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**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF**  
**MARGARET JOAN ANSTEE**

**BY**

**THOMAS G. WEISS**

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THOMAS G. WEISS: This is December 14<sup>th</sup> 2000. We are at Waterside Plaza. Tom Weiss is going to interview Margaret Joan Anstee on her career in and outside of the United Nations\*. The first thing is to ask you to tell us a little bit about your early life, your family's background, and in particular how you think this may have contributed to your own interests in international affairs.

MARGARET JOAN ANSTEE: Well, I was a country child. I was born in what was then a small village in rural Essex, called Writtle, into a rural, working class family. My father was originally, and for many years, a compositor in the printing trade. He worked in the neighboring town. Printing dye is in my veins, because in those days, he used to have to set up all of the print by hand. My mother came from the other side of England, in very rural Herefordshire on the borders of Wales and the Welsh county of Radnorshire. Her father had been a hill farmer. Her mother also came from farming stock. But we are talking about small hill farms on rather poor land, mainly sheep farmers.

My maternal grandfather died young, leaving my grandmother with nine children, of whom my mother was one of the oldest, and a lot of debts. In those days, there were no social services. My grandmother had had a rather privileged childhood. She had been an orphan, but she had uncles and aunts who had rather good farms and she had her own pony and she went to boarding school. Then, widowed in her early forties, she had to move out of the farm into a very remote cottage on top of a hill—a very, very bleak spot, without water nor even a proper road to it.

My mother went to an elementary village school where they taught Latin and typewriting and English literature and all sorts of things—something that doesn't happen now in primary

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\* Tatiana Carayannis was present throughout the interview.

schools in England. But she had to leave school at the age of twelve to look after her father. When he died, she was put into domestic service. She earned ten pounds a year. That is about fifteen dollars a year.

In those days it was unusual for two rural families on the opposite sides of England to meet. People did not move. In my father's village, when I was growing up, my grandparents were still living there and all his brothers and their families as well. There was only one girl. So my father and uncles formed most of the local cricket team. My father fought in the First World War, going through the Gallipoli campaign, and was very lucky to escape. He came out, not wounded, but with very bad dysentery. He was sent to recuperate on the Welsh marshes, and that's how he met my mother, coming out of church one day. He was a very shy man, but he actually said "hello" to her. She was very young. Had it not been for the war they would never have met.

He was sent back to the Middle East. They corresponded but could only do so through standard army postcards in which you crossed out what did not apply and picked things like, "I am well. I have not been wounded." Hardly passionate love letters, but eventually they were able to marry. Both of my parents were very intelligent. My father had had to leave school at fourteen. He had a highly intellectual father, who had been, I think, going to Cambridge. But then he had inherited his father's butcher's business, and he did not want to be a butcher. So he spent his life doing not very much. He retired when he was about thirty-five. He and my grandmother had a lot of children, too, of whom my father was one of the oldest. My grandfather became the village wise man who used to sit on the village green and give advice to people and write letters for them and do all that sort of stuff. But he did not help his own children to be educated.

In those days, as I say, a village education was not bad. And my father was a self-taught person. He was very, very good at math and read a great deal. My mother was somebody who had tremendous drive, which my father did not have. She started off as a maid in a local household, but she moved herself to London and became a parlor maid for titled people. She was really sort of rather superior in the downstairs area of the upstairs-downstairs business, if you see what I mean. Of course, in those days, people couldn't marry until they had saved a bit, and they were far from well off. They were finally married in 1922.

My mother told me, when she was old, that she hadn't wanted to have any children. She had had to sacrifice so much to the younger children in her family. The older ones had to earn money. Two of my mother's younger sisters became teachers, and went to training college. That was largely through the sacrifice of the older children. And when my parents married, they had to take on the youngest sister of my mother. My mother launched two women (my aunt and myself) on their own careers, something that circumstances hadn't allowed her to have herself, though she was equally able. She managed to put my aunt, the one who has just died, into a laboratory in an agricultural institute as an assistant. As a result, at the age of twenty-two, my aunt in the early 1930s was appointed as a fully fledged bacteriologist to head a large dairy laboratory—without a university degree, a woman and only in her early twenties. It was a really quite extraordinary achievement for those days.

My parents were very sold on education, which had been denied to them. Eventually, my mother did say to me, "I am so glad your father persuaded me to have you." She was then in the throes of her last illness, so it was very touching. But they were determined that they were only going to have one child because they were both determined that the child should be educated. They didn't care if it was a boy or a girl. But, of course, there was no money. So I went to the

same village school that my father and grandmother attended, which I think was quite a good school. I should perhaps add that it had a very Victorian headmistress who never tired of drilling into us that as country children we were not as intelligent as town children, and that the girls were not as intelligent as the boys!

In order to get to the secondary school in those days, you had to get a scholarship and that was not easy. Had I not done so, I would have left school at fourteen. I very nearly had to, because I was a very sickly child and had to spend six months in bed before the examination, which I was almost too ill to take. My poor mother was just distraught about all this. But she moved miracles. She went out to work taking menial cleaning jobs in order to save money and so forth. I went out to work when I was eleven or twelve. I went to help a local market gardener. I got six pence an hour, and I lost my first five hour's wages. I had a hole in my shorts pocket, and my half crown dropped out on the way home, which was a terrible disaster.

How did my upbringing affect my later life? Well, I have always been very much a country person. Both sides of the family were country people. I think that made it very easy for me to live in developing countries. I never really liked living in big cities. Most of my career—except when I was in New York, but then I traveled a lot—I had the good fortune to live in cities from which it was easy to get out. I had a great feeling early on of the importance of education and social justice because there was a terrible amount of discrimination, especially regarding women's rights. I have to say, I was very much a tomboy and I do remember when I was a child, I thought it would be much nicer to be a boy than a girl. I got over that and decided that I would, after all, accept the inevitable and try to make the most of being a woman. My mother had a wonderful phrase, which is the title of my autobiography, which was *Never Say Your Mother Had a Jibber*. No one ever knows what this means, but a jibber is a horse that jibs

at a fence, that is, refuses to jump over it. So, she used to say, take your fences, and I spent the rest of my life jumping them headlong. She was a tremendous influence.

My father was more of an intellectual influence. He had a very domineering father and mother and he was much readier to accept things as they were and resigned that you couldn't change things. There was tremendous social hierarchy. People still talk about the class structure in England. It is not nearly as bad now as it was then. I found myself in a very difficult situation, because I was one of the very few who went to the high school in the neighboring town. I lost all of the friends that I had in the village school. They had gone out and got jobs. As an only child I was very much isolated. At the beginning of the war, for a whole term, we only had school once a week because there weren't any air raid shelters ready for us. We were in a bombed area, a defense area. So I used to wander the countryside. I became very bookish and very keen on country things. But I was very self-reliant, which made it easier to go and live in remote places afterwards. At Chelmsford High School, I had met someone who had a great influence on my life. She also died last year. One of the families in the village had adopted, or taken as a foster child, a German/Jewish girl, who became my very bosom friend. I went with her through all of the problems—her parents disappearing, and after the war hoping that they were going to be found. They died in a concentration camp.

Through the family who had taken in the German girl, I went to parties with young people, belonging to moneyed families in the village, who went to public schools (expensive boarding schools). I remember there was a big drama on one occasion when I was invited to a party by the vicar's son, but the vicar and his wife said, "Well, we can't invite her, because we couldn't invite her parents to the house." You can't imagine what it was like. When I was first going abroad, the local JP (Justice of the Peace), who lived opposite our family in a big house,

refused to sign my passport application. She said she didn't know me. Then she said, "What are you going to do?" I said, "I would like to go into the Foreign Service." She said, "Hmm. You've got ideas above your station, haven't you?"

All of this crystallized in my mind a feeling for the underdog: the importance of education, and getting on in life and at the same time a concern about poorer people. I was always fascinated by travel. I remember the Sunday school teacher used to say, "Oh, I think you would make a very good missionary." That was not at all the case, but it was because I was interested in travel. In the public library, I used to get everything from *Hakluyt's Voyages* to Robert Scott's *Expedition to the Antarctic*. I was interested in the outside world.

At the village school, I always came top in general knowledge because my parents really made sure my interest was stimulated. They taught me to read before I went to school. Short as money was, they bought me the *Children's Newspaper*, which was like an ordinary newspaper for children. I remember writing a letter to the editor when I was about ten, criticizing the paper for an article against the opposition Labour Party and being very incensed, when I got a letter back simply saying, "We are very glad you read our publication."

I was very ill a lot of the time. I nearly died of diphtheria and I had various other things wrong with me. I had an awful lot of time for reading. So, that was my early childhood.

TGW: What do you recall about the Depression and the War, and the impact they had on your sense of where the world was headed and where you would like to go with it?

MJA: I should have mentioned that. As a child, I suffered from insomnia. I've never had it since, but I could never get to sleep. My poor parents. I don't know what they went through. They couldn't have the radio on or anything. I remember at six years old, I called my mother upstairs and said, "Mummy, there isn't going to be a war, is there?" That must have been

1932 or 1933 and it was fear of war that was keeping me awake. My father had been in the war. He had lost a brother. My mother lost her favorite brother in the war. All of my uncles had been, in one way or another, involved in the war. So their conversation was all about growing tensions and the threat of another war.

I moved a lot with grownups, you see. Even from the age of seven, they had me playing bridge with them. So, they would discuss things that went over my head, but obviously I absorbed all those things. So my great terror was that there was going to be a war.

The Depression—fortunately, my family was not affected. My father worked in a very small firm and kept his job. It was very low pay, but he was okay. So I'm not sure how much the Depression affected people in our village. It was a rural area, but there were factory workers who were stood off in the local town, where there were three factories. They were connected mostly with munitions. So it is a fear of war that I mostly remember.

I will never forget the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1939, when the war broke out. Perhaps I had better go back a bit. Among other things, I had a bone growth on my leg and had to have an operation. That was going to be in 1938. I had to go to a special hospital in Epping Forest but war became so imminent that the operation was postponed. So, I remember Munich because of [Neville] Chamberlain coming back and saying, "Peace in our time," that famous statement. I remember that because it meant that I would have my operation. I was by this time in high school.

The next year, of course, the war came with a big buildup to it. I remember being absolutely terrified, because this whole shadow of war had hung over all my childhood. And I know exactly where I was standing in our small sitting room listening to Chamberlain announcing the declaration of war on the radio. And I remember I was shaking. That night,



there was an air raid warning. It was a false one, as it turned out. But as my father was too old then to go the war, he was an Air Radio Warden. So my mother and I were alone in the house. I remember my mother shaking me awake, and saying, “There is an air raid,” and being very frightened. Then, after, I got completely used to it because the bombing just went on for several years. So I was very conscious of problems of war from a very young age, and of the importance of peace. In fact, by the time the war was over I was nineteen. I was just at the end of my first year at university.

Another thing—when my parents went to live in the house where I spent my youth, there was no paved road there. I don’t remember the paved road being put there. I do remember gas and electricity being laid on, so that we no longer had oil lamps and candles. But we had no bathroom. This was a terrible social stigma. I remember the school, when I was in secondary school, our form mistress saying, “You should have a bath every day.” I didn’t dare tell her but it was very difficult to have a bath every day, because we had to bring water in from a water butt, built outside, and heat it in a copper. It was a family sort of affair. Where my grandmother lived, when I went there—and I spent nearly a year there just before I was going to school—we had to carry every drop of water about a mile up the hill from a well and the toilet was a wooden hut with a lime pit at the end of the garden.

The reason I am saying all of this is that it did give me a feeling of the importance of those amenities. I remember, years later, in Bolivia, being with somebody—an American who was working with UNDP (UN Development Programme)—who said to me proudly, “I was in the Peace Corps, you know. For six months, I lived without hot water.” I said, “My dear chap, until I was twenty-one years old, I lived in a place where we had no bathroom and had to heat every drop of water.”

It seems very funny now, because one lives a modern existence. I couldn't live without a bathroom now. I think all those things were very important in my development. And I always felt an empathy with—I was going to use the word *campesinos* in Spanish—country folk. “Peasants” has a rather derogatory meaning, but I don't mean peasants in a derogatory way. I mean people who make their living off the land, because my family did that and they lived in those difficult circumstances. I took my parents to Bolivia when my father retired in the early 1960s. We had a big rural development program in areas of terrible poverty. I took my parents around, and I remember my mother saying to me with tears in her eyes, “That baby is going to die before nightfall.” And she added, “I thought I knew what poverty was. But I have never seen anything like that.”

At school, I did rather well. I was usually at the top of the form. So I was being encouraged to go on to college or university. In those days, you did what we called a “school certificate” at sixteen, and then most girls left and did typing courses to become secretaries or clerks. There was a very small sixth form for people who were going to go on to college. But my scholarship did not cover those two years. So the only way I could go on into the Sixth Form was to say that I would become a teacher. I didn't want to be a teacher. I didn't know what I wanted to be, except that I knew I did not want to be a teacher.

I suppose I was always a bit of a split personality, especially after being at university. I had a strong academic bent. But, at the same time, there was always this desire to do something practical, which I think I got from my mother. I just wanted to see concrete results. But I said I would be a teacher, because it was the only way I was going to be able to stay in the sixth form. Then I had to go and do some student teaching, which was hilarious. So at the great age of sixteen, I ended up virtually running a nearby village school where the children, at first, used to

let down the tires on my bicycle. The only way I could get out of this commitment of going to training college was to win a scholarship called the Ashdown Scholarship. You had to get the very best school certificate result in the whole of the County of Essex. Of course, it was a very long shot, but I put in for it. I was terribly lucky because I won it.

So then I got the teaching commitment off my back. Quite early on, when I was about fourteen, my teachers had said, "You should try to go to Oxford or Cambridge." To me, that was just incredible. Even though I got scholarships it was very hard for my family to afford uniforms and books, even for me to stay at school until I was sixteen. When I told my parents about the university possibility, I remember my father saying, "That would be very nice, but I am afraid it isn't going to be possible." But my mother said, "Well, I don't know how it's going to be done, but it can be done and it's going to be done."

At age fourteen, you had to choose whether you did sciences or arts. I was an all-rounder, and I was really quite interested in science. But my teacher said, "If you are going to Oxford or Cambridge, you are going to have Latin." So I had to drop science in favor of Latin. But I still didn't think I was going to get to Oxford or Cambridge. The problem with both universities was that the intake of women was severely limited, so I early learned of the difficulties women face in obtaining higher education. Originally, my choice was to go to Oxford; but for reasons I'll explain in a minute, I went instead to Cambridge. The university senate in Cambridge only allowed 500 women in the university at any one time, between two colleges. That meant there were 250 in each college, over three years. So every year only just over 100 women were admitted. The competition was tremendous. The intake was almost entirely from expensive girls' boarding schools because they were the ones who could actually

do the extra tuition and prepare people for these exams. All of the universities had different exams.

I went to a high school which is a very good high school. Once again this year it got the best award for a state school in the UK (United Kingdom). But in those days, only a handful of girls had gone to university—any university. It was only just in my generation that one or two started going to Oxford and Cambridge. And the way that was done was that you had two years in the sixth form doing your high school certificate. You had to get very good results so that you won county scholarships and state scholarships, which would fund you through university. So, this needed a great deal of effort. You then did a third year in the sixth form, during which you did the university entrance exams. The problem for me was that there was a war on, so you were not allowed the third year. At eighteen you became of calling-up age for the armed services.

You were allowed an exemption for two years if you were going to university, but you couldn't do your third year in the sixth form. So I never worked so hard in my life as I did in that last year at school, between seventeen and eighteen because I had to win all these scholarships. I was simultaneously doing an entrance for Oxford, an entrance for Cambridge, and an entrance for Kings College in London. And they were all different syllabuses. The teachers just didn't have enough time to help one through this, on top of the set syllabuses for higher certificate. I very nearly had a nervous breakdown that year. I was always grateful, actually, when I had a cold because I simply did not want to go to lessons and preferred to stay at home to work on my own.

It suddenly occurred to me to wonder what I was going to read at university that would fit me for an interesting job. Nobody had thought of that. No one gave anybody any advice. University was just an end in itself. I was good at languages, and for higher certificate I ended

up with French, English, and Latin as my majors, and history as my subsidiary subject. History was very complicated, because there was an awful lot of stuff you had to learn by rote. So just before I was going to do the entrance exams—I thought, “I don’t want to read English, because I will end up being a teacher again,” though perhaps the BBC (British Broadcasting Company) or journalism might have been an option. They wanted to hire me on a local newspaper, but I knew that I must go to university.

I then wrote to Oxford and Cambridge and said, “I don’t want to do an English degree. I want to do a modern languages degree.” I thought languages had more scope. The problem was we didn’t have a second language at the school; we only had French. Oxford wrote back and said, “Sorry. You can do mixed classics and modern languages. Latin and French.” Newnham College, Cambridge, on the other hand, wrote back in August 1943—the exam was in November—and said, “If you can pass our entrance exam not only in French but also in either Spanish or Italian, we will take you on for a modern languages degree.”

I went to the local technical college. I said to them, “I have to learn either Spanish or Italian in three months. Have you got anybody?” They said, “We haven’t got anybody for Italian, but we do have somebody who teaches Spanish.” By this time I had accumulated a little bit of money from my market gardening activities so I hired him as a private tutor. He turned out to be an engineer who was making a little money on the side, teaching. He didn’t have a clue about grammar. I taught him what a subjunctive was. He came from Gibraltar and had the most terrible accent. I used to go to his house. There were air raids on. He was very small and had a very fat wife. There was a table shelter (an iron table used inside homes during air raids), and when the sirens went she was always getting under the table shelter and urging him to join her. But, I said, “No, no, no. You have got to teach me Spanish. I have got to learn Spanish. We

can't take time off for air-raids." Then I would bicycle home with anti-aircraft fire lighting the sky all around.

My parents didn't know, but I used to get up at four in the morning and start work and then I thought, "I can't do all this history." So I thought, "I'm going to drop history. I'll do Spanish instead. I'll do it for the Cambridge exam and I'll do it for higher certificate." My headmistress got terribly upset, and spoke to my parents jointly and separately, saying, "She is just going to ruin all of her chances. She can't possibly win scholarships if she does Spanish in higher certificate." And I always admired the way my parents reacted. They were not used to standing up to people; well, my mother was. The headmistress belonged to the Cadbury family and was a rather intimidating lady. It was really quite daunting for them. But they said, "We think she knows best." I have always thanked them for that, because I was only seventeen. How did they know I knew best? They knew nothing about the university world.

To cut a long story short, that was a very dramatic time in my life. I actually got into both Oxford and Cambridge. I also got the scholarship at Kings and I confounded my headmistress by winning county and state scholarships on my higher certificate results. That was a wonderful year. A new world opened up. So I went to Newnham College and read French and Spanish for the modern and medieval languages tripos. My whole life changed, because you can't imagine what it was like living in a rural village during the war in a defense area. We couldn't move around. It was a very secluded life. Cambridge was very exciting culturally, and in every possible way. I still was very bookish and very exam-conscious, because they were very tough at Cambridge. You daren't fail an exam; you were never allowed to take it again. You were just sent down. You had to behave very well in those days, too. There were always young men trying to climb in and out of the college. I was terrified, because I had a Mexican

admirer who wanted to serenade me in Newnham garden in the middle of the night. I said, "For God's sake, don't do it. I will be sent down and that is my whole future." His intentions were good, but just the idea of someone coming along with a guitar and a big hat was likely to be the end.

Cambridge transformed my life. French was my major language still, but there was the most wonderful Spanish professor there, J.B Trend. It was a very small faculty. I became secretary of the university Spanish society. This was still, don't forget, not long after the Spanish Civil War. I don't remember an awful lot about that war. I do remember Japan's invasion of Manchuria being talked about. I remember the Ethiopian war, because I had an uncle by marriage, who married one of my mother's sisters, whom I adored (I was nine or ten at the time). He was a very dashing RAF (Royal Air Force) pilot, and when the Italians invaded Ethiopia, he had to go out to Malta. They thought they were going to go into Ethiopia but they didn't. Then he was killed in the Battle of Britain and I was devastated.

When I went to Cambridge, the Spanish Civil War was a very lively topic in the Spanish faculty. My professor had known all the best writers of the generation of 1898 in Spain. He had been a personal friend of [Federico Garcia] Lorca. He was the British expert on Manuel de Falla and he had been a *Comendador de la República*. So he was very much a supporter of the republican side. And I suppose he was a very pink professor. Generally, my sentiments in politics were always on the left. I don't mean the extreme left, but towards socialism, probably because of my childhood experiences. The rigid class hierarchy was something I had always found dull and restricting about our village life.

We had a complete split in the Spanish faculty. One lecturer was totally Franquista (pro-Franco). And two parts of the Spanish faculty were not talking to one another. So this brought

home to me very much the problems of war, conflict, and social justice. We also had Spanish lecturers as our professor brought in people who had been fairly high up in the republican government. Some of them weren't terribly good teachers. One was a wonderful lyrical poet who could only get through his lectures by fixing his eyes on one of the girls. He had wonderful brown eyes, but it was very embarrassing because he would just look at you while he painfully got through his lecture.

So I became very interested in Hispanic culture and in the politics of Spain. I am surprised that I wasn't more active in general politics in the university. You have to remember that in those days, in Cambridge, women were not allowed to be full members of the university and therefore not of the Cambridge Union either, so you could not become a debater. We went to the same lectures as the men. We did the same exams as they did and were marked by the same standard. But we only got a title to a degree at the end of it. Luckily, it didn't make any difference to our career prospects. Every time there was a move to remove this anomaly some old men would come out of the woodwork to stop it. It finally came about in 1948, a year after I went down. In 1998, we had a ceremony at Cambridge, in which I played a fairly prominent part when the university celebrated fifty years of women getting full membership and tried to make amends for the long years of discrimination. About a thousand women who had been deprived in this way—the oldest ninety-seven—attended.

While I was up at Cambridge, I did a great deal of acting. I really wanted to be an actress but I owed so much to my parents that I knew that I couldn't go into something that was just going to be so precarious. But even in drama there were some clubs which only allowed male members; women were simply invited to take female parts. Also, I did a lot of acting in French and Spanish. We did our first Spanish play after the war. It was a Lorca play. It took a lot of



time and I knew that I had to get good exam results. Fortunately, I got a double-first. And then there was the conundrum of what I was going to do next.

TGW: I am just fascinated by two things. That is, why this country girl from a constricting village became so interested in travel and languages and activities that are clearly outside of the village. Was it exclusively through reading?

MJA: Also my parents, you see. My father, particularly, was deeply interested in what was going on in the world. When I look back, they were both really quite unique. They talked to me about all these things. The first thing they bought me when I was old enough to have games was a huge jigsaw which was called *Mapa mundi*. It was a map of the world. You had to put the capitals in each country once you got the jigsaw done. I was the only one in the family who knew where La Paz was, little realizing that La Paz was going to be such an important part of my life.

My parents were very broad in their interests. Just to give you an example of this, in later life, wherever I was posted, my father immediately read everything he could about that country. Although you would have thought I could have grown away from my parents because I had a better education and a much more sophisticated life than they did, in fact, we didn't. We were always very good friends, and we always had an awful lot to talk about.

It was strange, I suppose. My paternal grandfather was a brilliant man. He was not a man who did very well by his family, but he was somebody who, when I was at school, always helped me, especially on history and Latin. I still have a Latin dictionary of his that has his initials, GWM, and the date 1860 and mine from 1940. So there was a sort of intellectual streak in the family.

TGW: And you also went back to Cambridge and got an M.A.? And you also went back to the University of London, later?

MJA: Well, for the M.A., you know, at Cambridge and Oxford, you simply have to wait three years and pay a fee because it was always considered that the B.A. at Oxford and Cambridge was much harder to get than at the other universities. Because we could still only have a title to a degree in 1947, my B.A. just arrived in the morning post. You didn't go with your cap and your gown and your mortarboard and receive it formally. But by the time I got my M.A., which was in 1955, women were allowed to be full members of the university and so I received my MA properly. And I actually went back and taught at Cambridge for a year. But that is the next stage.

TGW: Well, let's go to the next stage. You said you didn't want to become a teacher, and then the first thing you ended up doing was teaching.

MJA: But I meant a schoolteacher. I became more interested in literary criticism than in language. I was encouraged at Cambridge to think that I could have an academic career. I had the results for an academic career. And I thought I would like to spend most of my life in Cambridge. But, again, I was ambivalent. I remember that at the end of my first year I thought, "Do I really want to do modern languages?" Actually, I should have changed to economics but nobody suggested that I do this, and it didn't occur to me. I nearly went to do agriculture with my rural and farming background, but my tutors said, "No, no, don't be stupid. You are doing well on this so don't change your horses in the middle of the stream."

Again, it was that practical orientation. I kept thinking, what will I do when I get to the end of this? Although I was being pushed towards academic work, at the same time there was something else to which I thought that I ought to be directing myself but I didn't quite know

what, except that I was determined that I was not going to be a secretary. That was the other great danger. I remember later on in UNIDO (UN Industrial Development Organization) giving a talk to the women staff on, "What is the secret of your success?" I said, "Don't learn to type." My mother had scabbled some money together and insisted that I should learn to type but I refused. It was terrible for women in those days. My very best friend, who is dead now, she got a very good class, two honors, and she didn't get a job for a year. She then went to a secretarial college and became a high-powered secretary in a publishing firm. A lot of my friends on the outside became secretaries, often working for men not half as bright as themselves.

I had seen that trap and I said, "I will not go to secretarial college." I could have done a year's training in education and teaching and then become a secondary school teacher. Paradoxically, you didn't need any special training to teach at a university. I was called one day by my senior modern languages tutor, who was from Northern Ireland, and she said she had just had a letter from Professor Llubera, a Catalan exile, then a professor of Spanish at Queens University. Belfast had a tiny Spanish faculty. Professor Llubera was on his own and he had had a new lectureship post approved. My tutor said, "He has asked me to recommend somebody. I would like to recommend you. How do you feel about it?"

I said, "Done." The other possibility was that I would stay on at Cambridge and do a doctorate. But I was concerned about that because I really thought I had been a sufficient burden on my parents and should start to earn money. And I also thought, "Do I really want to spend three more years just doing research? I have really got to go out and do something." So, I went to Belfast. That was quite hilarious. I was twenty-one. Before my first lecture, I was absolutely terrified. It was a language class and everybody kept mistaking me for a first year student. Some frightful smart alec came up to me and started talking down to me, very pompously, about

[José] Ortega y Gasset. I didn't say very much and when the class began, there he was sitting in the back row of the first year elementary language course looking acutely embarrassed. There was also one undergraduate who was several years older than I was who had just come back from the army. He certainly knew a great deal more about some things than I did. It was quite a growing up experience.

I was interested in Irish politics. I had Catholic friends and I had Protestant friends. In those days there was considerable tension but it was another ten or twenty years before it all blew up. Then, during my year in Belfast, the government opened the Foreign Service up to women at the diplomatic level. That was what I had always wanted to do. I wanted to travel and I wanted to do something in public service. I didn't want to go into the home civil service. I wanted to go abroad but entrance to the Foreign Service was terribly competitive.

The idea had been that I should stay two or three years in Belfast and work on a doctorate at the same time so that I could return to Cambridge later. It was very difficult, because I had to prepare twelve lectures a week so there wasn't much time for research. I started work on the modern poet, Juan Ramón Jiménez, whose wife was still alive. When she heard what I was doing, she wrote and said, "I don't want anybody writing about my husband's work." All in all, I wasn't getting on very far on my doctorate.

So I did the Foreign Service exam. Apparently, they let in only about five people annually. I thought, "I am set in my academic career. If I am lucky, I will get back to Cambridge and spend my life in the university." So I went into this exam not so seriously, but rather as a lark, since I thought it highly unlikely that I would win a place. In those days, you had to do a quite complicated written exam, which was about politics and general knowledge, but also about things like statistics, which I had never done. If you got through that, you were

taken for a country house weekend where you were examined by a bevy of psychologists and various other people. They watched you day and night. I'm not sure they didn't have cameras in your bedroom. And you had to do all sorts of things, because they were also recruiting for the colonial service then. Among other things, you had to administer an island, and were given all sorts of problems to solve. You were the chairman of a committee, and then you were a member of the committee. I had absolutely no experience of this at all. But perhaps all the acting experience came in useful.

I think I had been rather shy and retiring early on. But Cambridge had been a great maturing experience. In our village I was regarded as "blue stocking" and a social disaster—the wallflower at local dances whom nobody wants to dance with. So I was convinced that I was just a sort of Plain Jane. But at Cambridge there were an awful lot of men around and very few women. One didn't have to try very hard. And I suddenly had a great social success with people beating down my door to take me to the cinema and to dances and so forth.

My Spanish professor was very keen on Latin America and often invited dignitaries, politicians and poets from those countries. One of the first people who came had been at the first UN General Assembly in Paris. He was from Bolivia, actually. My professor used to take them out and, as he was a bachelor, I, as secretary of the Spanish society, was his hostess. At first, this was terrifying, because I had not often eaten in a restaurant. It was very useful that my mother had been a parlor maid, because she had taught me exactly which knives and forks to use. This sounds very silly in this day and age, but then it was terribly important that you observed the correct etiquette.

So, I learned all sorts of social skills and had acquired a lot of confidence by the time I went to the country house. The examiners there also used to make sure that you could take two

or three martinis before dinner and still be coherent! There were all sorts of tests that you wouldn't do now. The survivors of the country house then had to brave an interview with a large committee of assorted academic and diplomatic dignitaries.

