

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

CHARLES A. MAST

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is February 13, 2001. This is an interview with Charles A. Mast. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. And you go by "Chuck."

MAST: Right.

Q: Well, Chuck, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born, and can you tell me a little about your family?

MAST: I was born on January 8, 1939, in Volga - like the river in Russia - South Dakota. I grew up on the farm.

Q: This is in South Dakota.

MAST: South Dakota. My father was a farmer, and I lived on a farm with my four brothers and sisters until I went to high school and college.

Q: Tell me something about the background of your father first.

MAST: I'm 100 percent Dutch on all sides.

Q: Why aren't you M-a-a-s-t?

MAST: Well, Mast is not a very common name. I've been in Holland and looked it up, and there are not many Masts at all. It's Van den Mast or other things. But my paternal grandfather and grandmother came from Holland in the 1880s. And my maternal grandmother and maternal grandfather came from Holland at about that time, as well. My father's father was a farmer, worked as a laborer for some time, and then bought a farm in the early 1900s in South Dakota. My dad also grew up on a farm. It was tougher for him than it was for me because he grew up during the depression. I was born in 1939, and my father, as a beginning farmer, got pretty good prices, of course, during the war and postwar years. I remember the Korean War particularly as a rather profitable time for farmers. We bought a new car and a new tractor in 1953.

Q: What products were you producing?

MAST: It was a general farm. We're still in the Corn Belt. We're very close to the Minnesota-Iowa border. We raised corn, oats, soybeans. My father had a small Grade-A dairy, about 30 or 40 cows, and also had pigs and chickens.

Q: Your father's education?

MAST: Eighth grade.

Q: Eighth grade. How about your mother?

MAST: Eighth grade.

Q: What was her background?

MAST: Similar. She grew up on a farm as well. She was the youngest of eight. My father was, I think, the third oldest of eight. She never went to high school either, and married young. She was, I think, 19, and my father was 23 or 24.

Q: I would imagine from what you say that there wasn't much time for sitting around and contemplating one's navel on the farm. It's a pretty busy place.

MAST: No, we stayed very busy, and I remember we didn't have electricity until I was 10 years old, or running water or indoor plumbing until the mid-'50s, when I was 14, so it was a relatively tough life, but I don't really remember it as that. We always had plenty to eat, and I don't remember ever going without necessities.

Q: What about schooling? Where did you go to school?

MAST: Well, the first four years I went to a one-room country school. Then the next four years a couple of churches started a private Christian school in town, and I went to this two-room school.

Q: This was in Volga.

MAST: In Volga, South Dakota, yes. For high school, I went one year to Volga Public High, and then to a Christian high school in Minnesota, about 70 miles away, called Southwestern Christian High, where I went for 3 years.

Q: Let's talk about elementary school first. This is a small farming community and all - were there windows that were being opened up for you about the world out there?

MAST: I was always a good student, and I come from the Dutch Calvinist tradition, which always had a very high emphasis on education, particularly on an educated clergy. Obviously there weren't that many opportunities for an educated laity at that time, at least in the rural areas of South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, the area that I know the best. But I do remember several times in grade school, particularly when I was in fifth and sixth grades, when I was in a room where you had people from the fifth to the eighth grade. As I was a pretty good student and didn't have that much trouble keeping up with my fifth or sixth grade work, I was able to listen in on the geography and history classes of the seventh and eighth graders. And I remember particularly, again, after the Second World War there were a whole series of new history and geography books coming out that really covered the war relatively well. And I remember being fascinated with following campaigns in North Africa and Europe and so forth. I don't mean I was a budding military strategist or military historian but that was clearly opening my eyes to a much broader world outside of South Dakota.

Q: How about books? Was there the equivalent to a Carnegie library in Volga?

MAST: I don't know if it was a Carnegie library, but there was a public library, and I read a great deal. Obviously I read the typical teenage or 12-year-old stuff, all the Hardy Boys and Zane Greys and things of that kind, but I also read a little deeper than that. I remember reading *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Les Misérables*, Alexandre Dumas and things like that in the seventh and eighth grades - probably didn't get it all, but again, it gave me some exposure to France and other foreign cultures, places and peoples.

Q: When you got to high school, what was the public high school like?

MAST: Small, maybe 30 people in my class, 120 to 150 in the whole school. As I say, I only went there for my freshman year. I took a general course: general science, English, algebra and agriculture.

Q: You're going off 70 miles away. How did you work that?

MAST: Well, my dad wanted to make a commitment to send us to a Christian high

school. My brother was one year behind me, so the two of us went together and we stayed with friends for one year, and then for two years we actually had a small basement apartment in the house of someone we got to know.

Q: Well, it must have been quite a sacrifice on your parents' part, because I would assume that having two boys around the general purpose farm would be a very handy thing to have.

MAST: Yes, I guess I had never thought about that quite that way, but you're right. I had another younger brother who was maybe 12 or 11 when we were in high school, so obviously he got his share of chores while my brother and I were gone. We'd be home to help on weekends and in the summers. I also started working in town quite early. I was about 15, and I had an opportunity to work in a general purpose farmers co-op - feed store, hatchery, creamery - and so I did that starting at age 15 for summers and on Saturdays. That meant my other two brothers had to do more work on the farm again.

Q: Did any of the teachers particularly strike responsive chords with you?

MAST: You had asked this earlier, and I was thinking back on that. I remember I had a history teacher - world history and American history - in Edgerton, Minnesota, in the Christian high school in my junior and senior year. He was also our debate coach. He was from Massachusetts and had a masters from Wisconsin in history. And he always pushed very hard for academic excellence and stressed "this is where you live - you've got to be proud of where you live, but there's a much larger world out there." I don't remember a great deal about a particular focus on foreign policy when we studied American and world history, but there was an emphasis on foreign cultures and foreign peoples.

Q: How about local politics? Did your parents have fixed opinions or the teachers, or in the area was this something that -

MAST: I don't remember a great deal about that. My father was always a Republican, although when George McGovern came along in 1956 - he was a professor at Dakota Wesleyan and ran for the house - my father voted for him. I think he felt there it was time for a change since South Dakota was a strongly Republican state. I do remember, particularly in senior high school and maybe when I was 18, 19, 20, some political awareness on my part, but not a great deal. I became a Democrat in my teens. I guess part of it was because I gave FDR credit for REA, rural electrification, and we had running water and things of this kind that I saw as quite an improvement. I sometimes used to joke with my father and uncles about biting the hand that fed them, because I argued it was certainly the Democrats and FDR that had promoted this rural development.

Q: In other areas, I guess that part of the Midwest didn't absorb it, but many households for years after his death even, Roosevelt was sort of a god because he did change so much.

MAST: I remember some people in our church, older farmers and so forth, very much

feeling that way, but they were very much a minority. People tended to be Republican in that area.

Q: How did the Dutch Christian ethos strike you at the time?

MAST: I guess I just accepted it. I wasn't terribly skeptical of it.

Q: I'm not talking about questioning, but did this sort of hard work -

MAST: Again, I wasn't terribly aware of it, but of course there was an emphasis on hard work. Anyone who had a lot of weeds in their field, it was obviously because they hadn't worked hard enough getting them out. It didn't have much to do with the poor land or whatever. But at the same time we come very strongly from what's known as the "common grace tradition;" that the sun and the rain fall on the just and the unjust alike, and just because someone has a tremendous crop one year or a failure another year doesn't necessarily have anything to do with their relationship to God.

Q: You didn't have a sort of predestination type-

MAST: Oh, we did. Very much. But nevertheless, that was more a kind of a personal thing, and that's not something you question God on. Obviously your path is foreordained, but you still have to work very hard in terms of free will. The dichotomy between free will and predestination was not meant to be easily understood, but was usually accepted.

Q: Well, when you are coming out, around... I guess you were about ready to graduate around 1957 or so.

MAST: Right. That's when I graduated from high school.

Q: What were you thinking - I mean, whither?

MAST: Well, then I took a side track because I really didn't know whether I was interested in college. I volunteered for the Air Force and took some tests but never signed up. I wouldn't have been able to fly or be a navigator because I had poor eyes. And there was a girlfriend I had at the time, though later she went off to nursing school in Chicago. And then I did something which perhaps in retrospect wasted a year and a half - I drove a truck for this creamery, driving a truck in the rural areas, picking up cream and eggs. That way I could buy a nice 1956 Ford and soup it up with headers and glass packs and things like that and have a good time in town.

Q: Did farming tempt you at all?

MAST: I think theoretically, but I saw too many people who were too beholden to the vagaries of the weather. It seemed that no matter how hard you worked you didn't necessarily get ahead. I was tempted by the independence of it and being your own boss, and I still feel that it's an ideal life in that sense. My son-in-law and my daughter are

buying a farm and becoming organic farmers, which is very tough too, but I find that very appealing, and in fact when they asked for my opinion I gave them my blessing. In fact, my wife and I are leaving DC for Michigan to work with them.

Q: When you were driving the truck, was the university beckoning at some point?

MAST: Actually, what happened - and I've given this person credit throughout my life, and when he passed away wrote his widow about it - a very young minister in our church, just 25, fresh out of seminary. Once I got to know him, and he got to know the young people through the young people's society and catechism, he started almost weekly to say I was the sort of person who should be going to college. I had curiosity and interest in the world around me. He may have done it with others, too; I don't know. He really worked me over, and after about a year of that - and I guess I also thought that I was not really going anywhere making minimum wage. As it happened I had two or three friends from high school who had been in and out of college and were going back and they said, "Hey, we're going, why don't you come along for the second semester, register, and we can have an apartment together." I thought that sounded good. My brother, who had started college at South Dakota State University and after one quarter was very tired of ROTC, was interested in taking my job.

Q: Reserve Officer Training Corps.

MAST: Getting up at six o'clock and marching on these cold South Dakota mornings - he said, "I've had enough of that." So he took over my truck for another year and a half, and then later he went to college as well. He has a Ph.D. now. Both of us had similar work experience on the truck before we went off to college. So in January, 1959, I went off to college.

Q: What college did you go to?

MAST: It was Calvin College, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a church-related liberal arts college, at that time maybe 1200 students. Now it has about 4000.

Q: What was college life like in those days? You were there from 1959 to -

MAST: I graduated in 1963. Well, again in retrospect, I didn't really take advantage of all the things the college had to offer. There are a couple of reasons for that. One, coming from the Midwest, coming from the farm, I sort of stuck with my own group of friends from Iowa and Minnesota and South Dakota, so I didn't get into the boarder college community - Thespians or the paper or the yearbook or debate or things of that kind - and secondly, I did have to work a lot. I worked 20 or 25 hours a week. That didn't mean I wouldn't have had time for some extra-curricular activities but it did limit me.

Q: What kind of work were you doing?

MAST: I worked as a janitor in an elementary school all the way through college. And then in the spring - this I really enjoyed, perhaps my rural roots - we used to do a lot of

work for wealthy people in east Grand Rapids who wanted to have their gardens manicured and get them ready to plant bulbs and flowers. Starting in April we used to do a lot of that.

Q: Well, then, what sort of courses were you taking?

MAST: I majored in history and economics. At that time, as a smaller college, Calvin didn't have a tremendously broad program, but I think in retrospect probably the kind of program I needed. I took six hours of American and six hours of Greek and Roman history and six hours of medieval and six hours of modern Europe and Russian and economic history. On the economic side I've always missed having a solid quantitative grounding. Whenever I've thought of a graduate degree in economics, I really didn't have the math background for it, because economics later became so quantitative. But nevertheless, I had a good liberal arts degree in economics - labor, money and banking and so forth - plus I took a fair amount of accounting and cost accounting.

Q: Did the politics at all get involved? So many college students got involved when Kennedy and Nixon ran for President.

MAST: I remember the 1960 election quite well. And again, I was in a fairly conservative area. Western Michigan has been Republican for decades. They all kept voting for Gerald Ford. And the college itself was quite conservative. Coming from a relatively conservative background, I would think, out of the Christian Reformed Church, which was my tradition, at that time probably 75 or 80 percent of the people were proud Republicans. And I remember having debates - not that I was a leader, but listening and pushing and carrying some placards and so forth. In a mock campus election, I think Kennedy got something like eight or ten percent. I voted for Kennedy.

Q: As you were doing the history and economic major, what were you thinking of as far as the future? Whither Chuck Mast?

MAST: I got very interested in history, and we had a couple of very good professors, one who had been at AUB in Beirut - he had spent a lot of time there. He used to talk quite a lot about AUB and that experience.

Q: AUB being American University in Beirut.

MAST: Right. I started thinking about graduate school probably by my junior year, not necessarily because I was so intrigued about becoming a professor, but a number of us at that time, and of course it's become much more prevalent now, thought that we had to get a master's degree. Some of us were thinking of going on, and also, of course, if you like the academic atmosphere, as I've noticed with my daughters, it's just sort of natural to continue to graduate school.

Q: Yes, I know.

MAST: Why go into that cold world when you can go on for a master's degree. So in our

senior year - and by that time I was married - I married my wife in 1962, and she's also from South Dakota and was a graduate of Calvin College - I was accepted at the University of North Carolina in American history for a Ph.D. My wife was going to accept a teaching job in North Carolina to help support me. However, in March or April of 1963, the Peace Corps recruiters came to campus. My wife was busy, so I attended this session, and was interested, but even more importantly, brought enough literature home so that my wife got very interested. She said, "Well, you can always go to graduate school and I can always teach at North Carolina. Why don't we go into the Peace Corps?" And so, as in many things, she was perhaps the motivator there who got me involved.

Q: What was your wife's background?

MAST: Very, very similar to mine. She grew up in Castlewood, South Dakota, on a farm, about 40 miles from where I did. She comes from a family of six, also 100 percent Dutch, very similar background. Her father actually came from Holland as a boy, at age 12. Anyone attending our marriage would say, "If that marriage doesn't click..." you know, none of them will, because we had very, very similar backgrounds and aspirations. She decided early on that she did not want to be a farmer's wife. It was too much physical work. She wanted to be a teacher - a teacher, at that time, that was about what women could aspire to. And she wanted to travel. She always had a yen for foreign travel, and so that was again one of the impetus for foreign assignments. I had incredible support all through my Foreign Service career from my wife.

Q: I take it you both entered the?

MAST: Yes.

Q: How did this work?

MAST: Well, at that time, we had training at Georgetown University for 16 weeks in the summer of 1963. We had been accepted for Turkey before that. When we had the chance to let the Peace Corps know where we wanted to serve, my wife did not want Latin America. She said, "That's too close. Let's go further from home, someplace a little more foreign." So we chose Turkey, and were accepted for Turkey, and had training for Turkey with about 100 other applicants, of whom perhaps 70 went to Turkey. At that time they had fairly rigorous selection out proceedings during training, and so a certain number of people - for psychological or other reasons - didn't get to go.

Q: This was early days in the Peace Corps, wasn't it?

MAST: Yes, and of course that was very much the whole Kennedy mystique. I remember any number of bull sessions we would have in the Peace Corps, and we had a large number of young Catholics - you know, 21, 22, 23, 24 - and I can hear them saying, "This is the secular priesthood and secular nunhood for Catholics that we've chosen." There were lots of them. We got to go to the White House, and we were in Washington during the Martin Luther King rally, so all of us could march in that rally. In some ways, Peace

Corps training and those four months in Washington broadened my wife and me perhaps even more than college had.

Q: I'm sure they did. In a way, I can see two different strains going on while you were there. One would be the civil rights movement, and the other would be the Peace Corps. If you're going to take the king's shilling, you've got to kind of cool it on the... Was this a problem?

MAST: I don't think I saw it that way. I got into this a little later when I came back from the Peace Corps and checked out Students for a Democratic Society. But no, I don't think I was radicalized at that time in terms of civil rights or in terms of poverty. It was very much an interest in the Peace Corps, quite idealistic - what can we bring, what can we do? You know, the Kennedy outreach -

Q: In a way, you and your wife, going back to your farming background, are probably bringing a lot more than the smart kid who's coming out of New Trier High and has come up and sort of lived in the suburbs of Winnetka or something like that. Were they looking at you and saying, "Aha, we've got some people who know something about -"

MAST: No, but you know how the government works. They train you for something, and then they send you somewhere else. We were quite disappointed in this because when we wrote to the Peace Corps we really high-lighted our background - could operate all these farm implements, raised all these crops, etc. - because we had hoped to go into some type of agricultural or community development program. Partially we thought that, well, we'll take advantage of our BA, but as you say, use the earlier experience we had had. And at that time, Turkey did not have a community development program. They had one the next year, but they did not have one for that particular group. So we were brought in as English teachers. We had BAs in general studies. My wife had an elementary education certificate. So we were qualified to teach junior and senior high school.

Q: Did the preparation work pretty well, as far as getting you ready to go, to do what you were going to be doing, get you ready for Turkey?

MAST: I think so. We had very rigorous training, up to 14-16 hours a day, of which 5-6 hours as in Turkish language. I think in retrospect they were a little hard on the physical training. At that time it was sort of the hair shirt image of the Peace Corps. The assumption was that you really have to climb a mountain every morning, that you aren't going to have anywhere to take a bath, that you're going to learn how to dig your own privy. There was a certain amount of that kind of thing, but we went into a middle, lower middle-class city in Turkey, so we really didn't need that much of that background, although in a way it was good to be prepared for it. And of course you had emphasis on American history and culture and a course on anti-communism. I think in terms of the teaching skills that they gave us, there was a little bit too much emphasis on academics - phonemes and morphemes, or whatever - and not quite as much on what to expect in Turkey. You know, you get into Turkey, and it's going to be the grammar-translation method. They're going to have a textbook. These kids are not going to want to depart

from that textbook because they don't know what their next teacher is going to teach them. There wasn't quite enough of that, but it was fine. I think we were quite well prepared.

In 1966, we worked in a Peace Corps training project at the University of Texas, and as you had Peace Corps returnees, they were able to bring a little more of that kind of nuts and bolts. 1963 was so early that there were still no returnees, so a lot of academic Americans would say, "It's great you're going to do this, but you have got to master - I've limited this as much as possible - my theory on teaching English as a foreign language. You've got to master that before you go." Well, you know, we didn't have time to master all that in three or four months.

Q: Where did they send you?

MAST: We went to Turkey, to a city called Kastamonu. It's in a valley in north central Turkey, not far from Sinop on the Black Sea. It's a relatively poor province, and it was a very conservative area. In fact, it was the place, in 1927, where Atatürk came to proclaim what they call the Çapka Reform, which was everyone in Turkey will stop wearing the fez and will have to wear a hat. And he supposedly at that time picked one of the more conservative urban centers. It was a small provincial capital, about 20 thousand. It had the only lycée, the only high school in the province. The province had perhaps half a million people.

Q: First, what were living conditions like? Where did they put you up?

MAST: Well, we rented, I think, four or five rooms. There had been three male volunteers there the year before, and they were transferred to other parts of Turkey because the Peace Corps felt Kastamonu was a little bit conservative, a little rigid for single males. There really wasn't anything for them to do. There were suspicions of young women, you know, that sort of thing. So the Peace Corps decided they would send a married couple there. There was a married couple in the neighboring city, about four or five hours away by bus, and they had been a smashing success, and so I think they hoped that the same thing would happen with us. So we took over the apartment. I think it was about four rooms on top of shops. We had running water, and we had a Turkish-style toilet, cement, which we modified so we could sit on it. We bought a wooden toilet top before we left the capital, took that along with us, and we had a magnificent shower-sauna, because you'd just put in the wood on the bottom of the hot water heater and heat the water and the room together. We had to burn wood or coal, so there was a fair amount of roughing it pioneer style, but probably it was a better life, or as easy a life, as we'd had when we were ten years old on the farm - so it wasn't that difficult for us.

Q: How about the society? How did you find this conservative city? How did you fit in?

MAST: Well, as married couples it was really much easier, because most of the young teachers were married and were very interested in getting to know us. We were constantly being invited out to their homes. Some of these teachers, if they were natives of the region, would live with their parents, or they'd have a large apartment and each

have half of it. We also got to know some of the older people that way. We had a wide acceptance, really, in a social context. Then we'd meet businessmen periodically, particularly some of them that were a little more up-and-coming, "We'd like to get to know the foreigner teachers, and my wife's a good cook, we've got a nice house, let's invite these people over and show off a little." And we also had adult English classes where we would have a chance to meet other interesting people. So it was very good socially, culturally. We really got into the culture, and I think this was good background for the Foreign Service, where you eat for your country many times, and drink for your country - mostly eat for your country-or you're placed into situations where you just *have* to try this food, or you have to have this second helping. Well, I very much had that kind of feeling in the Peace Corps, so it was good training for later life.

Q: How about the teaching? How did that go?

MAST: Well, I discovered that my wife had a real gift for teaching and was a much better teacher than I was. She tended to have younger classes, more seventh, eighth, ninth grade level, although she also had one senior class. I started out with a class on the junior level that had 83 students. Well, of course, we had discipline problems. Probably only about 10 percent of our students were really top-notch students. We had about 50 percent who were average, and then about 20 or 30 of them who really were never going to learn English at all, so it was always difficult to know what level to shoot for. Some of these students were excellent. Cheating was an incredible problem in a culture like that. We had a duplicating machine that the Peace Corps had provided us with, and we idealistically thought we could stop cheating. We made six separate tests - they were all different, all roughly equal, however, in difficulty - and passed them out, one-two-three-four-five-six, spread them all around. Well, I discovered a little bit later in the semester that I had one student who was good enough that she was doing six tests for all the people around her. They would shift these so that she would be filling in the blanks, you know, writing a little bit differently for each one. So the top-notch students were obviously very top-notch, but a lot of them could barely write a simple sentence in English.

Q: How did you find the school authorities? I would imagine that there could be a certain amount of resentment of these foreigners coming in.

MAST: That was true for many of the Peace Corps volunteers in nicer areas - you know, in Western Turkey, around Izmir or Istanbul. There were places like that which were choice areas for teachers, and there was some feeling that, well, my brother would like to come here and teach English, but he can't because the Peace Corps volunteers are here. In our area it was not easy to get teachers, and usually they either had teachers that were married and had decided to stay there, or they had some family there, or they had very young teachers that were maybe being sent there for two or three years by the ministry and just couldn't wait to get out and get to western Turkey. Since we really didn't take positions that were wanted by someone else, so we had a pretty good relationship.

