

Warren Marik

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Interviewed by Leah Cohen

Transcribed by Natalie Yaw

Edited by Leah Cohen

Biography by Leah Cohen

Production by Brad Guidera & Angel Melendez

COHEN: Today is July 6th, 2018. My name is Leah Cohen. On behalf of the Pritzker Military Museum and library, I have the pleasure of interviewing Sergeant Warren J. Marik, who served in TUSLOG, The US Logistics Group in Sinop, Turkey, as well as the 8th ASA, the Army Security Agency, radio field station at Phu Bai, in Central Vietnam. So welcome, and feel free to pronounce correctly the words or names that I've just mispronounced.

MARIK: Sure.

COHEN: Thank you. So, we'll start at the beginning- where and when were you born?

MARIK: I was born on 30 June 1945, at MacNeal Memorial Hospital in Berwyn, Illinois. And my family lived in Berwyn until I was just before 2nd grade. And then we moved to Lyons, which is just about three miles kitty-corner from Berwyn. We were part of the Czech diaspora- we're Czech people. My father grew up in the Pilsen neighborhood, they moved to Cicero, they moved to Berwyn, I was born in Berwyn, and then we moved to Lyons. Which is part of that whole, immigrant experience.

COHEN: So, what was it like growing up in this immigrant Czech community?

MARIK: There wasn't... there were a lot of... I used to work at my dad's hardware store. I started really early, I used to carry up paint from the basement when I was about ten years old. So that was in Pilsen. And there are a lot of people that had accents, a lot of people that came in and couldn't speak English to my father and my two uncles, who also owned the hardware store- Marik Brothers Hardware. So, I was used to that whole thing, when in Berwyn I would go shopping with my mother, and there would be Czech advertising on the windows with wax or however they used to write, you know, beets for 45 cents, or whatever it was in

Czech. And so, I was used to it. So, going to foreign countries has never been much of a shock to me.

COHEN: Something you enjoyed. Well, being part of the early baby-boomer generation- had your parents served in the military or gone through the Depression? Did that play a part in your life?

MARIK: None. My father was too old, my father was forty-eight when I was born - so that was a big surprise. And, he hadn't been in the military in WWI, and he was too old for WWII, and there wasn't much interest in the military when I was growing up. My mother's relatives had not been in the military. I had two uncles who had been in the [US] Navy during WWI, but they didn't talk much about the experience. They didn't have combat experience or anything like that.

COHEN: Was there an interest in politics, at the time? What was happening in Vietnam, for example?

MARIK: My father was very interested in politics, and he was a lifelong Democrat. And my two uncles were Democrats too, the two uncles who owned the hardware store. That was a threesome. There were other brothers, other uncles that I had, but I always saw these three uncles, all the time. And they were interested in politics, but they were part of the Reagan-Democrat bunch. But my dad stuck, my dad was always a Democrat.

COHEN: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

MARIK: I have a sister who is ten years older than I am. And she's still alive, lives in the same building that we live in now, in Chicago. She's got some medical problems, but that's all right. She's happy.

COHEN: That's good. Which high schools did you go to?

MARIK: I went to Morton West High School to start out, that's on 22nd and Harlem, practically. And I got in trouble there, got in a feud with the football coach. And stopped going to high school, and told my parents- as a kid, I was interested in military things. I don't know why, exactly. I've tried to think about where, when the interest started, and I really can't remember...but I've always been interested in the military. I've always watched *Navy Log* on television. I watched, when it was first on television, I watched the Rogers and Hammerstein music thing, um... I can't remember the name of it now, but I used to watch that when it was on television. But I was always interested in the military. And I had been, I

was very unhappy at Morton West, and I was looking at military schools, and my parents didn't have a lot of money, and it would have been a stretch. But the truant officer coming to the door was my best selling point. [Laughter] And I hit them, right after that and said, "I don't want to go back to Morton, I want to go to military school." So, I went to what then was called St. John's Military Academy, in Wisconsin. And now it's St John's Northwestern Military Academy in Wisconsin. And I went there for two years.

COHEN: What was it like?