To cut a long story short, I was only a year in Belfast and then I went into the Foreign Office where I was one of the very first women in July 1948. That was even more alarming, because there was still a lot of opposition among some men. Don't forget, the Foreign Office hadn't admitted women even as secretaries until 1917. Then they only had women secretaries and no women diplomats. There were about five of us in 1948. I was put in another department first, but then they discovered that I could speak Spanish, so I was transferred into the South American department. I could speak Spanish pretty well, but because of the war we had not been able to do six months abroad for modern languages training. I took my first trip abroad in 1946 when I was already twenty.

That trip to France was very instructive, because I saw all the destruction in Normandy. Our course was in St. Servan-Sur-Mer, near St. Malo. We were taken around the battlefields, only a year after the war ended. That was another influence. But I had never been to Spain, because we had made a pledge to our professor that we would not go to Spain until Franco was gone. One was terribly idealistic about this. He never went back to Spain. He just went and sat in Portugal, which wasn't much better, gazing over the frontier.

So I hadn't been to Spain, and suddenly I found myself always called up to interpret at high-level meetings. They didn't have official interpreters in those days. There weren't many people who spoke Spanish in the South American department. I remember a terrifying occasion when I was asked to interpret for an Uruguayan or an Argentinean delegation. I had been taught

Castilian Spanish and had never been exposed to all the river plate accents, which initially sounded like a totally different language!

There were two schools of thought among the men. There were the ones who couldn't bear the thought of women being in the Foreign Service, who were absolutely horrid to you. And there you were, a young twenty-two-year-old. Also, I was not only one of the very few women but I must have been one of the even fewer who came from a working-class background. They had all been to smart public schools, the girls as well. Quite a lot of men, in those days, had private incomes. So it was a difficult experience. The other attitude was patronizing. One man said to one of my very bright female colleagues, when she had prepared a draft, "Did you really write this?" When she said, "Yes." He asked, "*All* of it?" He couldn't believe she was capable of it.

Of course, my links with Latin America increased and intellectually the Foreign Office was extremely demanding. These may have been people from privileged backgrounds, but they were very, very bright people. I discovered that one of the things I should know a lot more about was economics, so I started studying in my spare time. These were people who had first class degrees and very brilliant minds. And I must say that one thing about the Oxford and Cambridge training that I always felt was very good, although perhaps elitist, was the tutorial or supervision system, the one-on-one teaching. The emphasis was not so much on what you learned, but on training your mind. You also had to do so much on your own and learn to analyze problems.

TGW: At that period, was there any discussion, either at Cambridge or in the Foreign Office, of what would come to preoccupy you subsequently, namely, the United Nations system? Or the importance of the economic institutions in Washington?

MJA: Well, I didn't work in the right department of the Foreign Office. There were various countries that I was dealing with. But I was also dealing with things that seem very abstruse nowadays, like anti-colonialism in Latin America. I was a great expert on the Malvinas, (Falkland Islands), and the Antarctic. I'm ashamed to say I was also involved in arms sales to Latin America. I used to take South American military chaps to the Farnborough air show. I think they chose me because I was a young girl. I didn't know anything about the inside of an airplane, but I was supposed to get them interested in buying the latest models.

I was also involved in analyzing trade union movements and communism in Latin America. This was just when the Cold War was starting up. I was in the office from 1948 to 1952. On the economic side, I remember that there was an ECLA (Economic Commission for Latin America) meeting at some point and the brief for the UK delegation had to be cleared in our department. I don't remember the details but there was a general feeling in the Foreign Office that this was a possibly dangerous organization that had to be watched.

I don't remember anything about the IMF (International Monetary Fund) or the World Bank coming up at that point. They were not active in Latin America. The IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) at that point was still conservative, very much on the "R," (reconstruction) rather than on the "D" (development), and so worked mainly in Europe.

TGW: And what about the first rumblings of decolonization elsewhere, in Asia? Did this sort of come into your job description?

MJA: Oh, yes. We had to train the Indians and Pakistanis. That must have been 1948. That was really very funny because they came in separate waves. They brought in these young men—there were no young women, of course—who had to work alongside us as third secretaries. We had to show them what we did and how we did it. Except there were all sorts of



things that were secret, so there were papers that could not be shown to them. They would come and sit alongside us, and we would say, “This is how we organize our files. This is how we put submissions up to ministers, how we prepare briefs.”

TGW: But did this seem like the beginning of a new wave, or did it seem like an isolated incident?

MJA: I don't think one had taken that on board at that point. When I look back, I am rather ashamed that I didn't seem to be a very perceptive thinker about how all that was going to open up though there were some clear pointers. I do remember one occasion when Ernest Bevin was then our foreign secretary. We had a Labour government, and he was a very fine foreign secretary. He came from a very, very poor background and had been an extraordinarily good trade union leader. One of the highlights of my existence then was that I was suddenly invited, which was unheard of for a third secretary, to a banquet that Ernest Bevin and his wife were giving at Carlton House Terrace. I don't remember his name, but it was for [Juan] Perón's foreign minister who was coming through London from Paris on his way back from the UN General Assembly. There were many problems with Argentina at that point. The only reason I was there, of course, was because I spoke Spanish. And I remember having some difficulties with some Argentine naval attaché whose feet were rather active underneath the table.

TGW: That three month crash course in Spanish had its advantages.

MJA: Then there was a Mexican trade commission that I had to organize with the second or third secretary in the Mexican embassy. I was extremely nervous about this because my knowledge of economics and trade, although I tried to bone up on it, was pretty rudimentary. But I discovered his was even more scanty, and he was more interested in taking me out to dinner and teaching me how to do Latin American dancing.

TGW: Your first UN posting ended up in Manila. How did you get there?

MJA: That's a good question. That was both a very unlucky and a very lucky break in my life. My mother used to say, "One door closes and another one opens." This is what happened in that case. Anachronistic as it sounds now, you have to appreciate that until 1971, if you were a woman in the Foreign Office and you got married, you had to resign immediately. So, that's what happened. I got married to another diplomat who was posted to Manila. How was one to organize one's personal life? In those days, people didn't live together. Nowadays, the Foreign Office sends partners out. They only have to say that they are going to stay for six months or so, and they get a free trip to the other side of the world. But in those days, a woman, even if she married some itinerant musician or writer or poet, ready to follow her anywhere, even if he did have clean toenails and didn't wear sandals, she still had to leave. She was just not allowed in the service.

Another thing—there was a rule that they were never going to send a woman diplomat to Latin America, because the assumption was that she would suffer a fate worse than death very shortly after arriving. I said in my autobiography that I didn't think they had read the famous article in *Esquire* at that time, that was considered very risqué, which said, "Latins are lousy lovers!" So that restriction was likely to hamper my career as a diplomat.

Against my mother's advice, and rather against my own better judgment, I got married and we went to the Philippines. I had decided at this point that I was going to go back to academic work. I thought, "Oh good, Manila," under the illusion that it was a Spanish-speaking country. Was I in for a surprise! But they do have this great hero, [José] Rizal, who was a revolutionary novelist and poet during the struggle against the Spanish at the end of the nineteenth century. So I thought I would now become a diplomatic wife, but I would continue

with my academic work and go back to my Spanish. No one had written on this man, so I would now do something—a book or a doctorate or whatever.

We went out by cargo boat. It took six weeks before the boat docked in Manila. There wasn't yet a British embassy there, only a legation headed by a minister. He was away, and the *chargé d'affaires*, who knew me from the Foreign Office, came on board and said, "Thank God you've arrived. We've got just the job for you because the UN is opening up a new program of technical assistance." It was being headed by an Australian who used to head UNESCO's (UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) regional office. But he has been made the first resident representative of the new program.

I had never heard of this new program, of course. He said, "I've told them you were coming because they are desperate for people to help them set up this office and obviously your background is right." I said, "I don't want to do that. It is of no interest to me. I have decided what I want to do." So I turned it down. That was in the beginning of June 1952. At the end of July 1952, I was extremely glad to take that job. This is the painful part. It turned out that my husband was an alcoholic, which I did not know, and the expatriate community in Manila was the worst possible environment for someone with those tendencies. He was an extremely nice man when he was sober, but when drunk he was violent and insulted me in public about my working-class background.

I was distraught. I remember walking up and down the beach and thinking, "What will I do?" I had given up two careers and I was still in my twenties. I hadn't enough money to go home and even if I had I couldn't go home and say to my parents, "I made this total mistake." So, I decided that the one thing I must do was to earn enough money to get back to England. "I've got to see this thing out." I had been trying to work at home, researching Rizal's work but

it was terribly hot. We did not have air conditioning in those days, and the climate absolutely killed me. I thought, "I can't do something academic. I have got to find an office that is going to keep me busy and also pay some money." So I said, "Yes, I'll come and work in the United Nations office." I was engaged as a local staff member. I think I am the only local staff member who has become an under-secretary-general! I guess I was perhaps a little overqualified. I earned U.S. \$100 a month.

There was no salary scale in those days. They just said they would give me \$100. I was rather fed up because there was an American woman who got rather more. I was told that this was because Americans earned more in their own country! I was called an administrative secretary and I said, "I can't type. It's no use calling me an administrative secretary." So they said, "We'll call you an administrative officer." I used to do all the accounts but I also had to run the office, because the head man was a wonderful Australian who was really a scientist and knew little of management. UNESCO had an office there and he had just been popped into the new post, you see. So then I entered this world of technical assistance, EPTA (the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance), and I was absolutely fascinated by it. We had a dreadful office, which leaked. I was supposed to get the Foreign Ministry to provide a new roof. When they eventually did I had to crowd all the staff and experts into one half of the building and one of the project managers threw a chair at me, I remember.

TGW: A big chair?

MJA: Well, he missed, luckily. He was a Norwegian who used to irritate me very much by calling me "baby face." But that day he threw this chair at me when I said, "You have to move me to this smaller office because half the roof is going to fall in." So I was doing many

different things—running the office, dealing with buildings, running projects in many different islands.

There were no fans in the office when I got there and no screens on the windows. My husband worked at the British legation, which had air conditioning. I would come home with my face all blotched, and the mosquitoes all lurked in the knee-hole of my desk, assaulting my legs. Then I began to get very ill and they thought I had some type of paralysis. It turned out that I had dengue fever.

Anyway, I plodded on. The Expanded Programme for Technical Assistance was my salvation. Eventually, I had enough money to get back home but I decided to stick it out and try to make my marriage work. I stayed in Manila for two and a half years. I then realized what I really wanted to do, and it fitted in with everything in my background. Before I had been bitterly regretting having left the Foreign Service. But then I thought, “This is what I really want to do. I am interested in development. I am interested in social justice. I like working in developing countries.” The other thing I did is that whenever I got any leave, I visited remote areas of the Philippines on foot or by local transport. The Australian was a bit mean to me because he used to take the American girl to visit projects but I was never taken to visit projects on other islands outside Luzón. I used my spare time to go on journeys of exploration by myself, much to the dismay of the British community, who thought that I was up to entirely no good when I sailed as the only European woman on a Filipino cargo boat which went right down to the southern Philippines loaded with cattle and pigs and lots of deck passengers. I went round the country on buses visiting remote parts of the Mountain Province where there were still head-hunting tribes, and I walked across the central mountain chain of Luzón in the company of two Igorot priests,

sleeping in huts along the way. I even mediated a peace pact between two warring villages of the Kalinga tribe! I was in my element.

In the meantime, I had to do my diplomatic functions and I absolutely hated that because of the old-timer British and American community in the Philippines. Poor things, they had gone through awful things during the war. They had been imprisoned by the Japanese and they were certainly making up for lost time. They were the greatest drinkers I had ever seen anywhere. It was terrible, and the worst possible influence on my husband who just couldn't resist all this. He was the British consul, among other things, and so always had to be with them. I was always criticized because I worked. In fact, one ambassador's wife complained to the British minister that there was a diplomatic wife who was working and she wasn't supposed to do that but just play mah-jongg and go to tea and coffee parties. Work was my salvation. I would have gone mad otherwise.

Our tour came to an end in 1954, and to my relief we were not going back to Manila. I did not like Manila but I loved the Philippines and I loved the people and the travel. And we had all sorts of interesting projects. We did important work in statistics, setting up a training institute in the university. We did a lot of work on bilharzia (schistosomiasis) and malaria with the WHO (World Health Organization) regional office. We did a lot on education, secondary education, teacher training. The Filipino wife of the postmaster in my nearby post office in Wales now is actually a product of the secondary school in the province of Pangarinan where we had a large UNESCO team working. We always talk about Bayambang, because that was also where she had been educated. And we had what we then called community development projects, and they were really integrated rural development, working simultaneously on agriculture, education, health and so on. I remember going off one day and receiving twenty-two breakfasts in one

morning in successive villages, all Filipino food that always made me ill. There were some very exciting things going on.

The whole thesis then was that it was not going to take very long before the developing countries no longer needed external assistance. There was a dichotomy between technical assistance and capital assistance. UN and EPTA were not to do capital assistance. This was very early, just before the debate on SUNFED (Special UN Fund for Economic Development) was beginning to start up in New York. The theory was that you if taught people how to do things, they would make their own way. The experts were, at first, called specialists. But, there was an American book called *The Specialist*, by a chap who was a specialist in country privies! So it was decided that “specialist” was not a very happy name to give to people, and they were called experts. Somebody then pointed out that an expert is somebody who is a long way from home!

But there was really very much the belief that we were going to inculcate all these new techniques. There were some pretty sophisticated Filipino people at that time, but not so many on the technical side as much as there were later. So, technical assistance was a very important input. But it was very small. We, in the UN, were the only ones providing it, apart from the Americans.

TGW: So you returned, got your proper mortarboard on top of your head. Then you continued in technical assistance, but this time in Latin America. How did you get from Manila to Latin America?

MJA: In a very roundabout way. From Manila we went back to England. I resigned from the UN with great regret. It had been a very fascinating experience. The Manila office was a very remote outpost. We were one of the very first UN technical assistance missions, you see.

Burma was before us. They started in Asia. So, the Philippines was a testing ground for all sorts of things. Unlike nowadays, people from headquarters visited us rarely, and sometimes only in a crisis.

One such was our pulp and paper project, which was extremely innovative. In Northern Luzón, in the Mountain Province, there were pine forests, from which it was proposed to produce pulp and paper. This was a project which was run jointly between the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) and the UN, led by a very charismatic Norwegian, Per Klem (The one who threw the chair! ) Per Klem was then accused of having fudged the statistics on the number of pine trees which made the project economically nonviable. A great row blew up. A wonderful Mexican, whom you really should interview if he is still alive, was Gustavo Martinez-Cabañas. He was then assistant-secretary-general and the head of UN Technical Assistance Administration (TAA) in New York. That was the bit of the UN that was dealing with this project under the Expanded Programme for Technical Assistance. The TAA dealt with all the sectors that didn't come under a specialized agency. Martinez-Cabañas had come out to sort this whole thing out. He told me he had read Ibsen on the plane in order to understand Per Klem, who was Norwegian. He was a wonderful guy.

The net result was that my Australian boss was fired as resident-representative and sent back to UNESCO in Paris. He never got beyond a P-5. I was embarrassed meeting him in later years because he had really been a scapegoat. He had signed a contract that he should not have signed, at the request of Per Klem, with a Norwegian firm. He was not corrupt at all, but simply trusting and naïve. Per Klem was not a man to whom it was easy to say "No."

So he left. And Per Klem was fired. The project then diverted its efforts to experimenting with the production of pulp from bagasse-sugar waste in Cebu. That was also an



innovative project. Harry Keith, the FAO man, who was also a part of that project, was put in charge of our office. Meanwhile the American girl had also gone, and Harry said to me, “I don’t want to know about the office. I am a forester. You run the whole program.” So, for several months I just ran everything until a new resident-representative was eventually appointed—an Englishman called J.P. Ross, who is now in his nineties. He is also someone I suggested should be talked to. He is in France. J.P. was a very eccentric character and very intellectual. But he, again, delegated a lot of responsibility to me.

So I made quite a name for myself. I was the only woman they had got in the field. But I was only local staff. Headquarters eventually decided to give me the equivalent of a local P-1 and I became “professional” after having been just general service. Then came my husband’s transfer. I resigned and went back to England. We had a long leave, and then we were to be re-posted abroad but suddenly he was asked to become one of the private secretaries to the minister of state in the Foreign Office.

I missed out on an important bit when I talked about my time in the Foreign Office. My boss was Donald MacLean, the spy, and I was the last person who saw him the night before he disappeared. I had had a dream about him several months before in which I dreamt that he disappeared and I told him my dream. He must have really thought that I was something sinister myself, but I wasn’t at all. Now this is important in terms of what happened later. After the Donald MacLean incident, the Foreign Office became very leery about people who drank a lot. This was my great fear about my husband, that there was going to be some problem and his career would be absolutely wrecked. He had some warnings from the British minister in Manila but these had not been reported back to London, nor was divorce possible without ruining his career. You couldn’t be divorced and remain in the Foreign Office. You couldn’t be received at

court if you were divorced! There were then only three grounds for divorce, which were adultery, cruelty, or desertion. I had grounds on the first two counts, but I didn't want to prove either. That would have been the kiss of death for his career, you see.

Anyway, I was determined to try to make the marriage work. In those days, you didn't get divorced. You just got on with it somehow. I hoped that England would provide a better atmosphere than Manila but staying there was a great financial blow, because there were no allowances. We didn't have much money so I was obviously going to have to earn some. Suddenly out of the blue, my old supervisor at Cambridge writes and says, "Do you know that the director of Spanish studies at Newnham is very ill? She has cancer and they are looking for somebody. Could you help?" So, I went back to my old college in Cambridge and they said, "We need you, but we cannot give you a salaried position. You will be paid as a supervisor (or individual tutor) by the hour. We just want you to do supervisions and you will be paid by the hour. But you can also supervise for some of the men's colleges. We'll get the word out that you are about to take over these subjects."

So, that was what I did. It was very tough, because I earned very little and I had to move around between the colleges. I had to pay my own way, and so I only went up two days a week. I would leave London at the crack of dawn on one day, teach eight hours, mark essays in the evening, teach eight hours the next day and catch the last train to London. Having been out of the academic world for six years, I was not exactly up to date and so I had to do a hell of a lot of work to catch up. So I thought, "Okay, I will revert to my original plan and try to get back into academic life."

We got back to England in September 1954. For a while things were better on the personal side but then there were some more incidents in London. In August 1955, I just decided

to get out. I left my home and my husband. I had this intermittent teaching work, but I didn't have a real job or a proper place to live. There was a lectureship coming up in Cambridge, but everyone said, "You haven't got a doctorate. You ought to get some more qualifications." Instead, I applied for a job that suddenly came up as head of international relations in the Labour Party, which had just been vacated by Dennis Healy who had just become an MP. (Later on he was chancellor of the exchequer and held other ministerial positions). So I applied and I was short-listed. I had an interview with a committee of high-pointed politicians chaired by Herbert Munson (who had been prime minister and foreign secretary) and it seemed likely that I might get it. I thought, "Well, I'll have a political career."

I was, at this point, living in a terrible bed-sitter, carrying coal up the stairs, cooking on a gas ring and sharing a bathroom with all the other tenants. Miserable as this was, it was very good for me, because I spent several months like that and I realized I would rather live like that than return to my husband. I said to myself, "I am going to get over this somehow."

My parents were supportive but I felt that I had let them down. I was managing on my own, but I had become a liability rather than the support I had intended to be. Then, suddenly, again out of the blue, there was an assistant-director-general of UNESCO—and you should really talk to him if he is still alive, called Malcolm Adiseshiah, an Indian—who was a very charismatic character. He had come to Manila a couple of times. And he had come to London and stayed with us, just before I left my husband. There had been an incident on that occasion so he knew that things were not going well and later learned that I had left my husband. He must have told other colleagues in the UN.

The next thing that happened was that a man called James Keen, who was very senior in TAB (UN Technical Assistance Board), which ran EPTA, rang up my parents, looking for me,

and they said, "She is in Cambridge." So he got in touch and said, "Would you like to come back to the UN?" I said, "I hadn't thought about it." He said, "Well, we have a vacancy in Mexico, the number two post of deputy-resident-representative, but you have got to make up your mind very quickly. We must fill the post urgently and you would have to leave almost immediately." It was just coming up to Christmas 1955 and my aunt drove my parents to Cambridge and we sat in this little bed-sitter and discussed what I should do. There was the political job in England, and there was this. I was again very impressed with my parents, who said, "We think you should get right away from England. It has all been so traumatic for you. Take the UN job." This in spite of the fact that it meant another separation of two years or more. People didn't travel back and forth then as they do now.

When I talked to people at Cambridge, they said, "Go to Latin America. They are offering you a two-year contract. You could do some research on Latin American literature and you can still think about coming back to Cambridge." So I took the job. Meanwhile I went to a solicitor and changed my name legally back to my maiden name, Anstee. I wanted to break entirely with the recent past. I thought, "He can divorce me for desertion. I am going off to Latin America. I can be the guilty one. I don't care. And his career will be safe."

I had been told I would spend Christmas in New York for a fortnight's briefing and then go down to Mexico but Christmas came and there was still no news. There were two reasons for the delay. One was that the resident representative in Mexico had said, "I am not going to have a woman here. It won't go down with the Mexicans." New York told me, "Oops, we've offered you a contract and we now don't have a job for you." I thought, "Hell, here I am, between various stools. I've given up the Labour Party job and now seem likely to lose this one." Then they said, "But there is something in Colombia." They had transferred the deputy resident

representative back to New York, meaning to abolish the post. The UN was having to economize even then. But then the resident representative, who was British, had a row with them about something and resigned and there was nobody left in Colombia. They put an expert in charge, and said, "Would you go to Colombia for three months, and then we'll find you another job? We just want you to tide the Colombia program until we can get a new resident representative." I said, "Okay, I'll go to Colombia."

So I came here to New York on January 8, 1955. Here I met a very old friend. We used to play lead roles opposite one another in Spanish plays in London. Even when I was in the Foreign Office, I was still acting in Spanish plays for the *Instituto Español*, funded by the republican government in exile. My friend was now serving here in the UK permanent mission to the UN. He took me out to dinner and said, "I have to tell you something. There was the most terrible row about you with the Americans." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because they objected to your appointment." I said, "The Americans? What do they know about me?" and he replied, "Well, you worked with Maclean."

It was so odd because the Foreign Office had never, ever asked me any questions. I was the last person who saw Donald. I had had the last conversation with him that he ever had in the Foreign Office yet nobody had ever asked me about it in the Foreign Office. And then, years later, it turns up with the Americans! The Mission reported it back to London and the Foreign Office came back saying, "She's okay." It could have been very difficult, because everyone knew that I had left my husband and he was the private secretary to the minister of state. So that was how I ended up in Colombia. It was a fairly dramatic incident and an example of flagrant intervention in internal UN management by the U.S., no doubt a hangover from the notorious McCarthy era.

But you see, all of this has made me very interested in women's problems from all sorts of points of view. In a way, I had been a battered wife as well. So one had a lot of empathy with these things. Also, I had been turned down by this man in Mexico. I had been so pleased, because I thought, "Here is the UN, which unlike the Foreign Office will send a woman to Latin America. This is much more my organization than the British government." And even that turned out to be difficult.

TGW: The idea of investing in people, as you indicated earlier—technical assistance—was somewhat new or unusual. It was a UN contribution.

MJA: Absolutely.

TGW: How did this change over time? What do you think ultimately its impact on international affairs has been?

MJA: It has changed a lot. I think that is why UNDP has lost its way. At first, technical assistance had a very good impact generally, especially in the more advanced developing countries. They learned very quickly and all sorts of things opened up. I am thinking particularly, again, of somebody else who should be interviewed, a Colombian, Gabriel Betancur-Mejia, who was a visionary. In Colombia, for instance, he started up an organization called ICETEX. Again, it was the same idea of technical knowledge promoting development, although not done internationally. He devised a plan whereby the government gave loans to students to finance their advanced training abroad, after which they committed themselves to work for a fixed period in some sphere of national interest, in the area of their technical competence, to pay the loan back. ICETEX has now been repeated in many countries. EPTA and UNDP provided scholarships and transferred technology through external experts working

alongside nationals. This worked particularly well in the better-off developing countries so that their international assistance requirements became much more sophisticated.

I think one of the things that went very wrong—and I used to have tremendous arguments with I.G. Patel about this when I came to work in UNDP headquarters for the first time in 1974—was the decision that UNDP fund national, rather than external, experts. That always seemed to me to be the beginning of the end. I.G. thought I was a dyed-in-the-wool imperialist. I said, “It’s not that. What added value are you giving when you fund national experts? The World Bank gives capital assistance in the form of money. But what we are giving is know-how that doesn’t exist in the country. In a poor country it can be very basic know-how. In more developed countries it can be something extremely sophisticated and done in different ways. But once you start funding national experts, what you are really doing is providing budget support, i.e. simply money. Therefore, the whole technical assistance *raison d’être* of the UNDP, which differentiates it from the Bank and other purely financial agencies, goes by the wayside—which is to provide knowledge and expertise that wasn’t there in the first place.” Technical assistance wasn’t just a question of money.

That brings me to the capacity study<sup>1</sup>, in which we warned that unless UNDP got its act together, the World Bank would take over. In the 1950s, the World Bank was entirely capital assistance. EPTA and technical assistance were the poor relation. EPTA had peanuts as funds. It did things that were useful, but not this big stuff that the World Bank was funding. Then the Bank discovered that their dams and their agricultural loans did not work if they did not have the people to run them. So technical assistance also becomes very much a part of the Bank’s

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<sup>1</sup> *A Study of the Capacity of the U.N. Development System*, 1969, otherwise known as the Jackson report after its commissioner, Sir Robert Jackson. Margaret Joan Anstee was his chief of staff and drafted most of the report.

thinking, and the Bank started funding it on a much larger scale than EPTA, or later UNDP, could do. But it did on a loan basis and not as grant aid, as UNDP did.

The other idea that came up later was TCDC (Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries), which has had a very checkered and not very successful career. The idea of the relationship between the transfer of technology and development still holds water. Much of it is now done through multinationals, as well. There are all sorts of channels. So the idea remains, but what has faded through the years is the notion of giving it on a grant basis through international organizations.

TGW: Let's go back to Latin America in the late 1950s and early 1960s. I think we should talk about Bolivia and your lifelong love affair with Bolivia. You became a citizen of Bolivia, subsequently. So you really are quite fond of the place. What explains this? What do you think your contribution was there? I'm curious as to what it was like in the early 1960s, in particular. There were lots of ideas floating around—the Alliance for Progress, the Development Decades. You were in an unusual spot.

MJA: In Colombia, I again found myself in the position where I was really running the office. I got there in January 1956, and Marcel Croisier, the expert who had been made officer in charge there, left in August 1956. He was French and didn't speak very good Spanish or English and he had his project to run, so he left a lot to me. We had a big program in Colombia. I remember trembling all the way back from the airport in August when Croisier left New York. They said they had chosen a new resrep (resident representative), but that he could not come until the next May. So from August 1956 to May 1957, I was left in charge. I was barely thirty, and I was given this very big responsibility. I was the only woman field officer they had, and the first to be put in charge of a field office. I had gone there for three months, remember. They had



taken me at the end of February 1956 to a regional meeting of resreps in Mexico—all male. It was a sort of slave market because they were trying to get some resrep to take me on as deputy and no resrep wanted me! There weren't any other women there until the real female star, Julia Henderson, then in charge of social development in New York, came in at the end and gave the best address of the lot. You really have to talk to her.

As no other post was available, I stayed on in Colombia for fifteen months, during nine of which I was acting head of mission. Women didn't even have the vote then in Colombia. But things went well, so much so that the Colombian government wanted me to stay on. That created awful problems with the new man, who was jealous of my success. I loved Colombia and I wanted to stay on even as deputy. I thought I had come to understand the country. But headquarters said, "No, you've got to move to Uruguay. You will be the first woman resident representative." I was a P-2. They said, "We are going to give you a promotion to P-3." I said, "Good, but I don't really want to go to Uruguay. I think it's too developed a country for me." Well, Colombia was a huge country and there were all sorts of areas, some very developed, others exceedingly remote and primitive. I had traveled all over the country and had spent Christmas in the Amazon. I had had all sorts of adventures. Really, I was having a ball.

But New York said, "No, the Commission for the Status of Women has criticized us because we do not have a single woman resident representative and insist that we appoint one. You are the only possibility because you are the only one who has any experience in a field office." So, finally I said, "Okay."

Shortly before I was due to leave there was revolution in Colombia, a remarkable popular uprising, in which they were throwing out the dictator, General Rojas Pinilla. So things were going "bang" outside the window as I was trying to pack. In the middle of this mayhem, a

telegram came from New York—there were no telephones—saying, “So sorry. We cannot promote you because the promotions board says that you are too young and don’t have enough experience.” I sent back a cable saying, “Okay. Then I am too young and too inexperienced to take over Montevideo.” After a long argument by cable I went—without promotion. That came quite a number of months later.

I decided to hedge-hop through Latin America. So I went first to Quito, which was just marvelous, then to Lima and then to La Paz. I had always been fascinated by Bolivia. When we were in the Foreign Office, we had a sick joke in the South American Department that anybody who was sent either to Tegucigalpa or to La Paz must be absolutely useless. We all wept when we sent one of my colleagues off to La Paz, because we thought that was the absolute bottom. We aspired to careers that would take us on a glamorous round of Paris, Madrid, Rome, Washington, New York, et cetera. But I had always been intrigued by La Paz, since my childhood, as I explained earlier.

