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

# JOEL FOREST MAYBURY

*Interviewed by: Mark Tauber*
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## INTERVIEW

*Q: Today is October 15, 2024. We are beginning our interview with Joel Maybury. Joel, where and when were you born.*

MAYBURY: I was born on June 5, 1959, in Redlands, California, a city some people may not be familiar with. It is in San Bernardino County, approximately sixty-five miles east of downtown Los Angeles.

*Q: Did your family remain there, or did you move?*

MAYBURY: We moved to the Boston area for one year, then returned to Redlands where we stayed until my fourth birthday. We then moved to Paris, France.

*Q: Was your family in the Foreign Service or how did you end up going to France?*

MAYBURY: In 1963, my father, who was a professor of chemistry at the University of Redlands, was asked to join the science division at United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) headquarters in Paris. His mentor was Albert Baez, the father of folk singer Joan Baez. Albert Baez, who was also a distinguished scientist, recruited a team to promote science education in the developing world.

*Q: Brothers and sisters?*

MAYBURY: Yes, three brothers and a sister.

*Q: Were they still all of school age or had any gone on.*

MAYBURY: I was the youngest of five. My oldest brother is twelve years older than I am. He completed his last year of high school in the UK. The rest of us went to Paris for our schooling. My parents enrolled one of my brothers and me in the Soeur Rosalie Catholic school in the fifth *arrondissement* (administrative district).

*Q: What was your early education like? Was it English or French or both?*

MAYBURY: It was entirely in French. Having come straight from Southern California, I imagine there were some adjustments. After a year there, we moved to the seventh *arrondissement*. I attended École Élémentaire Général Camou, a French public school, for one year and then enrolled in the École Active Bilingue, a bilingual school, on Avenue de la Bourdonnais, a school related to the school former Secretary of State Blinken attended. We lived in Paris from 1963 until 1969, then moved to Winchester, Massachusetts, for my father's sabbatical year at Harvard University. When we returned to France in 1970, I attended the Lycée de Sèvres in the suburb of Sèvres, a public school with an international section. Classes and curriculum were in French.

*Q: What is the seventh arrondissement like?*

MAYBURY: The seventh *arrondissement* is where you will find the Eiffel Tower, the Invalides where tourists can visit Napoléon's tomb, and the Prime Minister's office, Hôtel de Matignon. It is one of the most upscale neighborhoods of Paris with a large boulevard and monuments. The Seine River runs along its northern border. UNESCO is also in the seventh *arrondissement*. My father was within walking distance from his work while one of my brothers and I walked to the bilingual school. When we returned from the U.S. in 1970, we moved to an apartment on Avenue de Breteuil, a broad tree-lined street leading to the Invalides. My trip to the Lycée de Sèvres involved walking to a Métro station, taking two subway lines, and then riding a bus to where the school was located. This was when I was eleven to fourteen years old. All that travel to get to school every day!

*Q: How long did it take?*

MAYBURY: I recall leaving at 7:00 A.M. and arriving at school by 8:00 A.M.

*Q: How would you describe your education there? Did it differ significantly from U.S. education?*

MAYBURY: Well, I was not familiar with what U.S. education was until I was in the sixth grade in Winchester, Massachusetts, 1969–1970. That is when I learned what the difference was between the two. In the U.S. there was more homework, and the work was more focused on us producing papers. Both had quizzes and tests. In the French system, there was a lot of recitation of drama and poetry, something I do not recall doing at

Mystic Elementary School in Winchester. Our English teacher at Sèvres had us recite passages from Shakespeare, including "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears," from the play "Julius Caesar." In our French class, we recited passages by France's famous poets: Verlaine, Prévert, de Vigny, to name a few. Our field trips included visits to the Louvre and other museums, as well as attendance at live theatrical performances at the Comédie Française and other theater houses to reinforce our classroom learning. We also took field trips to the Poitou-Charente region and to Dijon and Mâcon regions.

*Q: Now as you are going through all of this, were there other influences on you Obviously you are already kind of an international student but were there other influences you recall during this period of education that had an effect on you, that were formative?*

MAYBURY: Certainly, just being in Paris. I shopped at the neighborhood bread, meat, and dairy stores, not so much in the small grocery stores. Every neighborhood had a boulangerie (for bread and pastries), a charcuterie (for cold cuts), and a boucherie (for meats), and we went to the open-air produce markets. I immersed myself in French all the time, not only in school. On the local economy and when I would go play in the park with French and North African kids, everything was in French. In 1974, my father was re-assigned to Nairobi, Kenya, as deputy director of the UNESCO office there, so we moved to Kenya. I entered the ninth grade in March of that year and completed my high school in December 1976. That experience certainly added to the exposure to different languages and cultures. My years in Kenya without doubt influenced what I would do later in my life. Between the ten years in France and three years in Kenya, I knew that I wanted to study international relations and French in college.

*Q: What were your important memories from Kenya?*

MAYBURY: Well, there are many. As an adolescent and wanting to explore the world, what better place to be in than Kenya? At the time, Kenya was safe. I hitchhiked in Nairobi and out of town, though that's not recommended now. Sometimes I was alone and sometimes with a friend. It was a country with immense wildlife wealth. We took safaris regularly and observed many animal and bird species. I became a bird watcher in Kenya, in fact. I got hooked on birding in Kenya and began compiling my life list of birds. I credit our high school biology teacher, John Miskell, a former Peace Corps volunteer, who came up with the idea of leading bird tours for students. It is a hobby that I have continued to this day. I have bird feeders at home, and I consistently carry binoculars, a field guide, and a notebook when traveling.

The experience of living in Kenya, and in Africa, really had an impact on my thinking. I witnessed international development work as a high school student. I saw the impact of international actors, including the United States and the various UN agencies wanting to develop the local economy and the political space. I saw women's organizations working with children, some of whom survived by begging on the streets. These were topics of discussion around the family dinner table, particularly when my father would invite guests related to his work at UNESCO. My dad even invited me to go to receptions with

him. Imagine a Foreign Service Officer taking adolescent children to a national day reception to expose them to the work of diplomats. In summer 1978, during a break from my university studies in California, my father arranged for me to join a UNESCO team that was studying camel and livestock grazing patterns in Kenya's northern arid lands. I spent three weeks with this team in an isolated part of Kenya. I busied myself trying to understand some of the decisions that the elders of these Rendille nomadic communities were making regarding where their livestock should graze and find suitable watering holes. I observed how they protected themselves against *shifta* (cattle raiders). One day while I was with the Rendille, word reached the encampment that *shiftas* had stolen their livestock about a mile away. Everyone stood up, took weapons, and ran into the bush. After a few minutes, I joined a group of elders atop a small hill where we could watch the younger men chase the *shifta*. They eventually were able to recover their livestock with the help of a specialized military unit.

*Q: Also, around this time as you are moving around especially in France but also in the U.S. the whole counterculture anti-Vietnam war thing, did that affect you at all?*

MAYBURY: It did, indirectly. I was just under the age when people were being drafted. I had two older brothers who were eligible for the draft, but who did not serve in the armed forces. My American peers knew that our time could well be coming to face the draft. In France, specifically in the late '60s and early '70s, I was not subjected to any kind of anti-American sentiment or any anti-American action. I remember seeing "Yankee go home" graffiti, a slogan during the Cold War used by French communists.

*Q: Since all of your siblings are older than you, was that fact also formative, in other words, you got to see them go to college and manage a new life and so on.*

MAYBURY: Certainly. My oldest brother went to college and got a degree in journalism. That turned out to be my first career. All my siblings attended college after graduating high school. My parents expected that of us. The only option outside of college that I briefly considered was to become a safari guide for French-speaking tourists. I made a few inquiries with tour operators in Kenya, but nothing came of it.

*Q: Now are there other recollections of your moving around? You have to adjust to that relatively quickly. Were there any problems or were you able to quickly adjust to local cultural activities.*

MAYBURY: That is it. The readjustment from childhood to adolescence was smooth, maybe because I was the youngest of five and always had an older brother who took me under his wing. I was also tremendously curious and bold. As an adolescent it was common for me to ride the Paris Métro at night after a party with classmates. Think of someone twelve years old riding the subway at night in Paris. Yeah, I did that! Once, after a party in the suburbs ended late at night, I realized it might not be a good idea to take the subway alone. There had been incidents of people being molested in the subway. I can tell you I had to travel through one third of Paris to get from the party in the suburbs to my home. I elected to avoid the subway and walked home, arriving about 12:30 A.M. I

remember walking fast and staying away from doorways. This sort of risk-taking became a feature of my life. I never told my parents what I had done. They thought someone had given me a ride home. You learn a lot from these experiences. Would I want my own adolescent daughter to walk home across a big city at night nowadays? I doubt it.

*Q: Sure. Did your mother work as well?*

MAYBURY: No, she raised five children. That was her full-time occupation. She did volunteer English teaching to non-English speakers.

*Q: Another typical influence on a young person's life is religion. Did that play a role in your upbringing?*

MAYBURY: It could have. Both of my grandfathers were ordained ministers. Two of my great-grandfathers were as well. I have done considerable genealogical research since retiring. My ancestors included Nazarenes, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Mennonites. My paternal grandfather was a Nazarene who pastored churches from Massachusetts down to Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. My paternal great-grandfather was a leader in the Nazarene church, rising to the rank of district superintendent. My father was heavily influenced by his own father up until the point that he turned his attention to science in college. By the time I was born, my parents had stopped attending church services and praying around the dinner table. One of their last churches was a Unitarian-Universalist church in Redlands.

My maternal grandparents served as missionaries in India, where my mother was also born. In fact, my maternal grandmother also was born in India of missionary parents. My mother recounts her parents' work as missionaries and her upbringing in India in her book *For the Souls and Soils of India: From Ohio Farm Land to the Mission Fields of India.* My exposure to religion in my first fifteen years of life came when we visited the grandparents, attended church with them, and listened to them saying grace at mealtime, including at restaurants, something that made us feel uncomfortable. In high school, some of my friends persuaded me to attend Friday evening Bible studies. My spiritual journey remained a more private pursuit.

*Q: Now often a common experience for kids who move around a lot is sport. It is almost an international language, especially soccer. Was that part of your upbringing?*

MAYBURY: Absolutely. I began playing soccer at the earliest age in school and in public parks in Paris. Usually, one of my older brothers and I played with young French men after their work shifts. No one showed up in shorts and jerseys. My favorite place to play was in the wide dirt alleys of the Champ de Mars a couple of blocks from the Eiffel Tower. My pickup games were the equivalent of Little League for me. My teammates and my adversaries were adult men who spoke French and Arabic.

*Q: Fascinating. Did that continue into Kenya also. I picture it as a country that plays soccer.*

MAYBURY: It did. I was on the varsity soccer team at the Nairobi International School, later renamed International School of Kenya. Our opponents included some of the high schools in Kenya, but also semi-pro teams and the Kenyan armed forces. Much, much later, I organized soccer teams in embassies and played in diplomatic tournaments in Abu Dhabi. I played until a physical therapist who was treating one of my injuries said, "You know you might want to try a sport with less contact." I have continued to follow soccer passionately, especially the French Ligue 1, the Africa Cup of Nations, the Champions League, and the World Cup. My favorite team all these years has been Olympique Marseille, long one of the best French professional teams until Paris-St. Germain's incredible streak of success began.

*Q: Sure. Are there other aspects of your upbringing that I have missed that were also formative for you?*

MAYBURY: I would say language as an expression of culture. I grew up reading mostly French literature and comic books. I knew far less about American literature. At home, our bookshelves were packed with novels by Steinbeck, Faulkner, and others. My mother majored in American literature. But I read French, and I took a special liking to Molière and the absurdist playwright Eugene Ionesco. Usually, I read Astérix and Tintin comic books before bed. When a new edition came out, we bought it, and I read it more times than I can remember. Astérix poked fun at French culture and politics and came up with clever sounding names for the Gauls, the Romans, and people of other lands caught up in the Roman Empire's expansion. The collection's co-creators, Uderzo and Goscinny, were gifted observers and cynics, and their material was funny as ever. Tintin was a Belgian product that employed all manner of stereotypes about other cultures and lands as it related the adventures of the hero-journalist Tintin risking his life to stop international criminals.

Years later, as a Foreign Service Officer in Djibouti, a French-speaking country, my French contacts puzzled over what part of France I came from. Some guessed that I was Parisian, but others were not so sure. They'd met Americans who spoke French well, but rarely anyone as fluent as me or as knowledgeable about French culture and history. They marveled at my knowledge about Astérix! They said I was just like them. I understood France. Part of me regrets not completing my secondary school education in France and not going to university in France. Who knows what direction my life would have taken had I not gone to Kenya and not graduated from the University of California system. Astérix and Tintin were highly formative for me. I am an American shaped by French and Kenyan cultures.

*Q: In graphic novels or the graphic cartoons, you are talking about and possessing an understanding of the cultural touchstones that were later helpful in cross-cultural communication.*

MAYBURY: There is no question that I absorbed facets of French culture. I have had a life-long appreciation for French gastronomy. I also still consider the baguette a staple

food, though I struggle to find what I would call an authentic baguette outside France. I came to appreciate varieties of cheese, the relationship between varieties of wines and foods, and much more. This experience helped in my Foreign Service career, particularly when sharing meals with French diplomats and other French contacts.

*Q: After Kenya, you went to college?*

MAYBURY: Yes, my parents had maintained a legal residence in California. So, the expectation was to return to California and go to a state university there. College tuition was about $230 per quarter.

*Q: That is pretty good.*

MAYBURY: A bargain compared to what students pay today. My oldest brother had already graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara. Another brother was enrolled at UC Santa Cruz. I had a good enough grade point average to gain admission into any state college. UNESCO covered about 70 percent of the tuition for the dependents of their staff. I visited several UC campuses and settled on Davis near Sacramento, the state capital. I immediately fell in love with Davis for a couple of reasons. One, everybody on the campus rode a bicycle. It reminded me of some European cities. I believed my adjustment to that campus would be easy. There was also a residence on campus called Hammarskjöld House, named after the late UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld. The dorm was created by Donald "Monty" Reynolds, one of the founders of microbiology at UC Davis and someone my father knew. The student residency program was aimed at broadening awareness of international issues and promoting cultural exchanges. When I lived there, I recall that we only had two international students out of the seventy residents. There was no international programming. The building flew flags of different countries on its roof and residents took turns raising and lowering them each week.

My academic plan was clear from the start. I met with an adviser in the International Relations Department early in my first quarter and declared a double major in International Relations and French Literature. With my French fluency, I was able to satisfy the French major requirements easily, although the upper-division literature classes were hard. The Enlightenment was enlightening, but none of us could easily explain – in French – the works and thoughts of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot.

*Q: French literature, like any literature, is quite difficult. Other than Asterix and Tintin you get into a higher level of understanding.*

MAYBURY: Yes, it is not easy. By the time I started college, I had not used my French daily in three years, and I could tell my vocabulary was not where it needed to be for college-level French literature classes. The expectation was that the discussion around Rousseau or Voltaire would be in French. Professor Marc Blanchard taught the French Enlightenment and did not want to hear English spoken. As a result, discussion was limited. The same was true in a nineteenth century French poetry class. Our homework

included trying our hand at writing French poetry. It was quite challenging. I would be lying if I said I got straight A's in French.

*Q: Just as a quick aside I have been trying to grind my way through a dual language version of Baudelaire's "Les Fleurs du Mal." Oh, my goodness. I read the English and looked at the French and maybe I got 50 percent if I was lucky.*

MAYBURY: I don't want to forget this point. Many years later after joining the Foreign Service and taking the foreign language exam at the Foreign Service Institute, the French examiner, a native French speaker, saw that I had an unusually high level of comprehension of texts. He challenged me with difficult texts. The idea was to read a news article or academic text, then summarize its main points in English and answer some questions about it. The examiner told me that they wanted to see my level of fluency to determine if it was native proficiency with a university-level education, or near-native fluency. My results indicated the latter, though that was still something the examiner had not often seen among diplomats. He used the French expression, *Vous nous avez tenus la dragée haute*. (You have about got it.) The examiner told me I used a couple of awkward expressions that a native speaker would not have used. By passing the French exam, I was able to get off language probation and not have to take further French courses in my career.

*Q: Now that reminds me of the last question I have about your upbringing. During that time, you moved abroad and your father was in UNESCO. Did you have any contact with embassies or U.S. Foreign Service Officers?*

MAYBURY: Yes, but without knowing that was the case. We would go to the U.S. Embassy in Paris to renew our passports and shop at the commissary. I only remember going to the commissary once because we didn't rely on American staples. We didn't use the UNESCO pouch to have American goods shipped to us either. We bought local goods. I had classmates whose parents were affiliated with the Embassy, but I only learned that during a reunion of Lycée de Sèvres classmates in recent years. When I was about seven years old, I was browsing for something to read in the children's section of the American Library in Paris. It was like the US Information Agency library that used to exist in many countries. As I was browsing, in walked a group of people in suits and a photographer. One of the men approached me and introduced himself as Ambassador Sargent Shriver. I still have a black-and-white photo of him leaning over a bookcase asking me what books interested me. Coincidentally, there was a poster in the background of the photo that read "Great People, Great Events." That was my first encounter with a U.S. ambassador.

*Q: So, following you into college this is obviously a new educational experience. Were you also involved in any of the college political or other extracurricular activities?*

MAYBURY: Unlike high school where I was on the student council, I didn't participate in college politics. I became involved with an alternative college newspaper. It was called the Third World Forum, and it was published weekly, unlike the mainstream college

paper, The California Aggie, which was published daily. The Forum later changed its name to the People's Monitor and had a decidedly Leftist editorial policy. We were all activists of one form or another and we represented the school's diversity. The editors welcomed stories about my experiences in Kenya and my insights about African affairs. I wrote some articles about the war between Ethiopia and Somalia, and I produced a photo essay about a summer trip to Northern Kenya when I lived among Rendille nomads while serving as a research assistant for a UNESCO scientist studying the grazing patterns of pastoral nomads. I also wrote about people with disabilities, and Indigenous peoples' rights. I became increasingly familiar with organizations defending the rights of people of color and other minority groups. During this time, my supervisor in the periodicals room at the university library, Mandy Piggee, introduced me to the Sacramento Observer, a weekly newspaper owned by an African American family that is dedicated to topics relevant to the African American community. I became a regular reader. Little did I know that I would land a job on the newspaper's staff after graduation.

*Q: So, I was just looking, it was the war between Ethiopia and Somalia. Of course, the interesting aspects were the world powers backing them.*

MAYBURY: That is what it was. It was really the Soviet Union and the United States fighting a proxy war. We switched sides in the heat of the conflict. We supported Ethiopia for a while and then we switched and supported the Somalis. The Soviets did that as well while building military infrastructure. Interestingly, that infrastructure still exists, as I came to learn when I traveled to Somaliland during my first tour as a Foreign Service Officer in Djibouti.

*Q: OK, interesting. Let's go ahead and finish up your time in college if this is a good moment to do it. You were taking classes and so on and having an initial exposure to journalism. How are you completing college and what were your aspirations?*

MAYBURY: Throughout those years I made important contacts through my mentors. My mentors were Africanists: Donald Rothschild, a political scientist; Richard Curley, an anthropologist; Cynthia Brantley, an historian; and Albert J. McNeil, an ethnomusicologist. They were the strongest influences. Another major influence was Joe Trotter, an historian who had published numerous volumes on African American history. I met regularly with each of them after class. They urged me to pursue a career related to my abiding interest in African affairs.

As I prepared to graduate, I signed up for Peace Corps' familiarization program and registered for the Foreign Service Examination. I was keeping all my options open. I put graduate school on hold. As it turned out, the Peace Corps did not pan out, and I did not pass the Foreign Service Exam on my first attempt. I learned later that many people take the exam multiple times before succeeding. The Peace Corps invited me to attend a week-long program (CAST) in Virginia that was designed for me to get a closer look at the organization and for them to assess my potential. I remember various role plays and Peace Corps staff observing us and taking notes on clipboards. Our group was assigned to teach English and health care in the Central African Empire. But I never made it to the

empire. Peace Corps staff who evaluated me that week determined that my obvious strengths (previous life in Kenya, African studies concentration in college, French fluency) were outweighed by qualities they believed might be perceived as threatening to Central Africans. For example, they said I came across as knowing too much about corruption and other sensitive issues. I returned to California, contacted my mentors, all of whom thought I would be a shoo-in for Peace Corps, and began the formal appeal process. Weeks later, Peace Corps headquarters corrected their staff evaluation and invited me to teach English in Togo. By that time, the experience had left enough of a sour taste in my mouth that I declined the offer. I later regretted declining the offer, as I believe I could have thrived in the Peace Corps and positively influenced people in Togo. A few months and some temporary jobs later, I accepted an offer to be a reporter with the Sacramento Observer, a career move I have never regretted.

I'll jump ahead 16 years to my time in the Foreign Service. It was 1997 and I was assigned to Lome, Togo, as a vice consul and political officer. That's right, Togo! One of my responsibilities was to meet with Peace Corps volunteers to inform them about the political and economic situation in the country. I also urged them to take the Foreign Service Exam. Talk about a twist of fate.