I remember there were some anti-American teachers, politically, very leftist, with whom

we probably had a better relationship in terms of academics and how to treat the students - these kids have got to learn, because it's a tough life out there - than we did with many of the more easy-going older teachers who were kind of settled in a rut and said, "You know, we've got to pass this kid. It's going to be hard for his family if he fails." "He can never become an officer in the army unless he gets his high school degree." That was an interesting dichotomy that I discovered among the teachers there.

Q: Did you either get involved or see before you the politics of Turkey at that particular time?

MAST: To a certain extent, we couldn't avoid it. Since we were an early group - we were Turkey 2 - we were taken to meet Ismet Inonu, who was the prime minister at the time, and had a ceremony with him. Right at the beginning we had a little bit of knowledge of what was going on. Turks are very political, and I would discover the intense discussions after Kennedy's death, for example, and people would know that Johnson took over, and where was Bobby Kennedy, and was Bobby Kennedy positioning himself to become President later? Many Turks tend to be a little conspiratorial, but were very well informed. Part of that, of course, was the advantage of a free press, but we would meet people in the bazaar, some illiterate peasants, who would be interested in talking about this sort of thing.

During that period, the problem in Cyprus, which had been going on for decades, flared-up again in 1964, when a number of the Turkish minority were murdered. The Greeks would probably say the Turks had started it, but we had a different perspective. That was quite an emotional time, and there was a fair amount of anti-Americanism. Johnson leaned pretty heavily on the Turks not to invade Cyprus, and we discovered later the Johnson letter, in I think June or July of 1965, about the time we left. He had really put tremendous pressure on the Turks not to invade and rescue their coreligionists there.

Q: Was there in your area any equivalent to a real sort of left-wing Communist or just plain left-wing element there?

MAST: Not that I really got to know. As I mentioned, there were several teachers that I considered left wing at the time. They were very strong nationalists and secularists. And we would have some discussions, and I had differences with them on issues of foreign and economic policy, but we had a lot of similar viewpoints on educational theory and educational psychology, and many of them became good friends.

Q: How about fundamentalism in Islam? How did Turkey work so hard to sort of dampen it or put it down? How did you find it at this point?

MAST: The teachers we taught with, many of them, particularly the younger ones, were strong secularists, so they would rarely, if ever, go to the mosque. They saw themselves as modern Western Turkish nationalists, secularists. The older people were more religious. You would see many of them going to the mosque. There were mosques everywhere. We would hear the call to prayer from two or three different mosques in the

morning or evening. And there were a certain number of Turks who would ask, "Why don't you become a Muslim? Obviously, first came Judaism and then Christianity, and Islam is the culmination of all this in terms of monotheistic religion. It certainly would make eminent sense for you." We had a Peace Corps friend in a neighboring town, whose Turkish was fluent and who later went on to get a Ph.D. in Turkish language and literature at Michigan. We often joked about stories in the Turkish newspapers where any time any Westerner anywhere in the world became a Muslim there would be quite a major story. So there would be such and such an educated person in Germany or Britain or the US who converted to Islam. My friend noted that fellow teachers or townspeople, or particularly shopkeepers, would come to him and say, "Look at this. This intellectual has become a Muslim. Now we've been talking about this. Surely this wouldn't be that difficult for you." So there was a fair amount of that, but on a kind of friendly day-to-day level. And usually we would say, "I grew up as a Christian, this is part of my tradition, part of my culture, part of my mind set. It's not easy to change religions. How about you? Would you find it easy to become a Christian?" "Oh, no, no, we couldn't give up on Islam."

Q: How about the female students? Did they wear head scarves and that sort of thing?

MAST: No.

Q: It might have even been forbidden at the time.

MAST: I think it might have been. I don't remember female students wearing scarves in school.

Q: It's still an issue.

MAST: Talking about female students, I had one little incident. One of my top female students, Oya, was not particularly modest. She was not at all provocative, but she was just very outgoing and treated boys and girls and male and female teachers alike. She really liked to speak English. We had an English club, my wife and I, and she was one of the star pupils there. Oya and I used to walk home from school together for lunch because she lived fairly close to our place, and I would be coming home for lunch and she would be going off to where she went for lunch. After a few weeks, we started to pick up little murmuring about this. My wife would pick them up, or somebody would say something like, "Why are you walking this girl?" So we decided to stop that.

Q: Did you feel at that point a rather nervous hand of the Peace Corps overlordship, or whatever it is, in Washington, wanting to make sure that none of you got involved in... One, you had to steer clear of the embassy and it was sort of sudden death or poison to get involved with them. Were you getting sort of directives all the time, or were you pretty much-

MAST: I don't remember written directives, but that point of view was expressed. We were far enough away from the embassy so that we got to Ankara very seldom or to

Istanbul, but there were a couple of volunteers who were only a three or four hour bus ride away, and I remember there was an older AID woman who in a sense almost adopted these kids. They could come in to do their wash if they wanted to, and she had peanut butter for them. They didn't abuse it; she didn't abuse it. But the rest of us kind of thought, hmm, you know, are they *really* the real hair shirts? And if the director had found out about that, he would have tried to prevent it.

Q: Well, I think it was a period where... I think now the lines have become blurred.

MAST: Oh, much more.

Q: And rightly so, but at the time, the Peace Corps was trying to make it absolutely positive that it was a separate organization and not a tool of the government.

MAST: Well part of it - and to give the Peace Corps credit at that time - there was a great deal of commentary in the Turkish press, particularly the leftist press, about how we were all crypto-CIA agents or were training to be CIA agents. One. Two, the more nationalist Islamic press would pick up on any Christmas tree that any volunteer had or any kind of a little Christmas party and say we were proselytizing. So there was that kind of criticism. And too close an identification with the embassy might have created additional problems.

Q: Early on. I think most people agreed with... So you did this for two years?

MAST: Two years.

Q: This would be what?

MAST: Summer of 1963 to summer of 1965.

Q: How did the death of Kennedy go where you were?

MAST: Oh, it was incredible, incredible. Most people our age, I think, remember where they were and what they were doing when the death of Kennedy was announced. But for us it was a little bit different because it happened during the middle of the night due to the time difference. I turned on the VOA at eight o'clock in the morning, and I got it as the program had started, and they were talking about "he was... he was." It was all past tense. They're talking about Kennedy. What's the *was* part? I started to have an eerie feeling, and then they came in again and talked about exactly what had happened. We decided to go to school, and the teachers wouldn't permit us to teach, and there was crying among the students. So we went home, and we had a steady stream of students and teachers calling on us. It was really very hard for all of us. I think it would have hit them hard anyway, because Kennedy had that mystique in the developing world. For our students and younger teachers, we sort of personified in a sense young, caring Americans and so they knew that we felt sad, though they probably thought we should have been mourning more than we were. We did a sort of stiff upper lip. But it was quite an experience, quite a day. And then, of course, later you saw a lot of pictures of Kennedy in people's houses -

many even before he died, but more afterwards.

Q: I was in Yugoslavia, and the whole country had flags at half mast, all over the country, and for years afterwards you could get in little plastic frames pictures of Kennedy down in the very local market, clearly people who were -

MAST: It wasn't for tourists, no.

Q: No, peasant, peasant, peasant markets.

MAST: Very similar.

Q: Well, 1965 you did your two years. Then what did you do?

MAST: Well, then there were opportunities to get assistantships and scholarships in graduate schools. I had not been that tremendous a student. I mean, B-, B average, but I did well on the graduate record exams, and so I had a couple of scholarship offers, one to Kentucky in international affairs and then one in American history, an assistantship at Maryland. We had liked the Washington area so much when we were here in Peace Corps training at Georgetown. We had, in fact, made quite a few friends already in our local church, our local denomination, so we decided to come back to this area, and my wife was able to get a job teaching in Montgomery County, which paid a lot more than North Carolina or Kentucky, as we discovered. And I had my assistantship. So we came back here for two years, and I studied American history, and she taught in elementary school in Montgomery County.

Q: In what were going for a master's degree at the University of Maryland?

MAST: Modern American history. I did a minor in Middle Eastern history. I had three or four courses in Middle Eastern history.

Q: Did your Turkish experience... Were there courses dealing with Turkey, or was this somewhere else?

MAST: I took an elective on the history of the Turks. I also took a couple of graduate level readings courses on ancient and modern Middle Eastern history.

Q: You'd mentioned that you had taken the Foreign Service Exam. We're doing a certain repetition here. You took the Foreign Service Exam when?

MAST: In the Peace Corps in Turkey in 1964.

Q: Could you tell me what sort of things they were asking you?

MAST: Excuse me, that was the written exam. It was not that dissimilar from the GRE. The oral exam I took in October of 1965, after I had started graduate school. I remember particularly one question - a theoretical, open-ended question - suppose we decided to

colonize the moon, what would be some of the things we would need to take into consideration. I noted that initially it would depend on whether colonization efforts were Russian-American, joint efforts, or a U.N. effort or a unilateral exercise. There were a few other questions, I remember, on foreign policy where I had the opportunity to extrapolate a little bit and talk about some new left theories on American imperialism at the time. I felt that I was very successful. They had a lot of good questions, and I thought that even though the questioners represented the establishment, they were open and interested in how well one would analyze and conceptualize theories and beliefs.

Q: And you passed. So what were the terms when you passed? You were still going for your masters.

MAST: I was going to go for my masters. It was going to take two years because I had an assistantship, so that wasn't a problem at that time. They said we should have a slot for you in the summer 1967 class. So periodically I would receive something from the Department or I would call. It was pretty well organized.

Given the fact of Vietnam and the expansion of the AID CORDS program, there was a very large class in 1967. In fact, I think it was the largest class ever.

Q: Yes, how many were in it.

MAST: Our class had around a hundred, but I think there were something like 250 or 275 entrants in 1967 among four different classes.

Q: Well, this was the time when, of course, we were pushing people into Vietnam. But how did you feel about Vietnam?

MAST: I hadn't thought too much about Vietnam. When I came back from Turkey, I was in a sense radicalized by the experience, but more particularly in terms of poverty, in terms of civil rights in the United States. And so I felt rather strongly that a society of our wealth and our standards should first take care of our own poor and secondly do something about poverty around the world. I don't remember getting terribly involved in Vietnam. Now again, I mentioned radical American historians such as William Appleman Williams and Gabriel Kolko had their own theories about the Cold War and how it started, and I read all of that and intellectually found it intriguing, but I think I saw a different point of view, so I tended to approach Vietnam somewhat differently.

Q: Well, your class...

MAST: Mega-class.

Q: A normal class is around 30, I guess, so how did you find your fellow officers?

MAST: I was quite impressed. Some of them were sort of ordinary, run-of-the-mill AB 22-year-olds, obviously smart enough to pass the written and oral exams, and articulate

but not particularly brilliant. We had ex-military officers, some of them were 29 - 31. I remember a couple of them - very highly qualified with five years to seven years of military experience. We had a number of people with master's and some who had Ph.Ds. in the class. Surprisingly, I don't remember any lawyers. Several had relatively similar experiences to mine - masters in history or international affairs and Peace Corps experience.

Q: How about women and minorities?

MAST: Not very well represented. I remember two or three minorities out of the 100 and several women. It was still pretty white male at the time.

Q: Where did you think you wanted to go?

MAST: We wanted to go to the developing world. After the Peace Corps, we wanted to go to a place that's different enough from the United States. We hoped to get back to Turkey, to have an assignment in Turkey. I passed the language exam in Turkish, so I knew I would probably be assigned to an English-speaking slot. I don't remember the places I requested. I do remember there was an opening in Holland, and I thought, well, if I have to go to Europe, with my background and familiarity with the language and culture, that would be an interesting assignment. I was told that I was assigned to Curacao because of my Dutch background. I've usually felt pretty comfortable with the assignments process, even though I know that there are problems with it, and I guess maybe that's because I started off with a pretty good assignment.

Q: Well, you were in Curaçao from 1967 to 1969, and what was your job?

MAST: I was head of the consular section. It was a six-person consulate general, and there were two Americans and four local employees in the consular section that I was to supervise. There was a young American woman who was junior to me, but had been at post a couple of months longer than I was.

Q: Who was the consul general?

MAST: Harris Huston. He had been there at that time about seven years, and he was a well-known conservative - I wouldn't say McCarthyite, but certainly very, very conservative, strong anti-Communist - and had been head at one time of security and consular affairs in the Department. The gossip had it that when the Kennedy Administration came in, they wanted to find a good job for him away from Washington and thus sent him as consul general to Curaçao. He was great. He did a great job down there. He was well liked, and I thought he was a good diplomatic manager.

Q: Well, let's talk a bit about consular work. Visas? What was it like?

MAST: Visas - we did immigrant visas and non-immigrant visas, but not a lot. Several hundred non-immigrant visas and, I guess 250-300 immigrant visas, which now would be

considered a light load for one officer. We interviewed virtually every person. We had time for that. We had a fair amount of citizenship cases. We also had to take care of Aruba and Bonaire and the other three islands. But we didn't have a great budget, so I entrusted the economic commercial officer to handle some consular duties when he traveled to the other islands.

Q: What about the non-immigrant visas? Were you considered a post for people that sort of had to sneak through to go to work, go as tourists and then end up staying?

MAST: Yes, we had to stay pretty close in touch with other posts in the region, such as Kingston or Barbados or Martinique. The Dutch passport holders were not a problem. They were not going off to the States to work illegally. But we had to be careful of the British passport holders because many of them were maids in Curacao and were always trying to slip off and become maids in the United States. Americans who would come down on vacation would often recruit people like this to come up and work for them. And Dominicans and Haitians, they would try us because it was much harder for them to get visas in Santo Domingo or Port-au-Prince. We had a particular problem because Curacao was a large port. There was a quasi-official house of prostitution, actually in the port, and that was usually staffed almost entirely with Colombians or women from Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Q: Did you have any sort of in with the police? Did they tell you?

MAST: Yes, we could get some information from Police Intelligence. If we wanted to turn someone down at the counter when we interviewed them, but had questions whether this might be a qualified person, we could ask them to come back a week later after we had checked with the police.

Q: Protection and welfare - jail, deaths, what sort of things did you have?

MAST: Not a lot. I remember two or three of them. One, an American who was a small businessman who came down to gamble and was sucked into an opportunity where he got a thousand dollars' worth of chips for a hundred dollars from a casino employee and lost it immediately. He was arrested and sentenced to six months and, I think, lost his business in the States. I visited him often in prison, a fairly nice prison by American standards.

The other one, we had a beautiful young woman - this was I think the first week we were down there - a dancer and entertainer in New York, and she became mentally ill while she was in Curacao. At the Country Inn, where I was living, she was actually dancing naked on the table at three o'clock in the morning. Of course, I was sleeping and missed all this. Basically, I was quite involved with that case, but my assistant, who was a young female, got very involved, and they hit it off well together, and the woman was in a mental hospital for a couple months, but recovered quite dramatically and went back to the States.

We had another death case, I remember, where a young American woman drowned and her husband was unable to cope. It took a couple of days to find her body. In the interim, he went back to the States and never came down for the funeral. She was Jewish so we needed twelve men for the funeral, and we succeeded thanks to several foreign tourists who were shocked that a young American woman should be buried without relatives present.

Q: Did politics intrude at all in Curaçao? Curaçao was quite a conservative place, but in 1968 there was a little bit of an overlap of the black power movement, which was of course strong in the States at the time. Shell oil was heavily unionized, and there was a strike going on, and it spilled over into a black power rally and anti-Dutch colonial manifestations. There were fires and rioting everywhere on the island. Of course, we had an enormous number of tourists to take care of. The Dutch police and the Dutch marines were very helpful. We discovered very early on - but of course the tourists wouldn't believe it - that it was not at all anti-American. It was very interesting to be on an island where the demonstrations were totally anti-Dutch. In fact, we knew Dutch friends who escaped violence by speaking English as fluently as they could and insisting they were Americans. But of course for the tourists, there was a lot of concern with what happens when you fall into mob violence. And I learned then that American tourists, particularly the New Yorkers, could be very demanding. They would say, "Well, I'm going to call Senator Javits, and they're going to send a destroyer for me, if you don't get me out of here in 24 hours..." The Consul General got involved with some of this if there were calls from politicians in the States, but most of them I handled myself.

Q: Did they turn the tourist ships away?

MAST: No, there happened to be some tourist ships there at the time and the hotels were full of tourists. They must have turned some tourist ships away for a few weeks. I don't remember that particularly, but the tourists were able to get out. It was just a problem for a day or two.

Q: Were there any manifestations of what is called the Amsterdam syndrome? I think that right about 1969 there were heavy demonstrations about Vietnam in Amsterdam. I think our consul general there was getting pelted with eggs about on a daily basis. Was there any of that spillover?

MAST: No, we had virtually none. There was no university in the Netherlands Antilles. And the high school kids were not particularly politicized, and I don't think the unions were interested in Vietnam. Their main concerns were with economic benefits and then to a certain extent black power, because the Dutch and the Jews, Sephardics, ran the island. In fact, I remember I got to know one Curaçaoan black service station owner well where I would go to to get my car washed and waxed, and he was a strong supporter of US policy in Vietnam. He would criticize US policy from the right; we needed more troops, more bombing, etc. I almost had to bring him down every time we would talk, and say, "Well, there are other points of view." So I remember it as not at all difficult. I was sort of insulated, working on my visas. So I'd read about US Vietnam policy in the newspaper

and periodicals but didn't feel any particular responsibility or any particular concern, I guess, about that aspect of US foreign policy.

Q: Were we looking at that time for Curaçao to declare its independence and move over to become another independent nation? By this time in the Caribbean so many had gone through that.

MAST: There were some movements of that kind. Surinam, of course, moved fairly soon into independence. But the Netherlands Antilles was a little more conservative than Surinam on that. They didn't have the resources, the economic base that Surinam had. And I think their *per capita* income was much higher than Surinam. I think they felt they had something to lose. Now you tended to get these squabbles between Curaçao and Aruba, and of course later Aruba declared its independence from the kingdom and from the Netherlands Antilles.

Q: How did that play out finally? I mean, is Aruba independent?

MAST: Most of this happened some time after I left, but as I understand it, Aruba is independent now, although it may still have some tenuous ties to the Netherlands in terms of foreign policy and national defense.

Q: Did Curaçao cover Aruba at that point?

MAST: Yes, we had had a consulate general, believe it or not, in Aruba as well because Esso had a very large refinery there and there were quite a few Americans there, but the consulate there closed in the early 1960s. Consequently, we used to go to Aruba periodically to handle citizenship concerns.

Q: Did you get involved at all in sort of servicing the oil people and all that?

MAST: Yes, we would do that some. They would come to Curaçao quite a bit because there was a bigger airport in Curaçao, but we would also go to Aruba. I didn't go there very often. I tended to let the vice-consul go. She preferred that, and I wasn't much of a traveler. I had a young child at home, and my wife was teaching.

Q: Well, then, you left there in 1969, and whither?

MAST: Well, I wanted to go back to Turkey, so I wrote to Personnel asking whether there was anything available in Turkey. Personnel said, "Well, we don't have anything in Turkey, but how would you like to go into Farsi language training?" So I started Farsi language training in September, 1969.

Q: Okay. Well, why don't we stop at this point, and I'll make a note here that we're 1969 and you're starting Farsi, and we'll talk about what happens then.

Today is the 28th of February, 2001. Chuck, you are off taking Farsi language. That was going to put you where?

MAST: The assignment was going to be in Teheran as commercial officer in the American Embassy.

Q: This was 1969?

MAST: 1969, September of 1969.

Q: How long was Farsi training?

MAST: Ten months.

Q: Ten months. How did you find Farsi as a language?

MAST: Well, I knew Turkish fairly well from being in the Peace Corps, and Turkish is a Ural-Altai language, but since it's written in the Western script and it's phonetic, that makes it somewhat easier to read. Farsi, as an Indo-European language, is much easier to learn to speak than Turkish, but the fact that it's written in Arabic makes it much more difficult to read and write. But I enjoyed it.

Q: Often when you go take a language course, you pick up an awful lot about the thought processes, how the system works in the country, from the language teachers. Did you get much from your language teacher?

MAST: My language teacher was a classic Iranian, I guess, a middle-aged fellow, at least at the time I thought of him as middle-aged.

Q: He probably was 40.

MAST: Yes, and he was a pretty good teacher, actually. He followed instructions well, worked closely with the director, the linguist. We learned a lot about Iran through him, his sense of humor, the way he approached life, slightly fatalistic and so forth - some of that kind of thing was quite similar to what I learned of Iranians later.

Q: What were you picking up - this was 1969-70 - about the Shah? I'm talking about before you went out there. Were there mixed feelings? What was the general?

MAST: I think before we went out there it was the fact that the Shah was not a civil libertarian and certainly not a democrat but that he was a friend of the United States and that under the white revolution, which had come along in the early 1960s, there was a considerable amount of land reform, education reform, social reform going on and that it was possible to work with this person.

Q: Well, you went to Teheran when?

MAST: I went in August of 1970.

Q: And you were there until when?

MAST: I was in Tehran until the summer of 1972, when I went to Tabriz, in northwestern Iran, as American consul, and I was there until the summer of 1974.

Q: Well, let's stick to Teheran first. Who was our ambassador when you got out there?

MAST: When I got there, Douglas MacArthur II.

Q: He had a reputation of being rather imperious, but also a real professional - but rather demanding. How did you find him?

MAST: Well, he was clearly very professional in his dress and his demeanor and the way he approached problems. I found him imperious. I am sure he didn't know my name. There's no question about that, even though I was control officer occasionally for a senator or someone, and we'd be in his office and he'd be briefing the person. But I was one of his younger officers. As a junior officer, that's what we accepted in those days. Although I do remember one thing in retrospect, after what happened to the Shah. Ambassador MacArthur was briefing Dewey Bartlett, who had been governor of Oklahoma and was going to be running for the Senate. And I can still hear Ambassador MacArthur talking about "in the great arc that extends from Japan to Turkey, there is only one Island of stability, and that is Iran." That was 1972, so he certainly didn't foresee the future very well.

Q: What was your job? What did it involve?