When I flew into La Paz, it was love at first sight. I have described my impressions in my book on Bolivia and in my autobiography. I said to myself, “This is my next post.” It was the biggest program in Latin America. I stayed there for a few days, and then went on to Montevideo. There I became a fully-fledged resrep, as opposed to an acting one, and developed new projects in rural development and rural education. I thought the program was very dull. It was a nice but dull country. We had lots of itsy-bitsy projects. I realized that, although Montevideo was well-developed and comfortable, there was poverty in the countryside. And I went out and found this wonderful, and very idealistic man, Miguel Soler—he is the best expert on rural education in Latin America, who with his wife was running a *nucleo escolar* ( a rural development program) based on the local school at La Mina, a very poor area near the Brazilian

frontier. Miguel and Nellie were performing miracles with virtually no funds and great self-abnegation. I tried to help them and to get a project for them. I have written about this in great detail elsewhere, but I was not terribly successful, and Miguel was not supported by the government. There was a collegiate system in Uruguay then and nothing worked. It was very, very difficult.

My life was comfortable, but I was bored and frustrated. I went to a resrep's meeting in Venezuela in about February 1959. There, in a military plane over the Maricao, David Owen, (the chairman of the Technical Assistance Board and my top boss), said to me, "We have to think about your future. There are two possibilities. You can stay on for another two years in Montevideo. But you are still too young to take over a large program. So if you go somewhere else you will have to be number two." I said to him, "I don't want to stay in Uruguay. It is too developed for me. I want to go to a really poor developing country. I don't mind where it is. And I don't mind being number two. But promise me something: I realize that I have a lot to learn, but put me under somebody from whom I really will learn something." He said, as a joke, "Bolivia?" I said, "Done." I had this Celtic hunch. David said, "You're joking." I said, "No." He said, "Well, we've first got to find a new resrep for La Paz to whom you can be deputy. The post is empty."

That was in February. And time went by and nothing happened. So, I wrote to David Owen and said, "What's happening about Bolivia?" It turned out they could not find a resrep to La Paz. Nobody would go there. It was too high and the living conditions were dreadful. There had been an IMF stabilization program in 1956 and its impact was still felt. Food was short. All sorts of ordinary conveniences were lacking. People were scared about their health. On top of that, about that time WHO decided to introduce minus post allowances and the whole UN

system followed suit. Under this scheme, where the cost of living was lower than the agreed norm, people had their salaries cut. So while embassies in La Paz got a 25 percent hardship allowance, UN people going to Bolivia—and they didn't discover it until they got there—had 10 percent nicked off their salaries. The irony was that the cost of living appeared cheap in UN surveys because many of the standard commodities costs were unobtainable in Bolivia and so cost nothing!

Funnily enough, Gabriel Betancur was one of the people they wanted to go there but he too refused. I had worked with him in Colombia, when he was minister of education, on educational planning. He prepared the very first educational plan anywhere, and he was the one who persuaded the World Bank and the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) that education was an investment, not a social cost. In Uruguay, one of the exciting things I had done was work with the World Bank on the first ever agricultural loan to which Uruguay was saying, "Please don't give this to us. We don't want it." I said, "Come on. This is a good thing. You get to have all these people who are experts in pastures and cattle and sheep and so forth who are coming from Australia. It is all going to be a good thing." It was an excellent project that was done in combination with the World Bank.

Returning to the question of my transfer, a compromise was eventually reached at the end of 1969. Anthony Balinski, the resrep in Quito, was asked to cover Bolivia as well—and go there once every two months. I was to be the deputy, and in between Balinski's visits, I was to be the officer-in-charge, the acting resrep. So off I went to Bolivia. And then the Congo came up.

I had for a long time been concerned that I didn't have any proper economic qualifications. So I started studying economics by correspondence in Uruguay. It was in

Uruguay that I met [Raúl] Prebisch first. We had a memorable encounter with the IMF. I began to understand what ECLA was trying to do. That was interesting—dealing with ECLA, dealing with the IMF, meeting Prebisch, meeting Dudley Seers. Dudley took a great interest in my educational concerns. He organized a special arrangement for me at Oxford, because one of my problems was that development economics was not being taught in formal university courses then. We are talking about 1959 and 1960. It was not being taught in the United States either.

TGW: It's still not being taught.

MJA: Well, okay, but it was not even on the syllabus as a title. By this time I was very well in with the World Bank and I first tried to go to their course on economic development for people from developing countries." They said, "Fine. Come." Even though I was not from a developing country. So, I asked for a one year's leave without pay and the UN agreed. Then it turned out that, although I had saved enough money to cover my living expenses, the World Bank would not waive the very substantial fee for the course. So that fell through. Then Dudley said that we could arrange something at Oxford, with Queen Elizabeth's House. I was going to be something called a "recognized student." I would have a tutor and I was just going to read. I wasn't going to sit for exams, and I wasn't going to get paper qualifications. But I was going to have a guided course of reading and research and writing about development economics.

I put this to David Owen. I said, "I just want a year's leave without pay. I will fund myself." There were no fees in this case. I just had to cover my living expenses for a year. The next academic year was still some way off, and Bolivia was very important since, at the beginning of 1960, we started this big experiment, bringing in an economic planning team organized by Prebisch and ECLA, but also involving the UN, FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) and other organizations. It was agreed that I would postpone my home-leave until

the middle of 1960 and then stay on in the UK for the academic year from September on. At that point Balinski was to move full-time to Bolivia.

But then the Congo blew up and UN headquarters was looking for people who spoke fluent French. Balinski and I came into this category. It was decided that one of us was to go to the Congo. In the end, Balinski went to the Congo and I was asked to postpone my sabbatical leave. Finally, I never had it at all. So I decided to inscribe myself for an external degree in economics at London University, which I did. I did part one under the supervision of a young man, a diplomat, who said, "If you want to go to the loo, I have to go with you." I imagine I was the only one who, that night, instead of swotting up for the next day, had to attend a presidential banquet.

With Balinski out of the picture, New York said, "We are going to send a new resrep." Then the Bolivian government insisted that they wanted me, and you will perhaps understand my love of the Bolivians. The minister of economy was a brilliant, brilliant man who had opened up all the eastern parts of Bolivia. He and his wife had been great friends of mine in Uruguay. He had been ambassador there, and was now the minister of the economy, so we worked very closely together. He said, "We don't want another resrep. We want Anstee. The president wants Anstee. Nobody wants any of your other chaps." New York said, "Well, we never do this. We never promote a deputy in the same place." But the government said, "Well, we just won't accept anybody else."

So, within a year of being there as the number two, I became the resrep. And it was a very, very exciting time because the ECLA group came in, headed by Pedro Vuskovic. We started work on the first economic and social development plan for Bolivia and training people in development economics, finance and budget, and all sorts of things.

TGW: Actually, what I would like to do is pause because we are within a minute of the end of the tape. This is the end of tape number one.

TGW: This is the beginning of tape number two, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December. We are in Bolivia.

MJA: Yes, well the interesting thing about the National Economic & Social Development plan (1962-71) was that it was—I know Louis [Emmerij] wouldn't mind my saying this—it was really about basic needs. That approach wasn't invented in the ILO (International Labour Organization) conference or it's employment conference some years later. That's a joke between us. I have always told Louis that we were trying to do that, in practice, in Bolivia at that time. The whole matrix was built up on estimations of how many calories per day were needed, how many hospital beds, how many schools, how many yards of cloth, how many pairs of shoes. It was all worked out as a program that would benefit the poorer people in Bolivia. That was quite an exciting time politically in the aftermath of the major revolution that had taken place only a few years earlier in 1952. It was the first big revolution in Latin America, after the Mexican revolution. It had tremendous impact because it had wrought extraordinary changes such as nationalizing the mines. Unfortunately, they nationalized them just at the wrong time, when some of the richer veins were becoming exhausted. Before 1952, Bolivia mining had been dominated by three tin barons. Another outcome of the revolution was it gave universal suffrage to people and education to everyone. It is still not a reality, but these needs and rights had not been recognized before. There was agrarian reform—distributing land earlier held in the *latifundias* where the people working on the land had been like serfs. They were given their freedom. They were given land. They were given the vote. They were given the possibility of

education. The over-arching aim was to integrate the Andean Indians (the original native inhabitants) into the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the country.

It was an enormously exciting time. One of the reasons why I like Bolivia so much is that it has always been a kind of *avant garde* country for new ideas that were being tried out in the UN. I think it was in 1951 that [Hugh] Keenleyside led a UN mission to the government prior to the 1952 revolution. The whole idea of the Keenleyside report was that the UN should help improve government administration by providing senior people who would not just be advisors but who would have line functions in very high positions in key ministries. That was done after the revolution. It was rather successful. There had been a democratic election won by the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR), who were then overthrown by a coup. The MNR had successfully regained power in another coup in 1952 and they implemented the Keenleyside report. The MNR was regarded with great suspicion by the Americans because the word “*nacionalista*” was in their title. They were suspected, during the war, of being Nazi sympathizers. Then they were regarded as communists. So there was a lot of ambivalence about how the U.S. saw Bolivia. There were then only two programs in Bolivia—one was the U.S. program (Joint IV or USAID) and the other was the UN program that I headed. The World Bank wouldn’t touch Bolivia because it had defaulted on its foreign debt. So we’ve come a long way in ideas on debt since then. Bolivia’s debt today is being alleviated under the HIPC (highly-indebted poor countries) scheme, as a result of negotiations in the 1990s in which I took part.

There was tremendous inflation in Bolivia. They had to have a stabilization program with the IMF in 1956. Then the whole Keenleyside arrangement fell down, and the U.S. took a more dominant position. The IMF came in and there was a very severe stabilization program with a great deal of hardship and the country was only just coming out of this when I got there.



The whole idea of the plan, on which our UN team was working, was to restart development, but development on a more equitable basis. But, again, there was a very difficult relationship between the UN mission and the U.S. mission. President Victor Paz Estenssoro, who was a very wily politician, was busy playing the one off against the other. The ECLA people were regarded definitely as dangerous leftists by the U.S.. The whole idea of planning was anathema to them until the [John F.] Kennedy administration came in.

They created the Alliance for Progress and everything changed, or we thought it had. A new U.S. ambassador was sent down, Ben Stephansky, who was a Kennedy nominee. Arthur Schlessinger came down, particularly concerned about the food situation. That was before the World Food Programme (WFP) was started. He was very open to the UN. He took me out to a night club, I remember, as we discussed all of this. There were lighter moments, thank goodness.

Then they announced the Alliance for Progress Meeting to be held in Punta del Este, Uruguay in August 1961, and said "We are going to give priority to those countries which have got a development plan." And Bolivia was the only one which had a development plan. The minister of economy, now dead, was heading the mission, and his number two was somebody you really ought to see, Roberto Jordán Pando, then the first planning minister, and until a few weeks ago, Bolivia's permanent representative here to the UN. The minister of the economy said, "We want you to come with our delegation as an advisor." And that sort of thing wasn't done then. UN headquarters said, "No, she can't go. She can't go to advise the delegation." So the government said, "Well, we want her to come. She has been working on this plan and nobody knows it better. And we want her to come and help us." That was what was so superb about the Bolivians, you see. You were admitted to everything. I was invited to cabinet

meetings when they were discussing economic development. I just sat in there. We, in the UN, were regarded as part of the national team, not as outsiders at all. It was the sort of experience I have never had anywhere else, of being totally accepted. It wouldn't happen now so much, in Bolivia even. Well, it has with me, in 1993-1997, with the previous government which I assisted in an advisory capacity. It was just an extraordinary experience.

I can't adequately describe what it felt like. We really felt we were doing something. We were young. We were starry-eyed, full of illusions, and we thought our plan was absolutely the be-all and end-all and that we were going to transform Bolivia. I think some of the things did stick, but of course there were an awful lot of pitfalls along the way.

When New York refused to authorize me to go to Punta del Este, the Bolivian government said, "We'll pay her fare." But they had no money for living expenses and I ended up sleeping on the delegation's table part of the time until an Uruguayan friend of mine who had a small apartment lent it to me for the duration. And Che Guevarra was there. It was tremendously exciting, very badly organized by the Uruguayans, and at times hilariously funny. The Uruguayan president of the meeting was a senator who had no previous experience in running a conference. On top of that, they had very embryonic simultaneous interpretation equipment. The senator kept forgetting to switch off his microphone, so we could all hear his asides to an advisor from the OAS (Organization of American States). "I knew that if I didn't shut that idiot up, he would make a mess of things," and, "look what he's done now." We were all fascinated hearing the chairman criticizing everybody. Che Guevarra made a kilometric speech and, of course, was the star of the occasion, ironically sitting next to [C. Douglas] Dillon from the U.S. Treasury, because alphabetically Cuba comes next to *Estados-Unidos* (United States) in Spanish.

He made this crack about America's aid, claiming that, as a result Cuba had ended up as a "paradise of latrines."

We all came away feeling that there was going to be money for our program. Meanwhile, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) had been created. Felipe Herrera from Chile was the first president. One of his first trips was to Bolivia. And we had all these projects ready for financing, you see, because the plan was a framework for a whole series of individual projects in various sectors, some pre-investment and some investment projects. One result was a triangular arrangement between the Inter-American Bank, the Germans, and the Americans to finance new investment in the mining sector. The plan sparked off all of this, and we also expected a great deal of help from the Alliance for Progress, which did not particularly happen to any degree.

At the same time, we were undertaking integrated rural development through the Andean Indian program (*Acción Andina*), which was the brainchild of Jeff Rens, the Belgian assistant director-general of the International Labour Organization. He was a very great friend of President Paz Estenssoro, and one of the main theses of the 1952 revolution was the full integration of the Indians into the economic, social and cultural life of the country. The Andean Indian program had started in the middle of the 1950s, and it became part of the overall plan. We had four pilot bases, three on the *altiplano* and one in the *oriente*, in the eastern lowlands. The three on the *altiplano* were experimenting with integrated development for rural folk in very poor circumstances. The fourth one was one of the very first colonization programs in Bolivia, because there was always the theory that you couldn't take the highland Indians down to the tropics, because they would catch diseases and perhaps die as soon as they got down to the

lowlands. They wouldn't assimilate. But they did. Of course, now they are doing it with the help of coca production, which is a different phenomenon.

So, parallel to our ten year economic and social development plan, we prepared a national rural development plan, based on the results of the "*Acción Andina*," expanding the latter to cover the whole country. It was my job as resrep to pull all these things together. We had a whole slew of other projects that we pulled together into a really coherent country program. It was one of the first examples of a coherent country program that was not just made up of isolated projects, but a series of activities plugged into the national plan that would constitute a multiple whole. There was input from other organizations, because by this time, as I said, some other bilateral programs were just starting up. The World Bank still wasn't in, for the reasons I explained earlier. I think they eventually came just after I left, or perhaps right at the end of my time. I cannot remember. But they were certainly very, very incipient at that stage.

So all of this was very heavy stuff. And Bolivia was being held up everywhere as a model of how to do things. Then everything went wrong.

TGW: Did the First Development Decade strategy—another Kennedy artifact—enter into any of the calculations at that point, or was it really the Alliance for Progress and the monies that went with it?

MJA: I don't remember. When did it start?

TGW: It was 1961, also.

MJA: Well, I think it was all together. Then there were the "wise men" under the Alliance for Progress. And everyone was saying, "Isn't it great?" By accident, the UN initiative of starting development planning in Bolivia as a pilot project, which was going to be repeated in Colombia and Ecuador, synchronized with the advent of the Kennedy administration, with all of

their different thinking about Latin America and planning development. I don't remember the ins and outs, I'm afraid. My reports must be in the UN archives somewhere, because I had to write a monthly or quarterly report—I don't remember which—on every project. There was an overview in which I analyzed the economics and political situations, the political situation, obviously, with some care because these were open documents. But I had a constant exchange of correspondence—very substantive and frank—with David Owen, the chairman of TAB and my top boss. I know these letters are in the UN archives, because in the 1980s a Canadian academic found them when writing a book on the UN in Bolivia in the 1960s, which centered around my role as resrep. Unfortunately, to my knowledge, he never finished it.

TGW: What were your relationships with headquarters? You had mentioned that you were a country girl in the field. But what was happening in New York and were there any tensions? Were you on your own?

MJA: It wasn't too bad, actually. They were very supportive of me, especially David Owen. I think I was their great experiment, you see. And at the risk of sounding immodest, I seemed to be succeeding. I have made the claim to fame that no government ever wanted to have me when I went there, but no government ever wanted me to leave when I left! I did things which made the program look good. There were problems about my promotion. I was running the largest program in Latin America, and all my male colleagues were D-1s, and I was a P-3! After a year or two in Bolivia they made me a P-4. But I was still, in the professional hierarchy, extremely low ranking in relation to the responsibilities that I was undertaking. You didn't get so many visits to the field then from headquarters people, but when they came they always seemed impressed because I could always get them to the president and produce the high-profile encounters. So, yes, the relations were okay.

I think I was regarded as being a bit too headstrong about things. I'm sure I was. It may seem paradoxical but the great advantage for those of us in the field was that communications were not easy. So you had to make your own decisions. You couldn't telephone New York from Bolivia. We had cables that went in and out through Western Union. They didn't go from our office. We had to take them to the Western Union office. I think telex finally came in at the end. But I remember the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1964, the revolution of November, and we had all these stupid instructions about what we were supposed to do if there was a revolution and none of them worked, as I pointed out afterwards. One of them was that you had to inform headquarters immediately. I finally found a telephone that was working and I managed to get through to Western Union. I said, "Can I dictate a telegram to you to New York?" The chap at the other end said, "You must be joking. I'm under the table. There is machine gun fire outside and they have just blown up our transmission tower by the airport. So forget it." The only ones who had communications, of course, were the Americans.

Years later, one of my successors had refugees occupying the office. I was in New York then. The UNDP people dealing with it called me up and said, "You know Bolivia. Come up and advise him." There were eleven people shouting conflicting advice down the telephone at him. I had to handle revolutions and all sorts of things. I was on my own and I couldn't consult anyone. But it was a hell of a lot better, because no one could tell you what to do and what not to do.

TGW: A few years later, what was your writing in your travelogue about? You didn't write an economic treatise on Bolivia, did you?

MJA: I did write a book about Bolivia. It wasn't a travelogue. It was meant to describe what Bolivia was all about. I felt Bolivia was terribly misunderstood. I passionately loved the

country. I thought it was wonderful. And when I got to Ethiopia, I was terribly homesick. Ethiopia was so different, and one was not accepted in the way one had been accepted in Bolivia. I was accepted at the end, but it took two years. It wasn't this open sort of Latin culture. Bolivia was very special. You were just taken on board as one of them. So I just wanted people to understand what the country was all about. People just talked about it as a country where they had had X many revolutions in X many years of independence. It was just considered a basket case kind of country, and I didn't think it was a basket case country. And of course I described my own experiences. The British Foreign Office still make it suggested reading for their diplomats coming to Bolivia, thirty years later.

TGW: Actually, you mentioned this jarring arrival in Ethiopia. What led UNDP to propose this? Or were you looking for a new, exciting change? And what was it like to arrive in Africa a few years after thirty or thirty-five countries had become independent? How were outsiders, like yourself, and how was the UN perceived in Ethiopia?

MJA: In Bolivia we had the November 1964 revolution, a military coup in fact, and everything we had tried to do collapsed. By the way, I think there are some more interesting things I should tell you about Bolivia. It is about the relations with the Americans, which became very difficult. As I mentioned earlier, the president was playing off the UN against the U.S. I was in the middle, because Bolivia was totally dependent upon the United States and it didn't want to be. So the only leverage they had at that point was the UN, although we were so much smaller, a case of David and Goliath.

There was a terrible incident, when my parents were staying. And this was during the Kennedy era. It was a great surprise to me. One of the things we did in Bolivia was to help the government find the first natural gas outlets. That was something that really uplifted the

Bolivian economy. It was a geological project and we had a whole lot of people coming to work with the state oil company. I was off visiting *Acción Andina* bases and couldn't be communicated with. But I had a French deputy. When I got back, he said, "While you were away, we got a list of candidates for the gas and petroleum exploration project. One of them was a Russian."

On those occasions, we wrote a standard letter saying, "Here are a list of experts, which one would you like? Here are their c.v.s (curriculum vitae), you choose." He said, "I hadn't even sent the letter to the government, when the counselor of the American embassy, a very nice man, phoned to say, 'We understand you are putting forward a Russian candidate. We want his name removed from the list.'" I said, "Well, what did you do?" He said, "I sent the letter." I said, "With the Russian included?" He said, "Yes." I said, "You did quite right. Don't worry. That's absolutely right."

About a day later, there was a very small dinner given by the minister of defense, for the president, most of the cabinet, the German ambassador, the U.S. ambassador, Ben Stephansky and myself. We were the only three foreigners. After the coffee—it was not a very large house—Ben Stephansky descended upon me and tore me apart about this. It was very embarrassing because the German ambassador wanted to talk about mining issues. I said, "Ben, what do you mean? This has nothing to do with you. The U.S.S.R. (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), whether you like it or not, is a UN member-state and they have always put forward extremely highly qualified technical people." Anyway, we went hammer and fangs at the issue while the other guests (all ministers) looked on. The president was having a whale of a time. He was really enjoying himself. I was not. Stephansky said, "Will you withdraw the name?" I said, "Of course I won't withdraw it. I can't. I have made an oath as an international civil servant. I



can't do that." And I added, "The British would never have asked me to do that. But even if they did, I wouldn't do that. That's it."

So the conversation ended. The next day, there was a big party at the Brazilian embassy. I was going with my parents. In the morning, the weekly communist newspaper, *El Pueblo*, comes out with a headline saying, "*Deshojando la Margarita.*" How do you say it, "Plucking daisy petals." In Spanish, "daisy" is "margarita," so there was a clever play on words. And there was a blow-by-blow description of this conversation between me and the American ambassador. The message was all too clear, "Three cheers for Margarita. She has got it right." I thought, "Oh, God. This is all I need." And I remember thinking, "I have to take this bull by the horns at the reception." So I went up to Ben, and said, "Ben, I don't know who it is who leaked this conversation to the communist newspaper. But it certainly wasn't me. And I had no desire for this. Of course, you did sort of make it a public occasion." He said, "Oh, I never read that rag. It's not allowed in the embassy because it's a communist newspaper." I said, "I think you really ought to read it, because it has quite interesting things in it." Curiously enough, having made such a fuss the previous evening, he didn't seem concerned by the leak, which I had feared might make things even worse.

There was an even worse situation when my same deputy was at a party, and a young man who I think was definitely CIA got drunk and said to him, "Your boss has got to watch her step. We have got her telephone tapped. And we know who visits her." It was not hard to know who visited me because my house was on the only road that went down from the center of the capital, and anybody could see whose car or Jeep was outside. A day or two later our mineral survey project manager came to me and said the number two in the U.S. embassy had made all

sorts of insinuations about my private life and said that I was being watched. I decided to see Stephansky.

To Stephansky I said, "We are the only two programs of assistance here. We have got to work together. And you are our major contributor. This is absolutely intolerable. Your colleagues are telling people on my staff that I am being spied upon." So he said, "I'll settle this. Tell me who the informants are and they will be out of the country in twenty-four hours." I said, "Ben, that doesn't solve anything. I don't want them out of the country. I just want an assurance that this isn't going to happen again." He was a Kennedy ambassador and had been in labor politics and so forth. He had a social conscience. But he didn't understand how the UN worked at all and I had to give him some lessons on this.

By this time, I thought that my career could be at an end and I could be thrown out. All sorts of things could happen. My mother, seeing that I was losing sleep over this, was making more or less wax images of Stephansky in her mind and sticking pins in him. Anyway, the sequel was that he called in his staff and said, "The UN representative has said that these things have happened. This cannot go on and I want to know who made these allegations." I felt very sorry because, although I think the junior chap was the more nefarious of the two, it was the senior one, the number two in the embassy who confessed, "It was me." And he was sent back to Washington in short order, I assume for having spilt the beans rather than because what he said to the project manager was untrue. With two of them telling the same story, it was unlikely there was smoke without fire. Anyway, I took no chances, and after that was very careful what I said on the telephone.

These were the kinds of very dark waters one was swimming in. And I was pretty young and there was no one to give me advice. These were the things about which I wrote the long

letters to David Owen that are in the archives. Also, I used to give him my own analysis of the political situation.

So how did I get to Ethiopia? Well, the revolution took place in 1964. It was a case of the State Department and the Pentagon not talking to one another. The State Department persuaded the Bolivian president, Victor Paz Estenssoro, quite inadvisably, to run for a third term because this man they had once accused of being a nazi turned communist, was now the best thing since sliced bread. So they quite inadvisably advised him to change the constitution and go for a third term straight off, which he shouldn't have done. After barely three months Victor Paz was by far the country's most outstanding statesman, but he should have stood aside for a term and then have come back. The government fell and there was a military coup. One of the interesting things that the 1952 revolution had done was to reduce the army and then to use it to educate people and for building roads and all sorts of social projects, but not for warlike projects. But, in the meantime, it had been built up again. The CIA had been involved. The ambassador (Stephansky's successor, Douglas Henderson) was in tears about the whole thing. But it had been engineered with American military support.

At that point, our development plan crumbled. The U.S. got the upper hand at that point. The new Bolivian government was a military dictatorship. The plan fell by the wayside, but individual projects were not lost. It was only the framework that was lost. Projects went on and I think a lot of things happened. I always believed that the plan was indirectly, and unintentionally, responsible for the coup, in the sense that the economic situation had begun to improve and I don't think anybody in their right senses before would have tried to take over the government, certainly not the military. Things were so bad that nobody wanted it. And then, when the situation began to improve, it was a very dangerous point. After the 1964 revolution,

*Acción Andina* was made into something that was just building schools and not integrated development. Our national rural development plan never took place. It has never taken place since. I have had four different attempts in Bolivia over forty years to start a national rural development program—the last one only two or three years ago—and it is still not working.

After the overthrow of the elected government in 1964, I didn't particularly want to go on in Bolivia. In fact, there were rumors that I was going to be declared *persona non grata*. I have a very funny story. It is not in my Bolivian book published in 1970. It was too close to the bone. The new president was very fond of the ladies. I had to take him to the inauguration of the first natural gas well, away in the jungle, which we had helped to discover, and he tried to chat me up and then fell asleep on my shoulder! One day I expected to be declared *persona non grata* and the next day I found myself altogether too *grata*! The perils of a young woman in those days were very great because in Bolivia I was living in a kind of goldfish bowl.

When the UN said they wanted to move me, I said, "I am not interested in staying in Bolivia. I have seen all of my dreams just perish here." Headquarters told me, "Anyway, you have become too much of a Bolivian. You think more like a Bolivian than anything else. We want to send you to Chile." I said, "I don't want to go to Chile. I think Chile is not challenging enough for me." I knew practically everybody there. It was a Christian-democratic government and I knew many senior people, some of whom had worked on my team in Bolivia. Chile was also much more developed. I still wanted to work in a really poor developing country. I knew there was a lot of poverty in Chile, but it was a very sophisticated government. I said, "The only post I am interested in in Latin America—I was absolutely sold on the Andes—is Ecuador." Ecuador was not free. I said, "Apart from that, I don't like this policy of stereotyping people and

confining them to serve in the same region all the time. I want to have experience in other areas and would like to go to Africa.”

Headquarters was reluctant but eventually Paul-Marc Henry said, “What about Ethiopia?” I said, “That sounds fascinating. It’s a highland country. It’s a poor country. And it’s very interesting. Yes.” So that was settled, except that we hadn’t reckoned for the Ethiopian ambassador in New York. The UN always used to consult unofficially first about the appointment of a resident representative because they didn’t want to get “no” for an answer. So they went through the motions with the ambassador, who was a very bad-tempered man. He threw my c.v. down on the table and exclaimed, “A woman! What is *she* going to do in Ethiopia?” I went to New York, and with some difficulty met the ambassador. He didn’t want to give me the time of day. Every time I was being appointed to a new country, with the exception of Bolivia and later Chile, somebody had to go and negotiate my agreement because no government wanted to have a woman.

So I went back to England and was hanging on, waiting for a decision from Addis Ababa. The year before, I had finished my economics degree. At last, the Ethiopian government said, “Yes. We’ll have her. We don’t really want to, but if you insist.” So I went there and that was a very hard road at first, from all sorts of points of view. It was a very different kind of milieu. Ethiopians were very nice. I liked the Ethiopians very much. But they were not the sort of people who invited you to their home—they took you to a restaurant. The Bolivians took you into their home, however modest. Addis Ababa was a much more sophisticated scene than La Paz in a curious way, because Ethiopia had such close British connections. There was an emperor and a court. It was a very different kind of government. There was a rather highfalutin international community there, which I was expected to mix with and which the Ethiopians

mixed with to a degree, but then they had their own lives. I thought, “Up to now I have always been a part of the life of the country in which I was working. But I don’t feel a part of this country.” This is why I really felt so homesick at first, homesick for Bolivia that is.

But by the time I had been there two and a half years, I had really been accepted. I was learning Amharic, and I was happy there. I traveled all over the country. It’s a fascinating country to travel in. We had some very interesting projects. Then my mother became seriously ill and I had to take a year off and go back to England. So I left there before I would normally have done, and frustratingly, just when I was beginning to make a breakthrough in personal relations.

Initially, our office was in Africa Hall, so we were cheek-by-jowl with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). I was given a special assignment because I had worked very closely with ECLA in Bolivia and was appointed as the liaison between UNDP and the ECA. I worked very closely with Robert Gardiner, the executive-secretary from Ghana. We became close friends. It was very fascinating going to the ECA meetings. The UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) of Rhodesia took place during a meeting of the Statistical Committee meetings in 1965. When news came through everyone was shocked.

We had joint projects that we worked on with ECA. UNDP didn’t exist yet when I first went there. EPTA and the Special Fund merged into UNDP on January 1, 1966, and I had arrived there in August 1965.

TGW: Did you meet the emperor?

MJA: Many times.

TGW: What was he like?

