

Ahtisaari interview 13 July 2006

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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF

MARTTI AHTISAARI

BY

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THOMAS G. WEISS: This is Tom Weiss interviewing Martti Ahtisaari on the 13th of July at the Millennium Plaza Hotel in Room 3005. It is actually a distinct pleasure to learn about people that I didn't know before doing these. So I would like to start in 1937. I wondered if you could just tell me, in your own words, a little bit about your parents' background—what they did, what the family background was, the family religion—and what importance that had for you as you look back.

MARTTI AHTISAARI: First of all, I was born in Viipuri, in Karelia, two years before the war started, when the Soviets attacked us. My mother is Karelian. Her family comes from Karelia. That part we lost to the Soviets in this war. My mother's family were all farmers. My father's family comes from southern Norway. They came to Finland in the 1870s, to southern Finland, to work in a sawmilling industry as foremen. A Norwegian investor started the sawmilling industry there. The company is still there. It is a Finnish-Swedish company. My father happened to be working in Karelia and met my mother and they got married. Their first child, a daughter, died nearly at childbirth. I was the second one. Then there was a third one a bit later—my sister, who is still alive.

My father's family came from a small place in Norway called Tistedal. It is near Halden, down in the south, close to the Swedish border. My great grandfather was married to a Swede. I learned that I have relatives on the Swedish side of the border. When people have taken a harder look on my past, and me they say that I have 12.5 percent Norwegian and the same amount of Swedish blood in me. The rest is supposed to be Finnish. My background is very important, because I have always felt, without really looking at my background so much, extremely Nordic. That perhaps partly explains that. Then, also the fact that everybody moved—400,000 of us

from Karelia moved to the rest of Finland. As I nowadays say, we became permanently displaced in the rest of Finland.

My first recollections are from those farming communities where I went with my mother, because my father was in the army. In the 1930s, when it was difficult to find employment in general, he joined the military on the technical side and stayed with our armed forces up to retirement. He was the inspector of the vehicles. He also gave the officers driving licenses. I still meet generals who say that they were scared of going to see my father for the driving test.

My family was a typical family of that time, in the sense that in my mother's family, after elementary school only one of them went to high school. Others either married, took on employment, or became farmers' wives, many of them. My uncle was a farmer, married to a teacher, a rather useful combination. My grandfather was in the sawmilling business. So were two brothers of my father. It was a lower middle-class family living a decent life. My father was religious. We were Protestants, Lutherans. When I look back on it, I have only positive things to say about it.

When my father retired and I became ambassador to Tanzania, my father joined us. It was very helpful, because our son was young. When we moved to New York he was only seven. In Tanzania when we had to go out in the evenings, there was the grandfather to keep company to our son. It was really an African concept of an extended family. My father died of cancer when we were there. He had to be transferred back to Finland. He went very fast. My mother died even younger.

TGW: You mentioned that you were from the part of Finland taken over by the Soviet Union. I guess you were internally displaced.

MA: Yes, I was internally displaced. I say now I am permanently displaced. I don't think the Russians will ever give back the territory the Soviets took. The fact that I had to move meant that I developed, I realized much later, a sensitivity that goes beyond the ordinary in sensing what people think, what their attitudes are. I was at the mercy and the kindness of that family that accepted us with my mother. It must have had a much greater influence in my life, into my thinking, than I ever thought.

We then settled into the eastern part of Finland, where we stayed until 1952, and then moved to the northern part of Finland, with my father's work. I was then fifteen. I have adopted that city, Oulu, as my hometown. I still go there quite often and see my friends there, because I did my high school and then went to university there.

I asked Ensio Siilasvuo, the famous Finnish peacekeeper, "When I can't say that my hometown is Viipuri, where am I from?" He said, "You are from Oulo, where you were when you were in your teens, around fifteen." I very much felt at home in Oulu. I was well received. I had been associated with the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) movement in Kuopio already, but more so in Oulu. I became involved with the sports activities of the organization. We had a good basketball team. So I played there and I became a coach for them. I was perhaps not good enough to be on the number one line.

So all in all, I am very happy with and have a very long relationship with that city. The city even asked me to become mayor in 1989 but I turned the offer down. I had started high school one year younger than normally. Normally, you would do four years in primary school and I did only three. I did so well that the teacher said, "Why don't you try?" It was a silly thing to do, but then when I moved to Oulu, I got conditional approval in the Swedish language. I should have passed the test in Swedish language during the summer 1952, which I didn't. I

didn't even go to the test, because I thought I would rather repeat the sixth grade, so that I would be among youngsters of my age group.

The irony is that my first foreign assignment, after one year working in Oulu, was with a Swedish NGO (nongovernmental organization), which had a very interesting name, the Central Committee for Swedish Technical Assistance. I always tease my Swedish friends about that. It was a typical 1960s name. The organization got half of its funding from the population directly and half from the state.

That brought me to Karachi, Pakistan for three years. I would say that that was for me of vital importance. I worked in a technical institute. I helped them to plan their teacher-training program so that Pakistanis could start taking over. Otherwise, the Swedes would have had to be there forever. It was one of the first technical assistance projects with very good teachers. I still have friends among them. I was twenty-three when I started working in Pakistan.

TGW: So 1960.

MA: Yes, 1960, for three years. It started my association with Nordic development—because while I was in Pakistan, the Central Committee became the Board of International Development. Then finally it became SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). I have lived through this development. When I came back, I went then to the Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration. I ran the Finnish Student Union's Aid Organization, which was affiliated with World University Service in Switzerland. I received the first Namibian, the present minister for agriculture and forestry, Nicky Yambothen. I remember when he came. He had his seventieth birthday this year, and we, all his Finnish friends, congratulated him. He sent a very nice letter to all of us.

He came as somebody who had not a terribly good educational background in elementary and high school. So we had to provide him support teaching. He did his Master's in political science. Then SWAPO (South West African People's Organization) said to him, "We want you to become a medical doctor." So he faithfully did that. He became a medical doctor. That is how, actually, my involvement with Namibia started in the mid-1960s. In 1965, I was recruited by the chairman of my board Jaakko Iloniemi to the newly established aid office in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

TGW: What spurred you to go from Oulu to Karachi?

MA: I thought that if I would settle there then I would regret it for the rest of my life. I just couldn't think of settling yet. I thought that if I would stay there I would most probably enter local politics. I was not ready for it. Going to Pakistan was a bit of a gamble as well.