MAST: There were three of us in the commercial section. After the oil price increase in 1971, Iran really became a booming market for the United States. As the junior, I was a trade promotion officer, worked very closely with the local employees, the two commercial librarians - I supervised them - and then there were, I think, four or five local employees who wrote our world trade directory reports, and I supervised them and would go with them on calls. I would brief the businessmen coming in, people who wanted details...not necessarily people who wanted the big picture. They would see the commercial attaché or the Economic Counselor or the Ambassador. But I would work with people who were looking for agents. How can we find such and such an agent, and what kind of information on agents did we have? I enjoyed it a great deal.

Q: You are in one of the preeminent commercial countries in the world, going back to God knows when. Did you have much to do with the bazaaris?

MAST: We'd go to the bazaar to go shopping, and we would sometimes have work with the *bazaaris*, but mostly the people that we would be dealing with would be people who were one step removed from the bazaar, perhaps the son of a *bazari* who was setting up in machinery or office equipment or things of this kind. We would be trying to help them

find American sources of supply and help introduce them to Americans who were looking for agents. We also worked a great deal with Americans who were bidding on contracts with the municipality or the national government or the World Bank.

Q: What was your impression of how the commercial world in Iran worked?

MAST: Well, it was relatively difficult to operate there. A great deal worked on what they called party *bazi*, which was who you knew. When I was there in 1971-1972, there were three or four of us who did a study using world trade directory reports. We had three or four thousand of these which were pretty in-depth studies of Iranian companies. We discovered that relatives of the Shah or the Shah's close family were involved in something like 30 percent of the companies where they had either silent partnerships or were active partners, and of course at that time we saw that as unusual favoritism and perhaps even corruption. Many times when American companies would come in and they wanted to find well-established companies, we'd look for two things. We'd look for a company that had the technical and the administrative and sales expertise, but was also well connected. Many times, Prince Chahram, who was one of the Shah's nephews, was a silent partner of that company, but people would still go ahead and pick the company. Sometimes they picked the company because Prince Chahram was a silent partner.

Q: Did this seem to work fairly well? I mean once they got in, were both sides pretty pleased with how things were going?

MAST: Certainly during that period, I would say 1970-74, there was a boom not only in sales but also in investments, and a lot of American companies found good Iranian partners or in some cases set up wholly-owned subsidiaries, and I think by and large found business there a fairly profitable undertaking.

Q: Did you get involved in military sales, or was that a different -

MAST: Fortunately I didn't get involved in military sales. There was a pol-mil officer who did some of that, and of course the military attaché's office did some as well. And we also had, as the sales beefed up even more, a separate military office that handled that kind of thing.

Q: Well, in those days, were the merchants in Iran, the people and the American companies you were dealing with, did they see Iran as being more a market in Iran, or did they see it as being a center where they could use Iran to deal with neighboring countries?

MAST: I think the American companies that came in saw Iran as a market, Iran as Iran. Obviously the Iranian investment promotion board and the people who were trying to attract foreign investment, as in virtually any developing country I've ever worked in, saw Iran as an export platform, as an opportunity for their people to be productively employed in making products with American or other foreign technology and expertise and exporting to other countries for export earnings. That one didn't work out very well. Iran didn't have that productive an infrastructure. The labor force needed training etc. It's a

difficult thing to undertake. And as the oil revenues flowed, of course, Iran became a higher cost economy as well.

Q: So it was mainly oil revenues that were paying for goods that came from other places, including the United States.

MAST: Almost totally. They had some traditional exports. Obviously, carpets and hazelnuts, pistachios, dried fruits. But I'd guess almost 90-95 percent of their export earnings were from oil and gas.

Q: While you were doing it, was it easy to make professional contacts.

MAST: Well, I'd almost have to separate the two assignments. The two years we were in Teheran - -perhaps it had to do with the fact that I was a junior officer and we had two small children, my wife was very much involved in teaching, and we had a circle of American friends - but we did not break into the Iranian community as much as I would have liked. When we moved to Tabriz, and for the two years I was there as consul, we had a tremendous group of Iranian friends, many of them actually mixed marriages, where you'd have Iranian males, in most cases, with foreign wives. In many cases, obviously, Iranian wives and husbands. We had a very large group of friends. We would have thirty or forty couples, for example, for a square dance, and every one of them were good friends. So we really enjoyed Tabriz much better from the social point of view than we did Teheran.

Q: Well, let's stick to the embassy to start with. You weren't, obviously, doing political reporting and all, but did you feel that we were under constraints to show the brighter side of how Iran was - I mean, not you but with the other officers you'd be talking to?

MAST: Oh, no question. I think that certainly - particularly under Douglas MacArthur II and to a certain extent under Ambassador Farland, who came later, to a lesser extent, I think, under Helms, who was the last ambassador I served under when I was in Tabriz - there were constraints on reporting. I remember there was a group of junior officers that got together to do a particular report. I don't even remember what it was on any more, but it had to do with corruption in the royal family. And there were some pretty good names: Arnie Raphel, Stan Escudero, who is a three-time ambassador just retired now, and two or three other junior officers - I was one of them. Arnie Raphel quarterbacked the operation and was going to be the one who was going to get it cleared through the ambassador, and it never left. I think finally the ambassador wanted so many changes that we just felt it wasn't worth sending in any more. And I don't remember whether that was pre-Dissent Channel or not, but perhaps we didn't feel strongly enough to send it as a dissent channel. Another time, I remember the finance officer - and you would think that this would be a fairly straightforward kind of report - he had gone to see a contact who was the deputy head of the Central Bank, and there were some particular problems in the economy with foreign exchange, and he wrote up a report, which was going to go through the ambassador. It came back, and I still remember the economic counselor talking to him saying, "Alex, I'm sorry that it can't go out that way because the ambassador says that's not what we've been reporting." Alex said, "Well, fine, then it

won't go out at all." And I don't know exactly what did happen to it. So there were some of those kind of things.

Q: Did you get any feel at that time - I'm talking about when you were in Teheran first - about discontent in the country? I mean, obviously about nine years later all hell was going to break loose.

MAST: That's something that we've talked about many times, people who had served in Iran. I certainly didn't. I have to be honest. Part of this, perhaps, is because I was working primarily with the business community, but even among friends, and we knew a lot of people well. There were some junior officers at USIS, and I think they got a little more, but not very much either. The Iranians were very close-mouthed, and SAVAK was ubiquitous. You didn't know where they were. They were everywhere. In fact, I remember hearing the story that any board meeting of any corporation, company, foundation, cooperative, whatever, in Iran that had a meeting, there would almost certainly be a person there to report to SAVAK on what happened at the meeting or what didn't happen. Those kind of things we knew from 1970-72, but I think we thought that the economic progress, what we saw with the White Revolution, with education, with rights of women, etc. - this could partially at least compensate for the other things.

Q: Was there a feel, again at that time, sticking to the 1970-72 time, was there concern about the Soviet Union doing anything at that time or messing around with the students?

MAST: Some, one of the anti-Shah parties was pro-Soviet. Many nationalists opposed both the US. and the USSR. There was some religious opposition to the Shah. I remember talking about it at times, but there had been such a long relationship between Iran and Russia, not particularly advantageous to Iran, that rapprochement was not that likely. Now the Shah, of course, would use that - that the Soviets were milling around and could interfere in Iran - in order to try to keep us on the reservation, so to speak.

Q: I'm asking the question but I'm pretty sure I know the answer: did you or your fellow officers have much contact with the religious in Teheran?

MAST: I certainly didn't, and as I think back, I think very few of the people did. I know Arnie Raphael and Stan Escudero, as I said, we were all Farsi language officers, they would try to get into the bazaar. They had some success there, but I think very little with the religious establishment - certainly not with the anti-Shah religious mullahs.

Q: Religious establishment is always difficult because almost by their nature they're rather xenophobic. This is true in almost any country. Well, then in 1972, you were off to Tabriz. You were there 1972 to 1974. Talk about Tabriz - where is it located, it's importance at that time, and how sort of is society there?

MAST: Tabriz at that time was the second largest city in Iran after Teheran. Isfahan and Mashed were virtually equal in population and a close third. It's in northwestern Iran, I guess maybe 75 miles from the Turkish border and about 50 or 60 miles from the Soviet

border. We had four or five provinces in our consular district, East Azerbaijan being the major one, and it was a very small consulate. There were only two Americans in the consulate. It went back a number of years. There were some excellent people who had served there. Bill Eagleton was one who wrote an excellent book on the Kurds and later became an ambassador. There had been times when we had been thinking of closing Tabriz, but during the 1950s it was a fairly major listening post for the Soviet Union, and later we built a magnificent new consulate, in 1965. It would have been extremely embarrassing to close that five or six years after we built it, and so instead we just gradually lowered the number of people that were there. It hadn't been a listening post for some years when I arrived, but we had magnificent vaults and we had a great building. It won an award actually from *Architectural Digest*. The house was built in similar style and was very comfortable.

Q: You had one other officer?

MAST: One other officer.

Q: Who was that?

MAST: The first one was Dick Bagnell for one year, and he left the Foreign Service after that assignment. The second one, again someone who has done well in the Foreign Service, was Ron Newman, Ambassador Newman's son, who later became ambassador himself to Algeria. I think he's currently deputy assistant secretary in NEA, though may now be ambassador to Bahrain.

Q: What was this north Iran? I assume there were Kurds there and Azeris and other people.

MAST: Yes, the main differentiation there would be, I would say, a high percentage - 75-80 percent - of the people in our consular district, which was about a third of the population of Iran, would be non-Farsi-speaking people. They might know Farsi, but it wouldn't be their mother tongue. So primarily, as you say, Azeris or Turks and Kurds. There were also Rashits near the Caspian who had different dialects as well. And then, of course, there were the more traditional heartland Farsi speakers in Khorramabad, Hamadan - those areas. It was really a nice mix of people and cultures.

Q: Well, this is 1970-74. Nixon is President. Kissinger is riding high. By this time he's the Secretary of State, I guess for most of that time. Did you get any high-level visits there?

MAST: Yes, I remember that one very well because it was just before I left Teheran, late May, early June of 1972. President Nixon, Kissinger, Haldeman, the whole crowd came out, and I was control officer of the guest house where Haldeman and Kissinger stayed. Another colleague of mine was in control officer of the palace nearby, where the President stayed. So we had quite a lot of interaction, at least in a logistic sense, with the visit.

Q: What was your impression of how the visit went, and just dealing with these people? I think it's sometimes interesting to get the junior officers' viewpoint of a presidential visit.

MAST: Well, one of the things that I thought was very intriguing concerned one of the people in the embassy who worked with the Agency and had incredible contacts with the imperial guard and people like that. He was in charge of one pretty important aspect of the visit having to do with motorcades and security, and at the end of the trip he said, "Well, one thing you won't have to worry about - we'll never have to handle this group again. I won't guarantee that the next party or the next administration will be any better, but at least we won't have to have another visit from these characters." Frankly, there were some people, a couple of Haldeman's staff and so forth, that I was sort of glad to see go to prison over Watergate, because they had just run roughshod over anybody from the embassy there. But that's unfortunately not unusual for a Presidential visit. I didn't mind Kissinger, and Winston Lord went out of his way to be considerate of junior officers.

Q: Up in Tabriz, how did you see your role as principal officer?

MAST: I think one of the reasons I got the job, after being commercial officer, is that I convinced the economic counselor and the DCM and, to a certain extent, Personnel in Washington (although it was logical to take an officer of my rank from the embassy who spoke the language and send him up to the consulate, because they'd done that before in Khorramshahr), that there were a lot of commercial opportunities in Tabriz. It had not been a commercial interest post before, but there had been six or eight major plants established in Tabriz starting in the late 1960s and going until 1974, actually. There were some that were established while I was there. Some of these were plants with Eastern European joint ventures. There was a Czech machine tool factory and a Romanian tractor factory, if you can believe it - later taken over by Massey Ferguson. SKF was there with a ball bearing plant, and Mercedes was there with an engine plant. There were a couple of American companies that were coming in, including Gould's to manufacture electric engines. Dorman Diesel, which was a British company, was there with a diesel plant. So there was a lot of investment going in. There were a lot of opportunities. I started work before I went there and then soon after I arrived we had a successful trade mission from the American Machine Tool Manufacturers Association. So there was beginning to be those kinds of opportunities in northwest Iran, that there hadn't been before. Now, in retrospect, I don't think we had a smashing success, but we had started something at that time that could have been carried out more successfully, obviously, if the Shah hadn't gone and the relationship hadn't changed.

Q: What was your impression as you looked at it, and also getting back to your Teheran times, about the ability of the Iranians to move within, rather than this mercantile role, manufacturing and getting into the heavy stuff?

MAST: I think they did fairly well. What happened is you had such a large group of Iranians - this is something that I found very unusual after my experience in Turkey - such a large group of Iranians that were being educated and had been educated abroad, particularly in the United States, so almost without fail, all of the managing directors,

deputy managing directors, and even the directors of many of the divisions within these companies would be returned Iranians from the United States, or in some cases from Germany, Britain, or from France. Some of them not only had degrees, but had worked for several years with International Harvester or companies like that. So that helped a great deal. Now obviously they still had to train people in industrial discipline, factory management, workers, the technicians - there were some problems. But I think they were doing fairly well with that.

Q: You mentioned that there were Rumanian and Czech factories. Were these sort of real, legitimate factories and that's what they were doing, or were they sort of a launching ground for other activities?

MAST: I think they were real factories. The Rumanian tractor they built was basically a copy of an old 1930s American International Harvester tractor, and of course it was going to be good for them. The Romanians could make a lot of foreign exchange out of this particular investment, and they'd use a lot of their own machine tools in putting it in. I think they had negotiated pretty well with the Iranian Government. The Czechs, of course, were pretty good in machine tools, and so I think that was it primarily. We had just recently gone through the Prague Spring. That happened before I got to Tabriz, but we had pretty good relations with the Czechs and with the Rumanians. I don't remember having them over that often, but we didn't have a problem with visiting their factories and things like that.

Now there was a Russian consul general and a Russian insurance agent in Tabriz who were doing some of the other thing that you're talking about.

Q: What was the situation between Iraq and Iran up in your area at the border there when you were there in 1972-74?

MAST: Well, there was starting to be quite a lot of problem with the Kurds in Iraq and to a certain extent in Iran, and so we were starting to do some reporting because we could get right to the border in many cases in Iran and could talk to some of the Iranian officials there. That was just starting in 1974, and Ron Newman, who was vice-consul and then was consul for two years did quite a lot of good reporting from 1974 to 1976. Of course, Kissinger really pulled the plug on our support for the Iraqi Kurds in 1975.

Q: I was wondering, this is not one of the more savory instances of American policy. When you were there, what were we doing? Were you aware of our support for the Iraqi Kurds at that time?

MAST: Yes, I guess we were aware, but it was still relatively early, the 1973-74 period, and so I don't remember a great deal. There was a great deal of curiosity on our part to get down to Teheran to try to find out what was happening. Of course, this often wasn't reported in diplomatic channels. I think Ron was probably a little more interested. He was a very aggressive young political officer, and as it picked up more in 1974, I started to back off a bit on my political travel and said, "Ron, you're going to be consul here next

year. You take that trip." So I did more of the commercial-economic, and even found myself doing some of the consular and administrative work so that he could do a little more reporting and traveling in the first year he was there, in 1973-74.

Q: Speaking of the consular side, way off on another thing, but did you get involved in the normal consular problem of the mixed marriages with the Iranians and Americans who get married? Usually it's the woman who's the American - and then children and then the marriage doesn't work and they can't take their kids out. Did you have that problem?

MAST: Yes, I came back from a consular trip to find out that my wife had an American living in our guest house on the property because her husband and the family had essentially thrown her out, and she had come there with their child, a six-year-old boy. It was pretty clear when we started talking to the family that they had no problem about her leaving - the husband was pretty weak - his father, ran that family, and so the American-educated husband of the American woman didn't really have a great deal to say about what was going on. He was willing to let his wife go, but he wasn't willing to let his son go. Eventually we were able to work that out, and the boy actually went back to the United States with his mother.

Q: How did you work that out?

MAST: I don't remember, just a lot of talking back and forth. Finally, I think the husband eventually came to see that his father was controlling the household and that there would still be an opportunity for him to see the boy in the United States, that the wife was not vindictive. The split would not necessarily be permanent, that there might be a chance to work something out again. But it was a very interesting month or so. Oh, and of course the stories that previous consuls or other Americans would tell were incredible. Stories about American women who had married Iranians and would come to Iran, their passports lifted the minute they entered Iran because under Iranian law they are property of the husband and therefore Iranian citizens. And some vice consuls would have stories about American women who had been chained to the bed. When the husband left in the morning he'd chain them to the bed because they couldn't be trusted, and then he'd come back at night and unlock them and they'd prepare the meal. It must have been a bit of a shock to American women.

Q: You said you had much greater connection with the community when you were in Tabriz.

MAST: Yes, we found this to be particularly true where there were mixed marriages, American or French or German or British, with an Iranian. They tended to be looking more for foreign friends. We had a swimming pool on the consulate compound, which we opened pretty much to our friends, and Americans, on the weekends. My wife - she had done this in Teheran as well and she continued in Tabriz because we had a lot of extra room in the consulate - started quite a large nursery school. There were a lot of Iranians who wanted to send their children there. So we had pretty good entrée then into the

university community, medical community - we knew a lot of doctors - some lawyers, businessmen, professionals out at the various factories - the engineers, people like that - though not such good contacts into the bureaucracy itself. But they were always open. We could call on them. We even got to know the chief of SAVAK - not that he told us anything, but we got to know him.

Q: Did you get any feel about this community, that there was a disaffection with it from, say, Tabriz from Teheran and sort of the center of the government and all that?

MAST: Yes, there was some of that. I think some of that was historical, some of it went back to the fact that in 1906, when you had the original constitutional revolution in Iran, it really started in Tabriz. So they felt that in a sense they were ahead of Teheran, but Tabriz was looked down upon in Iran.. It was considered the largest village in the country. In some cases it was. It hadn't had a great deal of investment. Investment was coming in to the university. It was growing, but there hadn't been very much in terms of cultural and economic and government investment. Some of the disaffection was because of that, and some of it was a question of language.

Q: How about the Azeris? How did you see their society and their allegiance?

MAST: Well, it was always interesting because, of course, we had lived in Turkey, and we took a trip to Turkey while we were in Tabriz, and then I went to Turkey after Tabriz. And the Turks, at least some of them, have this pan-Turanist view that really the Azeris are Turks more than they are Iranians, which I might have believed until I lived there. I mean, the Azeris may speak Turkish, and they may have some affinity to the Turks in Turkey, but they are Shia, and so from a religious point of view they are very much Iranian. And I think secondly, even from a national and a cultural point of view, if anything they would tend to look down on the Turks. I mean, "We're Iranians."

Q: The political reporting was mainly about the Kurds?

MAST: Yes. Occasionally, I remember a couple of different occasions where we had some university unrest in Tabriz. And particularly the second year there was one period where there were several demonstrations. We never could get the straight story. There may have been some deaths. There were certainly some bloody heads on campus. I don't think it was particularly political. Some of this would have to do with fees or it would have to do with a certain question of academic freedom and so forth, but obviously there were some underlying realities there as well in terms of the student unrest. The police would be called in, and they would just club heads. And I remember there were one or two days, particularly with the doctors from the hospital, many of whom had children in my wife's school, and my wife and I or others would talk to one of the doctors when they came. And, oh, these people were just beside themselves with what had happened, and the bloodshed, and "what they're doing to these students," and "what we saw in the hospital!" I thought, Oh, great, we're really starting to get some stuff here. By the next day, nothing had happened. Even these same people would argue nothing much had happened. And I don't think it was so much that anyone had come to them and said don't

tell the Americans or anyone what you saw or what happened. I think some of it was they may have been a little bit excitable, as it's natural they would be, but Iranians in some cases are even more excitable, so there may have been a little hyperbole in the initial story. But primarily, I think, they just mulled it over and thought what was to be gained by talking about this and protesting it and so forth. We'll just be quiet and things will go back to normal.

Q: Well, now, did the Shah or members of the immediate royal family appear in Tabriz often at all?

MAST: Not often. I remember at least one official visit when the Shah came and we all went out to the airport to meet him. One thing that struck me is how tall he *seemed* when I really knew that he was only I think about 5' 4" or 5' 5". But just from his bearing he really made himself seem several inches taller. Maybe he had elevator shoes, too, but I don't think so.

Q: Were we kind of watching what the Soviets were up to in the area?

MAST: A little bit, but I was convinced the consul there was pretty much a straightforward - drank a little too much - consul who had had several previous assignments. He was at least 20 years older than I was, and I think it was basically a sinecure for him until he could retire. Clearly, the "insurance person" (quote-unquote), who represented the Soviet insurance company and who spoke Azerbaijani Turkish as well as Farsi and Russian, was a KGB person, and our people in the embassy were at different times working back and forth with each other on that one.

Q: Were there any sort of crises or problems?

MAST: With the Russians?

Q: Just in the area when you were there.

MAST: No, other than these two or three incidents in the university and what we would see to a certain extent on the Kurdish border, I don't recall that there were any major other outstanding events.

Q: The oil fields of Mosul - where are they? Is that in your area?

MAST: Well, no, it's in Iraq, but, yes, it's in Iraqi Kurdistan, and we would go to Baneh, one and Kermanshah in Iranian Kurdistan. There were two or three other smaller cities right on the border, where the Kurds were fighting, and Ron Newman actually got to know Mullah Barzani and his family. That was somewhat easier to do between 1974 and 1976 when he was consul.

Q: One of the things that I gather the problem with the Kurds is that they never really get together.

MAST: Yes. There was the Talibani group and the Barzani group, and they could maybe make temporary alliances, but the families just hated each other. This would go back generations.

I want to say one thing about whether we did or did not have a feeling that something was going wrong with the Shah or something was going wrong with the American relationship with the Shah. We had two very good friends; one was a medical doctor who was head of the public health department in the province, and the other was a university professor. I remember one morning - probably two o'clock in the morning - and it was shortly after the Nixon-Kissinger visit and the press commented extensively on how many planes we were going to sell to Iran, F-14s, billions of dollars. And my friends started complaining about the sale of all the military hardware. They argued that the Shah had a big enough head already, was a strong enough ruler, a megalomaniac, and that we were pampering that sort of thing by encouraging him not only to have that role in Iran but in the entire region. All the money that was going to be spent on these arms could much better go back into economic development, education, health, things of this kind. And they were pretty bitter about it. That was really the first... I heard people speak so harshly. One didn't hear that sort of thing. They were obviously very confident of each other's friendship, and they must also have been pretty confident that their house wasn't bugged, because otherwise it would have been pretty dangerous to talk that way. But that's about the only case that I can remember where somebody really unloaded.