MJA: I had to meet the emperor often because he ran absolutely everything. Nothing got decided if the emperor hadn't said "yes." His entourage was terrified of him. He was a tiny little man but had great presence. He had fascinating hands, like a very small woman's hands with very long fingers—tiny, tiny hands. And he had tiny, tiny dogs—Chihuahuas. You had to go in diagonally into the throne room, and it was quite a long way from door to throne. As a woman I had to go hatted and gloved. If you were a man, you had to go in full morning dress. I had to curtsey three times, once at the door and once in the middle and once when I got to the throne, and he would take my hand. Then you had to do the same thing backwards going out, with these pestilential little Chihuahuas barking at your heels over a polished parquet floor. Stiletto heels were popular then and I always had a horrendous vision of being brought down by this combination of obstacles and spread-eagling myself on the floor. Finding the door was a major achievement. It was a sort of a Monty Python special—before Monty Python was invented.

I always insisted on speaking to the emperor in French. He had reasonable English, but wouldn't speak it. I used French because then he would answer directly instead of going through the interpreter. It was an incredible, almost medieval spectacle. There were lions on the palace grounds, and cheetahs. You had to run the gauntlet of so many things. And everyone was terrified of him. I think he knew a lot about me because I only knew one Ethiopian before I went there, his granddaughter who had been at Newnham with me when I was up at Cambridge—Princess Aida. The poor girl had been taken back and made to have a dynastic marriage, so she was married to a governor in the north in the province of Tigray. I used to go and visit her in her castle and she used to come to my little bungalow for lunch or dinner when she was in the capital.

But the funniest occasion with him was in connection with a huge multi-purpose river development project we had with the Awash Valley Authority (AVA). This is one of the things that Jacko, Sir Robert Jackson, was very much involved with for the UNDP, which by this time was active in this area, both in regards to pre-investment and technical assistance. The Mekong River project was another example, as well as various rivers in India and Nepal. The World Bank was funding the big dam for electricity and irrigation in the Awash Valley. We had two or three programs connected with this operation; one of the main ones was an agricultural research station, and another was the development of the river basin, which included all sorts of things like irrigation, new agricultural practices, settling nomadic populations, et cetera. The Awash Valley Authority, modeled on the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in the U.S., was run by an Ethiopian who had been put there by the emperor and was absolutely useless. We were very worried about this whole thing, because we thought it was going to go down the drain. We decided, with the FAO representative and our project manager, who was a very nice Pole called Reklewski, that the only way was to get a message that the head man must be changed to the emperor. And it was not a place where you did things in a straight line.

I had what I thought was a brilliant idea. I said, “We will go and hand him the latest report on the Awash Valley Authority and the project. We will have it bound in red and gold and I will find a way, in presenting to him, of insinuating to him between the lines that there are changes that should be made, without dotting any i’s or crossing any t’s.” So on the appointed day, there we were—the two gents in their top hats, me hatted and begloved in the car en route to the imperial palace. I say, “Where’s the report that I have got to give him?” They said, and I couldn’t believe my ears, “The manager of the Awash Valley Authority is bringing it.” The problem was that the man we wanted to get rid of was going to be at the meeting, and so was the



minister of court and the minister of agriculture. One did not have *tête-a-têtes* with the emperor. My heart sank. I thought that my project manager was going to give it to me. So we go in to the anteroom, to the throne room and the minister of court greets us. We were a bit early. And I said, “We have to see the manager of the AVA beforehand.” He hadn’t come. But I said, “But we must see him because he has got the report that I have got to give to His Imperial Majesty,” otherwise known as H.I.M.

Then the minister of agriculture arrived. I asked, “Minister, where is the report?” He said, “I don’t know.” At this point, we hear a dog barking next door in the throne room—the Chihuahua announcing the arrival of the emperor. The two ministers said, “We’ve got to go in.” I said, “We can’t possibly go in.” But they were so much in awe of the emperor that they insisted. So we went in. I hadn’t got a text, but I had rehearsed in my mind a beautiful presentation in French. It was all going to come out pat, with a code message I was sure the Emperor would understand. The Ethiopians were sitting on one side and we were on the other in a semi-circle, with Haile Salassie in the middle. There was no sign of the AVA man. The minute the emperor turned to me, I had no option but to start talking and play for time. So, I started off and did a filibuster. I launched into an interminable and rambling oration, very different from what I had planned, dredging up everything no one ever wanted to know about the Awash Valley Authority. I went on and on and on, all the while looking over my shoulder to the door to see whether this damn man came in with the report. I could see that the emperor’s eyes were glazing over. I could see, inevitably, the moment approaching fast when I would have to lamely end, “So, you see, *Votre Majesté Impériale*, I have come here to give you this report which I just don’t happen to have at this moment.” In Spanish I could have gone on for hours, but it is not easy to go on for hours in French. It is too logical and structured.

Then just as I was about to give up, I glimpsed a sort of bobbing movement over by the door. I realized it was the man from the AVA, who was coming in—on his stomach. When the emperor drove through the streets all other cars had to stop, everyone had to get out. Foreigners like myself would simply stand but Ethiopians had to prostrate themselves amidst all the mud on the ground. So, I should not have been surprised that the AVA manager was crawling in on his stomach. He sat down at the very farthest point from the emperor. And I just saw this gleam of red and gold. So I rapidly brought my oration to a close, I did a great swoop backward—you were not allowed to turn your back on the emperor—grabbed the report and presented it to him with a flourish. Although I say it myself, it was a pretty slick performance. But I had not made my pitch.

We went out very jaded and dejected and said, “That’s it. It’s not going to happen.” That evening, Princess Aida came to dinner with me. I didn’t tell her what happened. But she said to me, “His Majesty said he had a rather strange audience with you this morning.” I said, “Yes, it was strange. I was supposed to give him a report and I hadn’t got it. It was extremely embarrassing.” The next day we read in the newspapers that the man from the AVA had been sacked—for being late! We had achieved our aim but for very unexpected reasons.

TGW: Besides cheetahs and Chihuahuas, I guess the emperor also had his roster or list of contributors, a kind of *Who’s Who in Africa*. What was your role in that?

MJA: One event was a large symposium entitled “Africa and the World” held in Africa Hall. Robert Gardiner got me involved because he was organizing this whole thing. So I went to all the meetings and then was asked to help to edit the book. I was learning a lot—Ethiopia was a good place to be to learn about Africa. Everybody came there. It was not like being in an African country where you only see the people of that country. I met all sorts of prominent

people. The headquarters of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was also there. Diallo Telli of Guinea was the OAU secretary-general, and then when he went back home he was hung, poor man. He was very sure of himself and rather pompous. I met Tom Mboya, then minister of economy in Kenya, who became a close friend. Philip Ndegwa, also from Kenya, and his permanent secretary, were always coming through. I was going to Kenya quite often. That was when I first met Bernard [Chidzero], because Bernard was my colleague as resrep in Kenya. So we had a lot to do with one another.

We had all sorts of regional projects, too, that were run out of Addis. Since I was the liaison for funding that came from UNDP, I was involved in that. In February 1967, I went to the ECA meeting in Lagos, Nigeria. But I was called away because my mother was ill and I had to fly out to England. So I missed quite a lot of that conference.

TGW: One of the things is that when you were in the Foreign Office, you had a lot of Indians and Pakistanis working next to you. And in the interim, the twenty following years, virtually the entire planet was decolonized. You had this host of people going through. What was the view about the future of Africa at that point?

MJA: It was very optimistic. There were lots of problems, but there was optimism that they could be resolved. Those were still fairly early years. Rhodesia, of course, was a great blot on the landscape. Angola was not much spoken of and that was one of the things that interested me afterwards. One of the people at the symposium I mentioned, who has got an article in that book and who had a great influence on my life, was Basil Davidson. I had barely heard about Angola. But he told me about it and that's one of the reasons why I dedicated my book on Angola to him, because he was the first person who made me aware of Angola and its problems.

It was still a colony at that point, and of course I had no inkling that I was going to end up playing a role there later on.

It was the era of all the great Pan-African schemes to join up the continent. ECLA and the UN were very much involved. The ones I remember particularly were in transport and telecommunications. There was this very brilliant Colombian telecommunications expert from ITU—Santiago Quijano-Caballero—who was working on the transcontinental telecommunications link. Previously, Africa had only been connected by lifelines to their respective “mother countries,” and not between themselves. Our doctor in a remote village in Somerset had no difficulty in phoning me in Lagos during the ECLA conference to say, “You must come immediately. Your mother is ill.” And then, on my way to London, the plane had a crash, on the ground fortunately, and was very badly damaged in Kano in Northern Nigeria and I was going to be stuck there for three days unless another aircraft was directed to pick up the stranded passengers. I was trying to call Robert Gardiner from Kano to Lagos, to get him to intervene with the government, and I couldn’t get through by telephone. I did eventually and a rescue plane was sent. But this was typical of the problems. Africa was feeling its oats at that point, feeling confident. [Kwame] Nkrumah was still in Ghana. [Julius] Nyerere, [Kenneth] Kaunda, all of those people. It was all go, go, go.

TGW: What was the UN’s profile at the OAU and ECA? Was there any residue of the Congo operation and a perception that the UN was much more involved in one side of that conflict than the other? In retrospect, everyone talks about this legacy. I just wondered if at the time there was much talk.

MJA: I don’t think so. I don’t recall it. Robert Gardiner, you know, was not liked by all his staff. He was a somewhat controversial character. I thought he was a very fine man. He was

very good intellectually. And he had no chips on his shoulder. At the same time, he was of the new era of Africans. But it so happened—and it was one of the reasons I was quite keen to go to Ethiopia—that I had met him in 1964 at the same time I met Tommy Balogh. I had had to give a talk in the Houses of Parliament about Bolivia. It was a meeting on development, and Robert Gardiner had spoken about Africa. I had been very impressed with him. So when Ethiopia came up, I thought, “Yes, I want to go and work alongside this man.”

TGW: You have spoken highly of Gardiner. Were there other people around who impressed you at the time? Usually the ECA is seen as an intellectual backwater.

MJA: Somebody whom I didn't know very well, but was to know later on when he worked with us on the capacity study, was Mark Nerfin. There were several people who were good, but my recollection is that Gardiner was head and shoulders above everybody else.

TGW: Do you see a legacy from ECA of ideas elsewhere in the system? Was there an impact on anything that went on there elsewhere?

MJA: I don't think there was a lot. It was a very different kettle of fish. Gardiner was very good. He was not a Prebisch, though.

TGW: Maybe, actually, we should be doing this chronologically, because sometime later, in the mid-1970s, you are in Chile and you are linked to ECLA. What is your sense about the difference between these two regional commissions? Was it the people? The leadership?

MJA: The leadership. Enrique Iglesias, for whom I have a great deal of respect, was the one who came nearest to Prebisch. But there was no one, to my mind, who had quite the charisma of a Prebisch. Robert was a very strong character, but he was, as Ghanaians tend to be, a very soft-spoken kind of man. Prebisch was an *Argentino* through and through. The quality of the people differed, too. But there were an awful lot of Europeans and Americans working in

ECA at that time, but the African side was a bit weak. That was one of the problems—so many people from the outside—whereas ECLA was very much more “homegrown.” That’s not hard to understand because the Latin American countries had been independent for a long time. The colonial legacy was still very much in evidence in Africa.

TGW: So Dudley Seers, Colin Legum, and Hans Singer were around a long time. Do you remember meeting them in Addis?

MJA: Dudley did come to Addis but not often. I remember meeting Colin Legum but I don’t recall Hans Singer coming.

TGW: He is in your book, so I just thought Dudley was there.

MJA: Dudley was in ECLA. That was where I met Dudley first.

TGW: He has a contribution in the *Africa in the World* volume, so that is why I thought—

MJA: Well, I don’t remember him being at the symposium, but he did come in 1965 and was instrumental in my going to London to work in the prime minister’s office. He came with Thomas Balogh, and they had lunch at my house. That is how I ended up at Number Ten Downing Street. Dudley and I became quite close friends and he later visited me in Morocco. He was a very remarkable man and a very original thinker.

TGW: You mentioned Prebisch. Most people mention him as a star presence, an intellectual giant, if you want to be hyperbolic. When did you meet him, and what do you recall of this star?

MJA: I met him first in Montevideo, way back in 1956. The Latin American countries were trying to set up a free trade area (ALALC, *Área Latinoamericana de Libre Comercio*) and he came over once or twice for that. Eventually it was he who suggested to David Owen that I

go to Bolivia where ECLA was planning this pilot project in economic planning. The first time I came into close contact with him—although I had met him before, because I was always going over to Santiago—he came for the ALALC business. And there was a problem about setting up a payments union. It was rather similar to the dispute going on in Europe now about the Euro.

I don't remember what Prebisch's position was. All I know was that the IMF was on a different wavelength. The IMF representative had an office in the building near my building and Prebisch said, "I am going to see him. Come with me." So off we went with his retinue, to meet this unfortunate guy, a Hungarian who didn't speak either English or Spanish very well. I just remember Prebisch tearing him apart. It was rather dreadful to watch. At the same time, you could see that the man was a force of nature. That was my first encounter with him in Montevideo. After that, he just wanted me to go everywhere with him and to help him with all of the negotiations on ALALC.

Prebisch came with [Dag] Hammarskjöld when he came to Montevideo. That was in September 1959. It's a rather long story, but it's in my book on Bolivia. Or is it? It certainly is in my autobiography. Perhaps I thought it was too near the knuckle to tell in the earlier book. It was an absolutely dreadful story. It was headquarters versus field. I mentioned earlier James Keen, who was a tall, white-haired, rather grand British chap who had by then become resident representative in India. Hammarskjöld had earlier gone to India, on an official visit and James Keen did what any resrep would have done—he gave a reception for him. Hammarskjöld was furious. I think he thought that James was stealing his thunder. James was removed, and then David Blickenstaff was sent to India. He was Hammarskjöld's personal choice.

Shortly after this, Hammarskjöld was coming to Uruguay, and I was bombarded with advice from headquarters—"Whatever you do, *do not* be conspicuous! Hammarskjöld does not

like resreps, and he does not want them involved in his program of activities.” He was afraid, I think, that resreps would become UN ambassadors. So, my instructions were: “You are not to get involved in the arrangements for his visit. That is all going to be done with the permanent representative in New York.” They hadn’t bargained with the fact that the Uruguayan permanent representative was a very vague intellectual old boy, a great literary expert on various things, but administration was not exactly one of them.

The first thing that happened was that the foreign minister sent for me and said, “You will organize the program.” I said, “Sorry. I can’t.” He said, “Why not? That is not very helpful to me.” I said, “My instructions are that it is all to be done from New York.” The minister threw up his hands. “But he’s going to arrive on a Saturday. Don’t they understand about the five-day week in the UN? We observe the ‘English Saturday.’” He can’t be an official guest on a Saturday. I can’t go and meet him, nor can the president of the council. We can’t have a guard of honor at the airport. We’d have to pay them overtime, and you know the state of our budget. Would you please explain this to New York?”

So I went back and sent an absolutely deadpan cable to headquarters: “I am not getting involved. I am just sending a message to you from the foreign minister to warn you of some difficulties looming.” The reply came from the Secretary-General’s office, “We are absolutely bemused by the strange interpretation of the Uruguayan working week. Could you please take over?” The eventual compromise was that the government declared the Secretary-General to be a “semi-incognito” over the weekend. Then he became official on Monday. An informal program was to be arranged for Sunday. Fortunately, my antennae were up and I heard that two *estancieros* (ranchers) had met at the opera, and that one had said, “Do you know who is coming up to my *estancia* on Sunday?” The other said, “I have got a very important visitor at my house,



too.” That was at the other end of Uruguay. Both of them had been told by different people in the Foreign Ministry that Hammarskjöld was going to come and visit! I sorted that out.

On the day of the Secretary-General’s arrival the plane came early. I arrived in what I thought was plenty of time. The Foreign Ministry had lost the UN flag, so I had to go back to get one. The only people waiting to greet Hammarskjöld were a whole lot of Hungarians, who were protesting that the UN had not done something about the 1956 uprising. Fortunately, I was very friendly with the director of the airport. He rushed up to my car and said, “Thank God you’ve come.” It was a lovely winter Saturday afternoon. The sun was shining. There was no air traffic at the Montevideo airport apart from the Secretary-General’s plane circling overhead. He said, “I have been up in the tower myself. I have had it circling umpteen times. The pilot is beginning to get suspicious because landing conditions are perfect but there was no one here to receive the Secretary-General. Now that you’re here, I can authorize the landing.” I said, “Wait a minute, Victor. My job is on the line. I’m supposed to be inconspicuous. We have got to find the Uruguayan head of protocol.” We finally located him, rather the worse to wear, in the airport bar, dusted him down and sent him out on to the tarmac with me discreetly in the background.

It’s a very long, rather funny story. The last night, there was an official dinner at which I was the only woman. It was given by the foreign minister. As I walked in behind Hammarskjöld, in the “inconspicuous” little black dress that I bought especially for the occasion, an Uruguayan official, who hadn’t seen me before exclaimed, “Ah, Mrs. Hammarskjöld, I presume.” I thought, “Oh my God!” On the Sunday we had been taken out to the *estancia* and the Jeep that I was in got stuck in the mud. It was not an era when you wore trousers. I was wearing a tweed suit. The *estanciero* who was personally driving Hammarskjöld in another Jeep started ramming the Jeep that I was in but it didn’t work. So they said, “You must climb out on

top of the bonnet to be rescued.” I had to climb out, with all these journalists photographing my underwear and Hammarskjöld looking on. Talk about being inconspicuous!

We had had a meeting at my office, which he very much liked. I had said to all my experts, “Be brief. Don’t go on. Just be very precise about what we are doing.” They did. Hammarskjöld was delighted. He said, “I am very much interested in this program. We are doing good things.” He had been especially impressed by the WHO man who talked to him about primary health care and preventive medicine.

So at this big dinner where I had been mistaken for his wife, he was standing alone and I saw the minister of health. I brought them together. I said, “Secretary-General, you were interested in the health program here. This is the minister of health.” “Right,” he said, and took the cue. But I had forgotten that the minister of health was extremely deaf. After Hammarskjöld had talked for several minutes, the minister of health took out his hearing aid, tapped it, and put it back in again. The Secretary-General started again but the minister still couldn’t hear him and took out a small screwdriver and started dismantling the hearing aid. It was the first time I had seen Hammarskjöld unbend. He just crumpled up with mirth and had to move away. It was just so hilarious.

The next morning, we were taking him to the airport. Previously, the Uruguayans were always trying to push me to sit in the same car next to him but I had refused, saying, “No, I’ll get in the car behind him.” That morning, however, it was Hammarskjöld who said, “Come sit with me.” So I got in his car. He said, “That gentleman you introduced me to last night. Did you say he was the minister of health?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “He seems to be in dire need of medical attention himself,” the nearest thing I heard to his cracking a joke. Fortunately, I learned later

from headquarters that Hammarskjöld had come back charmed with his visit to Uruguay, and pleased with the resident representative. But I had really thought I was living dangerously then.

I think we should have some lunch or something, don't you?

TGW: That would be great.

TGW: This is the beginning of tape number three. You mentioned that your mother had fallen ill and that you took a leave of absence and went back to take care of her. Your c.v., at least, listed work for the government.

MJA: I was working full time. I had to earn my living to support myself and my parents.

TGW: The ministry had made room for women and divorcees by this time?

MJA: No, I was working in the prime minister's office.

TGW: I just meant the government services.

MJA: Well, there was never any problem about that in the home civil services. The difficulty was with the foreign services.

TGW: And then you went back to New York to work on the capacity study?

MJA: No, that was done in Geneva. I spent a year in Geneva.

TGW: When did you meet Sir Robert for the first time, and how did you get involved in this project?

MJA: I met Sir Robert for the first time in late June 1962, in UNDP on the 29<sup>th</sup> floor of the UN secretariat building, when we were introduced by Myer Cohen, who said, "You two should meet one another." I was accompanying a Bolivian delegation, headed by Roberto Jordán Pando, then planning minister (the present ambassador here) to drum up funding for the development plan. We had come to present it to the UN. We were leaving, I think the next day, for Washington, where we were going to present it to the State Department, the White House, the

World Bank, and the IDB. It was a lovely summer evening. My parents were in Bolivia. I had had them there for seven months. My father had retired and they were living with me. I had had this mission thrust upon me. Just a few days later, I was going on home leave, and was going back to England with my parents by sea. So I had to get back to La Paz in time to get on the ship.

We went down to First Avenue. I was staying at—what’s the name of that hotel on First Avenue? It used to be something very proper.

TGW: The Beekman?

MJA: The Beekman. That’s the one I had been put in the first time I went to New York in 1956. It was very suitable for young ladies, I was told. Jacko was staying at the Barclay Hotel, as he always did. We walked up First Avenue and he said, “Come and have dinner with me.” But duty-conscious as ever, I said, “No. I have no time to have dinner. I have got to get back to my Bolivian delegation.” It was hardly the way to start a beautiful friendship. So I went back to my Bolivian delegation. I never saw him again on that trip. It was just a brief encounter. I knew a little bit about him, but not much. He had just been taken on as a senior advisor by Hoffman especially to look at multi-purpose river-development projects, which were his specialty after his work in Ghana at the Volta Dam.

The next time we met was in 1964 or 1965 in Mexico at a resreps meeting, where the resreps had to appear before a committee of senior UNDP people from headquarters, including Sir Robert Jackson, and go through our little dance routine so that they could decide whether we knew what we were talking about, or not. But I didn’t really see much of him there. Then, in 1966, he came to Ethiopia because we had problems in the Awash Valley project. There is a long story attached to that. It was then we became friends. I had just written my monograph on

the administration of development aid for Syracuse University, although it wasn't published until some time later. I was very concerned about the centrifugal forces in the UN system, which seemed to me to be totally at odds with everything that we needed to do to integrate the different aspects of development more. Jacko was also concerned about that. So then began a correspondence, and a sort of personal relationship, which was a bit one-sided at first—on his side, not mine.

Then I went to work as a senior economic advisor to the prime minister in England. Jacko was always in and out of London, so we saw quite a lot of one another. I was going to Somerset every weekend to look after my mother and to deal with the medical problems but I was working in London full time, otherwise. When he came through we would have dinner together and go to the theater or cinema. We went on talking about the problems of the UN system, which I was also trying to raise a bit with the British government, particularly with Harold Wilson, the Labour prime minister. There is a set of memos that I sent to Wilson just before I left Number Ten.

Anyway, one day, it must have been in the spring of 1967, we had dinner and Jacko said to me, "Paul Hoffman has asked me to do an in-depth study of the UN system, particularly of the UNDP." I said, "How absolutely wonderful. You are just the person to do it. I am delighted." But, he was extremely dubious about it: "No, I think there are a lot of political pitfalls. I just don't want to do it." But I said, "You must do it. This is something that is so important. In the years I've been in the field, I have seen the whole thing falling apart and it is vital to redress that. You have got the clout and the clarity of vision to do this."

In the meantime, there was talk about what was to happen to me in UNDP. My mother had a very serious illness, which had not at that point been properly diagnosed. The doctors just

kept saying that she had had a nervous breakdown but she was not the kind of woman to have a nervous breakdown. The diagnosis came a bit later and she lasted about six years before she died. So there was the question of my going back to the field somewhere nearby. Paul-Marc Henry suggested Morocco. I said, "Okay. That sounds interesting. I would like to go to an Arab country. No woman has been resrep in an Arab country before. And it suits me because it is quite near." So I was to do that when I finished my year at Number Ten.

But then Jacko came through London again and said, "I will agree to do the capacity study, only on condition that you come and be my chief assistant to help me do it." I said, "I don't know that I want to do that." What you were saying before, Tom, about my having had a this very cloistered existence in a rural village, was very interesting. And then for years I had been working in an international environment. It was very interesting to get back to Whitehall. I was really very privileged. I was moving in the absolute top spheres of the government. I was very nervous much of the time, because I was having to deal with the problems of a developed country that was in difficulty, whereas my speciality was not exactly that. That year could have been a turning point in my career. Had I gone back into the civil service, they would have accepted me with alacrity. Or, I could have become a political candidate. So I went through a whole lot of self-analysis wondering whether I should make a change, but my problem was that I just found it terribly boring dealing only with British people all day. It is often very frustrating when you are working with a multinational team, because some of them don't write or speak English properly or they have different ways of approaching things. But that was the environment I had become used to, and I couldn't really get accustomed to the other. Instead of just writing papers and papers and papers for the cabinet, I found myself aching to get back to the field and do some hands-on work again.

In the end, however, I said, “All right, I’ll do it. But something’s got to be done about Morocco.” So Morocco was put on hold for a year so that I could work on the capacity study for a year. I went to two preliminary meetings in Geneva in the summer of 1967. And then we started it off in October.

TGW: How would you characterize your contribution to the report? Did you split it up by sectors?

MJA: I wrote the final version. What happened was that I was Jacko’s kind of alter-ego on the whole thing. A very small team was put together. I have forgotten what I was called. I think I was his chief of staff. We had brainstorming sessions on all the different subjects on which one or two people would work and sometimes write initial drafts. I had my own area, too. I worked together with Marc Nerfin. He was my assistant. Then I had to put the whole thing together. I lived in a little house above Trlex, near Nyon, between the Lake and the Jura. And I lived a closeted existence there. We made a lot of visits, of course. We went around to see all the agencies—the World Bank, lots of governments. And we had an advisory group of senior people from the UN system. We also had an advisory group of people drawn from developing and developed countries.

But when it came to the writing, I sat in my little house and started writing at half past five in the morning, and went on until eleven o’clock at night. So that I didn’t waste time, Jacko would send a car out from Geneva with food in it for me and I would send back the latest draft. Then the car would come back with lots of corrections and suggestions. He reckoned that I wrote the study eight times before it was ready. It had to be a homogeneous sort of document, so it was written by one person. Jacko wrote the introduction and the first draft of the first chapter which I revised and made into an executive summary. I was the person who had to pull the

whole thing together and make it consistent. The report was not written in UN-ese. The governing council exhorted us to be bold and imaginative and not to pull our punches. We obeyed them to the letter, and were never forgiven for it by some people.

TGW: Well, Jacko has been described by a lot of folks as *force de la nature*. What was he like in a committee that was working on things like this? How did he get his way, so to speak?

MJA: Oh, he was wonderful. Everybody that ever worked with Jacko just adored him. You often hear that people in bureaucracies always get on with the people above them and not with people below them. Jacko was the other way around. Many people above him disliked him or found his brilliance threatening. People under him adored him. Very, very few people who worked with Jacko didn't enjoy the experience. He was very good at bringing people along, prising out their ideas and putting them together. He was not really a very good writer, which is why I think he also relied on me, besides the fact that we thought along the same lines. He knew that I could put flesh on his bones, as it were.

TGW: You mentioned this report of yours that you had written in Ethiopia but was published later, about the administration of international development aid. How many of those ideas are in the Jackson report?

MJA: Well, quite a lot, but they were developed in much more detail.

TGW: What was the central thrust?

MJA: The central thrust was the need for an integrated approach, the need for an end to fixed "agency shares" of the UN technical assistance "pie" in each country, the conviction that it shouldn't be the agencies or the headquarters who dictated the form of a program. We said, "Development is homemade." There should be a country program and that program should stem



from the needs of the country as seen by that country and should be integrated into, and synchronized with the national development plan, where one existed. The country program as an integrated whole was a central pillar of the capacity study's thesis, around which everything else was developed. It was a big break with the past, when UNDP assistance consisted of separate, unrelated projects, often "sold" by the specialized agency concerned, and unrelated to the country's own priorities. Before, it was a sort of neocolonialist system under the specialized agencies. We also stressed that the resrep should be somebody who had real clout, who could pull a whole integrated team together. You shouldn't have all these agency representatives around, each flying a UN flag on their car. It should be one UN team with all its sectoral input as necessary, but geared to the country's needs.

TGW: So was the report ultimately half full, or half empty? Indeed, the Indicative Planning Figure (IPF) was certainly one idea that spread and transformed the neocolonial UN development system into something with more authority in the country.

MJA: Yes, in the country program. The whole thing was worked through in great detail.

TGW: So that part worked.

MJA: It didn't fully work. They didn't do it right. The funding of the country programs went wrong because the governing council consensus rejected the idea, which we had worked out in hours and hours of group consultation, of rolling IPF's. As a result, country programs were all adopted for the same five-year period, and synchronization with national development plans was lost. It also made UNDP much more vulnerable financially. That was the cause of the UNDP's financial problems in 1975, because all the chickens came home to roost at the end of the first five-year cycle of country programs.

TGW: But on the integration side, the dismantling of the feudal system, why did this hit such a brick wall?

MJA: Because of vested interests. These agencies were baronies, they were fiefdoms. They were very used to getting their own way and didn't want to kowtow to anyone else. They were furious that their control over projects, for which they received overheads, had been passed to the governments. I think the dam was already broken from the outset and it was just impossible to reconstruct it. It was the whole way in which the UN system had been set up. I don't know whether you recall, but in the capacity study, we looked at an "ideal model" which would have been the idea that was briefly touted early on in the history of the UN, of having a central international development authority to deal with operational matters, while agencies were confined to measures to becoming "centers of excellence and storehouses of knowledge in their respected spheres." We concluded, "That was the right way to go but it's too late. We can't go back to that. We have got to get the nearest thing to it." So, we came up with a "recommended model," which was a compromise.

The basic philosophy of the capacity study was maximum centralization horizontally, with the UNDP exerting "the power of the purse" as the sole funder of technical assistance in the UN system, and maximum decentralization vertically down to the field level, where you should have the same sort of pattern, with all UN system field operators pulled together by the resrep. Jacko often used to start off with what were then way-out ideas in order to come down to something that would really work. One of the things we examined once was why shouldn't the resrep just be given a checkbook and told to get on with it? One of the main reasons why things didn't work out was that the power of the purse was never given to the UNDP. That was a central thesis. A main reason why the capacity study did not achieve its aims was that the power

of the purse fell down and that, in the long run, was the downfall of UNDP. Many senior people in the UNDP opposed the study, among them Myer Cohen, in particular, and to some extent, Paul-Marc Henry because they also had their little fiefdoms, you see, especially on the Special Fund side. They were the great arbiters of what projects went forward. They had great power in that respect, which they saw being diluted with the introduction of country programming integrated into a national development plan. They were aided and abetted, of course, by the agencies.