I didn't know what would happen when I came back from Pakistan, either. That started a totally new career. I got interested in developmental issues. I realized it was good thing to study how the institute fitted into the local educational system. I asked the director, "Can I make a study and see where have these students disappeared and what are they doing?" The students had passed the Pakistani student matriculation examination. But our institute was a non-university engineering institute with very good Swedish professional teachers.

TGW: So you went there, but then you yourself went back to university when you returned?

MA: Yes. At the same time I was involved with a lot of activities and I am still.

TGW: I see. In high school or early university, did the United Nations figure in the curriculum? When were you exposed to the UN for the first time as a notion or as an institution?

MA: I was aware of the UN when I went to Pakistan, but actually it became a reality for me in the late 1960s when I was then asked to join the UN for the first time. We were a very small office, the aid office. It was part of the political department. We had taken over the recruitment for the technical assistance posts within the UN. TARS (the Technical Assistance Recruitment Service) from Geneva interviewed my countrymen for these tasks. We organized the interviews of the Finns who were applying for technical assistance posts. Mr. Udovenko, later the foreign minister of Ukraine and President of the General Assembly visited Finland for TARS. He asked me “Why don’t you come to Geneva and work with us?” I said, “I don’t want to leave at the moment.” But Mr. Lars Hyttinen, a countryman and good colleague of mine went to Geneva. He later did his career with UNDP (UN Development Programme).

TGW: So your entry into the Foreign Ministry in the mid-1960s coincided with UNDP’s basically getting off the ground?

MA: Yes. Then our small office dealt with the bilateral, multilateral, and Nordic cooperation. I started traveling to Geneva to attend the meetings of International Trade Centre (ITC), because we had programs with them. My first contacts with the UN were Geneva-based.

TGW: Of course, Pakistan had become independent in 1947. But the real rash of decolonization basically took place in the late-1950s and early-1960s, when you arrived in Karachi. How did decolonization look from Karachi?

MA: First of all, we had students from East and West Pakistan. East Pakistan became then Bangladesh. I made good friends in Pakistani society. Many of them were from the air force. I had then done the compulsory military service in Finland and three months as a training officer before going to the university in Oulu.

TGW: Which period was that?

MA: Yes. It was the summer of 1956. I vaguely thought that I might even join the military. I looked at the military during those months and I said, “This is nothing for me.”

TGW: When you became aware of the UN then, it was the development side and not the political side?

MA: Yes, very much so. It is very interesting that I thought that if I were ever to join the UN, it would be either in UNDP or UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees). Those were clearly my orientations—again, being a refugee from the territories that we had lost, there was a certain draw over there. Instead I did a quick career in the foreign service. I became ambassador when I was thirty-six, in 1973.

TGW: Actually, that is when we first met was in 1975 or 1976. You were based in Dar es Salaam, but were you covering several countries?

MA: I was covering, in the beginning, Somalia and Zambia, and then when Mozambique became independent, Mozambique as well. I dealt with the OAU (Organization of African Unity) Liberation Committee and the liberation movements. Humanitarian assistance was given by our embassy to the liberation movements.

TGW: What were the priorities of Finnish foreign policy? And why were Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, and the other Frontline States of consequence?

MA: It was very simple. We started our bilateral activities by participating in Nordic projects. I was on the board of the Nordic projects. We had one project in Kibaha outside Dar es Salaam. You must have visited Kibaha. The director of Kibaha was Bertil Merlin, a Swede, who was my boss in Karachi. So we had changed our roles, which was always amusing. Then we had a Nordic cooperative project in Kenya.

I led a mission to establish an agricultural research and training center at Mbeya in Tanzania, which became a Nordic undertaking.

TGW: Julius Nyerere and Ujamaa in Tanzania were soft spots for Nordics, right? That was the period of great enthusiasm in those days?

MA: I think anyone who had any left-leaning ideas—I had a social-democratic background—were enthusiastic about Tanzania. I think those years were very educational. I remember making my farewell speech on the police officers' mess to Foreign Minister Kaduma when I was leaving Tanzania in the end of 1976. I ended up saying, "What is good for Tanzania is good for Finland." I am not terribly proud of that anymore, but it reflected the thinking at the time.

I remember attending a seminar in the mid-1980s in Dar es Salaam. The Swedes organized it. We had candid discussions with Tanzanians on what was going wrong there and what should be done. I thought that we always had a very good relationship with our friends in Tanzania. Nevertheless, it took a long time before we came to that the type of relationship where problems were openly discussed.

TGW: My impression of the period was one that was very uncritical, when ideological stances trumped critical thinking. Is that correct?

MA: Yes, we were utopian, and enjoyed the mere fact that Tanzania had a president who was honest and meant good for his people, though he didn't understand much about economics. I more or less said that when I spoke at his memorial in Dar es Salaam. I also gave credit to him that he, himself, realized that things had gone wrong. But little did one understand at the time how important it would have been to encourage the entrepreneurial spirit in people. What we did understand was that education and good healthcare were important. So there were positive

elements in the total package of development cooperation, but not how you would actually start getting the country towards economic growth.

I remember looking at the figures on agricultural production when we planned the Mbeya agricultural project in the 1960s. There was no other rational explanation why the agricultural production was growing, except that the independence had been achieved. There was a sudden surge in agricultural production after independence, but it lasted only for a few years.

TGW: This period, based in Dar es Salaam, coincided also with either the high or low point—depending on your point of view—of North-South relations with the New International Economic Order (NIEO). How did that look through the other end of the telescope from Dar es Salaam? Did it seem serious?

MA: The problem when you ask that sort of question now is that my views are influenced by the more recent history. We activists always argued that our country has to start being more active. We used the Nordic countries as an example. There had to be a fairer deal for developing countries. I think we believed and we still believe. We were critical that we were not doing enough at that moment.

I negotiated the target of 0.7 percent of GDP for aid and then I was there when we came down to 0.4 of GDP in our aid. I was in office when we cut down our aid, because we were in economic difficulties. That had an effect and we have never recovered.

TGW: But Finland and other—as they were called—“like-minded countries” were in a comfortable position between Tanzania and Mozambique, on the one hand, and the Germans, U.S., and UK, on the other hand?