Q: Did you have a Peace Corps there?

MAST: Yes.

Q: I've interviewed somebody who may have been there at that time, Mike Metrisko. Did you know him?

MAST: Oh, I know Mike Metrisko well. I didn't know him at that time, although he may have been there in the Peace Corps. I knew Mike in Turkey later when he was working in the embassy. After he finished the Peace Corps, he became a GSO and he was our GSO in Ankara. He spoke fluent Turkish and Persian. He later was consul in Tabriz.

Q: Yes, yes, he did. How did you find the embassy? Did they show much interest in what was going on, or were they pretty well absorbed in Teheran?

MAST: They were pretty well absorbed in Teheran, although there would periodically be requests that we're doing such and such an update and so on and could you put input into this? It was somewhat difficult because both of the consulates - one in Khorramshahr, which is in the south, and Tabriz - were both too small to have our own communications system, so we could only handle things by pouch, and that was only every couple of weeks. So we would do a little double talk on the telephone. Or we'd go back to the one-tank time pad, which, as we all remember, was so complicated that in order to sit down and write a message on a one-time pad it would take you a week or two anyway.

Q: How did your wife like it there?

MAST: Oh, she loved it. If I liked the Foreign Service, my wife loved it. If I loved the Foreign Service, my wife was ecstatic about it. We never had any problems with it - Tabriz was one of her favorite places. She would go to the bazaar weekly. It was a great place.

Q: Did you get to travel around there much?

MAST: We traveled extensively in the consular district. We did quite a lot of traveling within Iran, and we went to Afghanistan and to Pakistan by car while we were in Teheran as well.

Q: Well, then, you left there in 1974. Whither?

MAST: Well, I was scheduled to take the econ course. I was an econ major, as I think I mentioned, but it was not particularly quantitative, and so I was scheduled to take that course in 1974. But around March or so the economic officer in the Embassy in Ankara had a heart attack - not that serious, but serious enough so that he had to leave. So they were casting around rather quickly, belatedly, in March, to find a Turkish language officer who could be there in June. Well, I think there were only two or three of us of the appropriate rank. In fact, I was somewhat junior for the job, but I got the job nevertheless and it was rather interesting when I got there. I was looking through the files for something or other, and there were a series of cables back and forth between Personnel and the embassy saying, well, Mast sounds like a great officer, but we really don't think he's got the requisite experience and economic background to handle this job. But of course, we were thrilled to go to Turkey, and we were not necessarily ready to go back to the States yet at that time anyway.

Q: So you were in Ankara from 1974 to 1977. What was the political and economic situation in Turkey when you arrived there in 1974?

MAST: Well, we arrived in June, and within a few days the Turks invaded Cyprus. There had been the coup in Cyprus, and the Greeks were supporting the Greek Cypriots.

Q: That was I think on July 14th or something.

MAST: Okay, I got there in June, so it was about a month. I was thrown right into it because of summer transfers where posts are always understaffed. I had a direct transfer, so I was there in early June and a language officer with previous Turkish experience, I got along well with Ambassador Macomber, so I ended up being control officer for Arnie Raphel and Joe Sisco and people like that, and doing a lot of work with the ambassador, not necessarily writing cables, but as a control officer. I would see the cables. Macomber was the kind of person who always wanted to talk about problems. I still remember bringing eyes-only cables to him from Kissinger in the middle of the night, and after reading it he would hand it to me and want to discuss it.

Q: Well, what was the view that you were picking up from the embassy about the Turks and what they had done there in Cyprus?

MAST: Well, of course, I went back a long way. I remember in 1964 when we were in Turkey in the Peace Corps and the bloody "bathroom murders," where the Greeks had murdered the Turks and so forth, so I must admit to a certain amount of localitis on that. I mean, I guess I thought it time for the Cypriot Greeks to get theirs. So I had a certain amount of sympathy with that. But nevertheless, obviously the fact that the Turkish Army invaded and was just moving very rapidly to take Greek territory as well as what had been more traditional Turkish territory bothered us a great deal. And that's a lot of what at least the initial diplomatic efforts tried to do, to get the Turks to stop the fighting - and Famagusta was one particular area I remember, and to retreat to more traditional Turkish land *and* to make a commitment to withdraw. They never made that commitment, and of course they're still there.

Q: Did you feel - you were brand new there, but were you picking up the mood of the Turkish people around, our normal contacts and all, about this whole situation?

MAST: Yes, what had happened in, was it 1965 or was it 1966, was the Johnson letter to the Turks. They were posed to invade Cyprus at that time under the 1960-61 guarantees, and Johnson basically said, "You invade Cyprus, we won't support you..." There were threats about NATO. It was really a very tough letter, which later, of course, became public. The Turks were telling us there would not be a Johnson letter this time. And the fact that they didn't tell us in advance that they were invading, though we saw it obviously by satellite. I think the Turks were very determined that this was going to be something that they were going to do on their own no matter what the cost might be to their relationship with the US, NATO, and the UN. And I think they, rightly, felt that they were more important to us than the Greek Cypriots were.

Q: I had just left Greece at the time, and I didn't become enamored of the Greeks as far as their policy, and from what I gathered, the Greeks had tried to pull a fast one and really put this Nikos Sampson, who was just a -

MAST: Just a thug, really.

Q: He was a thug, a real thug. So the Greek move was absolutely reprehensible, and the reaction was sort of understandable on the part of the Turks. Now maybe there were things that happened thereafter that maybe shouldn't have happened.

MAST: I remember for my experience that Embassies take on some of the colonization of the country and the Embassies in Pakistan and India or Greece and Turkey or Iran and Iraq engage in certain squabbles at times. I don't remember that from Athens and Ankara's perspective. Maybe a little bit later when the Turks were not making or honoring commitments. And of course later, when the colonels were overthrown, then it was somewhat of a new ball game from all sides.

Q: Well, then, of course, the Greek lobby, which next to the Jewish lobby is probably the

most potent politically in the United States, got cranked up. In fact, while you were there, I guess you were feeling the political heat from the United States, weren't you?

MAST: I think certainly in the 1975-76 period, and I don't remember whether it was a couple of years or 18 months or two and a half years, but we did have this tremendous pressure on the bases, which the Turks were threatening to close. We were refusing to sell arms. We were refusing to make certain types of military loans. The US Congress was trying to tighten the squeeze on Turkey due to their presence in Cyprus. And the Turks, in turn, were tightening the squeeze on us in terms of the bases and our listening posts. We could see some of this close at hand when the PX was forced to close.

Q: Well, then, while you were there, this was not a terribly close, friendly period, was it?

MAST: No, although I don't think of US-Turkish relations with huge mountaintops and valleys. I believe they stay fairly stable within a range of ups and downs. In Turkey, during that period, toward the end of the period - by 1977 - there was this incredible violence between the left and the right, and there were a lot of assassinations of even high-school-age children, certainly college and university - among the factions. And many of us wondered when the military would step in again. As it turned out, of course, they didn't until 1980. Ecevit was prime minister in 1974 and 1975, through that period, and had a relatively stable government for a while. Turkey also started to have some fairly serious economic problems and opened the country very widely to foreign loans. We had a lot of American banks coming through making short-term loans, sometimes longer-term, but mostly short-term loans.

Q: You were the economic officer - or an economic officer?

MAST: I was *the* economic officer. We had an economic counselor, a commercial attaché, and an economic officer.

Q: Well, then, what were you doing?

MAST: I did several things, but by the second year it was primarily finance and trade. We were so busy with bankers coming in, and while my boss would see some of them, I also got my share.

Q: Who was your boss?

MAST: Al Nyren. But as I discovered later in my career when I became economic counselor and wanted to continue to brief the bankers and the economists that would come through, there is only one person in the embassy who really has his hands on all the numbers, and that's the macroeconomic reporting officer, which is what I was. And so basically, I would see the bankers that came in. If they were senior, they might later talk to the counselor or the ambassador. And we had a flood of them because at the time Turkey had discovered there was this ocean of money in the United States and London that could be obtained under short-term loans as long as you paid slightly more than

LIBOR (the London Inter-Bank Offered Rate). As the Turkish economy deteriorated, however, spreads went to four percent, five percent, six percent, even eight percent above LIBOR. So they had high interest rates. I still remember these banks - American banks, Johnny-come-latelies, new to international lending, saying this is just too profitable to miss, we've just got to get it. They'd talk to me, of course, ask my advice, and I would give them all the cons, mostly, maybe a few pros. One of the things that really struck me at the time, and of course they proved to be right, is that they'd say Turkey is too important to fail, that regardless of the loans we make here, as a member of NATO and an important ally of the United States, they're good as gold. We may have some rocky places in the middle, but they will be repaid. And of course, that's basically been true all along the way.

Q: It's a calculation that's often forgotten.

MAST: What they call "moral hazard."

Q: So the bankers that came in weren't starry-eyed. They were pretty flinty-eyed, I guess, about what was happening. But what was the feeling, that if Turkey couldn't pay off, that the United States and other European allies would sort of kick in to help them?

MAST: Yes, there were two feelings. The first thought was that since these were six-month loans, we can get out in time. It's a little bit like the run-up in the NASDAQ last year. You know, there is so much new money coming in here that we'll always be able to get out in any six-month period if we really keep a close eye on this. So that was the economic side, where they thought they could get out. But of course the political side was that this is just too important a country to fail, and so there would be renegotiations maybe, or the IMF will have to come in, or there would be an additional World Bank balance of payments loan, but we'll get our money.

Q: Was there concern on their part that the military might take over and this would be a whole different ball game?

MAST: I don't remember that. This was more primarily economic that they were talking about. I think they felt that the military was as close to the United States in terms of the Cold War or in terms of their national feelings for the United States as were the politicians. Essentially under civilians or military rule, this was an alliance that would endure.

Q: How did you get your figures?

MAST: Well, a lot of them were available, because Turkey published pretty good numbers. Some of them I'd try to get ahead of time, of course, and for a lot of them I had to read between the lines a lot of times, and I got fairly good at that there.

Q: How did you get fairly good at that?

MAST: Well, there were some people at the Central Bank I got to know quite well. In fact, we were quite good friends with the director of foreign exchange. Whereas they wouldn't tell you things that were classified, you could talk to them and maybe bring some of their own published materials along and say, "Well, now, as far as I know, this means this, and that means this. Can I then assume from that that this will mean that?" And then they would say yes. It wasn't a secret. It was just something that they didn't really tell you in black and white. And so that was one of the ways. Also I knew people in the Ministry of Trade and Finance as well. There was a Brit that was pretty good in the British Embassy, and we'd exchange numbers as well.

Q: Since the bankers were playing such an important role, did they have watchers in Turkey, or did they come in from time to time?

MAST: Some of them had watchers. Obviously Citibank and some of the larger ones - Morgan Guaranty, J. P. Morgan - but many of these were just small banks. They were from Rhode Island or from Indianapolis. It was the era when American banks were all trying to become international, and so there would be some fellow who would come out who had maybe traveled a couple of times to Europe but had never really been outside of Europe, so he would always come to the embassy. And he would talk to other bankers as well. And they'd make \$50 million, \$100 million - these weren't necessarily huge loans - there would be line of credit, sometimes \$25 million - but it would really count up over time. I got pretty good at adding up all these numbers. I remember sometime in 1977 I sent a cable to the Treasury Department pointing out that it was two or three billion, which was an awful lot of money at that time, of exposure that American banks had in Turkey. It created a bit of concern because nobody had a clue that American banks had that much short-term exposure at risk in Turkey.

Q: Well, this is the same time when the same thing was happening down in Latin America, wasn't it?

MAST: Oh, yes. Turkey was not alone in that sort of thing. People were making those kind of loans.

Q: Yes, we went through a great banking crisis because of all the loans we had extended.

MAST: Right. Brazil, Argentina.

Q: Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and all that. At a certain point, was it on your watch that -
MAST: No, on my watch they managed to keep it going. It was starting to look bad, and a new counselor came in for my last year, Mary McDonald, and I got her well briefed, and she got somewhat concerned. She was pretty read up on the whole situation by the time I left, and things were starting to get a little worse in terms of the economy, but they were still paying off. If someone wanted to take a short-term loan out, there was enough short-term money coming in so that they could make the payment. So if that's the case, and they're getting an excellent rate of interest, normally the bank will turn it over again for another six months. So it was still going fairly well, but by about 1978 or 1979 - I

remember Mary was back in the States and I talked to her a couple of times, and you know things were going from bad to worse at that time. The person who replaced me had not perhaps had quite the economic experience I had had, was a little more on the commercial side, but also he really couldn't hit the ground running because I had had the three years to get on top of this bank situation. And Mary got so concerned that within six months there were two econ officers there. I took a certain amount of pride in being replaced by two officers.

Q: Just to sort of end that story, what happened eventually?

MAST: Well, the banks did get paid, but the Turkish Government in 1978-79 was reneging on a lot of the loans, and there was a renegotiation and consolidation of these loans. Many of the banks that had thought these were short-term loans ended up really making long-term loans at not very good rates of interest, but they were eventually paid back. As far as I know, everyone got their money eventually.

Q: Well, what in Turkey itself was generating... The money was coming in. What was Turkey generating to eventually pay off the loans?

MAST: There was a lot of investment going on, but Turkey at that time was still a very autarchic society. There were very few exports. Tobacco was their largest export, for example. They had hazelnuts and dried fruits, and some chrome. I would run down the list. So it was fairly easy for me to say, "Well, last year exports were I think 300 or 500..." They just really were not that large. Now there was a lot of money coming in from the Turkish workers in Europe, remittances were around two billion dollars annually. And of course there was aid and American military assistance and things of that kind, so that when one looked at the overall balance of payments, there were a certain number of things that could offset the high imports, because they were importing quite a lot of capital machinery to put into manufacturing. But it wasn't really until the 1980s that there was a boom in private investment, including private foreign investment.

Q: What was your impression. You weren't out in the field as much as you'd been in Iran, but sort of the Turkish economic productive system, as opposed to the Iranian economic productive system?

MAST: I think the Turks were a more disciplined workforce than the Iranians. But of course the factory workers and the factory production system that I knew in Iran was in a sense also Turkish. I mean, it was Azerbaijanis, so there was a certain amount of similar work ethic there.

It was very interesting on the military side. Of course the Iranian military was being built up dramatically in 1973 and 1974, and of course the Turkish military was very large but didn't have quite as much modern equipment. I remember one time in Tabriz an American colonel who had also served in both Iran and Turkey said that if the 8th Army in Erzurum in eastern Turkey were to invade Iran, they wouldn't even notify the General Staff until they were in Teheran. So in other words, the Turkish military would have no

problem. Iran would be a real pushover.

Q: How about the situation in Turkey. They've gone through various times of having left-wing terrorism, movements and all. What was it like during the 1974-77 period?

MAST: Well, certainly by 1976 and 1977, you're right, there was both very strong left-wing sentiment and very strong right-wing sentiment. There was Colonel Alparslan, one of the 14 army officers who had been part of the 1961 coup and later had been ousted from the group who later become a politician and set up what he called the Gray Wolves, which was very definitely a Turkish fascist organization. And they were very violent - against the left. There were tremendous clashes between the right and the left. And the Turkish left was more Maoist, actually, at that time than Soviet, or even Vietnamese and some of it was more like the Latin American "Carlos" people, almost terrorist cells.

Q: How about in your area, what sort of role were the universities - both the students and the faculty - playing?

MAST: We knew some of the faculty. We didn't know that many students. It depended on what university. Ankara University tended to be a fairly strong hotbed of the left. Middle East Technical University, which was a creation of the Rockefeller Foundation and USAID in the 1960s, was an English language university, and had more international students, while it was leftist was not particularly much of a hotbed. Istanbul Technical University was also a very strong leftist stronghold. But at other universities, newer universities sometimes on the outskirts of the big cities or in the smaller provincial cities, there were strong right-wing nationalist groups. So you could have students killing students very easily.

Q: Well, then, how about life in Ankara? How did you find it?

MAST: In Teheran we had never had any problems with heat or electricity or water or anything, although we didn't have central heating in Teheran - we had a kerosene stove. By and large things worked very well. And I still remember getting to Ankara in 1974, and the gas wasn't working right because they were changing pipelines and there just wasn't enough gas. They made gas from coal, and it wasn't very high-quality gas in any case. They were putting in a new forty-eight inch water pipe out in the outlying areas, so we never had enough water the first few months. Power was pretty reliable. I don't remember that being a particular problem. And then we discovered, when we got into winter, that the landlord lived on the top floor of our three unit building. He tended to be very tight with the heat, so we had some problems with heat as well. But we had a magnificent 300-square-meter apartment, so we thought it was pretty nice - at least in the summer.

Q: Was it safe to go out and travel around at all?

MAST: Yes. It's very interesting. When I think back carefully, I recall that Black September was on the loose in the Middle East and in Iran. Of course, there were American military who had been assassinated by terrorists in Istanbul and in Teheran

during the period either that I was in Tabriz or in Ankara, but very close at hand. And I remember we did vary our routes and all this sort of thing. But nobody really worried very much about traveling outside of the capital or outside of the major cities. Obviously we were informed as to what was happening, and we'd plan a trip and we'd go.

Q: Did the drug trade, particularly poppies and all that, play much of a role at that point?

MAST: Yes, but Ecevit was just starting to work closely with us during that time, I remember, in 1974 or early 1975, and we had various programs or were putting programs in place with AID support to move farmers from growing the poppies in Afyou to grow substitute crops. At that time there was obviously smuggling going on as well, but I don't remember hearing a great deal about that. There was always the Turkish-Marseille route, of course, we would hear about that.

Q: Was there any contact at your level between our embassy in Athens and Ankara on anything?

MAST: Not much that I remember. I remember some early on with the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, and then we would have people from Washington visit both capitals. Sisco came out two or three times. I think Kissinger was out once or twice as well, and then some of his staff assistants would be people who had maybe been a pol-mil officer in Ankara, or Athens. And while we'd do a lot of talking together and obviously there would be traffic, I don't remember a great deal of contact back and forth. I think occasionally there would be a visit; maybe the pol-mil officer or maybe the political counselor would visit back and forth, but I don't remember my visits on the econ side.

Q: Was Macomber the ambassador pretty much the time you were there?

MAST: Yes, Macomber had come just a little while before I came, and he left about the same time. I think we almost left on the same plane. He left in August of 1977.

Q: How was he as an ambassador?

MAST: I liked him. He could be very mercurial. He could be very hard on the political officers. You had to have a very, very strong political counselor or he was his own political counselor. But on the econ side he was not particularly well informed, and once he was pretty sure that *you* knew what you were talking about we never really had any problems.

Q: I talked to Mike Metrisko talking about being a staff aide there and saying that the problems he had of the ambassador with all the dogs that he had and sometimes forgetting to put clothes on and all that.

MAST: I remember going to the airport, and I'd do this quite often with Macomber because I was often a control officer and he'd just say, "Well, ride with me in the

limousine." But there would be a dog, always a dog. And I once, just to make conversation, said, "You know, that's quite an attractive dog." "Well, it's interesting you think so. I certainly don't think so, but his mother does." His mother? His mother? Well, of course, that was Mrs. Macomber. It's the first time in my life, I guess, that I heard people talking about being mothers and fathers to dogs. But they were very serious about it.

Q: Again, according to Mike, it was kind of dangerous to take your children to the Macomber because he collected street dogs.

MAST: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Q: And he would come out with puppies and sort of say, "Would you like to take this home?" Did you run across any of that?

MAST: Oh, yes, we'd see that all the time. But after Douglas MacArthur II, who as I said never knew my name - I think I was invited maybe once or twice to the residence, and that would be official functions, Fourth of July or the Christmas party where you got to escort guests to greet him. The real *old* Foreign Service - and then to be with Macomber was much different. They were just incredibly open. I was in the residence dozens of times. Macomber would insist, and I mean *insist*, on being invited to officers' parties, and he would inevitably make an appearance. This would really raise your own prestige. You'd give a little party for a few foreign diplomats and Turkish contacts, and here, well, the ambassador would come in and shake hands and "Who are you?" and "How are you?" and all that. And he'd go to three or four or five parties in a night. Some officers thought, well, he's kind of interfering insisting on coming, but I think most of us were quite flattered, obviously. He also would give small dinner parties where a couple officers could invite a couple Turkish contacts. They of course were flattered to get to know the Ambassador. And I don't know if Mike would have mentioned this, but my wife was quite involved in church groups, and Mrs. Macomber was constantly checking with her about needs for people and do I send flowers? And if Macomber was not informed that any relatives of his staff were in the hospital, that staff aide would hear about it, or his secretary. That was almost cause for almost dismissal, because the Macombers demanded to know this kind of thing and to be right there providing support. They were very good that way.

Q: You never ran across his legendary temper, which I understood went up and down within a couple of minutes.

MAST: I had on one or two occasions, but not the legendary ones, just a minor flare-up. But I have seen it, oh, yes, with political officers particularly. I never knew him to stay angry long or hold a grudge. And the only thing that was probably worse than the actual temper tantrum was that Macomber would never apologize, but he would spend hours trying to make up for his tantrum. I mean he would call in an hour and say, "How are things going? Is everything all right? Is your wife comfortable?" On and on and on. And it got embarrassing for people after a while. It became sort of like, "Well, yell at me,

scream, but then leave me alone." But his heart was in the right place.

Q: In 1977 did they finally get you back to Washington?

MAST: Yes, then I came back to Washington, and I did take the economics course from August of 1977 until January. A fun course.

Q: Well, having been inundated in macroeconomics and microeconomics, you must have found that you had really picked up an awful lot sort of by- You took the course, what, it would be 1977-

MAST: Six months, August 1977 to January, 1978.

Q: Yes, into 1978.

MAST: Of course, there was a difference between practitioner economics and academic economics, as I learned all over again. And I didn't have, obviously, much of a problem with the macro or with the balance of payments, international trade, and some of those courses except insofar as international trade, in terms of its effects on the balance of payments was only a small part of the course. I had to learn the Heckscher-Ohlin Model all over again, and all the theoretical causes of trade imbalances and so forth, not just what happened in Turkey or what happened in the 19th century or the Great Depression. There also was a very heavy emphasis on mathematics, on quantitative analysis, which I had not had very much of in college, and I had a weak math background in high school. So I had a lot of trouble with the earlier math part of the course. I flunked it, but still managed to do quite well in the rest of the economics courses and managed to pass statistics and even econometrics - but just barely.