I want to fast-forward again to 2014 when I was waiting for an assignment following a year at the National Defense University. I was sitting in a cubicle in the Central African Affairs directorate when the office leadership asked me to join a meeting. The upshot of the meeting was that the State Department had decided to reopen our embassy in Bangui, Central African Republic, and I was the perfect candidate to be the deputy chief of mission. Now who could have written that script? Thirty-three years after being denied an opportunity to serve in Bangui as a Peace Corps volunteer, I finally got my chance to serve in Bangui. Although there were no Peace Corps volunteers present in 2014-15, several Central Africans informed me that they had acquired English language skills from Peace Corps volunteers approximately 30 years prior. Another incredible plot twist.

*Q: An amazing alignment of stars.*

MAYBURY: So, I didn't do Peace Corps. Instead, I launched into a thirteen-year career as a journalist that ended when I passed the Foreign Service Exam and joined the Foreign Service in 1995.

*Q: You graduated from college, but you didn't think about graduate school? Or?*

MAYBURY: I did. During the time I was exploring other possibilities, and before starting my newspaper job, I traveled across the U.S. using a Greyhound bus pass. I visited colleges with journalism and international relations programs. I went to Montreal, Ottawa, Boston, New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Minneapolis, and Seattle. My suitcase quickly filled with college catalogs. After all of that I did finally get admitted to the University of Minnesota, but I deferred my studies for a year to earn more income to cover the tuition, which was affordable in those days. In the summer of 1982, I drove my Pontiac Bonneville to Minneapolis and settled in. I quickly found a temporary job in the

Hennepin County Hospital and then landed a position as an editor-reporter at the Twin Cities Courier, a Black-owned weekly newspaper. In that role, I met several prominent African American leaders who were in the Twin Cities for major events: the Reverend Jesse Jackson, former Ambassador Andrew Young, Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, to name a few. The publisher, Mary Kyle, gave me every opportunity and I quickly fell in love with the Twin Cities. But as fate would have it, after a year, I changed my mind about going to graduate school, packed up my Pontiac Bonneville, and headed back to Sacramento where I resumed my job at the Sacramento Observer. Observer publisher, Dr. William H. Lee, his wife, Kathryn, and the editor, Dr. Joseph Dear, were extremely happy to have me back. Did that one winter in Minnesota affect my decision? Yes, it did.

*Q: Now in Sacramento what was your beat? What did you focus on as a journalist?*

Q: I worked as a reporter and photographer, covering a wide range of topics. The family-run newspaper had a small staff. We covered the African American community. In my years with that publication, I interviewed a long list of Black personalities: Jesse Jackson, Assembly Speaker Willie Brown, astronaut Ron McNair before the fateful Space Shuttle Challenger mission, Bishop Tutu of South Africa, Andrew Young, San Francisco's Glide Memorial Church pastor Cecil Williams, to name a few. We covered the Black angle of the news. Black churches, Black fraternities and sororities, Black educators and school administrators, and Black entrepreneurs. On a typical Sunday morning, I was assigned to photograph a Black church in Sacramento and report on its history and community service. I covered politics in the state capital as well as elections. All the major candidates for local and statewide office came calling on the Observer to secure our endorsement. I remember meeting Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley when he was running for governor. Author Gore Vidal sought our support for his U.S. Senate candidacy. I would go into the community and people would ask if I was with the mainstream Sacramento Bee newspaper. They expected an African American journalist to show up at their doorstep. My publisher fully trusted me to write stories reflecting African American interests and sensitivities. Advertising was a major issue for the publisher because of its source of revenue. The Observer always had to make the case to businesses to buy more advertising space. We would inform potential advertisers that African Americans made up a sizable share of their consumers. Black newspapers and radio stations across the U.S. struggled to generate advertising revenue.

*Q: I am curious about one thing that you mentioned. You said working on this paper was a bit of lobbying. Is there experience, for example, of the kind of lobbying that you did looking for advertising dollars or other kinds of in-kind assistance that really stands out as something you did at that time?*

MAYBURY: Yes, that job was primarily the publisher's job. He is the one who founded the newspaper. He and his advertising director discussed business with contacts, encouraging them to allocate some advertising funds to the Observer. My focus was on editorial writing, but inevitably I would talk about the business side with people because I realized they weren't informed.

*Q: While you were there did it change? Did more advertising get into the newspaper?*

MAYBURY: Yes, it was incremental.

*Q: So, you are there, did you remain there or did you move onto other journalistic jobs and so on.*

MAYBURY: I was at the paper for five years, interrupted by the one year at the Twin Cities Courier in Minneapolis. When I left the Observer, I worked for three other newspapers in Northern California. I covered city hall for the Manteca Bulletin in the Central Valley. One of the hot topics was the rapid replacement of thousands of acres of agricultural land with housing subdivisions and commercial facilities. This was where I first heard terms such as environmental impact report and greenbelt. I covered a project to build the Superconducting Super Collider on farmland. Some weekends, I had the police beat. I vividly remember responding to a head-on collision on the highway south of Manteca that resulted in multiple fatalities, including a car full of Korean university students. On another occasion, I reported on a local resident who had built a mysterious tunnel under his residence. After a year in Manteca, I moved back to the Sacramento area and worked at the Roseville Press-Tribune. My beats included city hall, school boards, and the effects of urban sprawl. I wrote a few columns for them, including one for Bastille Day in which I reminisced about my life in France.

After spending just over a year in Roseville, I relocated to Hayward in the East Bay, a city notable for its location along the Hayward Fault, a significant seismic feature. The infamous San Andreas Fault runs up and down the San Francisco Peninsula and further south of the Bay Area. My first beat for the Hayward Daily Review was to cover the suburb of Castro Valley and its divisive incorporation battle. Then came October 17, 1989, that fateful day the Loma Prieta Earthquake struck. That evening, after our newspaper staff survived the minute-long temblor, I was assigned to the Bay Bridge where part of the upper deck had pancaked onto the lower deck. I reached the Bay Bridge toll plaza on the back of a colleague's motorcycle. By the time we arrived, there were already National Guard units on patrol and there were jets of water coming out of long cracks on the pavement. It was surreal. That assignment was my baptism as the Daily Review's transportation and earthquake specialist, a beat I would keep even when I joined the Oakland Tribune a few years later when the Daily Review's owners, the Alameda Newspaper Group, purchased the Tribune. I authored articles focusing on transportation and earthquake recovery. I would meet with seismologists, construction engineers, and transit planners to get the scoop on what the Bay Area needed to protect infrastructure and people from future earthquake damage. At the Oakland Tribune, my desk faced the Oakland harbor and the Bay Bridge, and colleagues would take cigarette, coffee, and lunch breaks at nearby Jack London Square. I spent countless hours in the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Alameda County Transit (AC Transit) boardrooms observing elected directors and agency staff tussle over multimillion dollar projects using local, state, and federal sources of income. My earthquake preparedness vocabulary expanded with words like retrofit and rebar. I reported extensively on alternative ways Bay Area residents could get to work and home now that many of their habitual routes

were severed. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission recognized me for my prolific reporting on Bay Area transportation issues.

*Q: Were any of these journalistic experiences helpful to you in your subsequent career?*

MAYBURY: Absolutely. As a diplomat, I gave numerous lectures on the role of the Black press in U.S. history. Audiences in other countries did not know that we had a specialized press in the United States. I have explained who the pioneering journalist John Brown Russwurm was. Come to think of it, he is little known in the United States. In 1827, Russwurm and Samuel Cornish co-founded the Freedom's Journal, a weekly publication that became the first African American newspaper in the United States. In its first edition, the paper proclaimed, "We wish to plead our own cause; too long have others have spoken for us." The Black Press became a vehicle for announcing achievements in the African American community, such as graduations, marriages, successful businesses, church life, themes the mainstream press did not cover. Other publications appeared and spread across the country. The first daily Black newspaper was La Tribune de la Nouvelle Orléans published in both French and English by Dr. Louis Charles Roudanez in New Orleans. It proved a significant force during the Civil War and Reconstruction eras, advocating for rights of Black people, including voting rights, education, and desegregation.

During my last Foreign Service assignment overseas, in Liberia, I lectured about Russwurm's contributions to both countries. He was one of the first African Americans to obtain a college degree in the United States (Bowdoin University), and he eventually joined other immigrants to Liberia who did not believe they would ever be able to exercise all their rights as U.S. citizens. Once in Liberia, he helped establish the country's first newspaper, the Liberia Herald, promoted education, and eventually settled in the south of present-day Liberia, in Maryland County, where he served as its governor. Russwurm lived out his days in Harper, a port town on the Atlantic. Visitors to Harper can see a monument erected in his honor and stand on a small peninsula named after him. Russwurm is buried in that part of Liberia. In yet another interesting twist, for many years the National Newspaper Publishers Association, which represents African American newspapers, gives the John B. Russwurm Award for Excellence to the best Black paper. The Sacramento Observer has been a recipient on multiple occasions. When I worked for that publication, I did not make the connection with Liberia. Thirty-five years later in Liberia, I was passing out Russwurm's biography by University of California at Irvine scholar Winston James – "The Struggles of John Brown Russwurm: The Life and Writings of a Pan-Africanist Pioneer, 1799-1851." Today, there are people in Liberia who believe Russwurm should be taught in school and his name honored more prominently.

*Q: What happened when you were following this journalistic path that made you go into the Foreign Service?*

MAYBURY: Well, I tried to explain this to the Columbia Journalism Review in 1995 when that trade publication contacted several current and former journalists who decided

to leave their newspaper careers. One of my reasons for changing careers was that I believed my newspaper was placing too much emphasis on earning revenue through advertising at the expense of the creative writers. I disliked having long, carefully researched articles chopped down so that a display advertisement could get in that edition. At times, the cuts were so arbitrary that the story no longer made any sense. Another reason was that my salary had flatlined for several years and there was no prospect of a raise. And then there was my yearning to get back to an international affairs career. That said, I tip my hat to my newspaper colleagues who are still going strong. I loved journalism. I feel enormous respect for the occupation today, but I had this other passion, and the other passion won.

*Q: All right. As you are making another choice you took the Foreign Service exam again and you passed. What year was it?*

MAYBURY: It would have been 1994. After passing the written exam, I was then invited to the oral assessment stage, and after I passed that, I had to obtain a security clearance and a medical clearance. Although my name appeared on a list of eligible candidates, inclusion did not ensure an invitation to begin training. During those months of waiting, I applied for a job at the Patriot Ledger in Quincy, Massachusetts. They invited me for a week-long tryout, so I went to Quincy and wrote three or four articles. The ones I remember were a piece on a new suburban rail service and another on a newly introduced lottery game. After a delay with The Patriot Ledger, I received a State Department letter inviting me to begin training in March 1995. I informed the newspaper of my change in plans, and they wished me well. It would have been interesting to work in the Boston area and be near my beloved Red Sox, but I know I took the right decision.

*Q: Now you are in California, and you must move to Washington.*

MAYBURY: Yes.

*Q: At any point here I forgot to ask you, did you meet your future wife?*

MAYBURY: So, without going into too much detail I have been married more than once.

*Q: OK I was just curious because if you are going into the Foreign Service and you are married you must talk to your spouse about what you …*

MAYBURY: Oh, we did. And the spouse was gainfully employed as a preschool teacher and happy to go on with this adventure. There was no kicking and dragging and screaming at that point.

*Q: And any children?*

MAYBURY: Yes, one son.

*Q: You have got now a family, and you have had a lot of experience with a family overseas and learning now to be resourceful in a non-English speaking one. Your decision was an easy one and once your spouse agreed you were going to Washington and from there wherever the Foreign Service was going to send you. All right. How large was your orientation class when you first joined?*

MAYBURY: There were 40 of us. The A-100 class consisted of twenty-five from the State Department and fifteen from the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). That was one of the last USIA cohorts before USIA was integrated into State in 1999. We were known as the 75th/105th class.

*Q: At that time did you go in with a cone or a specialization or was it you will go in and we will see?*

MAYBURY: I had selected the political cone before going to Washington. Prior to orientation, I contacted retired Foreign Service Officers who were friends of my parents. I wanted to make a clean break with journalism and public affairs.

*Q: How would you describe your entry class? Was it diverse or mostly men?*

MAYBURY: There was only one person of color and a good balance of men and women. We had one officer who had just graduated from the University of Virginia and a pair of colleagues who were in their fifties. The average age was around twenty-nine.

*Q: But most of the people you are talking about in your class had some pre-Foreign Service work experience.*

MAYBURY: Most. Several had federal government experience, including some with military service.

*Q: As you were going through orientation, was there anything unusual about it for you because you are moving from the private sector into the U.S. government but also a unique kind of niche in the U. S. government. Since very few others in the U.S. government are expected to spend half their career or more overseas.*

MAYBURY: Well, we all knew what we were getting into. We recognized that at least seventy-five percent of our careers would be overseas. I recall some colleagues saying that they would try this out for a few years to see if it works for them. We began seeing some attrition before the fifth year. Early on, I learned to respect the civil service, contractors, and locally employed staff for their institutional knowledge.

*Q: LES are locally employed staff, so these are nationals of the country to which you are assigned who will be part of your staff.*

MAYBURY: When we joined, they were called Foreign Service Nationals. There were also Third Country Nationals. They contributed significantly to our success. They knew

the local language, the customs, and the contacts. I advocated for local staff to serve as sponsors for arriving American officers to make their adjustment smoother. The Department already has a well-established sponsorship program that consists of American families and individuals at an overseas post giving newcomers a city tour and answering the expected newcomer questions. My recommendation was never implemented even though many people thought it was an innovative idea. In Ethiopia, an Ethiopian colleague explained that it might be uncomfortable for local staff to show Americans how they live. At another post, someone told me that American officers and their families benefited more by seeing where fellow Americans live, shop, attend school, and go for recreation. To her credit, an Ethiopian colleague did start offering cultural awareness training to American staff. It was a hit.

*Q: So of course, during your orientation, you begin to talk with the assignments office. Can you talk about that experience?*

MAYBURY: At the beginning of the ten-week orientation, we were told how the assignment process worked. After a few weeks we were each given a list of potential assignments to research and prioritize. We were given time to use the resources about different countries of assignment at the Overseas Briefing Center at the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington. Some assignments needed language training, so we had to address this early in our careers to end language probation. Some overseas posts were more family-friendly, meaning they had good schools and job opportunities for dependents. I was especially interested in French-speaking assignments and assignments in Africa, but we had to spread our bids around geographically. As I recall, all the assignments required two years of consular work.

*Q: Just a quick aside, Flag Day is the day you are told what your assignment is, and you're given a little flag of that country.*

MAYBURY: Yes, that is the culmination of all this research and marks the end of the orientation period. We were all in the room for the ceremonial occasion and there were small desktop flags on display. The class coordinator began announcing the assignments and passing out corresponding flags. There were ooohs and aaahs. They got to the end of the list and there were no more flags to pass out. Two of us were without flags. My top pick, Tunisia, was taken off the list at the last minute because it was a mid-level position that the mid-level division reclaimed, so there were no other entry-level vacancies. Keep in mind that once you have your flag and your assignment, you start training that is specific to your assignment for several weeks or months. If you don't need language training, you depart Washington after about three months. So, Joel Maybury was without a flag.

*Q: That was an odd thing for your orientation course.*

MAYBURY: Yeah, I had devoted hours to research multiple countries. There was a huddle among the instructors, and then they informed me that my name and background

were being shared with the Bureau of African Affairs. I was not panicking. Within twenty-four hours I learned that there was a specific need in Djibouti. It was a mid-level position, and I was an entry-level officer, but the bureau determined that I could manage the responsibilities of a consular and political officer in Djibouti given my French fluency and past professional and educational background. The position had been vacant for several months and Ambassador Martin Cheshes happened to be in Washington at the time and was searching for a candidate to fill the job. I heard that there was a similar vacancy in Libreville, Gabon, but Ambassador Cheshes reached out first. He invited me to have dinner at a crab restaurant in Arlington. The moment we sat down, he told me he believed I had the maturity, the French fluency, and the professional experience to supervise the small consular and political sections and manage the portfolios. It was one of the rare interfunctional jobs available for first-tour officers. Most first-tour officers were sent to two-year consular assignments, doing nothing but visas and U.S. citizen services. I just loved the fact that I could do one thing in the morning and a different thing in the afternoon. Sometimes I would do both at the same time. A year into my assignment, Ambassador Cheshes called me into his office and asked me to serve as Chargé d'Affaires for six weeks. He was about to depart post permanently and neither his successor nor his deputy was due to arrive until the end of summer. He told me that he had confidence in me. I now had a year of experience under my belt, plus the French fluency and a well-developed list of political contacts at all levels. Although I didn't have a flag on Flag Day, I got a great assignment. I became the first of that entry-level cohort to serve as Chargé d'Affaires, no small accomplishment.

*Q: What were your first impressions of Djibouti?*

MAYBURY: I arrived in Djibouti in early summer 1995 on an Air France flight from Paris via Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The Djibouti airport did not have jet bridges, just stairs. As I exited the aircraft, I was overwhelmed by the heat and humidity. I had read about Djibouti's reputation as a hot and humid post. This would take some adjustment, I thought to myself. It was good to get into an air-conditioned vehicle after clearing immigration and customs, although I can almost smell the humid, salty air from the vehicle's air conditioner. Shortly after leaving the airport, the embassy driver stopped to let a camel get out of the middle of the road.

*Q: Now you go to your permanent quarters immediately.*

MAYBURY: Yes, a two-story, four-bedroom house with a dozen or more air conditioners blasting away. Another Foreign Service Officer, Michael Raynor, lived in an adjoining house within the same fenced property. He is serving as our Ambassador in Dakar, Senegal, today. The house was fully furnished and the family that sponsored my arrival had stocked the refrigerator with some fresh produce and staples. I briefly met a night guard, a young Ethiopian man who had his quarters in a shipping container at the back of the property. The house was in the Héron residential neighborhood, approximately one mile from the embassy. Incidentally, that ocean-front property no longer exists from what I can see on Google Earth.

*Q: Now when you get to the embassy, if there are no confidential issues you can't raise, what does the security officer tell you about your personal security and threat of terrorism and so on?*

MAYBURY: Djibouti was a safe place to live. There was some petty crime, so we were instructed to use common sense when driving or walking around town, particularly at night. We were able to drive our own vehicles. There were a few restaurants with outdoor seating. The terrorism threat was low.

*Q: In terms of representations of other countries, who else was there in any significant way?*

MAYBURY: Russia had a four- or five-story building, imposing by Djiboutian standards at that time. The Russian footprint had been significantly larger during the Cold War, particularly with the conflict taking place between Ethiopia and Somalia. When I got to know Russian diplomats on a professional basis, they were interested in what I could share about Djiboutian internal politics and developments in Somaliland. Other diplomatic representations included Italy, Germany, Libya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Yemen, and of course France. The French military had several bases there, including an air base adjacent to the airport. There was also a French Foreign Legion presence. I helped organize the Embassy soccer team and remember playing against legionnaires. It was a bruising affair. The French were omnipresent, with technical advisers in every government ministry. There were French schools and French-owned businesses. France had been the colonial power until independence in 1977. The United Nations had several agencies in Djibouti as well, including the UN High Commission for Refugees.

*Q: Does the geopolitical situation between Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia play at all? Since you were a political officer, did that neighborhood play at all in what you were doing?*

MAYBURY: Absolutely. There were Ethiopian and Somali refugees in several camps in Djibouti. Some had been refugees for more than a decade. The United States was aiding through the UN agencies – housing, fuel, education, food, health care. In addition, the embassy was responsible for monitoring developments in Somaliland. At that time, our colleagues at the embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, were monitoring Somalia. The self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland was easier for diplomats in Djibouti to visit due to its proximity to us. The ambassador, the deputy chief of mission, and I shared the responsibility for reporting on Somaliland. That meant occasional meetings with Somalilanders and others passing through Djibouti, but it also meant periodic travel into Somaliland to meet with officials and civil society groups. Somaliland was headed by President Mohammed Ibrahim Egal. The country had proclaimed itself independent from Somalia and Egal was keen to win international recognition. Diaspora Somalilanders also made the case for full-fledged independence, something that has yet to be achieved. I traveled to Somaliland three times by air and once overland. I had meetings in the capital Hargeisa and the seaports of Berbera and Bosaso.

The trip I remember best was the overland expedition. For that, we needed every clearance imaginable from Washington, the Africa Command, and Djiboutian and Somaliland authorities. It was a classic example of risk management. We identified what we wanted to accomplish, analyzed the pros and cons, came up with measures to mitigate the risks, and made the decision to go. Once on the road, we monitored our progress and were ready to revise our plan to limit the risk. There was no history of embassy personnel attempting an overland trip into Somaliland. Our convoy consisted of two Toyota Land Cruisers, two embassy drivers with ties to the Somaliland clans, the Somaliland-born spouse of the deputy chief of mission, a French geologist, and me. We crossed the border at Zayla and made our first stop in Borama, the largest city in northwestern Awdal where most of the population is from the Gadabursi clan. We lodged at a government rest house, where we met with officials and community leaders who were all enthusiastic about supporting the success of our visit. Borama is a commercial center important in the trade between Somaliland and Ethiopia, whose border lies a few miles outside of town. From Borama we traveled on to Hargeisa, Somaliland's capital. In places the roads were nothing more than deep ruts that heavy trucks had dug. These large trucks carried merchandise between towns, and passengers would sit on top of the merchandise. As we entered our hotel compound, we spotted a sign forbidding weapons on the compound, a reminder that armed conflict was still a reality. The civil war, which saw the Somali military bomb Hargeisa, Borama, and other towns across Somaliland, left a legacy of ruins and ill will toward the rulers in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. But President Egal had internal conflicts to manage as well. On my visits to Somaliland, the discussions centered on stability and independence, and the threat of armed Islamist groups, although Egal assured us that he had extremists under control.