MARIK: It was great. I liked the school, I'm an active alum. I've been a volunteer, kind of titular head of the alumni association in my past, and I really enjoyed the school. And they got me into West Point.

COHEN: Were there, like, para-military activities in addition to the regular curriculum?

MARIK: There's a little bit, with the volunteer -- in my time it was the draft. And now it's kind of an issue, I think. Parents don't like their children, their sons -- and now for the first year, here in September of this year, female students are going to come to St. John's Northwestern. So that's going to be an exciting thing. But yes, there is, there are activities there that are related to the Junior ROTC program that they run. You know, I'm for them, but I'm not as interested in them as I am in the football team.

COHEN: When you were there, did you do activities during the summer, as well as during the school year? What did the typical routine look like as a student?

MARIK: In the summertime I didn't do anything, but they do have a summer camp. They had a summer camp then and they have many summer camps now, they have different kinds of things, it's a modular world now, so they've tried to adapt. But no, I worked in the summertime, to make money to go to the boarding school! My mother worked, and she had worked when I was in grammar school, also. So, she got me a job, and I worked during the summertime, also.

COHEN: Did she work in the hardware store, as well?

MARIK: No, no. she worked in a totally different place. I unloaded trucks for, actually, three years, but just for two summers for this military school.

COHEN: Did you study about military things? Like different types of equipment or ammunition, when you were there?

MARIK: I did, I read everything I could. And the library in Lyons, there was a librarian there at the time who took an interest in my interest, so helped me know where the books were and ordered books from the system, and I don't know, I can't tell you what the system was for Lyons [Public] Library, but she got things from other libraries and I read about it, and then I was really obnoxious in high school, in public high school, Morton West, writing papers. When I had to write an English paper, I'd write about, you know, Cowpens -- the battle in the [American] Revolutionary War -- and stuff like that. My teachers probably got really tired of me.

COHEN: But it's interesting, the very pronounced interest from early on.

MARIK: Very much, yeah.

COHEN: So after you graduated from high school, what were people thinking about? Were your friends enlisting, consider going in the ROTC program? What was happening around you and what did you choose to do?

MARIK: Well I graduated in 1963, the summer of 1963, and I went to West Point. St. Johns has a program - St John's doesn't have the program, I'm not really familiar with what the system is now, but it's not far away from the system I had. If you were an honor military school, Army officers would come in to inspect us every year, and we would march and do all sorts of things. They'd come into classrooms and they'd give tests on our NJROTC [Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps] subjects, they made you an honor military school. And honor military school that meant they could nominate a certain number of cadets. In my time, I believe it was four, but I'm not sure of that, I can't remember exactly, but they gave nominations. To go to West Point is a two-step process: to get a nomination, and then to get an appointment. With an appointment you can go, with a nomination it's still pending. Now some are competitive and some are noncompetitive. These honor military school nominations are competitive, which means they throw your name in a hopper, and West Point chooses what they want. And I got chosen -- bad move on the part of West Point. Because I didn't stay at West Point. West Point was not for me.

COHEN: How long were you there, and what did you not like about West Point?

MARIK: You know, I can't tell you. It just...was... I loved the military high school, and West Point was different. And I admit, I was a 'smirker' - the upperclassmen used to call me a smirker. But because I played football, and because I wrestled, I didn't get the total experience until spring when I didn't have a spring sport to keep me

off of athletic tables, they called it in those days. And you know... the Army was just not for me.

COHEN: So, you decided West Point is not what you're looking for, so what happens next?

MARIK: Well, you quit. And in my time, with the draft, it's a different system now -- I keep up with the athletic department, I really enjoyed the football part and the athletic department treated me really well. And the wrestling part too, the athletic department I got along with. No one else I got along with. [Laughter] Just like the football coach at Morton, who I got in trouble with. So, this is during the draft, so you don't just say, "Bye bye" and you're free. They put you in the [US] Reserves, and they gave you a MOS, that's a job description, you know? And it's your job to have to, during that time, they gave you a year to find a slot in the rank you were at. And I went to Champaign-Urbana, University of Illinois, and played a little football, it was a lot bigger football than Army was at the time, but that's okay, I enjoyed my time there. But I had, the end of my year was coming up, I didn't have a slot, the reserve unit in Champaign-Urbana didn't have the slot for an MOS that I had, and I would have had to go to Decatur for meetings, to stay in the reserves, so I enlisted. I knew from the very beginning that I was going to enlist. But I took a year to play football and to study a little Russian and have a good time at the University of Illinois after my nine, ten months at West Point.