Then quite a number of countries, including countries who had supported the central thesis of the capacity study, especially the ideas of having one single funding channel for technical assistance, that is UNDP, did exactly the reverse. When Edward Saouma, the director-general in FAO, declared, "I want FAO to have its own technical assistance program," even the Scandinavians, who had supported the capacity study 100 percent, put money into that. The only thing that could hold the system together in a coherent manner at that stage was the power of the purse in UNDP headquarters, and it was almost immediately diluted. The implementation of the study also became politicized. We had suggested regional bureaus, but we did not think that they should necessarily be headed by political figures from the regions, who always created their own fiefdoms within the UNDP, people who had a lot of influence, some of whom wielded it responsibly, others not so responsibly, and sometimes quite cynically.

So those same centrifugal forces that the capacity study had sought to curb within the UN system as a whole came to prevail within UNDP itself. But the suggestion that we had made, that ultimately the regional bureau should be decentralized to the economic commissions, starting with a pilot experiment in Latin America, because ECLA seemed to be the strongest commission and Latin America was a pretty homogeneous region, was not followed, the

technical assistance administrator, or whatever the operational department at the UN proper was called then, was moved down for a year or two to Santiago. But that wasn't exactly what we had in mind. We had sought to bring policy-formulating ideas and operational activities much closer together.

Then the whole question of the "second pope" was not taken up immediately. We had proposed a very senior post whose incumbent should be the alter ego of the Secretary-General on the economic and social side. When the idea was gradually adopted, and the post of director-general was created some years later it was very much watered down. Not only that, but the people put into the job were not the most appropriate. We were thinking it should be somebody who was a Nobel Prize winner, or that sort of thing—an Arthur Lewis, not that he was around any more, but that was the kind of level. Instead of this, there was Ken Dadzie and then Jean Ripert, both admirable and dedicated men but not exactly visionaries or strong leaders. Do you remember the joke, "The UN system is beyond Ripert?" He was a very, very nice man. He was a statistician. He wasn't a development man at all. I feel sorry for some of these people who come from the outside into senior positions. They are innocents abroad in the jungle of the UN system. They fall prey to the lions fairly quickly or, worse still, to the jackals and hyenas.

TGW: I just want to go ahead a little bit on this one point. You were unhappy that the director-general post was eliminated subsequently?

MJA: I was. Although I did not consider that it had been given enough clout, it was a step in the right direction—giving higher prominence to the economic and social development role of the UN, and in an integrated manner. In that sense the elimination of the function was a substantial reverse. I learned a lot from the capacity study. When I worked on it I was still pretty innocent and I just thought—it was my training—that if you put forward a logical system

no one would be able to resist it. The UN is not logical, so I no longer believe in anything like that. But I do believe that you can have the best program in the world, but if you don't put the right people in there, it isn't going to work. You can have the best people in the world, and an organizational chart that is just the dog's breakfast, and it will work. I suppose one always hoped that someone would be put into the director-general's post who was up to it. So you come back to people.

People and leadership—all those things are terribly important and have been lacking. I sometimes think that member countries, including some of the most powerful member countries, do not really want people in the UN to be leaders. People who, in the UN, do become leaders are immediately attacked. Anyone who stands out above the rest is immediately suspect. They don't want a strong Secretary-General. When it does happen they feel it's dreadful—Hammarskjöld, or [Boutros] Boutros-Ghali, for that matter. And that permeates down through the system.

I suppose in a way that you could say that the economic and social field is less “dangerous” than the political field, which is perhaps why, initially, we never had a strong political leader in the UN. But there were some very outstanding leaders in the economic and the social field. I am just thinking aloud, but now it seems to me that we are not getting them in the economic and social field, either. That really worries one. Is the UN system becoming intellectually castrated?

TGW: Who would you include in those leaders with great capacities and great ideas on the economic and social side?

MJA: I don't know him, and I can't remember his name, but he was a Frenchman. This is received wisdom from Jacko.

TGW: Labouisse from UNICEF (UN Children's Fund)?

MJA: No. Not Labouisse. The Frenchman who was right at the beginning. He was before my time.

TGW: Henri Laurier?

MJA: No, not Laurier. I don't remember. But there was somebody on the social side who I was told was very good. Philippe De Seynes, in his way, was also very good. He is a complex man. You see, this is also a problem—people not only have to be visionaries and full of ideas, but they also have to know how to work the system and manipulate it. Philippe did not really know how to do that. [Gunnar] Myrdal. Arthur Lewis. Prebisch, of course.

TGW: Who else played a role in the capacity study? You mentioned Nerfin. There were a lot of people listed in the acknowledgments sections.

MJA: Well, there was the cat. Thomas the cat played a very important role.

TGW: In what sense?

MJA: He tried to stop me writing it by firmly sitting on it. And we said in our “acknowledgements” we hoped this wouldn't create a precedent for government, but they sat on it too. The capacity study is the only UN document to include a cat in its acknowledgments. I have a photo of Thomas sitting on the capacity study. This was the final irony. Perhaps Thomas should have stopped me writing it. For I came to think later that Jacko had been right at that first dinner we had in London. He shouldn't have done it. Well, perhaps nothing would have happened because of the Americans' strong hold on to the post of UNDP administrator, but Hoffman had talked to Jacko about his succeeding him. And if Jacko had succeeded Hoffman, we wouldn't have needed a capacity study. He would have just done it, put it into practice. Of course, after the capacity study, he and Hoffman fell out. He and Mrs. Hoffman fell out even worse. The ructions were absolutely terrible.

As to the other people in our team—we were a tiny group, wee—there was Léonce Bloch, who had been a resrep. There was a Swede, Sixten Heppling, also a former resrep who did quite a lot of the work on project development. Then there was a Pole called Karol Kraskewiecz. Karol had been made assistant administrator of UNDP when they decided they had to have someone from Eastern Europe. He was a very kind Pole, a charming man. He chain-smoked cigarettes. He had not been a success in New York and Jacko had been asked to take him. So he came and poisoned us all with his chain cigarettes, and talked a lot but never wrote a word. Jacko bore it rather more gallantly than I did, but Karol was a nice man.

The people who stayed the whole time were Jacko, myself, Léonce Bloch and Mark Nerfin. That was all. Sixten Heppling was with us for six months. Then there were one or two people who came for brief periods, someone was loaned to us from SIDA (Swedish International Developmental Organization). We had McKinsey as consultant on management and organization, led by Bruce Rohrbacher.

TGW: Is there any chance that your recommendation regarding more cohesion, more integration, less dispersion of efforts will be implemented?

MJA: I am very pessimistic about the system. Jacko said, “The system cannot right itself.” That was thirty years ago. I think it is even less capable of doing so now. All of these go-it-alone tendencies have become totally ingrained. I am rather disappointed to see that, now that we do at last have a galaxy of women heads of organizations, something long overdue and generally to be applauded. They are not bringing in a new outlook. I had thought they would bring in a different kind of approach but they just seem to be emulating the old male things, the fighting over turf.

TGW: Women don't like turf?

MJA: Well, I don't know. I don't think they do as much. I don't know. Where it works much better, Tom, is on the ground. I never had any difficulty on the ground. I think it was much easier in the field, because people did pull together much more. In particular, if you were in a very difficult situation, in a very poor country, where people were there not in order to make their names, but to get something done, quite often they did things that ran counter to the positions their organizations were jealously guarding at the headquarters level. There was a great divide between the field and the headquarters, and the field was much more inclined to work together as a team. I have always thought that women weren't quite as competitive in the same way as some of the men were. But I can see that it is not always the case. I know of one situation of a woman resrep who tried to exert authority by dividing and ruling with very negative effects. That doesn't seem to me the way to go.

No, I don't see the institutions being changed. And I don't believe in an across-the-board logical approach as in the capacity study anymore. The capacity study has often been referred to as the Bible, because like the Bible, everyone agrees that it's a very good thing but its recommendations have never been fully applied. People come up with new ideas on UN reform but none are really new. It is a complicated problem, but it is not beyond the wit of man—or even woman—to resolve it. But the obvious solutions never work because all these other petty interests get in the way. The governments don't help either. Jacko said, “The system cannot help itself. Therefore the governments have got to do it.” But they haven't done it, because they are not interested in having a really effective system. They love to have it ineffective so that they can go on criticizing it and using it as a scapegoat for their own inadequacies.

I do believe that there are ways ahead, and I go along very much with Brian Urquhart and Erskine Childers, who took a lot of ideas from the capacity study. They go more across-the-



board than I would venture to do at this moment because I don't think very far-flung ideas would be accepted, however valid in themselves. Rather, I think that we have to look for certain key areas for reform that could have a multiplier effect, very much more centered on people issues and management of finance than organizational structures. Different systems for selecting Secretaries-General and heads of agency, based on proven competence, and longer-term single periods to these incumbents of top posts, with no re-election, would solve a great many things. And the combination of those two things would have an enormous effect. What goes on down below is very much affected by what goes on at top levels. The other thing that would solve a lot of coordination problems is a single, unified budget for the whole system. More crimes have been committed in the UN in the name of coordination than anything else, because all that happens is that you create more and more coordinating posts, until everybody is coordinating everybody else and no one is actually getting on with the job. A lot of money goes into that. And governments are absolutely mad on coordination.

Julia Henderson told me when I mentioned these ideas, "The first thing I had to do for the Financial Department when I joined the UN in 1946 was to devise a single budget for the whole system." That was fifty-four years ago. So I think there are ways forward, yes. But they are not major structural things. Structural dismantling is very difficult, as we have seen. Even the simplification of structures is very difficult. Even to get them to agree on a single governing council for several like-minded organizations causes howls and protests: "Oh, no, please, no. UNICEF is different. This or that one is different." Whoever it is, we're all different.

TGW: Is there any upside to competition? I am thinking particularly in terms of pushing new ideas, if not the delivery of technical or other kinds of assistance? Does a rivalry or a tension among the agencies, or between headquarters and field, ever lead to new ideas?

MJA: I don't think so. In fact, I think it is becoming worse now, because people are becoming alive to the linkages between development, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. They are all extremely complex processes, and more and more you have got to have an integral, not fragmented, approach. So what is their reaction to this? It is not to cooperate more together, but to say, "Oh, yes. We are very interested in the environment, or women, or whatever the latest fashionable theme is." It is true that all of these things have to be taken into account, but they take on a life of their own, so that each organization develops their own program in their own particular area as each one tries to develop a more integrated approach individually. The duplications and overlap are now multiplying.

TGW: So after the eighth draft of this report, you are off to Morocco, and then to Santiago?

MJA: The road to Morocco, yes. Actually, for the first six months I spent very little time in Morocco because I was constantly being called with Jacko to defend or present the capacity study to different organizations and particularly various sessions of the UNDP Governing Council. So that went on, and there was the row in UNDP. I was not forgiven in the UNDP. My promotion was held back for about a year because of my part in the capacity study. Paul Hoffman never forgave us, never forgave Jacko, never forgave me. It all somehow became terribly personalized.

TGW: So what ended the debate on the capacity study?

MJA: The UNDP governing council's adoption of the so-called "1970 Consensus" was the official outcome. That was very much a compromise. It didn't really reflect the essence of the capacity study. The consensus was always regarded as a great watershed, and it was agreed by the governments, but like most of these agreements, it wasn't a logical whole. What we were

very proud about in the capacity study—and that was why it took eight drafts—was that we had really worked it out so that everything fitted in with everything else. We brought it down to the last detail, so absolutely every little nut and bolt was in place. But many of the little nuts and bolts were taken out afterwards by agencies and governments. David Morse, who was the director-general of the ILO, said at an IACB (Inter-Agency Consultation Board) meeting or an ACC (Administrative Committee on Coordination) meeting, “What have we been given here, a package deal?” It was a package deal. It was a very neatly wrapped package, a very well-organized package. It had its *raison d’être*. But Morse used the term in a pejorative sense.

TGW: I wanted earlier to look at the experience in Santiago alongside the one in Addis because of the relationships between the rural, and the country, and the regional commissions located there. You mentioned over lunch this idea of having the regional bureau actually based on the regional commissions. Why didn’t that idea go anywhere?

MJA: I think nobody wanted to leave headquarters. Everybody wanted to stay in New York. I think it’s that simple. Headquarters is the center of power, and nobody wants to go outside. I once later had what I thought was a brilliant idea. I even talked to the Mexicans about it. It concerned the Department for Technical Cooperation and Development (the name given in 1978 to the operational arm of the UN, dealing with all the sectors not covered by a specialized agency) of which I then became assistant-secretary-general. There were all sorts of problems in New York, and I said, “Let’s out-post our department to a major developing country.” I was thinking of Mexico. And boy, the horror among the staff at the thought of going out, even to Mexico, which was not that far away and a very civilized place. They said, “No.” That was the problem. There were so many people who never, ever wanted to go to the field. They just wanted to stay in headquarters. They felt—I thought quite mistakenly—that power was at the

center. They also thought, equally mistakenly in my view, that the living in New York was cushier than in a developing country. It seemed to me that you had much more power at the field level. You could bring off all sorts of coups, not in terms of the institutions, but through imaginative programs.

TGW: And that was your attraction to the field? You preferred being in the field?

MJA: Absolutely. I loved being in the field. I refused promotions various times to go to headquarters. If it hadn't been for [Augusto] Pinochet, I would never have gone to headquarters.

TGW: Your presence there did coincide with the rise to power of [Salvador] Allende?

MJA: Yes, I went there after he was elected and took over the government.

TGW: But you were there for the end of it?

MJA: Alas, yes. I got there in the beginning of 1972, after some very traumatic personal experiences. The idea of my Santiago posting had first come up in February 1971, when I had met Gabriel Valdés at the global meeting of resreps in India (I was then resrep in Morocco). He had just been appointed as UNDP regional-director for Latin America (he had been foreign minister of Chile in Frei's Christian-Democratic government). He said, "We have never met before but I heard a lot about you. I want you to go to my country as resrep." I was very excited about this, because Salvador Allende had just been elected president. His cabinet was mostly made up of the experts who had served with me in Bolivia. This was the old crowd, you see. They were now in government, after years of being in opposition. But I had to reply, "I can't go that far away because of my mother."

My father was bearing the main burden of looking after my mother, but from Morocco I was able to visit more frequently to help him. I could not leave him to struggle on alone but in the last conversation I ever had with him, when I snatched a few days from Morocco in early

September 1971 to relieve him, he said, "I want you to go to Chile." So I negotiated a deal with Valdés whereby arrangements would be made to enable me to visit England frequently (anyway as a single person, I cost the organization much less than a married man with a family). I was on my way to New York to clinch this, in the last week of September, when my father had a stroke. I had to rush home instead, and found both my parents in the hospital. I now had two invalids to look after. Then, contrary to all the doctor's predictions, my father suddenly died. It was a terrible shock. I had expected my mother to die first.

There were practical problems too. I now had to make special arrangements for my mother's care at home, which was very difficult in England. I had to stay several weeks nursing her myself. Then, in February 1972, when I was leaving Morocco to take up my post in Chile, she took a turn for the worse and was expected to die immediately, and so once more I had to take several weeks off to nurse her and postpone my arrival in Chile. Valdés was most understanding. The UNDP administration was not, refusing even to give me leave without pay, and later, far from honoring the agreement of frequent visits home, even tried to dock me of my home leave, saying I'd already taken it. I had always found that single people were treated with much less consideration than those who were married with children. It was assumed that you had no family responsibilities at all.

My mother did not die then. She had a tremendous tenacity to live, despite a dreadful illness, and once again she defied the doctors. I could not cope with nursing any longer and had to put her in a nursing home and leave for Chile in early April 1972, which was dreadful. She eventually died the following Christmas, two days after I got back from Santiago to see her. So I lost both my parents in the space of a year.

As you can imagine, I was exhausted physically and emotionally when I at last got to Santiago. On top of that, I arrived on the eve of the UNCTAD II (UN Conference on Trade and Development), to find that I had no deputy. I had an assistant resrep, who was the son of my old friend, President Paz Estenssoro of Bolivia, a very complicated young man who never recovered from having such a famous father. Within twenty-four hours of my arrival, the new Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, arrived with Gabriel Valdés, for the conference. My assistant had a flaming row with Valdés, and either resigned or was fired on the spot. So I was not only exhausted from having nursed my mother for six weeks but I had no one to help me. And I had the UNCTAD conference on my doorstep. Well, of course, the UNCTAD secretariat was there, and ECLA was there. But I was left heading the UNDP delegation and the conference lasted for six weeks.

One of the big things that came up for discussion there was the UN Capital Development Fund. We really didn't talk about the 1950s, but I think you know all that story, of the negotiations and the row over SUNFED. That proposal stemmed from the need for developing countries, many of them recently independent, to have access to capital development finance at a cheaper rate than World Bank loans, especially the poorer countries. The "S" was added when they discovered the acronym without it was "UNFED!"

The argument went on for years until eventually a political compromise was reached. There wouldn't be SUNFED. Instead, the UN Special Fund was set up to fund pre-investment studies, while the World Bank created a concessional arm to provide cheaper finance to poorer developing countries: IDA (International Development Association). The idea behind the Special Fund, pre-investment, was an important one because it had been found that many countries could not obtain capital finance because insufficient preliminary studies had been done.

These could be costly and often it was difficult to fund them. The Special Fund provided this service on a grant basis. It started business in 1959, under Paul Hoffman, and shared TAB's resident representatives in the field. In 1966, the Special Fund and TAB merged and UNDP was created.

So, you had these two arms of grant aid through the UN—technical assistance and pre-investment—with capital loans provided through the World Bank. Pre-investment was an innovative concept made reality through the UN. It is difficult to say how effective it has been in practice, though, and it was, of course, a political compromise. We always found it hard to evaluate accurately just how much actual investment was directly spawned by our pre-investment work. And then there was the danger of studies just following on studies of the same issues, which happened in some cases. Jacko, incidentally, did a report on the impact of UNDP's pre-investment activities, some time in the 1980's, that ought to be looked at for the development assistance book.

But the SUNFED idea never really went away. So there was everybody saying, "We still need some kind of capital development fund on a grant basis." During the 1960s, this evolved into a proposal for a modest Capital Development Fund (CDF), which would be run by UNDP and would provide small-scale capital grants, which was a sensible idea. It became an issue at the UNCTAD meeting. I was very much for this. I had seen so many projects that didn't need a big World Bank loan, but where I did need access to a bit of money to fund some small investments. And IDA was not interested in making small loans. It was in this connection that I first met Jan Pronk. Jan was at UNCTAD II as a Dutch MP, leading a group with a name that was some kind of mathematical formula.

I was on a platform when Jan Pronk suddenly appeared. I hadn't a clue who he was. He had been looking for me everywhere. He pressed a check into my hand and said, "This is for the CDF." But the CDF didn't exist yet, because governments hadn't agreed. Meanwhile, there were acrimonious discussions going on in the UNCTAD commissions. The developing countries were, of course, pushing for CDF to be created. I had to testify to a meeting of the developing countries and then to the Group B countries, who, of course, were, to a man—and there weren't any women—against it. I was trying to find all sorts of practical examples to show what a good idea it was, how necessary it was, and how inoffensive it was. And the man who was most antagonistic and dismissive about it was the head of the American delegation, Bernie Zagorin. Bernie was all het up, and we almost came to blows.

Notwithstanding, not long after that, the CDF became reality. The funny thing was that some years later, now an assistant-secretary-general, and senior to Bernie in rank, I visited Bangladesh where he had become UNDP resident representative. His memory was not quite as good as it might have been for he said, "I really must show you some prize projects where I have had the most wonderful experience with the Capital Development Fund." They had dug all these wells for irrigation and water supply with CDF grants. (Now I believe it has turned out that some wells are poisoning people. They found arsenic in the water, or something. You know how it is, in development always one step forward and two back, or the other way around—if you are lucky). I said, "Bernie, don't you remember how you fought me tooth and nail about that in Santiago a few years ago?" So I had a few satisfactions.

The Chilean minister of economy was Pedro Vuskovic, who had been the head of our planning team with me in Bolivia ten years earlier. He had, I am afraid, become so radical that I regard him as being one of the people responsible for Allende's fall, because Allende was



defeated, in my view, by hardliners both on the extreme right and to the extreme left of either party. Pedro was one of the people on the extreme left. I've always maintained that Allende was a democrat, and that was part of his downfall. I got to know him quite well. He was a really marvelous man. And he was a *bon vivant*. He enjoyed life. He was a bit of a ladies' man, and always very well turned out. And he was very genuine, and always charismatic. He wasn't particularly handsome and he wasn't particularly tall, but he just exuded personality. Altogether he was a delightful person. He didn't know much about economics. He put his trust entirely in his advisors. One of them was Pedro.

And this same Pedro, whom I had found to be a very tolerant and jolly person in Bolivia, suddenly turned into somebody who became withdrawn and obsessed with the idea that he had a mission and that if he didn't use this time to transform Chile radically, the opportunity would be lost forever. Pedro later died in exile, a deeply disillusioned and embittered man. Vuskovic was very successful for a year, because there was a lot of spare capacity in the economy. He got all these state enterprises working more efficiently. Unemployment dropped. There was terrific growth but then the idle capacity was filled up and there was nowhere to go from there, and all sorts of shortages started. And of course the opposition got to work. There were strikes. The government gave a lot to the workers, and then the workers didn't know when to stop and wanted more. The ambitious land reform program went wrong because of the objections of the landlords and then the peasants invaded many towns and there were armed clashes. Then there were other people who had strikes for different reasons, to seize up the system, like the famous truckers' strike. That was definitely helped by U.S. funds. We had this galloping inflation and with the peso deteriorating at an alarming rate daily, with a huge difference between official and black market exchange rates. But when everyone expected the peso to weaken further, during

the truckers' strike, which paralyzed the whole country, the dollar suddenly went down in value. So one drew one's conclusions about what was going on. Dollars were coming into the country in large quantities.

I was again the liaison between UNDP and the economic commission and so attended ECLA's regional conference in Ecuador. I think it took place in March 1973. The Chilean delegation was led by the minister of planning, Gonzalo Martinez, who had also worked with me in Bolivia and again with ECA in Ethiopia, so I knew him very well. Unfortunately, he has had several strokes; otherwise he could give you some interesting thoughts. Gonzalo was a marvelous theorist, but not very practical. We were doing a lot of interesting things in Chile. We had a big agrarian reform project the Christian-democrats had started before. It was not a new thing started by the Allende government. We were also planning all sorts of regional development programs.

I had developed an idea in Morocco that hadn't worked there but which I was very keen to try in Chile. It always seemed to me that we had some excess capacity among our experts on the ground and that what we should try to do was to use their expertise in additional projects that weren't in the program. In Morocco, I got our people very interested in integrated rural development and ready to put in additional time and effort. But the government didn't want integrated rural development. They didn't really want the peasants to advance. My idea was to work out some projects and then get my team of experts together, and say, "Can you give us some help on this, besides what you are doing on your specific project?"

It was along these lines that we were working with Gonzalo in Chile on regional development projects. We had all sorts of people working all over the country, on whom we could call—in forestry, agriculture, education, health, social development, et cetera. We were

even working on petroleum exploration. So my idea was to get all these people working together on the regional development plan. We were very well advanced with that, and then the whole thing fell apart when the government was overthrown in 1973.

To come back to the ECLA meeting, at that time there were big difficulties between the Chilean government and the World Bank. The whole situation was so fraught, Tom, and we were just struggling to keep the government and the projects afloat. It was a desperate economic and political situation. The World Bank was refusing to give money because there was a big row going on between Chile and the Americans about compensation on copper nationalization. You've seen all that stuff, with [Richard] Nixon recorded as saying to [Henry] Kissinger, "We've got to get that son of a bitch," meaning Allende. That is recorded in the then American ambassador's (Nathaniel Davis) book on Chile. Robert McNamara, then World Bank president, had just come back from a Bank meeting in Nairobi, where he had proclaimed the theory of integrated rural development rather as if the World Bank invented it, when in fact the UN had been doing it for years, as I have said. This was rather typical of what happened to ideas launched by the UN. They obtained credibility only when endorsed by the Bank.

In the same speech, McNamara also said that no country was going to get any Bank money if it wasn't undertaking agrarian reform, educational reform, and generally attacking poverty. The irony was that was exactly what the Allende government was trying to do, not always successfully, because as I already mentioned, there had been a great backlash about the attempts at agrarian reform from the landlords, and then the peasants invaded the land. The situation was almost out of control. McNamara came to Quito and made the same speech as well.

I said to the planning minister, Gonzalo, “What you must do is to make a speech, a short speech, and just say, ‘We are doing this, this, and this in Chile so we are complying with World Bank policy, so why aren’t we getting any money from the Bank?’” Unfortunately, although he did say this, he did so in a long, rambling speech—very Latin American!—and the meaning got lost. It really needed to be a short, pithy speech. But this incident demonstrates very clearly the hypocrisy in determining to whom to lend money. The Chilean government was doing all the right things, but was considered a pariah, because vested interests were affected in the process—something that was almost inevitable, if the World Bank policy-makers had really thought through the logical consequences of their proposals. You can’t make omelets without breaking eggs!

At that meeting, the Latin American countries were trying to adopt something called the “Quito Evaluation.” They eventually got it out, but it was greatly watered down. There was agreement on all sides, except from the United States. I don’t remember exactly what was in it, but you can imagine the general thrust—a Latin American claim for more development aid, finance, trade, et cetera. The president of Ecuador had a banquet at which I was sitting next to Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the head of the Cuban delegation—well, I wasn’t sitting next to him, but he got there first and moved the cards so that we could sit together. This was a really very remarkable man—alas, now dead.

Our first meeting was one of the little sideshows of the capacity study. The Cubans went to the special session of the governing council on the study held in New York in March 1970. It was the first time a Cuban delegation had ever gone to the United States since Castro gained power. The Americans were quite upset and uptight about it, but the Cubans had to be allowed in because the UN was diplomatic territory. The Americans were even more embarrassed to find

that the two most vehement supporters of the capacity study were the U.S. and Cuba! To find yourself on the same side was almost worse, you know.

The Cubans had come up with a document, analyzing chapter by chapter the capacity study. For a small country it was remarkable. The study had quotations at the head of every chapter from the literature of different countries, the first time this had been done in a UN document. At the end, we had two from Lewis Carroll, the last one of which was, “The time has come, the walrus said, to speak of many things, of shoes and ships, and sealing wax, of cabbages and kings.” The interesting thing about the Cuban paper was that it had, at the head of every chapter, a very erudite quotation from Lewis Carroll. And when Carlos Rafael made his speech—a very long one, in the true Cuban style—he ended with a great rhetorical flourish, saying: “We are in agreement with everything in this report. We have only one criticism of Sir Robert Jackson. That is that, in his last chapter, he did not go far enough. He should not have stopped at the line, ‘cabbages and kings.’ He should have gone on to the next line, because the next line says, ‘Or why the sea is boiling hot?,’ because señores (his voice rising to a crescendo) the sea *is* boiling hot.” It was a clarion call for action to promote development delivered in a very poetic way. His oratory was superb.

I had gone up to him afterwards and said, “Thank you for your support.” I then asked, “Who is your great expert in Cuba on Lewis Carroll?” He struck his chest and said, “*Yo*.” (I am). I thought, “Oh, well, perhaps that is why they are supporting the capacity study.” We became very good friends after that. He always called me “*la pequeña Alicia*” (Little Alice) from Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. I didn’t see him often after that but sometimes had messages for “Little Alice,” through Cuban embassies.

He was a brilliant man. He was a total communist, but he was a very idealistic communist. He was an ideologue, and he stayed on until the end. I saw him shortly before his death when he lamented that he had seen his life's work collapse (Cuba was just beginning to open up its economy a little.) I did not share his vision but I admired his adherence to his principles and his intellectual integrity. Anyway, during the banquet in Quito, we were worrying about the Quito Declaration, which wasn't going through, and the declining state of development cooperation. The next day, Carlos Rafael got up in the conference room and said, "I have been reminded by a veteran of the United Nations (a description I didn't much enjoy at that stage!—and I can't remember if he referred to "*la pequeña Alicia*") about Lewis Carroll, who wrote in one of his books, 'Why are lessons called lessons?'" And he gave the reply, "'They are called lessons because they lessen.'" This was a clear dig at the U.S. delegation's position—a brilliant literary allusion in which he had to change to English because of the play on words.

It was very difficult at that time to get anything going in Chile. Everybody was very concerned about the situation, which was obviously going downhill. It was in Quito that Waldheim asked me to help Jacko, who was snowed under, working on the Bangladesh disaster and Zambia with a tiny team. So from June 1973 to December 1973, I was working part-time in New York dealing with Bangladesh and Zambia, but I retained my resrep post and went every two or three weeks to Chile. I was there in August 1973 when the situation was deteriorating daily. I had a dinner at my house, which was meant to try to get people together to seek a solution. I had several ambassadors, including the American (Nathaniel Davis), the Italian, and the French. Ministers of the Chilean government were also supposed to be there, but the situation was so bad that at the last moment they didn't turn up. That night, we all agreed around my dinner table that there was just a glimmer of a chance of avoiding disaster because it looked

as if the Christian-democrats were going to support Allende. There was going to be a new agreement. It was the 16<sup>th</sup> of August. But that all fell apart afterwards.