MA: It was very comfortable. But then, of course, I remember being in Dublin in the mid-1980s when I was undersecretary of state. I attended one of the meetings of the like-minded

countries. I said, “When I look around here, this group of like-minded, when it started included Canada, the Netherlands, and the Nordics. Now this has started to become a group of “light-minded countries”! So it really lost it’s meaning, but not perhaps the sympathy and contacts that remain still within the original group of countries. It’s actually fascinating that those ties are still there. They have never disappeared.

TGW: At this point, I was actually sitting at the ground zero of these negotiations at UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development). But did this bridging role of the like-minded countries—on the political side I understand how that works in negotiations—but in the field, let’s say, what concrete form did this take?

MA: During the time I was in the field it meant close contracts within the group. We all had to concentrate on our own bilateral programs. UNDP coordinated because the UN resrep (resident representative) had a coordinating role and we all very much supported that role. The personal contacts also were there. Then, of course, the whole liberation struggle fascinated all of us. As I said, we had to deal with humanitarian assistance and the contacts with FRELIMO (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique), and SWAPO (Southwest African People’s Organization), and the ANC (African National Congress) as well.

TGW: Did Finland’s peculiar relationship with the Soviet Union act as a constraint in any way on politicking within the western group?

MA: On the contrary. Some of us were arguing that we should get to par with the rest of the Nordics, and with Canada and others in our aid because it would increase our identity with that group. So that was basically a way of clarifying the Finnish position as part of the Western group. The socialist countries, as a group, were giving little aid. The representatives of the

socialist countries were much more critical of what was happening in that society. Perhaps they were more cynical because of their own experiences in their own societies.

TGW: You said before that it is a little hard to answer some of these historical questions without moving forward and reading into the past with today's lenses, but I wondered whether the North-South distinction made more sense than it seems to today. How do you view this clash between North and South? It was the defining characteristic of the 1970s. Certainly, in the General Assembly today, there is a kind of similar breakdown.

MA: It always bothers me. How do we allow it to get to that? Perhaps we didn't help. In all honesty, we didn't help that process. We perhaps also understood things that should not have been understood. I started realizing, in the 1980s and thereafter that it is not a sign of friendship—accepting everything when people are doing things that they actually shouldn't be doing.

I remember I had to be the chairman of the Finnish delegation of an UNCTAD meeting in Caracas when no ministers were available. I was undersecretary of state then. I started teasing my Nordic colleagues when we were sitting together and having a dinner. I said, "Why are we paying the Third World representatives to come to a meeting like this?" "Not a single country is out of the meetings of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and World Bank. Everybody comes there. If people don't find that this organization is worth it, why are we maintaining this sort of bubble?"

I think we still continued, but it started bothering me tremendously, because perhaps we should have much earlier concentrated not only on the macro issues that we did, and the arguments that were very important. We concentrated less on what actually works, what creates development, what doesn't, what the obstacles for development are. Slowly we started also

looking for answers to these questions. Actually, they were the same questions that our partners were asking at the same time.

We enjoyed the camaraderie that this work brought, and the friendships are still there. In Tanzania, Ben Mkapa, who was then press spokesman for Nyerere, became minister and foreign minister and minister for higher education and president. We are still good friends. It has been rewarding to see the change in all of us. We have always been able to maintain a very candid relationship. When I was dealing with Namibia I very often tested my thoughts with Minister Mkapa. He was often critical but we remained friends. Perhaps that is the explanation why I am still around.

Then my work went more and more for politically oriented tasks. In the case of Namibia, however, I was rather forcefully driving the preparation for development planning in Namibia by financing studies, even when we didn't have yet any counterparts there. They criticized me: "Why do you do this?" I said, "You can do whatever you like with these papers, but you better have something that you can use after independence as long as they are professionally done. Don't you believe that you can have next summer's donor's conference if I don't do this." In the end everyone was happy that the work was done.

TGW: Maybe we should spend a little time focusing on Namibia, which occupied you for, I think, longer than you thought it was going to.

MA: For too long. It says something about my friendships—Dr. Peter Onu, a Nigerian, who was the deputy-secretary-general of OAU (Organization for African Unity)—said, in the early 1980s when I complained to him "Peter, for God's sake, I can't waste my life here. I want to go home." He said, "Martti, you are not going anywhere. It is better to have a devil we know." At least I learned an enormous amount from that experience, perhaps more than I

contributed—first of all, patience and how sometimes you simply have to sit tight, which is killing. But then you have to be ready when the right time comes. I am now thankful for that experience. And Namibia is not doing so badly. I hope attention could be more put on education. The quality of education is of vital importance for all countries

TGW: So you were asked to become commissioner in 1977?

MA: In 1976. In the early autumn, a delegation from SWAPO came to see me in Dar es Salaam. Sean McBride the Commissioner and the commander of SWAPO's armed forces in Angola, and I think the present president, Mr. (Hifikepunye) Pohamba, was in that delegation. They said, "Would you become our candidate for the commissioner job?" I said, "I am a civil servant. Call Helsinki and ask."

TGW: So this occurred while you were ambassador to Tanzania.

MA: Yes. I was also the Finnish representative in the UN Institute for Namibia in Lusaka. Everyone got to know me and knew that I took seriously the institute's work.

TGW: That's what I recall. There was an initial excitement. The second time we met was in 1978, on the Nationhood Program.

MA: That was a Finnish initiative again, in the Council for Namibia. It was very useful, because it gave the opportunity to start development planning exercise with Namibians. Hage Geingob became responsible for the program on SWAPO's side. He then became the director of the UN institute and later the first prime minister. I said to SWAPO, "Look, this is the amount of money I have been able to get you. Now, how do we use it? You better have an internal discussion with your different secretaries." It was a sort of embryonic development planning exercise for Namibia. I had to help them when some of the UN family members came with a programme, which they had not even discussed with SWAPO. I said, "What do you have to say

about these programs?” They said, “We know that these are good for them.” I said, “Not a single one will be approved.

TGW: When did you decide that commissioner for Namibia wasn't going to be a full-time job? At the outside, everyone was excited, but it obviously became clear that independence was not going to occur in 1978 or 1979, even though that was the initial thought?

MA: In 1978, it was a question of who would become the special representative. I started as a commissioner in 1977. In 1978 I was appointed special representative as well. We were running the assistance programs for Namibia from the commissioner's office. The UN Council for Namibia's secretariat served the council. When we had the first trip in 1978 to Namibia, it became clear that you couldn't hold both posts. You can't be commissioner and special representative at the same time. So the idea emerged that we should divide those tasks, because some people did not want to see me as commissioner, but they were happy to see me in a separate building as a special representative.