COHEN: Okay, so you studied and the University of Illinois -- Russian -- and it sounded like football was a very big part of your life, you enjoyed that very much.

MARIK: It was, it was.

COHEN: What was your MOS coming out of West Point?

MARIK: I was a light-weapons infantryman. I was 1-1-0 at the time, it turned into 1-1-Bravo.

COHEN: So then after that, you decided to enlist, so that would have been, I believe, in 1965..

MARIK: Four, yeah... No I'm sorry, 1965, you're right. You were right.

COHEN: It's okay--

MARIK: I had football season in '64 at Illinois, and then '65 I enlisted, April was my year date.

COHEN: So, what did your family think of your interest in the military, particularly as Vietnam is wrapping up?

MARIK: They didn't think anything other than I was screwing up. I couldn't find anything I liked. They had gone through the trauma of Morton West, and going to St John's Military Academy and then I went off got an appointment -- eventually got an appointment, got a nomination then an appointment to West Point, then I quit, then I'm down in the trough. Then I'm starting to creep up, they went to a football game, they didn't get to see me play because in my time freshmen weren't eligible to play varsity. But they knew, I was there, I introduced them to people at a little football party after the game I went to -- so here I'm up. And then, boom, I'm down again -- I join the Army. So, they don't know what to think. They just kind of developed callouses and said, "All right, he's going to do what he wants to do." But I had a Russian instructor in Illinois, who said, "You know, I had trouble in school too, and I enlisted and I asked to go to language school [i.e., at the U.S. Army's Defense Language Institute]." And that's what I did.

COHEN: So that was what turned you on to--

MARIK: I had a Russian instructor who said, "You know, Warren, I had trouble the first time around in college, too. And I went in and asked to go to language school, and language school is great."

COHEN: So, were you went right away to -- I forget the acronym -- basically, the Defense Language School on the West Coast, in Monterey, California?

MARIK: Well, yeah, I enlisted and asked to be sent to language school, but it's not a guarantee. I've got a 1-1-Bravo MOS, a lightweight infantryman's MOS, they don't know what to do with me in basic training, I'm a mystery.

COHEN: Where did you go for basic training?

MARIK: They sent me to Fort Leonard Wood [Missouri]. And they looked at me, and they said, "Okay, there's a guy that's got his MOS", and at the time I was an E5 coming out of the reserves. And they said ASA, the Army security agency, who I enlisted with, which is the signals intelligence organization at the time, said, "We're not gonna take you as an E5, you're going to get a bust, a one-grade

bust.” So, I said, “I don’t care, just sent me to language school.” And they said, “Well, we don’t know about that yet, you gotta take the test”, you know, the language, what was it called, maybe M-Lat? Maybe that’s not it, maybe that’s the modern one. But they gave me the Army language aptitude test -- the DOD language aptitude test, and I had to wait, not knowing whether I was going to go to a rifle company somewhere or to language school. So, towards the end of basic, they said, “Okay, you’re going.” So, the Army made me an assistant platoon sergeant, which means I was the gopher for everybody, but that wasn’t bad. And I waited to know if I was going to a rifle company or a language school.

COHEN: And what was it like while you were waiting ,and did you find basic training physically arduous?

MARIK: No, I was...

COHEN: A football player.

MARIK: I mean, it wasn’t even that. I didn’t have to do as much as the recruits did. I can’t do anything but I’m still what I am, so they made me teach bayonet, I had to go to the rifle range with the recruits and requalify on the rifle, but that’s just about the only thing I had to do. But I taught bayonet for different companies going through basic training at Fort Leonard Wood.

COHEN: Okay, so you didn’t have to go through the whole rigmarole, because of your prior...

MARIK: No, except to requalify on- in my time- the M-14.