Q: Did you find having more than many in the field as a practitioner - I mean, you weren't getting ready to go out. You were coming back from having been a practitioner, maybe in a certain field. Did you get any feel for the theory and where it was going and whether it made much sense?

MAST: Yes, there were some people who would sort of kick against the pricks, so to speak. Well, I've been there, and this really doesn't make any difference, and who cares about this model? I decided no, this is really an academic exercise. When they need me to put in some input they'll ask, or if there's a unique opportunity to put in a practical example. But there isn't time for that kind of war story or that kind of resisting an academic program. And all of us were going to take the Graduate Record Exam at the end of our term, and I thought that was a pretty important element in case I wanted later to go on to graduate school. In any case, it's good to have on your record. So I played the game seriously.

Q: I know. When I went to the Army Language School - this is back in 1951 - as an enlisted man, the motto there was "Don't fight the system." This was language teaching. Don't try to argue it; just accept it as it is - which makes very good sense.

MAST: We could, of course kibbitz after class. We had an area where we all had small desks, where we had a chance to do our work or eat lunch. We would sometimes talk about how ridiculous some of this is; it doesn't work in a practical world. It's very interesting that Bruce Duncombe, who was the head of the program at the time, an economist at Georgetown who had left to become head of the FSI program, later joined the Foreign Service. He was in my retirement class in 1998 and had served several times as economic counselor in major American embassies such as New Delhi, Cairo and Jakarta, as well as Office Director in EB.

Q: His name is what?

MAST: Bruce Duncombe. I think he would be a very interesting person to interview because he had the academic and practical Foreign Service experience.

Q: Do you know where he is, by any chance?

MAST: He lives in Maryland, I think Bethesda or Chevy Chase. He had the academic experience at Georgetown and then the academic experience at FSI and then the economic experience abroad and in Washington.

Q: Well, then, what did they do with you when you got out in January something 1978?

MAST: Well, along the way, we were being interviewed and recruited, actually, by EB because there were a number of people that EB was interested in getting, and I flattered myself that I was one. I was interviewed for several jobs. Some of the people in the class had ongoing assignments. They were going back to the Desk or they were going to language training and going overseas. I did not have - and there were several of us who did not - but I got a job in EB in General Commercial Policy which dealt with trade problems of developing countries. I worked there for three and a half years.

Q: So that would be 1978 to about 1981.

MAST: Right.

Q: Tell me about the EB bureau at that time. It's gone through various stages, and you talked before about it was pretty prestigious. How did you feel about it in 1978-81. Was it still riding high?

MAST: I think it was still fairly good. Jules Katz and Dean Henson were both assistant secretaries within the period I was there, and I don't remember which one came first. I think actually Jules Katz was first, and then he later went over to USTR, and then Dean Hinton came in.

But I considered it a pretty strong bureau at that time, particularly in trade policy. We had some pretty good people. Bill Barraclough was our deputy assistant secretary. Harry

Kopp was the office director, and Sharon Ahmad earlier. I think we had a fair amount of influence. We were very actively involved in the interagency process in terms of the Tokyo Round. I worked on the generalized system of preferences. Richard Cooper was the under secretary for economic affairs at the time, and he was a very good economic player - I think maybe one of the top economic under secretaries we've ever had. He was highly respected in the other agencies which gave us more influence than we might otherwise have had.

Q: Your job was dealing with what, now? You were in the office for -

MAST: I primarily dealt with the generalized system of preferences, which was a program of preferential tariff preferences for developing countries. Under the GATT there was a specialized derogation from GATT rules so countries did not have to give equal treatment to all countries; rather, they could give better treatment to developing countries. We passed that program in 1975, somewhat later than the Europeans, and it was going to be in place for five years. It was later extended several times. The program was administered through the GSP subcommittee. While USTR was actually responsible for the administration of the program, there were mid-level officers - GS-12, 13 (at the time I guess I was an FS-4, probably) - from State, from Treasury, from Labor, from Commerce, from Agriculture, and from USTR who would meet together regularly at USTR. Being a member of the GSP subcommittee was essentially a full-time job. I may have had a few other things that I did, but what would happen is that at certain times of the year, American companies would petition to have products added to this duty-free list, or they'd petition to have products taken off the duty-free list. Foreign governments would petition to have products added, so we constantly had diplomats coming in asking how their particular country could get more involved in GSP. I would sometimes go out and give seminars for the program overseas or in the United States. I was a member of the subcommittee for two and a half years. I was promoted in 1979, and in 1980 I became deputy chief of the five or six people we had in the office. Then I didn't work on GSP on a day-to-day basis; rather I had more supervisory responsibilities.

Q: Well, where were the countries that you were particularly looking at that were of particular interest? I mean some countries were so far down the scale that in a way it really didn't make a hell of a lot of difference what we did. Or am I correct?

MAST: No, no, you're definitely right, and of course what happened is that when we put the program into effect in 1975, a lot of the poorer countries, least developed or way down the scale, as you say, on the development cycle thought that this was going to be a great program for them. Well, if you didn't have anything to export, it wasn't really going to help you very much. And so the countries, as you would expect, the countries that really took advantage of GSP and took as much as 80 percent of the program benefits were Brazil, Mexico, Taiwan, Korea, and Singapore.

Q: When you look at it, these were countries, with maybe the exception of Mexico - well, Mexico, of course, has its own peculiar economy - but these were major countries, basically.

MAST: Even by 1975 they were important trading countries, but what the program did do is that, for example, the Japanese were the primary producers of many consumer items during the 1950s and 1960s exported to the United States. Well, by the 1970s, the Koreans and even more particularly the Taiwanese, were starting to move into all these kitchen utensils and all the kind of things you use around the home and in the car in a pretty big way. But when we would give Taiwan and Korea and to a certain extent Singapore a five to 15 percent tariff preference - sometimes even more - over the Japanese, obviously that tended to accelerate the shift of that sort of production over to Korea and to Taiwan. Thus, what we discovered over this five-year period is that, in effect, what happened is it became even more difficult for Kenya to break into furniture because they weren't going to get any advantage over Taiwan. Taiwan by that time was so productive and so efficient that we came up with the concept of "graduation." That is, in order for Kenya, for example, to have a chance in furniture against Taiwan we would have to consider removing Taiwan's preference either by product or perhaps even remove preference for all its exports.

Q: We're talking about real money.

MAST: Oh, billions.

Q: There must have been screams and yell. I mean the Japanese must have been mad as hell.

MAST: Well, no, because the Japanese were part of the problem, or the solution, however you look at it. I mean the Japanese, the US, and the Community - and I think Australia and Canada - were the people who had decided to set up this program in 1966. The concept started in 1966, but it really wasn't until the early 1970s that it came into effect. So, yes, I think the Japanese recognized that this shift was happening in any case and that it was a forced way for them to move some of their production out of these things that weren't as productive or weren't as profitable and to move more into upscale products. So the Japanese didn't complain formally. There might have still been some interest among Japanese manufacturers that this particular item not be added to GSP because that would drive their manufacturers out of business more quickly than otherwise.

But the main opposition to the program would in general come from American manufacturers. And the main support would come from American importers.

Q: How did you do? Just sort of put them in a room and let them fight it out together?

MAST: Well, it was very interesting. We would have public hearings. We would go through all of these items in the subcommittee first and fight it out ourselves - Labor, Commerce, the ITC would come up with a report and say, "You can't add that item to GSP; it's got a 15 percent duty on it, and that will drive American companies out of business just by giving that preference. And besides, Taiwan or Brazil or Singapore are efficient in that item; they don't need that preference, and that preference is not going to

be passed to lesser developed countries because it's going to all be grabbed by the more developed ones." So then we might not even have public hearings on that item. But on the other hand, we'd have a wide range of items that there might be a fight about in the interagency committee, but everybody would agree that these are items that could be at least considered. Then we'd have public hearings. Sometimes we traveled around the country for public hearings, depending on the items.

Q: Did the lesser developed countries - were they able to combat this, or say we're being discriminated against? You said you graduated this, but would you look, say, at Kenya and say, you know, they can produce furniture and maybe we can help them along in that?

MAST: No, it was very interesting. I went to two or three UNCTAD meetings in Geneva, and there was great solidarity among the developing countries. The Singaporeans and Brazilians have magnificent diplomats, and they would work very hard at this: we are in this together; this is a trade preference program for *developing* countries. Later, of course, the UN started talking about "the least developed," a group of about 40 countries. But even the UN and UNCTAD did not really dare to talk about more preferences for the least developed than for the developed because graduation was a very explosive topic during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Q: Where did this idea of graduation come from? I mean it was pretty much an obvious thing that at some point you had to come up with this-

MAST: I'm not quite sure who was the first person who came up with it. Of course, we had graduation in other areas. We had AID graduate countries. When a country would reach a certain *per capita* level, AID would end its program. I got to Iran in 1970. It was a very recent AID graduate. Turkey became an AID graduate in 1976 or 1977. Korea certainly was an aid graduate. So the concept existed in USAID. We also had it from a World Bank perspective. The World Bank would make zero interest rate loans and then later, of course, would gradually move up to the market rate as countries became more developed. So it wasn't a totally new concept, but I don't recall who first came up with the idea to apply graduation to GSP.

Q: Was it the United States or one of the-

MAST: We were the leader in this, yes, much more so than the Community, although the Community gradually came to see this as well because the countries that were taking the primary preferences for them were many of the same countries such as South Korea and Brazil. (I don't remember whether Taiwan got preferences from the Community because we always had a different relationship with Taiwan than they did).

Q: Let's talk a little bit about the European Community. I would have thought, I mean, here is the country which has a lot of rather disparate economies in this thing. I mean they're all trying to put on a unified face, but the difference between Portugal and Germany is considerable, particularly in those days. How did you find dealing with the

Community? Was there a community that you dealt with, or did you - I'm talking about the American delegation - deal with the Germans on one hand and the Spanish on another?

MAST: No, not very much. It would tend to be at GATT or, more likely, at UNCTAD that the Europeans would spend a great deal of time caucusing, and in fact, we would spend hours some times just waiting because, the US - we were the US, we didn't need to caucus! And the EC would have to come up with a common position. Now sometimes we would try to find out from the Germans or the Danes or someone what was going on. Usually the French were a little more protectionist and the Danes and the Dutch were more liberal, of course, so they'd have to try to bring that together. But it was a rather cumbersome arrangement. I found it rather cumbersome dealing with the Community, and then we always had to write resolutions at the end of every meeting, which is something that I really dislike doing, because there would always be pressure to get you to try to commit to slightly more than what your instructions would permit. But again, with the Community, if they were on board, then they could really push. But then if we would accept a little but demand a little more back or something, then they'd have to caucus again. It would just take hours and hours before you'd get through some of these meetings. That was one of the things I remember the first time I went to an UNCTAD meeting. It was supposed to start at ten; I was there at a 9:45. And of course it didn't start until 12:00 primarily because the Community was caucusing.

Q: You were there during the Carter period. This was a Democratic administration. Did you find that it, from your point of view, had a different cast from maybe a republican one, or are we pretty unified on trade questions?

MAST: Well, of course, the GSP program had just been passed in 1975 in the Ford Administration, and it started in 1976. Carter people were new to the program, but as a liberal Democratic administration, I think they probably supported it somewhat more wholeheartedly than the Republicans had. Although certainly Ford had signed the legislation. And Carter had people like Cooper, who was an academic economist and a trade specialist from Harvard, who was the under secretary and had a good reputation in the Administration, and of course other people like him at Commerce and USTR.

Q: How did you find the USTR with the State Department relation? Was it somewhat adversarial?

MAST: Well, I think EB and USTR, at least at that time, had a pretty good relationship. I think there were parts of the State Department that didn't have such a good relationship. Usually more the Desks than the bureaus, but many times they didn't have too good a relationship with EB, either, because we would tend to be somewhat more oriented toward the interagency process. I always saw EB as kind of as an interface. We would explain real world trade policy to the bureaus, and we in turn then would talk to USTR and other agencies about some of the political problems that would happen if they did XYZ.

Q: Well, I would assume that the economic people on the Desks would see the problem in individual countries when you were trying to promote a much more global policy.

MAST: Well, yes and no, but my experience was - there were exceptions, obviously, and some of them were superb - that most of the economic officers on the Desks were not that knowledgeable about trade policy. Trade policy is a pretty esoteric part of overall economic policy, so even if one had worked abroad in balance-of-payments reporting or analyzing trade flows, one didn't necessarily know all that much about GATT. I think that desks became somewhat more expert in the 1980s and '90s, but I don't think this was as obvious in the 1960s and '70s. So there were a lot of economic officers in the Bureaus, they'd give me a call and say what's this "Generalized System of Preferences"? Of course, it was quite specialized, and I'd start explaining it to them. I'd start talking about Most Favored Nation, and sometimes they'd say what's "Most Favored Nation?" So I was not overwhelmed, let's say, with at least the trade policy knowledge of the average economic officer on the Desk.

Q: Well, then, you left there in 1981.

MAST: Right.

Q: And then whither?

MAST: Well, when it came time for me to take a job overseas again, I decided I wanted to work, obviously, in economics. I wanted to work where I could make some use of my trade policy background. I wanted to also do something in terms of balance of payments, which I'd enjoyed so much in Turkey, and I now had a little better academic background after the economic course to do that sort of thing. I had also been deputy chief of the section, and I was an FS-3 at the time (which translated into a 1, of course, later), so I thought I had a shot at becoming economic counselor in a smaller embassy. And I remember when I served in Teheran and Ankara, we had a number of officers there who had been "glopped" out of Southeast Asia.

Q: Global outlook: the main idea was to get the Europeans out of Europe and the South Americans out of Latin America, get them to look around.

MAST: There were quite a number of people who came from Southeast Asia to the Middle East. And I thought Teheran and Ankara were great, and I loved working there, and I knew the languages, but these newcomers would inevitably shake their head and say, "Oh, compared to Jakarta, compared to Singapore, compared to Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok, this is hell - this is nothing. That's where people really live and you really work," and so on. So I thought they let me have a little of that. There was a job available as economic counselor in Singapore, which was slightly overreaching for me, but I had a very good interview with the ambassador and was his number two choice. There was a job for economic counselor in Kuala Lumpur, which is one of the most highly bid jobs at the FS-1 level for econ officers. But I knew the Desk officer, so I had a shot at that. And there was a job in Jakarta as the economic officer, number two in the section, which

probably made a little more sense for me. If I hadn't been so naive about how the personnel system really operated, I would have known that you don't really put all your eggs in three bids in the same bureau because they'll decide where you're going to go, and it would almost certainly have been Jakarta. I was also quite competitive for Sri Lanka and for Rumania. Those were two good jobs I was also interested in. But we were very pleased to get Jakarta.

Q: So you went to Jakarta in 1981, and you were there until 1984.

MAST: And I did very much the same thing I did in Turkey - all macro stuff, bankers, finance, a lot of reporting, writing the *Economic Trends Report*, some on trade, although we had a trade officer. It was a bigger economic section. The officer who did trade policy was a great guy, but he was innumerate. He just couldn't make any concept out of ratios and so on, so he was always getting me to do his trade analysis stuff, to examine the bald numbers. He'd go make the representations on trade policy and the GATT, but if he had to talk about numbers he wanted me to do it.

Q: What was the economic and political situation in Indonesia when you arrived there in 1981?

MAST: We had recently gone through the Iranian revolution of 1979, and gas prices were really quite high at the time, so Indonesia was doing quite well. Again, here was another country, like Iran, where the overwhelming percentage of its export earnings were based on oil and gas, and so if oil prices are high they're going to be booming. If oil prices are low they're going to be hurting. If it's sort of in between they can manage. At the time, Indonesia had what was known as the "Berkeley Mafia." They had four or five people that had Ph.D.s in economics from Berkeley. Wijojo, Wardhana, Samarland, and others, who were basically running the economy for Suharto. And they did a pretty good job, I think.

Q: Well, was there a lot of money running around looking for places to invest in those days as there had been before, or had this kind of dried up?

MAST: No, we had a very aggressive, very active AmCham - American Chamber of Commerce. This was the first post where I came face to face with an active American Chamber of Commerce. They'd meet monthly. They'd also had a lot of active committees. We'd have something at the ambassador's at least once a month where we'd have various briefings on problems, or they'd brief Embassy officers. American businessmen would also do more detailed briefs for members of the Economic Section. There were quite a few investment opportunities, but of course it was pretty much driven by the "oil patch," as they say. There were lots of American oil companies, oil service companies. Other firms such as Ernst and Young, accounting firms, had a lot of their work with the oil sector as well, with the American companies and other foreign companies or with Pertamina, the Indonesian oil company. So if you'd start scratching and say, "Find people who are not at all associated with the oil community," that was a pretty small group, obviously.

Q: What about much later, the Suharto regime collapsed mainly because of the corruption of the family, the poor economic situation, mainly because of both poor investment and corruption, and the whole process was rotten? How was it when you were there, particularly in 1981-84?

MAST: Well, in 1981-84, there was corruption in Indonesia. There's no question about it. But I always felt that a certain amount of the corruption in Indonesia facilitated economic efficiency. I remember an Australian scholar in the early '80s who argued this theory. He said in essence that we have a running machine that's the country, and there are all kinds of people always putting sand in the gears because they want to try to stop that machine long enough for them to get their share, or if they can stop that machine somebody may pay them to get the machine to run again. Consequently, lubricant had to be added to the machine in order to compensate for the sand that was being thrown in. Lubricant was a certain kind of corruption, but it was needed to counteract the sand. The machine basically ran pretty well. I don't think the senior ministers were very corrupt, although they were well compensated. Suharto's wife, whose name was Madame Tien, she was called "Madame Ten Percent" because she supposedly was scooping off ten percent. But that was nothing in retrospect. If she was scooping off ten percent, it was ten percent of certain types of batik factories and *solo* - you know, traditional stuff, a few hundred thousand dollars or something. Corruption wasn't really gross until we got into the 1980s and the '90s, where the six children of Suharto who were incredibly greedy and incredibly competitive with one another just raped that country. They would all have to be *the* major partner in various major investments that went into the country. The children were still relatively young when I was there, although some of them were getting into their 20s by that time, so we were starting to hear some of this, but not a great deal. It didn't really happen until the 1990s.

Q: Were American bankers still coming sniffing around for good investments?

MAST: Oh, yes. There were some good branches. Citibank had an operation there. J. P. Morgan, I thought, had just a branch office, but they had a superb banker, who was one of my main contacts. I'd go see him often and share war stories and intelligence. And Chase had a good operation there, and there were a number of others. American Express, Chemical, Bank of New York. And then there were a lot of American banks in Singapore, their Asian offices would be in Singapore, sometimes Hong Kong, sometimes Japan, so they'd come regularly. I had many more visitors in Jakarta than I had in Turkey. It was a very active place.

And we also had an oil attaché who was very good, a fellow named Dick Morford, and so we would tend many times to see bankers together because the oil sector was so important. Or sometimes they'd see him and then later they'd come to see me or the Economic Counselor.

Q: How about the statistics and information you'd get from the Indonesian Government? Was that -

MAST: That wasn't as good as Turkey, by any means. It was a little more complicated and a little more difficult, although there again I got to know some people at the Central Bank and used the same system. I take the written form and say, well, what does this mean and can this be trusted, and is this more trustworthy than that and so forth? Usually they were quite willing to talk about their own documents, so it was a way to get a pretty good feel as to how seriously one could take the numbers. This was the first time - it happened again later - but there was a superb IMF rep and he was discreet in terms of gossip, but very willing to share his analysis of the numbers because he knew we would hold it confidential or might use it but wouldn't source it to him, and so we would meet every week or two, actually, to go over numbers. That was helpful, since he was in the Central Bank and had better access than I did.

Q: How did you feel about Indonesia, where the economy was going and how it was working?

MAST: I guess I saw its potential as something like Kran's, there was more potential in Turkey, I thought, because they were doing more in the manufacturing area, and Turkey was a tremendously rich agricultural economy as well, more so than Iran and in some ways more so than Indonesia. Indonesia had such incredible population pressures on Java, though Java is the most fertile place on earth, except maybe for Bangladesh. You can just put a stick in the ground and it will grow, but the populations pressures were such that it was very difficult. Indonesia had tremendous resources of gas and oil, and they were finding more and more gas all the time, so that there was clearly going to be - if they could keep the politics together - the economic wherewithal over a series of several decades to have the resources to continue rapid economic development.

Q: What was the role of Singapore? You mentioned Singapore. Was that sort of the R&R banking center or something?

MAST: Yes, Singapore was important for all the countries in the region. They didn't always get along well with each other, of course, and as arrogant as Lee Kwan Yew was, it wasn't always easy to get along with him.

Q: He's not warm and fuzzy.

MAST: That's right. Nor are the Singaporeans. There is this incredible emphasis on meritocracy and on elimination of corruption, and "the reason we can't have a democracy..." or "the reason we can't have XYZ is because otherwise it will lead to corruption," with the implication that everybody else was corrupt. It was an important place for the embassy people in the region too. That was where we'd go to the doctor and the dentist and so on. Later, Indonesia got a little more developed, and people would tend to use medical facilities there. Our kids went to the Jakarta International School, which at the time was probably one of the top five international schools in the world. It was an incredible institution, primarily built with oil company money and a lot of oil company input. And some students would go off to Singapore and come back with a frozen Big Mac, which they later put in the microwave to take to school the next day to eat for lunch and make all the rest of the kids jealous, because Big Mac had not yet opened in Jakarta.

Q: We're talking about MacDonal'd's.

MAST: Yes.

Q: How about life in Jakarta for you and your family?

MAST: It was very nice. We had housing in the Pertamina oil village, where there were a lot of oil company people, but also a lot of Indonesian senior officials. For example, [Bacharuddin Jusuf] Habibie, who was a minister at the time and later, of course, became president for a while after Suharto, lived in that Pertamina village. The house had two huge Carrier air conditioners, and was centrally air conditioned. The embassy had gotten a very good rate on the rent for six houses there during a period when the oil patch had declined a little bit and there weren't as many Americans there. So we were able to rent these houses at a very good rate, but they didn't really realize how much it would cost to air condition them. But nevertheless, we had long-term leases, so we had one of those houses, and it was very nice with a great garden and landscaping.