TGW: At what point did it become clear that Namibian independence was not imminent?

MA: It was fairly clear for a long time, because the western governments—the so called western five—were not in a position to impose a settlement on South Africans, and South Africans felt rather comfortable in their position in Namibia. The armed resistance was not such that it would have forced them to negotiate. When the Cubans came to Angola that had an effect. It perhaps required that you had a Republican administration in USA because it was during Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker's time when the deal was made. Ambassador Don McHenry had started the work. He mastered the details of the whole exercise extremely well.

TGW: What did the thaw between East and West, or the end of the Cold War, contribute to this? Anything? Or was it the hard line of the Republican administration?

MA: First of all, the Republican administration introduced the linkage of withdrawal of the Cuban forces. That was the carrot for South Africans. The character of the fighting had changed with the Cuban presence. The South Africans were bogged down in Angola. Perhaps it was also easier for them to deal politically with the Republicans. I have very high regard for Chester Crocker. I don't think the Democrats would have accepted the linkage

A good illustration of the South African attitude was when I went to see P.W. Botha, when he was prime minister in the 1980s. He looked at me when I went in with my delegation and said, "Ambassador Ahtisaari, I have to tell you that we here in South Africa don't like the UN." I thought for a second, and I said, "Mr. Prime Minister, I want to assure you that the feelings are mutual."

I remember my South African interlocutors saying, "You are too serious." I said, "Look, don't waste my time. You are not serious. It doesn't do well to our relationship. Why don't we stop this nonsense and come back when you are serious?" We still kept on pushing, but it was very frustrating.

TGW: As you look back, the efforts in 1978 and 1979 with the Nationhood Program, if we fast-forward to 1989, the investment in looking at issues and training people, did it pay off? Was it worthwhile?

MA: Yes, it definitively was, because we also gave scholarships to new SWAPO members. I remember being criticized by a member of opposition party DTA (Democratic Turnhalle Alliance) for favoring SWAPO in training programmes. I said, "Who actually financed your studies?" He said, "The UN." We insisted that we could include others, not only SWAPO

members. The UN Institute in Lusaka was important, because it gave the opportunity for Namibians to gain administrative, managerial and teaching experience. But it also gave time to think, because I think people saw what worked in these countries where they spent so many years and what didn't work. People were intelligent. They had good education. They were capable of drawing conclusions from their own experience.

TGW: You mentioned the South Africans. Mr. Botha mentioned that he was not fond of the UN. I, at least, see a rather clear distinction between the UN on the political/military side and on the development side. My recollection is that Africans, after the UN experience in the Congo, were more than reticent to have the UN involved on the political and military side. Did any of this ever get expressed categorically? Obviously, there was going to be a peacekeeping force of sorts and an election.

MA: The negotiations on how to get the peacekeeping forces accepted were difficult. Brian Urquhart was in charge of peacekeeping and negotiated this. Both sides wanted to have their friends among the peacekeeping troops. It was a good experience for me when I had, in 1999, to negotiate with the Russians on what sort of international force we should have in Kosovo. They started like the South Africans and SWAPO in the spring of 1999. But in Namibia we got the agreement. We had Finns and Malaysians and Kenyans in Namibia. The size of the force is always an issue. We were bogged down for months with the G-77 (Group of 77) and the Africans in New York. I know that this comes out in all negotiations, like in my negotiation on Aceh, where we have now a mission of only 200 people. In the discussions in Namibia we had to clarify what sort of roles the international community should have. The G-77 wanted the UN to take over Namibia. I did not agree. It is much easier to supervise and control others than to run a country and be criticized by everybody.

But these were the issues, which we debated endlessly. I was comfortable with the numbers of peacekeeping troops when we strongly reduced the South African troops. But I said, “Give me flexibility in police.” That we got. We increased the police numbers threefold from the original numbers.

TGW: As I recall the first day, the numbers weren’t exactly apt to the task. Perhaps people weren’t there yet?

MA: True, exactly for the reasons I described we were delayed in deploying our troops. We couldn’t have done anything to prevent what happened. Our military observers were there to witness that South Africa had withdrawn to bases all their troops. But when SWAPO troops started coming across the border from Angola, the South Africans would have come out of their bases either without our consent or with our consent. So I took the enormously unpopular decision. I got the support from New York grudgingly General Prem Chand was supporting me: “They have to be allowed to leave from their bases.” We said to the South Africans, “Try to manage with as few troops as you can.” A few hundred SWAPO fighters died. Of course, the whole thing was totally wrong. SWAPO should never have come across the border to Namibia. It was against all the agreements.

TGW: At this time, if we could go back just a little bit, how do you recall [Mikhail] Gorbachev’s coming on the scene. I guess I am trying to get at whether or not, in the mid-1980s, or even a little later, in the 1986 or 1987, whether the kind of sea change that we subsequently saw seemed possible. Because at the outset, as you mentioned, whether it was linking troops, or withdrawing from all the hotspots around the world, this seemed pretty impossible.

MA: I called it an unholy alliance in 1989. We started this group—the western five, Angolans, Russians, Cubans and South Africans sitting in meetings in South Africa, and Angola,

and Namibia. Had it not been for this sort of alliance we would never have been able to manage the beginning, the events of the first of April 1989.

TGW: But was this surprising?

MA: I think it was extremely rewarding to see that it was possible for this group to solve these problems and support us. They wanted this operation to succeed.

I had very candid discussions with Russian friends, because many of them I had gotten to know over the years. They were helpful. So were the Cubans.

TGW: So during this period between 1977 and 1990, you worked full-time on Namibia. When did the position as under-secretary-general for administration and management?

MA: That came from 1987 onward.

TGW: So you were doing that and Namibia—

MA: First I went back to Finland for three years 1984, 1985, and 1986, as under-secretary of state for international development cooperation. But I continued as special representative of the Secretary-General for Namibia at the same time.

TGW: While heading the aid agency?

MA: While heading FINNIDA (Finnish International Development Agency). I was not then anymore commissioner for Namibia.

TGW: So you came back to the UN as undersecretary-general for administration and management in 1987?