COHEN: Okay, I see. So after, how long was it ‘til you heard you were accepted, in fact, to the language school?

MARIK: So, I heard that, about, you know, a week before basic was over. Now, knowing the Army, they probably sat on it for a couple of weeks. [Laughter] But anyway, about a week, roughly a week before basic is over they say, you’re going to language school. That’s a big thing in my time, the platoon sergeant. At the end of basic, it’s like the movie, the one about Vietnam that starts off at [US] Marine [Corps] basic training *Full Metal Jacket*. It’s like that, right at the end.

COHEN: Very dramatic.

MARIK: The platoon sergeant gets to read where everybody’s going. But I knew already, they told me already that I was going to language school.

COHEN: Did you, did you choose the language that you wished to study?

MARIK: Third. I chose Russian, Chinese, Turkish. And the Army, in all their wisdom, gave me Turkish. Because I was probably the only person that chose Turkish in my top whatever it was, top five, they gave you five choices, maybe, something like that, I don't know

COHEN: What, were you interested because of the Truman doctrine and all that?

MARIK: No, I read a young adult novel when I was about ten that was about Turkey. And I got interested in Turkey and read about it and knew a lot about Turkey for, you know, for an American at the time, so I wasn't unhappy.

COHEN: So, what was the language training like? How many hours a day? Who were the teachers?

MARIK: In my time, they were all Turks. It was six hours a day. I got really close to one of the Turkish guys, who rumor had it had deserted from the Turkish navy [Naval Forces] to marry his American wife, who was a painter in Carmel, which was right over the hill from Monterey. And that was the rumor, I was afraid to ask him if he actually deserted, you know, and he could never go back. But anyway, I got to be friends with him and had a good time in language school. Six hours a day, with always a dialogue to memorize the night before. And you went in and you did your dialogue, and then you know they had the six hour program that they had down, that they'd been doing, churning people through.

COHEN: Were you part of a group or was it individual?

MARIK: Mhmm. But a small group. We were probably six? Something like that. Six I think, I'm pretty sure

COHEN: Was there also a cultural training to be in Turkey?

MARIK: Right, Friday was an easy day, yeah, it was Friday. And after the dialog they gave you, two hours of a lecture about what Turkey was like and what's going on and that sort of thing.

COHEN: What were the expectations of the students? As a person can't become fluent in two months, so what did they--

MARIK: No, this is forty weeks! Forty weeks in Monterey. You don't become fluent. I mean, when you start seriously learning a language, you're never going to become fluent. And you read newspaper articles that said, "He's fluent in

Spanish, German, French', kinda take that with a grain of salt. But people tried, and I try. I'm really sensitive to the people who teach me, obviously. I run amok if I don't like the people who are, over me. I was lucky to have a teacher who I really liked and who liked me, because I would go to his house a lot, in Carmel, which was nice. So, I studied, and I kept on studying when I was finally sent to Turkey.

COHEN: So, were you sent to Sinop, I'm not sure how to pronounce it- is it pronounced Sigh-Nop, See-Nop?

MARIK: Sinop [Sih-Nope]

COHEN: Were you sent--

MARIK: I had one assignment in-between. The [Unites States] Army Security Agency, which no longer exists -- one of my little punchlines when I talk to another military person, is that I got out of the Army, leaving a country that no longer exists -- South Vietnam -- at a rank that no longer exists -- Specialist 5- with an agency that no longer exists -- the Army Security Agency. But that's a SIGINT [Signals Intelligence] arm of the Army, and we were the slaves of the National Security Agency.

COHEN: So, when you went into language school, were you already part of the SIGINT, of the Army Security Agency?

MARIK: Sure, we knew we were getting a clearance. There's another little funny complication too, that I thought was funny. If you failed out of language school, and a lot of people failed out of language school, and if you had a clearance, you were safe. They made you an Army Security Agency MP, or the...You got a good job. But from language school, it wasn't a long, it was just a half an hour drive to Fort Ord, California, which was advanced infantry. If you didn't have your clearance yet, you went directly to Fort Ord California and got put into advanced infantry. And you knew where you were going, and you were signed up for four years in the Army, four years in the Army! It was one more year to go into ASA [US Army Security Agency]. Now for me, that one extra year was spent in Monterey, California -- which was okay! But for, if you were going, if you failed out of language school, you went to be in advanced infantry and got your- by that time I think it had turned into bravo- your 1-1-Bravo MOS, and, you were going straight to a rifle company

COHEN: So, luckily you graduated.

