college lecture, it was actually on target and he was right. I later talked to an economist friend and he said, "Yeah, Gary, he's got everybody in the government these days working on the dollar." What they did this special period is they allowed people to hold dollars and to receive dollar remittances. Before they could only receive gift packages well they started allowing remittances, which was good for them because they eventually got the foreign currency.

They opened all these dollar stores where Cubans could take their hard currency and buy things usually at about 150 percent more than what they would pay in the States. So the Cubans were making 200-300 percent on it but they would soak up the dollars, this is where they got dollars. This created a new two-system society in which those who received dollars could live a lot better than those who couldn't get dollars. So you really wanted to work for a foreign hotel, which was the other big thing that happened; they started encouraging tourism and opening a lot of hotels usually under foreign management, that's one of the other places that foreigners came in. So working in a tourist industry was very important because that is where you earned dollars either from tips or from firms themselves as we did in the embassy we had this practice you paid the employees' wages to the government of either $10 or $15 a month and then you give them a little extra. The Canadians were the cheapest and they gave them about $15 or $20 to the workers. At the embassy we gave them $300 or $400 per worker but whatever it was $10 U.S. was a hell of a lot of money for a Cuban.

So they had this dual monetary system and Castro was unhappy with it but didn't really know what to do, he really hated this idea that the U.S. benefited by supplying currency to the whole world. So this economist told me that he had all the economists in the government studying the international monetary system and trying to figure out how it could switch from the dollar to the Euro and whatever, which they eventually did many years later and it turned out very beneficial as the Euro went sky high. But he learned about the international monetary system somewhere and all of a sudden this became the big thing and it wasn't forgotten because as I say ten years later he switched to the Euro. So, a lot of Cubans understood our economic system, at least in an idealized way or a notorious way. But it was interesting and even when you talk to the best of them you see they didn't really trust the market very well.

Q: I'm looking at the clock now and I think I've got to call a halt. Is there anything more to cover here?

MAYBARDUK: Let's put at the end I guess I just talked about the dollarizing of the economy. Maybe more on the Pope's visit, more of what it was like to live in Cuba during this period. This whole idea of the embassy's goal being to stick the knife into Cuba all the time versus being a traditional embassy of trying to understand what is going on which meant that the whole U.S. government did not understand what this economic reform had meant and I need to discuss that.

Q: OK, today is the 9th of June 2008. Gary, what of the Pope's visit in January 1998? How did that go?

MAYBARDUK: Pope John Paul II's visit was considered a major international event.

Q: Had he been there before?

MAYBARDUK: No, and Fidel Castro had really persecuted the Catholic Church in Cuba. He had jailed priests; he limited the number of foreign priests who were allowed to come into the country. I don't think they were even allowed to have a seminary at that point to produce priests, although that was one of the benefits of the Pope's visit. They were either allowed to enlarge or add a seminary for the training of priests and Castro did approve, before the Pope's visit, the entry of another dozen or so foreign priests but the country was badly underserved in the number of priests.

Q: Was there much speculation or knowledge of why all of a sudden they allowed the Pope to come in?

MAYBARDUK: Well, I think it probably goes back to the whole special period, this whole period of economic deprivation and an attempt by the regime in some sense to open up to the world. They needed trade, they needed tourism, maybe they needed to deflect some international criticism. But the bottom line is that when it was all over they didn't give the church very much. Because it was considered such a major international event we had virtually the top newscasters from around the world, including Dan Rather and I forget the others from the other major news networks. They were all there for the first day of the Pope's visit; on that same day the Monika Lewinski affair broke in Washington. So we went from being the center of all news broadcasts to being totally eclipsed within 24-hours as everybody packed their bags and got out of town to cover Monika and Bill.

In the meantime I had to deal with…we had about six visiting political officers who were covering the three cities he was visiting. He visited Havana, Santa Clara and I think he went to Santiago de Cuba which are all quite a bit apart so we sent two-person teams to each city.

The Pope was very well received, he was able to speak freely and there was this view that maybe it would open up a lot more freedom for the church. In the end it did very little and that is typical of Castro. I think that pomp and ceremony of visits are great but he was never willing in any way fundamentally change his system in a way that it might

challenge him or their economic plans and so on. So that and I think that was indicative of what other nations found who thought by being friends with Fidel they could change things, such as the Canadians and we have already mentioned that.

The other thing they had during the Pope's visit was we had a delegation down and I really couldn't believe it that the Cubans' had let them come down. We had a visit from Jessie Helms staff, Roger Noriega, Dan Fisk, and somebody from Gillman's staff, all of whom became prominent in the current (Bush II) administration. Roger Noriega became U.S. ambassador to the UN and then assistant secretary of the Western Hemisphere Affairs; Dan Fisk was a deputy assistant secretary in Western Hemisphere Affairs and is now the National Security Council adviser on Latin America; Caleb McCarry was the gentleman from Gilman's staff and he is now head of the commission for assistance to a free Cuba which we will talk about later because that is the last job I had in the State Department.

They were very hostile to the regime and, of course, Helms staff had no faith in the State Department whatsoever but as soon as the Pope's visit was finished, I had to show these gentlemen around town, take them to meet, (Ricardo) Alarcon, the head of the parliament, took them to a hospital where they got into a big debate about why people couldn't get medicines from the United States. These were tense meetings; they were tense meetings because Roger Noriega doesn't give any quarter. I don't know if they learned anything or not, I think Caleb did but I was kind of on pins and needles this whole time trying to help educate them and yet being careful because one wrong word and you know it will be held against you forever, as I think it actually was for that and some other reasons later on. So that would come back to haunt me even though I think I did a good job and even though I don't think I offended anybody I think I was never trusted by them and I think that hurt me later on.

Let's see, a little bit about life in Cuba. It was comfortable in many ways; we had a very nice house. I don't know if I described it previously or not; but it belonged to some prominent lawyers before the revolution. It had some stain glass windows. It was two-stories with several balconies, a very nice covered back patio where even in the heat of the day you could have a lunch with someone and not get overheated. Your biggest problem was food. We were able to bring in a shipment of food from the United States when we came and periodically they brought a barge over to supply equipment for the embassy and that brought in some food as well we could order from. But things like fresh meats and so on were harder and they had the "Diplomacado" the diplomatic supermarket which is where we normally shopped. It always had this smell of dried chicken blood, just never…it was a pretty lousy smell.

It was pretty run down I mean any Food Lion grocery store in the United States which my experience is one of the seediest stores in the United States, any Food Lion in the United States would look like a palace compared to this place.

But strange combinations of goods they would bring in. Whoever the Cubans were who were ordering it were not obviously people who had access to kinds of foods that

westerners normally eat. So we would stock up with lots of sardines, a lot of Spanish-type foods. But we made do, it wasn't a serious problem. Then they had opened up farmers markets again and we would go and buy fresh vegetables there and that was very nice and it was ridiculously cheap. Five dollars would have given you more than enough vegetables and fruits for the entire week; but five dollars was an enormous amount for Cubans. Just look at the bags we might carry away when they were spending a couple of pesos or something.

The yard must have been beautiful once, but it had kind of fallen apart. We spent a lot of time trying to decorate it and this was interesting. I discovered that there were a reasonable number of plant nurseries around town. One I discovered was privately owned, but had been confiscated by the government three times in the 1960s and each time they failed to operate it and they returned it to the owner and so since the 1960s the owner or his son had been managing this nursery. They provided a lot of plants for hotels and so on. We had a couple nice visits there and talked to people and so on; but I went back one day and got told well he could not do landscaping for the embassy anymore. They asked him why and he said, "Well we just created something I think is totally unique in Cuba, a joint venture company between a private Cuban businessman and the state." Occasionally the state did joint ventures with foreign firms but never with someone from Cuba but it just showed you how flexible things could be when it had to be and he was doing an awful lot of work for the hotels.

Then I met another gentleman who had a small little nursery right near the Plaza de la Revolution. This was less than an acre, this was maybe half an acre, and very nice plants and I got to know the family. Most of the time it's hard to spend any time with a Cuban family because the second or third time you visit state security is around warning them off. But I would go there on either deliberately or under the pretext of buying plants and I got to know this family very well. The patriarch had been a machinist who now made copper wire designed in a way to hang plants; he did a very nice job. He had a small business there; he had a son who had been in the university at the time of the Cuban intervention in Angola [Ed: Cuba militarily intervened in Angola in November 1975 and in early 1988] and had been an excellent student apparently but he refused to sign a declaration of support for Cuban intervention in Angola. A student court was held with many of his friends and they expelled him from the university. His colleagues are now doctors and lawyers and other professionals, but he never finished college because of it. He had become in the meantime an expert at art and had collected a very nice collection of old Cuban art. It must have been very valuable. Now this was typical in Cuba, if people had something of value. they never display it; certainly not in the front room but there in rooms inside the house was a small museum. And he had gotten a job teaching French at the French Cultural Center. He was married to the daughter of a prominent Cuban general. She was basically estranged from her father over this marriage. We took him to dinner once and I'm going over this because it gives you an idea of life in Cuba that you get very little sense of. I took him to dinner at a "Paladar" one of these private restaurants and I discovered they had not been to a restaurant in over twenty years. They had not gone to a restaurant in over twenty years because the last time they went they were forced to leave early so space could be made for foreigners. They were incensed;

the father was incensed by this treatment of Cubans as second-class citizens in their own country. So it was just a fascinating little excerpt.

Before we go on to the next topic I want to just go on to another area and that was my whole view of our policy in Cuba as it developed. I went there knowing that our contacts would be limited, that it was basically a hostile relationship. I certainly went there with no sympathy for the Castro regime, but before I left some of my views had fairly dramatically changed.

The first thing I discovered, as an economist I naturally spent time on the economy which nobody had done in years. They hadn't had a real economist in the mission in a decade or two and I began to discover all the reforms being made during the special period. As I looked at those reforms and as I looked at how it affected the politics, I realized we hadn't understood what really just happened in Cuba. The reforms basically allowed Cubans, although limited, to make money on their own with small businesses and so on. They had allowed people to receive dollars from the States and hold onto dollars, creating, I don't know if I would call it a middle class because everybody in Cuba is so poor, but yeah I would say they were either the middle class or the relatively wealthy in a society where the average wage was under $15 a month. If you could get $100 a month from the States you were doing very, very well in Cuba. Because the Cubans needed the foreign exchange, this was breaking down to some extent the whole socialist concept of everybody being treated equally and Cubans were noting that and some were complaining about it; not the ones who were making the money but anybody else.

At the same time the political control in Cuba was really not just a police state although it was a police state. Social control came through your place of employment, you know, if you did the requisite number of demonstrations or show proper revolutionary ethics many of the economic benefits you got came as kind of extras from your place of employment and if you got on somebody's wrong side there, you might not get those extras. Other kinds of extras, as well as being able for your kids to go to college or if you are interested in music to buy musical instruments, because even buying a violin required the permission of the office of the vice president. Seriously, think of a country of ten million people in which all requests to buy a musical instrument had to be channeled through the office of the vice president and that first required approval from your local committee for the defense of the revolution, the block groups, who also rated you on your political liability. The ability of your children to go to college depended on the recommendation from the "Cidiere" the CDR.

Now with this breakdown in the old economic system a lot more people were in some sense economically independent. The dollar stores had a lot of goods that were not previously available. So if you had a source of dollars and were not dependent on the local CDR (Cidiere) it meant an awful lot of Cubans were no longer in the formal work force. Meaning that the state had no control over them at the work place. So what you had is a greater sense of independence, a much more willingness to hold private conversations of Cubans to criticize their government in smaller groups, not to protest,

but talk in small groups. The embassy had totally missed that so one of my contributions there was to begin to document that.

The other side of the coin was that as the academic world and the press became more aware of these changes they began to talk about the great reforms happening in Cuba and they were important reforms, but by the time I was leaving I was writing about how limited these reforms really were. They were important in certain senses but I ended up writing a paper for the Association of Cuban Economy, well for Washington first, and then I got it into a paper which I could publish in which I just pointed out that the two actually how unprepared Cuba would be for a future transition that the state corporations even though they now were hiring accountants were now still not independent and still not going to be viable after independence. That the labor markets were so messed up still, that the farming sector was going to be more like Russia than Eastern Europe and it would be very difficult. So I really think I provide a lot of brand new stuff that nobody had been thinking about before which I have continued to do since I am now into retirement.

One of the great problems for the mission was and it became much worse after I left was this insistence that we, and I've mentioned this before, be totally tied to the dissidents and that we be so totally in the face of the Cuban government. After I left we started making gifts of tape recorders and Xerox and fax machines and computers to the dissidents and then we started putting this electronic news board on the top of the embassy and from what everything I've heard we basically lost all contact with the government and even the chief of mission can seldom if ever go over to the Foreign Ministry and have a conversation, which we could do all the time. That has continued and that has left us in a situation that we are woefully ignorant of what goes on in Cuba, in people's attitudes, on how things work, there is nobody in the U.S. government who can tell you the organization of the municipal government in Cuba.

Q: Was this because of you might say domestic politics or was this a genuine misreading of the situation?

MAYBARDUK: I think it was initiated from U.S. domestic politics, but over time developed into a mindset that influenced the people who worked on Cuba as much as professionals such as the political people so that breaking that mind set is extremely difficult, and speaking today in 2008 or speaking and knowing some of the people still there and listening to at least one of them talk, it still exists, it still exists and reform of Cuban policy which we will talk about at the end of our all sessions, if we get to it maybe, will revolve not with our political leaders, it's going to revolve in replacing all the old Cuban hands.

Q: During your tour there was a real revolution developing throughout the world of the Internet, cell phones,…

MAYBARDUK: It hadn't reached Cuba. It has now but it hadn't then.

Q: I would think that this would leave the Cubans far behind.

MAYBARDUK: It did and they were worried about it and one way they handled it was in the scientific institutions or universities or places that needed stuff off the Internet would have one Internet machine, which people could use but it was controlled, but if a scientist or a doctor needed to find some medical article he could probably do so.

Q: Yeah but I mean so much of the Internet is sort of spontaneous and all.

MAYBARDUK: That was not, that was not available.

Q: The Yugoslav communist and thinker Milovan Djilas wrote the book The New Class. Was there an equivalent to The New Class of the comandantes and all that?

MAYBARDUK: And their kids, yes.

Q: I mean the whole apparatus of the people of the revolution was there a spoiled generation or generations?

MAYBARDUK: I don't know if there was a spoiled generation because Fidel didn't really like to spoil anybody, but it was a little hard to tell. There were parts of Havana that were essentially walled off where a lot of party military leaders lived and they really were walled off. So you really couldn't see how they were living. You did not see, for example, lots of new cars driving around town.

Q: And also you weren't getting stories of the son of general so and so came and raised holy hell at a nightclub and everybody kowtowed and that sort of thing?

MAYBARDUK: I actually did not hear those kinds of stories. I mean the sons and daughters of the elite did not only get a good Cuban education but a lot of them got to study in Europe. They definitely lived better. They seemed to be the ones who are leading some of the change going on now in 2008. The first vice president and a man often considered responsible for the economy, Carlos Lage, there was some meeting with Raul Castro and university students and Lage Jr. spoke up and talked about the lack of communication with the Internet and the lack of communication as we know it and how it was hurting the economy. That seems to have changed policies, which we see ripening now with Cubans being allowed to buy computers the Internet is becoming more available.

One of Raul's daughters I don't think it's one of Fidel's, I think it is one of Raul's daughters has kind of become a champion of gay rights. So one has a sense that there is a newer, younger generation coming directly from the people in power who may, in fact, end up leading major reforms within the country. But in terms of a spoiled generation there isn't a lot of evidence of it, but it may be there.