From Hargeisa, we traveled to Sheikh in central Somaliland, inhabited by Habr Awal and Habr Yunis Isaaq clans. We met with community leaders and visited the SOS Sheikh Secondary School that was destroyed by the Siad Barre regime in 1989. Ahmed Hussein Esa, the deputy chief of mission's spouse, was an alumnus, and I remember that our visit was an emotional experience for him. His school was considered one of the best in the country at the time of Somali independence. Ahmed is a biomedical scientist who holds a PhD from Johns Hopkins University. Other alumni include current Somaliland President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi and former presidents Egal and Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud. I understand that the school reopened in 2003. From Sheikh we headed to the seaport of Berbera. Our road trip allowed us to see more of the legacy of conflict, including the hulls of Soviet era tanks. The airport outside of Berbera had both Soviet and American features, including hangars and a runway that could accommodate fighter jets and military cargo planes. By day, we visited the bustling seaport and watched herds of cattle and camels from Ethiopia and Somaliland being lifted onto vessels bound for the Arabian Peninsula. In the evening, before retiring to the guest house provided by the mayor of Berbera, we had a fabulous seafood dinner overlooking the Gulf of Aden. We returned from Berbera to the Djibouti border on a little used coastal track that ran along miles of pristine beaches. We could not help but imagine the tourism potential for the region.

Our trip reports contributed to Washington policymakers' understanding of Somaliland's progress after the civil war and its aspirations as an independent country. We saw evidence of an economic comeback, of a genuine desire for self-determination. One of the reports I drafted discussed illegal fishing in waters off the Somaliland coast. This was something we heard about frequently as Somalilanders felt other countries' fishing fleets were taking advantage of the unregulated waters. As much as we tried to convey the views of Somalilanders and paint a picture of a people capable of rebuilding, restoring stability, and standing on their own two feet, we knew that there were skeptics in both Washington and in Africa who were not warm to the idea of another African country fragmenting and ending up without the resources to sustain itself. Somaliland remains unrecognized by the international community to this day.

*Q: Did war have any lasting impact on Somaliland?*

MAYBURY: Yes, when I was there, people remembered the devastating impact of the war, including aerial bombardments of their communities by Siad Barre's regime, and unexploded ordnance. At the same time, their focus was on expanding commercial ties with their neighbors in the Horn of Africa and on the Arabian Gulf. I don't recall animosity toward Ethiopia. Ethiopia was regarded as a key trading partner.

*Q: Right. Was the port in Somaliland deep enough for large cargo ships?*

MAYBURY: Yes, it was. There was considerable investment in the port, the main revenue source for the Somaliland economy.

*Q: Those were basic context questions. Did you have any other responsibilities besides consular and watching the emerging situation in Somaliland?*

MAYBURY: I had a busy political portfolio. I met with government and opposition leaders to talk about upcoming elections, recovery from the civil war, labor unions, and human rights. I learned how to compile data for the annual human rights report that each overseas embassy prepares for Congress. I met with journalists to get their views on political issues and remember fondly the excellent working relationship I had with Christophe Farah, a broadcast journalist who generously explained the inner workings of the Djiboutian polity and the various Djiboutian clans and tribes Issa, Issak, Gadabursi, and Afar. There were also sizable Yemeni and Ethiopian populations. Farah now works for the British Broadcasting Corporation in the UK. My meetings with the political opposition helped me understand different perspectives about Djibouti's governance. The opposition included parliamentarians and former Cabinet ministers, and all were eager to maintain contact with the U.S. Embassy. I remember names like Jean-Paul Noel Abdi and Mohamed Djama Elabe. Elabe passed away while I was there and I remember attending a wake at the family compound. I should mention that my meetings with opposition and union representatives were monitored by the government. I remember hosting a dinner at my residence for a dozen or so guests – all activists who were unhappy with the government of President Hassan Gouled Aptidon. Somehow the government learned about the guest list and contacted me to inquire about my intentions. This was an early

reminder in my career that host governments have various means of tracking U.S. Embassy personnel and their activities, including who they meet.

The portfolio also required me to monitor refugee affairs, and Djibouti had thousands of refugees from the conflicts in neighboring Ethiopia and Somalia, some of whom had been in the camps for a decade. There was some sentiment within the international community that the Djiboutian government did not want the camps to close because they generated income from the operations of the camps funded by UN agencies. Another part of my portfolio gave me an opportunity to learn more about the role of women in combating female genital mutilation. I also managed a small grant that financed a project by a Djiboutian woman, Hasna Mohamed, which helped women who were victims of forced sexual commercial exploitation to learn marketable skills and reintegrate into the economy. The Embassy joined hands with the national women's association to clean a maternity hospital, an event I remember well because one of the organizers, seeing that I stood 6 feet 4 inches tall, handed me a long broomstick and asked that I clean the cobwebs in the corners of the ceiling. The young women in the maternity ward got a big kick out of this.

In addition to the political responsibilities, I served as chairperson of the American Employee Association, a body that managed a property with a swimming pool, guest rooms, and a snack bar. We also rented videos to members. These associations are important for post morale overseas as they often serve as a social club for embassy staff and local contacts, whether Djiboutians or other diplomatic missions. The chairperson supervised the property manager and oversaw financial accounts. I would say to the next generation of diplomats that it is important to volunteer your time on embassy committees. There are many at post and some slots are hard to fill. These committees are responsible for a wide range of decisions, from housing assignments to performance awards.

*Q: That does lead to a quick question. How large was the contingent at the embassy? How many Americans and how many local staff as you recall?*

MAYBURY: This is a memory test. It has been over 30 years. I want to say that there were about 25 American staff and twice that many local staff.

*Q: So that is a good-sized embassy for you to be the chargé.*

MAYBURY: In Djibouti, there were fewer than 100 U.S. citizens at any one time. That number included family members of embassy staff. Some had dual citizenship. The consular workload was light.

*Q: During that period is there any incident that stands out in your mind as demonstrative of what you had to do as head of a mission, even a temporary head of a mission.*

MAYBURY: As Chargé d'Affaires, I had to resolve one particularly sensitive crisis involving a member of the Djiboutian president's close aides. This individual had been

critical of the administration and was afraid for his life. He came to the embassy gates and asked for U.S. assistance. The Marine on duty called me to get instructions. I instructed the Marine to let the individual wait outside in the car that had brought him to the embassy, and under no circumstances was the Marine to allow the person on the compound. I called the State Department Operations Center, relayed the information, and asked that a senior Bureau of African Affairs official get back in touch. Within a half-hour, Barbara Bodine, the Director for the Office of East African Affairs, called me to inquire about the situation. She confirmed that the decision I had taken was the right one and that we should advise the individual seeking protection to find a safe place to spend the night. In the end, the individual fell out of favor with the government but was not harmed. I received a glowing email from the office director telling me that I managed the mini crisis well. The major takeaway was that it is better to seek guidance than to improvise.

*Q: That is always a difficult event when you are the head of an embassy. The only thing I can think of that could be more troublesome is if a Russian showed up at the front door and said I want asylum. Separately, as the chargé arrives, was there any difficulty handing over the reins to the new ambassador since people knew you so well?*

MAYBURY: No, there wasn't. Terri Robl was a seasoned career officer who immediately recognized my talents and let me fulfill my responsibilities in the consular and political sections. I introduced her to key contacts, and I attended her meetings as a notetaker. We got along fabulously. It was a smooth transition.

*Q: By the mid-90s much of official Washington believed that the struggle with Communism was over and that the U.S. should enjoy a "peace dividend," a scaling back of the military and diplomatic investments we had made to oppose Communism both in the Soviet Union and through its proxies. Nevertheless, were there rumblings about the necessity to have a more visible presence because of how strategic Djibouti is?*

MAYBURY: Not really. Not at the time I was there. There were other incidents in the region, but I was not aware of plans to increase our military footprint the way we did after 9/11. We had security cooperation with the French and an agreement that they would assist with an evacuation of U.S. citizens and embassy staff had that been necessary.

*Q: This was a two-year tour, so just at the end of the first year you are already thinking about where you are going next. Were there people talking to you about where you were going or was it just essentially placing a bid?*

MAYBURY: Both. I had a bid list that included about fifteen posts in various parts of the world. One evening, I received a phone call from our ambassador serving in Niger. He told me that he had heard from the Africa bureau that I had a solid reputation. He asked if I would consider coming to Niamey to serve as the political-economic chief, a mid-level position. I was flattered, but it turns out he was not allowed to recruit a first-tour officer since first-tour officers are still bound to the Entry Level Division and its process for

assigning personnel. I found out a few days later from the personnel officer responsible for guiding my career at that stage. In the end, I was selected for a political/consular interfunctional position at my grade in Lomé, Togo. Lomé was seventh or eighth on my priority list.

*Q: Then you arrived in Lomé in 1997.*

MAYBURY: That is correct, in the summer of 1997. The ambassador at the time was Johnny Young and the deputy chief of mission was Terry McCulley. I led a consular section with two locally employed staff and one American family member, and a political section with one locally employed staff. A year later, the front office consisted of Ambassador Brenda Schoonover and Deputy Chief of Mission Christopher Davis.

*Q: Could you comment on where relations were at this point. When we have good bilateral relations, it sometimes goes back and forth according to the government.*

MAYBURY: We were in a period of good bilateral relations. Our attention was centered on the fact that the president of Togo, Gnassingbe Eyadema, had been in power since his participation in a military coup in 1967. Our policy in Africa was to encourage governments to adhere to constitutional term limits, and to hold free and fair elections. A close advisor to the president and a good contact of mine told me on the eve of the 1998 presidential election that the race would be close, with Eyadema winning about fifty-three percent of the vote. Eyadema won with fifty-two percent of the vote and his opponent, Gilchrist Olympio, whose father Sylvanus had been killed in the coup, disputed the results. The Constitutional Court announced the results, while the United States criticized numerous electoral irregularities. Others in the international community likewise called into question the legitimacy of the outcome.

*Q: As a result of that, did any of our relations with Togo change?*

MAYBURY: Not really. Togo was a player in helping find peaceful resolutions in other parts of West Africa, including Liberia and Sierra Leone. Eyadema was a mediator and Togo contributed troops to the regional peacekeeping force, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which intervened in Liberia. Our State Department envoys came to Lome to consult with Eyadema. Our military-to-military cooperation was already limited to offering a few slots to the Togolese Armed Forces in the International Military Education Training program. Our Peace Corps presence continued uninterrupted.

*Q: You had already mentioned that he was a senior player in that region. Was he also still running things in Ivory Coast?*

MAYBURY: That came in 2002, three years after I left Lomé. Eyadema coordinated peace talks between the Ivoirian government and rebel forces. Those efforts failed.

*Q: I only ask because Houphouet would have still been the senior player in the region but if he passed.*

MAYBURY: He died in 1993.

*Q: And did they also supply troops for other UN missions?*

MAYBURY: Yes, but that was several years later.

*Q: So, in your case, you didn't become involved in reporting on the economy. Nevertheless, did the economy have a role in the political work you were doing? In other words, who had the money and who led the economy.*

MAYBURY: They overlapped. We still had an economic officer. They had immense reserves of phosphates to process and export. The port of Lomé was not the engine of growth that it has become today. The major economic players were closely tied to the presidency.

*Q: Now, since you divided your time between consular and political work, were there any interesting consular aspects to your job?*

MAYBURY: Yes, monitoring Nigerian fee fraud, or 419 scam. U.S. citizens were being defrauded of thousands of dollars by Nigerian-based individuals. These Americans would come to Togo and other West African countries expecting to collect huge sums of money in exchange for an initial fee. The scam artists were usually Nigerians who posed as traditional princes and other figures claiming that Nigerian authorities were blocking their fortunes. The fees they exacted from Americans would help unblock the accounts and then the Americans would receive a substantial reward, which never happened. The consulate helped get the victims back to the United States and reported the crime to local and U.S. law enforcement.

*Q: But in terms of immigrant or visitor visas, were there any unusual or interesting cases?*

MAYBURY: There were. We would often see visa "shoppers" from the Gambia and Sierra Leone who had failed to obtain tourist visas in their own countries. Many of them wanted to sell beads, wood carvings, and other handcrafts in New York City. Some had photo albums to prove that they had already been vendors in the United States and were simply wanting to return to sell more goods. Some of the visa shoppers also tried to bring a spouse, but we determined that they had traveled with another spouse previously. Polygamous marriages are not recognized for immigration purposes.

*Q: The immigrant issues were your first and sometimes your most important. Sometime in your consular work you began to understand how people get along. The principal economic drivers and so on. Were there any benefits for your consular work that transferred over to your political job?*

MAYBURY: Political contacts solicited me for visas for themselves or their family members. I had seen a little bit of this in Djibouti. If I determined that the purpose of travel and the traveler were legitimate, I would issue them a visa. That often led to new and better access to the political class. What we lacked in the consulate was an effective way to verify that the traveler returned to Togo following the visit to the United States, whether it was tourism or to attend an academic program. That is the risk you take as a consular officer. I would like to think that the visas I approved went to deserving Togolese who eventually returned to Togo to contribute positively to Togo's development. At the same time, I know that people's circumstances change, and they elect to stay in the United States and apply for permanent residency. This happened often in Djibouti, although Djiboutians were more inclined to move to Canada from the United States because of French-speaking opportunities and existing family and friends in places like Quebec. I heard that the Canadian authorities began detecting this pattern and tightened up their immigration requirements.

*Q: You have already hinted at the kinds of activities you did on the political side, but were there other ones that are salient in your recollection?*

MAYBURY: I managed security assistance. My contacts included the armed forces leadership. One of Eyadema's sons, Gnassingbe, was an officer in charge of the military in Northern Togo. We were both eager to cultivate a good relationship. He opened up about the security apparatus in the country's north, and he sought repeatedly to request additional training and weapons from us – despite a long-standing U.S. ban. We reminded the military hierarchy that if there were credible reports of human rights violations being committed by elements of the armed forces, the opportunities for greater security cooperation would remain limited. During my second year in Lome, we did persuade the U.S. Navy to make a port of call and deliver what are known as excess defense supplies, in this case non-lethal hospital equipment for use by the Togolese health care system. We arranged for a reception on board the vessel and a well-publicized delivery of hospital supplies. This goodwill gesture was a step in the right direction, but Gnassingbe and others in the military were hoping for more.

*Q: Given this situation was there political violence?*

MAYBURY: There was. In one instance, there were unverified reports of political opposition figures being thrown out of aircraft over the ocean and their bodies washing up on local beaches. I also remember when a group of armed men based in Ghana came across the border and engaged with Togolese military forces. This attempt to destabilize or overthrow the government ended in a few hours, but it rattled the capital and our embassy staff because there were street battles in downtown areas where most of us lived and worked. I was in my home with one of my children when a particularly intense gun battle broke out. I peered through a window to see what was going on and saw men in uniform crouched in a doorway firing their weapons. I called the embassy to tell them I was pinned down, and the neighborhood was too hot for anyone from the embassy to attempt to come to the house and take us to safety at the embassy. After a few minutes,

the shooting stopped and there was calm, except for the sound of distant gunfire and mortar rounds. From the porch on my home, which overlooked downtown, I could see some of the action in neighborhoods below. About one hour later, unexpectedly, a low-flying Togolese air force jet screamed directly overhead in the direction of the coast. My only thought was that this was a demonstration of force. After that, there was no more gunfire that I could hear. In the aftermath of that incident, the government arrested some opposition elements and blamed the opposition for instigating the cross-border raid.

*Q: Other than handling these incidents, were there any other activities or opportunities that served you well in subsequent tours. In other words, did you pick up talents and abilities that served you well in the future?*

MAYBURY: Learning about consular fraud prepared me for what was to come. In later assignments, even though I was not a consular officer and had no authority to issue visas, I was routinely approached by contacts seeking my assistance in securing a visa for them, a family member, or someone else they knew. Several contacts were well prepared. They had documents proving that the purpose of travel was legitimate, there was adequate financial support, and there was no doubt about a return to the country. I used the State Department's visa referral process judiciously.

*Q: Do you then have aspirations for the kind of career you were looking for?*

MAYBURY: I was still very much feeling my way around. I realized that I had made a good decision to become a political officer. That was clearly something I could do well because having been a newspaper reporter, I had transferable skills. I was able to go up to about anybody and start a conversation and retrieve information. So, I was extremely comfortable in that role. I observed more senior officers and took note of their skillset. I imagined myself becoming a deputy chief of mission one day. Being a section leader in an embassy was a key step forward in my career. I intentionally took risks when I served in Togo and elsewhere knowing that leaders take risks because they recognize that this leads to opportunities. To be clear, taking risks sometimes means meeting with unsavory characters and traveling to unsafe places. I would calculate that the risk was worth taking to learn more about what these actors were thinking.

*Q: To the extent you did, were you convinced they were even honest with you or forthright or playing with your propaganda and misdirection?*

MAYBURY: Both. We received training for these types of scenarios. You listen, you analyze, and you report to your bosses so that others can interpret what might be taking place.

*Q: You mentioned mentoring. At this point in your career, were you mentored by anyone?*

MAYBURY: I was, by the ambassador and deputy chief of mission. They listened attentively and provided relevant feedback. I was far from having figured everything out on only my second tour, so their insights were valuable. That we all ended up playing

tennis together at the ambassador's residence opened the channels of communication further.

*Q: One other source of mentoring, in a sense, is your local employees because they have been there so long and have their own network of contacts. To what extent did you draw on them?*

MAYBURY: I did a lot. They offered insights about political figures and the host of embassy contacts they believed I should get to know to do my work more effectively. They serve as the institutional memory of the embassy, and it is essential for Foreign Service Officers to carefully consider their insights and guidance.

*Q: All right. This once again is a two-year tour and once again after about a year you have to consider where you are going after this. What went through your mind for this.*

MAYBURY: I thought I really wanted to give myself a professional challenge and learn a new language. I decided that learning Arabic would lead me to a part of the world that intrigued me. I was also keen to develop my understanding of the dynamics between Africa and the Middle East. As I bid on my next assignment, I focused on staff assistant or desk officer positions. I did toy with the idea of competing for the junior France desk job. In the end, I found the right fit on the Algeria desk. Ambassador Ron Neumann, who was the deputy assistant secretary in the Near Eastern Affairs bureau and the former chief of mission in Algeria, convinced me that I was the right person for the job.

*Q: You went into the Foreign Service having been married. During these first two tours was your wife able to work?*

MAYBURY: No. There were opportunities, but the greater priority was taking care of young children.

*Q: Okay, Algeria was in turmoil at that time. What role was Washington playing in the region to help ratchet down the violence?*

MAYBURY: From 1999 to 2001, Algeria was emerging from its civil war under President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. He implemented the Civil Concord law to offer amnesty to insurgents, though attacks continued from hardline groups like the Armed Islamic Group. Our Embassy, under the leadership of Ambassador Cameron Hume and his successor, Ambassador Janet Sanderson, slowly modified its security posture to allow limited travel within the country, but the security details that accompanied officers to meetings with the government and civil society were impressive, as I witnessed during a week-long familiarity visit that I undertook at the end of 1999. My request to see the famous Casbah was declined by the Embassy for security reasons. Washington was keen to see Algeria stabilize. There were American companies operating in the oil and gas sector, and we were focused on strengthening counterterrorism cooperation and maintaining a cautious approach to human rights issues. The Algeria portfolio included

the Western Sahara. The United States publicly supported the United Nations' mediation efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution, and we favored a negotiated solution that would maintain Moroccan sovereignty over the territory. Algeria had long supported the Polisario Front, which seeks independence from Morocco, and this caused major friction between Algeria and Morocco. Sahrawi refugees have lived in camps near Tindouf, Algeria, for decades because of the conflict. Our diplomats traveled to Tindouf to meet with Polisario representatives. The conflict remains unresolved to this day.

As the desk officer, I shouldered the responsibility of managing our relations and overseeing policy implementation. In a typical week, I was coordinating with the U.S. and Algerian embassies and other government agencies, briefing senior Department officials, including Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas R. Pickering, and Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs William Burns, clearing assorted reports and memos, and reading everything I could about Algeria, in English and in French. The fact that I was fluent in French helped immensely both in terms of my frequent communications with the Algerian Embassy, but also in researching various issues. I reported to Egypt and North Africa Directors Ron Schlicher and Albert Dalgliesh, as well as Deputy Director Carol Kalin.

My working relationship with the Algerian Embassy in Washington was exceptional. Ambassador Idriss Jazairy, a seasoned diplomat with considerable experience at the United Nations and a close confidant of Bouteflika, welcomed any and all advice I could give him about how to approach the Washington bureaucracy. Before long, he was calling on members of Congress and pursuing meetings for Bouteflika with our president and secretary of state. With my help, his persistence paid off. Secretary Madeleine Albright met with Bouteflika in her hotel suite on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York, and the White House under President George W. Bush agreed to a working visit in July 2001. As a result of my close working relationship with Ambassador Jazairy, he made a point of introducing me to Bouteflika in New York where he told him that I was working hard to get more visibility for Algeria in the United States. Years later, after Jazairy retired, he invited me to visit Algeria and stay with him and his spouse in their home on the Mediterranean coast outside of Algiers. Unfortunately, I was unable to make it before he passed away in 2020.