MARIK: I already had a 1-1-Bravo MOS, I was afraid, my fear started in basic training that I wasn't going to get language school.

COHEN: That's right, work on your infantry experience. So, what was your first assignment?

MARIK: First assignment after language school was Fort Devens. You went to Fort Devens to learn what you were going to do when you went to your first assignment. So, I was in Fort Devens, which is about an hour west of Boston.

COHEN: So, Massachusetts, okay.

MARIK: Yeah, and, that was, I was going to be a traffic analyst. They don't let Army people do the Turkish problem. Civilians do the Turkish problem. NSA [National Security Agency] people do the Turkish problem. So, they had an open slot for Turkish somewhere at the Pentagon, for an Army guy. You know, they have twenty-two lines, empty lines, and they've got to fill those empty lines with twenty-two names of Army guys, who know Turkish, who have gone to language school for Turkish. But they can't work Turkish, and from my point of view, getting Turkish was the luckiest break I got. Because if you were a voice intercept, you listened in on people's radio, it's pretty boring. But if you become a traffic analyst, as I was, as I got trained for at Fort Devens, then you get to see a lot bigger picture than just your guys, you always listen to the same people, the way they work it. The NSA has a way of systematizing the whole process.

COHEN: Can you describe a little bit, they type of training at Fort Devens? Like you're saying it's much broader than merely trying to intercept conversations?

MARIK: They teach you that system, that method for systematizing the whole way of intercepting the other guys' communications, you learn that way to systematize it. What's a good analogy?

COHEN: Yeah,

MARIK: Football. We call a certain way a system, the I-formation. And the I-formation in American football runs certain plays and that's their system. You learn the system, how to call that an I-formation, call that a wing-T-formation, call that, now they call them things like... I can't remember what they call 'em now.

COHEN: So, did this system involve like the use of radar?

MARIK: Paper, no, you used paper. Traffic analyst report back, we're the slaves of the National Security Agency, so we do reports. We talk to the people who listen in on the voice, and overwhelmingly in that time, Morse code. I don't know Morse code, I know passively Morse code. If you tell me what one dot is, I can tell you what it is. But if I hear it at any speed, I can't type it out. But people can, they go to different classes at Fort Devens and become, what, at my time, what was called a 05-H that was their MOS, but now is called a ditty-chaser. In my time it was called that, too.

COHEN: So the traffic analyst somehow works with this system of coding or decoding...?

MARIK: Gets this piece of paper, from let's call it the Morse intercept. So, gets this piece of paper from the Morse operator, so you get to be good friends with your Morse intercept people, and they give you this piece of paper and here is these guys, and these guys are called something -- the NSA [National Security Agency] is calling everything a name or a number or something. So, you know what he's talking about. And you tell NSA what he's talking about in a format that NSA can understand. And once in a while NSA will come back and say, 'Woah, that's interesting.'" But we don't know exactly why it's interesting, necessarily. Sometimes we do.... Civilians were my boss, I had three operational assignments, one very short one at Homestead Air Force Base, but all my bosses were civilian.

COHEN: That's very interesting, it's like you're understanding code and recoding and coding differently--

MARIK: It's not their codes, it's our system of... you see a jumble of football players -- my wife sees a jumble of football players, and I call that, "Oh, that's an I-formation." And my friend who I've watched football with for a long time knows what I'm talking about, an I-formation, and what happened. And my wife, she doesn't know what I'm talking about. See? So, NSA has to call these things something, so they call it. And that's what, at traffic analyst school, you essentially know what to call, you know how to communicate with NSA, and NSA know how to talk to you and says, "Whoa, do this, do that, do that!"

COHEN: That's fascinating. So, how long was the training as a traffic analyst?

MARIK: Seven months.