Q: But at least it wasn't apparent.

MAYBARDUK: No, because Fidel was very careful about not allowing any signs of affluence and as I mentioned a couple times now, individual Cubans don't want to show off affluence. It was the second and third room in the house before you saw anything more than a black and white television. A country that used to be gorgeous, everybody had let their property gone to seed, I mean you could find gardeners who could plant but you couldn't find gardeners who could landscape.

Because if you spruced up your house, painted your house and did a lot of things people would ask you where you got the money, so it had been discouraged. The lack of money to spend in restaurants, even before the "Paladares" opened, the state restaurants, meant there were very few attractive restaurants. There were some. Whoever was in charge of ordering condiments for the restaurants didn't order them, as most Cubans don't like spicy food of any kind but Cuban food can be, in Cuba anyway, could be so terribly bland, it's rice and beans and if you get meat it tends to be pork or maybe some pastas. Even in Chinese restaurants you talk about a country that never got away from its American connections, prominent on the menus in Chinese restaurants if chicken chow mein or chop suey, both American inventions.

Q: American inventions going back to the turn into the twentieth century.

MAYBARDUK: Right and you don't even see that in Chinese restaurants in the States anymore it's gone. But in Cuba they are prominent on the menus and all of the normal spices you have in Chinese restaurants are up there. There was a Cuba that once had a vibrant, wealthy sector, and a very large middle class. One thing is obvious as you drive around Havana from the huge numbers of private homes that are there, you really get the sense of how middle class of Havana was. The homes are still there, they aren't painted, they are falling apart, their roofs have collapsing and there may be two families living in them. But as you drive around town near the area where we lived a little farther out a little more to the east, there are whole sections of town that look like what we were building, maybe of a slight Spanish tinge, in the 1950s, modest single-family homes, blocks and blocks and blocks of them. But all that kind of refinement and Cuba once had some of the greatest architects in the world. Now when they build hotels they bring in Spanish or Italian architects and now all the tourist hotels have Spanish or French or Italian chefs; even the landscaping is done by foreign architects and it's a very tropical country and its got lots of interesting stuff

They've lost all of that, all that kind of I won't say cultural sense of beauty; you still have the ballet you still have this great ballet, they still have great music but there has been a great loss there.

Well, by 1999 I was obviously ready to leave. A couple of last interesting things that happened in Cuba. Fidel decided to crack down on the prostitutes, put 7,000 in reeducation camps but within three months they were starting to appear on the streets again.

Q: What was your next assignment after Cuba in 1999?

MAYBARDUK: I went off to Venezuela as Economic Counselor. I must say I was disappointed, I really wanted a DCMship but it just didn't come; they weren't coming. Ambassador (John) Maisto was our ambassador in Venezuela [Ed: Ambassador Maisto served from March 1997 to August 2000. He has an oral history on file with ADST.] I had known John back from the days in 1982 in the debt crisis in the Philippines when he was a deputy director and I was a junior officer and I discussed it at the time he kind of helped out understanding what was going on in the Philippines and its economic crises and so on. John had been ambassador to Nicaragua when I was acting director of the Central American desk so he was delighted to have me come to Venezuela. So John remembered me.

I was a FS-1 and I was hoping to get promoted to OC but I was beginning to get long in the tooth so this was kind of my last chance. So we actually left Cuba a little early, didn't have two full years there and we went off to Venezuela. This assignment was from 1999 to 2002.

Q: What was the situation when you went to Venezuela then?

MAYBARDUK: Well, Chavez was in power; he'd come in power in February 1999. He had come into the power as the old democratic system in Venezuela and the old traditional parties had fallen apart. They had fallen apart for several reasons. One, the economy was in tough shape. Because oil prices as we listed were about $135 a barrel prices today on June whatever 2008, oil prices back then in 1999 for Venezuelan crude which is a mixture of very heavy as well as light. The heavy crude is less valuable because it takes more to refine it had dropped off to $8 a barrel. Venezuela which has a big middle class, it is one of the more prosperous countries in the continent, fortunes go up and down with oil. They have never been successfully able to broaden the economic base of the country to avoid the big hit by the huge swings in the oil industry. It's not just the oil that brings in revenue for the government, it's when there is a lot of investment in oil which can be billions of dollars which creates a tremendous amount of work for local business, for employees and so on. If that's not happening and oil prices are low, oil companies tend to cut back their exploration which is why we have this huge crisis now because in 1998 several years' prices were so low that company's were beginning to see it didn't make much sense in spending much money on exploration and development. Now ten years later as that has changed, companies are behind in having to…so it will be another five years before we start seeing major new fields come on line.

Anyway so the economy had been depressed and Venezuela had also undergone a significant constitutional change in that governors were now elected and you had state assemblies, I don't know if they were state assemblies before but now you had elected governors and it broke down the two-party system because now you got independent power bases in some of the more important provinces. So that those who opposed Chavez couldn't get their act together, there were so many candidates, that Chavez had a fairly easy time, because the traditional parties were no longer that significant, this had really

been a rapid change. Chavez himself was an army colonel who had staged a coup or attempted to stage a coup ten years or so earlier, had failed, been jailed, the church eventually helped him get clemency so he didn't spend that much time in jail. But he made his various statements, very similar to Fidel after the attack on the Moncada base with you know his famous letter, the history will absolve me. Chavez used his time in jail for the same kind of development of political movement.

So he was now in power when I arrived. Washington had planned to send down a large delegation to sit down with the Venezuelan government, Al Larsen had proposed this, to have talks with Chavez about how we could help them think through the kinds of things that they might do in their economy to better approach the problems of the poor and the things he said that he was doing. But before that happened Chavez had done something, either he had gone to Cuba or said nice things about Iraq or Iran I can't remember, that really annoyed Washington, so we never sent that delegation. So this was the situation I came into.

Maisto was a very good ambassador. I had quite a large economic section, about four officers under me, including a petroleum attaché and a two-person local staff. If ever properly staffed, there would have been three or four in the political section, if we were ever ready to get that as we were already seeing the effects of the reinvention of government that had taken place in the 1990s. I mean it was just a severe shortage of mid-level officers, which would become a problem.

Anyway, Chavez decided to rewrite the constitution and the way Chavez did this, is he just held plebiscites in each state, sort of ignored the old constitution, got plebiscites to say yes, let's write a new constitution. Then they had an election for an assembly to rewrite the constitution, then they had an approval by plebiscite all this ignoring the old parliament and so on which he basically controlled anyway, maybe by not as great amount. This really wasn't my area but the political section spent a lot of time evaluating the constitution and so on. In December they held an election, a vote, on whether to approve the constitution. I went out as a poll watcher out to Valencia a major city outside of Caracas, it was a rainy day and as far as I could tell everything went fine in talking to people in lines and so on. There was no doubt in my mind that this new constitution was approved fairly by a vast majority of the voters.

But it continued to rain all day and that night we got back to Caracas only to wake up the next morning to find that there had been huge landslides on the mountains on the other side of Caracas. Caracas really had two parts, the main city and then you had to go over the mountains or tunnel through the mountains, they had both, to the other side where the mountains came right down to the oceans. You had a hundred thousand or so people living over there. There had been landslides before, one in the early 1900s I guess, but this one just took, it was just like oceans of mud came down, just oceans of mud. The initial estimate was 50,000 dead, that later got dropped to 15,000. As I think probably happens in an awful lot of these disasters, two years later when I was talking to the former head of disaster resistance in the country he said, "Well our final total was about 5,000." I think that is very common in national disasters. I mean the Nicaraguan

revolution was supposed to have caused 50,000 dead; it could not possibly caused that many deaths from what I visited around the country.

But anyway it was still a major disaster. I mean there was Catia a small little town, which was completely submerged in mud. I went to it several times and mostly you could only see the tops of houses and some houses I think that is where the most damage was done.

Communications was cut off from Caracas; the tunnel that you get to it was half full of water. I guess people were able to walk through the tunnel, which went for a couple miles, with water up to their chest, no traffic could get through there. There was an old road over the mountain, which was reportedly washed out, we never tested it. I wish we had. So it was really helicopter was the way you got over there. So the embassy went into disaster relief gear and having been through humanitarian relief in Sierra Leone I knew I had similar background knowledge. So the first thing I did was call AID and said, "Can we get approval for the $50 or $100 thousand emergency relief that ambassadors can normally give in this sort of thing." AID waltzed me through how to do it and said, "By the way there are a bunch of helicopters in Honduras you might be able to use as well." So I walked into the office and told the ambassador this and that started me on the way to becoming disaster relief coordinator; simply because I had…it's an interesting part of bureaucratic politics it's often the person who moves first who ends up running the show. I tried to teach that to my staff over the years that if you want to run the show you've got to write the first memo or take the first action.

But he didn't want to go that far, technically the DCM was the disaster relief officer but I ended up being the contact with AID. We got one of the civil disaster assessment teams, which I forget the acronym for, came in to look around. We got the money which mostly we turned over to the admin officer to start distributing food, which turned out not to be needed. We began our own assessment of the situation. I worked carefully with the AID team. What quickly developed as a problem was potable water. OFDA (Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance) being that part of AID which does disaster assistance had discovered that problem when hurricanes hit Central America; that purified water was a major problem. There was a very big problem in the landslide area because basically the water people usually used came down in streams; but the streams were completely full of mud. So we did two things. One, we got in the helicopters and two, we got in water teams from the U.S. Army. The helicopters went right to work with the Venezuelan army and they did a great job, both of them, in getting people out of isolated areas and getting them to safety. It was amazing how well it worked. I went up in a helicopter eventually and I mean it was like a freeway of helicopters up there. They had guys at every windows looking out to make sure they didn't run into another helicopter they were that close. They lost, we didn't, but I think the Venezuelan's lost three helicopters before it was over, one of which was a private helicopter because the oil company brought up its helicopters and so on.

We brought in these collapsible water bottles which were made in Canada which I used camping many years earlier, as giving people a way to grab water. The army brought in ROPUs (reverse osmosis purifiers) reverse osmosis machines that sometimes you see in

movies. They even made a movie about them at one point, but they are amazing machines. They can take salt water and purify it. They set up right on the beaches and very quickly went to work providing water.

AID had a totally different system that was much cheaper and produced much more water but required much more engineering. The system itself was such that you could produce thousands of gallons of water with equipment that would be no more than the table that I am sitting at which is about six or eight feet by two feet but you had to find basically a somewhat clean water source.. That meant stringing a lot of pipe.

Q: Out of the ocean?

MAYBARDUK: Not out of the ocean because it didn't do salt water it could do fresh water only. AID made an understandable mistake and I wouldn't know better at the time either. Because unlike Sierra Leone when the crisis hit there I had been in the country a year, I knew the country well. I had been in Venezuela two or three months and didn't have the local knowledge of…anyway they immediately turned the requirement over to the Venezuelan water system which took forever to get the pipes put in. I mean hoses are really what they are but you have to run them maybe two miles in some places and so we ended up not taking it back but basically doing our part to basically push the system and get the things open. I would told that the system was working by the AID people and then somebody would come back and tell me that it wasn't working and so I started sending out my own team to check on all these things; that took a couple weeks. It seemed to take forever to get some of these systems working.

But when they worked they produced lots of water cheaply. The ROPUs were costing millions of dollars apiece, they were five-man crews and any one of these machines that AID had would produce as much water as five of the road crews. One of the biggest parts of our relief, apart from providing the helicopters, was the clean water component. However, there was a whole series of problems from the very beginning; that were as fascinating too. Out at the airport there were thousands of people; the airport was on the ocean side of the mountains. The airport itself was not damaged but the roads to it were blocked. There were hundreds if not thousands of people including Americans stranded there. There was no water and no food; so one of the first things we had to do was to figure out how to get to them and how to help them. One of the first calls I made was to American Airlines to ask them whether could they get planes in, pick up the people, and take them out? They said no, they had need for the planes elsewhere. It was only when I basically said, "Do you really want to be in a situation where it would get out publicly that American Airlines refused to help American citizens trapped in this kind of situation?" that they began to back off. About twelve hours later I called the American Airlines representative in the city and I said, "I have just got a report that there are ten thousand people at the airport now, no food and no water." His reaction was, "Oh my God, they're going to steal our new computers."

Eventually they began to fly the planes out, their crews were trapped on the city side of the mountains because the city was where the hotels were. So we offered to take the

pilots over by helicopter to get the planes going. But I was very careful, I only let a few go at a time. I knew as soon as they got over there, they were going to leave. One of the problems we had was that the Sheraton Hotel, which was about two miles from the airport, reportedly had about 180 Americans in it and they couldn't get to the airport. So the day that we transferred the crews over I stopped the last helicopter late afternoon and said, "No more helicopters today," hoping I would keep enough crew people in Caracas that the next day the last plane would go out with those Americans. Well, at this point the American Airlines representative was a little smarter than I was. He had sent all the pilots first and they sure enough took off with empty planes; left the stewardess' behind.

The consular officer who was dealing with Delta didn't have it quite as bad. I remember in the days of Pan American World Airways you could always trust Pan American, when it was the carrier for the U.S., to be there for this type of problem. Then these airlines weren't there. So over time I ended up taking charge of the operation. Here is a lesson for young Foreign Service officers to learn. We started doing a daily sitrep (situation report) and I started collecting information for the sitrep and that meant daily meetings for everybody, so gradually I ended up taking over the operation. But there were a lot of independent actors. The admin officer was off doing his own thing, buying food, and so on, which was not needed, it is a wealthy country. He didn't want anything to do with the operational issues.

In the mean time, the military attaches had been working with our military to get in two engineering battalions to fix the roads and bridges along the coastline. Meanwhile I was working with the Transportation Ministry which had come in and said, "You know we have the equipment we just need a few people to operate the equipment because a lot of our people are trapped." These are two very different stories and because we weren't coordinating, neither of us knew the other story. Anyway, the first engineering battalion was put on a boat and was half way to Venezuela, the other one was being loaded when Chavez says no, we don't want the battalions. The American government thought this had been cleared with Chavez through the head of the army. Whether it was or not we were never sure but this became a big hullabaloo back in Washington how Venezuela slaps the U.S. face and turned down the aid. But it was also due to a lack of coordination; the fact that there hadn't been a single coordinator of the aid at that point and the country team wasn't working well.

Q: That's often the problem. Everybody wants to do something but they have their own priorities. I was in a major earthquake in Naples as the consul general there and all of a sudden we are getting these boxcars full of used clothes and God knows Italy in the 1970s, a huge garment center, didn't need used clothes.

MAYBARDUK: Well, you always get that kind of thing. We started getting in all sorts of private NGOs wanting to donate water-processing plants of various types. That was fine but they took even longer to set up than we did and by the time they got set up we were already getting ours going.

Now the NGO industry for disaster relief has become huge. But my experience both in Sierra Leone and in Venezuela, and in a slightly different context in Papua New Guinea, my very first post, was if the NGO is not already in the country, does not even know the country, working in the country, have its people in the country, who know the country, they are not going to be able to do very much. It becomes a way they raise money. In fact, World Vision came in and was very clear about it. I ask, "Why are you here?" He said, "Well one of the things is, you know, World Vision is a Lufen (if I remember correctly) we have a surprising number of Lufen's who are Venezuelans who know Venezuela and they want to donate a lot of money." So they went down there looking for projects.

Enough to keep their money base going as it was to do good I think they were going to do some good for the country. So anyway that took about six months of my time and I did eventually become coordinator and got all sorts of awards and so on; we got properly thanked by the government, but it was a very dysfunctional embassy and a lot of tensions and so on.