Moving on, the year is 2000. I'm in the middle of a two-year assignment as desk officer for Algeria. I am in Washington DC and beginning to contemplate possibilities for an onward assignment.

*Q: So how was that determined?*

MAYBURY: I was interested in Middle East and African politics. As the Algeria desk officer, I was able to use my French when speaking with Algerians. But I came to realize that it would be beneficial for my career to acquire Arabic. It was a difficult language,

and I was up to the challenge. I thought of using my combination of Arabic and French to pursue assignments in North Africa or francophone Africa. This is how I got the assignment to Abu Dhabi as a political-military officer.

*Q: And the level was three speaking and three reading?*

MAYBURY: Yes, it was. So, the first year of that Arabic language training was in the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, Virginia.

*Q: Just a very quick question. At the very beginning of your training, did your teachers emphasize one part or another of those three areas of expertise that you needed?*

MAYBURY: There was more emphasis on spoken Arabic. I was not expected to do much writing in Arabic in my assignment.

When I began class, I knew no Arabic. Before long, I was using familiar greetings like *salaam aleikum* (peace be with you) and *marhaba* (welcome*)*. We were exposed to Arab culture and took field trips to Arab restaurants, mosques, and an Arabic bookstore. In restaurants, we ordered our meals using our newly acquired vocabulary and grammar. Part of the class took an immersion trip to Dearborn, Michigan, which is home to a sizable Arab American community. I struggled with learning how to write in a different script and learning a new alphabet. Some of my classmates had some prior Arabic exposure in college. I felt like I was playing catch-up. It motivated me to keep working at it. We watched Al Jazeera and Al Arabia television stations to follow the news and to learn the language used by journalists. By the end of the first year, we were assessed to see if we had reached the level (2 in spoken and 2 in reading) needed to move to Tunisia for the second year. In the second year, we had to reach a 3/3 level to then be able to go to our assignment. A 3/3 level is still far from the 5/5 level of native fluency, but it is sufficient to understand most newscasts and news articles, have conversations, and deliver talking points to government officials.

Once in Tunis, I had to resist the temptation to speak French. I had a Tunisian language coach who met with me in coffee shops and insisted that I not speak a word of English or French. I made the most progress under her watch. Each student was assigned a Tunisian professional to meet with from time to time. Mine invited me to his family's home and introduced me to more professional friends. We spent half the evening speaking in Arabic and half in French. We talked about the situation in Tunisia and international politics. I forgot to mention that we had two weeks of Tunisian dialect at the start of our stay in Tunisia. That was helpful for our interactions with taxi drivers and shopkeepers. Eventually, all students learned classical Arabic. Some of us wished we had some familiarization training in the dialects of our countries of assignments. In my case, Gulf dialect. We recommended that FSI consider adding that to the curriculum. The second year of Arabic no longer takes place in Tunis. Instead, students now receive advanced training in their countries of assignment and are exposed to local dialects. After a year in Tunisia, I achieved the 3/3 score needed to start my assignment in Abu Dhabi in the summer of 2003.

*Q: Moving on, when you arrived in Abu Dhabi, you were the political-military officer. Roughly what was the size of the embassy at the time?*

MAYBURY: There were just under 100 U.S. direct hires. That number grew by the second year when we moved to a New Embassy Compound. The ambassador was Marcelle Wahba and the deputy chief of mission was Richard Albright.

*Q: And among those hundred I think what you are saying is there weren't simply State Department officers. There were officers for various federal agencies and so on.*

MAYBURY: That is correct.

*Q: How big was the State Department contingent?*

MAYBURY: About 60.

*Q: Then going down one level, how many in your Pol-Mil section.*

MAYBURY: The Pol-Mil section had two Americans. I supervised a first-tour officer and two very capable locally employed staff.

*Q: Were there any concerns about your personal security as you arrived?*

MAYBURY: There were briefings about the need to be aware of my surroundings. Given the proximity of the United Arab Emirates to Iran and Saudi Arabia, there were ongoing concerns about armed Islamist groups and ideologies that did not mesh with the Emiratis' more tolerant and moderate leadership. We were free to move about in our own vehicles, travel throughout the country, and have our families with us. Most of us did not have guards posted in front of our homes. We had mobile patrols. We were cautioned about using taxis because some of the drivers were thought to be sympathetic to the Taliban in Afghanistan.

*Q: Since you mention family at that point, you were married and had kids. How easily did they adapt at least at the beginning?*

MAYBURY: Fine. Families adapted because there were some job opportunities and a choice of international schools.

*Q: To return to the embassy, with 100 or so federal representatives, who were the ones you dealt with the most?*

MAYBURY: I dealt a lot with those who were concerned with national security questions. So, the Defense Attaché Office, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Legal Attaché Office, and the Office of Defense Cooperation responsible for military sales.

*Q: So that office was separate from yours.*

MAYBURY: Yes. They dealt most directly with the sale of military equipment to the Emiratis. I was more concerned with the bilateral implication of military cooperation and the regional security picture, including counterterrorism. We worked on treaty arrangements protecting our armed forces. The U.S. Air Base at Al Dhafra outside Abu Dhabi was not widely publicized. I remember the base well because we would go there to visit the commander and his team, and we attended a United Services Organizations concert by Bruce Willis, the Hollywood actor who had a blues band. When it came to defense cooperation, the Defense Department representatives, the ambassador, and I engaged in discussions about the type of weapons systems the Emiratis wanted to acquire and the funding arrangements. These sales involved an interagency review through the Foreign Military Sales systems and were governed by the Arms Export Control Act. In short, they required presidential approval.

*Q: Other than the restrictions on re-export or dual use and so on, were there other restrictions related to Congressional requirements? Perhaps for human rights or other aspects of the relationship in the defense and military areas.*

MAYBURY: There were and this is what makes these jobs so interesting. Our embassy leadership as well as our military commanders who would visit Abu Dhabi would let the Emirati leadership know that the United States was concerned about human trafficking, including sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and the use of children from other countries as camel jockeys. We also advocated for direct elections to replace membership on the Federal National Council by appointment by the rulers of each emirate. Sex trafficking was a sensitive issue. There was no denying its existence, particularly in Dubai, but officials were not keen to talk about it. Visiting U.S. envoys, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, were more likely to raise the issue of poor conditions for construction workers and the issue of camel jockeys. There were tens of thousands of construction workers from South Asia and Southeast Asia who would work under trying circumstances. The child camel jockeys became a highly emotional issue for the Emirati rulers after they were shown videos showing how the young jockeys were treated and how they suffered serious injuries at times. Most of these boys were from Pakistan and other South Asian countries. The children were often from villages where their parents had agreed to send their boys to the UAE for a fee. I attended camel races a couple of times and I remember the excitement of fans and camel owners and trainers. Each camel's "coaches" would ride in an SUV and root for their camel using bullhorns. It was quite a spectacle.

By 2004, the Qataris had developed robots to replace child camel jockeys. Qatar and the UAE were the first to use the robots. Nowadays, robots are in use with their operators using remote controls as they drive alongside the racetrack in SUVs.

*Q: Sure. Now you have described it in general on this particular aspect relating it to human rights, but are there other examples of what a police officer does in Abu Dhabi that are really salient in your memory?*

MAYBURY: I think I have captured it.

*Q: OK let me move on to a larger context question because in U.S. media coverage we heard a lot about how the U.S. was moving large amounts of personnel, weapons, and logistical support for the impending war with Iraq. How did that affect you?*

MAYBURY: Well, it was very much part of our role. Central Command (CENTCOM) visited Abu Dhabi several times a year.

*Q: I think it was at least initially in Germany.*

MAYBURY: It is possible. In any case all the commanders came down and wanted to meet with us and get briefed by us and then meet with Emiratis and see the U.S. air base. They were keen to get Emirati insights about developments in Iraq and Afghanistan, including leadership dynamics. Our ambassadors in Kabul and Baghdad visited as well for the same reasons. The Emirati leadership had their own connections and channels in Iraq and Afghanistan. They wanted to hear from our side as well to stay abreast of the situation on the ground. There were a pair of think tanks in the UAE that offered briefings on regional security matters. One was the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research in Abu Dhabi, and the other was the Gulf Research Center in Dubai. Their respective policy papers, conferences, and briefings were valuable resources.

*Q: Did that factor into how you had to do your other jobs? In other words, you couldn't necessarily rely on the Emiratis' media to give you all of the background and things that were going on that didn't make the media but were nevertheless important.*

MAYBURY: The media there was quite good. There were newspapers in Arabic and English that provided different editorial perspectives. You didn't have to rely on government sources or NGO sources to get the skinny on a particular issue. The media fulfilled its role, and as a political officer, I regularly checked all sources. There was self-censorship, so it was rare to read articles critical of the UAE government.

*Q: So, to go back to 2002 and 2003 the war in Iraq goes on. Were there important discussions that you had that addressed this with the Emiratis?*

MAYBURY: All the time. Iraq was a central talking point and the Emiratis sought to see the conflict resolved and to ratchet down tension in the Arabian Gulf. In addition, I had meetings with a group of Iraqi expatriates who held positions in the UAE government and private sector. Some of them knew Saddam Hussein intimately for having served in key positions in Iraq previously. They introduced me to the Iraqi chargé d'affaires in Abu Dhabi, Qussay Mehdi, someone who had worked closely with U.S. government representatives in Baghdad. We held several productive meetings. He was nearing the end

of his career and decided to return to Baghdad to take care of personal and professional business. He was shot and killed by four armed men after he fought off an attempted kidnapping. Another of my Iraqi contacts successfully applied to become mayor of Baghdad after seeing a widely publicized advertisement for the job. He served from 2004 to 2005. He had previously served in Iraq's nuclear weapons program and as a professor of structural engineering at Baghdad University. After fleeing from Iraq, he settled in the UAE and worked as a Planning Ministry advisor.

*Q: To the extent you were able to determine, what was the policy followed by the Emirates with regard to the U.S. presence and later efforts at rebuilding Iraq.*

MAYBURY: The Emiratis were partners. Keep in mind we had an air base on their soil. They sought stability in the region and collaborated with us publicly and behind the scenes to bring the Iraqi conflict to an end.

*Q: This wasn't just conflicting parties in Iraq.*

MAYBURY: Right. There were conflicts in Afghanistan and between Israelis and the Palestinians. The UAE built schools and hospitals in Gaza. They were also concerned about Iran overstepping its bounds and returning to the days of Greater Persia, which Arab leaders see as a threat even to this day.

*Q: Now once again the Emiratis are in a zone that has all kinds of problems. Do you also deal with their problems within the region? In other words, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and their neighbors and so on.*

MAYBURY: The UAE was concerned about Muslim extremists based in Saudi Arabia. I did a lot of analysis about these influences in the sermons in UAE mosques. The UAE government drafted the weekly sermons to reflect the country's moderate stance. Imams were expected to adhere to these messages. The government would verify that the pre-approved sermon was being delivered. Critics might have seen this as controlling free expression, but for the UAE government, it was a method to promote moderation and restrict extremist ideologies.

*Q: Now also in all this time in the Emirates, how did your Arabic do? Did you increase your fluency?*

MAYBURY: I would say that I didn't use Arabic in Abu Dhabi as much as I would have liked to. In part, this was because the government ministers were mostly fluent English speakers. In retrospect, it was better that we do not waste our time listening to me struggling with technical expressions in Arabic. In addition, most shopkeepers were not fluent in Arabic and were more likely to speak to customers in English. That said, I did watch Arabic language television stations and read Arabic language newspapers to develop my vocabulary, but it was challenging.

*Q: This is a three-year tour. So, over that time and the developments in Iraq, what would you say were the most important take-aways that you had, both in the skills that you developed that were valuable to you later, but also insights into Arabic culture?*

MAYBURY: I would say that as a Foreign Service Officer, the challenge of learning a hard language was important both professionally and intellectually. That was one of the hardest challenges I ever had in my life as an adult. But there were plenty of benefits to having some command of Arabic, particularly the many useful words and phrases used around the holidays and important occasions like births, weddings, and graduations. These words and phrases helped defuse a tense situation and they helped express sympathy and understanding. The other skills I developed in Abu Dhabi were those related to serving as a control officer for high-level U.S. government visitors. I was Secretary Rice's control officer, a huge responsibility given her Cabinet-level status. I also served as control officer and principal briefer for military commanders, the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs, and the World Bank President James Wolfensohn. As luck would have it, I was also their notetaker at high-level meetings and was the one to draft the reporting cable to Washington after obtaining the visitors' clearance. That meant I was privy to some of the most sensitive discussions taking place.

*Q: Absolutely. What have I forgotten to ask you that was also important during that tour?*

MAYBURY: During the last year of my assignment in the UAE, the Foreign Ministry asked if I would find time to meet the individual appointed as their next ambassador in Washington to inform him about what some of his responsibilities would entail. Saqr Ghobash was not a career diplomat and was not familiar with Washington, D.C. I drew upon my experience as a desk officer to share what I knew about how to navigate the bureaucracy. We met several times before he departed for Washington. We had dinner in Georgetown when I returned to Washington in the summer of 2006. Another of my activities involved giving lectures on American politics and foreign policy at Zayed University, which at the time was reserved for women. The contact of mine who made this possible was an assistant professor, originally from Sudan, Dr. Nadir Elmahdy. I found those classes fascinating because they offered a rare opportunity to speak directly with Emirati women. They were a bright group that asked tough questions. I would like to believe that many of them now hold key positions in government and in business in the UAE.

*Q: Which does leave me with one other question. I imagine you will get to this later. Were those networks valuable to you later in your career?*

MAYBURY: The people I met became part of my network. One of my excellent contacts was Yousef al-Otaiba, who has served as the UAE's ambassador in Washington since 2008. Nadir Elmahdy, the professor at Zayed University, is now in the United States and we are regularly in touch. Others have moved on to various activities, but we have stayed in touch on LinkedIn. I have passed on their names to other State Department colleagues heading out to the UAE.

*Q: Sure. In that case you mentioned that you were wanting to go to another Arab speaking country but not Sudan. How was it determined that you would end up in Sudan?*

MAYBURY: Well, this was a critical point. I had just been promoted. I was aware that this would be a time to consider assignments outside my cone (political) because it would be a few years before I would be eligible for promotion again under the Department's promotion system.

*Q: Just very quickly to what level you were promoted.*

MAYBURY: At that point I was promoted from FS-03 to FS-02.

*Q: It is still in the mid-levels, but it is a more responsible grade for a mid-level officer.*

MAYBURY: Correct. And so, I was assigned as public affairs officer in Khartoum, Sudan. I received training for that at the Foreign Service Institute. Public diplomacy officers are responsible for a wide range of programs, including Fulbright fellowships, the International Visitor Leadership Program, and Humphrey fellowships. I was familiar with each of these programs because I nominated candidates for them at previous posts and took part in the selection process. Public diplomacy officers also manage programs for the alumni of U.S. government programs. I received grant management training and public affairs training as well. The latter was most familiar to me because of my previous background as a newspaper reporter.

*Q: You arrived there in 2006. Did you bring your family with you?*

MAYBURY: No. Khartoum was a danger post, and a one-year assignment. So, the family returned to the United States. And for the first time I served in an unaccompanied post.

*Q: What were the personal security issues you had to face upon arrival?*

MAYBURY: First, there was a no-nonsense briefing about personal safety. We were not allowed to bring our own vehicles, and all transportation was arranged by the embassy motor pool. We lived in secured housing compounds. Our embassy was then in central Khartoum, near apartments and shops. There was no setback. I could look out my office window and peer into apartments across the narrow street. It was 2006–2008. The bomb attacks on our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam had occurred in 1998. The embassy in Khartoum was in a six-story building with an old, rickety elevator. To say we were vulnerable would be an understatement. Our government had designated Sudan as a state sponsor of terror. Ambassador Cleo Noel and Deputy Chief of Mission George Moore had been assassinated at post in 1973. There was ongoing violence in South Sudan and in Darfur. The security environment was completely different from what I had seen in Abu Dhabi.

*Q: When you arrived, you had all the issues of instability and human rights violations in Darfur and the secession of South Sudan. How did those disasters affect your work?*

MAYBURY: These were the issues we raised with Sudanese interlocutors. I addressed them in contacts with the press as well as in remarks I made at universities and with civil society organizations. All of us with public speaking roles had to be careful because our words could be misconstrued or twisted to discredit us.

*Q: Then within the Sudanese government, were there also concerns about coups or other things that would create more difficulties for the security situation at the embassy?*

MAYBURY: At the time I was there, President Bashir had a tight grip on power. He had a powerful security apparatus. That said, during the time I was there, there was an attempted armed takeover of the government from rebels who came in from the Darfur region. They made it as far as Omdurman, the city across the Nile from Khartoum. The Sudanese Armed Forces put down the rebellion in less than a week. The rebels did not seem well prepared. I recall stories about rebels asking local citizens for directions to the radio station and other targets.

*Q: What were the top goals set for you by the ambassador and Washington?*

MAYBURY: Both Chargés during my two years in Khartoum, Cameron Hume and Alberto Fernandez, urged me to pay close attention to cultural affairs programming, produce a daily media summary, and foster strong ties with Sudanese journalists. Due to sensitive issues, they chose to manage spokesperson duties for the embassy, including on-air interviews in English and Arabic. We also had a special envoy for Sudan who visited several times a year, and when that happened, they would agree among themselves who the spokesperson would be. The special envoy and the Sudan Programs Group within the Bureau of African Affairs were not always perfectly in sync with the embassy front office. I saw this both in Khartoum and during trips to Juba in present-day South Sudan and to Darfur. Observing the interaction between the chargé and the special envoy proved useful to me a few years later when we had a similar arrangement in Bangui, Central African Republic.

I thrived in Khartoum because I had wide latitude to spend half a million dollars in grants to promote cultural and educational programs across the country. The two deputy chiefs of mission to whom I reported, Roberto Powers and Mark Asquino, were huge advocates of cultural and educational programs. I developed fantastic connections in universities, donated thousands of books to university and high school libraries and spoke to hundreds of college students about U.S.-Sudan relations and features of U.S. culture. In the periodicals section of Sudanese libraries, I noticed that subscriptions to academic journals had ceased in the early 1990s, presumably because the government opposed Western influence. The embassy sought to remedy this by purchasing both hard copy and electronic subscriptions, but both required ongoing budget support. Sudanese academics and librarians wanted this, but they lacked support from their own administration. My section also used what was known as the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation to rehabilitate the Palace of Sultan Ali Dinar Museum in El Fasher, Darfur. The throne and other artifacts were threatened by the elements. I also organized journalism workshops to

teach community journalism. Most newspapers wanted to be the paper of record and tended to cover national news. I tried to persuade them that they could also play a vital role in covering local news, something their readers had an appetite for. Another of my priorities was to revive the network of Sudanese alumni of U.S.-sponsored programs such as Fulbright, Humphrey, and International Visitor Leadership. Some of these alumni had attended U.S. universities as far back as the 1970s and had not been contacted by the embassy in two or three decades. They longed to maintain their affiliation with the United States and welcomed the alumni dinners I hosted at my residence. This was how I learned about a number of Sudanese jazz and blues artists who were popular before the Islamic revolution shut down nightclubs.

*Q: This is a good point to drill down a bit. What was the value of this alumni association? These people had been to the U.S., learned a few things in their professional or scholarly career, and came back. What did they do with the embassy to advance any of the embassy goals?*

MAYBURY: Some of them proposed names of suitable candidates for our exchange programs. Some were sources of helpful information about the political, economic, and social environment. I enjoyed greater access to institutions thanks to them.

*Q: I just want to interrupt with one point having been a public affairs officer myself. A lot of times people outside the State Department think you are just out there having a good time or sitting and reading the newspaper. One of the big advantages is that the U.S. Embassy costs very little. This is the power to convoke, to bring people together who might otherwise not have met. This benefits them, but it also benefits the embassy since it creates new networks centered on amplifying embassy messaging.*

MAYBURY: Yes, that is true.

*Q: Thinking back on this new alumni initiative, are there examples of successes beyond running the programs well?*

MAYBURY: The musicians provided the impetus for a series of concerts my section arranged with the help of the African Regional Service at our embassy in Paris. That program had Europe-based American artists willing to travel to Africa to perform. A live performance of American music is something that Khartoum had not had in decades. We invited Manda Djinn and her accompanist Roland Chammougom. They gave concerts and taught music theory to adoring Sudanese audiences, including members of the government who insisted on buying front-row seats. One of the concerts took place in the cathedral. For an evening, at least, the strict years imposed by the country's Islamic rulers were forgotten. Manda sang jazz, blues, Black spirituals, and gospel. For some of the older generation Sudanese in the audience, the music made them nostalgic for the period they studied in the United States. I will never forget that story. And the impact that had sitting in the front row. Those concerts illustrated almost better than anything else how our public diplomacy can be a force for good, for mutual understanding.

*Q: Now you are talking about outreach to elites and cultural leaders and so on. At that time, the State Department was also beginning to urge outreach to youth.*

MAYBURY: We were.

*Q: How did that work for you?*

MAYBURY: Fabulously. Our section ordered massive amounts of textbooks, early reader books, and other publications for school and university libraries. We established an American Corner at a university in Juba, and we opened an Information Resource Center at the embassy. The U.S. Information Service would have operated a library many years earlier. Sudanese of all ages were able to make an appointment to visit the resource center in the embassy.