COHEN: Oh, quite some time. Were you sent after that to Sinop, Turkey?

MARIK: Turkey, yeah.

COHEN: And what was your assignment there?

MARIK: We would wake up NSA when the Russian activated their ICBM [Intercontinental Ballistic Missile] test range. And I did Plesetsk missile test range and Kapustin Yar missile test range.

COHEN: Okay, these are the areas from which...?

MARIK: These are what they're called, these are Soviet missile, where the rocket's come from, and they always go to the Kamchatka Peninsula for the ICBM's. I just did ICBM's. I had the SS -- at Plesetsk they tested the SS9, the SS7, which was already operational, but they were still tweaking it and that was one of the big NSA problems that they were working on, is why are they still tweaking this thing? There's something called a CEP, a circular error probability, and if you get a certain CEP number, which is a statistical number, in the Kamchatka Peninsula, NSA said, "They shouldn't be testing this thing anymore. They shouldn't be wasting money on this." The CEP is acceptable from what we know, the Soviets find, is acceptable. And so, that was one problem. NSA is still interested in those SS7's because they don't know why they're still shooting them as a test missile. And then, I had the SS9, which were not operational yet but they were still trying to get the CEP number down.

COHEN: So is the basic objective to be able to trace and see how they're being shot, how the missiles are being shot to have a greater im--

MARIK: My job was, that's what my job was. The Army, for some reason, had the missile. But there was [US] Air Force and there was Navy in Sinop, Turkey too. But they did Black Sea fleet stuff, Air Force stuff.

COHEN: When you were, this was with the 41st, right?

MARIK: Say that again?

COHEN: Were you with the 41st at the time?

MARIK: TUSLOG [The United States Logistics Group] four dash one.

COHEN: Yeah, TUSLOG four dash one.

MARIK: I can remember, that, yeah, two slag four dash one.

COHEN: TUSLOG four dash one. I think I was reading that it was supposed to support the TUSLOG and how so?

MARIK: I'm don't know what that is--

COHEN: Oh, okay. I thought I had read--

MARIK: That's a cover, that's a cover. Sinop was a huge SIGINT site. And we had the Turkish SIGINT site right next to us. But the British had the contract, yes, to support them. But we didn't go over there. We didn't know anything, we didn't know anything allegedly about what the British and the Turks were copying, but undoubtedly it was the Black Sea Fleet and the Air Force. Because we would get flyovers from the Soviet Union.

COHEN: Were you aware, or were you conscious of coordination?

MARIK: We'd all go downtown and go the same bars and do the same thing

COHEN: How many people were on these bases?

MARIK: Huge, I think it was, I think our strength was 800 when I was there, the American strength was. But next door was the Brits and the Turks.

COHEN: Were you also in touch with the, with the other group, as well? SIGNITs? The other intelligence, the electronics intelligence group?

MARIK: For the Navy, it was the Naval Security Group and the Air Force was the Air Force Security Service, in my time. And yeah, we talked to each other, we ate together. It was all, in my time, also in my time they called it purple suitors, that's when you had a Joint [Forces] Command. It was a purple base, I mean, we all mixed. We didn't mix in work, I mean we could have, but that's not what we did

COHEN: Were you in contact with any of the native [i.e. local] people living there?

MARIK: Sure, as soon as I got to Turkey. You went to the same barber's shop that was the deal. I'm sure other groups went to other barber's shops, I can't see how he serviced all 800 of us, because it was never that crowded. But a bunch of people that I was with, which was, maybe, seven guys, something like that? We went to the same barber's shop, and through the barber, and I can pretty much speak intelligible Turkish, kind of, I just had seven months where I tried to keep the Turkish alive with flashcards, and it's not that great. But I asked for if there were an English teacher, a Turkish English teacher at the high school there, there's only high school in Sinop. He wanted to teach me to be a teacher. And I'd pay a lot, from the Turkish point of view, I would pay a lot. But I got funny hours, so I

might show up and I might not show up, you know. Right? So, the barber found me somebody.

COHEN: Okay, so you continued with your Turkish language training?