I wrote up my staff and a few other people who I worked with for very nice awards and I went away on vacation. During that time the awards committee said, "Well, did they really do that much," and "in this award being written by the ambassador doesn't seem that Maybarduk did all that much" and "look at all these other people who did things" (much of which was about four or five hours work where my staff and a few other people worked for months on it). So they downgraded a lot of the awards. They rejected mine. My staff went back and immediately rewrote my award and resubmitted it and I ended up getting a Superior Honor Award. But I was so pissed not for me but because my staff didn't get the recognition and some of the others didn't get the recognition they deserved. To be given meritorious honor awards or whatever along with people who did almost nothing. It just really annoyed me so I didn't even go to the ceremony. I'm told Ambassador Maisto gave a very nice speech and thanked me but I told him ahead of time that I wouldn't go because I was just so angry at the way people had been treated. Unfortunately, it was an embassy that had been just torn by internal pettiness the whole time I was there.

So that was my introduction to Venezuela, but a lot more would start to occur. We regularly followed the petroleum industry; I became quite an expert in oil. I now have a much greater understanding of the current oil crisis than I would have ever before because I visited and talked to all the big chief executives who came through. The CEOs (Chief Executive Officers) of Exxon, Mobile, Chevron, and Conoco Phillips would come through and they would always invite the embassy to some very fancy lunch or dinner at a top restaurant or somebody's home and so you got to meet all these people. You would ask them questions and it's quite apropos to what is happening to oil prices in 2008. I would always ask the same question I would say, "How do you predict oil prices and what kind of guidelines do you use for your exploration?" Their answer was uniformly the same, they always said, "You know we always hire an awful lot of economists to predict oil prices and they always get it wrong." So we use a planning figure of $15 a

barrel to decide whether or not we are going to invest or not." Oil is now $130 or something a barrel, you see how bad the situation became and where it came from.

Q: Had the full impact of the Chavez regime hit the economy at this point?

MAYBARDUK: Yes and no. Chavez sounded like a populist but initially at least he acted like a leader who followed conventional economic policies. The country had a chronic problem of inflation due to this inflow of petrodollars and a difficulty in maintaining its budget properly. Nevertheless inflation was like 7-15 percent a year, it wasn't the hyper inflation I had once seen in Argentina and other places. They were devaluing the exchange rate at a steady rate so it didn't get too far out of whack. He was making all these threats but he was taking no action so it looked to me as if the downturn in the economy, which was definitely taking place, was more out of fear than anything that had actually been down; we are now talking the 1999-2000 time frame.

I think in 2001 he announced, and the new constitution gave him the power, a set of forty-seven economic decrees. This was a typical Venezuela thing and other presidents had been given this power too because they had trouble getting proposals through Congress. Congress would have just sort of delegated to the president the right to change the economic as he seemed fit. These decrees just absolutely galvanized the opposition. He had a certain amount of time to do it in and his commissions didn't get going until the last minute and so these things were probably written in the last few weeks before they were due. So when they came out you know they reserved to the state, one of them I remember, all land within 100 yards or 100 meters or 200 meters of any water shoreline. It was presumably designed to make sure that the beaches of the country were public property but it automatically put all piers, it put numerous hotels, numerous businesses around lakes all under government control. Now they eventually said oh there are some typos here and they rewrote it past the deadline, I mean forget about the niceties of the constitution or what you can and can't do, but that upset a lot of people.

There was a decree, which said that underutilized property could be taken by the government and distributed to the poor or farmers and give them as part of land reform. Without much definition of what they meant by "underutilized land" and that, of course, got the agricultural sector all upset. You know some of the decrees were good but there were about a dozen of them that drove people crazy and you began to see a real galvanization of the opposition. Finally they began to develop a voice and started holding demonstrations against the government; fairly big demonstrations.

At the same time he was fooling with PDVSA (acronym pronounced "pedevasa"), the state oil company. The state oil company in Venezuela was an institution unto itself. Back in the crises of 1973 and 1978 Venezuela had nationalized all of the foreign oil companies and it paid compensation to them but it nationalized them and created half a dozen independent companies that produced Venezuela's oil. Then, I think was in the 1980s or early 1990s, they merged all these companies into one big company called PDVSA which was a state oil company. Somewhere along the line they bought Citgo, the largest retailer of gasoline in the United States and there are more Citgo stations than any

others; a lot of them are owned and licensed but in any event, including several refineries. In the meantime they are also beginning the new technology had allowed for the extraction of some of the very heavy oil, traditionally oil had come from the Lake Maracaibo area but now you could do it on the western side of the country. There's huge fields of very heavy oil. So they were building five major refineries, processing plants, refineries each costing $4-5 billion a piece to take out this heavy oil; huge investments by the oil companies. The foreign oil companies were allowed to participate in partnership with PDVSA to do this.

In the various years of the policy changes before Chavez came in when a lot of these contracts were signed and some of them were signed by Chavez himself, there was a group of mid-level people in PDVSA who were essentially forced out, they didn't want foreign companies at all, they didn't want to buy Citgo, they were very hostile to the administration of PDVSA. These guys became the advisors to Chavez and Chavez started tinkering with the management of PDVSA, which basically operated independently. Eventually in 2002 PDVSA went on strike lead by management but also with a large part of the white-collar and professional force and the strike went on for several weeks I guess. One Friday two senior executives came to the embassy, they just wanted to tell us what was going on and they said how successful it was and so on. When they left from their body language and what they told us I turned to the petroleum attaché and I said, "Donna, I think they lost." She agreed with me that they had lost.

That was Friday, on Sunday - I'm getting ahead of myself on the story - but I will finish this part and then go back. On Sunday Chavez normally did a television show called Alo Presidente in which he basically talked to the people of the country in the language of the street. He would go off to these small villages and hand out land titles or he would go and hand out small loans and he would talk with whomever he felt like. He would take over most of the television channel, he had the right to take over the television channel with presidential addresses and he would go on for hours. So this particular Sunday with the strike going on he comes on Alo Presidente, talks a little bit about the strike, starts mentioning all the directors of PDVSA and he would say, "I want to thank doctor whatever her name was for all her good service to PDVSA but now you fouled out and rang a little bell and said, "You're out." Then he would go on to the next one, ring a little bell and say, "You're out." In one sense it was a little hilarious the way he was doing it, it was a soccer metaphor and as I watched this I said, "This is going to explode." Sure enough by Monday the country was in an uproar and the strike that one thought was just about to be over led to millions in the streets. I will come back to that in a minute because I want to go back a little earlier.

As the opposition to Chavez developed after the decree I think it was actually 49 laws, 49 decrees, and the opposition got really angry and they began their first demonstrations. I called my staff together and I said, "You know we are going to forget about environmental reporting, we are going to forget about financial reporting, we are going to forget about trying to reestablished the park service agreements with their park service and we are going to stop worrying about intellectual property. I've seen this before in Nicaragua, the private sector is leading the opposition, this is going to be a major crisis

and so all my economic officers were now, except for the petroleum attaché, you are now essentially to become political officers. I want you to get to know every private organization, political organization in the country. So we sort of geared up to that.

The political section was having a serious problem it's counselor, very smart guy but he had a drinking problem and he wasn't functioning as well as he should. Because of the reinvention of government his number two was somebody out of the civil service who was doing an excursion tour overseas and I think he had some junior officer working for him. They just couldn't keep up with what was going on, so we became a sort of center. In the meantime, I was attending regular meetings of the economic community, the American chamber of commerce which is almost all Venezuelans in it representing all the big U.S. companies but I also any company that traded with the U.S. I went to one of these meetings and people were talking about overthrowing the government, about huge demonstrations, then about getting the military involved and they would overthrow the government. Somebody said, "And I'm sure the U.S. would be happy about that." About 40 sets of eyes turned on me and I had no instructions on this but, you know, it was pretty obvious what to say. I pointed out that at 9/11 (Secretary of State) Colin Powell was in Lima signing the pact for democracy for which all countries in Latin America would support democracy and all the other countries and he delayed his return to Washington even on 9/11 to stay long enough to sign that treaty, that the U.S. did not support military take-overs of democratic elected governments which, with all its faults, Chavez' government was. I said, "So as far as I can see from U.S. government, there is no green light for a coup. There is no yellow light for a coup, it is a red light and if you don't understand that let me say it in Spanish "No allous verde, no allous amarillo, soy am loos rojo" and that became a standard phrase for the next standard months." Virtually everybody in the embassy then got tested with that over time, where the embassy stood.

We had had a lot of meetings on it but this time we were on our second ambassador, Maisto had left and Donna Hrinak was in charge [Ed: Hrinak was a career officer who previously served as ambassador in Bolivia and served in Caracas before from August 2000 to January 2002]. Donna came down there and we had a meeting about the post planning, what's it called?

That's not what it is called but its…and we had a big meeting on it and I mean she said, "Well, you know, what are our goals?" and I guess she said, "I presume our first one is promoting U.S. business." I raised my hand immediately and said, "No, it's either regional stability or democracy, one or the other but it's not you know…" I actually won that point but it was interesting, she was not on board at first but she became on board and became very…you know was definitely right on the right policy after that, after a while.

I had memos first to Maisto and then to Hrinak, which said let's look at this government, let's see where U.S. interests are. Are they involved in terrorism? As far as we know they are not, we have no evidence of them supporting the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), but now in 2008 we do, but we are talking about 2001. We had no evidence of Venezuela supporting it whatsoever. Are they confiscating or nationalizing

any of the U.S. companies? No. Is anybody in prison for their political beliefs? No. Is the press operating freely? Yes, the press is attacking Chavez across the board. There had been an issue about Venezuela not allowing U.S. over-flights to track the drug smugglers flying out of Colombia over Venezuela but aside from that how is our cooperation on the fight against drugs? There were DEA people there and I would look to them and they would say, "It's never been better, we are getting bigger busts than we had ever gotten." So I said, "Chavez is a pain in the ass, I mean, he insults us all the time, he goes visits Fidel, he goes and visits Iran, he even visited Iraq at one point but he's not a serious threat to U.S. interests. The serious things are still in place. Maisto took that memo back to the National Security Council and used it for several years back there to argue the point. I made a couple trips to Washington and talked to Noriega and to who was the WHA at the moment, Shannon, and made the same point. Chávez is really obnoxious but…

Q: Did you find when the Bush II administration came in in 2001 was it palpable that our policy toward Chavez was different or more in opposition?

MAYBARDUK: Not…well there was some but it was not really hostile yet. Remember the relationship between Venezuela was very important and it goes both ways. We import more from Venezuela than we export to Venezuela because of the oil. Venezuela provides about ten percent of our oil and at times has been the number two producer of imported oil to the U.S.; there are huge oil investments there. Our ability to sanction Venezuela therefore becomes very difficult and we had twice a year meetings between the Department of Energy and their Department of Energy and we worked fairly well together with our long history of friendship. So no there really was a sense in Washington too that we will endure Chávez because we have to.

But then one day Chávez brings up a picture of a little girl who has been killed in Afghanistan and effectively attacks the United States for its genocide in Afghanistan or someplace, which infuriated (Secretary) Colin Powell. I mean when he got back he was just infuriated with this and we started getting a lot of hostile statements out of Washington; this is all the other internal pressures we were also building.

We also began to get reports of the captains and majors were planning a coup, this was coming through one of our contacts I won't say it here, but one of our contacts in the military. Those reports kept increasing and increasing. Now our policy was we did not want a coup, we were still saying that to everybody.

Q: Today is the 11th of June 2008. Gary we are talking about a building crisis in Venezuela. Do you want to pick up from there?

MAYBARDUK: At the end of the last tape we were discussing the rumors of coups and so on. This would have been around late 2001-2002.

Q: So the Bush administration was in, the September 11 attack on the Twin Towers in New York city had occurred and…

MAYBARDUK: Yes, we are talking about now early 2002. Let me just for the record when we edit this thing later we can get some things down straight. I did have this timeline that I had developed for a lecture I gave once. I think it's really useful to put it in context of what happened earlier and some of it we've already talked about.

In the late 1980s basically Venezuela adopted the Washington consensus economic reform, lowering the tariffs, privatization of industries but this caused riots in Caracas, I don't have all the details as to what happened. The army had to intervene and dozens are killed and that action activates a reformist or somewhat leftist element in the military. That comes to a head in 1992 when Chavez led his unsuccessful coup. As I mentioned before, he's in a very much Castro-like situation. He is jailed but he makes a statement essentially of the nature that history will absolve me like Castro made, and gains prominence among protestors and people who are dissatisfied with the system. He is pardoned in 1995 by the president at the urging of the church and in 1998 you begin to see the collapse of the two traditional parties, which leads to Chavez' election, and then last time I talked about other reasons I talked about some of the reasons the parties had collapsed.

In 1999, before I arrived, we had planned to send an economic team to Caracas to offer help and give advice on working through Venezuela's economic problems but in the same year Chavez goes to Cuba and we cancel the trip. I don't think had we provided that advice that it would have been accepted and I don't think it would have made a difference but it's an interesting note of history. I arrived in the fall of 1999 during which time Chávez writes a new constitution and calls for a referendum to approve the constitution and in December 15, 1999 the constitution is approved in a land-slide vote, I'm in Valencia that day watching the polls talking to people in the lines and there is no doubt in my mind that it was a fair election and that the opposition had essentially disappeared. But that night it's raining all that day and that night landslides engulfs Vargas, Vargas being the part of Caracas just over the mountains on the coast in which initially we thought 50,000 people were killed, eventually it becomes 5,000 after a year and a half, it's hard to keep these numbers straight. But in everybody's mind it's still 15-35,000 even today.

The next six months the U.S. army is providing helicopters and water units, USAID provides several million dollars of assistance and again I talked about this last time I basically ran this effort for the U.S. side of it. That was also when we had the engineering fiasco where essentially a defense attaché working with the head of the army agrees that we ought to send two engineering battalions to help rebuild roads along the coast. The first battalion is on the sea and the other is loading up ships when Chavez says he doesn't want them and that causes all sorts of unhappiness in Washington and further anti-Americanism. In fact, it may be that the army chief who we thought had consulted with Chavez, but had not.

It was also a lesser extent a failure in the embassy because we had a new, well we didn't have a new DCM we had a DCM who didn't really take charge very well and didn't want

to appoint a single coordinator to coordinate relief efforts at that point so things were not coordinated. So I was hearing from the Ministry of Transportation very different reports of what they needed to help rebuild the roads and bridges from what the army was telling our defense attaché. I'm working with AID and I'm providing the food and actually there wasn't need for much food, key was the water and the helicopters and some of the other relief supplies. The defense attaché was working totally independently and arranges his thing. In the meantime the admin officer is out there buying food for which we had already decided there is not a need as Venezuela could easily feed itself and he is operating as his own independent operation. It was neither how not to run an embassy, nor how not to run a relief operation.

Over time I became in charge of everything pretty much and we pretty much pulled it together. There were a lot of lessons to be learned from those crises though that apply not only to that particular one but also applied to Sierra Leone when I was there and when Hurricane Katrina hit the U.S. and devastated New Orleans and so on. Just watching in on television I could just see the errors…a very key thing in disaster relief is you cannot overly centralize it, it has to be decentralized. You need people who are on top of what's going on but most of the relief that was done in Vargas was not done by the Venezuelan military, although it did a great job or by the U.S. helicopter unit that also did a great job or even our aid, it was by the people of Vargas themselves who pulled their neighbors out of the rubble and found places to house them and individual Venezuelans who managed to get water and other things through those flooded tunnels and over the mountains and that was all going on independent of what the governments were doing. More relief agencies came in and they began to do it.