And as I've mentioned, the school - the kids loved the school. My wife taught music at the elementary school three days a week, and this was professionally very good for her. She had the Cricket Choir, which was the third and fourth graders, and we were very involved in a great international interdenominational church. So I think living was as good as it got. The traffic was not that bad. By 1984 it was starting to get worse, and of course now it's terrible. The 1970s and the early '80s were very livable in Southeast Asia.

Q: Were we looking at Indonesia as an economic unit and concerned about the variety of nationalities and the extent of the... You've got so many islands and all that?

MAST: Yes, I traveled a little, and we had a couple of other people in the Economic Section that loved to travel, and of course the oil attaché had to be sure to get out to more areas, and we had someone who did minerals, so that got him to Irian Jaya, where the big Freeport copper mine was located. I mainly traveled in Sumatra and Java. My wife actually did a lot more traveling than I did, particularly during the last year. She had a group of Indonesian friends, maybe as many as 15, and that was where we saw the multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-religious character of Indonesia. I mean, these were Chinese Christians, they were Muslims, they were Javanese, they were from Sumatra, they were from all over. They did a lot of traveling together. There would be a wedding in some city - Palembang or Bukittingi or somewhere in Sumatra - and then she'd get to know the Minankabau culture. There were all these different cultures. Indonesia is a world, in many ways, as much as a country, like India very much, in that sense. My wife really got into the nitty-gritty much more than I did that way at these places. Then they'd be off to Turaba, which is a very strong Christian area on Sulawesi, and she'd walk across these rice paddies to go to church, and she'd hear people singing hymns all across the valley.

Q: Often it's the wives who really introduce the society to embassy people.

MAST: I got to know many of these husbands as well. Though I didn't get to know them as well as she got to know the wives, obviously.

Q: Was there any feeling of discontent at this particular time of the Suharto regime?

MAST: Some. I'd hear them talk more than I heard Iranians talking about the Shah when we were in Iran, for example. I don't think the secret police were nearly as powerful, nearly as ubiquitous as they were in Iran. But the Indonesians - I don't mean to say that they are Chinese in this - but there was a concept, the "mandate of heaven" kind of thing, that Sukarno had it for, whatever, 20-some years, and now Suharto has it, and we got pretty good economic development during his time compared to Sukarno's. There are things that, you know, I like to complain about, and I do complain a little bit, but after all, he lets us complain a little bit. There was a lot of that.

Q: Did Vietnam play any role, or had it sort of off the map?

MAST: I think it was pretty much off the map by that time. There was still some discussion within ASEAN. Of course, Vietnam was later to become a member of ASEAN, and there was some discussion about, well, should they be a member or when could they become a member or eventually they'll become a member sort of thing, but I don't remember anything more definite.

Q: Did ASEAN play a role, from your perspective? Did you deal with it, or were we dealing strictly with Indonesia pretty much from the embassy?

MAST: On the economic side, particularly on the trade side, we tended to do a lot more with ASEAN than with any other side of the fence. We wanted to do more - certainly the Secretary and people around him - wanted to do more with ASEAN particularly on the military side or to use ASEAN vis-à-vis China or Burma or our relations with Vietnam. And so we would have yearly - and this was religiously adhered to: where the Secretary would have consultations with all of the ASEAN foreign ministers. And they in turn with the foreign minister of Japan and the EU and so forth. It was a major multi-lateral forum when the ASEAN foreign ministers would get together. It was always very interesting. I have attended a number of these sessions both when I was in Washington and when I was overseas, and we would come in and want to talk about various political or security subjects, and they would inevitably have trade complaints. Why certain products weren't on the Generalized System of Preferences or why we had countervailing duties on other products, or there were problems with USDA on sanitary standards or something or other, or the Malaysians would complain that we were slandering palm oil. There would be all of these kind of trade-related problems, so the Secretary always got frustrated. You know, even if you were George Shultz you would have a problem, but for some Secretaries who were economic illiterates, it would be particularly painful because they had briefing papers on what they were supposed to say and what they were going to ask, and it would be all these esoteric economic things. Since the ASEAN foreign ministries usually knew even less about trade than our Secretary, it was often a dialogue only for the record.

But I think it was worthwhile because both of us got to get things on the record and it did have some impact. But working in the embassy *per se* didn't have much to do with it. The ASEAN secretariat was actually in Jakarta, so occasionally we might have to go over and ask what's going to happen at the next ASEAN meeting, or are you starting to plan. But they did little planning, they would travel around and get the view from other ASEAN countries, and then they'd decide what the agenda was going to be. The ASEAN secretary general didn't have much real clout on his own.

Q: Who were the ambassadors while you were there?

MAST: I served under several. Let's see. Ed Masters was ambassador for the three months.

Q: Old Indonesian hand

MAST: Old Indonesian hand and ambassador to Burma. I really liked him. I got to know him a little bit better because after he retired he came back to work as a consultant for IAPCO, an American oil company. He lived in Singapore, and he used to come through, so we would consult with him quite a lot on some economic issues, particularly oil royalty questions.

Then we were vacant for quite some time because that was the period when Haig had put Ambassador Abramowitz forward as our ambassador to Indonesia, and the Indonesians dilly-dallied. I mean, they didn't say no, and they didn't say yes. Months went by, and so after about eight or ten months of this, Haig withdrew Abramowitz's name. We then went for several months again without an ambassador. And then Holdridge, who was the assistant secretary at the time and had been ambassador to Singapore and had been, I think, our chargé in Beijing, came as ambassador. and then he came out. Holdridge was there the rest of the time we were there. So we had as much as 15 months where John Monjo, who later became ambassador to Malaysia, was our chargé.

Q: Who's that?

MAST: John Monjo.

Q: Oh, yes.

MAST: He was Indonesian specialist. We had several at the senior levels of that embassy. We had Dick Howland who was also our DCM earlier. He was fluent in Indonesian and was on his third tour.

Q: There really was a rather strong "Indonesian mafia."

MAST: Oh, Paul Gardner was another one. He was the political counselor when I first got there. Later, of course, he was ambassador to Papua-New Guinea. They had some strong Indonesian speakers who had gone through the Sukarno-Suharto transition. I remember particularly Dick Howland, I'd be clearing something with him or talking with

him, and it would be, you know, five-thirty or six, and you wanted to get home. Let's get this cable out. And he'd start on some story, and it would be fascinating. He knew everything and everybody from that period. His stories were incredible.

Q: Okay. This is probably a good place to stop. In 1984, where did you go?

MAST: Well, in 1984 I went to Malaysia as economic counselor. What had happened, that was one of the jobs that I had wanted, as you remember, in 1981, and of course what had happened in the meantime is I had solidified myself a little bit better with the Southeast Asia people back in Washington. John Monjo, who had been our chargé, was the deputy assistant secretary. Joe Linder, who had been my economic counselor and my boss, was the country director, so I was their clear choice among about 72 bidders to go to Kuala Lumpur. I was the logical candidate, really.

Q: All right, so we'll pick it up next time in 1984 when you are off to Kuala Lumpur.

Today is the 5th of April, 2001. Chuck, let's talk about you went to Kuala Lumpur, and when?

MAST: I think it was August of 1984.

Q: And you were there how long?

MAST: Three years, until August 1987.

Q: What was your job there?

MAST: I was economic counselor.

Q: Before you went out, what were you told about Malaysia?

MAST: Well, I had visited Malaysia a couple of times before, once while I was in Indonesia from 1981-84, but even more importantly perhaps, earlier, in 1978, I think, when I was working on a trade program for developing countries. I had a chance to get to know a little bit about the embassy. I had given a couple of seminars and called on some Malaysian Government officials at that time.

Q: Who was our ambassador at the time?

MAST: Tom Shoesmith.

Q: Tom Shoesmith, a Far Eastern hand. He was in Japan a lot.

MAST: He had served a lot in Japan. I think he was DCM in Japan before he became

Ambassador. I think he was deputy assistant secretary for East Asia. I really enjoyed working for him. He was unflappable and the most knowledgeable on economics of any political officer I served with.

Q: What was sort of the both political and economic situation in 1984 when you arrived out there.

MAST: Well, Mahathir Mohamad was the prime minister, which is not unusual. He still is and was before that, although he was having, as often happens within the UMNO, the main united Malay party, a squabble with his number two. He forced out Musa Hitam, who was his vice president, just as he forced out Anwar Ibrahim not all that long ago.

Q: He doesn't like vice presidents, and his own particularly, I gather.

MAST: That's right. Anybody who is vice president for Mahathir has a particular problem. In order to get the job, he has to be in some ways a sycophant of Mahathir, but also has to make his own way in the party as well, because other people are going to be challenging him for vice-president. The party is quite democratic below the prime minister level, and there is great competition for vice-presidential positions.

Q: In 1984, your main focus was obviously going to be on the economy. What was the economy and how did it look at that point?

MAST: Well, when I went there in 1984, and I think looking back in retrospect, I think it's still true that for an FS-1, Malaysia was one of the best economic counselor positions in the world, and there were several reasons for that. One was that, while it was a Malay-speaking country, there were a lot of Chinese and Indians as well, so that you had that sort of diversity of population, as well as an English-Speaking country, so that documents that came out from the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance, were going to be in English. They were going to be very well done, because the people were highly educated, a real meritocracy in the upper levels of the government. Also, Malaysia had a wide range of economic resources and economic problems, and we had a wide range of interactions with them. For example, they were a relatively large oil and gas producer, Exxon and Shell were there, for example, so that gave us that side of the equation. They were large in the commodities area - rubber and palm oil, tin - so this gave us the whole commodities sweep that we had a chance to interact with. They were a major trading country, in commodities but also increasingly in manufactured goods. There was a lot of Japanese investment. Matsushita, for example, had six plants in Malaysia. And there was a lot of American investment, particularly in semiconductors and radios, peripherals, of that type, so that we got a lot of experience in trade policy and investment policy. Citibank and AIG also had large banking and insurance interests there. So it had the broad range of interest.

Q: Where was their port?

MAST: They had a couple of ports. One of the ports was at Johor Baharu in the south,

another at Penang in the north. The major port was Port Kelang, which was the port really of Kuala Lumpur, although Kuala Lumpur was about 35 or 40 miles from the sea.

Q: Was Singapore a -

MAST: And Singapore, of course, was also a large port for Malaysia.

Q: I wondered whether they could bring things in essentially duty-free.

MAST: Singapore was a very efficient port and many shippers to and from Malaysia preferred to use it. Malaysia ran a large service deficit, however, in its balance of payments, so they tried to encourage shippers to use Malaysian ports. They encouraged businessmen to set up their own insurance and banking and shipping and air services in order to shut out Singapore to a certain extent.

Q: How did you find dealing with the Malaysian bureaucracy?

MAST: I really enjoyed it. It was probably the best experience of my life in terms of interacting with foreign bureaucracies, not that the Malaysians couldn't be a little prickly and couldn't be a little tough at times, but one of the things that I enjoyed the most is that there are always several layers of Malaysian bureaucracy. Whether that was in the trade ministry, Trade and Investment, or whether it was the Central Bank or whether it was in Finance or Transportation, I had several levels I could deal with. And their own bureaucracy was open, something like ours, so that if you dealt with the deputy office director, you were pretty sure that the deputy secretary general was actually going to be briefed in person or with a memo as to what you had had to say. I really enjoyed that, and it gave me a lot of flexibility as well. Some times as counselor, rather than try to go up in the bureaucracy and work on his nickel, so to speak, I would go down, and go to a deputy director-general or somebody who was actually dealing with the problem. They were often flattered to be called by the US economic counselor. I really enjoyed working with them, particularly the Trade and Investment bureaucracy.

Q: Obviously, one lives and dies in the economic world by data. How was the data?

MAST: The data there was pretty good. Both the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance would do - one in the spring and one in the fall, fortunately - a major economic analytical survey of the country. It was historical - what had happened - but also looked ahead as to what they projected would happen, so that we always had a lot of information, a lot of their own analysis that we could use to do our own projections, as well for an economic trends report. And they were pretty good, actually, though probably a little bit overly optimistic.

Q: What were American interests at the time?

MAST: We had a number of them. As I said, Exxon had major investments there in the oil and gas sector. Motorola had as many as 10,000 employees in two or three plants.

Intel, National Semiconductor, RCA, Texas Instruments all had large plants there, so it didn't take long to get 40 or 50 thousand people working in American plants. Of course, rubber was a very important concern of ours. We bought a lot of rubber. We were members of the International Rubber Organization. Timber, which I haven't mentioned before, but Malaysia had major timber interests, and we were purchasing timber and plywood, things of that kind, hardwood particularly. Also in the palm oil sector, while we bought palm oil, probably the chief US interest - and our agricultural attaché spent a lot of time on that - had to do with the competition that palm oil posed for US soybean oil exports.

Q: Are they essentially interchangeable for their use?

MAST: More or less. I think soybean oil is generally a healthier oil than palm oil, although you'll get an argument from the Malaysians about that.

Q: During this time, you mentioned maybe there were 50,000 people working for American firms. Probably into the next decade it became rather popular in the United States to take a look at a lot of these overseas producers and looking, are they using child labor or are they paying good wages? Part of it was inspired by American concerns of losing jobs, but others were sort of in the human rights thing. Were we looking at that at the time?

MAST: Not particularly in Malaysia. I got into concerns with that in Bangladesh, as you can imagine, and also we had to a certain extent earlier in Indonesia. But there were a couple of things that happened. First of all, in the electronics area, these were pretty much high-tech jobs, and so their people are in rooms that are absolutely spotless, so it's healthy in that sense to work - although I suppose there were some acid-etching and things like that for semiconductors. People were relatively well paid. In that sector, however, we did have some problems. A lot of this took place in a Duty-Free Zone, and Malaysian law did not permit union organization in the Duty-Free Zone. Malaysia had quite well established labor unions involved in a lot of association with US unions, and Malaysian unions wanted to unionize free-trade zones. Obviously American unions wanted the free-trade zones unionized. So we did have some union - I don't know if I'd say pressure, but a considerable amount of union interest on unionization issues. It wasn't so much that they would argue that working standards and wages were substandard. And in the textile and apparel area, too, generally Malaysian plants made higher, top-of-the-line shirts and so forth. They were not making the cheap stuff, so that usually their wages and working conditions were one or two steps above Indonesia or Bangladesh, for example. So we had very little problem in that area.

Q: Why would there be an exclusion of unions in the free zone?

MAST: That's not so unusual in developing countries. It often happens because, of course, the overseas firms prefer to have a minimum of problems when they're going to invest in a developing country. It was true in Bangladesh also. It was true in Indonesia. Of course, Indonesia did not have a democratic labor union like Malaysia or even, to a

certain extent, like Bangladesh did.

Q: Well, now, as you were working with it during this time, later - I'm not sure what happened in Malaysia, but certainly Thailand, Japan, South Korea, and all that really found that they had overextended their bank loans and that there was too much cronyism and all that. Was this an issue, or were we looking at this?

MAST: There were waves of this sort of thing that would come through. For example, when I got to Malaysia in 1984, the economy was booming - real estate particularly. Everybody was building large, new apartments and large, new office buildings, particularly in downtown Kuala Lumpur and other cities, and that clearly overextended. You had a boom-and-bust cycle, and by 1986, there was actually no growth; in fact, growth was slightly negative. Now a number of other things happened at the same time. Commodity prices were down around the world, so they got hit with a double or triple whammy. Malaysia as a primary commodity producer was not unaccustomed to going through these periodic upheavals. The one you're talking about with Thailand and Indonesia did not hit Malaysia quite that hard. There was a lot of cronyism, but because of the fact that the overall economy was probably a little better run and they were a little more diversified, as I mentioned earlier, all of these - from oil and gas to commodities to manufacturing to textiles, services - they tended to be able to ride these kind of crises out probably a little easier.

Q: Where did both the technical staff - I'm talking about the engineers and all that, but also the bureaucrats who were trained in economics - where were they getting their training? Were they going to Europe? Were they going to the United States?

MAST: The people that I would deal with by and large were Malaysian-educated, University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. Some had had graduate training in London. That was not unusual. The London School of Economics or the Imperial College, or sometimes Cambridge or Oxford, And increasingly people were going to the United States; however, that tended to be the people who were in their teens and 20s in the 1980s. By the time we left in 1987, I think Malaysia was number three or number four on the US foreign student list. A lot of them also were going to Australia, New Zealand. What happened, of course, was that it primarily was Indians and Chinese that needed to be trained abroad privately because Malaysia had very strong affirmative action programs for Malays, and so they tended to have preferences to university positions and to government scholarships abroad. Some of the Chinese, if they were good enough, could get into the University of Malaya; otherwise, they really had to pay their own way abroad.

Q: How did the president -

MAST: Mahathir Mohamad.

Q: What was his role in the economic world?

MAST: He was actually the prime minister. They had a sultan, who was in effect the president, but the sultan rotated every five years, and while they had a certain amount of power, it actually was the prime minister who ran the country. He was *very* interested in economic problems, as you can imagine. We considered Malaysia an economic interest post, and I suspect he considered his position an economic interest position. I mean, domestic politics were intensely important. Obviously he had to maintain his position amongst a lot of competitors and a lot of people who wanted the job, but he was very knowledgeable on international economic affairs. However, he tended to be someone who had a powerful chip on his shoulder - sort of the British colonial type of individual - who went around the world and gave these blasts at the United States and Britain for being colonial powers and for how they were exploiting the Third World, proletariat of the world, etc. And the interesting things about Mahathir was that he could give that kind of speech one day, we would have a country team meeting the next day, and my political colleagues would be complaining about how he was lambasting the United States and creating a lot of problems with the State Department. That afternoon, I could go with a major group of American investors to call on Mahathir, and it was great. So he was able to compartmentalize between these anti-colonial speeches he gave to get politicians concerned and to deal realistically with private investors.

Q: What was the complaint that Mahathir was making about the United Kingdom?

MAST: It often had to do with commodity prices, that the Anglo-Saxons were exploiting the commodity producers of the world. This was particularly true in the tin area, but also to a certain extent in rubber and timber and palm oil. The Malaysians always wanted, obviously, to manufacture as much of these products that moved downstream as they could, and they felt that the developed countries exploited them, that they refused to permit them to be competitive in the downstream area. This was also true in manufacturing. They wanted to set up their own automobile industry, but they argued that American and Japanese companies were refusing to make the kind of investments and to transfer the kind of technology which would permit them to become competitive.

[Inaudible portion of text]

Mahathir argued the extreme point one day, and then the next day, when he met with foreign investors or had to make decisions on trade policy, for example, he could be realistic and know exactly what the interests of the country were. So he himself, in a sense, admitted that there was validity to both points of view.

Q: What about the neighborhood? What about Thailand and Singapore?

MAST: Well, Malaysia had pretty good relations with most countries. I would say in many cases they had excellent relations with Singapore, but there you had the competition with Lee Kwan Yu, who never really has accepted the fact that he wasn't president of a much larger country than Singapore. He really would have liked to have a much larger stage to play on, and of course the Malaysians were always a little bit concerned that in terms of services or transportation or banking or the stock market, the

Singaporeans were getting revenue that the Malaysians should be getting.

Q: Did we ever get in between on that?

MAST: No, we pretty much managed to stay out of that. Occasionally there would be problems with American banks or American firms. I don't remember, though, any serious problems in that area, no.

Q: At this time, were the Malaysians look at Vietnam to bring them into ASEAN, or how did they feel about Vietnam?

MAST: No, I don't remember very much about that. There was quite a debate going on about how close they should come to China, the PRC, and in fact, I think it was during that time, sort of the mid to late 1980s, that Mahathir led a trade delegation to China. This was quite a major step, because during the 1950s, they had fought a major civil war, where the Communists very clearly supported and subsidized by the Chinese Government.

Q: How were racial relations at this time?

MAST: Well, they ebbed and flowed. In 1969 there were major racial riots in Kuala Lumpur, and Mahathir himself was determined that this would not happen again. So his philosophy was that the Malays have to get an increasingly larger share of the economic pie, but that's only really the second point. The first point is the pie has to get a lot larger very quickly, so that the Chinese particularly, but also the Indians, could also continue to have their share of the pie grow even though overall more of the percentage of the pie will go to the Malays, who were, after all, 45 to 50 percent of the population.

Q: Were there any trade problems that came up? This was mainly during the Reagan Administration, and every once in a while Congress will come up with some law or something that screws everything up for people out in the field.

MAST: Well, there was a rather esoteric one that came up, which of course maybe 10 people in Washington even knew about, and it became a political problem. This had to do with tin. For decades, tin had been part of the national security stockpile, and we would buy x thousand (whatever it was) tons of tin per year. Well, obviously this provided a nice little floor below which the world price of tin could not fall, and regardless of what the demand was, you were always going to have that demand, and other world demand would fluctuate based on that. And we decided somewhere - I don't remember exactly, but somewhere between 1984 and 1987 - that this was ridiculous. We had thousands of tons of tin, more than we were ever going to need for national security concerns, so we would stop buying tin. Well, that really was a problem, because the price of tin plummeted. Basically, other things going on in the world were affecting tin prices as well, as other commodities were being used as substitutes for tin. Tin was no longer needed in certain areas, so the price of tin plummeted, and it was a real problem for the miners in a couple of key constituencies in Malaysia. That became a serious political irritant. There

wasn't anything we could do about it, really, just try to manage it.

We also had a problem at the time with palm oil. There were some scientists and pseudo-scientists in the United States that got engaged (probably funded to a certain extent by the soybean industry), in a major campaign placing, large ads in US newspapers, arguing that palm oil was detrimental to one's health. That was also about the time that McDonald's had started buying a lot of palm oil - because it was cheaper - to use for French fries. So that got to be a political problem as well, because the Malaysians insisted it was a "conspiracy by the American Soybean Association," which "used the US Government and the press" to try to stop the exportation of palm oil and drove the price down.

Q: How did that play out?

MAST: It sort of, like many things, gradually dithers away. We had to manage it for a while, and their exports continued to flow. There's a growing market for fat in the world, and the Malaysians were very competitive, so their exports continued to grow.

Q: ASEAN - how did we see ASEAN at this time?