Then I went back to New York. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, when the coup occurred, I was in the UK on my way to Dacca. My aunt and I were having tea in the garden when the telephone rang. It was Gabriel Valdés to say that the Chilean government had fallen. He said, “I want you to go back immediately to Santiago.” I had foreseen that a coup was inevitable but I did not think, at that time, that Allende was going to die. I was used to rather civilized revolutions in Latin America. I had been through revolutions in Colombia and in Bolivia. There was a kind of unwritten code for such situations. “A revolution, a car for the president to the airport, a private plane into exile, ministers into asylum in Latin American embassies.” There was a rather gentlemanly way of doing things in Latin America in those days.

I remember that I had to work half the night to get the house ready, because I was renting it out, and then drove my car the next day at dawn to London airport (four hour’s drive away) where my best friend was waiting to see me off. She said, “Allende’s dead.” I just could not believe it. I knew that the government couldn’t last, but I just could not believe that he was dead. I got on the plane to New York, and they thought there was a wanted man on the plane who had laid some bombs in London the previous day. So they delayed the plane and I missed the connection in New York. Jacko was absolutely furious because no one had asked him if I could be released to go back to Chile. I said, “What do you think? Of course I’ve got to go back to Chile. I’m the head of the mission. There are people there who may be in danger.” I think his real concern was for my safety.

I packed a very small bag and caught the night flight out. Of course we couldn’t get into Chile. The junta had closed the frontiers and the airspace. Gabriel Valdés had preceded me,

catching the flight the same night that he called me. I went down the next night. I met him in Buenos Aires, where we were stuck. He had been told as he boarded the plane in New York that they were going to make him interim president. So he was hovering in the wings, waiting to be called to become president. Then it became very clear that he wasn't going to be made the interim president. So we decided that he should go back to New York and that I should still get into Chile by some manner of means. The country remained hermetically sealed for sixteen days but I did get in after two or three days. That's another long story that's in my autobiography. I inveigled my way onto a tiny military plane that had brought Chilean generals from Santiago so they could fly to Washington to establish the junta's legitimacy with the U.S. government. They thought I was a Chilean. It was an alarming experience, as we crossed the Andes in a terrible storm and the plane could hardly hedge-hop over the peaks. I arrived in the middle of the night in a total curfew, a deserted city. Then the men at the airport discovered I wasn't a Chilean. They were military guys, you know, who didn't know anything about the UN. It was a horrible, horrible situation. I was driven into town in an antiquated bus with machine guns sticking out of it, first to the Ministry of Defense where they said they were taking me to my home. I said, "My home is right out in the foothills of the Andes." It was rather near to Allende's former country house, so I knew I had better not go there. Instead I said, "Take me to ECLA," where I knew Enrique Iglesias had been sleeping in his office but in fact it was the first night he had felt able to go home.

So I arrived, to the terror of ECLA's security guards, with this menacing escort. I just walked up to the gate, clutching my little bag. I had been living in the same clothes for days and looked very bedraggled. At first, the guards didn't recognize me, but then I was taken in. I remember being given whiskey, bacon, and eggs at four o'clock in the morning in Enrique's



office and slept, for what was left of the night, on the couch before going to my own office. My staff were amazed to see me because this was several days before they opened the airport. I found an absolutely horrible, horrible situation. Enrique and I worked very closely together. Some of the ECLA people were imprisoned and tortured. I had to go to the notorious stadium to get out UN fellows that were studying social research who had been tortured. Several Chilean friends were killed. There was a dusk to dawn curfew and during the hours of darkness horrible deeds were perpetrated. It was just awful. Enrique and I had special passes, but even so it was dangerous to drive at night. He was pulled out of his car and was put flat against the wall and searched. And I was stopped one night by an illiterate young soldier whose hands were just shaking on the gun. I thought, "It's just not worth it, even though you are driving at five miles an hour with the lights on."

Our telephones were tapped. The UN was a totally bad word. There were many dramatic moments. Then the Swedish ambassador denounced us to the *New York Times* and said that we weren't doing enough for the political refugees from other Latin American dictatorships who had sought safety in Allende's Chile. Waldheim got upset. That was total travesty of the truth, for we were working day and night with the cardinal archbishop of Santiago and an ecumenical commission, trying to persuade the government—which refused to recognize there were any refugees and dubbed all foreigners as "communists and criminals"—to allow us to set up safe refuges under a UN flag. The situation was so tense that we had to negotiate in secret, which was why we were unfairly criticized. We eventually managed to set up refuges. I had over 1,000 refugees coming to my office, often weeping, and we set up a register to keep track of them. There was no UNHCR (UN High Commission for Refugees) office in the country and I just put the experts to work to register and help the political refugees. For the Chileans who

were in danger we had to work under cover, smuggling them into embassies where they could get asylum and eventually leave into exile.

TGW: How did you get back to New York? You said you never wanted to go there.

MJA: In October, Enrique and I were called to New York by Waldheim to report to him directly what was happening. While I was in New York, my house was ransacked by the DINA (Directorate of National Intelligence), the dreaded secret police. I rented a house, which belonged to a Venezuelan lady who was a communist millionaire, and married to the brother of the secretary-general of the Socialist Party, Carlos Altamirano. Carlos Altamirano was very far left and was high on the list of people Pinochet and the military junta wanted to capture but he had escaped, and they thought that he might be hiding in his sister-in-law's home. So they ransacked my house. Waldheim officially protested to the foreign minister, adding that he had no control over the DINA!

My boss, Gabriel Valdés, was a Chilean and a former foreign minister. Understandably, Gabriel got very upset and said, "You have to leave Chile." I said, "I don't want to leave Chile." It is not that I liked Pinochet. I had already been in contact with the junta because Pinochet had called me in to meet with them to discuss the food crisis. The country had no food. They wanted food and other help from the UN. On the one hand, they were pursuing our people. On the other, they wanted help from the UN. I felt that I had been able to do quite a lot to help alleviate some of the suffering caused by the coup, for instance with the refugees, and I believed I could do more. I didn't want to stay for very long, but I didn't want to leave immediately. I was not popular with the Junta because I had worked with Allende, and because of my helping the refugees but I had not been declared *persona non grata*. I had been doing my job as an

international civil servant should and I didn't want to leave any impression by departing at that point that I had done something wrong.

But I couldn't reason with Gabriel. He got quite emotional. It was his country and he was very upset, obviously, about what had happened and didn't want me to stay there. He wanted me to become his deputy. So that's what happened. But I got my way. I didn't leave immediately. I didn't leave until April 1974 when I became deputy-regional-director for Latin America at UNDP headquarters.

TGW: You arrived in the midst of the new euphoria. The New International Economic Order (NIEO) is being kicked around in New York. But I was going to ask you to look back to the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and UNCTAD, and the Group of 77 (G77). These groupings had a clear impact on negotiations and how people discussed things, but did they have any impact in the field? In your discussions with governments, did these group positions ever come up?

MJA: Gabriel was very much into this, because he was a politician and had been in the Foreign Ministry. He was constantly taking on board consultants in various new fields. So I suppose, yes it did. I must say that I sometimes felt that, perhaps being a more practical, down-to-earth person, that some of this money could have been spent with more visible results. We were not directly involved in the NIEO discussions. Our main job was to continue to provide useful technical assistance on the ground, though we sometimes helped government with their negotiating positions, e.g. for UNCTAD. In the meantime, I was still going back to Chile, back and forth, because Enrique and Gabriel had asked me to do a regional study on ECLA and UNDP regional programs and projects, a sort of follow up to the capacity study, to bring the two closer together—the connection between policy formulation and operational activities that I

mentioned before. Of course, I welcomed doing it because it demonstrated that I had not fled the country as it were. And I thought I could keep a tab on what was going on, and perhaps help very quietly behind the scenes.

TGW: What were the most memorable moments during that fairly lengthy period of twelve, thirteen, fourteen years in headquarters in New York? This was an entirely different optic for you. What did you learn while in New York?

MJA: Many of my worst fears about headquarters were realized: the endless meetings, paperwork, bureaucracy. But I enjoyed being deputy-regional-director because I enjoyed going out to the field and I thought that I could make a useful contribution in that regard. I could empathize with the people on the ground because I had been through their circumstances. And I think that they felt the same thing. But I didn't last long in that job because then we had the financial crisis of 1975. Brad Morse was sitting here, not on this particular sofa, but in this corner of my apartment. He used to come here night after night before he became administrator of UNDP, to talk to Jacko and me about how to get the UNDP back on the proper road, because Rudy Petersen, his predecessor, had been rather a disaster. The so-called financial crisis was really a cash-flow crisis largely due to the fact that the governing council had not accepted the system of rolling IPF's which were a central pillar of the capacity study's country programming system. I wrote Brad's first speech to the governing council in January 1975. I had to do it in secret and it caused rather a stir at the time. We called it the "Phoenix" speech—UNDP rising from the ashes. I haven't even got a copy of it now. I remember slaving over it.

We were still trying to get some of the ideas of the capacity study acted on. Brad made me head of a unit, working directly for him to solve the financial crisis and get UNDP back on track. That was a very tough period, though very interesting. After that, I was supposed to go

back to being Gabriel's deputy but I didn't because then Brad promoted me to assistant-administrator in charge of the Bureau of Programme Policy and Evaluation (BPPE) at the end of 1976. I was the first woman to reach that level in UNDP and for a long time after the only one. It was the same level as assistant-secretary-general. A short time before, the first woman ASG had been appointed in the UN, Helvi Sipila, but only to deal with women's affairs. My post had previously been a "male" fiefdom. One of the things I tried to do was to cut the BPPE down. I didn't want the UNDP to go on duplicating the technical efforts of the agencies. I thought we should draw on their expertise. Today, the UNDP has something like 200 people in that bureau which I think is quite wrong.

I also introduced some new ideas about evaluation there. Nearly every morning, Brad Morse—he was terribly enthusiastic—used to come dashing in and say, "Joan," (he called me Joan), "I want the UNDP to become the world authority on—" whatever the buzz theory of the month happened to be at the moment: integrated rural development, public administration, renewable sources of energy. I would reply, "Brad, we can't become the world authority on that because we do not have the resources. It is not our field. What we should become the world authority on is how to deliver effective technical cooperation." With that in mind, instead of doing all evaluations of individual projects and programs, I introduced what I called "thematic evaluations." In short, we were looking across the board at what we had done in agriculture extension, for instance, small industry, or integrated rural development, and seeing how it had worked, what techniques worked. Admitting that every country is different, you could still draw from them certain principles about things that you could try that might work, and certain principles that should be observed in future technical cooperation.

At that point, we did a new paper, “the Role and Activities of the UNDP” for the governing council, which had a lot of ideas in it. That was in 1976 or 1977. I spent months on that. I was the person who presented all the papers to the governing council, where I had a very prominent role on the policy side. One of the things I also tried to do—actually, one of them was with Louis Emmerij, when he was in the Hague—was to build up linkages with academic institutions, universities, and technical institutions who could provide us with advice or policy inputs or who could help us carry out evaluations, rather than UNDP trying to duplicate all these things. I also managed to bring in an idea from the capacity study which went on for some years in the UN in a slightly different form. That was to create what we called TAP (Technical Advisory Panel), which was made up of representatives of main agencies seconded to work alongside UNDP, through BPPE. So we were trying at that stage, again, to do things that were in the capacity study, to build up the links with the agencies by getting them involved in the policy discussions, so that they felt part of the whole thing and we could draw on their expertise in specific areas and avoid duplications. So that was an exciting time, and I was quite happy in BPPE. I didn’t really enjoy being in New York, but I thought I was doing something useful and innovative.

But then, Waldheim snatched me and put me into DTCD (Department of Technical Cooperation for Development), which neither Brad nor I wanted to happen. Finally, we couldn’t avoid it.

TGW: It was because of his irresistible charm?

MJA: Hardly. But he was the Secretary-General and both Brad and I had signed an oath to do the bidding of the top official of the organization. What happened was, they did another reorganization of the UN and they split up the huge Department of Economic and Social Affairs

into two new departments, one for the policy and the other, DTCD, for operational work. This huge department—it was the biggest department in the UN—was dealing with all the areas of development cooperation that there weren't specialized agencies for, all the mineral projects, energy, public administration, development planning, statistics, social development, et cetera. Its field programs were funded by UNDP and it was UNDP's second largest executing agency after FAO. Waldheim put Djermokoye in charge of this. Djermokoye was from Niger. He was a tribal chief. He was very tall, very handsome, married to a French wife, and had been a deputy in the French parliament, the kind of African who has been totally assimilated into the French system. He had been in charge of the Trusteeship and Decolonization Departments before, and they were by then dying arts in the UN.

Djermokoye was not at all suited or experienced to carry out his big new responsibilities and Waldheim knew that. So he had decided that he had to put under him an assistant-secretary-general who was to be British. Why British? Because—let me get this straight—in Rome he had promised the headship of the World Food Council (WFC), which was an assistant-secretary-generalship, to the British. Then at the last moment, he put in an American. So he said to the British, "Okay, I'll give you another post." So when DTCD came up, he said, "Here's a post for you." The British sent in the names of two chaps from Whitehall, but Waldheim and the people around him thought they were not right for the job. So they looked around and said, "Who knows about technical assistance and is British? Ah!" So I was approached. I was horrified. I didn't want to leave my job. I was very happy there. It wasn't a promotion. It was the same level. I didn't want to get into the UN proper. Also, Djermokoye and I had had a fight over something and I had thought him quite unreasonable. I thought, "I cannot work with this man.

He is absolutely impossible.” So I said, “No.” And Brad said, “No, I cannot spare her. She is my one woman, the first woman that I have put up to this level.”

So we stood it out. But Waldheim just piled on the pressure and we finally got him to sign an agreement with Djermokoye. It was like a marriage contract: he would leave all the running of the department to Anstee. DTCD was doing very badly as an executing agency of the UNDP, and so Brad had a vested interest in wanting someone there whom he knew and trusted. The new department was a mess. Someone had just cut the staff of the old Economic and Social Development Department down the middle and said, “This is DTCD and this is the other bit.” It was all a mix-up. I worked for six months to pull it all together, which I did. I suddenly discovered that Djermokoye was a dream to work with, if I just kept him informed and let him be the figurehead. I decided after a while that it was rather like being married to a rich husband who was very handsome and very nice, except that he occasionally had a few little affairs on the side but you just let him do that because the rest went so well. In this case, the little affairs were what we would call nepotism, but which in African culture are just family and tribal solidarity. Although I could not control him on everything, I did stop him from giving his son a job.

But it was working pretty well. My reorganization plan was approved by George Davidson, who was the under-secretary-general for administration and finance, and by Waldheim personally, and I announced it to all the staff in a big meeting with 600 people present. Waldheim had asked me to go to Bolivia to represent him at an ECLA meeting and I left immediately after making the announcement. I went off very happy on the plane, thinking, “Well, after all, this was not such a bad move.” I was away a week. I was the last person to know that, meanwhile, Waldheim had gone to China to see the Chinese because they had vetoed him until the last moment on his second election, and he was determined that they should not do



it on the next. They wanted a big job and he offered them the Department of Trusteeship and Decolonization and they were not interested. Poor Djermokoye was in Paris. He was summoned to London where Waldheim was on his way back to New York and told him that he was returning to Trusteeship and Decolonization with immediate effect and that the Chinese were taking his place.

Needless to say, no agreement was signed with the Chinese about my role. Waldheim really did sell me down the river, all for the Chinese vote. And in the end, the next time around, they vetoed him and vetoed him and vetoed him. It was a classic case of inept political expediency at the expense of the organization's effectiveness. The Chinese didn't even know which department they had got. They just wanted a major USG post. They sent people with no operational experience and tried to run everything from Beijing. I spent eight years in purgatory. During that time, I just got on with my job and they didn't interfere with actual operations. But they overthrew my reorganization and spent months doing a new one which was demoralizing to the staff. I had them here, in this apartment. I spent a whole Saturday explaining the organization plans to them (and gave them an excellent lunch!) They said, "There is nothing here about drafting the strategy for the next Development Decades." I said, "Well, that is not our job." They said, "There is not enough here about policy and theory." I said, "That is not our job. Our job is delivery of effective technical cooperation with these countries. It's the other department that deals with policy and the Development Decade." But they still changed the plan.

My great satisfaction was that we became the best functioning executing agency of the UNDP, with a better delivery rate than any other. But it was hell. There were three kinds of responses to my memoranda. I put everything in writing because the first Chinese USG, Mr. Bi,

didn't understand English very well, so he usually got the wrong end of the stick. A memorandum of no importance would get "yes" immediately. The second kind of memorandum, on a slightly more complicated issue, would get "yes" after three weeks. That meant that it had gone through the Chinese mission, where Mr. Bi lived, to Beijing for consultation, and come back again. To the third kind of memorandum about really difficult questions, I never got an answer. So, I got around that. I had a very efficient "bring up" system and kept sending reminders about unanswered memos. I think I must have been a real thorn in their side.

I was told a very funny story the other day. The Chinese always had problems with my English. In one of my reminders it appears I wrote: "Dear Mr. Bi, I am sorry to badger you about (whatever it was)....." The word "badger" apparently just created total confusion. It went to the Chinese embassy for clarification. The answer came back, "A ferocious carnivore that goes straight for the jugular." No one ever told me about this at the time. It must have made them even more wary of me!

In spite of all this, the department went well operationally until there was another financial crisis at the UNDP, which financed our activities, and then we had to fire a lot of staff. But I had got a lot of money set aside for contingencies and I thought, "This is a good moment to get rid of the dead wood because we have money to pay them off." A lot of our people were funded on our overhead earning from projects financed by UNDP, you see, and not on the regular budget. But Patricio Ruedas, the under-secretary-general for administration and finance, said, "Oh no, separation from the service must be voluntary." So we lost quite a lot of our best people because a very good opportunity was missed of doing so on a selective basis.

One thing I managed to do, in one year flat, when we were on a roll, was that I increased the number of women in professional grades from eighteen percent to twenty-seven percent. It was easy then to increase because our operational budget and overhead earnings were going up. But it is very difficult to do when you are on a zero-growth budget. And if you are reducing the number of staff, you cannot make gender choices.

Meanwhile, [Javier] Pérez de Cuéllar was giving me all sorts of extraneous jobs to do. At the end of Waldheim's second term, I had been the front-running candidate to head the World Food Programme (WFP). Then Pérez de Cuéllar came in and bowed to Saouma (the director-general of FAO)—that's a very long, sad story—and put an Australian in because Saouma thought he was going to be a yes-man. And he wasn't. The Australian was a late candidate. He came and attacked me violently in my office and said that I should withdraw because nobody knew who I was.

TGW: What was his name?

MJA: Ingram. He was actually a good manager in the end. He really had a violent temper. He came to me to ask me to withdraw because, when he threw his hat into the ring, there were two candidates from Group B (developed) countries. Waldheim was wringing his hands, saying, "My dear Miss Anstee, you know you are my first candidate. But now I have got another." It was the first time the British had supported me officially. They got agreement and they campaigned very actively on my behalf when they asked the Australians to support my candidature from the mission in New York, but when the Australian Mission went back to Canberra, the government said, "Why should we support a British person? We export more food than they do." I knew from my Australian friends that Ingram was not much liked in his own country. Anyway, he went to Rome and seduced Saouma, and then came to see me in New

York. I told him, “I am not going to withdraw because: a) I did not put myself forward, the British put my name forward so it is for them to decide; b) this is the first time a woman has come up for this job and if I withdraw women will feel I let them down. Let’s see how the decision goes.” He said, “Well, I have got Saouma’s support. I have got Washington’s support.” I said, “Well, I can understand. Saouma wants a yes-man, doesn’t he?” That got right under his rather tough skin and he very nearly hit me. But, of course, Saouma preferred him and Pérez de Cuéllar caved in because everyone feared Saouma.

By coincidence, I ran into Saouma only three months later at Charles de Gaulle Airport. He knew me very well. He said, “I made a big mistake. I didn’t want you because I thought you were going to be difficult to control but Ingram is impossible.” He had bitten off more than he could chew. The two men were publicly at daggers drawn over more autonomy for WFP, which was closely tied to FAO. UN headquarters had to resolve the fight between the two, and Pérez de Cuéllar asked me, the person whom had been passed over, to do it, alongside Patricio Ruedas. I thought he really had a nerve.

Other extra-curricular activities included dealing with the Mexican earthquake, Chernobyl—well, Chernobyl was when I was in Austria—and the Bolivian business. My Bolivia mission started at the end of 1982. Democracy had been restored but the country was in a total mess. The elected Bolivian president, Hernán Siles-Zuazo, came up for the General Assembly and said to Pérez de Cuéllar, “I would like you to appoint a special representative to help us to consolidate democracy and to help us to get back into good standing with the international financial institutions. And we want Anstee, because we know her and she knows Bolivia.” He had been president when I first went there at the end of 1959.

The situation was so bad that the Fund and the Bank didn't want to know. The Bolivian government didn't even know how much its debt was, to whom it was owed, or on what conditions. Pérez de Cuéllar later said, "What we did in Bolivia was something really quite remarkable, because we helped that country over a number of years to get back on its feet and it didn't cost very much UN money." On this Latin American matter, Pérez de Cuéllar was willing to go out on a limb. I gave him the arguments and he drummed up support from the international community to explain this was not just an economic and social problem but that it was a very serious political problem with wider implications than just Bolivia. And the whole question of debt relief was beginning to stir up interest at the same time.

TGW: It was right after the debt crisis of the early 1980s?

MJA: Well, Siles-Zuazo was president of Bolivia from 1982 to 1985. And we did things that no one had done before. The internal problems of the government and the country were such that it just didn't work—strikes, demonstrations, hyper-hyper-inflation—and the governments weren't prepared to bite the bullet of economic stabilization and meeting IMF terms. The situation went rather from bad to worse in 1985, and then another old friend, Victor Paz-Estenssoro, came back as president. His government then bit the bullet and brought in stabilization. There were all these negotiations going on, and there were a whole lot of IMF people going down there with their calculators and imposing conditions in a very narrow kind of way. I said to Pérez de Cuéllar, "We have got to persuade De la Rosière, the IMF managing director, to adopt a more tolerant approach." So he sent me down to Washington to give De la Rosière a message in his name: "This is not just an economic or financial problem. This is a political problem. Democracy is in danger of collapsing there, so the IMF has got to have a more open approach. This is not only a political problem for democracy in Bolivia, but it will have a

knock-on effect on all the surrounding countries because of Bolivia's geopolitical position."

And De la Rosière listened. So it was an interesting example of a situation where the Secretary-General did carry a lot of weight.

The World Bank was helpful. At one point, I chaired a meeting on behalf of the Secretary-General actually in the World Bank, with the World Bank present as well as the IMF and the ministers and representatives of the developed countries, in order to give a platform to the Bolivian ministers and mobilize moral support. At that stage, it was not much more than moral support. The first thing we had to do was to find some money to hire a firm from Wall Street to go down and work out exactly how much the Bolivian debt was and who they owed it to and on what terms, because they didn't have a clue. It was such a mess.

Then after the 1985 stabilization, we set up the Emergency Social Fund, which was a public works program to offset the social impact of the IMF measures. This was before Richard [Jolly] and UNICEF brought out that marvelous policy paper, *Adjustment with a Human Face*. It was being done there in practice in Bolivia. It was an enormous success—public works, community works, and so forth being carried out by local communities who determined then our priorities. We got international funding for this. The Secretary-General chaired a meeting of major donors that I organized. That was really one of the very satisfactory things in the 1980s for me. The UN really did play a key role in putting Bolivia back on its feet.

TGW: You have mentioned the role of women a number of times. I just wonder, at this juncture in the year 2000, what sort of opportunities or constraints women face in the international civil service.

MJA: It's a hell of a lot better, though problems do remain. When all this was going on in the 1980s, I was three times put up to be High Commissioner for Refugees. The first

time—this is related to your question—Pérez de Cuéllar decided to continue the incumbent for a short period. When that ended, the U.S. pushed Jean-Pierre Hocké, but I was also a front-running candidate again. Hocké was a friend of ours. He used to come to dinner. Jacko had known him in Kampuchea. Pérez de Cuéllar said to me, “You know, you are my preferred candidate for this job.” I was always somebody’s preferred candidate! He was a very cautious man, of course. He would never stand up over appointments. He went on, “But I have been told that a woman could never be High Commissioner for Refugees.” I said, “Why not?” He said, “Because most of the refugees are in Muslim countries.” I nearly exploded. I said, “Secretary-General, that is ridiculous. Has it occurred to you to put an equally ridiculous argument back? That is that no man could be High Commissioner for Refugees because most of the refugees are women and children and no man could deal with women and children?” He said that he had not thought of that.

But I was passed over again. Pérez de Cuéllar said, “You must go out and persuade some Arab ambassadors.” So I did talk to some Arab ambassadors and was ticked off by the Jordanian ambassador who said, “You have a nerve. Everybody knows the man they want is Hocké. Why are you sticking your nose in it?” Anyway, Hocké became High Commissioner and it was a total disaster. He had to leave after only two years or so under an administrative and financial cloud. The Norwegian who succeeded him was there for a very short time also, because [Gro] Brundtland called him back. She was prime minister and she called him back to be foreign minister again.

TGW: Stoltenberg?

MJA: Yes, Thor Stoltenberg. By this time, I was at last an under-secretary-general and director-general of the UN office at Vienna, and Pérez de Cuéllar was about to leave as the High

Commissioner post became vacant again. He said, “You are my preferred candidate.” I said, “Thank you very much,” with a certain irony, for the phrase had begun to sound a hollow ring. Sure enough, he went on, “But you know, I have got to do something about Virendra Dayal (his *chef de cabinet*).” I thought, “This is sudden death.” The High Commissioner had always been somebody from a developed country because they provided most of the money and Virendra was from India. I had nothing against him. He was a friend. So he said, and this was typical of Pérez de Cuéllar, “I’ll canvas his name first. And if my soundings are negative, I’ll put yours up.” I knew that was not going to work.

Predictably, it was a total disaster because there was a great outcry from the developed countries. They would not have Dayal. And Dayal, who was always such a controlled person, flew off the handle. I remember lying in bed, listening to the BBC World Service in Vienna, and hearing Dayal getting quite hysterical with the media about this. And I thought, “This is down the river.” His candidature was thrown out. Governments then took the matter out of Pérez de Cuéllar’s hands. It was something that was in his gift, but the General Assembly had to approve his choice. Governments set about finding a candidate instead, and, lo and behold, a woman. Mrs. Sadako Ogata, gets it. And she has done very well, I’m glad to say.

So, my long answer to your short question is that it was only 15 years ago that I was being told that a woman cannot hold the job of High Commissioner for Refugees. There were prejudices about all sorts of things. But now all these jobs—UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA (UN Population Fund)—are being filled by women, as they should be. But that is at the top. I think there is a problem at the middle levels. I think it is difficult within the structure. In the case of very high-profile political appointments there is a feeling now that it has to be a woman here or there, and that is done. It is easier than it was, but it is still not easy for women to come



up through the system. I think Brian Urquhart and I are among a very small minority who got to become ASG and USG through the ranks, and not as political appointments by a member state.

TGW: Yes. Obviously Kofi is the first SG. I think Diego Cordovez and James Jonah were probably the only other two. If things have somewhat changed on the personnel side, what do you think, on balance, has been the UN's role in raising visibility or setting the agenda for gender issues?

MJA: I think it has been very central. I am just thinking to way back. How did I become a resrep? Because the Commission on the Status of Women wanted at least one woman resrep. Mind you, there wasn't another for seven years, although I had been told that I was a pilot experiment. So I said, "Am I the light that failed? Because nobody else has been appointed." And then they appointed Jacqueline Granger. I think there is still a low proportion of women resreps. I don't know what the proportion is, but it is not as good as it should be.

Then we come to 1975, to the Mexico Conference (UN Conference of the International Women's Year). I am not really keen on conferences, and I wasn't terribly keen on that conference. Peterson was the administrator of UNDP, I was the most senior woman in UNDP and deputy-regional-director for Latin America, and the conference was in Mexico. Peterson sent for me and said, "I want you to lead the UNDP delegation." I said, "I don't want to lead the UNDP delegation." He said, "Why not? This is a conference on women." I said, "Precisely because of that. I am a D-2, but I don't call the shots in this organization. If this conference is going to mean anything, it has got to be someone senior to me who goes and who can take action afterwards. I think you should go. You should go certainly for the beginning, and then you should have somebody senior—a man." I was the most senior woman, but I said, "A man. Because if this is going to be just a figurehead sort of thing, it's no good. You think the UNDP

delegation should be headed by a woman at a women's conference, because it is going to recommend women's issues. But women will not be able to carry out the recommendations because we do not have the position of authority to do so."

So I went to Mexico as the number two in the delegation. Peterson didn't go himself, and I was rather cross about that. But he did send Bruce Stedman, who was then an assistant-administrator. I think that helped. I have always been a bit keen on having men involved as well because otherwise nothing changes. I went to all the global meetings on women except Beijing (Fourth UN World Conference on Women), though I had laid the basis for the Beijing meeting in Vienna before my transfer to Angola. I went to Copenhagen (World Conference on the UN Decade of Women). I didn't think a great deal of that. I thought the great step forward was the Nairobi Conference (Third UN Conference on Women). That really did go extremely well. What was so marvelous was the parallel informal meeting or forum. Well, they had it in Copenhagen, too, but it really took off in Nairobi. It was an extraordinary sight—all these women from all over the world. I even met a little Indian woman from the Bolivian *altiplano* with a bowler hat there. There were even veiled women from Iran who were proclaiming their right to wear the veil if they wanted to. One suddenly felt that women were getting together, and this was giving them a forum to do so.

The fact that there were all these conferences, and these recommendations, put pressure on governments as well. It has been a very slow process, but I think the UN has been absolutely central in this.