The coordinator for an international relief organization is usually the UN Development Program and in Sierra Leone we worked fairly well with them but we only had like four or five embassies and two or three NGOs to go to the meetings and so the meetings were sometimes several times a week and they worked fairly well. In Venezuela UNDP would have everybody in a room maybe three times in a fairly good sized room you could have 150 people mostly standing, you could not get any business done. I eventually stopped going and I stopped sending people because it was just was a waste of time. We did, however, work a lot with PAHO, the Pan-American Health Organization. But the key to this was how many different types of operations were going on and the important thing was having people out there looking for where the problems were and then seeing how you could help or suggesting to other people because NGOs would regularly come to my office and ask how they could help and I can say, "Well there seems to be a gap here or there seems to be a gap there." So you have to have the people out there constantly monitoring the situation, providing whatever resources you were particularly good at and understand that the civil society, an overused term, but basically probably a good one in this case which was basically the population itself is going to provide a lot of the relief efforts. Now you take that and compare it to say Katrina where there were the pictures of boat owners who came down to the flooded area and wanted to rescue people and were told they couldn't do it and they could only do it with policemen with them and so people remained stranded and probably drowned while boats were standing up ready to move in or you had pictures of the buses just standing by the road waiting for orders that never

came; the buses could have been in and out two or three times. It was that attempt of over centralization which occurred at every level in Katrina, which I think, made the situation much worse; it took away the individual initiative sort of the thing. So it was an interesting set of lessons there to draw from this event.

The one other thing before I go on that I didn't mention last time on the relief effort was another big issues we had was there was a customs warehouse in the port that stored hazardous chemicals and the landslide broke into it. You had tanks of chlorine gas sitting on top of other things that could explode and you could have had a new disaster all in and of itself that could have killed at least as many people as were killed in the landslides. I don't remember how we first found out about it but this became our project and it was amazing that we couldn't get the Venezuelans to act. We finally got somebody from the CDC down there, he made an estimate of how many could be killed and we had to push and push and push the government to clean it up. The National Guard was very slow, there were lots of rumors that they had things in there that they weren't supposed to have, smuggling and so on and so they wanted to hide it. A couple people went in there in rubber boots, which had virtually dissolved around them in the chemicals. Eventually we did get a U.S. engineering team down there and did an initial, partial clean-up to take away the most serious danger and that work was done primarily by a U.S. army officer, I think she was a major, who did disaster relief, public health, she'd come down there and advised them on how to avoid epidemics. The Venezuelans had that pretty much in hand but it was in this process she or somebody discovered the rest of it. I gave her one of my local staff as an interpreter but he also was the kind of guy who I knew had a lot of initiative. The two of them together virtually over a four-month period got the problem under control and they were pretty much operating independently. It was just one of those things that was going on.

We also were providing a lot of the water and one of the things that we needed to go with the water filtering devices that we had we needed storage tanks and Oxfam provided the storage tanks. Interesting because Oxfam doesn't usually like to work with the U.S. at all. They are generally hostile to the U.S. I never met anybody from Oxfam; they never came to the embassy and I never went to their office but in the field, the guys we had in the field who couldn't tell people from the embassy got together with the guys from Oxfam in the field and they put this together. So we had the USAID water filtering devices and the Oxfam water tanks. This is the kind of very disorganized, not disorganized decentralized almost chaos theory type of management that goes into a handling major disaster and in the end I think we did a pretty good job but it's so different with what we tried to do in Katrina that it really gives you an idea of a whole different philosophy.

All right, anyway we were working on that for the next six months. In 2000 Chavez went out of his way to thank the Cubans for their aid and the Cubans did provide a good aid, they sent doctors and their doctors were everywhere. So Chavez went out of his way to praise them and was very late in praising the U.S. and that too created notice in Washington and elsewhere. But eventually he did get around to praising us he actually had a nice little ceremony; actually I got to talk to him a little bit in the ceremony.

Also in 2000 Chavez wins reelection, the new constitution called for a new presidential election, which he won handily. He won the great majority of congress and the new constitution gave him the right to appoint a new supreme court as well almost all the other constitutional offices some of which were for the protection of human rights and so on. So, what you had was a democratic takeover giving the president something that looks very close to absolute power. It really wasn't absolute power but it certainly looks that way. In 2000 Chavez then also visits and I don't know how exactly these things came in 2000 but he visits Libya and Iraq, of course the UN has this prohibition about anybody going to Iraq and we are very unhappy; the wealthy and middle and some poor Venezuelans are also unhappy. His rhetoric has scared them and investors and the economy are doing poorly and as I mentioned last time his policies were not actually that bad, he really had a populous rhetoric but he kept the budget under reasonable control, kept inflation under reasonable control and at that point had undertaken no nationalizations and no real price controls. Hell he made all the mistakes every other populist leader in Latin America had made in years and years and years.

During this time we changed ambassadors and before Ambassador Maisto, John Maisto, left I gave him this paper which I talked about last time that points out that despite Chavez's rhetoric he is following a very conventional economic policy and he really wasn't threatening our interests. I spent a lot of time last time talking about that so I won't repeat that. Maisto carried that message to Washington where he becomes the national security advisor for Latin America at the NSC. Then comes September 11, 2001. I was called in by the DCM right after the first plane hit one of the towers we could watch the slide down there; it was capable by satellite, cable vision. We go in his office, we've also now replaced, this is late in the year, the new ambassador Donna Hrinak had replaced the DCM and I see the second plane crash. You just know at that point the world has changed, tremendous outpouring of sympathy by the Venezuelans, just tremendous. We got invited to every church in the city. I went with the ambassador to…there's a reasonably large Jewish population in Caracas; I guess I'm ethnically Jewish. So I went with her to that service but it was just tremendous; people would call and pick up the phones and were crying. You know you really felt great empathy being connected to the United States despite the tragedy that was kind of a nice feeling. Of course, this was when Powell stayed in Peru to sign the new OAS, Organization of American States, Covenant on protecting democracy throughout the region. He delayed his return to Washington by a few hours so he could, in fact, participate and sign this document.

On October 19 Chavez makes a speech on Afghanistan which infuriates Secretary of State Powell; I don't remember the details of the speech but basically some little girl who's been injured or in some way hurt he uses it in the way that picture of the little girl after the napalm attack in Vietnam. He uses it in the same way and he accuses the U.S. of genocide or whatever and Powell goes ballistic; Powell starts making enormous speeches criticizing Chavez. Donna Hrinak is called home, she's our new ambassador, and she comes back with a very tough message to deliver to Chavez, a message that essentially says, "You know, if you are going to attack us like that then we are going to respond forcefully" by which was meant verbally. Of course, that is absolutely I won't say it was the wrong way to handle Chavez because you probably needed to do it but it doesn't

change Chavez's behavior it just infuriates him and it ruins his relationship with Ambassador Hrinak.

Q: How were you at the time were you seeing Chavez at this sort of thing? Was he looking around, you know the populist is always looking for an issue to try to play up or did he have really a deep-seated enmity toward the United States? What was going on?

MAYBARDUK: I think Chavez, and I think I had felt at the time, it is kind of hard to know what I felt at the time as what I feel now, but Chavez did have a deep-seated enmity to the U.S. and a really strong affinity for Fidel. He also was very resentful toward the wealthy within Venezuela. He had grown up in Barinas which is a town in the, I guess the northwestern part of Venezuela, a cattle ranching area, in a very modest family. I think his parents were schoolteachers and I'm sure he was I think very unhappy bothered by the wealthy ranchers in the area. But again he actually had some good people in the Ministry of Finance and the central bank and he really…as I mentioned before we did have excellent cooperation on drugs and there was no evidence, at least until recently there was no evidence, of his doing anything than give some venerable support to the FARC, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, a group in Colombia. So as I said and that was the memo I gave Maisto now added to after this Chavez was a pain in the neck and he really wasn't very helpful at the UN and places like that, but he really was not at that point challenging our fundamental interests. The oil flow continued to go to the U.S.; the oil companies were worried about new legislation but at that point were still doing just fine, oil prices were beginning to go up which made them even happier. I think by that time oil prices were close to the $30 range which sounds like nothing today but as I mentioned last week in 1998 oil prices for Venezuelan crude were about $10 a barrel.

Q: Was there still that sort of equation that has been mentioned recently that Venezuelan oil is not that fungible and that it has…well you might explain it.

MAYBARDUK: Yeah, Venezuelan oil is two types. I became quite an oil expert after three years in Venezuela; I was not before. It has a light crude that can be refined anywhere but its recent discovery of new sources of oil are from the Faja, it's part of the more eastern Venezuela and it's a very, very, very heavy crude which twenty years ago you could not economically have gotten out of the ground, new technology had been developed and I think five new refineries were being built or developed each costing $4-5 billion each with a great deal of foreign investment. Exxon, Chevron, Conoco, BP, Shell, Total French, you know just about every major oil company in the world was there and spending a fortune in getting this oil out which at $30 a barrel was becoming profitable. But these refineries only reduced the viscosity of the fluid. It still did not get it down to a level to the further refining that needed to be produce gasoline. So there were only in the consuming countries only a few refineries could take this heavy crude and take it all the way down to gasoline and that's where Citgo came in. Venezuela in the 1980s bought Citgo and converted Citgo refineries to be able to handle heavy crude. So that and there were also refineries in Europe. So this was their main market for the heavy crude that is right they were a bit trapped they needed to sell to us just as though we needed to buy from them. Of course, because Venezuela is so close to the U.S. that for both parties the

transportation costs were a lot lower so it was just a natural supplier. In fact, at times Venezuela was talking about building an undersea pipeline that would have taken crude directly from Venezuela to Florida. That was quite a distance but I guess it was not technically impossible. So you know we continued to cooperate in oil and a lot of other things continued to go on in normal relationships despite this hostility, OK.

Once Powell started criticizing Chavez it awakened the opposition in Venezuela, it might have been awakened anyway but the fact that all of a sudden the U.S. was criticizing Chavez sort of gave the opposition a sense of strength; so there was a much greater degree of protest. We in the embassy had to set our position because by November this is again of 2001 there was talk of a coup. I had gone to this meeting of the American Chamber of Commerce where I had been asked directly would the U.S. support it and I'd used the phrase "The U.S. will never support the overthrow of a constitutional government, there is no green light, there is no yellow light, there is only a red light and if you didn't understand me in English I will repeat it in Spanish and vice versa." Hrinak basically called the embassy together and basically gave the same pitch. She made it clear that we were not supporting the coup, we were not to retain the…we were not in any way sound like we encouraged it, stop light had become a very common usage and we were not to engage in speculation. Would we recognize the regime if the government was overthrown? We just will not do it; we were opposed to a coup period. It was not a popular position in the embassy, there were a lot of people who were really pissed off with Chavez and to her credit Hrinak understood that and she at country team meetings regularly brought that point home again. I absolutely agreed with her, I actually brought it home to my staff but this was a clear minority position in there but it was the authority position also strongly supported by the CIA station chief who felt the same way.

Q: Were you getting any feeling from the Washington angle at this point when the rumors were going around?

MAYBARDUK: Well, let me look at my timeline. I mean this was Washington's position too; this was Washington's too at this point. We had all sorts of, we had various problems; most of our contacts were with the opposition, the press, the political parties and business. As the chief of the economic section I did have regular contacts with the Ministry of Finance to whom we were actually providing technical assistance on debt management from U.S. Treasury. I got to know the fellows there very well and used to have lunch with the finance minister from time to time. I got to know all the central bank people reasonably well, had a local employee who had once worked at the central bank and so he introduced me and I developed a good relation with the central bank and then we had attempts to try to reinstate the Park Service cooperation with the Venezuelan parks. We also had regular talks with the environmental…I mean the intellectual people so in the economic section we had a reasonable number of government contacts and most of these were professional and at great extent we had good relations with them. Sometimes they were suspicious but usually after two or three meetings they would go out to lunch with you and tension would begin to relax. I had a lot of them to dinner at one point or another.

Within the embassy group think had become a problem. Group think is the thing of when you get a small group together and everybody has the same view they begin to exclude other views much as has happened in Iraq, the administration on Iraq. So because we had this most of our people, most of our contacts were members of the opposition and this built within the embassy, this feeling that Chavez is a really bad guy and we've got to do something about this. So this group thing had to be really seriously thought, which Ambassador Hrinak did. So at this point we sort of sat down at one point to look at our real national interests and evaluate the risks and figure how we could do this. In the end we decided democracy and the constitutional process came first, the risks, other interests, was acceptable no matter how annoying Chavez had been and we stuck to that position.

Then in December there was a general strike and literally hundreds of thousands of people marched. Counting crowds is always hard. The U.S. Park Service has given up trying to count crowds on the Mall. But the embassy stood on a small mountain peak; Caracas is in a valley with some small mountains within the valley with suburbs built all the way up into it and then bigger mountains around; but we were on one of the smaller mountain peaks. So we could look on virtually most of the downtown and the highways leading to downtown. I mean these demonstrations were as far as the eye could see from one position. There were just miles and miles and miles of protestors. I started going to the demonstrations and people weren't densely packed but they were…it wasn't totally blocked either it was several hundred people there or more within a block. Initially the protestors were fair skinned, there was some darker skinned individuals but skin tone can be stereotyped as a class difference.

Q: An indigenous…

MAYBARDUK: Well Venezuela has this it really has had an enormous mixture of races, which among other things has produced incredibly attractive women and more Miss Universes and Miss World's than any other country. I mean they are a very good-looking people. Also, on surveys that have been done worldwide they always come close to being the highest on sexual satisfaction. You know, it's just sort of an interesting sort of place.

But interestingly though unlike almost any other place I had been I never heard race talked about. We already talked about Cuba where race is not supposed to be talked about but on a one-to-one conversation it comes up all the time and if somebody refers to somebody else they will talk about you know he's…they won't say it but they will take one finger or a couple fingers and bring it over the back of their other hand indicating that he is a person of color. You didn't see any of this in Venezuela but class wise, economic class wise, there is a clear relationship between the darkness or lightness of your skin and your economic status. So it was a general strike and as I said, thousands of people marched.

Q: What were the issues there?

MAYBARDUK: Had they passed the new Decree laws yet? I guess so. I'm sorry let me check my timeline here. Yeah this must have been mainly in reaction to the new decree

laws, which I talked a little about last time but I'll repeat just for coherence in this presentation. These were 49 laws passed by presidential decree which the constitution gave the president the right to do on various ways to regulate the economy including such things as saying that anything within 100 or 200 yards of any body of water belong to the state. It may have started out as conservation practice but, in fact, by this point the previous had been 50-100 meters and now it was double. It ended up all of a sudden confiscating hotels, docks, marinas, our homes and I think that was just the careless drafting because they did it in a hurry. But eventually the government back tracked on that one and said it was a typo. You know the law was if came out you published the law and that was it, there was no provision to go back and rewrite it but they did. There were threats of confiscating agricultural property that was not being properly cultivated, this was a direct attack to the cattle owners and I'll mention at this point but forgotten all the others but out of the 49 laws there are about a dozen in one way or another really that upset people. So the general strike and the general strike really demonstrated that the opposition was serious and powerful and was the joint effort of the private sector and the labor union movement. The private sector led by a man named Carmona who was president of the general chambers of commerce and the labor union movement ran by a guy named Ortega who came out of the rough and tumble business of labor politics. They would not have been natural allies but they were in this case.

Now by February there were rumors of coups everywhere while our leaders in Washington were continuing to criticize the Chavez administration.

Q: Who was the assistant secretary for western hemispheric affairs?

MAYBARDUK: At this point it was…it wasn't Noriega yet. It was someone who goes back to the days of the Contras who Dodd didn't like. He was a contemporary one…he Otto Reich, it was Otto Reich.