*Q: You mentioned the use of American Corners. Could you go into more detail about their work?*

MAYBURY: So that is like a mini library with some space for public talks and workshops. The State Department establishes these outside capitals in regions with limited or no access to embassy services. The American Corner shares space with the university library and is managed by the university librarian. I worked closely with Makila James, our consul general in Juba, to open the facility there. For students and community members, American Corners are magnets because they are equipped with multiple computers with access to a whole universe of online resources.

*Q: Also, by 2006, there are some social media or some opportunities to use technology for outreach. Given Sudan's level of development, were you able to do anything with that?*

MAYBURY: No, I was not yet the social media aficionado, but my team was more tech savvy.

*Q: Even in more developed countries we were not able to use social media in the mid-2000s, and certainly not in Africa given the limited telecommunications grids.*

MAYBURY: It is amazing to think we are talking about seventeen years ago and our best media to reach mass audiences was radio, and to some extent television. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) distributed 75,000 radios in Southern Sudan that could be powered by a crank generator or solar panels. The lead on this project was John Granville. Sadly, John and his driver were assassinated in a shooting in Khartoum on New Year's Eve in 2008.

*Q: Were you also engaged in specific outreach to Muslim groups?*

MAYBURY: Absolutely. We forged ties with a wide spectrum of political and social groups. The goal was to reach out to as many people as possible and have them be part of

an inclusive dialogue about peace in Sudan. Our Chargé gave interviews on local radio and on Al Jazeera radio.

*Q: As we approach the end of the George W. Bush administration, I recall that the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs began to instruct posts to conduct more outreach to women's groups. Were you able to program those?*

MAYBURY: Yes, we did. We were intentional about identifying qualified women for exchange programs and non-governmental organizations for grants.

*Q: Speaking of solutions and resources, you had mentioned assistance from USAID for the distribution of radios. Often public affairs will work with USAID because there are overlapping programs of democracy and development of skills, capacitation and so on. Were there other examples of that while you were in Sudan?*

MAYBURY: Yes, USAID and my section collaborated on a project to preserve Southern Sudan's archives damaged in the civil conflict. Some of these date to the early twentieth century. Many of the documents were stored in a dilapidated building open to the elements. The Rift Valley Institute received a grant from us to conserve, reorder, catalog, and digitize the historical government records of Southern Sudan. I recall seeing deeds and titles for land, tax forms, meeting minutes, and other government records dating back decades. conflict.

*Q: Just one interesting point about what might be thought of as a dusty, insignificant task like preserving archives. I worked for many years in the former communist countries in Europe. One of the most nettlesome issues that arose in these countries was the effort to restore properties stolen from many private owners. Some of those dusty old archives still contained the deeds and titles of the original owners. Helping those countries find, organize, and digitize those documents was a major effort and brought us a great deal of goodwill.*

MAYBURY: I couldn't have said it better.

*Q: All right now, one quick question before we go any further. Did you get any training in language before you went out?*

MAYBURY: No, my onward assignment after Sudan was at the U.S. Mission to the African Union (USAU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a country where English is widely spoken.

*Q: Your CV also says that you were deputy chief of mission of the U.S. delegation to the African Union.*

MAYBURY: That is correct. Initially, I was selected to be the Political/Economic Chief, but when I arrived at post, Ambassador John Simon needed a deputy chief of mission. The Africa bureau took care of that administratively and gave me the title acting deputy

chief of mission. The ambassador was a political appointee. Our office occupied the former residence of the deputy chief of mission assigned to the bilateral embassy. The embassy and USAU were co-located on the same compound. When Ambassador Simon departed post at the end of the George W. Bush administration, I served as Chargé d'Affaires for nine months until the next ambassador, Michael Battle, was confirmed by the Senate and arrived in Addis.

*Q: How big was the U.S. delegation?*

MAYBURY: There were three of us from State, one from USAID, and two from the Department of Defense. We had two contractors embedded at the AU, one working on democracy issues, the other on peace and security.

*Q: Now, with the new embassy construction underway, it was assumed that you and the delegation would be moving into that building eventually.*

MAYBURY: Yes, we saw our new office space in the embassy. I departed post by the time the embassy opened.

*Q: Now, do you have any local employees?*

MAYBURY: Yes, we had a pair of drivers and two staff assistants.

*Q: To what extent were you supervised by the embassy?*

MAYBURY: Ambassador Donald Yamamoto, the bilateral mission ambassador, closely monitored our work and included us in the country team meetings. The embassy provided all the administrative support the USAU mission required. USAU staff served on embassy committees.

*Q: Then restrictions on you and your family for security reasons were not a major concern?*

MAYBURY: Staff and family could drive their own vehicles. It was possible to take overnight trips. The tourism opportunities were endless. To be sure, there were no-go zones in parts of Ethiopia, such as along the border with Eritrea and parts of Afar region. The country was quite liberal.

*Q: What were your general instructions for work at the OAU since we are not formally members.*

MAYBURY: We had a dedicated diplomatic mission to the AU. We made our voice heard where we could. We attended the biannual summits, general assembly meetings and the committee meetings that interested us. A high priority was to encourage member states to sanction member states where the undemocratic changes of power occurred. They did so by suspending their privilege of attending meetings.

*Q: Now USAID obviously was active throughout Africa in a whole variety of ways. What was the USAID role in your jurisdiction?*

MAYBURY: Well, they had a contractor working on democracy issues. They assisted AU staff in building member states' capacity to hold free and fair elections.

*Q: It is interesting. I think a lot of people outside of the department and outside of USAID believe that we just go in and give them what we have. It's a negotiation between what they want and what we have to offer. And then the negotiation continues because there are stakeholders outside the central government who can often prevent any aid from reaching target populations. And then, even after you've reached target populations, you have to get buy-in from them. Sometimes it works smoothly; sometimes not.*

MAYBURY: That is right.

*Q: Now one more question about the members of your delegation. You mentioned you had a defense attaché. I imagine that they were there in part to keep the Africa Command apprised of what was going on.*

MAYBURY: That is correct, and their roles were quite specific. Our Defense Department representation paid particular attention to training and equipping African peacekeeping troops across the continent. Our busiest account was related to African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

*Q: On a daily or weekly or monthly basis, what did you do? You were called to meetings but in terms of the practical aspects of the job, how did that work?*

MAYBURY: For me, a typical week involved meetings with AU staff and AU ambassadors. I reported about the meetings for our policymakers in Washington, and made sure to copy other stakeholders, including our military command and all the embassies in the Africa bureau. One of my best contacts at the AU was the Ethiopian government's representative, Sahle-Work Zewdu. We had developed an excellent rapport when I was in Djibouti, and she was serving as Ethiopia's ambassador there. She served as president of Ethiopia from 2018 to 2024. Some of the other superb contacts at the AU were El-Ghassim Wane, a Mauritanian serving as peace and security director, Ramtane Lamamra, the commissioner for peace and security, and Jens Odlander, who headed the European Union delegation to the AU.

*Q: You mentioned that you were also keeping other US embassies in African countries apprised of AU deliberations. Were there particular ones that you were in touch with? What were the most important issues?*

MAYBURY: The ones that kept me busiest were in Madagascar, Mauritania, and Guinea because that is where there were successful coups d'état. I would send key documents and messages to ambassadors and their deputies. They particularly appreciated products

about peace and security issues that I was able to get from a South African think tank that contracted with the AU.

*Q: To go back to Washington for a moment, were there bottom lines or red lines that they warned you about. Either something you really needed to work on or something you had to stay away from?*

MAYBURY: I don't remember that being the case. We were there to support the AU and offered recommendations where and when appropriate.

*Q: Was some of your discussion related to alleviating poverty or investigating possibilities for new opportunities for assistance or trade?*

MAYBURY: Yes, we discussed ways AU member states could boost intra-African trade and how the AU could play a role in ensuring the effective implementation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

*Q: You had two AU summits each year. Were there noteworthy outcomes or activities while you were here in those two years?*

MAYBURY: Our interagency delegation led by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Ambassador Johnnie Carson, met with many of the key African leaders to urge adherence to the rule of law and respect for their constitutions. Our delegation made clear our continuing role in training and equipping African peacekeeping forces.

*Q: OK while you were in the African Union from 2008 to 2010, the U.S Africa Command was being established at that time. Did that play at all into your activities?*

MAYBURY: There was a lot of interest in AFRICOM, but there was also speculation about whether the command should be headquartered in Africa, not in Stuttgart. The USAU's two Defense Department team members were in regular contact with AFRICOM about deliberations at the AU.

*Q: Now you mentioned that the EU was also on observer status. Was China as well?*

MAYBURY: No, not at that time.

*Q: Because obviously they were already pretty active in Africa. You might have thought they wanted to begin exercising a bit more visibility. If not, I am not trying to overstate.*

MAYBURY: There was a Chinese diplomat who I would see from time to time at the AU, but he was not a regular attendee at meetings.

*Q: One other U.S. initiative that was visible in Africa was the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Did you ever have contact with them or consult about what was going on with the millennium challenge?*

MAYBURY: No, not at the AU. The MCC participated in funding projects that align with the AU's development agenda for Africa.

*Q: You had mentioned that you knew an Ethiopian diplomat. Were there other key contacts from any of the other African diplomats who you worked with regularly and who ended up being helpful to you in some way?*

MAYBURY: Yes, Edward Gboloco Howard Clinton, the long-serving Liberian ambassador, the dean of the diplomatic corps. Liberia was one of the founding members of the Organization of African Union back in the '60s. He was generous with his time as he explained the inner workings of the AU and introduced me to key AU personnel.

*Q: Were there any of these diplomatic contacts useful to you in future posts?*

MAYBURY: We kept in touch. Some of them put me in touch with colleagues of theirs serving in some of my future posts of assignment, such as the Central African Republic and Liberia.

*Q: One last thing about how you interacted with the organization for your benefit or for the benefit of the delegation. Often secretariats could provide you with background information that is useful for your job. What kind of secretariat did you use?*

MAYBURY: The secretariat of the AU was immensely helpful in chasing down information the USAU needed. We had excellent access to the AU leadership thanks to the secretariat's professional staff and their understanding of what our needs were.

*Q: A lot of these regional organizations did make at least an effort to address democracy issues. Did the AU have the ability to send observer missions and election monitors and that kind of thing?*

MAYBURY: They did it all the time. The USAID contractor embedded in the AU frequently traveled with the AU election missions. Typically, the AU was one of several international entities monitoring elections.

*Q: That is as far as I can go with formal questions, but there may be other aspects of your work there that I have missed.*

MAYBURY: I enjoyed the fact that I was able to use the three languages I know: English, French, and Arabic. Arabic was useful when speaking with Libyan diplomats.

Speaking of Libya, one of the AU Summits I had the privilege of attending took place in Sirte, a Libyan city on the Mediterranean and Muammar Gaddafi's hometown. Just reaching Sirte from Addis Ababa was an adventure. I flew first to Cairo then caught a connecting flight to Tripoli. I was in Tripoli two days before the rest of the U.S. delegation arrived from Washington. I used every waking hour to explore what I could of

the downtown, including the historic souk, Roman ruins, and modern and traditional hotels. A colleague from the USAU and I were able to get around on foot without restrictions. We were both impressed by the freeway network, the cleanliness of the city, and the calmness of the place. Keep in mind that this was in June 2009, two years before Gaddafi was killed by National Transitional Council forces, and three years before our U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens was assassinated in the Benghazi attack. Our delegation drove from Tripoli to Sirte, with a stop at Leptis Magna, some of the most impressive Roman ruins I have seen. A Libyan security detail followed us wherever we went. Gaddafi spared no expense in beautifying Sirte: fancy hotels, wide boulevards, and a stunning convention center. Our housing consisted of a newly built apartment, and I mean newly built. On Gaddafi's orders, the Libyans built an entire residential neighborhood. Delegations that could not be accommodated in hotels and apartments were given rooms on a pair of cruise ships at the port.

At the Summit itself, I saw a who's who of African leaders. Gaddafi was always surrounded by his Revolutionary Nuns, or bodyguards, and an aide who dressed like an airline captain. The U.S. delegation attended the plenary sessions, but our main purpose in being there was to hold bilateral meetings with certain heads of state where we had a particular agenda to promote. I attended two AU Summits in Addis Ababa as well, and the drill was the same. Our office supported the visiting delegation from Washington by arranging meetings and logistics, and taking notes and drafting reporting cables.

*Q: As a closing question, as you look ahead to your next assignment, was this assignment in some ways good for your overall career?*

MAYBURY: I think so. It was the first time I had worked in a multilateral setting, and it was the first time to serve as a deputy chief of mission.

*Q: Then while we were on that subject. It is only a two-year tour. You are always thinking about the next tour, so what were you thinking as this one winds down?*

MAYBURY: I thought about a post where I could use Arabic again. I also thought about returning to Washington for a policy position, such as a deputy director in the Africa bureau. I also bid on the American Presence Post (APP) in Bordeaux, although one of my mentors told me that Bordeaux would not be career enhancing. The embassy in Paris selected me for my French fluency, proven public diplomacy skills, and because someone there thought that I deserved a break after serving in back-to-back hardship posts.

*Q: Now before you go ahead with anything, there had once been a consulate, but it was downgraded to an "American presence." What is an American presence exactly?*

MAYBURY: It is a single direct-hire officer at a consulate in a city important to U.S. interests. The APP focuses on public affairs, business facilitation, and limited consular services, but legally the APP is considered a consulate under the Vienna Convention. The Bordeaux consulate, which provided full consular services, was closed in 1995 for budgetary reasons when Madeleine Albright was Secretary of State, despite its history as

the oldest consulate in the world. The APP concept originated with the U.S. Ambassador to France, Felix Rohatyn. In 2010, he reopened Bordeaux as an APP and opened similar offices in Rennes, Toulouse, and Lille. Around the same time, then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice established APPs in major Chinese cities where there was no U.S. representation. APPs opened in other countries as well. The State Department reduced staffing at large embassies in Europe to create positions at the APPs. In the end, France ended up with APPs in Bordeaux, Toulouse, Lyon, and Rennes, along with the consulates general in Marseille and Strasbourg. Little was limited to a Virtual Presence Post. Each of these had specific portfolios due to their location. For example, Rennes had a critical role to play every year with large U.S. delegations coming for D-Day memorial ceremonies. Toulouse was in the heart of France's aerospace industry, with Airbus and other companies nearby. Bordeaux was spared permanent closure in part because the southwest region of France had important links to the wine and spirits industry in the United States, significant aerospace presence, and its unique history as the oldest consulate. From what I heard, Bordeaux Mayor and former French Prime Minister Alain Juppé also lobbied to keep a U.S. presence in Bordeaux.

*Q: That is interesting because you remember Morocco as well but maybe Morocco came second.*

MAYBURY: Yes. The Kingdom of Morocco was the first country to recognize the United States in 1777, which paved the way for the Treaty of Friendship and Peace of 1786. That marked the beginning of the longest unbroken diplomatic relationship in U.S. history. The United States opened a consulate in Bordeaux in 1790, well before a legation was established in Tangiers, Morocco, in 1821. Incidentally, the first U.S. Embassy abroad was in The Hague, Netherlands, established in 1782.

*Q: So, let's go back one second. Your transfer from Addis Ababa to Bordeaux went without any issues? And your family accompanied and so on?*

MAYBURY: No issues whatsoever.

*Q: Were you in the old consul's residence? Did we keep that?*

MAYBURY: I was in the previous consul's residence. If you are talking about the first consul, Joseph Fenwick of Maryland, who was appointed by none other than Thomas Jefferson and who was friends with George Mason and a business partner of John Mason, then that is a different residence known today as Hotel Fenwick. We no longer own that. Fenwick built a beautiful structure next to the Garonne River. He retained the architect who also designed Bordeaux's grand theater. Fenwick was a merchant who traded wines and tobacco between France and the United States. Some of the wines he shipped back to the United States were destined for the White House cellars. I have researched this and found correspondence where both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson are requesting cases of wine from Bordeaux. In those days, consuls were not paid by the government but lived off their business income. Since he was a well to do wine merchant in those days the consuls were not paid.

*Q: They lived on consular fees and so on.*

MAYBURY: Correct.

*Q: Yes, and I am sure the presence has kind of a ghostly other worldly sense. Anyway, it is the U.S. embassy in Paris that gives you your instructions. How did you determine your responsibility?*

MAYBURY: When I first arrived in Paris, I met with Ambassador Charles Rivkin. He and I agreed that I would lead public diplomacy efforts in southwest France, follow local political trends and personalities, work to attract French exports to the United States, and manage U.S. citizen issues, including passport applications, notarial services, and prison visits. The APP did not accept visa applications. I let Ambassador Rivkin know that I would look for opportunities for him to visit the region to reinforce our messages, which he did on three occasions. He was also keen that I engage with Muslim youth just as he was doing in Paris. The deputy chief of mission, Mark Taplin, was a strong supporter of the APPs.

When the G-20 Cannes Summit was held in November 2011, I joined scores of colleagues from Paris and the other APPs on the Riviera to support the U.S. delegation led by President Obama. We each received "Yes we Cannes" T-shirts and went about addressing the many logistical details of the visit. One of my roles was to act as a liaison between the White House Presidential Food Service, a U.S. Navy branch that ensures the President has the foods and beverages he needs during his trips, and the French presidency's equivalent office. I learned a lot about the detailed preparations that take place behind the scenes ahead of important official dinners. Another role was as a liaison between the White House advance security team and French security. Here again, I was privy to highly sensitive planning arrangements designed to keep the President safe. I will never forget the scene backstage on the stage of the Auditorium Louis Lumière, the main theater of the Cannes Film Festival, when President Obama and his entourage arrived for a walk-through of the premises prior to his delivering remarks there. The White House advance team's strict instructions to those of us in these support roles was to not disturb the President in any way. At one point while the President was pacing around backstage deep in thought, he passed within a few feet in front of me. I was tempted to greet him but remembered our instructions. Sure, part of me regrets not saying, "Hello, Mr. President," but people who have heard me tell this story appreciate that I had to respect the rules.

*Q: Now one of the reasons I think we could go down to a smaller presence in Bordeaux was France was already on the visa-free travel list.*

MAYBURY: True.

*Q: So, nothing in Marseille and nothing in those other towns.*

MAYBURY: Marseille continued to issue visas during that time, but none of the APPs did.

*Q: OK. Now I imagine you have a fair amount of travel. How large was your district?*

MAYBURY: My consular district covered everything from Basque country along the Spanish border up to La Rochelle on the Atlantic coast. It also covered the Limousin and the cities of Limoges, Brive, and Tulle, as well as the Poitou-Charentes and the city of Poitiers. The cradle of French tapestry, Aubusson, was in my district. In fact, that part of France, known as the Creuse, is famous for its masons. I was told that many of the buildings in Paris were built by masons from the Creuse, which today is one of France's poorest areas. I traveled by car to various programs across the consular district at least once a month. I especially loved my visits to Basque region. In the mid-1960s, I attended summer camp in Tarnos, just north of Bayonne. One of our field trips was to St. Jean-Pied-de-Port, a lovely Basque town in the Pyrenees. The Dordogne region was another favorite. I attended a summer camp there as well, staying in the Château d'Oche in Saint- Priest-les-Fougères. I returned as a consul and spent a night in what is now a hotel. The new owners were delighted by my stay.

*Q: Just one quick question going back to the wine. Certainly, you were present to demonstrate American interest in wine. But wasn't there also a fair amount of exchange between the U.S. and the French about the safety and viruses that could affect both sides of the Atlantic.*

MAYBURY: Indeed, American phylloxera nearly devastated the French wine industry during the 1860s. Both countries share expertise on controlling the aphid-like insect, and their specialists collaborate through joint research visits. The relationships were solid, and the wine trade shows held twice a year served as a chance to reconnect. There was a new trend emerging and that was the purchase of wine chateaus by Chinese investors. I heard two different responses to this phenomenon from French contacts. Some saw it as a way to save the chateaus and vineyards while others saw it as an invasion that would lead to a loss of an essential part of French culture. The Chinese were also copying the French wine operation, right down to mimicking wine labels and the chateaus themselves – in China! There were American investors in the mix as well, men like banker Robert Wilmers, who purchased Château Haut-Bailly, and American banker Clarence Dillon, who bought Château Haut-Brion.

*Q: Were there other trade sector products that went through Bordeaux?*

MAYBURY: In addition to wines, the region was known for its spirits, especially cognac. Courvoisier's general manager at their distillery in Jarnac invited me to spend a night in the Courvoisier Hotel, an elegant palace in downtown Jarnac. He offered a tour of the distillery and then we attended Jarnac's annual Festival Cognac Blues Passions that featured some American artists. In those days, Courvoisier was owned by the Jim Beam company in Kentucky. It has since been sold to Campari.

*Q: I also meant just things related to science, technology, and medicine.*

MAYBURY: Yes, there were numerous aerospace companies in the region. Turbomeca (now known as Safran Helicopter), supplied turboshaft engines to power Sikorsky helicopters. BorgWarner supplied automotive powertrain solutions to American automobile manufacturers. Ford owned a massive transmission manufacturing plant outside Bordeaux. It was such a large investment that when the global economy experienced a downturn, the plant closed a good part of its operation and laid off a sizable part of its workforce. The labor disputes continued throughout my time in Bordeaux, and in 2019, Ford announced that the facility would close its doors due to its massive European restructuring strategy.