MA: Javier Pérez de Cuéllar was a bit surprised when I said I was accepting his offer, “Assuming that I will continue as your special representative on Namibia.”

TGW: So in 1989 and 1990, you stepped down temporarily from the management role?

MA: Yes, for one year. When I was in Namibia my colleague Louis Gomez took over from me. He had a UNDP background.

TGW: What do you think about the challenges you faced as head of administration and management? This now seems to be on everyone's lips: reform this, reform that. In the late-1980s, was it all that different?

MA: It was the same sort of discussion. I was criticized by the Heritage Foundation: "What is this man running on the Hill?" Because I had talks with people on the Hill and we got some response. You may remember the reforms that were agreed to: a reduction by 25 percent of the top posts and 15 percent of the rest. We got it on the top posts, but if I recall correctly on the rest we didn't go down to 15 percent but 13 percent. I did it in good cooperation with the staff union. With the help of Cedric Thornberry, we started looking also at the administration of justice in the UN. There was a big delay in dealing with staff complaints. We formed working groups where we had two from the management, two from the staff side and an independent chairman. I said, "If you don't decide on these complaint cases in half a year, I rule for the claimant in every case." So all of sudden we cleared the backlog. But I am afraid that when I left to Namibia the delays re-emerged.

TGW: You have worked within NGOs (nongovernmental organizations). You have worked within governments. How would you rate the international civil service? There obviously are various kinds of international civil servants, but is it meaningful to try to generalize about the quality of UN staff?

MA: I think it is very dangerous to try to generalize. Namibia is an example. I was then head of administration and management, so with the help of Cedric and my other colleagues, we interviewed and we got the best people out of the system. I negotiated the budget with the Fifth

Committee. I was openly candid and said, "We can't expect cooperation from South Africa." The budget was based on that assumption. We got, however, some cooperation from them. So we saved, I think, 10 percent of the budget. I think we showed, through these personal performances, that the UN can. Many of those who were then in Namibia have worked successfully in many other missions. They have been all over the world.

But the difficulty is very often the return back to the UN system and secretariat particularly. No one is actually prepared to utilize the returned colleagues. It is a managerial problem. How are we managerially capable of providing work, which is interesting and challenging. Tasks where the persons have to try their best to actually succeed. This decides finally what sort of people we are getting and are able to keep in the UN. Now I have good people in a small office in Vienna, all handpicked. I demanded that we have people who had been in the Balkans and had worked there successfully and can work together. For substantive people, I insisted that one or two people should know them and vouch for them that they can fit in here and can perform. I can't do a job in a year if I have to go through the routine recruitment exercises. It is the only way you can succeed. And we have been very lucky with our people.

TGW: It seems to me from my own experience, which was ten years in the secretariat that something drastic needs to be done to get back to the idealistic origins.

MA: You have excellent people; you have mediocre people; and you have people who shouldn't be around.

TGW: Is there a way to alter the incentives, the kinds of contracts? I know there is no magic fix here.

MA: We have to be courageous enough to stand by those who are good. It's a managerial issue, not to be misled by political considerations. If people can't perform, they can't

perform, period. They have to be told so. I know people are capable of running to their embassies for support. I have worked with excellent colleagues from all continents. I have told many of them, “If I have a new task I will call you if you are still around.”

TGW: Within the belly of the beast, as the head of administration and management, what were the biggest challenges of getting agencies to work together?

MA: It was typical that when we had the money, because the funding came through my office when I was commissioner for Namibia, of course they then came to us. They wanted the money. That is the difficulty when you run a place like OCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) for instance. How do you expect people to listen to you if you have never been in the field and you don't have a penny. Why should I waste my time with you when you say that my task is to coordinate you? When Michael Priestly was USG for OCHA it was a good choice because of his solid field experience.

Now it seems to be working very well with Jan Egeland, who had a Red Cross background before being in the Norwegian government and in the field. I have come to the conclusion that individuals do matter enormously. The more you can concentrate in finding the right person for the right job, it is very much worthwhile.

TGW: Actually, it sounds like the last sentence from our project's first book, *Ahead of the Curve*, which is, “People matter.”

MA: It is like I always say, that in the case of an ambassador, his or her personality means perhaps 60 to 70 percent. The basic knowledge is there for everyone.

TGW: Before we leave this undersecretary-general phase, you were involved in doing an oft-cited report on the first Gulf War.

MA: A very dramatic one.

TGW: Yes, exactly. As you look back at that—I often times think about reports. For instance, the worst sentence that Robert Jackson ever wrote was about the “prehistoric monster” in the Jackson report (*Study of the Capacity of the UN Development System*). So I was just wondering whether you regret your “stone age” sentence?

MA: No, I don't. I was working with Cedric then. I asked him to draft a couple of choices for me to consider. I was asked by SG Javier Pérez de Cuéllar to undertake missions to assess the need for humanitarian assistance in Iraq and Kuwait. I realized how unpopular the case of Iraq was. I told SG, “Let the report go under my name so that I take the flack. If you don't really tell people how badly things are in Iraq, we will never get the money to help people, which we should, because we should assist. No matter how bad mistakes the leaders make, the people should not suffer.” That has to be the principle. Had I written a normal UN report of Iraq's humanitarian needs we would never have gotten the money we needed, because the case was so unpopular. I was amused that the Starlight Bookstore in San Francisco had my report reprinted by Noam Chomsky. We bought all the remaining copies. I still have few of them left.

I did a report on security in Iraq in 2003, after the killing of twenty-two of our staff. I was sad and furious when I did that task.

TGW: On the August bombing?

MA: Yes, people had neglected their tasks. Many of my friends died there. Of course my report started a process in the UN and rightly so.

TGW: You worked very closely with several Secretaries-General, and we're thinking about selecting a new one soon. What kinds of leadership style do you think makes the most sense for a Secretary-General? Or are there tactics when you need one kind and times when you need another? Are there things that work always for a Secretary-General?

MA: First of all, a person has to have a vision. There has to be in the top echelons of the organization people who know where they are actually trying to take this organization and what sort of task they should concentrate on and what they should avoid. They may be important, but not important enough. And how can one get the membership to support the necessary action? I have worked most with Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, and of course with Kofi Annan. He and I are old colleagues. He was assistant-secretary-general when I was under-secretary-general for administration. I have very high regard for him. I think he has grown in the task and done very well. I liked Javier Pérez de Cuéllar very much, because he was a very principled and determined individual. He was quiet. If there was a gentleman, then Javier Perez de Cuellar was one. He always followed things. If he asked me, for instance, to do something, I could be sure that he would call me in a few days: “Martti, where are we?”