Q: Otto Reich whom I interviewed a long time ago before Kennedy. Were you getting visits from Washington of people like Reich and others?

MAYBARDUK: No, but we were going back, Maisto was back there and Maisto was still of the opinion, as we were in the embassy, that Chavez was a pain in the neck but not a serious threat to our interests, the desk still held that view. Reich, however, had been an ambassador to Venezuela and this is one of the interesting things in the age of telecommunications whereas at one time most of Washington's information would come from the embassy reporting. Plenty of ordinary Venezuelans knew Reich well enough to pick up the phone and call him directly and, of course, you now have Spanish television in the U.S. and we were getting reports through there which people in the Department watch, and you've got a Venezuelan lobby in the U.S., the Venezuelans, you know pushing against Chavez and the Wall Street Journal printing editorials.

Q: There had not been a great exodus from Venezuela or I mean…

MAYBARDUK: There had been some exodus but not a great one.

Q: You were picking up sort of a coalition of Cuban-Americans and Venezuelan-Americans who were sort of joining forces?

MAYBARDUK: Well, they had this similar viewpoints; I don't know if they were joining forces but they were similar. It was not dissimilar to the Cuban exile situation except that there weren't as many Venezuelan exiles then or self-imposed exiles but it was growing, it was a growing number. There was a little Caracas somewhere in Miami.

We continued, of course, the stop light thing 'no green, no yellow, and only red' but our contacts really stopped listening. They would assume we would eventually approve any future change in the Venezuelan government. While we were very careful not to encourage such thinking even in the embassy we were not at all sure they weren't right in fact.

Q: As a matter of fact the United States can huff and puff about any change but eventually it's going to come around to recognizing any country that goes through a change.

MAYBARDUK: When I was an intern in the State Department many years before I actually joined, I had talked to somebody who had been in Guatemala in the 1950s. It was a period in which Guatemala not only had the Arbenz thing but a series of other coups and he reported the case in which the word came down from Washington we were not to support a coup but we were to get in the way of one if one place and at a cocktail party some colonel asked him, "Well, if we had a coup would the U.S. provide diplomatic recognition?" He told me that his answer was, "Well, eventually we recognize just about everybody" and left the conversation at that.

A coup took place and a couple months later he met the same colonel at another party and said, "I want you to know that your answer to my question gave us the go-ahead for the coup," which I brought up in our staff meetings because this was how careful we had to be in Venezuela. We could not send a signal that we would do it.

At some point I go to the DCM, when was that, oh yeah I go to the DCM this would be in February and I basically tell him our speeches in Washington are basically fueling the coup, the possibility of a coup, and we need to lower our rhetoric in Washington. I think he was Chargé at the moment and he took me seriously and he called Washington on a secure line and basically asked the desk to get that message up to the secretary; it gets stopped by somebody on Powell's staff, it doesn't get to the secretary. Somehow though about a week later it appears in the Washington press that an unnamed senior State Department official says that the U.S. would not support a coup in any way in Venezuela. It didn't get a lot of comment in the Washington press but we made a big thing of it at the embassy and pointed it out to everybody. The DCM always believed that Otto Reich was the person to have talked to the press but I have met Otto Reich several times since and I've at least twice thanked him for that help and neither time did he seem to have any idea of what I was talking about. So I don't know who was the official who actually did it but

it did discourage things a little bit and when my evaluation report came around that year I got credit. The DCM was convinced the coup was going to take place; I'm not so sure, but anyway I got credit for stopping the coup. But again I wouldn't push it that far, but who knows. It is interesting how you go back to that case in Guatemala in 1954 and you go forward and lessons learned kind of come forward and the need to be extremely careful.

Now we are beginning to have another problem how do we collect information without becoming part of the problem? I think it was the number two in our defense attachés' office who had really good relations with colonels and the captains and the majors in the army; he was the one bringing back the constant reports of the coup. It was really the CIA station chief who first said, "You know this guy is new at this he can say the wrong thing and start up it up himself." So this guy is taken, not to the woodshed, but he's taken to the bubble and is given a very serious talking to by the ambassador and by the station chief, I wasn't there I think the political officer was involved too, letting him understand how dangerous this situation was and what he could say and what he couldn't say. But the more we did that because we were doing that with the civilian side as well people stopped talking to us, they were determined to oust Chavez, they thought they could do it and if we weren't going to be part of it, well they didn't need to talk to us. We could only sort of ask so many questions because you didn't want to be seen as being a participant. So now we had this interesting situation that we were opposed to a coup, we didn't want to know what was going on and those two goals conflicted. It was very interesting and this is the reason I wrote this up as a class once, I wrote this who thing up for a lecture I gave at Dickinson on kind of all international relations theory in three months. All the various elements came into it from group think to understanding your national interest, information collection and so on.

Anyway then we come to…now we are finally getting back to where I started last week. Chavez makes a change at the top of PDVSA, the state oil company. The state oil company has a tradition of Venezuela being fairly independent, being run like a business. It actually has an excellent reputation; it is considered the best state run oil company in the world. It's got modern offices; it's got big training facilities, when you go see its operations you really feel that you are dealing with a very serious corporation, a very serious group of people. I can't remember all the details but Chavez' change starts off another strike this time lead by the employees of PDVSA including most of the top management and they shut down the country's oil production. Very quickly it's joined by another general strike within the rest of the country. It is around this time just about a month before this time Donna Hrinak has left as ambassador, she clearly from day one never wanted to be ambassador to Venezuela; she had one foot out the door before she came in. Her policy sense was good in her mind but her heart and soul were never really in it. She had been working to try to become ambassador to Brazil and somehow pulled that off; she is replaced by Charles Shapiro, coming out of Washington. Charles had been a DCM in Chile, had been head of the assistant secretary staff in Washington and I think he was a deputy assistant secretary at that point; anyway he was now an ambassador. [Ed: Shapiro was a career Foreign Service Officer and presents his credentials on March 19, 2002.] He comes out with pretty much the same views as Maisto and Hrinak. Kind of an

arrogant personality and very quickly lets it be known he really doesn't have much respect for most of the people in the embassy, especially those who don't agree with him. I was fine because I was on the same wavelength. He would later tell Washington he had nobody good in the embassy except for Gary and he, again, would eventually replace the DCM but that came later.

By this time I had had Hrinak to my house with Carmona the head of the private sector and now I had Shapiro to dinner at my house with Carmona and some of the leaders of the private sector. The private sector, of course, was leading the strikes, they understood the U.S. position, they all said there was not…everybody was now telling us there would be no coup there would simply be such enormous demonstrations that eventually some senior people probably from the army would go see Chavez and tell him he needed to resign. Having listened to Chavez for now two and a half years nobody in the embassy believed that scenario, could not believe that demonstrations would force Chavez out of office. But of all the opposition figures we talked to Carmona seemed to be the most rationale, the need to replace Chavez, get on with democratic government and move forward. It had none of this kind of emotional gutsy, you know, Chavez is another Castro and we need to kill the son-of-a-bitch kind of thing that you heard from so many people. I heard that a lot. I heard that a lot from my contacts.

So the demonstrations continue and they are big or bigger than the ones in December. I have now walked through several of these demonstrations and one thing that is interesting to me is the color has changed. No longer is it all just fair skinned people there are an awful lot of people with dark skin in it. Both my sons are down for a visit I take them to one of the demonstrations and both of my sons are very progressive and one at that point considered himself an anarchist, he later became a democrat, but they're fascinated to see the Communist Party banners marching in demonstrations against Chavez.

Q: Were there counter demonstrations?

MAYBARDUK: Oh yes, thank you, yes there were counter demonstrations. I was the only one to go to those. It was a really hard problem getting people in the embassy to just to pass the group think; I get my staff to go too. They were smaller, they were darker but they too were passionate and they could be good size just if one is 50-100,000 and the other is several hundred thousand these were good sized demonstrations. Generally speaking a lot of the Chavez supporters were bussed in, the government would bus them in and you could see the long line of busses that had been bussed in from all over the country, whereas on the opposition side it was pretty much spontaneous; of course, a lot of the opposition had cars, a lot of students would…

I guess the day before it must have been April 9th. On April 9th. there is another huge rally in front of PDVSA, and it's like a party, you have a sense of everybody thinks Chavez is coming down. You see families out there, you see fathers carrying their children on their shoulders, you see college students and I left that demonstration, this must have been on the 10th it was on the 10th actually I guess, and I go over to the presidential palace and I'm

wearing a tee shirt and baggy pants and tennis shoes and it didn't do any good everybody recognized me as an American. But anyway, a much smaller demonstration of probably not more than ten thousand maybe less. It is not well lighted around there so that just adds to the gloom of the situation, and you came away with this feeling that it is over, that Chavez can't rally his supporters but I also saw something different. I had been in Argentina, of course, during the return of Peron as a student and what had struck me in Argentina is how the believers, the Peronistas, the believers the shirtless ones, believed in Peron like he was a God. No matter what he did there was this absolute faith and that's what I saw among the Chavez supports. So on the morning of April 11, I guess it was the morning of April 11…

Q: Are we talking about April?

MAYBARDUK: April 11, 2002 we have a country team meeting or an expanded country team meeting because we are now down to kind of an emergency mood, we are worried about demonstrations coming to the embassy and everything else. I simply state I said, "I don't know what to do about this anymore. It looks like it's totally out of our hands but this is going to come to violence and Chavez people are going to fight back." Not only did I not get any support for that country team meeting but actually the press attaché laughed at it. Later the DCM came over and saw me afterward and he said, "Gary, if what you say is true what can we do about it?" I said, "I'm just warning everybody, I am at a loss now of what to do." Well the demonstrations started and they were bigger than ever I mean there were thousands, tens of hundreds, I don't know, it could have been a million people I don't know, who knows of these numbers. All I can tell you is that it looked like the entire city was out there.

By this point I am running both the economic and political sections, the political counselor is sick, he had a problem with alcohol and I don't know if that was the issue but anyway he was out. His number two a good man, a civil servant, who was on excursion tour, his wife was having a nervous breakdown and he was home taking care of her. That left one junior officer in the political section. So I was running both the political and economic sections and we were covering what was happening over at the offices of the chamber of commerce and the national chambers of commerce and trying to follow as best we could. I send out two of my officers to sort of cover…at this point I can't go out myself because somebody's got to run the operation from the embassy to cover the demonstrations. There is this monstrous rally with Carmona and Ortega and at the end of the rally they announce that they are going to march downtown to a plaza downtown not on the presidential palace but on another plaza. Again you can watch it from the embassy. You can watch all this happening from the embassy this mob of people moving. I'm getting reports and doing the best we can from my two people in the field. One was over near the presidential palace reports that trucks had arrived with baseball bats and they are handing out baseball bats to the Chavez supporters. Here's where I get really fuzzy but it's interesting…I'll come back to more because it is interesting later. At some point apparently the parade march changes and begins to head toward the presidential palace. At the head of the parade is Carmona and a former general, who's name escapes me but he had been the head of PDVSA at one point, he had been a Chavez appointee at one

point. They get a phone call from Ortega warning them that they need to get out of there as there is violence or there is going to be violence. This point is factually unclear to me as to when they got the phone call. I don't know if it was before the shooting started or after the shooting started but the shooting started and it ended up in a firefight between the police and Chavez supporters who are firing from an overpass over the highway which the demonstrators are going to march; parts of this gets on television.

Now at this point the press, which never liked Chavez, was totally with the opposition. Chavez had been abusing his right he had a right to sort of anytime he wanted to force all the television stations to join a national Cadena chain they could listen to his speeches and he had been using this on a regular basis to shut off the opposition and voice and they stopped obeying it and they stopped going on the chain. The one government owned station essentially goes silent. It wasn't taken over; it just sort of like everybody left. So now most of the news reports we are getting is from the side of the opposition. Now after this already a lot of this is a second hand story Carmona and the general were put on motorcycles and are scooted out of the parade; again I don't know if this is before or after the shooting started. A column of armored cars leave Fort Tiuna which is quite a ways from downtown, goes several miles and stops and parks, never moves again.

My other officer is in a position where he can see on some hill the presidential palace; he hears the shooting. Neither of my officers saw the shooting, I'm in the meantime by the way trying to get them on their cell phones and trying to tell them to get the hell back to the embassy; whatever is going to happen it would be nice to know about it but it is not worth getting yourself killed. One guy comes back and the other guy has his phone turned off, a former Navy captain, I think he was having too much fun. But to be honest also those who defended him, because I was chewing nails about this, said virtually everybody in the city was on their cell phones so it was quite possible just all the lines were just completely and totally jammed. Anyway, he reports later that he heard the shooting, he looked toward the presidential palace and he said nobody at the palace were ducking, the palace guards were not ducking so as far as he could see nobody was attacking the palace. But at some point a group of generals go over to talk to Chavez and suggest he resigns. It was reported later that he was completely emotionally exhausted and he does resign just like it had been predicted to us, just like it had been predicted to us.

So he's taken away for his own protection to Fort Tiuna and the idea was to send him off on exile; now there has been no force here at this point, he has not yet been physically arrested or anything. By the time he gets to Fort Tiuna I mean the shootings had taken place, people were dead and there are people who want to put him on trial. The plan was to send him either to Cuba or the Dominican Republic but a decision instead is made to send him to an island off the coast, basically a prison island until they decide what to do. So ends April 11, at least as far as I know, an incredible day.

Luckily I live two blocks from the embassy and I go home that night for a few hours sleep. I have a nice couch in my office and I give the station chief a blanket and a pillow I keep hidden in the basket when I want to take a nap and she sleeps in the embassy.

Sometime during the night there are riots destroying the large shopping center in town. The next morning there is a meeting I don't know if it was at the state house or the assembly but in any event which essentially is going to swear in Carmona as the temporary president. He essentially swears himself in and he is surrounded by people who nobody has ever seen before, nobody has ever seen before. At some point during this I get a visit from several senior people in the private sector movement who I've gotten to know pretty well, they've been to dinner at my house along with Carmona and they say can you get through to Carmona? Nobody can get through and he's got these new people blocking our way and we can't get to him. We [Ed: the embassy?] don't have that contact. He even becomes president and the first thing he does is he absolves the national assembly, he absolves the Supreme Court, dissolves every other constitutional court in the country. He does promise new elections within a year; where that came from to this day I don't know and it leaves everybody wondering where you are at, where you are at this point.

During the course of the day Washington starts getting hit by all the members of the OAS (Organization of American States). Remember that back on September 11th we all signed this charter which basically says that this is a continent where everybody has always believed in national sovereignty. We don't get involved in each other's affairs but it says basically it is the responsibility of all states in the region to protect democracy in each and every individual state. At the OAS we are getting clobbered by the Latin's that this is wrong, that Chavez cannot be removed from government this way and so by now, I guess, it is the morning of the thirteenth. Sleep is so limited that it is really hard to keep track at this point. We could not report events fast enough, we did not have… I mean I have an extra person out of the consular section and about five or six people working for me. We couldn't keep up and report the…and we are running twenty-four hour shifts. While I'm in charge of coordinating the reporting, the DCM regularly approves the outgoing cables of the agency and the defense attaché's office without me or any of his staff seeing them. So we are beginning to lose control that way in the embassy plus everybody is exhausted barely able to keep up, the radio stations are all reporting the same thing with the opposition now in government. In the meantime, we had several days before these events, maybe a week or two before, had told our defense attachés they could no longer go over to Fort Tiuna. As this came to a head we did not want to be seen as the instigators, which meant we no longer had any contact with the military.