TGW: You started out saying that maybe you were dubious on the importance of conferences, but you ended up by saying that these at least played an important role.

MJA: Yes, I think they did. That is exactly what I am saying.

TGW: But which ones then succeeded, in your view, and which fell flat?

MJA: You mean in general?

TGW: Yes. Because we have a number of these ad hoc global conferences—the environment, women, food, population. You name the subject, we have had one.

MJA: I suppose they all have some impact, don't they? But there is so much verbiage surrounding them. Maybe that is the essential part of the whole operation. One of the things I did not like was that, initially, the UN thought it was adequately addressing the question of gender equality by appointing women to senior positions to cover women's issues. Necessary, okay, but not sufficient in itself. My great pride was that although I had always been conscious of women's issues and tried to promote them, I had never been in a position that was a "position for a woman." It was only when I went to Vienna that, for the very first time, I had the responsibility for the Division for the Advancement of Women, among other major programs.

We did a lot of innovative things. As one example, we were the first to draw attention in an official UN report to the Commission on the Status of Women which we serviced, the effect of the AIDS pandemonium on women—this was in 1987 or 1988. Before that the emphasis had been almost entirely on the homosexual aspects. More generally, the UN office in Vienna was the first to bring out the economic and social consequences of AIDS, as compared to the medical and scientific aspects. As a result Jonathan Mann asked me to serve on the WHO Global AIDS Commission, which I did for three years. At first I was the only member who was not a scientist or a medical researcher. Jonathan Mann was a wonderful inspiration and leader, and it was tragic when the ineptitude of the WHO Director-General Nakajima forced him to resign. Even more tragic was his death in a plane crash a few years later.

I think one of the things that has really worked, coming back to your question on women, is the Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Because CEDAW is—and maybe this is the secret of success—an organization which evaluates, in a very strict way, what governments have been doing to live up to their international commitments. And it is composed of a dozen, maybe less, women who are selected on a rotating basis, and they are usually very well-chosen. They are really tough cookies. And the governments who have signed the convention or ratified it have to come every so often and report what they have been doing. Their report and their representative are examined, as in a court of law. I used to sit in these meetings, and they really did have an impact.

Again, I was really rather pleased when a government sent a man to represent them, for it was a steep learning curve for that individual. There was one rather smug young man from a Francophone African country, a very debonair black diplomat. The CEDAW women were furious from the start because in this country, there was a woman in charge of women's affairs, but they hadn't sent her. Instead, they had sent this diplomat, who thought he was going to have a very easy time of it and made the fatal mistake of trying to exert charm at the outset. CEDAW just dragged him through the mud. I thought I was going to have to call a stretcher to carry him out! So I think the review apparatus, and the strength of the review apparatus, is very important in ensuring an effective follow-up to global conferences.

TGW: Since we are on this issue, and the processes that sometimes help, one of the other vehicles that you have been exposed to or been a part of are expert groups, advisory panels within the UN, one on peacekeeping, and you have been on others. What is important about these for the bureaucracy, and what is important about them for governments? And how does an

idea move from a staff member, an academic, or someone through these advisory groups? And does the secretariat ever do anything about them?

MJA: Well, rather like conferences, I have mixed feelings about these groups. I am just trying to measure my words a bit here. I am not on the present group on peacekeeping that you mentioned. I am, however, the chairperson of the Advisory Group to the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which has made some forthright recommendations, not all of which have been appreciated. One does sometimes wonder who endorses the members of groups and panels, and how they are chosen. I have a very strong feeling that the choice often rests most often on people who are not likely to make waves, so that the outcome is, in a way, a bit stitched up to begin with.

I think it useful to get independent views, but a lot depends on independent views from whom. Let me just take one example, with the consequences of which I was much involved—another little extra job. I refer to the Group of 18 (G-18), on the reform of the UN, which sat in 1986. That was so different from the capacity study, because here you had these eighteen chaps who were chosen for political, representational and geographical reasons. My former Chinese under-secretary-general, Mr. Bi, was on it. What his contribution would be, I am not quite sure. He never did understand the inner workings of the UN. Anyway, the Group of 18 came up with a raft of proposals, some of which were extremely good, and some of which were minimal—the usual thing like classes of travel, or things that are very ephemeral, alongside sweepings cuts of staff. Such groups often come up with very mixed bags because they come with different backgrounds, different experiences, different baggage. Quite often they are not always as independent as they should be. The Group of 18 was composed of government experts anyway, so they were not independent, but were representing their governments' views. You

asked, “to what extent are they implemented?” Well, we really did implement most of the Group of 18’s report, although some of it was unimplementable, because that is one of the problems of having these compromises, which sometimes do not lend themselves to rational applications.

But we did a lot of the things in the Group of 18 report—we did streamline the structures; we did reduce the upper echelons of staff by 15 percent; we cut the whole staff by 25 percent; we reformed the budgetary process and we introduced sweeping changes in personnel management to make it fairer. But the upper echelons of staff have gone up again, now. This was in 1986 and 1987. All of this was supposed to lead to proper funding of the UN and renewal of the U.S. contributions but nothing happened. One does sometimes get the impression in the reform process that there are governments that are constantly making the UN jump hurdles and then say, “Okay, you jumped that hurdle nicely. Let’s try a higher one. Now try that one.”

On the question of reform, member governments are never satisfied. They are always looking for some pretext to say, “Give us more,” because to say that the UN is effective has all sorts of implications that they don’t want to recognize, liking paying up or even increasing the budget. But I don’t see how the organization can continue never having even its basic approved budget fully funded, and having a constant zero-growth budget. It just is not feasible. It is one of the reasons that there are less ideas now. Anybody who is in a rather commanding position in the UN has to spend their whole time worrying about staffing and budgeting and how to meet the next day’s payroll. So how can they be thinking great thoughts?

There was one thing I was very pleased to be out of when I left the UN—and I did not want to leave, I loved the UN. I was not somebody who said, “Oh good, I can retire soon.” I was happy to go on as long as I thought I was doing a useful job. But when I did leave, I thought, “Thank God I haven’t got to manage personnel any more.” It is a nightmare. You have

senior people who should be able to think about the future, and get on with things, but they are constantly being beset by petty problems, and by governments also getting into the works, micromanaging. I used to suffer from that in New York, but it was much worse in Vienna—all this jockeying by member-states for positions that were no longer there because there was a recruitment freeze that they had imposed. Ambassadors nonetheless kept beating a path to one's door. Just occasionally there were vacancies, which were only for people who were already in the system. And there were always people who wanted to know why they didn't get promotion—sometimes useless people. It is difficult to say that person X just isn't worth it. And they were the ones who usually got their government to plead on their behalf.

TGW: Of the recommendations that either were massaged and got through, or were totally thrown out, is your impression that it was the intellectual or the political power of experts sitting on these committees that really made a difference? Using the Group of 18 as an example, it seems that the political placement of these people is at least as important as the ideas they come up with.

MJA: I wouldn't want to think that. I hate to think that. But I believe it is so, yes. But what about the Committee on Development Planning (CDP)? That was different, wasn't it?

TGW: I believe so. But Gerry Helleiner, who resigned from it, said it was a bunch of toadies and that the ideas didn't make a difference.

MJA: There were some very good people who were chosen for intellectual reasons.

TGW: The usual argument is that the people who were there were really important intellectuals, and that this did make a difference. He is the first person I have heard who argued the opposite. And he actually resigned because he thought there was too much politics and not enough ideas. This is the end of tape number three.

TGW: This is the beginning of tape number four. Before we go back to Vienna, I just wonder whether it is possible for you to generalize about how you feel the UN has been important to the creation and dissemination of ideas.

MJA: In Geneva, you remember, I suggested that one had to distinguish areas in which the UN had been the fount of ideas, where ideas originated, and those in which it had been the forum for the discussion or the promotion of those ideas. Since then, I have thought of a third way, where the UN provided a channel by demonstrating in practice how those ideas work and promoting them in the field acting as a funnel, if you wish to keep the alliteration. That gives them credibility and makes it easier for people to promote the right policy choices. I want to give some examples of that. One was work in the Department for Technical Cooperation and Development on new and renewable resources. There was a big conference about it. But we were doing it in practice all the time in many countries and we also played a very big role in organizing that conference. The secretary-general of the conference was Enrique Iglesias. For instance in Cape Verde, the provision of wind energy, was an extremely successful project. Geothermal energy projects all around the world, in the most extraordinary places, including in Chile at 5,000 meters right on top of the Andes, demonstrated how new and renewable resources could be tapped and that they could make a big difference to local economies.

As regards women, I think one can push women's roles in all sorts of discreet ways. For instance, in Mali, in West Africa, we had a program of sinking wells for water, which is very scarce. It was not always a great success because the local men were not maintaining the wells. That meant that the women were going back to having to carry huge pitchers on their heads for several miles every day from distant springs. Then an idea occurred to us: it is the women who have the greatest interest in keeping the wells working, so let us train them in the very basic



techniques that are needed for the maintenance of wells. Showing that women could do these things also improved their standing in the village. But these things are never straightforward. In this case some of the men objected to the women doing this because it was a Muslim country. I think that was eventually got over. There were all sorts of ways that you could show, through technical assistance, that women's lot could be improved. We took to the new and renewable resources conference in Nairobi a special wheelbarrow we had devised in which women could carry several large pitchers of water. The UN has been able to show that ideas actually work in practice, sometimes in very simple ways.

TGW: We are now going to go back to Vienna from New York. You were the under-secretary-general and director-general of the UN office in Vienna during quite an interesting period in world relations—the beginning of the end of the Cold War, and the true end. What, in your view, was the impact of the disappearance of a different model on the development business, development ideas, and development cooperation in general?

MJA: It was such a very sudden collapse, wasn't it?

TGW: You were as surprised as the rest of us?

MJA: I was surprised. I had a very special link, as it were, with that part of the world because, for historical reasons, the countries behind the iron curtain had a particular affection for the UN office in Vienna, and for the agencies in Vienna. They regarded Vienna as their UN because it was nearer to them. I had some very strange experiences. At one point, I was asked to go into the Soviet Union. It was in the [Mikhail] Gorbachev era—it must have been 1988 or 1989. I wasn't particularly keen to go because I had had a very disagreeable experience there in 1979. But I went, and was greeted absolutely like visiting royalty by Gorbachev's minister of the

interior, Vadim Bakatin, who later became quite a close friend. He was desperately seeking our help on crime and drugs. I find it easier to start from that experience, if you don't mind.

TGW: Sure.

MJA: He was saying, "Well, we never admitted it, but we have terrible problems with crime." The crime division was one of my fiefdoms, as was the program on narcotic drugs and the control of psychotropic substances. He said, "We have drugs also, and all of this is getting much worse. Because of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, our borders are opening up. We need help. We need technical assistance." I found myself in a very strange situation. The Soviet Union wanted to receive technical assistance like any developing country, and we were not geared or mandated to provide such help to a huge, supposedly developed country. I had to find all sorts of ingenious ways of getting support from the West to help them.

One of the things that struck me very much at that time there was just how totally the Soviet Union was throwing out the old model. They could see nothing good in it, and they had a blind faith in capitalism. I was vainly saying to them, "Look, do be careful. Your model was pretty awful, and it didn't work. On the other hand, it did have a few saving graces and one of them was that it did have a safety net. It was a very low safety net, but it was a level below which people could not fall in terms of their living conditions, and so forth. So do be careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water, and don't imagine that capitalism is an unmitigated blessing. All sorts of problems will come with that." But they just did not listen. They wanted to go the whole hog.

As time went by, I was visiting Moscow very frequently and they were coming to Vienna. Meanwhile, of course, there were all sorts of western economists—usually rather hard-nosed economists—who were advising them on how to transform their system and to go over to

the market and who were recommending very stringent economic measures. These were already having a rather adverse impact on the social situation without producing the benefits that were supposed to come from all this. We have talked earlier about my experience in Bolivia; and while I was in Vienna, Pérez de Cuéllar had asked me to do a similar function in Peru. In fact, I was sent down there before [Alberto] Fujimori was elected in the second round of the elections in 1990, when there were two candidates, to talk to the both of them. You may remember the rather disastrous situation there with the previous president, Alain García, who wanted to renege on Peru's external debts. And then the economy collapsed. I remember that we had a meeting there and they couldn't even produce paper for the report and we couldn't even buy paper, because there wasn't any. Of the two candidates, one was Mario Vargas-Llosa, the novelist who was going to go the conventional IMF route, and the other, Alberto Fujimori, the outside populist who won on the understanding that he was not going to go to the IMF. Fujimori won. I had been advising both of them about the things that we thought should be done.

The first thing I had to do immediately after the election was to organize a lunch for Fujimori with the Secretary-general at which the president of the World Bank, Enrique Iglesias of the IDB, and the head of the IMF were also guests. We had to say to him, "Your cabinet should not be arguing about whether or not to go to the IMF. Whatever you think, you have no choice. What you should be arguing about is how to get the best deal, how to negotiate." Fujimori was a very quick learner. Suddenly the man who had been elected on an anti-IMF policy very quickly entered into an agreement with the IMF. There, we started an emergency social program at a much earlier stage than in Bolivia, but for political reasons it did not work as well as it might have.

About this time I was in Moscow at a dinner with the minister of the interior, who was a very broad-minded kind of character, not the sort of man you would imagine a Soviet minister of the interior to be. The conversation turned to what the UN was doing. I found myself explaining what we had been doing in Peru and Bolivia. The next day, I was leaving for Vienna. The Soviets put on this VIP treatment and I was in a special salon at the airport with a crowd of officials. There was a bit of commotion, and suddenly I was surprised to see the minister to whom I had said goodbye to the night before coming in. He said to me, "I have been thinking about our conversation last night. What we need the UN to do is to provide us with a program of assistance similar to that which was given to Peru and Bolivia. Please arrange it for us" I practically fainted on the spot but recovered sufficiently to point out there was a slight difference in size and complexity.

However, this idea progressed. Unfortunately, the timing turned out not to be right. I went back to Vienna and spent the rest of the weekend trying to think how on earth do we handle this? I had left Moscow on a Saturday morning, and on the Sunday evening, just as I was finishing an outline of a plan, I listened to the BBC World Service and heard that my friend, the minister of the interior, had just been changed. So we lost some time on that. However, others in Moscow said they were still interested.

The next spring I was in Moscow, in April 1991. Pérez de Cuéller had nominated me in response to an unprecedented Soviet request for international help in dealing with the economic and social fallout of Chernobyl. I had been to Chernobyl, to the Ukraine and Belarus. In the Kremlin, I met Bakatin, who was by this time security advisor to Gorbachev, and we discussed the idea again. He called in Yvgeny Primakov, then Gorbachev's economic advisor. We agreed that my office would send them a mission of people from Western Europe, a mixture of

academics and people who had been in government, to give them some advice on how to reduce the social impact of the measures that were being taken in the transition to the market.

Gorbachev was consulted and said that he liked the idea very much. We formalized our proposal, then we didn't hear anything for some time. Then, suddenly, I was told, "Yes, we want you to come in September." So we prepared the mission for September. But in August, there was the attempted coup against Gorbachev and the whole thing was put off again.

It was a very sad story because Bakatin told me that, while Gorbachev liked the idea very much, the political upheaval during that summer had been such that they could not come to grips with receiving the mission before September. Had they accepted the formal proposal immediately when it was made in April the mission would have taken place before the coup, but they were in terrible disorder. You can't imagine what it was like trying to get anything done there. Then they said, "We will have to wait until things settle down again before the mission can come." Bakatin became head of the KGB with instructions from Gorbachev to dismantle it, which he did. He has never been forgiven politically, because he told the U.S. ambassador where they had put the microphones in the American embassy.

Then I was suddenly called back to Moscow in November of that year. Bakatin said, "Yes, we want this mission. The timing is not good now, but we have got to have this because we are very worried about how things are going." Eventually, we took the mission in January 1992. But by this time, the Soviet Union had split up and Yeltsin came in as president of Russia. So we worked with the Yeltsin government which was still finding its feet. Although the mission made a number of proposals, it was just too late. I felt very strongly at that point that the complexities and the dangers—and I had seen them first-hand—of that situation were not fully understood in the West. It seemed to me that Western Europe, the United States, all the powerful

countries, were treating the Soviet Union as I had always seen them treat developing countries, in the sense of saying, “You show us first, and then we will see if we can help.” The problem was that when you are drowning, it is not helpful if someone on the shore says “show me you know how to do the breast stroke and then I’ll come and save you.” You need them to throw you a lifeline so that you can at least support yourself for a bit.

I tried to argue this in various places, but I didn’t really get any kind of hearing. By this time, of course, Pérez de Cuéllar had gone. Boutros-Ghali had been appointed in January 1992, and he had seen all his under-secretaries general. But I could not go to New York because I was in Moscow. So I didn’t see him until the end of January. I had just come back from Moscow, from this social policy mission, which was headed by Professor Peacock, and we had just presented our report to the Russian authorities and I was very full of it. I had never met Boutros-Ghali before, and I went in rather as I used to with Pérez de Cuéllar, telling him at the outset that I had a list of six things. The first one, uppermost in my mind, was Moscow and Russia. Of course, I had the whole Chernobyl disaster on my plate as well, and I had seen all of the terrible impact that that had on the Ukraine and Belarus and parts of Russia. I said, “The situation in the former Soviet Union is very dangerous and I do believe that the UN should take a lead in persuading the West that we have to help them over this. They are rather like a developing country at this time.” If we did not—and I had said this to my friends in Moscow—I was very much afraid that there would be a political backlash. There might be just a reversion to a new episode of communism. And, if the whole thing just imploded, with all the nuclear implications, it would be a dreadful danger not just to those countries, but to the rest of the world.

So I put all of this to Boutros-Ghali. It was very different from dealing with Pérez de Cuéllar, who never liked an argument. You didn’t know what he thought, but you certainly

knew with Boutros-Ghali, and he did not think this was a good idea at all. And I was given a great talking to, that the priority was for developing countries. I said, "Yes, I have spent most of my professional life working in and for developing countries, so I agree with you but I think this is a really difficult situation and that the UN should take the lead." Our argument took so long that I never got into the other five points.

I still believe that the West made many mistakes over the Soviet Union, and the UN did not take the lead that it should have done. I could, perhaps, have pursued the matter further. But within a month I was on my way to Angola. So I was no longer involved. But I did not feel the Russians were getting the right advice. Everyone was treating this as a kind of standard case when it was anything but. It was something completely without any precedent and with enormous and terrible implications.

TGW: With some irony, the Vienna offices were opened by the Austrian Secretary-General of the UN, Waldheim. By the time you were there, the same Secretary-General was still president. He was in disgrace and couldn't leave the country. What happened when you ran into him?

MJA: It wasn't a great event, running into him. He was always there. He would always turn up. He was the president of the local UN Association (UNA). He liked to come to everything. And it was awkward. I felt that he had been wrongly treated, excessively punished. I never felt that he had been a war criminal. He had obviously lied, but I felt that other people knew that he had lied long before it all came out. Major countries must have known when he was elected. And the extent of the reprisals that were taken against him seemed to me to be excessive. I did not think that the same thing would have happened had he been president of a larger country, such as Germany. His downfall was useful for some from a whole lot of points of

view. So, although I had no reason to be particularly grateful to him, after what he had done to me by landing me in that big department and then putting the Chinese on top of me without any redress, I did feel sorry for him. And I didn't feel that he should be made a total pariah. But, it was awkward when he kept turning up at UN functions.

TGW: My impression is that, across the planet, UN offices are somewhat like sponges in the sense that they soak up local culture. The way the office operates partially reflects local operating procedures. Having worked in Geneva for ten years, I was always astounded. The pace was very slow, very asleep. New York is at the opposite end of the spectrum in terms of frenzy. Where does Vienna lie on the spectrum?

MJA: I don't know. I think I brought my own pace with me. I suspect a lot of people thought that I was going in for a little bit too much hard pounding. But, I also found a lot of support. You see, the UN office at Vienna was nothing. You had the two big agencies there, the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) and UNIDO (UN Industrial Development Organization). Waldheim had also been foreign minister before he became Secretary-General. The Austrians were obviously very keen to be prominent in the UN for a whole lot of historical, political, and geographical reasons. I think they felt that it gave them a standing. They had also tried to be neutral in a situation where it was very hard to be neutral. So having an important UN presence in Vienna reinforced all of that.

Waldheim obviously wanted to do something. They decided to build this huge building, and he promised that many departments and offices would go there from New York. They didn't go. The UN office at Vienna was initially just administration and finance. There was nothing there. Certainly the UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC), the Division of Narcotic Drugs, and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) had been transferred there from



Geneva. But they were separate. They weren't under the director-general. All this changed when I was appointed director-general as part of the reform we did following on the Group of 18, who, among other things, had asked us to consolidate operations. The idea was to have a nucleus for social development in Vienna. The Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, which included the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Division for Social Development, covering social policy, crime prevention, the disabled, the aging and youth, had been transferred there earlier, too, but again was not under the director-general. They were under an assistant-secretary-general, Leticia Shahani, who in turn came under the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in New York. It was total nonsense. An under-secretary-general in New York was still responsible for managing half of his department located on the other side of the ocean. In Vienna also, there was the UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control, which had an assistant-secretary-general, and then there was the Division for Narcotic Drugs, and the International Narcotic Control Board. The drug programs came under the oversight of another under-secretary-general in New York

The idea, in conformity with the desire of the Group of 18 for integration and for cutting posts, was to put all of this together. The director-general would become head of the Center for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, thus eliminating one of the assistant-secretary-general posts. That would come directly under the director-general. The director-general would also take over the Division for Narcotic Drugs and the secretariat for the INCB, and would become the coordinator for all drug programs, including UNFDAC. Several posts were saved as a result of this. The director-general took over responsibilities that formerly occupied one under-secretary-general and one assistant-secretary-general full time, and half the time of two under-secretaries-general in New York.

So there was a tremendous amount to be done. I am afraid I have always been a sort of workaholic. In a way, the Vienna office is rather separate from Vienna because it is across the river, on the other side of the Danube. There was not that much mixing with the Austrian people, generally. On the official level, there was a lot of contact with the authorities. I don't think things moved particularly fast in Austria, per se, but I don't think that was reflected in the pace of our office at the time. Then there were all the increased contacts with Eastern Europe. We had so much to do.

TGW: Earlier, when you were in Addis or La Paz, you had spoken about difference in perceptions between the field and headquarters. Is Vienna the field, or is it headquarters?

MJA: Sometimes it was referred to as the third headquarters of the UN, but the problems with headquarters here in New York were dreadful and very similar to a field-headquarters situation. I could not have gone there at a worse time because the UN was reducing staff everywhere. There was a recruitment freeze and you could only fill vacancies by transferring people from other places. Nobody wanted to come from New York to Vienna. But one of the really serious problems was that the whole thing was fudged from the outset. If Vienna was to become a nucleus for social development, we should also have had a section on social policy but that had stayed in New York under Rafi Ahmed's control. Among other things, it was producing the *World Social Report*, which was very important. We had all sorts of ideas about how we wanted to change that report. Pérez de Cuéllar said, "Of course, responsibility for social policy must go over to Vienna." But Rafi Ahmed just stuck his toes in and said, "No, neither the function nor the posts are to go." This wrangle went on for five years, and we never got them. Kofi Annan was, at that point, head of personnel, and I raised this issue with Kofi twice and came back to Vienna delighted. Kofi had said, "Yes, of course, all these posts in social policy

must be transferred to Vienna.” But nothing happened—no action. So this was a constant bone of contention.

Another major problem was that the director of UNFDAC, di Gennaro, a fiery Italian, did not accept my overall role as coordinator of all UN drug activities, and did everything he could to undermine my position, usually through Andreotti, then Italian foreign minister. The British foreign secretary, then Sir Geoffrey Howe, spoke to Andreotti, but Pérez de Cuéllar would not bite the bullet and call di Gennaro to order because he was a political appointee and Italy was an important member-state that gave a lot of voluntary funds to the UN. It is a sad story. After I left, UNOV (UN Office at Vienna) and the drug programs became a permanent Italian fiefdom and now various scandals and allegations have become public and undermined the drug programs’ credibility.

After I left Vienna I saw much of my five years’ efforts destroyed. In particular the social development component we had so carefully built up was transferred back to New York, and dispersed in various parts of Mr. Desai’s department, just when it should have become more prominent and integrated in its own right.

My life was quite complicated because I had to keep coming to New York to report to various inter-governmental commissions. I used to travel back and forth across the Atlantic an awful lot. In addition, we were running programs all over the world. So I didn’t have time to imbibe whatever the pace of Vienna was, because I was always in the air. Between DTCD and all those years at various headquarters, I visited over 120 countries on official mission, some of them several times. So I was constantly visiting projects, and governments, and going to conferences. I was also trying to promote understanding of the importance of social development, which was rather like crying in the wilderness at that time. So there were various

meetings about that. I started a Forum on Social Development in Vienna. Louis was one of our speakers. It is rather sad looking back at that now because that and other initiatives collapsed after I left. In addition to dealing with the various drug commissions, we had the ICDAIT Conference in June of 1987, when I had barely settled in. Although I was appointed in March, until June I was still running this operation back in New York on the Group of 18 reforms. So I was going back and forth.

The second important drug conference of which I was also the secretary-general was the Convention on Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic and Psychotropic Drugs in 1989. That opened up a lot of new departures, among them the whole question of money laundering, lifting bank secrecy and so forth, for the first time. A really far-reaching international convention came out of that meeting, some of which has been applied by member-states. Then, of course, in the Crime Division we were also preparing for the Eighth UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Section, which took place in Cuba in 1990. One of the ideas that I did get across to some developed countries was that the tendency at that point to point the finger at the drug producing countries and say, "These are the people to be blamed. They are the ones who have got to shape up and eliminate drug production," was unfair and counter-productive. Years before, when I was dealing with Bolivia's economic problems, that was one of the bones of contention when we were trying to get funding. I created a bit of a furor in Washington by saying, "Why are you complaining about this? This is Reaganomics in action (Ronald Reagan was President then). These are market forces. Where there is demand there will be supply. So you have got to do something about demand."

From Vienna I did manage to get through the idea that you have to tackle demand for drugs as well as supply if you are going to lick the problem. And I did that through Mrs.

[Margaret] Thatcher, who had written me a letter of congratulation when I was appointed and said that if ever she could be of help, she would be very happy to do so. Later on I happened to be in New York when she was visiting for the General Assembly. Pérez de Cuéllar, as was his wont since I was one of his two senior British people, paraded me in his meeting with her. Mrs. Thatcher fixed me with a gimlet eye, and said, "Since Miss Anstee is here, let us discuss drugs." I think Pérez de Cuéllar was really wanting to discuss Cyprus and a whole lot of political things, but not drugs. She said, "I am a chemist. It is really a very simple problem. There have been a lot of advances in these things now, in herbicides and so forth. So these drugs could be very easily eliminated." So I said, "Excuse me, prime minister," and I could see Pérez de Cuéllar beginning to look a bit white about the gills, thinking that these two women were going to argue. I said, very politely, "It is not quite that simple. This is much more than just eliminating crops with herbicides. There is the problem of the conditions in which these people live, the economic situation."

As the Secretary-General was looking even more anguished, Mrs. Thatcher said, "Next time you are in London, come and see me. We will discuss further." So, the next time I went to London I went to see her and we had an absolutely ding-dong battle about this at 10 Downing Street, watched only by her private secretary, who said nothing. I said, "You should really be the leader on this. Why don't you organize a global conference on reducing demand for drugs? We can help. We haven't got any money, but we can organize it and provide all the substantive papers." She agreed and the conference took place in April 1990. It was a very unusual conference in that we had all sorts of practical demonstrations. Alongside the plenary sessions with the usual formal speeches by ministers, there were less formal gatherings where people and NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) who were working with drug addicts gave

demonstrations and visual presentations of their projects they had and explained the problems they faced and the approaches they found helpful. Some of them were quite junior people, not the normal people that you get in these conferences—ministers, and diplomats, and so forth. And the ministers flocked to hear them. I remember, particularly, a very nice man who was the U.S. secretary of health, and he was fascinated by these practical expositions of the issue. They weren't just pontificating in long speeches. They were also going to these sideshows and seeing what was being done in the field and what could be done.

It was the first, and so far, has been the only global conference on reduction of demand for drugs. In Bolivia, now, they are trying to eliminate coca growing to get to zero coca production under great pressure from the U.S. But the social consequences for the producers, who are the poor people, are dire. This is one of the reasons that they, along with peasants all over Bolivia, blockaded all the roads two months ago and brought the country to a virtual standstill. The “cocaleros” marched on the government because this is their livelihood.

TGW: Maybe it was at lunch, or earlier this morning, when we were looking for a thread that runs through your career. And before we get to the politics of Angola, on the development side we have mentioned your fondness for the underdog, social justice, and the like. After thirty-five years in the business of development, as you were leaving Vienna, or now, how have your views changed, if at all? Did they evolve in some way? Are you more upbeat? Less upbeat?

MJA: I couldn't be more upbeat than I was when I was young. I really thought this was the holy grail, you know. Of course, I am much less upbeat. But I still see it as the way to go forward. And one of the things that most distresses me now is that governments have gone off development aid. It is so much easier to get humanitarian aid, because you can jerk the tear strings by bringing starving children into people's living rooms on the TV screen. But you talk

about development aid, and they don't want to know. This is certainly sad for the developing countries, but it is also very shortsighted on the part of the developed countries. I do worry very much about the widening disparities of income within countries, and between countries. This is something, even if you cannot prove it statistically, that is a major cause of conflict.

TGW: Conflict—we are about to come to it in Angola. Other than the occasional earthquake, your main work had been in development. But your focus was development. It certainly was not in security or dealing with war zones.

MJA: I have dealt with several revolutions. You would be surprised—in Colombia, one in Bolivia, in Morocco, and of course Chile.