*Q: And other science and technology things other than aerospace?*

MAYBURY: Yes, there were medical equipment manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies with ties to the United States.

*Q: I worked in Eastern Europe for quite a while, and we were always encouraged by the ambassador to establish sister city relationships. It was agony in Eastern Europe because no American city wanted to be a sister city to cities in Romania or even Hungary. Were there such programs in Bordeaux?*

MAYBURY: Yes, there were, in Bordeaux as well as in other cities in the consular district. Bordeaux had a sister-city relationship with Los Angeles, and it was by far the most active. After I mentioned being from Los Angeles, people quickly became interested in reviving the relationship. I worked closely with the Bordeaux-USA group to plan ways to solidify the ties with Los Angeles. With the help of the city of Bordeaux, we had a city tram and a downtown walkway named after Los Angeles. I reached out to the City of Los Angeles and collaborated with them on a pair of visits by a delegation of city officials to Bordeaux. La Rochelle and New Rochelle, N.Y., had ties. Huguenot refugees, escaping religious persecution in La Rochelle in the 1680s, named New Rochelle after their former home. I should add that there were several associations in the region that promoted France-U.S. ties, including a group in Basque region that invited the consul to a Thanksgiving dinner each year and asked me to speak to the group on other occasions. There were similar groups in La Rochelle and in Arcachon. Mayors invited me to commemorate World War II events in the region, an international fireworks competition, a 9/11 memorial with local firefighters, and so much more. I was also very much in demand by universities and high schools to give lectures about the Franco-American ties of friendship and other current events, including the debate over guns.

I left a mark, literally, on the Bordeaux quai. The APP and Bordeaux City Hall had long planned to honor Dr. Martin Luther King. During my time as Consul, Mayor Alain Juppé and I jointly installed a memorial plaque on the quai and unveiled a street sign that read "Promenade Martin Luther King." This coincided with Dr. King's birthday. We led a march of city officials, civil society representatives, students, and teachers on the promenade. On the same holiday a year later, the APP joined American friendship

groups, students, teachers, and civil society organizations to remember Dr. King with a march, speeches, and a singing of the gospel song "We shall overcome." My experience in Bordeaux, including the latitude I had to promote mutual understanding between our two countries, was incredibly rewarding.

*Q: Now one last thing that I am curious about, was youth outreach including Muslim youth outreach.*

MAYBURY: Yes, I met frequently with French Muslims, including alumni of our International Visitor Leadership Program. I had very productive conversations with Muslim youth at cafés. I met with the imam of Bordeaux, Tareq Oubrou, one of the most insightful contacts during my time in Bordeaux and someone who was keen on having me meet Muslim youth at that time. I hosted a Ramadan Iftar dinner at my residence and invited the imam, several members from his mosque, and representatives from the city of Bordeaux and representatives of other faiths present in the city. We had a Moroccan comedian entertain us, we had media coverage, and a fabulous meal that the Muslim community cooked in my kitchen. I made sure that the residence had appropriate space set aside for prayers. City officials told me this was the first-ever interfaith Ramadan Iftar, perhaps in the city's history and that it would be talked about for a long time. I had hosted Ramadan Iftar dinners in Khartoum and in Abu Dhabi, but this one in Bordeaux was special because of its interfaith character.

By mid-2013, it was time to leave Bordeaux and many good friends. I was headed back to Washington and the National Defense University's Eisenhower School to get senior leadership training and obtain a master's degree in national security and resource strategy.

*Q: Resourcing the military as it changes for the new challenges ahead.*

MAYBURY: Precisely. The school taught us how to connect strategy with resource management. We learned how to apply critical thinking to strategic decision-making, assess the global security and economic environment, and develop policy options to achieve national security objectives.

*Q: In addition to required courses, you also had several possibilities for electives. What did you choose?*

MAYBURY: I chose a course about the role of senior advisers and one on armed Islamic movements. We also had to select an industry seminar that involved travel outside of Washington. I selected the environment industry. We investigated recycling, climate change, solar energy, and the intersection of military activity and the environment industry. Our class examined how munitions were disposed of properly. We traveled to Hawaii and Alaska as part of our investigation.

*Q: When you mention the disposing of munitions there is one other military aspect of the environment which is the potential for extreme weather to harm bases and harm equipment. Did you go into that at all?*

MAYBURY: It was one of the topics of discussion.

*Q: So, one quick question about your visit to Alaska. Did you also address while you were there the pros and cons of more oil exploration?*

MAYBURY: We had several presentations by Exxon representatives about the Exxon Valdez spill in Prince William Sound in 1989. We also heard from Indigenous organizations and federal government agency representatives about how future oil spills can be prevented. Unrelated to oil, we visited the Anchorage Museum and its fascinating exhibit on gyres, or plastic oceans, that threaten marine life. There is a huge gyre between Japan and the United States.

*Q: Sure, was there any discussion of mitigation of that? Were there any talks or efforts?*

MAYBURY: There needs to be a greater effort to stop the dumping of plastics and other waste in the ocean. This can be done by developing more biodegradable materials, educating the public around the Pacific Ocean, and enforcing laws being violated by fishing boats and other vessels.

*Q: Were there any other major takeaways from your time at the Eisenhower School.*

MAYBURY: Guest speakers such as Colin Powell, Brent Scowcroft, and senior Pentagon officials gave inspiring speeches about leadership and the challenges facing the national security establishment. The National Defense University programs are fundamentally leadership training opportunities. One theme running through these presentations was the importance of humility in leadership.

*Q: All right then, the other thing that happens nearly at the time you arrive at the Eisenhower School is that you enter the bidding cycle. What did you foresee as a follow-on to these studies?*

MAYBURY: A leadership position in the Department, but I also bid on deputy chief of mission positions. I thought the bidding process would be easier for me given the Eisenhower School experience. I thought there should be a formal linkage between National Defense University assignments and onward assignments.

*Q: Just a quick word about that. I was in the same position in 2008-09 when I was there. The expectation was that you would take a tour in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Pakistan. Not all of the Foreign Service Officers who were part of my cohort that year did choose to work in those countries. How did it work out for you?*

MAYBURY: I graduated without knowing my onward assignment. I was placed on over-complement in the Africa bureau and waited several weeks for a decision on a couple of deputy chief of mission assignments. One day, I was asked to join a meeting the director for Central African Affairs was having in her office. I quickly learned that it was

about reopening our embassy in Bangui, Central African Republic (CAR). I was introduced to David Brown who had been selected to go out as Chargé. I was asked to consider being deputy chief of mission. I went home, talked about the opportunity with family, and returned to the office the next morning to accept the assignment. Bangui had been closed for twenty months because of civil conflict. My previous experience in Africa, French fluency, and leadership experience, including the Eisenhower School, made me a perfect candidate. The bureau registered me for the deputy chief of mission training, and I headed to Bangui in early September 2014.

*Q: OK so just a quick question. I assume you are going out as DCM without your family.*

MAYBURY: Right. Danger posts are unaccompanied.

*Q: And then the other question is you are going out to reopen an embassy. Do we still have the embassy building?*

MAYBURY: Locally employed staff maintained the compound, often risking their lives traveling between their homes and the compound. Our team came in, cleared out the pigeons that infested the place, set up equipment, and officially reopened the mission.

*Q: Before you went or as soon as you arrived, were they making new security fixes to protect the building?*

MAYBURY: The compound did not meet the latest security standards. There was an urgent need for concertina wire, surveillance cameras, and other security infrastructure. A Marine Expeditionary Unit based in Rota, Spain, took positions along the perimeter walls. The Regional Security Officer and his team established an elaborate operations center with impressive communications capabilities.

*Q: Now when you say perimeter security what did that entail? Was it sandbags, or actual walls? What did they do?*

MAYBURY: The Marines occupied reinforced towers from where they could monitor the surrounding streets and buildings. The exterior of the compound resembled a military installation, but the interior had the flavor of an embassy compound with offices, a few residential bungalows, a motor pool, and a large courtyard. The Marines occupied the public diplomacy section meeting room.

*Q: Did they stay for a while?*

MAYBURY: About four months. They were replaced by more than a dozen American security contractors, several of whom had recent military or security experience in Iraq and Afghanistan.

*Q: Now when you arrived, how large was the embassy in terms of personnel?*

MAYBURY: We had the Chargé, me as deputy chief of mission, a management officer, a general services officer, a facilities manager, three regional security officers, and two communicators. I was also the political officer, economic officer, public diplomacy officer, and consular officer, and I had support from about six locally employed staff spread across those sections. We had two USAID officers visit post every few months, but they relied on a local employee who covered both the USAID and consular portfolios. We performed limited consular functions.

*Q: You're in the center of Africa; how did they get you what you needed? Upgrades and so on.*

MAYBURY: There were two ways that supplies reached us. By commercial air and by road from Cameroon. Our embassy in Cameroon deployed a team of general service office specialists to help us install generators and perform essential repairs and maintenance. Our initial flight to Bangui left Andrews Air Force Base with quantities of supplies. We stopped in Cameroon to load more supplies. This was a re-purposed Boeing 747 chartered from Kalitta Air. We had hundreds of Meal, Ready-to-Eat (MRE) packages to sustain us for the first month while a cafeteria was built. Supplies also reached us via Air France. The truck route from Cameroon was iffy because of occasional threats by armed militia groups.

*Q: How safe was that?*

MAYBURY: We took the precaution of traveling in convoys with other trucks.

*Q: So, a relatively small staff. Did you have secure communications? How easily could you get communications to Washington or other embassies in the area?*

MAYBURY: In my estimation, we had a strong communications capability given our isolated situation. We had dependable high-side communication for our reporting purposes. The French military and UN peacekeeping contingent rivaled our communications capability, but we had what we needed.

*Q: High side means secure communication.*

MAYBURY: Yes, where one can send encoded messages at the confidential or secret level. I think to the State Department's credit they equipped us well. The technology was there, and we relied on it to get out our messages. We wrote a lot.

*Q: Then you arrived there and before you describe your basic responsibilities what were the general mission goals?*

MAYBURY: We wanted all the stakeholders to know that the United States was back in Bangui. We set about joining meetings with the other international and regional partners, and schedule meetings with government officials and the various political factions. The key mission goal was to help restore stability to Central African Republic.

*Q: Were there principally two political adversaries or was it fractured?*

MAYBURY: There were two principal adversaries, the mostly Muslim Ex-Séléka and the predominantly Christian Anti-balaka. Both sides committed atrocities, but the U.S. and others were not persuaded this was a religious war. The political leaders of these two groups were outside the country. Some of our Central African interlocutors told us that Muslims and Christians have lived side-by-side for decades and accused politicians of dividing the two communities. Efforts at finding solutions usually took place in neighboring countries.

*Q: Speaking about solutions, you mentioned the major players. How did you all work together? Was it useful?*

MAYBURY: We had regular meetings with the international community. The UN had a sizable peacekeeping mission as did the African Union and the French military. After the international community meetings, representatives would head to CAR President Catherine Samba Panza's residence to provide updates and get her latest take on the political and security situation. We also met with the legislature and civil society representatives, the CAR military and gendarmerie, and with other diplomatic missions. In addition, we met with different militia groups, each keen to demonstrate that they had popular support in particular regions of CAR. When the armed groups came to the embassy for meetings, we asked that they leave their weapons outside the compound. The French embassy had a vastly different posture than ours. Their diplomats drove around in their own vehicles whereas we did leave our compound without a significant security detail. The French school continued to operate and there were excellent French restaurants catering primarily to expatriates. The Russian embassy had a small footprint, and we rarely interacted with them.

*Q: So, you lived on the embassy compound.*

MAYBURY: When our small team first arrived in September 2014, Chargé David Brown and I settled in one of the one-bedroom bungalows on the embassy compound. The management officer chose to camp out in his office inside the chancery. By Christmas, we received approval to move into the Chief of Mission Residence, located a mile from the embassy. The Chargé, Regional Security Officer, and I moved to the CMR, and our quality of life immediately changed for the better. Everyone else continued to live in the bungalows on the compound. We still ate most of our meals in the cafeteria, which we had built in a couple of months and staffed by a contracting company. Sometime in October or November, the French military mission Sangaris and our embassy exchanged some of our respective MREs because we had grown tired of the same menu. The French loved some of the uniquely American foods and we loved the French cuisine.

*Q: Right. In looking at the territory of the Central African Republic, was some of it possessed by one of the combatants and other combatants, in other words, what was the nature of the civil war?*

MAYBURY: Yes, it was in part a territorial conflict fought by the various factions of the Anti-balaka and Ex-Séléka. When we traveled outside of Bangui, we gave advanced notice to the French, the CAR government, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and the armed groups. We did this to avoid any incidents. Amid this civil conflict, CAR troops and troops from neighboring Uganda were searching for Joseph Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army who were believed to be hiding out along the borders of CAR, Uganda, and Sudan. In the northwest of CAR, there were periodic reports of raids of Boko Haram elements based in northern Cameroon and Nigeria.

*Q: Now the government you were in touch with in Bangui, did we more or less believe it was legitimate or what status did we give it?*

MAYBURY: It was a legitimate, elected government. We participated in election monitoring.

*Q: Roughly how much of the Central African Republic did the central government control?*

MAYBURY: The central government relied on international peacekeeping forces to control the territory. The French and MINUSCA had helicopters and armored vehicles to deploy troops to various parts of the country. The capital was well defended by a combination of forces that included the CAR military.

*Q: Now were any of the bordering nations a player?*

MAYBURY: They were because most hosted CAR refugees and some hosted the principal adversaries in the conflict.

*Q: Given the fact that you have studied environmental degradation, was that also an issue in the lives of the people?*

MAYBURY: CAR had tremendous natural resources. Forests were exploited for their woods, including valuable hard woods. These were trucked out of the country rather than processed in lumber mills inside CAR. The forestry industry was not properly regulated.

*Q: Then since you were only there for a year, what did you see that was encouraging and allowing the displaced to return?*

MAYBURY: The CAR government and civil society had a singular focus to restore stability and experience true self-determination without outside actors dictating terms. Most Central Africans wanted to end the conflict and reconstruct the country. Some turned against outside peacekeeping forces, especially when allegations surfaced of sexual abuse of CAR women in camps established to protect internally displaced persons. Central Africans wanted justice for war crimes and that meant asking international

partners for assistance to set up courts and train prosecutors. Faith leaders played a significant role in speaking out against further violence. The heads of the Protestant, Catholic, and Muslim faiths traveled abroad to call attention to the CAR crisis, and they campaigned within CAR to urge calm and community harmony.

*Q: You mentioned that you were also in charge of USAID. I imagine we didn't have any actual programs or projects going on while you were there.*

MAYBURY: Right.

*Q: What would we be doing if we could introduce some aid there?*

MAYBURY: Kinshasa-based USAID officers traveled to Bangui on several occasions to explore potential projects related to agriculture, health care, and democracy and governance. USAID and Peace Corps would have had significant missions in CAR before the violence made their presence untenable.

*Q: Now before your departure, did Washington send any additional Foreign Service Officers?*

MAYBURY: We had some temporary duty officers for a few weeks at a time to assist with conflict stabilization and human rights issues.

*Q: Sure. Was there anything else I missed in your responsibilities and the things you carried out?*

MAYBURY: CAR attracted Washington attention. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield visited to meet with CAR leadership and representatives of civil society, but also to see firsthand the progress in restoring the mission. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice Stephen Rapp met with interlocutors seeking United States assistance in establishing a Special Penal Court. U.S. Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power used a visit of the UN Security Council to Bangui to conduct meetings with stakeholders and speak with the CAR press. We would take some of these visitors to sites of massacres, including churches where we would all fall silent at the sight of bullet holes in the sanctuary walls.

On the public diplomacy front, I oversaw the distribution of thousands of textbooks to universities and schools that had few if any books on their library shelves. We successfully nominated a Women of Courage candidate, Beatrice Epaye, and we identified deserving exchange program candidates and sent them on programs in the United States to help build up their experience and networks. Our team made significant improvements to the post's housing situation by identifying residential leases that would permit the next group of diplomats to live off the embassy compound.

*Q: All right, with your assignment only being one year, who are you talking to about your next assignment and how is that going to be determined?*

MAYBURY: With a good taste of what it's like to be a deputy chief of mission, I lobbied for another deputy position. One of the exciting opportunities was in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. I made my case with our ambassador there, Walter North, who told me that Papua New Guinea's challenges were like those I would have encountered in my hardship assignments in Africa. I made little effort to lobby on other assignments.

*Q: Now that assignment allowed your family to accompany you, but did they want to?*

MAYBURY: Yes, they did. There were employment opportunities for family members and good school options.

*Q: OK, so before you went on to Papua New Guinea, did you have consultations? Did you have any training?*

MAYBURY: Just consultations. I could have taken a regional studies course covering Asia and the Pacific, but I was told that it would have limited applicability to Papua New Guinea. During my tour in Port Moresby, there were issues involving the South Pacific's role in broader developments across Asia. Washington wanted us to keep close tabs on China's expansion in the South Pacific, and Papua New Guinea was preparing to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in 2018. My consultations more than made up for any classroom training. On the way to post, I stopped in Honolulu for meetings with the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), the Defense POW/MIA, and the East-West Center think tank.

*Q: Take one second and explain what APEC is.*

MAYBURY: APEC consists of twenty-one member economies in the Pacific region. The organization promotes free trade and investment, sustainable growth, and economic cooperation among its members. New Guinea had never hosted the annual summit. They sought our advice and security support, particularly when the newly elected Trump Administration sent signals that the president was likely to attend.

*Q: So, with this explanation of putting together the APEC summit I can understand how it would be a top concern, but let's go back just for a moment when you arrived. Can you just describe the American presence there? In other words, there is an embassy but the other U.S. government elements as well.*

MAYBURY: Yes. The U.S. embassy had approximately fifty U.S. direct-hire officers representing the State Department, USAID, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Department of Defense. Our Defense Attaché was stationed in Fiji. We also had a sizable Peace Corps presence in Vanuatu, and a consular office in the Solomon Islands. Thus, our Embassy in Papua New Guinea also covered the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

*Q: I can't recall. Did the APEC occur with Trump going?*

MAYBURY: It happened after I left. Vice President Pence is the one who went.

*Q: That is my recollection also. I don't think President Trump went. Now if it had been held in Manila, there would be a better chance that Trump went.*

MAYBURY: In my estimation, Papua New Guinea made a solid effort to prepare for a visit by the U.S. president. To make up for the lack of hotel space in Port Moresby, they leased cruise ships to accommodate overflow guests at the harbor. They went as far as exploring the possibility of having some aircraft overnight in nearby Australian cities to avoid overcrowding the tarmac at the Port Moresby airport.

*Q: Ok so there is a lot going on for you In Papua New Guinea. Were there other security concerns? Also, transnational crime.*

MAYBURY: Carjacking was the biggest threat. Robberies and break-ins were a concern as well. We were advised to be extremely vigilant, night and day. Sexual- and gender-based violence was a major concern in Papua New Guinea, especially in local communities. Our locally employed staff told horror stories that affected loved ones, and sometimes themselves. We addressed this crime in our conversations with government officials, civil society, and in the media. We hosted an annual women's forum to bring women together to discuss what the government and community's response needed to be.

*Q: You had introduced some of the basic things you were doing but you concentrated on the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation preparation. So, can we just go back since you are deputy chief of mission? How did you and the ambassador divide the responsibilities?*

MAYBURY: Ambassador North departed post less than six months after I arrived. His successor was Catherine Ebert-Gray. Both wanted me to make sure the trains were running on time. I directly supervised the management officer, consular chief, political and economic officer, and the regional security officer, but I also closely monitored progress on the new embassy compound. The ambassador directly supervised USAID and CDC. With the APEC summit approaching, the ambassador relied on my contacts in the government and at the Australian Embassy to keep her informed with preparations. As important as APEC preparations were, I could not afford to take my eyes off the new embassy compound project. This project had been repeatedly delayed after its groundbreaking in 2012, but a new project manager from the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations was a strong leader who was making important inroads. It finally opened in 2022.

*Q: Yes, absolutely. Anybody in that situation has an understanding of that. We went through that in Hungary. It was years of blueprints and changes. I left long before they began building it.*

MAYBURY: This is a good example of why the ambassador wants to place full trust in a deputy chief of mission. Some say a good deputy is the chief of mission's alter ego. If

you are effective in that role, you will have a better chance of succeeding as a chargé d'affaires when the ambassador is absent from post.

*Q: Sure. So that is sort of the division of how you worked with the ambassador and how you worked with APEC. Were there other key activities that stand out in your mind?*

MAYBURY: Election monitoring was fascinating. I remember flying to a rural district and observing polling places in remote forest locations. Some of the voters reached the polling site after walking from their villages overnight. I was impressed by the sacrifices people made to take part in this democratic exercise.

One of our government's major policy priorities in the South Pacific was to rein in the People's Republic of China (PRC), which then and now is increasing its political, economic, and strategic influence in the region. We viewed their investments, security cooperation arrangements, and diplomatic activities in the South Pacific as a challenge to our interests. Our "One China" policy recognizes the PRC as the sole legal government of China, while maintaining unofficial relations with Taiwan. We met with Chinese diplomats on a regular basis, sometimes at Chinese restaurants, sometimes in our respective chanceries, sometimes in our homes, and our discussions were frank.