So I think it was on the morning of the thirteenth we get a phone call from Washington saying, "You've got to talk to Carmona and get him to reverse these decisions about abolishing the assembly, about abolishing the Supreme Court and so on. The ambassador asked me do I have a cell phone or something for Carmona. I had his office phone but I did not have his cell phone. We tried to figure out how to get in touch with him. The embassy operator figures it out fairly easily and says, "Let me call the presidential palace," and he [Ed: Carmona?] picks up the phone. So Shapiro delivers the message, you know, you've got to reestablish the rest of the constitution as well as moving ahead to free elections. He says, "OK, Mr. Ambassador you are probably right." He goes over to Fort Tiuna with the generals and they begin to figure out what to do next. They are busy fighting over who's going to have what ministries and so on. In the meantime a

colonel or brigadier general in charge of the parachute battalion or brigade in a nearby city announces that he does not support Chavez' overthrow and wants Chavez returned setting the stage for a fight within the military. Chavez at this point is off on one of the islands off the coast. You then start seeing pictures on television of motorcycle gangs, Chavezta's, threatening the TV stations. There are pictures of them roaring up to the TV stations and all of a sudden the TV stations start going off the air. There may have been large demonstrations out at Fort Tiuna in favor of Chavez, that's what the Chavezta's said. We never saw that on television, we never saw any pictures of it; I never got a clear story.

In any event, while the generals and some politicians and new president are meeting at Fort Tiuna they put no guards to protect themselves and somebody with a company of soldiers comes over and arrests the whole bunch of them. I often want to teach a course on how not to conduct a coup. The next thing you hear is Chavez is he is on his way back and by the way Chavez never resigned. Witnesses swear he resigned but they never got him to sign a piece of paper. So he never officially resigned and within a day Chavez is back in power.

Q: What about what happened in Washington?

MAYBARDUK: Aha, on April twelfth I guess or maybe late on the eleventh Washington puts out a statement to the effect that calling for the early restoration of democracy in Venezuela, lamenting the coup but basically saying Chavez brought it on himself. That statement has been used ever since by those who want to believe there is an indication that we, in fact, instigated the coup.

Q: And we hadn't?

MAYBARDUK: We had not in any way shape or form. The DCM is told by the desk this statement was written by the NSC and was never cleared by State. Well, former Ambassador Maisto is the key person at the NSC; I talked to him a year later and he claims he never wrote the statement.

Q: It sounds like something came out of Cheney's office or something like that.

MAYBARDUK: I think personally but I have no proof of this whatsoever but just intuition I think our press attaché at the embassy wrote the statement, sent an email back to Washington and somebody picked it up and released it uncleared by anybody. Presumably somebody needs to go back and try to…because the way you make these statements you know they are normally pieces of paper with a bunch of clearances at the bottom. Somebody should be able to go back and find out who actually drafted it and did it but nobody has bothered and if they did they didn't want to publicize it.

Q: Yeah, I mean I wasn't following this except as a retired person looking at the paper and I sort of came away with the impression that we recognized the new government.

MAYBARDUK: Well I think we basically did. I don't think we formally recognize it but pretty much. We would have if we had it but I don't remember anymore.

Q: But I mean at least there was no official recognition?

MAYBARDUK: No, there was no…obviously we were not part of the coup we obviously tried…it wasn't a coup, of course. I don't know what do you call it? It wasn't actually a coup. In New Guinea pigeon which is a language with limited vocabulary a lot of concepts can't be described by one word, you have to use a whole paragraph or a sentence or a page to describe something so if you wanted to describe a piano in New Guinea pigeon it would take you a page or two to describe it or you can come up with the closest word which would be another percussion instrument – a drum. Well in either English of Spanish to call this a coup would be like calling a piano a drum, there was simply no nonstructural word we have to describe or categorize what went on here.

Anyway, Chavez is back in power.

Q: Today is the 18th of June 2008 I believe this is the 197th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. Gary, we are talking about the coup in Venezuela

MAYBARDUK: I thought you were going to say it was the 197th interview I've had and I didn't think we were quite at that point yet. It wasn't a coup but anyway…

Q: Apparently Chavez claimed that we had done something and that there was something about the United States and Chile both jumping the gun on things. What was this all about?

MAYBARDUK: I don't know what Chavez said. I mean, he says a lot of things but I think we talked a lot about it the last time but to refresh after Chavez resigned, or whatever the story is, because we only got it secondhand. But supposedly he resigned but he never signed anything that said he resigned and you know the word got out to the world. The State Department, was it the State Department or the White House; it may have been the White House…

Q: It may have been the White House because Condoleezza Rice was in there and she was in the National Security Council.

MAYBARDUK: That is right. They read a statement that - I don't remember the exact statement - but we had hoped for the early return of democracy but lamented what had happened I think but basically said that Chavez brought it on. That's not the exact language but…that has been used and interpreted ever since and I've had many, many arguments with people over this as indication that we somehow supported what had happened, which couldn't be further from the truth. We had this issue of where did that statement come from. It was a claim that blamed it on Chavez that sort of made it look bad. The desk officer at the time, whose name I forget, this is all hearsay. The DCM who I did hear it from directly, said that it had come from the NSC without clearance of the

desk, or the bureau. The NSC person at the time for Latin America was John Maisto and had been an ambassador in Venezuela, in fact when I first got there. He knew Chavez well and he had been one of those people who basically argued with me that Chavez was a pain in the neck but no real security threat to the U.S. When I returned to Washington and I went to visit him at some point and I asked him about that and he said it didn't come from him. So I don't know where it came from. I've always suspected it came from our press officer in the embassy who sent out press guidance uncleared by the front office, we had email, but I have absolutely no…and he was someone who definitely wanted Chavez out and definitely felt strongly about it but I, in fact, do not know where it came from so that's all hearsay and speculation.

Q: Was there any sort of…did you get involved in any sort of investigation on this?

MAYBARDUK: Well, there was all sorts of questions and I think it was Senator Dodd who asked for a General Accounting Office study of what had happened and what our involvement was. So the General Accounting Office came out and that was the first time I'm told that they ever actually looked at foreign policy decision-making versus misuse of money or whatever or effectiveness of programs. So they did a full report, which basically said, "No we were not involved and we did everything appropriately." Dodd himself came out, talked to the embassy and talked to the people, he seemed to be satisfied. I had met Dodd just a couple years earlier in Havana at the ambassador's residence. I do remember discussing this and sort of pointing out how hard we tried and he did seem to take that in and he did seem to believe me. But I mean even today you can go on the web and you can find plenty of people who said the U.S. was behind it. We've denied it to Chavez in person, at least two ambassadors have done that but it's not convenient for Chavez to think otherwise. But we were not and I'm convinced we were not and I'm convinced that there was no one else out there involved in the U.S. government without telling the embassy. If the embassy had known, I would have known about it given the position I was in in the embassy with the closeness to the ambassadors and the DCM and, of course, to the station chief who had worked for me at least nominally worked for me at one time many years earlier.

Q: OK, let's look at…after this episode how long were you there?

MAYBARDUK: Well this happened in April and I was there another two or three months, long enough to go through the GAO investigation and Dodd. Also for this the hearings, the beginning of the hearings in the Venezuelan congress which I guess one should have paid a lot more attention to but I was getting ready to leave and everybody was contradicting everybody and it went on for weeks so there is some sort of written record or testimony that may or may not present some further light on it.

But in the meantime especially in the first couple two to three weeks we did try to figure out some things that went on. At one point, a former military officer then senior member of the Chavez government who had resigned I won't go into his name, came in and asked for political asylum, apparently he was really worried; we don't grant political asylum. We were trying to figure out where he might go to be safe but we couldn't give him

asylum. We spent two or three hours with him and I did ask someone on my staff to make notes but the notes weren't good enough to use later. But it was this individual who basically had been in the meetings after we had gotten a message from Washington to tell Carmona that he could not just dissolve all the constitutional government offices. He had met with generals after he went back to Fort Tiuna and that was where they were all arrested and the whole thing was reversed. He was the first one to tell me that story; I can't remember if he was there or not.

He also was with Carmona during the march the day before that led to Chavez's overthrow and he had actually marched with Carmona. He reported at some point that Carmona had gotten a phone call from Ortega, who was the head of the labor union movement telling him it was dangerous and he needed to get out of there. They got Carmona away from there on a motorcycle, I guess his general took a motorcycle too. What I've never been clear is whether or not that came before or after the beginning of the shooting and I think that is kind of significant. Did Ortega know a shooting was going to place or not, but I'm not sure. At the time the pictures and everything that came out all indicated that it was the Chavezta's firing at the police that started it; the Chavezta's, of course, basically denied it. I still think that's a truthful story but I would like to know, I would be very curious to know the timing of that phone call and the shooting.

I had a friend at the business school IESA I think it is called, I can't remember what the acronym stands for and I can't remember her name at the moment either. [Ed: Wikipedia says IESA, the Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administración (Institute of Advanced Studies in Administration) is a private, non-profit school founded in 1965 and is considered Venezuela's leading business school.] She and I had had a lot of discussions leading up to this and after. She was an American who had married a Venezuelan twenty years earlier and stayed in Venezuela had come down on a Fulbright and stayed and was now teaching at IESA. Sometime later, I may have been back in the U.S. by then and we were corresponding by email I was talking about the incident as the embassy saw it and she raised the question that the march was supposed to head to some square in downtown and at some point veered off in the direction of the presidential palace. Now I don't actually know the truth of that and she was asking the question why, again I don't know the answer. But then about six months later she committed suicide, when I revise this thing I won't put her name in. She had bought the local English language newspaper or had been part owner of it which was having financial trouble and she apparently went to a bridge over a autobahn type road and jumped off leaving a message for her family at home but I mean everybody I talked to said yes it was suicide she did suffer from depression but I really often wonder. I'm not a conspiracy theorist but if she was investigating I really often wondered. She was not friend of Chavez but she was no friend of the other side either. So the whole thing has been kind of left up in the air, you know, on my account a lot of unanswered questions but I don't think…the unanswered questions I have do not involve the U.S. government.

Q: Well, by the time you left a couple months after this was there retribution either way?

MAYBARDUK: Yes, Chavez fired anybody who participated in the strike at PDVAS, the state oil company, which badly hurt the company because there were an awful lot of technical staff and senior management staff. Arrest warrants were out for Ortega and Carmona long after I left but for some reason Ortega snuck his way back into the country and was arrested and was jailed. I think Chavez has since issued a pardon for everybody else who was involved. A lot of the high command had to resign, Chavez moved up younger officers who he thought might be loyal to him so there was a huge turnover in the general staff that went on.

It was interesting many of the same people who were so anti-Chavez who were convinced the Chavez was Fidel Castro or worse were really angry at the way things had happened and now decided that the only way to get rid of Chavez was by elections but they were really angry not just at Chavez but at Carmona and the people around him and so on. Interestingly a lot of my contacts who I had met, senior people in the commercial-industrial establishment sort of disappeared for a while and I know I didn't see many of them for a while. I would read their names sometimes of meeting with Chavez and they were doing things so some of them are back but there are several I've never heard from again since.

So yeah there was this kind of retribution, there was the fear as I said this general came in to see us it didn't happen right away it happened like two or three weeks afterwards or a month afterwards when he came in. We eventually snuck in by the way, out the backdoor out the back parking lot and he was, in fact, never arrested but he was one scared character and his family eventually joined him. I actually found him a place to go that he might have been safe but…my wife actually found it I talked to her and she actually traced somebody down; but that information didn't come until after he had already left.

Venezuela, of course, has continued to flounder on. Chavez now may, in fact, be more of a threat than he was then. I don't know if I' have the same recommendation today as I did then especially now that he seems to be involved with the FARC in Columbia but at the time we didn't have evidence we had no evidence that he was involved with the FARC. There was a recall election for Chavez and the opposition was totally convinced that they were going to win this election. Apparently the embassy, I wasn't there, the embassy was convinced they were going to win the election and the Ag attaché who had been there when I was there saw me here at FSI about two years later and said, "Gary, I played the role you did. I came in and said I didn't think Chavez was going to be recalled. My contacts, my working the streets did not indicate…" but she said, "Just like you were about the violence and the attempt to overthrow Chavez nobody would listen." Chavez won and then, of course, since then there has been an attempt by Chavez to extend his mandate to give him an opportunity to run for a third time. He always said that he wanted to be in office for at least twenty-one years so this was to be expected that he was going to try this but then he was defeated. I think it's working out to a large extent as I as time will tell that Chavez would eventually go too far, too long, the economy would not do well and eventually the Venezuelans would tire of him and that Venezuelan society was such that he was never going to be able to get dictatorial control of the country. The army was too democratic, many of his supporters were still basically democratic, Venezuelans

knew how to go into the streets and while there was some exodus as there had been in Cuba with Castro there was nowhere near the kind of exodus and most Venezuelans holding on. So my view is still that Chavez will eventually be forced out of office hopefully by elections.

Q: After Venezuela you came back to the Department in the summer of 2002. What did you do?

MAYBARDUK: Well I was kind of disappointed; I had gotten rave annual reviews from my work in Cuba, had gotten rave reviews from my work in Venezuela and yet I could not get a senior job back in the Latin American bureau. I was pretty much forgotten by the other bureaus I had worked in, I didn't want to go to the Economic Bureau and tried to get a job of running the office of economic policy, economic policy staff of the Africa bureau. This story is a little confusing because I twice sort of lost this job but at that time I believe they had a new assistant secretary who was going to be nominated to head the African bureau, ambassador to Pakistan I think at the time. In the end she decided not to take the job and she retired or something but in the meantime you couldn't get any decisions made about the assignment process but I knew the acting assistant secretary and he had told me that he would like me in that job. In the meantime, the designated assistant secretary made her decisions which I don't think is kosher, in fact which I don't think is allowed, but she in fact did make personnel decisions.

There was no assistant secretary at that point; it was an acting and another name I can't remember at the moment, but somebody I had worked with. The new nominee was to be I think our ambassador to Pakistan or something. But it eventually didn't happen and in the meantime all these senior assignments had gone unfilled and the Director General at the time basically decided well we will go for recommendations of the ambassador who, in fact, did not become assistant secretary rather than with the principal DAS who had already told me he would like me for that job, so I didn't get it. So I was pretty discouraged with the whole assignment process, which is, I guess not uncommon for officers. Anyway, I thought that after what I had done in both Cuba and Venezuela I would have done better.

But then came an opening on the teaching staff at the Army War College and I really enjoyed being a student at the National War College and I figured well it would get me back to Washington and I would visit Washington more often and I would look for assignments so I took that job and spent two very happy years starting in 2002 at the Army War College at Carlyle barracks.

Q: What was your impression of the teaching regime there and students?

MAYBARDUK: Good all the way across the board. The Army War College, of course, is actually the first war college created in the armed services. Its function is to teach mostly lieutenant colonels, to prepare them for senior commands. Most of these people are expected to go on and become colonels and many are expected to go on to become generals. Their job then is going to be more than just how to move a couple of companies

of tanks around but actually begin to understand the political as well as the military aspects of war, to have better feelings of understanding leadership and to have a greater appreciation of strategy be it military or political or both. So it becomes a little bit like a school of international relations, like my experience at the Fletcher School for a year, but with people who have already had enormous experience. Many of these guys already had experience in Iraq as part of the First Gulf War. Many, many have been involved in peacekeeping efforts, so these were very experienced people.

The teaching staff there was another State Department individual along with myself, the deputy commandant was from the State Department, that's traditional and the staff itself included some active duty military mostly colonels, some lieutenant colonels and even a major there and some retired military officers and just some civilians who were just academics in these fields. Overall it was a very high quality.