MAST: Well, we were always quite interested in maintaining a relationship with ASEAN, encouraging ASEAN. ASEAN was primarily a political association, although they were so strongly committed to non-interference in each other's internal affairs that many times ASEAN became little more than a discussion club. And one of the things that did happen - and I attended several ASEAN meetings - was that because of that, the ASEANs would gang up on us on economic interests, so that we always had discussions on commodities, or we always had discussions on US protectionism. They always wanted discussions on the new international economic order, which was the big thing at that time, a UN program. On UNCTAD, they would argue with us that we were not supporting UNCTAD. These kind of trade and multilateral issues became a lowest common denominator for them, and so our poor Secretary of State, who really wanted to discuss important, burning political issues of the day - China, and how ASEAN saw that and so forth - would be scolded with this laundry list. It was sort of as if every secretary had to say, "Oh, dear, in order to get the good political and security stuff done, I'm going to have to sit there and listen to these guys harangue me for an hour or two about this other stuff."

Q: Did you get involved in ASEAN meetings where the Secretary of State would come out?

MAST: Yes, sometimes, although usually there would be a more senior economic DAS, or there would be couple of office directors along, and I would sometimes be working with them in the corridor. ASEAN meetings on economic issues were surprisingly open, however, so I sat through most of these. I sometimes thought the ASEAN Foreign Ministers wanted to be sure their staffs saw them making their esoteric economic points.

Q: Well, then, you left there in 1987. Whither?

MAST: Bangladesh.

Q: Oh, boy.

MAST: I went to Dhaka to be economic-commercial counselor in 1987.

Q: And you were there from 1987 to -

MAST: 1990.

Q: I would think for you and your family that going from Kuala Lumpur, which is considered one of the nicest spots on earth, to Bangladesh, which I have heard people describe as the armpit of the diplomatic world -

MAST: Well, I've got several things to say about that.

Q: Okay.

MAST: In the first place, you may not believe this, but here I was - you know, I had been in the Foreign Service for 23 years, but I was still quite naive when it came to bidding. I was never very good at manipulating the system, although as I mentioned earlier I did pretty well in order to get the Kuala Lumpur job, but that basically fell in my lap. So I bid, believe it or not, on a job as economic counselor in Seoul, which was a stretch, and there were a couple of economic jobs in NEA that I bid on, economic counselor in Tel Aviv, which was a stretch, and there was another economic job perhaps in Jordan that I also bid on, and I bid on Dhaka. Well, little did I realize until I started working in Personnel, that that was the stupidest thing. *Anybody* who bid on Dhaka who could live and breathe and had any kind of a reputation was *never* going to be considered for *any* other jobs in that bureau, probably in the Department. It was so hard to get people to go to Dhaka.

Q: "We've got one! We've got one!"

MAST: "We've got a ringer here!" But some part of me actually knew that that was going to happen. I had only two years left on my TIC as an FS-1.

Q: TIC being... You might explain.

MAST: Yes, time in class. So that unless I was going to be promoted within two years, I only had three years left in the Foreign Service in our up-or-out system. And Dhaka was a 25 percent hardship post. Dhaka was going to give me an opportunity to save some money and to get at least - one of my daughters was in college, and the other one would have been starting in a couple of years - to get them through college. That was one of the reasons why I bid on Dhaka, or I could have bid on another 25 percent hardship post. The second reason was my second daughter had finished her junior year in Kuala Lumpur and wanted to go to a boarding school in France. Dhaka did not have a high school, so that meant that the Department would pay for that. So that was another small reason to bid on Dhaka.

But Dhaka - the other point I was going to make is I was starting to get a glimpse of this because we had talked to the Schaffers, Howie and Teresita Schaffer. I had worked for Tezie in Washington before. Howie was, of course, ambassador in Bangladesh; Teresita was later ambassador to Sri Lanka. They had been visiting the Shoemiths, and we had them over for dinner, and Teresita - and Howie, of course, but Teresita even more than Howie - had really tried to recruit us. "You'll love Dhaka. This is a great place. It's a sleeper post." You know, etc., etc. And actually, you know, believe it or not, Dhaka *is* a sleeper post. It certainly turned into that for me. I was promoted into the Senior Foreign Service six months after I arrived and served my last two years at post as DCM. Also Tezie Schaffer was South Asia DAS when it was time to move on again and was instrumental in getting me the Consul General job in Bombay.

Q: Explain what a "sleeper post" is.

MAST: "Sleeper post" means that it's a post that has the reputation of being the armpit of the world or has the reputation of being a terrible place to serve. But in reality it has high morale, good housing, works together better in terms of a commissary or in terms of making sure that what services you have work properly, and where everyone takes care of one another. We had a very good club in Dhaka. And it was easy to get to know the Bangladeshi middle class who loved to entertain and be entertained.

Now it's true there were floods every fall, and I had to take a rowboat to work, and some of those kind of things, so there were natural obstacles to put up with, but we had excellent housing.

Q: Okay, why don't you talk about when you went out to Dacca in 1987? What was it like there? I'm talking about the political and economic side of things.

MAST: Well, Ershad was the president, and there were two women who opposed him. There was Ershad's party and Madame Zia, whose husband, General Zia, had been a previous president headed the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. After General Zia had been assassinated, Ershad had taken over - he was also a general - but he had not been involved in the assassination (or at least we don't think he was involved). But Madame Zia, as so often happens in South Asia, the wife or the daughter (Benazir Bhutto would be another and there are others in Sri Lanka) took over his party. On the other side Sheikh Mujib, who had been the founder of Bangladesh in 1971 had been assassinated in 1974, and his daughter, Sheikh Hasina, headed the Awami League. And so we had the two women and Ershad. And over the course of the three years we had any number of general strikes. Sometimes the women forced coalitions, but they were very ephemeral, to try to oust Ershad. He was finally ousted, of course, after I left, in the early 1990s, and then Madame Zia took over, and then Sheikh Hasina would call strikes, and then Sheikh Hasina was elected, and then Madame Zia would call strikes. They worked very hard in that country to try to keep some kind of a democracy together, but it's been very difficult. And in a country like that, politics is all, and no one is ever going to compromise, it seems.

Q: What about the economy?

MAST: Well, an awful lot of the economy is aid-based. They produced a lot of their own food, obviously, rice particularly, but a lot of vegetables and meat as well, it's a very productive agricultural country. I'd never seen soil, except perhaps in Java, that's as productive as the soil in Bangladesh, because it's from the river delta, basically. We'd have great gardens, for example, temperate during the winter, which was a very nice temperate season, something like our spring, so we would plant temperate vegetables, temperate flowers during the winter months. We would sometimes argue that one could just put a stick in the ground and it would grow.

But there was not much manufacturing. They had had jute, which was a very traditional crop, and they would make twine and rope and jute bags, but basically synthetics were starting to take that market, so there were tens of thousands of people who were really not productively employed in the jute industry. And what was happening then was they were going big into clothing and textiles. By the late eighties, there were as many as 500,000 women employed in the apparel industry. So for the three years I was there, a lot of the management of our economic relationship was how we would negotiate with the Bangladeshis, sometimes in terms of large quotas that they would have in order to try to stabilize imports into the United States of certain types of items.

Q: The same question I asked about Malaysia - were we concerned about working conditions and that sort of thing in Bangladesh?

MAST: Yes, to a certain extent, although they were making pretty basic stuff for discount stores. They would make shorts, little tee shirts; they would make a lot of synthetics, certainly not 100 percent cotton. They were in the early stage of manufacturing apparel and exporting to the United States. Later when it boomed we put on rather large quotas. For example, they had much larger annual quotas - millions of dozens of shirts - than Malaysia had, for example, or than Indonesia had.

Q: What about working conditions?

MAST: Not good at all. They were very difficult. I visited a lot of textile factories. They would be large warehouses or old office buildings where they'd knock out some walls. One of the big problems was not enough lavatory facilities, so that sometimes they might have 100 or 200 women and just a few holes in the floor, so to speak, for a lavatory. There were also problems with children - not so much child labor but what were the women going to do with their children during the day? So many times they would take their children who would be underfoot or in a corner. Most of the plants I visited I didn't see that, but that tended to be a problem.

Q: Were we taking a sort of a stand, or was this a UN thing?

MAST: Actually, when it started there was very little done, because what happened is this was incredible economic and sociological and cultural progress for these women. I've

read lots of books, lots of pamphlets, lots of articles in the Bangladeshi press but also in the international press and among the international observers on what progress this employment was for women. We have to realize that in Bangladesh, the women were so badly exploited, the husband could just walk out on them, marry a younger woman, and leave the first wife with five children. Well, once a woman had a job in a textile factory, do you think any husband would ever walk out on that woman? Absolutely not. She was the breadwinner. Now he might not help that much around the house, and he might not necessarily take care of the children, but she was going to have a husband. She gained considerable status through this employment.

Q: Were you feeling any pressure from concerned people in the United States? I mean, you might understand it, I might understand it, but this doesn't sell well back to -

MAST: There wasn't much yet at that time. I don't mean there wasn't any, and for example when a US textile delegation would come out, we would usually have someone from the International Ladies' Garment Workers Association. But I got to know these people, for example, in Malaysia earlier as well as in Bangladesh, and they're pretty sophisticated. They understood the complete difference between these two economies and that what would be considered extremely exploitative in the United States could be considered progress in Bangladesh. They didn't have a toilet at home. Of course, they could go behind the tree, but you didn't have a tree in this tremendous, big building, so it was, in a sense, a setback. But just to have a cash economy for women was quite an improvement.

Q: What about dealing with the government? You had been used to the pretty sophisticated statistics of Malaysia. How did you find Bangladesh?

MAST: Bangladesh was much more difficult, of course, although again, you had two or three levels of pretty competent people. But they would have peons running around carrying folders. I understood where the term "red tape" came from when I got to South Asia, because there were these huge folios with red tape wrapped around them. So it was a lot more difficult, and they were always intensely interested in comparative statistics, as to how many thousands of dozens of such and such a kind of shirt had been exported to the United States, because their own statistics were not particularly good. I'm sure they used ours to set the course, to gauge where they were going. But I found a lot of their bureaucrats, particularly at the second or third level (the ministers tend to be politicians, obviously, but then the secretary general would be a career civil servant, and then the deputy secretary general would be the next level), would be quite sophisticated about what was happening.

Q: Were there a lot of American firms coming to look at what was going on there?

MAST: No, what happens in the apparel area is the vast majority of all of these kind of textile firms, as we see today as well, are run by Koreans or Taiwanese or Hong Kong folks, though they often had Bangladeshi partners. They are easy to set up. They are very easy to move. They come into a country like Bangladesh which hasn't exported to the

United States before. They bring in thousands of sewing machines. They train and hire people. They send out tens of thousands of dozens of shirts. Then they get a quota, and then they see, well, can I work within that quota? How much quota am I going to get from the government? And if they don't get enough, then they move on to Sri Lanka to Uganda or to the next developing country wherever they can set up. And it's very, very mobile. At least I don't think there was any American investment in the apparel area, even though at least 80 percent of their exports were going to the United States.

Q: How did you deal with the floods? I mean every year you read about a monsoon or typhoon or something going around and thousands killed and all that.

MAST: Well, one-third of Bangladesh being flooded is normal in the monsoon. In fact, probably - although there is suffering and some death - one could argue it's beneficial because of the way the water brings the silt - sort of like the Nile Valley for centuries or thousands of years. But once it gets more than that, and I think it was the second year I was there, 1988, they had the flood, if not of the century, at least every 50 years or so, and then two-thirds of the country was flooded, including large parts of Dhaka. Most Embassy people were able to stay in their houses. Our house was slightly higher than the surrounding houses. But almost everyone else on our block, in our area, had to leave. And I had a man with a rowboat who was at my house, and he would sleep in the rowboat and take me to higher ground near the American Club and then a Jeep would meet me to take me to the embassy. Or I remember we had to have a special meeting at the ambassador's house, which was several blocks away, and this man took me by rowboat. This was quite an interesting experience.

Q: Our ambassador there was who?

MAST: It was Howie Schaffer when I came. But then immediately, really, within a couple of weeks, it was Bill De Pree, Willard De Pree, who had been ambassador in Mozambique before and also had been a senior official in M, in Management.

Q: What was his method of operation?

MAST: Well, a lot of our interests in Bangladesh were really humanitarian. We had very few trade or economic interests, as we did in Malaysia. We had very few political interests *per se*. I mean, we had some concern that they work with us in SARC, you know, the South Asia area. Occasionally we would work with them on UN issues. Obviously there were common multilateral interests of this kind. But our interests were primarily humanitarian. We had a large AID program. There were enormous numbers of US NGOs there. There were lots of US missionaries there from all different kinds of church groups, most of whom were also involved in development projects as well as some proselytizing. And so the ambassador did a lot of work with these kinds of people and with the government to try to insure that these sort of things moved to our mutual benefit. And of course, we had a lot of work in civil society, in human rights, a lot of work in religious rights, things of this kind. So already by 1987 or 1988, part of this was Bill De Pree, part of this was other people in the embassy, part of this was the fact that we were in a country

like Bangladesh - many of the issues that have become prevalent only in the last decade, say, were already issues of real concern in diplomacy there.

Q: What was the role of India at that time?

MAST: Well, India was interesting. They were seen as the bogeyman by Madame Zia and her party, because they were a strongly Muslim party and they were quite worried about India. Sheikh Hasina, however, remembered that when Bangladesh became independent, the Indians had sent enormous amounts of military help, soldiers in fact, to help her father become the first prime minister of independent Bangladesh, so she always was a friend of India. And she would visit India; her children were educated in India. But she didn't win very many votes in Bangladesh for that, so she had to be quite careful about India.

Q: India had until very recently a very protectionist policy of fostering its home industry. Did that carry over into Bangladesh?

MAST: That's a very good question, because you're right. India had a very protectionist attitude, and they were always extremely critical of how other more developed countries treated Indian companies, while the Indian on the other hand, treated Bangladesh fully as badly as many developed countries treated India. They would dump products in Bangladesh, they would refuse to accept Bangladesh exports that might compete with their products, even though Bangladesh had a tenth of the capacity of India. They always played hard ball on water rights. So India was not always a good economic neighbor, one could say.

Q: What about the population there? Wasn't this a major issue?

MAST: Yes, it was a country the size of Wisconsin, and it had - now it's probably to 150 million - but at that time it had about 125 or 130 million people. So you can imagine that in an area the size of Wisconsin. The press of population was the main reason for Bangladesh's endemic poverty. Even though there was usually enough food to feed the population, the poor had difficulty in earning enough to buy the minimum calories needed. There was considerable malnutrition. We sometimes said that it was only a minor exaggeration.

Q: The size of Russia, in population.

MAST: Yes, close.

Q: Were you all feeling constraints because of being the Bush Administration, most of this, and Republican administration unhappy about birth control and abortion and that sort of thing?

MAST: You know, I remember that becoming an intense issue since then, and during Reagan's time, too, and we had a large family planning program in Bangladesh. Maybe

because of the kind of organizations that were there, I don't remember that being an issue in Bangladesh.

Q: Well, were there any major occurrences or incidents or things that happened in this time period that come to mind?

MAST: Floods and U.S. assistance in flood relief. General strikes or other disturbances which often kept us at home. And we built the new embassy.

Q: Was it on Pilings or something, or out of the flood zone?

MAST: Yes, although the embassy was not flooded, the surrounding area was. Bangladesh is so low that one of the main problems, one of the main interactions we started to have with them had to do with global warming because, obviously, if warming is as serious as people say it is, as much as one-third of Bangladesh would be under water. The new embassy was one of the first of the new Inman embassies, so it was very secure, although once you get in you find out that there are still certain problems. Obviously, security itself brings its own problems.

Q: What about up-country? I look at Bangladesh, and it does get pretty close to the range of the Himalayas and all that? Is there and up-country?

MAST: No, it's pretty flat all the way. Except near the Burma border in the Chittagong hill region there were foothills or "hillocks" as the Bangladeshis often called them.

Pakistan was the country that had slaughtered a lot of people during their war for independence, but on the other hand, they were also a member of SARC, the association of South Asian countries, and they were a Muslim country, so there was still quite a lot of respect. So you had ambivalence vis a vis Pakistan.

Q: Well, then you left there in -

MAST: We left there in 1990.

Q: Whither?

MAST: Then I became consul general in Bombay, in India.

Q: And you were there from -

MAST: 1990 to 1994. We extended a year we liked Bombay so well.

Q: What was the situation vis-à-vis the United States in India when you got there in 1990?

MAST: Well, I'm trying to think. Gandhi was no longer prime minister. There had been a recent election, and V. P. Singh was the prime minister. It wasn't a Congress Party

government, nor was it a BHP or Hindu Nationalist Party coalition. It was a coalition of a lot of smaller parties, including Marxist parties. Our relationship was pretty good. Singh was seen as a very competent bureaucrat and a very honest politician, probably a little bit arrogant who found it difficult to compromise. That was one of the problems that he had, and his coalition fell apart within a matter of months. Of course, the invasion of Kuwait happened within a few weeks of my arrival and this had a fairly major impact on our relationship with India.

Q: How did that play there?

MAST: Well, it played two or three ways. India has maybe 125 million Muslims, and the Iraqis and the Kuwaitis and the Saudis would fight - intellectually at least - for the support of the Muslim community, and so you had factions within the Muslim community, whether it was in the bazaar or whether it was the more educated or the more religious or obscurantist groups. The Iraqis had a lot of support, but the Saudis had a lot of money to spend, so they had their strong supporters as well. Any demonstrations we had during that time, and there were some demonstrations against US policy in Iraq, would obviously be put together by this Iraqi faction. Later, during the war itself, particularly January and February, we had voluntary departure status, so some of the wives and children left India, mostly from Bombay, not so much from Delhi. Bombay, because it was a major port and a huge airport, had a lot of activity there by Iraqi agents. Iraq had a large consulate in Bombay. Our intelligence sources said that probably our people in Bombay were at more risk - not huge risk, but at more risk - than American diplomats and their families in Delhi.

Q: There was concern that Iraqis would announce they were going to wage war against -

MAST: Well, there were a couple of incidences - remember in the airport in Manila and the airport in Bangkok - where I think they arrested some Iraqis or some associated terrorists who were working for the Iraqis, who were trying to put bombs on planes. We had an apartment building where, I think, 12 or maybe 14 members of our staff lived, primarily single people, and the Iraqis, with diplomatic cars, granted, but they would park in front, and they would drive slowly by at night. We know that we were under constant surveillance. Now, of course, I always said, since we would discuss this at our staff meetings, that I would prefer to be under surveillance by an Iraqi car that has a diplomatic license plate than by a Indian car, when you don't know who they are. At least we know that the police, obviously, are keeping a very close eye on this diplomatic car that's teasing our staff. I wasn't trying to minimize it, because it was scary, and we had some people, a couple of female staff, that went back. It was very hard on them, and they took advantage of the voluntary departure status to relocate elsewhere.

Q: Let's talk about the consulate general in Bombay. What was the size and what were its activities?

MAST: We had pretty much everything there that you'd have in any embassy. We had 26 American officers and staff. There was a large USIS facility downtown, where there was

a very large library. Indians were fantastic readers, and we had great programs. And in the same building there was a Foreign Commercial Service officer, with an office and library and a staff of local employees as well. In the consulate building itself, which was a few miles away, we had a large consular section with eight officers. At that time, we issued many more visas than they did either in New Delhi or in Calcutta or in Madras because Gujarat, which is a province in western India, sent the largest amount of Indian migrants to the United States. These were obviously coming through the consulate in Bombay. Plus the fact that Bombay as a large business and banking and commercial center generated a lot of non-immigrant visas, especially business visas. We had two DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) officers.

Q: Why in Bombay?

MAST: It primarily had to do with smuggling into and out of the port of Bombay. They would work in liaison with the Indian authorities, and with their people in Karachi, and working together with the Pakistanis and the Indians they would be able to come up with some fairly major intelligence finds that would cause large quantities of drugs to be seized, either in India or in Karachi, before they got to the United States. So they were relatively active. And then we had the typical communications sections as well as a political officer and a couple of economic-commercial officers.

Q: I know up in Delhi - I've talked to people who have served there - and they say that at the upper level of bureaucracy the Americans and Indians don't meet very well because they tend to preach to each other and all that. At a different - I won't say level - at a different plane of some kind down in Bombay, it was more commercial, wasn't it?

MAST: Yes, I would tend to agree with that. I don't know that I would have enjoyed an assignment in Delhi, when I loved India, and we loved Bombay, and we liked to travel to Delhi when we would have conferences or Embassy business. We'd go shopping or go to restaurants and that sort of thing. And I thought the living conditions were quite nice in Delhi - in many cases nicer. Bombay was extremely urban. It was like living on Manhattan. But in Delhi, especially in New Delhi, where the embassy was, it was more like living in a large American suburb - you know, big houses and yards. Pollution was terrible in the winter time, however, much worse than in Bombay, so I wouldn't have liked that.

But I think you're right that the Foreign Ministry kept a fairly tight hold over our relationships with the government - or at least tried to. So the Political Section had quite a bit of difficulty dealing with other agencies and other ministries other than through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Now in turn, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had quite a lot of clout in the Indian Government, so I don't say it wasn't worth working with them. In the Economic Section, of course, they would deal more with the Ministry of Trade and Finance and other more specialized economic agencies. But I had a feeling it was difficult. We didn't have that much difficulty in Bombay. The Central Bank was in Bombay and we had a lot of dealings with them. Some of our dealings there were representations on policy issues and commercial problems but most had to do with economic analysis and statistics.

Q: It was all more -

MAST: Day-to-day, yes. We didn't have to make many representations on US policy.

Q: One has the feeling that the Indians had absorbed an awful lot of the British, sort of, London School of Economics type of thing, but particularly the Foreign Ministry is always more susceptible because this is where the people who get their Oxford firsts or something go. And it doesn't work very well, I mean, as far as easy relations.

MAST: The Indians claimed that the Indian Civil Service created a certain breed of Indians and to a certain extent this was true. But while one doesn't want to make too big a thing of this, who is an Indian, what is an Indian? There are Punjabis, there are Gujaratis, there are Maharashtrians, you have Tamils, and Sindhis, not to mention Bengalis, to start and there enormous differences among these people. Then there are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, Jews, etc. Delhi tends to be perhaps one-half Punjabi, and they have the reputation of being hard, aggressive pushers, generally, and very loud, boisterous, jewelry everywhere on the women - that sort of thing. In Bombay, we had the Gujaratis, who tend to be a little less sophisticated, perhaps, than the Punjabis, but I really quite liked them. They are very, very good in business - better than the Punjabis usually - and they really are people who take a longer term view on business and investment, for example. There is a great deal of difference among the peoples of India.