TGW: But you always said that things were rather “gentlemanly.”

MJA: Yes, but Chile was not gentlemanly. Neither was Morocco.

TGW: I guess what I was asking was whether the adventure when you had come back, when you had decided to take the job in Angola—in your book you described that you had twenty-four hours to make the decision. You had been New York and Vienna. Was it time to go back to the real field? What was going through your head during those twenty-four hours? What was attractive about it?

MJA: I don't know that it was attractive. I was scared stiff. I suppose my mother's rallying call “Never say your mother had a jibber” was going through my head. I didn't feel I could turn it down. I think I described in the book how I felt, “I am damned if I do this, and I am damned if I don't.” I knew that it was probably something that wasn't going to succeed because of the complexity of the conflict. Probably there were not going to be enough resources and the mandate wasn't going to be right. At the same time, I thought, “If something can be done to help these people then something should be done.” I was also very conscious that it was the first time

that a woman had been asked to lead a peacekeeping mission. I had done practically everything in the UN, and had been a first as a woman in many things. It was one of those strange coincidences—I don't know what ever happened to that book, I never saw it—but somebody wrote to me and said, "We are writing this book, *Women Leaders Speak*." They wanted women who had prominent positions to talk about their experiences. So I wrote this chapter. I scribbled it off in Vienna in late 1991. In it I said that while women had broken many thresholds in the UN, no woman had ever been in charge of a peacekeeping mission. I had rather obliquely referred to a conversation a few years earlier in which Pérez de Cuéllar had said, "You are my preferred candidate (that phrase again!) to succeed Brian Urquhart. But I have been told that a woman could not deal with the military." It was the story of one's life all over again. Even the British ambassador, Tony Parsons, who was a dear friend—and I was rather furious with him but he sort of made amends later—said to my face, "You cannot possibly have a woman in charge of the military." And I said, "What about Mrs. Thatcher?"

I had also made a remark in this chapter saying that sometimes we women are our own worst enemies. Usually when challenges open up, a man, whether he thinks he is qualified or not, goes for it. A woman often worries whether she is adequately qualified even when objective observers think she is. The essence of my argument was that a lot of myths persisted about what women could not do, firstly because they had not been given the opportunity to prove otherwise, and, secondly, because when they had they had shrunk from accepting the challenge. I emphasized that women must accept challenges when offered.

The ink was hardly dry on this when I was offered Angola. I thought, "My God, I have got to follow my own advice on this." I was truly hoist on my own petard! I also thought, "If I don't go, the men who are against all of this will say, 'We did offer a woman this job, and she



didn't want to take it." So, I would have given them a good excuse to reinforce their prejudices and the women would be furious. But I also realized, "If one takes it, and as is all too likely it turns out to be a failure, then they will say it is because a woman was the special representative of the Secretary-General and headed the operation." So I was damned if I did, and damned if I didn't. But I think it was basically the "never say your mother had a jibber" thing that won the day. There it is, you must, like a racehorse, just jump at that fence even if it does look too high and there's a deep ditch on the other side.

TGW: You described your life in the camp and raising vegetables and toads and bulls and things.

MJA: Copulating frogs.

TGW: Was the fact that you were a western woman with absolutely no military experience per se a shortcoming?

MJA: Very often it is a western man with absolutely no military experience.

TGW: I would argue also that military experience or familiarity with this is an important part of trying to lead a peacekeeping operation. So I just wondered whether man, or woman, it made a difference.

MJA: I don't think it did. But other people could have a different view. A special representative of the secretary-general has a very political role. It is both a political and a managerial role. After all, to handle the military, you have your force commander—or in my case, the chief military observer. The first one I had was a total disaster. But, in a perverse way, that was of great assistance to me. I had a wonderful acceptance from the military, because they all hated the chief military observer who was dreadful to all of them. And I came in and was polite to them and listened to them and though I'm sure they must have been dubious at first,

they saw me as so much more acceptable than the Nigerian general that we got along famously. Some of them still write to me.

The role of a special representative of the Secretary-General in a peacekeeping operation is largely a question of managing resources and negotiating and so forth. It was not so different, in essence, from what I had been doing in another context. You need the same kinds of skills. For instance, when war erupted again in Angola and we were planning the elaborate evacuation of our people all over the country, I worked very closely alongside the military. We sat around the table together. They would put up plans to me, and I would help to analyze them. One of their fortes is logistics and don't forget that I had had considerable experience in that field, especially in managing disasters, though in a different context.

TGW: Actually, the person who is doing our manuscript on human security wanted me to ask you how you conceived the problem of security in Angola—whether you saw this as primarily a diplomatic balancing act, whether one needed to address the broader development and security concerns. How would you perceive the definition of security in this operation?

MJA: I didn't have time to make definitions. I was dealing with the problems of security all the time. Human security in Angola was at about the lowest ebb that you can possibly imagine by any possible definition. It still is. When people are under fire, or not getting enough to eat, or not having the real basics of life, you just don't define it. You deal with it. You are trying to stop people from being killed. You are trying to stop people dying of starvation or disease—all of those things at once.

TGW: So there is a direct link between human security and conflict management or resolution?

MJA: Of course. Absolutely.

TGW: But you don't need to define security.

MJA: When you are in that situation, you are not sitting down and writing a nice little treatise. You are just getting on with these situations as they arise and trying, usually rather ineffectually, to alleviate the situation.

TGW: Do you have the impression that the UNDP and virtually every other UN agency now has embraced human security? Is this meaningful? Or are they mainly continuing with their own business and using a new label?

MJA: Well, every organization jumps at the new labels because they think it gives them a new face and a new prominence and they are all in competition for funds. It was easier for me to define human security when I was in Vienna than it was when I was in Angola. One was faced with it every day in Angola. In Vienna, we did quite a lot of work on the theoretical side. As I mentioned before, I set up a social policy forum, which was an extra-curricular activity. We had a meeting of the staff, ambassadors, NGOs, et cetera, whenever I could get a hold of a speaker. We never had any money for that. Louis Emmerij was the first. Then we had [Olusegun] Obasanjo and later Juan Somavía. Of course, I knew Juan very well from long before, from Chile. With Juan Somavía, we worked out the whole thesis of the Copenhagen social Summit (World Summit for Social Development), but by the time it took place, I was no longer in Vienna. But we were working with him, supporting him on the Copenhagen Summit and developing the idea that security is much more than a military or purely physical concept. Security embraces the whole question of the basic welfare of human beings. Nobody can be considered to have security if they don't have enough to eat, or they don't have access to basic needs. This was the definition that we were pursuing in Vienna. But, as I said, it wasn't foremost in my mind in Angola.

TGW: Actually, in your dedication, in *Orphan of the Cold War*, you mentioned Basil Davidson, whom you mentioned earlier. You said, “Who first opened my eyes to the forgotten tragedy of Angola, in October 1966.” What did he tell you in 1966? Why did he tell you not to go back in 1992? And why did you write this book after this was all over?

MJA: I thought I had mentioned earlier that Basil had come to the Haile Salassie Prize Trust in Addis Ababa in 1966. And he started talking to me about Angola. There were a couple of chaps there in ECA who were also very disturbed about what was going on in Angola, one of them, a West-Indian. I can’t remember his name. But Basil was the man who first uncovered what was going on in Angola. He wrote a book in 1952 about all the labor problems, the exploitation under Portuguese colonial rule and the anti-colonial struggle. Before that nobody knew what was going on. Why did he tell me not to go? I thought I said that in the book. He said, “It is a mission impossible. You will fail. And you will get very hurt in the process.” And I told you earlier why I still went. You ask a friend’s advice and then you do the opposite.

Why did I write the book? I felt an immense necessity to write the book. For one thing, I thought that Angola was a forgotten tragedy and I wanted to bring it to the attention of the world. Secondly, I felt that there had never really been a proper understanding of what happened. To the extent that it had been reported at all, there hadn’t been full or accurate reporting as to exactly what had happened. Thirdly, while there had been times, for example in Chile, when I had been involved in matters of life and death, I had never before been involved to the same extent and for such a long period, in such a dramatically life and death threatening situation. Every day, you were dealing with matters of enormous responsibility in which you knew human lives could depend on your decision. I was obsessed with the feeling of failure. My disappointment after Abidjan, when my third round of negotiations to end the renewed war

ended in failure, you cannot imagine. I knew it was almost inevitable, but one had tried so hard to prevent that outcome. The sense of failure led to the need to examine one's own conscience, to examine what had happened. Was there something that could have been done differently? And to tell the story, I also wanted to tell people what it was like to be in a peacekeeping operation—to try and convey not only the facts but a feeling of what daily life was like, how it felt to be in my position. The chronology was pretty good. It was detailed. And I thought it was quite interesting to show people how negotiations can go wrong and what it takes for them to be successful.

But I also wanted, in a more personal way, to try to convey the atmosphere. I was fed up with the UN being criticized the whole time. True, the Nigerian general and a few other people were dreadful. But we also had splendid people there, including some of the very junior people and some of the girls who went out in the field in really dreadful and dangerous conditions and did wonderful work. One just wants to say to people, "The UN is not a life of ease and conferences. There are people who go out and risk their lives." I wanted to tell that story.

It was a cathartic experience. My poor, dear aunt used to say when I staggered out to tea from my study after a long day of writing, "You look absolutely like death. You are obviously reliving this whole thing again." And in a way I had to relive it again, because while I was actually living it, it was all going so fast. You couldn't grasp it all, whether you were doing the right thing or the wrong thing. It was such a very intense experience. Is that a good enough answer?

TGW: Yes. As a result of this peacekeeping experience, and as a result, I suppose, of the cottage industry in which we are all involved, subsequently you have been involved in a number

of efforts to learn lessons from peacekeeping at the UN, the U.S. government, in Moscow, et cetera. Is your impression that international institutions actually can learn from the past?

MJA: Yes. But they don't. Let me just give you a little example. Bangladesh in 1973 and 1974—that was a superbly articulated operation. We really pulled success out of the jaws of disaster there because Jacko was handed something that had been mucked up beforehand by everybody else and that success was due to his particular genius. Before I left that operation, he asked me to write a brief memorandum to the Secretary-General, which he would sign, on “lessons learned.” And we did. And so many of the lessons of Bangladesh had direct relevance to the peacekeeping missions of the 1990's. Even though there was no peacekeeping force there, it was a political emergency, there was a natural disaster, a civil war, all the elements were there. But, no one ever acted on our recommendations. Again, when I left Angola, I prepared a personal memorandum for the Secretary-General, which I handed him myself: “Lessons of Angola.” They were very brief points and I gave them only to him in the first instance because he had been very angry before, when the American under-secretary-general for administration and finance, a former attorney-general, had been a friend of [George] Bush's.

TGW: Yes, from Pennsylvania.

MJA: Richard Thornburgh. A nice man, but he wrote this absolutely damning thing about the UN and circulated it widely so that it got a lot of publicity before the Secretary-General could deal with his report. So to avoid this, I gave my paper only to the Secretary-General. There were some lessons which were general ones, for example about the Security Council, but there were some internal recommendations about the mess that always seems to exist in a large bureaucracy. The tensions between field and headquarters were very great, I can tell you. So, I said, “I am not circulating this to anyone else. I thought perhaps you would like to see it first and

then circulate it.” But, he never gave it to anybody else. There were some things that could be sensitive if they got into the hands of the press. I was not lambasting anyone. I was simply suggesting some improved systems and procedures that could easily be acted upon.

Unfortunately, there was no follow-up at all, but I have fed it into other things, especially through my voluntary work since retirement as chairman of the Advisory Group to the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and in the various reports I have done for both Boutros-Ghali, and Kofi Annan, and the Department of Political Affairs on how to organize the UN system better to address peace-building—the new broader concept, deriving from the peacekeeping operations of the 1990’s—another idea launched by the UN. Most recently, I have been asked to draft the plan of action on peace-building required by the Brahimi report (*Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations*). So there are ways of feeding in conclusions obtained from practical experience, but the process is terribly slow and ponderous and getting action taken on those conclusions even more difficult.

Every situation is different, but there are certain broad principles that can be applicable. There are examples of techniques that have been tried successfully, or not successfully, in one place that could be tried in some other place. But the UN is terribly bad at this. It has no institutional memory, as we have long since discussed and discovered and is bad at follow-up.

TGW: One of the more poignant moments in the book is at the end. This is, after all, your swan song. You are retiring from a system you have served for about four decades. It was hurtful, I suppose, that nothing was done. You write here that the UN had lost its human touch, that it was quite a different organization from the one that you joined earlier. In what ways?

MJA: I suppose it has become very much bigger. I had grown up in UNDP where everybody knew everybody else. Senior people were more concerned about the staff. It is also

the case that the organization has become demoralized by these constant attacks upon it. Jacko really cared about his staff. He was famous for that. When the Bangladesh operation started, he was smuggling cutlery off aircraft to give to people in the field because they hadn't any knives or forks! He worried about their relatives, and he would take personal messages back and forth, desperately overworked as he was. And he was very senior. It is not done now. People just don't seem to care so much about their staff. I always tried to do so, perhaps not always successfully. I do get depressed when I come back and see people in UN headquarters whom I know to be good people, because they worked for me in the past—they all just want to get out. They say, "The atmosphere has changed completely."

I think it is this constant, constant criticism that has worn people down, especially at UN headquarters. People no longer care the same way as they did. We cared tremendously. It is also, I suppose, for some people just a job like any other—though not for the people who go out on really tough missions. That is something that—I was going to say, "divides the men from the boys," but perhaps I should add "the women from the girls." In the traumatic experiences many of them go through, they show tremendous qualities. The problems are at the headquarters level, and this terrible bureaucracy of personnel. There just doesn't seem to be much attention to merit, and there is constant litigation. In personnel evaluations, if you ticked any other than the top box "outstanding," you could expect a long process of recourse through innumerable appeals panels. I used to say, "Outstanding from what? You cannot stand out from anyone if everyone is outstanding." Even the second box, "excellent," is not considered acceptable. Everyone used to complain, even staff qualified as "excellent," which was absurd. These are the things that take up people's time and make advancement on the basis of real merit very difficult to bring about. That adds to the demoralization of good staff.



TGW: You were in your national foreign service, and you have served in the UN international civil service, and you have observed lots of other bureaucracies over time. Is it possible to characterize? Is the international civil service as good as the best national civil services, sort of in between, or is it just impossible to generalize about the quality of the people who work for the international civil service?

MJA: I think it is impossible to generalize. You cannot measure international against national services. It is so different. Just the very fact of being multinational means you are going to have very, very different levels and standards and approaches. That makes it difficult to pull it all together. I do get the impression—perhaps because I was naïve, I didn't see it in my early years in the field—that the linkages between the member-states and their nationals in the secretariat seems to be very much greater because of the number of people who run to their missions for support every time something goes wrong for them.

TGW: Is there any difference between the motivations or the qualifications of the people who want to work in headquarters and in the field?

MJA: Well, I don't know. I have always felt that in an organization like this, which is international—and this is difficult for the UN proper, but it is not so hard for organizations like UNICEF, or UNHCR, or UNDP—people ought not to get promotion unless they have worked in the field. There should be a rotation. I persuaded two administrators that that should be made a rule in the UNDP, and it was. And in each case they immediately breached it by giving people senior positions who had never been in the field. It is more difficult in the UN proper because there are not necessarily that number of posts out in the field, though they are increasing now with the peacekeeping and peace-building missions being created. But I do think that there is not enough fulfillment of the rule—and you swear it by oath—that UN staff are supposed to go

wherever the organization or the Secretary-General asks you to go. I always have, and I have never regretted it. I don't regret Angola, tough as it was. The rule could so easily be enforced if willingness to go to the field was related to promotion prospects. Instead, the reverse applies. UN headquarters staff who go to the field all too often actually lose their seniority for promotion instead of getting incentives and recognition for having done their duty, often at the cost of personal and family sacrifices, not to mention facing life-threatening situations. They are just forgotten.

TGW: One of our interviewees, who actually may have been an international civil servant as long as you were, was Jacques Polak at the IMF. He was with the League, and eventually became IMF research-director. He retired a few years ago and still has an office there. But he claims that the IMF and, I suppose by implication the World Bank, are better able to draw better minds than the UN because they pay more, they give greater freedom to publish, and it is a more demanding environment. Is he correct?

MJA: He is certainly correct about being paid more, and better conditions of service. That is not going to attract everybody. It doesn't necessarily attract the best people. I am not so sure about the quality of these two organizations now. They used to be, I think—well, they were insufferably arrogant sometimes, but they had really very, very good people. They drew away quite a lot of our own top people from UNDP, or from the UN. Quite a number of people went, although I do not necessarily think they went only for the higher salary. There was not so much nitpicking in the Bank and IMF on stupid things like class of travel, and so forth, making one's life quite so uncomfortable. But I think something is completely wrong in the UN system, because we are supposed to have a common system, but the Bank and Fund do not observe that. Everybody ought to be paid the same, though not necessarily at the World Bank level. Both

IBRD and the IMF are specialized agencies of the UN, although they never want to recognize that. It is quite wrong that one set of agencies should be paid at a different scale to everybody else, enjoy different standards of travel, et cetera.

I think that the IBRD and the IMF were too flush, with the kinds of offices they had, the way the staff traveled, and being able to take their wives along. I think that was wrong. But my main point is that there should not have been that distinction in the first place.

TGW: I actually wanted to ask you this earlier, so I'm going to ask it now, which is how you actually felt as a former *campesina* from the United Kingdom, who now attaches "dame" to her name. What did you feel like when you earned that?

MJA: I wished my parents had been alive, for it was all due to them.

TGW: I am sure.

MJA: They saw some of my early prowess but they died too soon to witness what came later. They would have never dreamt in their wildest imaginings that that could happen, their daughter could become a "dame." They would have liked that. My aunt liked it, too, so that was okay. And the other thing that made me very pleased, and I didn't know until the actual day—they do the knights and the dames first and I was the only "dame" in the Order of St. Michael and St. George, because it is for services overseas. But when I entered Buckingham Palace ballroom to receive the honor, they announced, in clarion tones, that it was "for services to the United Nations." I liked that. And a friend of mine, who had been in the Foreign Office, wrote and said, "Isn't it nice that the UK still thinks that services to the United Nations are also services to the United Kingdom?"

TGW: Indeed. I would have to agree. It is the other reason why the existence of the Bodleian Library, and the financing of that with official sources, it seems, is highly unusual. In fact, it is unique at this juncture. We hope it doesn't remain that way.

MJA: I think it was easier to be an international civil servant as a citizen of the UK. The UK never, ever asked me to do anything. They respected the independence of an international civil servant. That was a particular British attitude at the UN, going back to the beginning. I always said that the British were playing cricket and everybody else was playing much tougher games. But you never, ever felt under any sort of pressure.

TGW: I just wanted to ask you—you mentioned several leaders. You have worked under most of the Secretaries-General of the UN, and several administrators of the UNDP. Did any of them stand out in their leadership capacity as facilitating intellectual inquiry, of pushing people to dream up new ways of approaching the issues? Are there any of those people who stick out as exceptional in that way?

MJA: David Owen did in a curious way. He was a very quiet and understated Welshman. He had been in the economic part of the UN, and he was the one who invented the network of resreps, a brilliant idea that has stood the test of time. I don't know that he came up with so many new ideas, but I told you that I did have this private correspondence with him about the situation in the various countries in which I served under him. I can't think of that happening now in the same detail, with the same frequency or with the same personal reaction. Probably a UNDP administrator doesn't have time, now. But I knew that David was interested in one's thinking about how development was going. So he was interested in ideas and very supportive of innovation and initiative.

Other people who come to mind are I.G. Patel, Arthur Lewis, and Arthur Brown. Arthur Brown was much more practical than I.G. Patel. My vision of I.G. Patel is always of going to his office and seeing a virtually clean desk, and I.G. sitting there reading the latest book on economic theory. He was a very bright intellectual. But I thought a lot of his operational approaches were mistaken. As I told you, he insisted on having national experts of government execution, which seriously undermined UNDP's *raison d'être*. But certainly he was keen on new approaches and was an innovative thinker, but too much on the theoretical side. In UNDP, Paul-Marc Henry was a brilliant mind—very imaginative, and having a unique quality of knowing how to translate intellectual ideas into practice. It was most stimulating to work with him.

And how could I omit Jacko? He was an exceptional person, always dreaming up new ideas and approaches. He had a unique talent for dissecting complex situations, very rapidly, adopting a plan to address them, and pulling everything together. He was a man of action, a logistic genius. He saved Malta during World War II. But all this was based on an extraordinary talent to analyze the key elements in any situation, however intransigent. I never worked with anyone else who could make the UN system work as a team, as he could. But his outspoken ideas alienated some powerful people, and he was never given the opportunity to head a major UN organization, which he would have done brilliantly. It was a tragedy for him, but even more so for the United Nations.

Jacko had a great influence on my life professionally and personally. In Angola, I daily asked myself, "How would Jacko (who had just died) handle this?" I missed his advice, even at the other end of a telephone, so much.

Who else? Well, of course, Hammarskjöld. And, well I didn't really know him, but Ralph Bunche and the whole idea of peacekeeping. They were all innovative thinkers and doers. Prebisch, too. He was so stimulating to work with, and very supportive. Well, I was lucky because he liked me. He could be very, very tough on people. But, luckily, he and I got on well. There are some areas where it helps to be female, you see. I always thought that women have so many disadvantages and that they should not fail to make use of the few advantages, but obviously not in an unscrupulous way.

TGW: We are very grateful and sorry to have taken up so much of your time. You would probably have liked to have already arrived in Lake Titicaca.

MJA: I would just like to add something. I think all the things I have been doing during my professional life have come together in what I have been doing since, in my so-called retirement. I refer especially to the work I have been doing on peacekeeping, and even more importantly on peacebuilding. As I said earlier, I am the chairman of the Advisory Board to the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). I also help to train troops in peacekeeping techniques for the U.S. forces, and in Latin America for the UK, the Scandinavians, and in Africa. My work on the broader concept of peacebuilding began at a meeting in Stadt Schlaining, Austria on restructuring societies after conflict, organized by my old office in Vienna in June 1995, which I was asked to chair. It brought together very senior people from the agencies, the World Bank, some governments, and NGOs. It was very stimulating. It is so nice at the UN when you find everyone in agreement. The difficulty is how to make it work afterwards. So I said at the end of it, "We don't want the kind of report that says, 'X said this, but on the other hand, Y said this.' We want something that states clearly, 'We have agreed on a course of action. Will you leave it to me to write a synopsis?'"

And they did. My synopsis—called The Chairman’s Synopsis—had very specific recommendations about what should be done by the Secretary-General, by the agencies, by governments, and so forth and was published as a General Assembly document in August 1995. And then nothing happened at UN headquarters because Mig Goulding and Alvaro de Soto—USG and ASG respectively in the Department of Political Affairs—were not on speaking terms. That was the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) that was supposed to follow up on this. I was upset by the lack of action and I finally said to Mig, “Why don’t you ask me to do it and I’ll do it for free.” So I wrote a report for Boutros-Ghali. It is a brief report, and does not contain brilliant intellectual ideas but blinding glimpses of the obvious, of common, or uncommon, sense. It describes very simply how the UN should function in a conflict situation in an absolutely integrated fashion without creating any new organizations or any new coordinating mechanisms.

I gave my report to Boutros-Ghali in August 1996, but by that point he was caught up in his campaign for reelection. Then Kofi Annan took over, and I gave it to Kofi in January 1997. One of the things I said was that the UN must have a focal point for peacebuilding, and I analyzed which department should perform that function. I also pointed out that the term “post-conflict peacebuilding”(PCPB) was a misnomer, since it should begin long before the conflict ends. But you may know that there is a political problem about that because some countries see generalized peacebuilding as an intrusion in their sovereignty, though that is improving now. After considerable delay, Kofi adopted my suggestion that he make the Department of Political Affairs the focal point for PCPB, but did not give them adequate resources to discharge that function. Also, the wording of the announcement was rather vague, so that other people could

get around to it. Everybody is trying to get onto the peacebuilding bandwagon, including UNDP, and there is the usual competition for funds.

A whole year after that, the DPA asked me, "How do we do this?" Actually, it was all in my first report but I wrote another report to them, spelling it all out. And then I chaired a weekend retreat for the whole department last December (1999). It has just been going on, and on, and on. This exercise started in 1995 and peacebuilding arrangements are still not functioning properly there. In August 1999, I suddenly got an urgent call in Bolivia, "Could you, in two days, produce an administrative directive for PCPB to be issued by the Secretary-General?" So I dropped everything I was doing, produced this and faxed it to New York. Over a year later, it still hasn't even been submitted to the Secretary-General.

The strange thing was that opposition to DPA's role in peacebuilding came not only from UNDP and other organizations feeling that this involved trespassing on their turf, but from within DPA itself. The different divisions objected to the setting up, within the department, of a small special unit on peacebuilding to promote the whole process within DPA and in the UN system generally. After several meetings, and the retreat I just mentioned, that was more or less sorted out. But then came the panel on peacekeeping, et cetera, chaired by Ambassador [Lakhdar] Brahimi, and everything was put on hold until its conclusions were published in August 2000.

I felt that report didn't bite the bullet because it did not address the overlap and self-defeating competition between DPKO and DPA. I saw Brahimi in July 2000 and expressed my strong view that the two should somehow merge. This comes back to your earlier point. How effective can expert groups be? Brahimi, for whom I have great respect, told me that he was originally assured that there were no holds barred and that he could convey anything he thought



relevant. But, later he was told specifically by Kofi Anan, “Don’t touch the two departments.” I think the panel should have resigned on the spot, there, because if you cannot do that, you don’t have a free hand. They can do what they like after the recommendations but I think you have a responsibility to say what you consider necessary.

There are a lot of good and interesting things in the Brahimi report, though more on peacekeeping *per se* than on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. On the latter, the report does support the focal point role of DPA and the idea of the Special Unit, and it also recommends that a plan of action on peacebuilding be drawn up for the whole system, to make all the different agencies and bodies work together more effectively. Kofi Annan accepted this suggestion and I have now been asked to help draw this up. I shall do so with considerable reticence partly because the essence of what needs to be done is all there, in my earlier reports, which haven’t been fully acted on, but more particularly because I anticipate that this will set off another round of in-fighting and turf battles.

The whole new concept of peacebuilding developed in the 1990s is a fascinating example of how ideas evolve in and through the UN. The relationship with development, and the new, broader definitions of security is self-evident. It is also another telling example of how everything is related to everything else, and that an integrated and articulate approach is essential—partial approaches just won’t solve the world’s problems. So, once again you have the paradox of a UN system originally conceived on sectoral, or thematic lines, having to struggle with issues that require a broader, comprehensive response. And as I said before, instead of this leading to more cooperation within the system, which would be logical, it results in each organization widening its mandate and operations to meet the challenge. So, more confusion and overlap results, more quarrels over turf, more blurring of the dividing lines between the

individual responsibilities of the various organizations. And globalization complicates all this further.

In my own life, the work I am doing on peacebuilding brings together all of my development experience and my peacebuilding experience. As always, I find it more satisfying to start something rolling in practice rather than writing endless papers that no one acts upon. So last year, when I had the deeply affecting experience of going back to Angola for the first time, I launched an idea with President [José Eduardo] Dos Santos, which he seemed to like, and which afterwards was well received by the State Department, the British Government, the “troika” (Portugal, Russia, and the U.S.). Since the war is scaling down and the government has recaptured most of the large areas previously occupied by UNITA (National Movement for the Total Liberation of Angola)—though there is still a lot of guerilla activity—it must now start work on reconstruction and on restoring the economy. But the problems and the country are so vast, it’s an almost impossible challenge.

So the hub of my idea was a pilot project in one province in which the government would try to bring all its ministries to work, and all the national agencies, and undertake an integrated pilot program of post-conflict peacebuilding which would involve not only law and order and all of those things, but judicial systems, democratic institutions, involving the community, health centers, education, and social services and so forth, which are absolutely essential before actually going to a proper development process.

So I said very bluntly to the president that such a program could demonstrate to the people there that there is a peace dividend and that the government taking control just does not mean a posse of police coming in and killing people, which was the current impression. It means coming in and demonstrating that you are going to govern, and that you are going to govern in a

fair way and that the people's lot is going to be better than when they were fighting UNITA. At the same time the project would act as a proving ground for techniques that then could be expanded to other parts of the country. All of this is so new, and in a vast country like that it is impossible to cope with it all at once. And some of the places are not safe to work in. The project could also serve as a showcase to a skeptical international community that the government genuinely means business and persuade them that should help.

The problem here is that donor countries are sadly increasingly reluctant to give money to development aid. And peace-building is a kind of development aid. Ultimately, the main focus of outside aid can be channeled through the whole world, and can be turned over to the UNDP and other development programs, bilateral and otherwise. Of course, the rest of the country should not be neglected while this is going on. As a corollary to it, I suggested the country introduce an emergency social program, as in Bolivia, to offset the social impact of the agreement, then being negotiated with the IMF, and to stimulate local employment through public works. Unfortunately, in the succeeding months it looks as if efforts are considerably on a broad poverty reduction program, the standard model promulgated by the IMF and World Bank, and I believe the very special circumstances in Angola require a special process, a special approach. So I go on struggling with the same ideas, actually. It is a conviction now that this is the way we have to go forward.

TGW: It remains only for me to thank you on behalf of the project, but also on behalf of lots of other people who will be able to have access to your words of wisdom and sense of commitment to try to change things.

POST DATUM: In May 2001, I made another visit to Angola and had another long conversation with President Eduardo Dos Santos. As a result, I am happy to report that my pilot project approach has now been adopted and the president has formally asked the Secretary-General to provide UN support. This could be a major pilot experiment in peace-building, which will test the UN system's ability to work together.

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