Q: They had at Carlyle at one point a peacekeeping institute and then they cancelled it. I know it was Bush II Administration which came in with the attitude we don't do peacekeeping and nation building…

MAYBARDUK: That's right, you're absolutely right. Rumsfeld attitude seemed to be, "We don't do peacekeeping, we don't do nation building. We don't need the peacekeeping institute and by the way I have too many military officers stuck over in the State Department helping in political-military affairs and elsewhere and I want to cut back on it and I think they should cut back on the number of State Department officers assigned to the Pentagon."

Q: I've talked to Mark Grossman who is our number three officer in the State Department as the secretary for political affairs and said that his counterparts over at the defense department were told don't have contact with him but they did, of course, but I mean this was Rumsfeld.

MAYBARDUK: This was Rumsfeld and in fact the peacekeeping office closed only to reopen about six months later after they got rid of the staff and packed up their books, it closed. I mean I almost didn't stay a second year because it wasn't clear if we were going to have two spots for teaching and normally they are one-year assignments but I ended up staying two; yeah, it was a real problem. Rumsfeld was not liked by the army from day one. He had gotten in a fight with the Chief of Staff of the Army (General Eric) Shinseki. The same guy who said we needed 400,000 troops in Iraq.

He got into a fight with Rumsfeld over artillery pieces. The army wanted a new long-range cannon and Rumsfeld didn't think it was necessary and basically cancelled it. Shinseki had testified on the Hill about it and displeased Rumsfeld with his comments. But Rumsfeld thought we needed a smaller army that we could do more with high tech stuff and there was just this general dislike about Rumsfeld among army officers in general.

Q: What sort of courses were you teaching?

MAYBARDUK: The most important course that everybody takes is what they call course two which is national security strategy, which covers everything from kind of basic introduction to what is the State Department and what it does which you try to do very quickly to a kind of a classic discussion of whether you are idealism and realism in international relation thought, which is the stuff that usually puts everybody to sleep and discourages them from international relations classes ever again. You move on to the study at some point to the great military writers, Clausewitz particularly, Sun Tzu The Art of War, plus some of the writers on naval warfare.

Mahan, and early air warfare, the Italian…I should remember all these names but I don't and when I taught the courses, this comes with rapid senility I think. So you teach that, you teach how foreign policy is made so not in a quick review of basic civics and the division of powers in the U.S. government along with some readings on that. But actually some of the practical nitty-gritty like the interagency process, how inter-agencies work or don't work, group think very appropriate for what we went through during our lead up to the Iraq war. Group think is the idea that you get small groups together and they begin to think alike and after a while they exclude other ideas and I mean you see it all the time, you see it in Cuban affairs right now.

Q: Yeah, is there a way you are talking about group thinking, but is there a school solution about how to avoid group think?

MAYBARDUK: Not that I know of. It really requires people being individuals. You have to have individuals who will question conventional wisdom and are careful enough to do it and, of course, as a commander because that is who we are teaching, we are teaching people who will be commanders some day by about warning them about the dangers of group think and you try to warn them against the dangers of excluding people who have different views.

This course, by the way, went on for ten weeks, met three hours every morning in a seminar type session, five days a week included a trip to New York to visit the UN and when they went to New York we broke up in smaller groups and we visited lots of institutions. I did it for two years in a row I took the group to Forbes Magazine, met Steve Forbes and came away with a book of his quotations and a "capitalism is great" umbrella. We saw the Faberge eggs, went to Belleview Hospital that same trip and interesting discussion about what Belleview does in terms of case of terrorism and so on but also some questions about who gets served with medical care these days and who doesn't. I don't know where we went the next year. But this is valuable because one of the problems you have in the military today and the civilian force today is with the professional military it tends to get isolated on bases or on air bases, they socialize with each other and so they are a lesser part of a wider community than they used to be when you had the draft.

You know conversely fewer and fewer Americans have served in the military especially since Vietnam so fewer and fewer understand the military. Oh, the Carnegie Institutes of

Peace was another place in New York that I went to. Other places were the fire departments, the police departments, and so on. NGOs of all types and it's really an attempt to sort of bring home to them the varying aspects of U.S. society. A lot of these people had never been to New York so they also thoroughly enjoyed going to the Broadway plays. Spouses were encouraged to come along so it was kind of a bit of opening of eyes event for many, not all, but many of the officers who may have been pretty narrow up to this point.

Q: You were there from 2002 to 2004. Doesn't this coincide with the invasion of Iraq?

MAYBARDUK: Oh yes.

Q: What was the military perception of Iraq policy and how was it discussed at Carlyle?

MAYBARDUK: Among the facility, it was a continuing source of discussion. The military has trouble questioning U.S. policy, even though this is an environment in which you are allowed and encouraged to do so. The fact that we regularly wrote papers some of which were critical of varies aspects of policy. They were published, although Rumsfeld essentially began to crack down on that too. But up until that point in the first year it was pretty still open. So the students tended to be pretty quiet about it, but a friend there who was in charge of the base security told me, "Gary, if you had been here in the first Iraq war and you had seen how gung-ho everybody was and now you look and see how nobody is really gung-ho, it tells you something; just that kind of tone." We certainly brought it up in the classrooms. I brought it up in the classrooms; I tried to stimulate debate. Among the civilian faculty I would say probably at least 50 percent were opposed to the war, among the military faculty there were some who were very much opposed but perhaps less so.

Q: Where did you fall on this?

MAYBARDUK: I was absolutely and totally appalled that we were going to go to war. I made this clear too…

Q: But were you getting this from your State Department colleagues too or was this just you?

MAYBARDUK: Well I went back and talked to State Department people and yes there was some of that but I would say it was as much myself really. I remember the first Iraq war and why we didn't take Baghdad. I didn't so much question the intelligence on the war about the weapons of mass destruction but I discounted the importance of it. Chemical weapons are notoriously difficult to deliver, as are biological weapons.

Q: Winds tend to drift all over.

MAYBARDUK: Yes, winds tend to drift all over and it's just as dangerous almost to the guys releasing them, as they are to the guys receiving them. The idea that Saddam

Hussein was going to commit suicide and attack the U.S. with this stuff didn't make any sense at all.

Chemical weapons were not beyond the pale but you can't deal with intelligence outside of the context of everything else.

Q: We are talking about intelligence, i.e., information.

MAYBARDUK: Information and intelligence, I didn't see much of the other stuff in the administration. You know most countries in the world can produce chemical weapons; most countries of the world can produce biological weapons.

And the fact that they had the potential to do it or even had it doesn't mean they are going to use it. You have to judge it in the political context as well and even nuclear weapons, what was Saddam Hussein going to do with a nuc or two? But we had people on the faculty who had contacts with the intelligence community and I won't go beyond that. They were coming back saying there is no evidence of nuclear development. So you know among the faculty a large part of the faculty just the threat wasn't there and the danger of getting involved in Iraq was severe I mean the issue at the time we were worried about or I was worried and others were worried about the Shiites and the Sunni's and the fact that they don't get along and what kind of problem they would get into. I guess I was less worried about…I hadn't really thought so much about an insurgency that we faced so much as we get in, we set something up, we get out and then there would be some horrible bloodshed and communal fighting that would lead to far more deaths than Saddam Hussein would ever caused.

The other thing is there is a paper written a long time ago but people in my seminar said that it was still basic logic, that it was still basically military logic, that it was, I forget the exact details but it was going to take a company of men a day to capture two city blocks in city street fighting and they could expect fifty percent casualties. Well now, you know, Baghdad is hundreds of square miles and there didn't seem to be any plan that if Saddam Hussein had decided to fight in Baghdad what were we going to do about it. In fact, I said I don't think there was a plan, there didn't seem to have been a plan.

It was that year that there was a meeting at the National Defense University where the National War College is for POLADS, those political advisers to the combatant commanders in the field. They invited the professors at the various war colleges to come down as well. I knew the adviser both to CINCPAC to the Central Command and to the Special Forces Command; I had worked with both of them at various times and one of them had been a neighbor, our kids played together. The three of us were talking and I said, "Guys, can you tell me what happens if we have to fight in Baghdad, what are the plans?" There was a lot of silence and finally somebody said, "Well, you know, there have been a lot of phone calls in and out of Baghdad." Which I took and I think turned out to be true that I think we thought we could knock off Saddam Hussein in the first couple hours with a missile attack, which we tried to do in fact. But there didn't seem to be any real contingency planning for this thing. It was really amazing and the whole thing

was just amazing and the risks were so high, were just so high I was just furious. I was just worried and furious.

Q: What were your lieutenant colonels and majors…

MAYBARDUK: They generally listened politely. Some of them agree with me, some of the military faculty felt as strongly as I did. But as I say it was interesting they were often very out spoken on most issues but on this issue they basically kept their own counsel. The teaching that started this place by the way is seminars of about seventeen students and the first year I team-taught which is very frustrating to me, the second year I had my own seminar, but it would normally include two foreign officers, the first year we had officers from Ukraine and Chile and the second year, wait it was Bangladesh and Argentina first and the next year it was Ukraine and Chile. Anyway, it is not important. Then you usually had a Naval officer or two, an air force officer or two and defense department civilians.

One of the things I did when I was there was they were having trouble getting State Department students, the State Department again is reinventing government of the 1990s which left us short of mid-level officers. Positions at the war colleges used to be highly coveted, highly desired but now they were having trouble filling the positions at the National War College so even more problems just trying to fill a couple positions at the Army War College. I suggested to our deputy commandant, and then to, I think, the director general came visiting, why not open it instead of normally to FSO-1s who are the people who get these jobs, open it up to FSO-2s which is the equivalent of the lieutenant colonel in the Foreign Service and that is what they did and after that they have been able to fill them every year. So that was one small change I managed to push through.

I did teach some other courses as well. I developed a course in essentially economic issues, what was the title of it, issues in international economics. Because it attracted a lot of foreigner officers I discussed the IMF (International Monetary Fund), what the IMF does and the problems it gets into. Remember these were the years in which there was still a lot of fighting over WTO (World Trade Organization) and all the student protests in front of the IMF and WTO so we talked about international trade, talked a little bit about development, it was kind of a smorgasbord course; it was fun for me as I was able to get back to teaching economics. It was also fun for me to begin to figure out what all these demonstrators were protesting about because I hadn't been quite sure all this time. The third thing that made it fun for me was both my sons were busy protesting in front of the IMF and the WTO; both had gotten arrested in various demonstrations against it.

On the book of readings I prepared for that course I had a picture of one of the demonstrations against the IMF with this student who is wearing a black and red checkered jacket, kind of a fishing jacket of the 1950s and 1940s, wearing a mask and praying with a riot all around him so I used that as my cover. The first year I couldn't do anymore and the second year I brought up somebody from Ralph Nader's organization to talk about the issue of essential drugs and so on. He came in along with this other young

gentleman wearing all the paraphernalia of that picture, it was my oldest son in the picture, it was my son.

So I taught that it was very successful both years, it was a very popular course. Among the other courses they take they get into a series of electives and that was an elective. They also were taking courses in regional studies and so I gave several lectures in the African studies and the Latin American studies. At the end of each year the faculty and students are given the opportunity to invite people they know from civilian society who would enjoy spending a week at the college having big name speakers and discussing with the speakers or anything else they want to do in a seminar atmosphere. Again it is part of this getting the army to know the civilians and so on. So both years I lead that group in my seminars and that was fun. The second year we had a hypnotist and we had lawyers and people and we had people who would never have any contact with the military. It was fun for them and fun for the military and it was weeklong discussions just sort of opening up everybody's eyes a little bit.

Q: In 2004 you left Carlyle what was next?

MAYBARDUK: Right, another difficult assignment period for two reasons. One, it turns out I did not have real good relations with the deputy commandant and that was the main reason actually and unbeknownst to me she sort of killed a lot of assignments behind my back.

Q: Do you have any idea what sparked this?

MAYBARDUK: One was my own fault. In the fall of the second year we took the international students on a trip to army bases around the country including one we went to Cheyenne Mountain where they control our ability to respond to nuclear attacks. It's a big base built inside a solid rock mountain, it's a classic thing like Dr. Strangelove and now we were taking foreign students to it, before it was completely secret. You had to take a road up to it and we are driving up and the Ukrainian officer who was a pilot looked out and said, "Gee, it doesn't look very much like our targeting photos." (laughter) Targeting photos they would have had in case they had attacked the place. It shows how far the world has come. Anyway, we had started a program in Miami and I had gone to a class reunion in my hometown of Orlando. I was going to drive down to Miami where they were meeting the rest of the group before they were about to start the trip. She made it pretty clear she wanted me to be sure to be on time. I got a late start and got lost and arrived about a half hour late. She was really upset about it but part of the problem was she wasn't prepared, I mean she really had not done her work for this course. This was the first time they were going to make students write papers for this course and instead of just traveling around we were going to have seminars as we went around. It just didn't go very well and she needed somebody to blame; I think she was really unhappy.

Then the second thing was during this period a debate started about same sex marriages and my oldest son got really upset about this because my youngest son is gay. I wrote a

letter to the local Carlyle newspaper about it, which got published. One of the senior people in the command structure at the war college asked her about it, what was Maybarduk writing about this stuff. Nothing was said to me at the time but when it came to my getting my efficiency report done I ended up getting about a twenty-five minute lecture on it from her. I should have filed a grievance, this was totally out of bounds, absolutely totally out of bounds but by that time the assignment process was long past and I didn't know at that she had been calling people up and sabotaging my jobs. Christine Shelly was her name; Ambassador Shelly, by the way, was one of those women who was part of the successful women's class action suit which claimed discrimination and got a promotion and benefits from it. Anyway it was a very unpleasant end and I can go into more reasons too but the history books don't really need it except…

Q: Then what happened?

MAYBARDUK: Well anyway I tried to get this job in the EPS (Economic Policy Staff) of EB. There was a job and I had worked in that office and had done great accomplishments, which I talked about earlier, but I lost out to a woman who was pushed by the Economic Bureau. The Economic Bureau for years was known for not really helping its people. When I first came in the Economic Bureau it was known for helping its people.

Q: Well they had a woman called Frances Wilson who was renown, she was a civil servant and dedicated to her job and fostered economic officers. She nurtured them, she was really a tower of strength of the Economic Bureau.

MAYBARDUK: And they had nobody like that for the next thirty years, nobody, and then Al Larson came in as first assistant secretary and later as undersecretary and he just decided to get that pushed. So they pushed this woman into the job and the African bureau didn't know me anymore so. This woman had been my desk officer in Sierra Leone and would have done a terrible job. Later when I would go on to teach at the Foreign Service Institute the economic course, which is the next thing I would eventually do, I found out I didn't bring it up but she had also failed a nine month economic course as had her deputy. I really was beginning to feel quite picked upon at this point I must say. Although I was enjoying my work, my feelings of the Foreign Service were sort of a little less happy than they had been for the previous twenty-five years or more.

Anyway, I was known over here at the Foreign Service Institute in the economic training, what's her name the head of economic training [Ed: Lisa Fox is listed in the Spring 2004 State telephone book as head of Economic/Commercial Training]? I'd known her for years I'd actually given a couple lectures over there. Earlier I helped design a course for mid-level officers so I walked over and said, "Hey, do you need somebody?" She said, "Yes." I later found out that Christine Shelly, the deputy commandant, tried to kill that job too but they knew what they needed over there and I spent the year teaching at the Foreign Service Institute; much less interesting teaching than at the war college. I basically taught two week short courses for new officers, brand new officers reviewing what they knew about economics and introducing them to a few basic principles of

economics and then showing them how to use Excel for economists and how to make graphs and so on and so forth; I learned how to use Excel very well for that period.

I had two other jobs. They had an Internet course on international trade theory and my job was to clean it up; supposedly it was all done and it was terrible so I had to rewrite a large part of it for this Internet course. Then we tried to do a course on intellectual properties, which EB was going to do it and we were just going to help them but they never quite got finished and it took them three years and they finally got a contractor to finish it.