Q: Jokes have been made in the last couple of decades about the "Patel Motels" because it seems like every time you go into a motel it's run by somebody named Patel. Where do they come from?

MAST: The Patels are Gujaratis, and approximately one-third of Gujarat, which has about 40 million people, has the surname Patel. They aren't all related, obviously (although they probably are going way back when). But that's where the "Patel Motel" joke came from, because if one-third of all the Gujaratis that come to the United States are Patels and a number of them go into the motel industry, one-third of those are going to be Patels.

I would give a lot of speeches. I really enjoyed US immigration policy, US ethnic history, how different groups came in at different times, how the foreign-born coped and so forth. That's always been sort of an interest of mine. And there was a long article in *Commentary* magazine, somewhere around 1990, 1991, that had a lot of data on this Patel phenomenon in the hotel industry. Using some of that - and building from other information we had in the consulate or my graduate background in US history and from periodicals I would give speeches about US immigration history that was at the same time a defense of US immigration policy in the present. I would weave in little hints about why we had to turn away people for visas and so forth. But it was mostly a "big picture" thing about what had happened and what was happening, and a fair amount of what I would say would focus on the kind of opportunities that Patels were exploiting in

the entrepreneurial area and also, obviously, the benefits that the US was obtaining from this kind of entrepreneurship.

Q: Were you beginning to feel an Indian lobby in the United States reflecting back? In other words, were the Indians getting themselves organized?

MAST: I think that was happening then. It's happened more since then, although the Indians sometimes have a tendency to shoot themselves in the foot. Sometimes the more sophisticated Indians in the United States would be working on something in India, and the Indians would torpedo whatever they were working on. So there tended to be difficulty in coordinating all of this properly. During the last few years, however, the Indian Embassy has become much more sophisticated in working with Indian-American groups. President Clinton, who was the first President in 22 years to visit India, had an incredible trip there. The Indian-American community would probably vote for him hands down. There are a couple of major fundraisers that Bush has, too, so there is Republican support as well. Clinton's in India again, or was in India again a couple months ago, in Gujarat working on earthquake rehabilitation. I've seen considerable publicity on that in the Indian press; though not much in the US press. And of course, many Indians are very, very successful here, particularly in software and Silicon Valley. We could easily come up with a half a dozen Indian billionaires, at least we could have prior to the dot.com meltdown.

Q: Were you seeing this transformation of India into a technological country, a high-tech country?

MAST: Oh, yes. That had started certainly by 1990, and by 1994 it was booming pretty well. It started out with some pretty non-sophisticated software writing. At the time, this was called a body shop. Indians would come to the United States and work on simple code, or people in India would work on relatively simple time consuming projects. But they're gradually getting more and more sophisticated. By the time we left in 1994, we were starting to see, for example, Honeywell having a regional center in Bangalore, which is in south India. They would have skilled Indian troubleshooters there, and customers would call in, for expert advice on how to repair software or how to go about repairing a particular problem with technical machinery.

Q: I read an article, I think in The Economist, recently, how they have centers - I think in Bangalore or something-

MAST: Bangalore mostly, yes.

Q: -where you have young Indian experts who would take on American-sounding names and fix up a sort of little fictitious history, so people are calling with no idea they're talking to somebody in Bangalore. They think they're calling somebody in Spokane or somewhere.

MAST: I can believe that. And of course that's starting to happen now. We talk regularly to Jamaica or the Bahamas. But you're right, it's happening in India, too.

Q: What about the industry around there? Were we trying to open up India? Was this mainly done through the embassy, or were you contributing to open up India to American goods and all that?

MAST: It was mainly done in the embassy, of course, but they would work very closely with us, and we would be sending problems that the American business community had up to them. There was what we called an American Business Council in Delhi, and we had a similar group in Bombay, and the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce was much larger in Bombay than it was in Delhi because Bombay was a much larger commercial and industrial center. So we were quite a large part of that, but obviously we didn't have a Ministry of Trade or Foreign Affairs to whom we could make representations.

Q: How did American business people that you were dealing with feel about their work in India?

MAST: Terribly frustrated, but the potential was so huge - still is so huge, although they've opened up a lot - that it was the kind of place they *had* to be. I remember Guardian Glass, for example, was building a large glass factory in Gujarat, in our part of India, and I had lunch with a Guardian executive just before I came, and I, of course, had been in Indonesia recently, and I had been in Malaysia and thought I knew something about China, and I said, "Well, what are you doing here? What are you doing there?" And he said, "Well, we've got two or three areas where we've just got to be." Indonesia was one, and they had a factory there. China was one, and India was one. That if Guardians didn't get in, get the factory set up, learn how to make glass competitively in India, there was a danger of being shut out of the market.

So ironically - or not so ironically, perhaps - some of the Indian protectionism sort of forced people to try to set up factories in India, where they might have lost money for a number of years, but though that they had to be there because of the potential. But also even in terms of trade, exports and so forth, people would say: "We've just got to be there."

Q: How about American in trouble and all that? You're the chief consular officer in a major area.

MAST: I had a deputy, of course, who was an FS-1 consular officer, and he and his staff would deal with most of that, although I occasionally had to get involved personally as well. One of the more interesting problems we had involved ashrams and this is true all over India - but we had them in Gujarat and we had them in Maharashtra.

Q: These are Buddhist retreats.

MAST: Hindu retreats.

Q: I mean Hindu retreats.

MAST: They could be Buddhist, too, but they're primarily Hindu, obviously, in India. And there was one that we called the "Yuppie Ashram," and the devotees there tended to be wealthy Americans - I think Richard Gere was even there, you know, people like that - and their *guru* was wealthier or more sophisticated than others. There were other ashrams which included basically a common *guru* and a number of Indian disciples and somehow some American would get involved with that, and then there would be odd accidents, sometimes very tragic ones that would take place, and the consular officer had to go up and investigate. We had several of those in our area.

We had some people in prison, but not that many. I've probably had more people in prison in other places where I've been than we had in India. A lot of times they would just deport people, unless they got into serious problems.

Q: Did you get involved with "Bollywood" or whatever it is?

MAST: Actually, it's very interesting. I've talked to other consuls general who have been there, and my immediate predecessor said, "Stay away from Bollywood." His predecessor had been deeply involved with Bollywood, and one of my successors has also been involved with Bollywood. We generally stayed away. Initially we had some peripheral contact with some of these folks who are big entertainers. Time means absolutely nothing to these people, so you'd be invited for a nine o'clock dinner, and you'd think, Oh, I don't want to be too early, I'll go at nine-thirty." We would get used to doing that. We would eat at one. At nine-thirty we would probably be the first people. In fact, often the host and hostess would still be getting ready. Indians ate late anyway. We never ate at dinner parties until 10:30 or 11 or 11:30. If one had to go to work - we went to work earlier than Indians did, although as consul general I could adjust a little bit, but if one worked all night and half the morning one should be able to sleep in till eight o'clock, but I usually couldn't. So I decided I did not need this aggravation. We were so sought after in the commercial community and in the university and in the intellectual-cultural community that we did not pursue Bollywood folks. We got to know some of them, and we got to know writers, and they would sometimes have some of the Bollywood people at their parties. But Bollywood, *per se*, we'd kind of try to stay away from. Although at the end, I must admit, one of the last nights there, we had a wonderful evening with three or four friends that were having a little farewell for us, and which included some movie stars. One was Amitabh Bachchan, who is sort of Mr. Everybody in Indian movies, and he's a wonderful person. I had a great conversation with him for the evening. And then I thought how wonderful it would have been to have gotten to know each other a little better. But we just didn't have time for everything there. There were times during the social season, which would be the cool weather - December - March - when it wasn't unusual at all to have three functions a night for night after night after night. I used to joke somewhat arrogantly that there was little in an important social sense happening in Bombay to which the American CG was not invited.

Q: What about the universities?

MAST: I was not as involved, again in retrospect, as I should have been. Our USIS BPAD was a senior officer, and he was very active, of course, and he would periodically get me involved or come with me. I would do that some, to defend US policy or attend university functions. But generally he did that himself. I got very involved in US policy during the Iraq war. I had to be a little bit careful there, because the Kuwaitis obviously made a big thing out of the occasion. They spent a fortune on major banquets and public fora, and of course I was always included on the dais, and I always had to say something. I had some set talking points, but usually I would have to do more than that. They usually managed to get the Russian consul general on the dais also, so he had to also make some comments about Russian policy. So for the first six months or a year that I was there, there was a great deal of that, and that was something new to me. I hadn't gotten that deeply involved in public diplomacy before.

Q: What about the consular corps there? Were they pretty active?

MAST: Yes, it was a large consular corps. I think we had something like 40 or so career, consul generals. Virtually all the Arabs were there, most of the Europeans, the Canadians, one or two Latin Americans, and a few Asians, including the Indonesians, the Japanese, the Chinese, the Malaysians, Thais, and the Filipinos. So there was a pretty good-sized consular corps. The governor of the state and the chief minister would each do me a major representational event annually for the corp and, of course, we were invited en bloc to all Indian national functions.

Q: What about trade disputes? Were the Indians exporting much to the United States?

MAST: I got deeply involved in one part of US policy, which was, I guess, fairly secret at the time, although it's not particularly now, and that had to do with our concern with dual-use chemicals.

Q: Yes.

MAST: I had some pretty good friends, good contacts, who were manufacturers of chemicals. When I first got there, there wasn't so much emphasis on dual use, or maybe I just didn't know that much about it, but certainly after the Gulf War got more deeply into that sort of thing. Of course, there's always a certain bureaucracy in Washington that believes that no Indian, and certainly no Iraqi or no Syrian, should ever buy any kind of precursor raw material for insecticides because they don't need insecticides. We need insecticides, but they don't need insecticides. There's usually a great debate going on as to what is proper use for these precursors, and what is improper use. Well, I knew this Indian quite well, and now and then I'd see some intelligence on so-and-so. I'd think, I know this guy. I got pretty deeply involved with analysis and lots of memoranda of conversation. Washington would be quite interested: check this out and check that out, and so forth. This guy was just a manufacturer and exporter, and he was selling certain kinds of chemicals. He argued that if the Iraqis wanted to buy it, well, they were legitimate consumers, why not sell it to them, or the Syrians. His government had no

export embargo on these products. There were a lot of honest misunderstandings about many of these things.

Q: Talking about chemicals and all, this was way before your time, but Bhopal, where there had been a major poisoning.

MAST: It was in 1984, I think, where they had turned a valve on improperly and several thousand were killed. Well, we used to go to Bhopal periodically because it was in our consular district, but it was rather quiet at the time, although there were still lawsuits going on. The Indian Government won a major lawsuit against Union Carbide, I think \$450 million or so. And then, of course, what happened was it basically went into the Central Bank, and the government was supposed to use that for the people in Bhopal. Of course, the Indian Government said that for eight years we've been taking care of all of these people and we've spent x hundred millions on this. There were many debates in the press and among NGOs and other groups who argued that the government was exploiting these poor Indian people who had been injured and died in the accident. They were exploiting them almost as badly as Union Carbide had, so it was quite a story. For a little while, there was a danger that - I've forgotten his name - the chairman of Union Carbide might be extradited or arrested, but we were not directly involved in that, as of course the consulate general had been earlier in the 1980s.

Q: You set up a factory in India and very quickly, as happened in Bhopal, you have squatters and all getting all around the fence, which creates a problem. Did this happen?

MAST: I remember it happened with a number of Indian factories. I knew people in the chemical industry who would have this problem. Indian chemical effluent wasn't nearly as clean as it should have been. But the problem intensified when squatters moved so close that the kids were actually playing right in the effluent or people were washing their clothes in it or whatever. So you're right. The press of population and the poverty really does make it very difficult. Again, this guy I knew in the chemical industry was very successful and had a very large plant in Gujarat. He told me, "You know, I used to go to this plant, and I'd see this effluent coming out, and it would be blue and it would be red and it would be yellow. We have started to really clean it up. Now it's just sort of a dirty gray." He added, "I'm not doing that for humanitarian reasons. That was money flowing down there, so we've just got to recover the chemicals that we were flushing away and reuse them or resell them or re-exploit them." There is economic sense in cleaning up, maybe not when you get to where you've got to take 99 percent out, as we find out with our own smokestacks. But if it's going to be the difference between 50 and 90, there is a great economic incentive in cleaning up.

Q: The Soviet Union while you were there ceased to exist, and for a long time, India had looked to the Soviet Union as being its strategic ally. Did that make any difference for you all?

MAST: On a personal level, I had a good relationship with the Soviet consul general. There were two or three of them during that period, and obviously the Indians, some of the more idealistic ones, would always be trying to get us together on the dais in a public

venue. The theme would be how there was going to be world peace now that the Cold War was over. You can imagine this kind of thing going on. There was a large naval base in Bombay, and the end of the Cold War and subsequent US naval visits made it much easier for us to get to know Indian naval officers.

Q: Was there anything else we should cover on Bombay, do you think?

MAST: Well, of course, there were failures.

Q: Yes.

MAST: We had the BARC, which was the nuclear power facility and research facility, the center in Bombay and Tarapur, which was a major facility we had sold to them originally in the 1960s. There was intense interest in the USG in getting to know as many of these people and what was happening as possible. I mean it was a major interest for open-sourcing, but our covert people were also very interested in what was going on there. You know I think I understood why we didn't know that the Indians were going to blow off the atomic bomb, whenever it was, two or three years ago, because it was just virtually impossible to get to know any of those people. If I was at a party and I would just accidentally meet a BARC scientist and he might tell me his name, or I might be able to find out and he might even talk to me a little bit, but then it would totally close. I mean there was no way *ever*. I'd come home from a party and think that so-and-so is the technical director of such-and-such. Maybe we can have him over to our next party. Or I'd tell someone in the consulate that he might want to get to know that fellow, and so on. Never. They were just very secretive. I understood why we didn't know very much about what was going on in the nuclear area.

Q: What was your sounding of -

MAST: Excuse me. For an open society and economy like India, where *everybody* was willing to tell you *anything* at any time, for certain sectors of that society to be able to keep that kind of secret was extremely unusual. Americans tend to be very open, too, but we manage to keep some secrets also.

Q: What about the attitude towards Pakistan? What were you getting? Bombay was somewhat removed from it and all. I was wondering what you were getting.

MAST: There were different attitudes among different groups of Indians. There were many Sindhis in Bombay who had originally come from Pakistan. Many of them were among our best friends. They had incredible interest yet in Pakistan, and surprisingly, for people who had been driven out of Pakistan, some sympathy for Pakistan. Other people - there was a nationalist almost nativist group who were born and raised in Maharashtra, the state that Bombay was in, who tended to be fanatics when it came to Pakistan. They were fanatic anti-Muslims, and that of course also made them anti-Pakistan. So there were these different groups with different points of view having to do with Pakistan. There was a Pakistani consul general in Bombay for a couple of years. I got to know him very well, and it was very interesting to see India through his eyes. He felt that he had

made a lot of good relationships there, but it was always very difficult because any time anything adverse would happen there would be all kinds of demonstrations. They never opened a consulate. He lived in a hotel for a long time before the Paks closed the office. Different groups made it too difficult for them to open a consulate.

Q: So you left there in 1994. Incidentally, what was your impression? We had probably a couple of ambassadors while you were there, didn't we?

MAST: I served for only 8 months with *the* best US ambassador I ever served with, Tom Pickering, who was ambassador there just for that short period of time. The ambassador when I came had been Bill Clark, who was an East Asia hand, and I thought did a good job, although I wasn't as impressed with him as I was with Pickering. And then Ken Brill, who was a young DCM at the time (he's since been ambassador to Cyprus and was executive secretary in the Department), and was chargé a couple of different times for several months. I was very impressed with him. It was interesting to work for someone who was younger than I was. I think that's probably the first time I'd ever done that. Frank Wisner came about three months before I left, so I just barely got to know him.

Q: Well, then, you left in 1994. Whither?

MAST: Well, back to Washington. I was starting to think of retirement at the time, although I did want to serve a few years in Washington. I had an MC TIC, as we said earlier, time in class, which allowed me to serve until 2001, when I would have had to retire, unless I had made career minister, which, as you know, is a needle in a haystack. So I knew I would have to leave by 2001. The way the Foreign Service is set up nowadays, you have to serve three years in Washington before you retire in order to get your locality pay, which applies to your retirement. There are a lot of people that do retire overseas, but I think it's very economically disadvantageous. However, it wasn't that easy, after having been overseas for 13 consecutive years in a couple of different bureaus, and being out of the main track with EB, the Economics Bureau to having been consul general, I had worked a little bit with EB, but not nearly as much, for example, as I had in Malaysia. I was sort of at wit's end, and as I say, lobbying for jobs was never my strong point, so I actually came back without an assignment. Part of it was due to the senior level personnel at the time, they had two or three different personnel changes, so I actually had three different counselors during that one year. You know, how it sometimes happens with senior level personnel, something opens up suddenly, a dream job, and well, who's going to fill this job? Why not me? Occasionally, that will happen and it happened to a couple of my counselors. One ended up as admin counselor in Canada.

So I came back and looked around EB. I got an offer very soon, a day or two after arriving, to be office director in EB dealing with maritime affairs. This was a small office, and an office that basically after I had been there for a little while I questioned whether we really needed the office. It was the Office of Maritime and Land Transportation Affairs. By 1996, after I left, this office was combined with Aviation Affairs.

It was an interesting job. I worked with the Maritime Administration in the Department

of Transportation, the Coast Guard, the Department of Commerce, the Pentagon, and worked primarily in promoting US shipping, Sealand and APL, Farrell, and other American shipping lines. US shipping lines were a disappearing breed. There were many fewer by 1994 than there had been in 1980. But they still had some clout in Congress, some clout in the Administration, some clout abroad. And we had a lot of trade-related maritime problems with China. We were very involved in those areas. It wasn't a total nonentity of a job, so to speak, just one without much visibility.

Q: Was there much of an American merchant marine by this time?

MAST: There still were some. Sealand had quite a large fleet, but basically the only way they could be flying an American flag was to have subsidies. Sealand had a lot of ships, but only a few of them were flying the American flag. American President Lines (APL) had a lot of ships, but only a certain minimal amount of them were flying the American flag. The question of how strongly we would support Sealand and APL's non-American flag fleet interests often came up. We decided we would push Sealand and APL's interests anywhere, whether they were flying the American flag or not because they were fully-owned American companies. It got to be a problem if the union said this was hurting their membership because we were helping them increase the non-American flag part of their fleet. Occasionally that kind of thing would happen, but usually the better APL was doing, the better Sealand was doing, and usually the better the American flag part of their fleet was doing as well. But, of course it was terribly expensive to run these American ships.

Q: Yes. Well, the crews are pretty small these days, too, aren't they?

MAST: Yes, and of course that was one of the arguments from the American unions, that these crews are getting so small; down to 22 or 24 on some of these highly mechanized huge ships that labor costs are really a very small percentage of the problem. And I think there is some truth in that. But now, of course, Sealand has gone into partnership with Maersk, which is a big Danish company and APL has also been sold to Hong Kong interests. There probably still are US flag vessels, however, to carry US military and aid cargoes.

Q: Was there much of a seagoing lobby in Congress?

MAST: There were people on the Democratic side. There were some Republicans as well because of harbor and national security interests. If a Congress person represented Baltimore or New York and the harbor was in his district, that could make a difference. Shipbuilding was another thing, of course.

Q: I would think that one of the concerns would be that you've got a lot of rather elderly ships run with Liberian or, God knows, Sri Lankan interests or crews or something, and they're not very side and they're poorly manned. Was this something you dealt with?

MAST: To a certain extent, but of course the Coast Guard has the primary responsibility.

If it's an American-flag ship, then, of course, the Coast Guard has certain rights, more than it would have if it was a Liberian flag. But any ship that enters US coastal waters has to meet US Coast Guard requirements, so they have the right to board any ship that they think is not up to snuff. They would do that fairly aggressively, and you have firms like the American Bureau of Shipping and other quasi-governmental firms from various countries that would inspect ships abroad, when they would be sold or title would transfer or a new captain would take over. There are certain rules that everyone has to follow.

And of course the crews are increasingly Filipino, Chinese, Ukrainian, and they often don't even have a common language. Ships must have an executive officer or a couple of administrative officers who are able to speak several languages. Ships are becoming increasingly automated, but this language babel must still be a problem.

Q: So then in 1994 -

MAST: To 1996. I worked two years in Maritime Affairs, and then the question was what to do next. I had always wanted to work in Personnel, so I got an assignment in senior personnel. They were very interested in having a senior officer who had had economic experience. I started work in the summer of 1997. And unfortunately I didn't enjoy that as much as I thought I would. There had been major changes in senior-level Personnel just before I entered, and instead of just dealing with senior officers I also had to work with FS-1s. Well, I had nothing against assigning FS-1s. It just meant that I had 150 officers every year as opposed to maybe having 75-100, which my predecessors had had. Plus, they had changed the whole personnel system so that we also did the counseling and the assignment process. The technical part of assignments was all supposed to be done, as things are nowadays, with this new *software* we had had developed. Well, of course, the software didn't work well, and I was somewhat of a technophobe anyway. So that part of Personnel I didn't like at all. The work load was incredible, there had been 120 people involved in Personnel the year before, and they cut the staff to 103. So the director-general, but particularly one of the deputy assistant secretaries was getting a lot of credit for being an efficient manager, and it came out of our backs. I had more stress in that job than any I had previously held. The main reason was that we could not do justice to the personnel requirements of our fellow officers whose careers we felt we were failing. To make a long story short, after about six months I decided that rather than do this for two years I would retire. I then learned of an opportunity to work as an advisor at the US Mission for the UN General Assembly. I had planned to retire in September of 1997, but then I learned about this opportunity to be an advisor to the South Asia Bureau, and I leaped at this opportunity to live in New York and learn something about the UN as well. So I did that for three months, and came back in late December and worked another month in Personnel and then into the retirement course with retirement in May of 1998.

Q: Well, great. We just made it. I was ready to go to a- (end of tape)

End of interview