*Q: You mentioned gender-based violence. I don't know if that also included human trafficking and that kind of thing. Is there something more to say about that kind of thing? You had mentioned it in passing but I am wondering if there was a large embassy activity related to that.*

MAYBURY: The Women's Forum drew participants from across Papua New Guinea. The other diplomatic missions collaborated because they also prioritized preventing this form of violence. The forum explored what community institutions needed to play a larger role, including churches and men's organizations. In fact, a men's organization whose membership included former perpetrators of gender-based violence talked about how it trained Papua New Guinean men to respect the women in their communities. Papua New Guinea's leaders acknowledged that it was time that the country no longer have the highest incidence of gender-based violence in the world.

*Q: Absolutely not because you know it may have an effect on tourism or a whole range of relations.*

MAYBURY: That was not a reputation the country wanted.

*Q: Yeah absolutely. Are there other issues with trans-national crime?*

MAYBURY: There were reports of individuals from Southeast Asia who were found on fishing boats working in deplorable conditions, but such human trafficking was challenging to prevent without a coast guard. There were also concerns with labor practices in the vicinity of large mining operations.

*Q: The only other formal question I have is: Within the country, was there political stability or was that also a concern of the embassy?*

MAYBURY: There was political stability in the three countries in Embassy Port Moresby's district – Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. In neighboring West Papua, a region of Indonesia, there were calls for independence by the Free Papua Movement, but that had negligible effect in Port Moresby.

In Papua New Guinea, the political opposition tried hard to make the prime minister and his ruling coalition's life difficult, with allegations of corruption often being reported in the media. We urged the government to hold free and fair elections. We could have offered more assistance, but we would have needed to request that assistance months earlier. There is a lesson there for embassies seeking to support election operations. You need to understand how funding cycles work in Washington and ask far in advance. The other source of tension within the country was intertribal in nature and frequently was triggered by a land dispute.

In the Solomon Islands, the government was in the process of restoring stability after a bloody civil war from 1998 to 2003 between the Indigenous Guadalcanal islanders and the Malaita Eagle Force representing Malaita Island settlers. An Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands helped restore law and order. In Vanuatu, the situation was stable, a condition that made it possible for dozens of Peace Corps volunteers to serve across the archipelago.

*Q: Are there any other things that I forgot to ask you about that were important during that tour?*

MAYBURY: The South Pacific figured prominently in the Second World War. Let's talk about three things here. One is that wars leave unpleasant legacies. The war left unexploded ordnance on land and at sea. The ordnance still injures and kills residents. On the island of Guadalcanal, site of major battles between U.S. and Japanese forces, a U.S. entity was working with the Solomon Islands to detect and remove unexploded ordnance. Separately, each year, there were ceremonies at the monuments established by the Japanese and the United States to commemorate the many who lost their lives in the war. The other activity that was especially important for our embassy was the work undertaken by the Department of Defense's POW-MIA Accounting Agency. They are based in Honolulu, but their work takes place across the globe where U.S. servicemembers disappeared during the Second World War. Teams from this agency investigate reports of sightings of sunken vessels and aircraft, and downed aircraft. They inspect a site to verify remains or artifacts and establish nationality. Any human remains are removed from the site and returned to the agency's laboratory for possible identification. The agency has successfully reunited missing family members decades after the war ended. The embassy helped the agency operate in three countries and joined the repatriation ceremony. As of 1973, 73,684 Americans were missing. Thanks to the work of the agency, 1,845 have been accounted for, but 71,839 remain unaccounted for. Funding for this agency should never cease. While I was in Papua New Guinea, I

proposed that there be more cooperation between the United States and Japan. Both countries have agencies responsible for locating and identifying remains of their respective service members. I hope that cooperation is taking place today. I can still remember the stories of how villagers would find an aircraft that had crashed in the dense forest canopy and alerted authorities. The agency would send a team to investigate, locate the aircraft, and scour the surrounding area for anything that might be related to the incident that had taken place in the 1940s. And they would come across evidence.

*Q: The remains!*

MAYBURY: Right. It might be a piece of a uniform with a name on it, dog tags, or skeletal remains. Occasionally, aircraft crashed into the sea and were found underwater. Sometimes, the remains of multiple individuals were found who had been on the aircraft. I remember well the repatriation ceremonies at the airport, watching coffins draped in United States flags being placed inside military transport planes bound for Honolulu. It was very moving.

*Q: I imagine it was a bittersweet moment.*

MAYBURY: I got emotional. My father was a WWII veteran who saw action in Okinawa. He survived but he knew soldiers who did not.

*Q: Your family is with you. What kind of discussions or considerations did you have when deciding about the next post?*

MAYBURY: That it was time to seek a leadership position in Washington. I had not served in Washington since I was the desk officer for Algeria. I looked at regional and functional bureaus. While there were advantages to serving in a geographic bureau, such as having better access to information about personnel changes and ambassadorial openings at embassies, there were terrific opportunities within functional bureaus. The way I saw it, it was important to excel in what you did regardless of the portfolio. In a Foreign Service career, positions with leadership responsibilities abound, but you do have to demonstrate leadership and management competencies, and you do have to compete with others who are accumulating those same skills.

*Q: How did that turn out?*

MAYBURY: Well, I ended up interviewing with both types of bureaus for office director and deputy director positions, on the advice of mentors and based on my experience as a deputy chief of mission. The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons was looking for a Foreign Service Officer to serve as deputy director reporting to a more senior Civil Service deputy director. Both roles were accountable to the ambassador-at-large, who was a political appointee. There were approximately sixty of us in the office, a healthy mix of Foreign Service, Civil Service, and contractors. The office was responsible for producing the congressionally mandated annual Trafficking in Persons Report and for organizing the annual Trafficking in Persons Report Heroes

ceremony. I had held the human trafficking portfolio as a political officer and was familiar with the issue.

*Q: Before we continue with your career postings, I think this is a good moment to pause and reflect on how you reached the Senior Foreign Service. In general, what were the skills and talents you acquired, what kind of awards increased your visibility as an officer ready for senior assignments, and so on.*

MAYBURY: The Foreign Service precepts were an essential guide for officers wanting to develop their skills and position themselves for advancement. These skills included leadership, management, communication, interpersonal, substantive knowledge, and community service and institution building. These changed every few years. Performance appraisals required rating officers to assess performance in each of these areas. I acquired considerable leadership and management skills in each of my assignments, and I selected assignments based on the opportunities they would give me to demonstrate those skills. I also developed my communication skills quite a bit. Writing cables for the State Department is quite different from writing newspaper articles. Giving concise briefings to senior diplomats and to visiting delegations is a specialized skill. I was grateful to learn more about interpersonal skills because it helped me be a better leader and to manage crises in the office. As far as awards go, I won several Superior Honor and Meritorious Honor awards at different assignments. These awards recognize a variety of achievements, but for me, I appreciated them because they usually came at the tail end of an assignment and were an affirmation that I had accomplished my job objectives, which included advancing our foreign policy objectives.

*Q: So, based on what you just said, is there an example you could give for when your accomplishments were well documented and helped in your promotion?*

MAYBURY: My supervisors observed my strong leadership and management skills, and they assessed that I was on the path to attaining the highest levels of the Foreign Service. They documented instances when I had to take tough decisions that were not always popular. My decisions resulted in better outcomes for the mission and for staff morale. They noted that I excelled at communicating with colleagues, and how I was able to get staff buy-in for my initiatives. My performance evaluations consistently talked about my fairness, my open-door policy, my inclusiveness, and my support for first- and second-tour officers.

*Q: To return to one other aspect of promotion. Did you receive an award that particularly demonstrated you were either working above your grade or accomplished something else that brought you to the attention of people who decide promotion to the senior service.*

MAYBURY: The award for which I am most proud is a Secretary's Award for Public Outreach that Ambassador Michele Sison and Deputy Chief of Mission Martin Quinn nominated me for in Abu Dhabi for my reporting and contact work on the different Muslim groups in the United Arab Emirates. The award was announced in late 2006, after I had transferred from Abu Dhabi to Khartoum, and I recall asking my parents to

accept the award on my behalf at a ceremony at the State Department because I was very busy with my public diplomacy portfolio in Sudan. While I regret not being there in person, it was a way to honor my parents for steering me in the right direction and influencing my career path.

Embassy leadership recognized me for taking the initiative to meet with UAE government officials, clerics, scholars, and civil society organizations to learn about the UAE's practice of promoting moderate Islam in the mosques. There were moderate, conservative, and extremist ideologies in the region, and these differences had led to deepening tension and conflict. The UAE distanced itself from ideologies that could lead to instability, and instead the government produced a system to ensure that all mosques would adhere to the same theme in their sermons. An interministerial committee reached a consensus about the sermon text each week, and then the government would check that mosques did not deviate from the theme. The United States government was keen to promote moderate voices in the Muslim world, so my reporting stood out for policy makers. One of my interlocutors was a prominent cleric who was a gifted speaker and a positive influence in several countries. He and I had a lengthy conversation at the home of a mutual contact in a Dubai suburb one evening. It was a privilege to hear him speak so eloquently – in Arabic, I might add – about the immense challenge of messaging to the Arab street.

*Q: Yes, and you could write that up as an example of someone very influential who is part of your network with whom you consult regularly with the interest of the embassy at heart and influence. A major influencer.*

MAYBURY: He was. I have no doubt he had access to the UAE government leadership and the leadership of several other countries.

*Q: Once you have accomplished it, you report it to Washington, but other embassies in the region also see reports. When they do, it is likely that either the ambassador or heads of political sections will say, "Holy cow, this guy is really on top of this. Can my section do the same?" When that happens, you demonstrate a major accomplishment in your own embassy, but one that is emulated throughout the region. That is typically the basis of an award.*

MAYBURY: I agree. I would like to think that other embassies made similar inquiries or had similar conversations with clerics and government officials concerned about extremism.

*Q: Cool. Now, just a quick check at this point, you have not been promoted to Senior Foreign Service yet?*

MAYBURY: That's correct.

*Q: Okay, all right. Let's go ahead with the organization of the office and your responsibilities.*

MAYBURY: The office had four divisions: Reports and Political Affairs, International Programs, Public Engagement, and Resource Management and Planning. Reports and Public Affairs staff did the research and writing for the annual Trafficking in Persons Report. Embassy reporting officers, usually in the political section, collected data in the field to send to this division. International Programs made decisions about the distribution of foreign assistance to organizations and governments in various parts of the world. Public Engagement played a key role in not only publicizing the office's activities, but also maintaining ties with survivor organizations, the White House task force, and other advocacy groups. Public Engagement also prepared the annual report's chapter about human traffic activities in the United States. That chapter lent credibility to the overall report because it made clear that we were not immune to human trafficking and we also had to make efforts to prevent it, protect potential victims, and prosecute those committing human trafficking crimes. Resource Management and Planning provided management support to the entire office. I directly supervised the division chiefs for International Programs and Resource Management and Planning. In the absence of John Richmond, the ambassador-at-large, and Kari Johnstone, the senior deputy director, I served as the acting office director.

*Q: How many reported to you and what were their general responsibilities?*

MAYBURY: Approximately twenty staff. International Programs recommended how our foreign assistance should be spent. They analyzed the performance of potential and existing recipients to determine if our taxpayer dollars were well spent on anti-trafficking projects that addressed both sex and labor trafficking. They issued grants and then monitored their progress. Recipients included UN agencies like the International Organization for Migration, institutions of higher education, private sector organizations, and U.S.-based and foreign-based non-governmental organizations. They also provided technical assistance to award recipients, and they managed an emergency victim assistance program. Resource Management and Planning was responsible for strategic planning, budget formulation, and execution of foreign assistance and state operations resources.

*Q: About the Trafficking in Persons Report, I think a lot of people outside the Department may not know the criteria we use to determine how well or how poorly countries are doing in preventing, interdicting, and punishing traffickers. Can you take a moment to describe how we judge the effectiveness of countries?*

MAYBURY: Let me begin by correcting a common misperception about human trafficking, or what is also referred to as modern slavery. Human trafficking does not have to involve people crossing an international border. Quite often, it takes place within borders, and the United States is no exception. The United Nations' Palermo Protocol is a helpful place to start as it provides the first internationally recognized definition of human trafficking and aims to prevent and punish it while protecting victims. The United States ranks countries for their compliance with the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) for eliminating human trafficking. We look at their efforts to prevent,

protect, and prosecute (the three Ps). We place a government on Tier 1 if it is in full compliance with the TVPA. If a government is making significant efforts, but does not meet the TVPA's minimum standards, we place it on Tier 2. If a government fails to meet the minimum standards, but is making significant efforts, we place it on Tier 2 Watch List, if certain other conditions exist, such as the government fails to show increased anti-trafficking efforts compared to the previous year. If a government fails to make efforts, we place it on Tier 3. Governments can rise and fall on our ranking system depending on the number of resources they commit to their anti-trafficking efforts. Those resources vary from country to country. Some can fund prevention campaigns but do little to protect victims or prosecute perpetrators. A government that has made little or no effort year after year and then successfully prosecutes one or two cases may get favorable consideration or an upgrade from Tier 3 to Tier 2 Watch List. These are often hotly debated issues within the office, but in the end, office leadership reaches a consensus. I remember governments pleading with our office and with the overseas embassy to keep them off Tier 3 for fear of losing foreign assistance and to avoid a bad reputation. Sometimes, the office in Washington and the embassy disagreed on the rankings. If we adhered to the TVPA to justify our decisions, we ended up in a better place, but some foreign governments disliked the United States playing the role of a global police officer in the fight against human trafficking. In my experience, we rewarded governments that made significant efforts to prosecute trafficking perpetrators, even if their protection and prevention efforts were significantly weaker.

*Q: As you're talking about making all these judgments at the various levels of cooperation, are there other agencies in the federal government that cooperate with you, and what would be the nature of that cooperation?*

MAYBURY: You might be surprised to hear that several federal agencies help in the fight against human trafficking. The Defense Department trains its personnel to recognize signs and indicators of human trafficking both domestically and abroad. The Department of Labor enforces labor protections, assists survivors, and monitors trafficking internationally. The Department of Health and Human Services funds support services, strengthens prevention services, and operates the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

*Q: Just quickly on a couple of other agencies. I wonder about DHS [Department of Homeland Security] and FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation]?*

MAYBURY: Well, absolutely. DHS uses its criminal, immigration, and trade authorities to identify, disrupt, and dismantle human trafficking organizations. Its Blue Campaign educates the public about human trafficking and how to recognize and report it. The FBI operates its own task forces in most of its field offices, which work to recover victims and investigate traffickers. Every year, the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, a cabinet level entity created by the TVPA, met so that each agency could provide progress reports.

*Q: To move a little out, does Congress also involve itself? How did you interact with them?*

MAYBURY: Congress plays a fundamental role in all of this because they mandate that an annual report be prepared every year. There were anti-trafficking champions on both sides of the aisle, individuals who would listen to our office and Department of State leadership when we went to the Hill to request additional resources.

*Q: Now you also mentioned that part of your responsibilities in the office is the conduct of public affairs. Does the State Department use its travel advisories also as a tool to warn Americans about the dangers of traveling to certain countries with regard to human trafficking?*

MAYBURY: Embassies and the Bureau of Consular Affairs have a duty to warn travelers if there is a significant risk of human trafficking. There is another side to this, which is that a tourist in another country could enable sex trafficking.

*Q: And certainly, buying products from locations where children are in forced labor.*

MAYBURY: Certainly, a travel warning or travel advisory might cover that as well.

*Q: Can you, without giving away sources and methods, give an example of a successful effort in maybe breaking up a trafficking ring, or preventing it? Some practical examples.*

MAYBURY: I already discussed the tremendous international campaign that pressured the UAE government to end the harmful practice of using child camel jockeys. That was part of my portfolio in Abu Dhabi, and I would have collaborated with the anti-trafficking office in Washington. Eleven years later, as a deputy director of that same office, I traveled to Italy, Sudan, Ghana, Israel, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Peru to encourage each of their governments to step up their anti-trafficking efforts. Some governments committed more resources than others. The nature of the trafficking varied, from domestic worker exploitation in the Arabian Gulf to organized criminal groups in Italy. I met with prosecutors, legislators, law enforcement, civil society entities, diplomats of sending countries, media representatives, and survivors. My visits were part of an ongoing campaign at the embassy and Department level, often in coordination with governments of other countries and international organizations, to combat modern slavery. I have no doubt that our tax dollars were being put to effective use. Sex and labor trafficking survivors I met in Khartoum, Tel Aviv, Palermo, and Kuwait expressed their gratitude to the United States delegation for our ongoing commitment.

*Q: The international agencies you mentioned, UN [United Nations] and International Organization for Migration and so on. Was our cooperation with them fruitful?*

MAYBURY: It was extremely fruitful. They had the expertise that governments lacked. We committed a generous percentage of our foreign assistance to UN agencies because they had a good track record and countries often preferred working with them instead of with local non-governmental organizations. The size of some of our grants was large enough that we assessed that it was wiser to select a UN agency than a smaller organization that had not managed a considerable sum of money before.

*Q: That concludes my formal questions, but I imagine there are other aspects to the job that I haven't asked you about, so I'm giving the floor to you.*

MAYBURY: I admired the courage of human trafficking survivors. They wanted a seat at the table where they could influence how the government responds to trafficking. Some voluntarily told their stories to the media. They believed their experiences would raise public awareness and prevent others from being targeted. Their insights were valuable to policymakers. In the United States, survivor groups are active and effective. When I traveled abroad, I recommended governments to help create opportunities for survivors to contribute to fighting this crime.

*Q: If that sums up your major activities, could you speak to the takeaways from this position? You mentioned learning expressions, learning how to understand the work you do through the eyes of victims and so on. Were there any other professional abilities, skills, or talents you acquired there that were valuable for you later on?*

MAYBURY: Serving in Washington in a senior leadership position exposes you to the complex policymaking process and gives you a heavy dose of personnel management. I was sometimes called upon to attend very senior meetings chaired by the Secretary of State or the Executive Director. When I had a matter to raise with the principals, I would be as concise as possible. In settings like these, you quickly learn what the policy priorities are.

*Q: Right. Absolutely. Then the other part of working in Washington is just getting known and seen by a wide variety of people who may be thinking about you, possibly for a follow-on job.*

MAYBURY: This is exactly what happened and why I got the follow-on job that I did. Pam Pryor, a senior political appointee in the office of the under secretary for civilian security, democracy, and human rights observed my leadership and communication style over a series of meetings. When she learned that I was going to be available at the end of my tour in the Office of Trafficking in Persons, she persuaded me to bid on the position of operations director in the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues. The position did not have an active bidder and the incumbent's tour was about to end. The operations director was the equivalent of a deputy director. In this case, I would be heading the

office until Ambassador-at-large Kelley Eckels Currie could be confirmed. There was no other active bidder. The person who had urged me to apply knew there might be blowback for having a man head the office, but she was convinced that I was an ally on women's issues and had the necessary leadership credentials. I was thrilled.

*Q: You will arrive in the Bureau of Global Women's Issues in 2019. Can you talk about what the office is, how large, and its responsibilities?*

MAYBURY: It was unique. We advised the Secretary of State and Department leadership on issues related to women and girls – political and economic empowerment; women, peace, and security; and women in leadership. The Department of Health and Human Services was responsible for sexual and reproductive health. We had regular consultations with other federal agencies, to include the Department of Defense, and we collected data to produce the U.S. Women, Peace, and Security Congressional Report that discussed the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Strategy. Our office was responsible for planning and executing the annual International Women of Courage Awards ceremony, one of the State Department's most prestigious awards. I was familiar with this award having played a role in the nomination of a deserving candidate from the Central African Republic: Beatrice Epaye. She was a politician and an educator who oversaw a home for street children during her country's civil war. She was targeted and assaulted for her political engagement. Speaking of the courage award, when I served in Liberia a few years later, the post successfully nominated activist Facia Boyenoh Harris for her work combating gender-based violence. It was the first time a Liberian had been selected for this prestigious international award, and I am quite certain that my experience with the nomination and selection process had something to do with it. It is something of which I am enormously proud.

*Q: Did your office have funding to make grants to organizations, to carry some of these objectives?*

MAYBURY: Absolutely. We had the Women's Global Development and Prosperity initiative that funded projects that aimed to increase women's participation in the economy and leadership. For example, we used funds to reduce economic and legal barriers for women entrepreneurs.

*Q: Along those lines, money and grants and so on, does your work overlap with USAID [United States Agency for International Development], because some of the projects they do are also intended to empower women?*

MAYBURY: Yes, there was overlap, but there was consultation to ensure we did not duplicate efforts.

*Q: Now, also, while you're there, you take on supervisory responsibilities with several people. As you do, how does your supervisory approach change or what lessons from previous roles are useful for you in this position?*

MAYBURY: The Office of Global Women's Issues was about fifty strong. One of the challenges I had was to balance staffing and space needs. I couldn't do it alone. Decisions such as those require close consultation with a variety of offices, especially the Executive Secretary's management office. While in the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, I learned which offices to contact about an office move. That knowledge helped with the move that we ended up making with the Office of Global Women's Issues. The other lesson I took away from the previous move was to keep a pulse on staff morale. It was hard to make everyone happy, but that is a leadership challenge. Among the issues I remember, there was resistance from supervisors who did not want to be far from the staff who reported to them, and there were staff who felt they were deserving of window seats because of their seniority. With COVID, I had to manage the pressure from senior executives to have more staff come into the office. Staff pushed back for a variety of reasons. Everyone who worked virtually was able to maintain the same level of productivity or increased their productivity. But some could not find suitable childcare for their children when childcare operators shut down, and they could not commit to returning to the office until the pandemic was over. One of the unusual issues I had to grapple with was an air quality problem that was making some staff sick. By this time in my career, I had developed a resourcefulness that helped find solutions. In this case, I found the office responsible for air quality testing and mitigation that addressed our problem.