I also put together a course for economic FSNs (Foreign Service nationals) covering primarily the former Eastern Bloc and South Asia. It was I guess an introduction to a lot of major issues that were going on and I had to put that course together from scratch getting all of the professors and so on and so forth. A major focus was the European Union and what it was going to mean for these countries who were going to become part of the European union, that was it. I had never worked in Europe and I knew very little about the European Union aside from what I had read in the Economist magazine or newspapers so it was an interesting opportunity for me to sort of learn a whole new area but I didn't lecture much. I basically found the lecturers all over Washington, DC from the department and universities and so on. It was an interesting year; it wasn't my favorite year but it was an interesting year. So that was 2004 to 2005.

By this time I was beginning to have some physical problems too. I had had the summer after the War College I had had my left knee replaced and about three months after that I began to get severe pains in the other leg, which took almost five or three to four years to properly diagnose before they got it fixed. It was easy to fix once they got it diagnosed, anyway. So I was in pain sitting in the car driving to work and I must say at this point I was not my most productive self either.

Anyway I again had problems on bidding and I decided I wasn't going to wait until the end this time. This time I was going to bid on a job that nobody else was bidding on and was qualified for at that time so I bid on the economic counselor job in Canada for which I was completely qualified. But the Latin American bureau, my old favorite bureau that should have been protecting me had their own favorite for that job. [Ed: On January 12, 1999, the ARA Bureau assumed responsibility for Canada from the Bureau of European Affairs and was renamed the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA).] The gentleman who they wanted to give the job to was also quite qualified for it, there was no question of his qualifications, besides he was also the best friend of the principal DAS of WHA. But he wasn't qualified because he had never served in a hardship post, one of the personnel requirements of the day. He had just spent six years in Washington and was being told he had to go overseas and so the bureau went to the director general and said, "We object." So he put a hold on the Embassy econ job one week and then he came back the next week and said, "We object again" and he put it on hold for two weeks. What I hadn't known until then was this had become a standard tactic in the Department for getting people in jobs they weren't otherwise qualified in. They kept putting holds on the

assignment until other bidders moved on. Theoretically this fellow had to bid on a hardship job but he didn't want to go to a hardship post.

So anyway time passed and they came to a big showdown on the assignments committee with the head of senior assignments supporting me and the bureau supporting me, but I lost. The AFSA vice president wrote a major editorial about it in the Foreign Service Journal. I wasn't terribly disappointed; I had decided to fight it at that point because I was just angry at the system. I was going to make people read my past efficiency reports and see what I had done and accomplished and kind of realize the system wasn't working for some people.

Of course, since then now they are going to change it again. Secretary Rice is saying if we want people to serve at hardship posts we've got to reward them, we can't keep rewarding the same old people who stay in Washington or stay in the European posts and so on. Of course, we found ourselves in Iraq and this is really the only important reason I mention this in this history because nobody will care about my personal problems. But when we went into Iraq we couldn't find officers to staff that embassy, nobody was volunteering. I actually did volunteer, I volunteered from the War College but the econ counselor job went to Larson's assistant which was ok but three Foreign Service senior officers even volunteered for that job and the next year there were no volunteers for the job. I didn't volunteer a second time because I wasn't feeling that great at that time. The system hadn't worked for a long time and it showed and they talked about forcing people into those jobs but if you have people that have done nothing but served in Europe their entire careers or in Mexico City, a non-hardship post, they are not the people you want to fill in in a crisis situation, you want the people who have had the experience in crises'.

Q: We had a bad experience during the early sixties as bunch of European senior officers were sent to Africa to open up the post as ambassadors and they had been lolling around the marble halls of Europe and then all of a sudden grass huts in Africa they weren't very good at it.

MAYBARDUK: No, no and I think someday the story is going to get told that whatever problems Rumsfeld had in going in and not being prepared we were equally unprepared on the State Department side.

Q: So what happened?

MAYBARDUK: So anyway I lost, I could have protested, I could have grieved, I just didn't care. Actually the first of that year I had applied for a job in a brand new office the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization in the Office of the Secretary (S/CRS). [Ed: On August 5, 2004, Secretary Powell announced the creation of the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) to enhance institutional capacity to respond to crises involving failing, failed, and post-conflict states and complex emergencies. Ambassador Carlos Pascual was appointed the first Coordinator. See: https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/PascualPresentation.pdf] This was a job in which the department had discovered that it and the military were not work well

together. How could we work better, how could we develop a system to work better? So this was an office that had been created it was supposed to be sixty people and at the beginning of the year I was told there were not any openings in it but as I came to this latter part of the cycle there was and the director general said, "I want Gary to go there." In a sense I was happy because I was ending up going to a job that I wanted in the first place except apparently that office didn't know I was coming. So anyway I went to that office I had another job opportunity I could work for the science advisors office as well.

Q: So how long did you working in this?

MAYBARDUK: Just one year. It was a very rough year but I did make some accomplishments. There was a book written, I was going to wait and do this the next time but I've gotten into it sooner than I'd thought, on how you might do better in interagency coordination. The Coordinator of S/CRS a former AID officer, I can't remember names today for the life of me, was now head of it and he had taken this book and he said this is the model we should be using. So we were doing two things in the office. We were trying to develop a planning model for the interagency process, how you bring together the interagency process in Washington and then how you carry it down to the field.

The central problem of interagency coordination is that unlike the military which has a unified chain of command all the way up and down the line, a reports to b, b reports to c and so on. You don't have that in the interagency process, there is no central authority for the various agencies of government between the president, where he is the commander of all agencies, and the ambassador as chief of mission. So the president can say I want all agencies to contribute to our efforts in Iraq but it is the agencies which decide what resources they are going to commit, how they are going to coordinate and so on. Some will jump into it and others will be passive-aggressive and others will be absolutely very aggressive in opposition.

This, of course, has been going on and this is the kind of thing I had dealt with in the department for years, anybody who has spent any time in the departments has dealt with this kind of stuff. There had been all sorts of ways in the past to deal with this. You had the deputies committee, where the number twos in all the departments would get together and you would have various working groups and you would have…I forget all the acronyms of the various working groups that you have to put this together to get every administration trying a different way of doing it. The Clinton administration even tried chaos theory, deliberately I think, but it definitely ended up in chaos.

But we were going to create this kind of central special working groups that would look at the big issues and smaller groups as you went down the page and so on, kind of reinventing government again in another way and another format. The S/CRS, the office did have two advantages. One, it belonged to the secretary's office not to a bureau so it kind of was supposed to go across bureaus and would have easy access to the secretary, well it would have some decent access to the secretary of state. Second, it was supposed to have its own budget, which it never got from Congress but it keeps trying. So they could spend its own money on highly conflicted situation where it needed an interagency

presence. And three, it was staffed on an interagency basis so it did have several military officers in it, quite a few, in fact there were more AID officers than State officers in it. Somebody from Justice and so on so it was supposed to think like an interagency group.

When I got there, there were several major problems. The first was the office just wasn't functioning. I'm trying to think who headed that office, he's now over at Brookings. A very disorganized chain of management, he basically liked presidential management interns (PMI) and he had a bevy of young female presidential management interns around him. Most of them were pretty smart but most of them we sort of gave direct orders to and they kind of went off and did their thing and then you did have the equivalent of office directors, I worked with Barbara Stevenson who was head of planning. But these office directors had very little authority and he would ask for a paper to be done and one of these PMIs who were very bright would quickly write a paper and take it up to him, clear it with nobody and all of a sudden now it was the way we were moving ahead or if it wasn't the way we were moving to head now because he already signed off on it and now you were going to have to have a big fight for months or weeks trying to straighten it out. It really became who could write the paper the fastest, rather than let's think about this and this started…

Second, we had developed this elaborate system for coordinating in the field between the various agencies. The problem was I looked at this diagram and the embassy was nowhere on it. Basically S/CRS was going to command through a complicated structure through the military combatant command down to these teams in the field that would deal with whatever problems they were dealing with. Nowhere in the organizational chart was the embassy or the country team. The thing was, with the exception of the admin officer, this was now about forty or fifty people, and there wasn't anybody in that staff who would have a lot of experience in the embassy or crisis experience. So you had people drawing up plans out of books and ideas and think sessions without any real input from people who had done this sort of thing.

So those were the kind of things I first saw when I got there and at that time we were beginning to work on our first two projects: one was Haiti and the other was Sudan. On Sudan the goal was to come up with a plan to support the peacekeeping or peace arrangement between northern and southern Sudan, Darfur was initially a part of this. A very elaborate plan of how you would support that process was developed and it took months, which immediately gave you a problem because we don't normally have months to plan this sort of thing but we didn't have the support of the Africa bureau. Our coordinator had gone over to see the assistant secretary for African affairs, would that be Frazier?

Q: Yeah Joe Dean Frazier.

MAYBARDUK: I think that was it. She said that he had been asked to coordinate this and the question was, "Does that mean the secretary doesn't have confidence in me?" So anyway we got off to a bad start and while we did get some cooperation from the Africa bureau there was a lot of passive-aggressive behavior especially from the Sudan desk.

They were doing their own thing, they were sending teams out, didn't want to tell us what they were doing, nobody wanted to work on a budget so it took us almost a year to develop this very elaborate plan, it was a good plan, except for a few things intervened in the meantime like Darfur, which meant that this plan which involved spending a lot of money in Sudan we couldn't do because of Darfur. Then there was this idea that they would have a continuing coordinating group that would follow this plan as it went along and change it and so on and you couldn't get anybody to staff it.

In Haiti, I didn't work on Haiti, it worked a little better but it was a very limited thing it was simply how to make the elections work in Haiti. But that really wasn't supposed to be the job of the office, it was supposed to be much more strategic rather than implementing. So we struggled through much of the first year on those two projects.

In the meantime, AID became furious with us, because our plans for the field coordination basically relegated AID to a secondary role and anybody that has worked in the field knows that AID directors are their own kingdoms, they barely take instructions from an ambassador, never take instructions from a DCM, and are basically have their own fiefdoms. Now all of a sudden we had these groups working in the field where AID was simply a member at the table plus nobody else in the State Department could understand it because they couldn't see where the embassy was. We ended up playing a game in Miami on Cuba, which with the Southern Command which involved really how we would deal if there had been a major disaster in Cuba and Fidel was gone and we would be called to help out on a multiple of situations. I guess SouthCom wanted to do it because they wanted to think through if something happened to Cuba some day and they knew that they would have to work with civilian agencies on that one. For our office it was an attempt to try out our models and the models broke down on our first day. Our teams in the field couldn't communicate well with the military, they couldn't communicate well with Washington and they couldn't even work well with each other.

Q: Isn't there a truism in the military all plans break down the first day of conflict.

MAYBARDUK: Right. They finally came to me to help, I was playing Cuba in this game and basically I ended up organizing it like a country team. Then things started to work. Essentially we had to reinvent what the Foreign Service has developed over a hundred years as a way to coordinate in the field; essentially you just had to reinvent it. So I think they have finally gotten a lot closer to what it should be. In the meantime the group in the office quite wisely I think said, "This isn't planning for the future, we don't want to get involved in Afghanistan and Iraq." We knew that the department needed it. So for its first two years, almost three years, it wasn't involved in Iraq or Afghanistan at all.

Q: Which of course is what was on the table.

MAYBARDUK: I think they now help out a bit. But their planning scheme, interagency planning, still has now, four or five years later, still has not got an interagency approval.

Q: Sort of pushing this ahead what happened to you?

MAYBARDUK: Well I stayed a year and left and then retired.

Q: OK, well just quickly what have you been up to in retirement?

MAYBARDUK: There are a few things that I would like to go on the record. One of the things was there was a third country exercise and that was Cuba and that was the one I really wanted to play. I mean I'd been writing about it and so on and long before I'd gotten there they'd already assigned who was going to run it for the office and who was the backup so I basically had to work my way into the system. But I did play in these exercises, it was called Blue Advance 06, I did get to play Cuba in the games and using very realistic assumptions I think I thoroughly demonstrated that we weren't prepared to deal with that problem and the Southern Command agreed completely. The game's controlling people were from the Cuba desk in Washington and they went back and declared it a success. But we showed basically you couldn't start repatriating people if you weren't feeding people on the ground and there are likely more people leaving than you were able to repatriate given time and that we had the Helms-Burton law which supposedly governs the transition was unworkable.

In the meantime, we also started doing a major study on the presidential commission for assistance to a free Cuba, the second report. This was to look again on how to plan for the day that we could help free Cuba. I lead the economic working group on that. I was essentially the co-chairman, the actual chairman was the secretary of commerce but he wasn't going to come to the meetings and the other co-chairman was from the Cuban desk and he didn't have time so I basically ended up running that committee.

We put out a long report on it and it became known as CAFC II, the administration still talks about it. It was an opportunity to draw on my Cuban experience and on what I'd been writing about in the meantime. Since I left Cuba I had written seven more papers on the Cuban transition and the problems that we were likely to face. It was frustrating because the Cuba desk and the Cuban policy all the way up to the National Security Council was being run by former aides of Senator Jessie Helms and so we were forced to make our plans in the context of the Helms-Burton law, which basically said Castro is has to be out of government, the state security which essentially means the entire police force and the coast guard and the territorial border guards have to be abolished, sound like Iraq does it? And this transition government has to restore all liberties and they have to promise an election within eighteen months, which means they would have to make a new constitution and everything else; it just doesn't work. So we had to see who/when the U.S. government certified that they had met these conditions and eighteen months later when a new elected government took office how could we help them without any money without giving any humanitarian assistance. But we did make some real accomplishments in this report. I basically was able to get into the report language that essentially property that was confiscated by the Cuban state from people who were not Americans at the time of confiscation was not a problem of the U.S. government, it was the problem of the free Cuban elected government.

That is a huge political decision, that's a huge…it's still not mightily known but it's still not understood but it's a huge political one. It basically disenfranchises most of the Miami Cubans from getting the U.S. government to help them get their property back or help them get paid for it. We even said compensation, you know, we don't even expect the government necessarily to return the property and the compensation can come later, the most important thing is to get whoever is going to own it to get property titles. So that absolutely eliminates things. So that was a major thing.

Also we got the first statement of the problems that we were going to have in the cultural section of Cuba, which nobody had thought about. We were able to bring home the need that Cuba is going to need an awful lot of money when this happens and the U.S. government better be prepared to come up with a lot of money.

So all of these were fairly new conclusions that got into the report so although it was a very frustrating process I felt pretty good about that and as we are finishing this report and I was thinking about my next assignment I did not really want to go through the assignment process one more time and Castro got sick. I said, "If I'm going to write my book about this now is the time to do it" so I decided to retire and probably would have been forcibly retired a year or two later anyway.

Q: Well I want to thank you very much Gary.

Postscript: For a review of Maybarduk's writing and analysis of Cuban issues see: Gary H. Maybarduk (August 2001). The Post Fidel Transition - Mitigating the Inevitable Disaster. In Cuba in Transition - Volume 11. Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, Washington, D.C. Available at http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/asce/pdfs/volume11/ maybarduk2.pdf. Two earlier articles by the same author that are largely still relevant are: The State of the Cuban Economy 1989-1999. In Cuba in Transition - Volume 9. Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy, Washington, D.C. Available at http:/ /lanic.utexas.edu/la/cb/cuba/asce/cuba9/maybar1.pdf, and Measures Not Taken: Issues for Today and Tomorrow. Also available in the same issue at http:// lanic.utexas.edu/la/cb/cuba/asce/cuba9/maybar2.pdf

End of interview