When it comes to selection of the new SG he or she should hopefully be somebody who would ensure the respect and support of the member states. Otherwise, you will become a caretaker in that job. So I find it difficult to imagine that it could be somebody again with Kofi Annan’s background. I don’t think that would happen. I don’t think it can be somebody from the ranks. The Security Council may be looking for a former prime minister or minister. I think the personal qualities are important in that sense—that a person has to know the job. You can’t learn that job. You have to start running from day one. I would be surprised if somebody was nominated with a civil service background.

I have the interest of the organization at heart. I would quite frankly abolish the old ground rules that the Secretary-General cannot come from the permanent member states. Why so? The Cold War is over. Why do people have privileges but not responsibilities?

When I looked around, I came to the conclusion very fast that the type of persons I would like to run this place, without putting them in any type of order are leaders like Bill Clinton and Tony Blair. They could save the Americans and save the UN, because you need that type of person. I use them as an illustration only. But why not make a deal among the permanent members that the deputy comes from another permanent member and rotate them. They could serve on a one- year term basis.

You don't need to be there forever. I was president for six years. It's quite enough, if you are not interested in power and more interested in substance.

The person has to be somebody whom people can respect, then Bill Clinton for instance, would be very good. You see what type of personalities I'm after, because I want to normalize the relationship with the host country and save the UN. These people could also carry out the necessary reform programs.

TGW: Republicans might be interested because it might get Hillary off their backs, but I'm not sure there would be another reason they would support it!

MA: I don't know. But these are the types of people that we badly need. Why should we omit the possibility to engage these sorts of individuals? Asians should, when they want to have the Secretary-General, to start looking amongst themselves for this type of person. I'm sure you can find the right person from Asia.

TGW: As the former head of administration and management, were you surprised by the oil-for-food (UN Office of the Iraq Programme) scandal?

MA: Disappointed.

TGW: But is the UN capable of running anything of that magnitude?

MA: That's a good question. I think one has to look very carefully at the different tasks the member states are giving to the UN. Perhaps a Secretary-General has to say in some cases, "Sorry, we don't want this. You haven't given me the resources." He might actually need to start looking whether it would be necessary in some cases to outsource this sort of activity outside the UN. You might be able to actually find a private company that can do that type of work better than we can.

TGW: We're going to pause here. We're almost at the end of tape number one.

TGW: This is the beginning of tape number two, the 13th of July, Tom Weiss with Martti Ahtisaari. You have never quite left the UN, but we are going to leave the UN for a minute when you became secretary of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. How did this position arise? Why? What attracted you about it?

MA: First of all, I was undersecretary of state for development cooperation, from 1984 to 1986. So that was the next logical step. I came from the aid side, so I was not a career diplomat in the traditional sense of the word. It was Harri Holkeri, then prime minister, who wanted me. We are good friends. We come from different political backgrounds. He was the conservative party chairman. I felt that after Namibia I wanted to go back. There was a moment after Namibia, when Javier Pérez de Cuéllar asked me whether I was interested in UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees). I consulted with my Foreign minister. He said, "Yes, that would be good." I heard however that the president felt that, "No, you have been appointed as state secretary. You have to come back."

But the SG's enquiry was not yet an offer, not in the same sense as when Kofi Annan offered me UNHCR in 2000. I turned it down then. The earlier approach was a polite inquiry from Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. It sounded a little like a reward for work well done in Namibia.

I wanted to go back to Finland. We were starting to prepare for our European Union (EU) membership and negotiations. But I had hardly landed in Finland when Cyrus Vance and David Owen asked me, “Would you like to come to Geneva and chair the Bosnia-Herzegovina working group in the Yugoslavia Conference?”

TGW: The UN from the inside, or the UN now from the outside as secretary of state, how do its strong sides and weak sides look on the other end of the governmental spectrum? In some ways Finland, for an American, is a little hard to understand. As someone who has been interested in the UN, spent a great portion of his career in development in the UN, then actually gone into government service—this would disqualify you in this country. I always have to remind myself that.

MA: When I worked for the UN I was always on a leave of absence from my government. I insisted on that because that gave me independence. I could leave tomorrow. My government would have to take me back. I said, “I will never leave the government service and be at the mercy of anybody.” But perhaps that’s my general attitude. I want to have options. When I looked at colleagues who didn’t have that same option, I realized that for them it was a life filled with many more compromises than I needed to make. So for your own integrity it’s not a bad thing. If you find that you are in a situation where you would have to do things that you don’t like, you could say, “Thank you very much, I would rather go home.” Therefore, I admired those colleagues who didn’t have that flexibility and still managed to have a life of integrity. Perhaps people like Brian had developed that over the years, but not everybody is Brian Urquhart.

TGW: As you mentioned earlier, individuals matter. People matter. The other part of this project is related to ideas, norms, and principles. I’m just wondering, as you sat in the

foreign ministry, and then subsequently as president, how some of the big ideas that have come out of the UN were useful or not to you in those other chairs. I'm thinking of the 0.7 percent, if you want a concrete idea, or something like gender equality as a big and less specific idea. How did you use or not use them?

MA: First of all, I always admired the UN for what it stood for and the ideal of the organization. Concretely, I was part of the decolonization process, ending the decolonization process basically, on African soil, and assisting the change in South Africa. We felt that we contributed to the change in South Africa with our project because we showed that one could talk to "terrorists," as the South Africans had branded SWAPO. The South African government then started talking to the ANC.

Let's take another area, the environment for instance, where the UN's influence has been greater than the credit given to it, and on the developmental issues through which the issues like gender equality have gained ground. There are always new challenges in which the UN has to engage. How do we deal with the failed states? I have just read the paper that Michael von der Schulenburg (DSRSG) from Iraq gave to me when he was in a meeting in Vienna. We have done lots of work together when he was head of administration and management in the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe). He had ideas about what role the UN could play in Iraq which I find very appealing. There is no end to the challenges.