*Q: That concludes my formal questions, but are there other aspects of the work there that you want to highlight?*

MAYBURY: A few things are worth highlighting. One of them was our participation in meetings during the UN General Assembly in New York, and at an APEC meeting in Serena, Chile. It was an honor to represent the United States at these fora, and to meet gender equality advocates from around the world. In New York, I met the president of Niger while waiting for the elevator at our hotel. When he learned of my portfolio, he arranged for a meeting with his spouse, a champion for women's rights. The networking opportunities were tremendous. At the APEC conference, I remember having to fill in as a panelist for the White House representative who had fallen ill. I also traveled back to Port Moresby to be a guest speaker at the annual Women's Forum. It was great to see old acquaintances from the Embassy and the government, and to bring the Washington perspective to the work being done to promote gender equality and combat sexual- and gender-based violence. Another aspect of the work that was professionally rewarding was the opportunity to serve with career officers and political appointees on issues as important as these. The important lesson here is that Foreign Service Officers remain politically neutral regardless of which party is in the White House and which party controls the House and the Senate. It was delicate at times because we had different

points of view on our issues and approaches, but I got a close-up perspective on how the different parties think and operate.

*Q: All right, let's turn to your next assignment in Liberia. How did that come about?*

MAYBURY: I thoroughly enjoyed my previous assignments as a deputy chief of mission and was looking for a similar rewarding position. I was being considered for Tanzania, Lebanon, and Liberia. I also competed for chief of mission positions in Africa and the Middle East, but those did not pan out. By this time, I had been promoted into the Senior Foreign Service and had strong references. What is important to understand is that this is a highly competitive process with hundreds of talented officers vying for a few dozen positions. The very fact that I was in the running for these senior leadership positions was a sign that I had had a successful career. My advice to officers contemplating serving at this level is to stay in touch with your network, particularly those who are older or more senior. Give them your career progress reports so that they can write credible references. Peers and subordinates will be easier to find because they are less likely to be approaching retirement age.

*Q: Now, your job in the Global Women's Affairs Office ended in the summer of 2021.*

MAYBURY: Yes.

*Q: How much time did you have to do all this preparation before going out to Liberia?*

MAYBURY: I only had a few months because the selection came late in bidding season. I reached out to the incumbent and the various domestic offices with Liberia in their portfolio. I read about Liberian history and U.S.-Liberian relations dating back to 1822 when Americans first settled there.

*Q: How long ago did the civil war in Liberia end? It was such a destructive force that many observers still think it will take many more years to fully recuperate.*

MAYBURY: The war ended eighteen years before I reached post. Recovery from the war was a common theme in my discussions, although there were Liberians and diplomats who felt the time had come to move beyond recovery and assess what needed to be done to push forward beyond the recovery phase. As I was soon to learn from my trips around Monrovia and upcountry, there were still too many visible signs that the recovery had not taken place.

*Q: Principally, was that due to destruction of infrastructure, or also just the departure of so many people who then never came back?*

MAYBURY: There was a combination of factors. Certainly, there was a large number of Liberians who left during the two civil wars. That's a loss of technical skills and the ability to take the country forward. It is also true that much infrastructure was damaged or destroyed: roads and electrical power were in bad shape.

*Q: And Ebola?*

MAYBURY: Ebola was certainly a hurdle along the way to recovery, without question. It slowed things down, while at the same time drawing attention. The advantage of a health crisis or a natural disaster is it typically comes with an international humanitarian response.

*Q: And then, just one last question, as for your overall context, I imagine there's a bit of a Liberian diaspora in the U.S. Were they still sending remittances? Was that still a significant part of their economy?*

MAYBURY: Yes, sure. Any Liberian who successfully gets to the United States or elsewhere in their diaspora and begins earning income is expected to send remittances. Some went beyond remittances and made substantial investments in the Liberian economy and created new jobs.

*Q: Interesting. Was the exchange rate relatively stable?*

MAYBURY: Yes, it was during my time there.

*Q: As you get ready to leave, is there any possibility that your family can accompany you?*

MAYBURY: There were employment and educational opportunities for dependents, but some of us elected to go to Liberia without family members.

*Q: Then when you arrived, what was your division of responsibilities with the ambassador?*

MAYBURY: Ambassador Michael McCarthy and I had an even division of labor. He entrusted the day-to-day operation of the Embassy to me. I had done this before, except our Mission in Monrovia was larger than the ones in Bangui and Port Moresby. We had more federal agencies than in those countries. That said, early in my tenure in Monrovia I identified the perfect role to match my passion for history. I began coordinating our efforts to plan for the bicentennial of the arrival of the first free Blacks from the United States. The date of the bicentennial was January 7, 1822, so I had about four months to mobilize support both from the United States but also within Liberia. When I arrived in Monrovia, I discovered that planning for a major event had not really started. I reached out to the government, churches, and local organizations to muster support for a commemoration. Monrovia's three historic churches were early partners in this endeavor because they had grown out of the early immigration of members from the United States. There was also work to be done to fire up interest in the bicentennial in the United States, particularly in communities with historical ties to Liberia. In the evenings, I spent several hours on the phone with newspapers in Baltimore, New York, Washington, and North Carolina trying to sell them stories of relevance to them. It wasn't long before my

colleagues nicknamed me the “Embassy historian” because I was producing regular articles for our newsletter about historical figures, monuments, and facts about the bicentennial. Many of the first Liberian presidents were born in the United States, and some were born into slavery and were later emancipated. It turns out some of our early chiefs of mission in the 1800s were born into slavery as well. Liberian historians and history buffs joined in the effort to learn more about the past and plan appropriate celebrations throughout the bicentennial year.

*Q: Now, the Indigenous population themselves had different traditions from the ones who arrived.*

MAYBURY: Of course, there were battles and people lost their lives on both sides. Indigenous people defending their territory, Americans defending their interests after they had arrived. The settlers went as far as building forts and used cannons to repel the Indigenous population that rose against them. These same settlers are the ones who declared independence in 1847.

*Q: Just one quick thing, when you say independence, my recollection doesn't go back that far. Independence from the U.S.?*

MAYBURY: No, independence from the American Colonization Society, an organization with financial support from Congress, property owners, and slaveholders. They saw it as a way to provide a home for free Black people who would not be treated as equals in the United States. Some Black people and white abolitionists saw the colonization as a racist movement that sought to remove the Black population from the country.

*Q: Regarding the 200th anniversary, were there other key events that the embassy supported or took a role in?*

MAYBURY: Again, we had partner organizations. I mentioned the historical churches that did their own programs. The oldest of the three, Providence Baptist Church with roots in Virginia, had Hollywood actor John Amos come to Liberia for their celebration. Amos had been to Liberia before and fell in love with the country. But when all was said and done, the government mobilized its resources and organized a massive celebration on Providence Island, a small island adjacent to Monrovia’s downtown, on January 7, 2022. Several weeks later, then organized an even bigger event at the national stadium that several African heads of state and a White House representative attended.

*Q: Alright, let's step back for a second, because you've been talking about different services and activities the Embassy did. How large was the embassy, and what other federal agencies were represented there?*

MAYBURY: We had about 125 direct-hire staff. USAID had a good-sized mission and the Centers for Disease Control, Department of Defense, the National Institutes of

Health, and Peace Corps were there. During my two years in Liberia, we had regular vaccination campaigns, whether for COVID and other communicable diseases.

*Q: Now, were vaccines readily accepted?*

MAYBURY: There was some resistance, but our different agencies worked with local communities and the government to dispel some of the myths about vaccines.

*Q: Interesting. Is AIDS still a major issue as well?*

MAYBURY: Yes, but malaria was more common and responsible for more fatalities, despite our robust anti-malarial campaign.

*Q: None of these forerunner efforts to reduce malaria were being practiced in Liberia, even the distribution of mosquito netting and so on?*

MAYBURY: Yes, they were. Part of the challenge was getting mosquito nets to isolated communities, villages reachable only by motorcycle or on foot.

*Q: What were USAID and Peace Corps doing?*

MAYBURY: The Peace Corps during the entire time I was there was the comeback story. The director worked tirelessly to prepare the country for the return of an initial cohort of volunteers. Peace Corps volunteers had left during the Ebola outbreak in 2014. As for USAID, they were a huge presence, providing foreign aid to support the country's development in sectors like health, education, and water access. USAID colleagues also played a significant role in developing electoral capacity.

*Q: All right, we've talked a bit about health and the historical aspects. What was the political scene like?*

MAYBURY: The political scene was interesting. We were in a period of election campaigns ahead of the 2023 presidential and legislative elections. Incumbent President George Weah and his ruling Coalition for Democratic Change party knew re-election would be tough. There were more than a dozen candidates for president. The Weah administration's reputation for corruption and his failure to deliver on many of his campaign promises, including more jobs for youth, are what ultimately weakened his chances. Liberia's media covered politics aggressively, with several media organizations being financed by influential politicians. Our zero-tolerance policy toward corruption took the form of Global Magnitsky sanctions against government officials found to have engaged in criminal behavior. The Embassy won public support for our statements and our determination to challenge corrupt senior officials. What frustrated Liberians and the Embassy was the government's failure to prosecute any of the individuals sanctioned, some of whom later were elected to the Liberian Congress. The aim of these sanctions, as spelled out by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, is to change behavior. We hoped

sanctions might also change attitudes so that corruption could be rooted out of society finally. In the end, the incumbent narrowly lost the election.

Externally, we looked at countries in West Africa where the threat of militant Islam was beginning to rear its head. A handful of military overthrows of civilian governments tightened tensions, with some Liberians asking if their government would be next. We often praised the Liberian armed forces for their professionalism and training, keeping in mind that their military had been disbanded in the wake of the civil war. The United States was responsible for the training and transformation of the new military.

*Q: Were you there for the actual election? Did it take place during your tour?*

MAYBURY: No, it took place a few months after I left.

*Q: Since you were close enough to that moment, how would you describe the outcome?*

MAYBURY: For many, it was to be expected. People were fed up with the reports of corruption and the unfulfilled promises. Joseph Boakai, who had served as vice president under Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first female president in Africa, made anti-corruption a central part of his message. He promised to restore good governance. But with so many competing priorities, the winner of that election was going to carry a heavy burden.

*Q: Also, during that time, you mentioned trying to get more investment, or trying to develop more business. Was there any commercial development between Liberia and the U.S. that developed?*

MAYBURY: No, I would say that things stayed as they were. There were a lot of inquiries, including interest in developing a ferry boat service between the different seaports. Liberia was hoping for a new Millennium Challenge Corporation compact, but they had to earn that through, among other things, a commitment to democratic governance, economic freedom, and investing in their people. Liberia would also need to pass indicators related to corruption and political rights.

*Q: Other than health and education, were there other projects you worked on?*

MAYBURY: In Liberia as well as in some of the other countries where I served, the issues of war crimes and accountability were always on the table. Liberians witnessed their share of atrocities during their two civil wars and during the bloody military coup in 1980. A recommendation in 2009 by a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to establish a hybrid war and economic crimes court was ignored by subsequent presidents. When we raised these issues with the Weah government, the response was that it would stir up old memories and be divisive. It was not until 2024 that President Boakai signed an executive order to establish an office to investigate and design the methodology for a War and Economic Crimes Court. Meanwhile, survivors and victims' loved ones wait for justice. I heard some of these pleas when I attended the anniversary of the July 29 massacre of some 600 unarmed men, women, and children by the Liberian armed forces in a Red

Cross shelter at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Monrovia. Pews reserved for government officials sat empty during the memorial ceremony. When the ceremony concluded inside the sanctuary, we gathered outside and placed candles and wreaths on the ground. The victims of the massacre were buried in a mass grave under what is today the church parking lot. Later, I persuaded the Ambassador-at-large for Global Criminal Justice to visit Liberia, see the site for herself, and meet with Pastor Janice Faijue Gonoe, who has urged the Liberian government and the international community to supply essential necessities for the war survivors and victims. Plans for a museum and memorial have yet to be realized.

*Q: Now, you mentioned that some of the churches were involved in human rights advocacy. Were there other human rights issues that you were following?*

MAYBURY: There were. One of them was human trafficking. In Liberia, there was a prominent case involving individuals who arranged for Liberians to find employment as domestic workers in Arab Gulf countries. Reports of abuse began filtering back to Liberia and that is when the Weah administration began to devote more resources to combating the crime. With my experience in the anti-trafficking office, I was able to engage with the Liberian government very directly and support the terrific work of my colleagues in the political section and the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs office. In fact, in 2022, that office successfully nominated Judge Cornelius Wennah as a "Trafficking in Persons Report Hero" for his work combating human trafficking. It was the first time the award had gone to a Liberian, and I have no doubt that my experience with the office in Washington played a part.

*Q: This is a bit marginal, but I've heard of the problem of trafficking exotic animals and plants. Was this a concern for you?*

MAYBURY: It was. USAID worked with government wildlife experts in addressing this issue, and the Ambassador and I raised it with government officials. The good news is that there are organizations that now protect chimpanzees in safe colonies, but the traffic of some other animal species continues.

*Q: What about the Chancery and the Embassy properties? Did you have day-to-day issues with those that you had to manage?*

MAYBURY: We have a real treasure there. I am talking about the Old Embassy Compound that sits two blocks from the new Chancery. The old compound is now strictly residential. It faces the ocean and is a delightful place for parties, to enjoy the swimming pool, tennis, and basketball, and for functions the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission host in their respective official residences. The old Chancery is still standing on the northern end of the old compound. We closed it and moved to the new Chancery in 2012. There is no consensus on what to do with the massive structure. Demolish it? Convert it to residential units? The State Department's Overseas Building Operations did not have sufficient funds to begin any work on that building, and it remains vacant even

today. While I was at post, a pair of resourceful Facilities Managers identified some funds to make quality of life improvements on the Old Embassy Compound.

The most historic building on the residential compound is the Deputy Chief of Mission's official residence. It was built in 1939, the year the Second World War started. This became our U.S. Legation, with offices on the ground floor and the living quarters of our then-head of mission, Lester Walton, his wife, and two daughters. Subsequent heads of mission, including Edward Dudley (who in 1949 became the first African American to hold the rank of Ambassador of the United States), became the building's only occupants when a new Chancery was built nearby on the old compound in the early 1950s. When we acquired the British Chancery on the other end of the present-day Old Embassy Compound in the 1990s, our ambassadors lived there, and the Marines occupied what had been the chief of mission's residence. In 2012, with the opening of the new Chancery and a Marine House on the New Embassy Compound, the now historic building became the official Deputy Chief of Mission Residence. And I was fortunate to be its last occupant before it underwent two years of renovation. I made a point of treating my guests to a tour of the residence, beginning with a mini-lecture next to the foundation stone and its "1939" date still visible. I had the original floor plan from Walton's time and was able to point out where his office, the consulate, and other business offices were located. I also worked closely with the Overseas Building Operations office that concerns itself with historical preservation to get the building renamed "Lester Walton House," at least informally. I set up the lobby with some historical artifacts and recommended that we develop the exhibit further.

I researched U.S.-Liberia history incessantly, and I still pursue that today. One of my findings was that Martin Luther King had landed with Coretta Scott King at the Monrovia airport on his way to Ghana to attend the presidential inauguration of Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana in 1960. I also found evidence that then-Vice President Richard Nixon had met and dined with then-Liberian President William V. S. Tubman in 1957 – in the historic building then occupied by U.S. Ambassador Richard Lee Jones. No one in Liberia knew these details, not even the surviving daughter Romeo Horton, the Liberian banker and civil servant who reportedly went to the airport to meet his old friend and fellow Morehouse College graduate Martin Luther King. Speaking of Dr. King, I identified a school in the capital named after him, then developed a partnership that culminated with a service project on our federal holiday honoring the civil rights leader. Several dozen of us, including representatives from the Embassy, the American International School of Monrovia, and Dr. Romelle Horton, the daughter of Romeo Horton and the president of Cuttington University in Liberia, took part in the activities that saw us teach in the classrooms, contribute school supplies, and build an access ramp from the playground to the school building.

*Q: Wow, yeah, remarkable. And with OBO, they weren't even willing to do something about this very old, decaying, chancery. What about just a tear down and reuse of the area?*

MAYBURY: Nothing was ever developed. I think taxpayers would stand to gain something. But today, at least, when I left it, it sat idle. Showing serious wear and tear.

*Q: I mean, eventually it could become really a safety hazard.*

MAYBURY: I would think so.

*Q: You had from August to June, and it wasn't possible to extend this DCM position up until that final month?*

MAYBURY: I was a year away from mandatory retirement. Extending in Liberia was out of the question.

*Q: Now this is just a two-year tour, and as you had mentioned, your opportunities for continued high-level positions were narrowing as you were approaching the mandatory retirement age of sixty-five. At this point, what kind of position are you thinking about?*

MAYBURY: My only option was a domestic tour for less than a year.

*Q: In the middle of negotiations, when you're the lead negotiator, and it looks like the negotiations are coming to an end, who better to complete them?*

MAYBURY: I agree, but I needed to make the case for an extension at the time I accepted the assignment. Therefore, I returned to Washington to serve as Director of the Office of e-Diplomacy. There were about 20 staff, a good mix of experienced professionals, some with tremendous talent in diplomatic technology. I had to learn a whole new lexicon to follow conversations and to produce paper for principals. Secretary of State Colin Powell established the office to bolster diplomats' competence with emerging tools. Our daily fare was knowledge management, artificial intelligence, and other digital innovations to help our colleagues do their jobs more effectively. This was far removed from the work I was accustomed to doing as a deputy chief of mission, political counselor, or public diplomacy practitioner, but I was surrounded by a talented team. During my few months in e-Diplomacy, the Bureau of Information Resources was renamed the Bureau of Diplomatic Technology. They changed logos, phased out some offices, and created new ones. I understand that e-Diplomacy was eliminated under Secretary of State Marco Rubio's sweeping reorganization in early 2025.

*Q: Were you beginning to introduce the use of AI in any of the programs?*

MAYBURY: There were several offices in the Department beginning to make inroads with AI. Our office was at the table, but I sensed that bigger initiatives were on their way, and it was going to be up to my successor and the team, plus the bureau, to find what role to play in the evolution of AI in the Department.

*Q: As you begin preparations for retirement, are there any other recognitions, awards, and so on that you want to mention?*

MAYBURY: At the retirement ceremony officiated by Secretary Blinken, I received a handsome certificate. Later, I received a package in the mail with a framed U.S. flag, and the Department provided a link to a photograph taken with the Secretary at the retirement ceremony. I will tell you this about the State Department. There is a strong tradition of public recognition. Award ceremonies, service pins, flags, and more. This is a good thing. People work hard and make incredible sacrifices. I display these proudly in my home, although what I will miss are the amazing people I met throughout my twenty-nine-year career.

*Q: I ask two final questions of every interviewee. The first is at the State Department level. If you were to advise the department on making any changes, what comes to mind?*

MAYBURY: Well, there's one that I think is a bugaboo for many people, and that is our performance appraisal system. It seems like every few years we try to reform it; we try to refine it. This takes an enormous amount of time every year to write, and that's not all. If we respect the process, we are also spending hours counseling colleagues about their performance. The evaluations need to be submitted around the same time a number of other important deadlines need to be met, so it can be stressful. I am not sure those are the best conditions to write a thoughtful appraisal. That said, we need an objective way to promote colleagues. One change I would absolutely make is to prevent situations where the rated employee ends up writing his or her entire appraisal because the rating and reviewing officer say they are too busy to draft their respective sections. That is wrong and I have told two foreign service directors general as much.

I would also seek further ways to empower our locally employed staff overseas. These brave men and women are a gift to us when we arrive at post. As subject matter experts, they often sacrifice their personal safety to help us get our jobs done. We should do more to give them the tools they need to excel at what they do, and we should recognize and reward them throughout their careers. Those who spend entire careers in the service of the U.S. government and perform in outstanding fashion should be awarded Special Immigrant Visas. Many of our colleagues have earned that reward and we should honor that.

*Q: The last question is, if someone came to you and said, how would you advise me on considering a career in the Foreign Service, how would you respond?*

MAYBURY: I would say consider not just what it would mean for you, but if you have family members, a spouse, a partner, and children, what would it mean for them. Some countries are easier to adapt to than others. Does a post have all the services that you might find in one of the 50 states in terms of educational services and job opportunities. come easily for everybody? The other piece of advice would be to recognize that this is going to be an adventure, the greatest adventure in that person's life. As such, take advantage of everything it has to offer. Select overseas posts with a view to where you are going to be living, not just where you are going to be working. There is life outside the embassy. I am told some people have chosen assignments based on the availability of

historical sites. Not everyone joins the Foreign Service with the goal of becoming an ambassador. When you consider the relatively small number of ambassadorships, not to mention the many career development hurdles along the way, why not manage your expectations in such a way as to thrive in whatever you do, and maybe all the stars will be in alignment and you will be selected as an ambassador.

*Q: On behalf of ADST I'd like to thank you for taking part in our oral history program. Your legacy of service is a vital part of the history of U.S. diplomacy.*

*End of interview*