Every time I visit the UN building it excites me. I meet former colleagues everywhere. You realize that this is a fascinating world. Then you start thinking about what is the satisfaction you get out of that. I have never wanted to become a UN ambassador. You see the potential the organization has and how it manages with a fairly small budget. You and I know that when you compare the budget of the UN with anything, it's peanuts. Then you ask yourself, "Why can't

the General Assembly cut its agenda to 10 percent of what it is now and be serious instead of repeating things year after year?" Everyone realizes it doesn't make any sense and does not add to the credibility of the organization.

So how can we make this organization's member states concentrate on really serious matters? We have to, as we would as national governments, concentrate on the worst social issues. We should realize also that there are areas where we shouldn't get involved. We should instead say, "Why don't you, EU, do this; and why don't you, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), do this; and why don't you, African Union, do that?"

I believe in the organization. Frank Bengt Säve-Söderberg, from Sweden, sent me some material, which I promised to read over the weekend. He is working with South Africa and Chile on UN reform. Please get in touch with him. I will tell him to send the material to you. I said a couple of years ago that I will not any more participate in seminars where they are talking about UN reforms. All participants know what needs to be done. I want to see that we actually do these things. But here I am reading about reforms again

TGW: When did you start thinking that you might become a politician? Way back in 1959?

MA: In the late 1960s, I joined the social-democratic party. When you become a president in our system, you give up the party. So I am independent at the moment. I'm very comfortable being independent. It doesn't mean that my views have changed, but I like being independent in this sense as well

In summer 1992 I was getting my green card for golf in a sports center in Finland. Somebody put my name and that of Minister Jaakko Itoniemi, my boss in the foreign office, among thirteen politicians into an opinion poll. All of a sudden, I did extremely well. I had a

good international career and people were looking for someone outside the every day politics. People were tired of traditional politicians. It may have been the only time when you could actually become a president having not been a real politician.

I said to my wife, "Why don't we try? If we don't win, so what? We'll continue our life happily ever after. She said, "Why not?" So I went to the primaries. I beat the expected winner six to four. Then I had a very tight fight with Elisabeth Rehn. I won. I wanted to reduce unemployment. That had nothing to do with the president's functions but I put together a working group. I wanted to get Finland into the EU. We became a member in 1995. And of course I wanted to get Finland into NATO, but the country was not ready for it at that time. My argument was basically not that there is a military threat from Russia or anywhere else, but that we have to be in all organizations where western democracies are members.

Then, after four years, I came to the conclusion that of course everyone who wants to have a job in administration is encouraging you to continue. But I had done what I came to do. The more I thought about it, I said, "Look, this is it." My six-year term as president ended at the end of February 2000. Kofi Annan offered me in April UNHCR. He gave me three months to think about it. My international friends said, "Don't take it because others can do that job." They said, "We need somebody who can do odd jobs and you are just the right person for it." They helped me to establish an NGO Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) in Finland.

I said to Kofi Annan, "I am prepared to help, but the more I thought about the UNHCR the more I thought it might not be the job for me. You are actually not able to deal with the root causes in that job. You have to take care of refugees, which is a very honorable, and important, and extremely challenging task, and requires a good person to do that. You have to do a lot of fundraising. But it may just not be the job for me." Kofi Annan asked me after the October

2003 security study in Iraq if I were interested to become his special envoy for Iraq?” I said to the SG, “I’m a totally wrong person because I don’t know enough about the internal politics of that country. For me to be able to help in the democratization process, I should know much more. You have to get a more knowledgeable person for the job than I am.” I would have needed at least half a year to study the situation and we didn’t have that time.

He asked then if I would help him in the humanitarian crisis in the horn of Africa. I did so for a couple of years. So I have tried to assist him as much as I could. And also defending him, because I think he has had to meet a lot of totally unfair criticism.

TGW: On several occasions you have mentioned nongovernmental organizations. In our work, there seem to be three UNs. There’s the place where government meet. There’s the secretariat. Then there is another world. You are now back as an official, but there are people who are experts in one area or another and then go out. There are NGOs. There are commissions. We are increasingly calling this collection the “Third UN.”

MA: Do you know, by the way, Matthias Stiefel?

TGW: Yes, of course.

MA: I am the chairman of the Governing Council of Interpeace, formerly the War-torn Societies Project (WSP), which Matthias Stiefel founded. That’s a good example of an area, which intrigues me—post-conflict reconciliation work. I introduced Matthias Stiefel to the Indonesian government delegation and to GAM when we signed the Aceh peace agreement in Finland last August so that WSP could start helping them to establish the reconciliatory mechanisms there. Hopefully, we are succeeding in that.

The good thing about my background is that I have done work in Namibia with the peacekeepers—my own and others. I have done work in the government and with the NGOs. I

am trying to make the NGO world also to realize that you don't need to be afraid of governments. You don't need to be afraid of the military. We can all work together. We can share information. For instance, on the security of personnel we have to cooperate better. I am trying to prevent compartmentalization. I have done work in all these areas. So I can cross easily from one world to another. When we have been promoting the use of information technology in crisis management operations, we started from the security of the staff. No one can object to that. Then you can move slowly to the more managerial type of functions.

TGW: Do you see a comparative advantage for nongovernmental versus intergovernmental institutions, in either delivery, or in thinking about issues?

MA: I don't think you can generalize but I see advantages in both areas. As we have different individuals, we have different NGOs. If I take humanitarian assistance, for instance, I see marvelous organizations that can deliver inputs under very difficult conditions. Sometimes you don't get even locals there. Then you have some who are not so relevant. Sometimes the governments tend to dish money to NGOs to keep them quiet or to make them their allies. I think there should be the same scrutiny of NGO work as with the governments. Some NGOs are also extremely good in providing practical solutions to problems. They should be listened to. There are a few extremely competent, worldwide organizations like the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), Oxfam, CARE. Then you have organizations like the one Matthias Stiefel started (Interpeace). It is unique in many ways. It does not do the work for people, but instead facilitates the work of locals and supports them. This fascinated me and is the reason why I started working with him and still do.

I don't think we can say that all NGOs are very good. But I think the majority of them are.

TGW: With one of your hats as a UN, governmental or nongovernmental representative, do you see a specific role for scholars in helping to push out the way that we think about issues?

MA: I see many roles for academics. Again, they have to be getting out of boxes—like all of us. Perhaps we have to provide the academics the experience also of the operational and fieldwork that we are doing. The challenge we face is how you combine academic research with operational demands. I'll give you a good example of how for instance we used a research institute when all of a sudden the Aceh negotiations started. We didn't know too much about the problems surrounding the Aceh question. We called the former Finnish professor, Timo Kivimäki, who was in the Nordic Asia Institute in Copenhagen and a known expert in that area. I said, "Come and educate us."

That's how it started. Sometimes you can invite the scholars to meetings with peacemakers. I have come to the conclusion that you should actually establish these relationships with the academics well before you start anything. You don't have time anymore when the process is moving. Sometimes you cannot accommodate the scholars. The issues they may want you to pursue may have to be dealt with later in the process. Sometime you have to leave them entirely for post conflict era, unfortunately. You have to concentrate on the most vital issues, no matter how tempted you might be to expand your agenda. The ideal thing would be that you could prepare yourself well for the eventual task that through well functioning network arrangements you could come together every now and then with the academic scholars. Because without them we practitioners are much less effective. For instance, they have better opportunity to follow developments worldwide in their field of expertise. In the Aceh process we benefited greatly from the evaluation work done by the East-West Center in Washington of previous

attempts to make peace. Practitioners should find the time to keep themselves up to date on the work of the scholars in their field otherwise they are much less effective.

My general observation is that we peacemakers are not utilizing the expertise of scholars as well as we should. We have to improve our dialogue.

TGW: As you look back to Karachi and going through Tanzania and now thinking about putting, I suppose, Kosovo back together again, how has your own thinking about development per se changed? What do you see as most different and most the same?

MA: I would say that I have realized how important it is to enable the local communities to do the work and help them succeed. I think the problem still with the development is that the outsiders tend to do the work and think that they can do it better. Sometimes I have a feeling that there is a tendency to prolong one's stay well beyond what is actually needed. My enthusiasm for Interpeace is based on this fact as well. They want the locals to do the work. They are facilitators. If research was needed, the locals did it. Not the foreigners.

For the non-humanitarian NGO community the key question is why should you be doing the work forever? Why don't they try to create local institutions that will replace them? I have argued for instance, that if Kosovo is independent and if there is a central bank, why do you select one country to be a lead agency and then recruit experts from ten or twenty countries? Why don't you have a twinning arrangement with a central bank? In general, look at the institutions. Have a twinning arrangement that can last ten, twenty years, perhaps a lifetime. That is what partnerships are all about. Then you have always somebody with whom you can turn to when you have problems. You can turn to the institutions you know.

If you have twenty experts it is very confusing. Often people turn to a person who is very good in human relations but may not be the best expert. These are problems that we have all

seen in developmental activities. I am intrigued with twinning arrangements, because that would actually start a real partnership. People would have to travel both ways. But it's a real respectful partnership we should be aiming at.

I ask myself sometimes, "Should we be more demanding from the NGO community, also when we monitor them?" The EU has also given money to me when I ran the Aceh peace process. It was a small amount, but we did the work in slightly over half a year. I have argued with several of my donor friends, "What are you doing to make the local organizations self-sustained?" I have used a very simple example that in Kosovo in 1999 it would have been helpful if we had built local NGOs an apartment building and let them collect the rent from internationals and have their own offices downstairs. Then they would not need to use 60 percent of their time for fundraising and attend the courses on how to write applications to donors.

One donor said to me "Then we can't control them." I said, "Then you are in the wrong business, my friend. This is not what the enabling exercise is all about. We have to be able allow them to make mistakes which we have made. You will never grow up if you don't let go. I said, "If you don't trust them when they collect the money, put an accountant sitting on them." We have methods to do so that we can control the flow of money and get good governance through that.

So these are small things, but it is difficult to get the donors actually to do them. We need a lot of discussion among the donors on how they can better enable locals to take over and be in a better situation to do their work.

TGW: Before we stop in a couple minutes, I wondered what you see as the United Nations' main short-run and then longer-run challenges. What are the issues that you think

researchers ought to be thinking about, that the secretariat ought to try to solve, that the next Secretary-General should try to emphasize in the first time and then beyond that?

MA: I was very much hoping that the new Human Rights Council would get off the ground properly. I would also hope that we could, as an organization, emphasize more the governance issues. I am impressed when people like George Soros are dealing with the transparency issues and how the money from natural resources are used in countries. I think a lot more can be achieved for ordinary citizens and I think we somehow have to find the ways and means how we can prevent the misuse of funds in any society. So standards are an issue. We talk about standards in Kosovo, but I think we need to do that internationally also. I think we should somehow find a way of getting an acceptance to the fact that there has to be enough transparency. That is why I always say that developed countries should be ready to be scrutinized so that the developing countries are not saying that we are leaving ourselves out of this scrutiny. How, for instance, are the oil and gas revenues used? What is coming? How is that used?

When the governments in developing countries are doing a little bit better, they cannot receive anymore IDA (International Development Association) support. Those countries that are poorly handling the developmental tasks and misusing money, they are supported! This is what (William) Easterly is talking about in his *Elusive Quest for Growth*. He rightly reminds us that when political leaders in a country are misusing the money from the World Bank or somewhere else the institutions give more money so that the whole country doesn't collapse. Is that what we are supposed to be doing?

We have both been dealing with developmental issues. You can't get out of them. I don't know how it would be possible for me to deal with the political issues had I not done the

development work. It's a very interesting realization. I come back always to the developmental side of things and use that often as an example. How can I talk about political issues if I don't understand what the development is all about and what is happening in that sphere? When I was dealing with the humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia and Eritrea, I had to talk with their leaders about developmental issues and explain why donors were insisting on certain policies and solutions.

Perhaps the greatest successes in the UN have been decolonization, human rights issues and refugees. But I don't think we will ever get enough money through official development assistance. We should perhaps look at the governance issues more. How do ordinary citizens get the best out of the money that they might have, whether it comes from inside the country or from outside? Does it make any sense?

TGW: Yes. Actually, I think when we had the tape recorder off earlier, you mentioned that the two of us have been very blessed because we've had interesting lives and lived interesting times. I am thankful for that and I am also thankful for your taking the time to record some of this for future historians.

MA: In general, I would say that whatever we do in the UN, we have to be professional. This is not a job for amateurs. Whatever organizations do, it cannot be a hobby activity. We have to be the best professionals and lead thinkers in our field. I don't think we will survive otherwise.

TGW: That's a very good spot to end. Thank you.

MA: Good to talk to you.

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