MARIK: Right, and I kinda knew what I was gonna work on. I was fascinated by Ataturk. Partially, because my Turkish teacher that I liked, looked like Ataturk. [Laughter]. But I was interested in Ataturk, so, now, this is from an intelligence point of view, later on I'm a human intelligence guy, I know this is hot, this means there's a lot of counterintelligence stuff going on in Sinop. So, I say, I'll go to Ankara, buy the speeches of Ataturk, bring them back, and we'll just translate the speeches of Ataturk. And when the police come and talk to you about, "What are you doing with that American?" I mean, even when I was young I knew it. We got a counterintelligence briefing too at Sinop, so I kinda knew that it was a hot area, even before I knew about what hot means. So, when the police come to talk to you, just show them that this is what we are doing. Translating the speeches of Ataturk. There's nothing political, there's nothing military, other than what Ataturk said in 1932, you know.

COHEN: That was a smart, kind of, cover?

MARIK: Well, it helped me too, because then I got my master's thesis and all that. So, I'm working on my master's thesis before I even have my bachelors, in Sinop, Turkey. It really helped me.

COHEN: Wow! And did you have a certain amount of free time when you were there?

MARIK: It depended. Those, our, we didn't know anything. 'Know' meaning, I knew what the civilians told me. I knew about CEP because a civilian told me about CEP, but we told NSA when the ranges went active. That was my job, I had Plasetsk, and I had Kupustin Yar and we would sit there on a regular shift and do nothing, literally nothing, except play chess and play cards and try not to get caught playing chess and playing cards by the officers, the civilians didn't care. Because nothing was going on. But once those ranges went active, once that guy in Moscow sent that first Morse message saying, "Wake up, wake up, wake up." Then it hit the fan. There was a whole line of intercept, from Berlin through god knows where, in Greece, I can't remember where in Greece. Maybe it wasn't even in Greece, maybe it was in Crete, where the next one was... Sinop, Samsun, then one is in Iran, which that story really has never gotten out. The Shah hasn't fallen yet when I'm in Turkey, there's one up in the mountains in Iran. Then there's one in Pakistan, then there's one in Shemya, Alaska. And Shemya, Alaska

the funniest one, because we'd say that was a great post, there was a girl behind every tree. Well, there's no trees in Shemya. And the Air Force had Shemya. So, if somebody says they were assigned in Shemya, Alaska, it's on that long string of islands that goes out from Alaska. And that was the last one. So you had to wake everybody else up, so that they're up for a launch. And then they can't wake, the Russians can't wake up their own guys. I mean, they've got a whole string of observers across the whole USSR to the Kamchatka peninsula. And they can't wake up their guys, so you're there, and you sit there for days waiting for them to, for the whole range to get up. That's an exaggeration, I mean, it has been days, but it wasn't normally days. But it could be days.

COHEN: Pardon my ignorance, but was it visible or audible at all when a missile would go off, where you were based?

MARIK: No, it was all electronic. It was all communication. We had a big dish at Sinop, and so that started it. And then there were dishes in other places.

COHEN: Okay. And how long were you in Sinop?

MARIK: A year.

COHEN: So, I think you mentioned, that after that you had an assignment in Florida, in Homestead base? What was involved with that?

MARIK: Cuban. It was a boring assignment. It's hard to go from ICBM testing, to these poor little Cubans riding up and down, Cuban Illicit it was called. It was supposed to be Cuban spies in the United States. But there was so much... work, red-tape work involved, that I imagine the FBI is running these guys as double agents and they're just making sure that the double agents actually do do what they say, tell the FBI guy they're doing. It's complicated that way. And I didn't like it at all, I didn't like Florida much.

COHEN: What didn't you like about it?

MARIK: Oh, what didn't I like about it...? I don't know, it was just the down -- after being in a foreign country, being back in the United States. Actually, the post at the ASA company that I was assigned to on an Air Force base, flunked its IG two weeks before I arrived. So, they're going around, the admin people, the Army I mean. I feel sorry for the Army intelligence officers, for SIGINT posts. They don't do anything. They just push troops, that's it. They make sure everybody shows up, everybody... its NSA that ran things, work-wise. So it was not good.

COHEN: So were you looking to get out of that?

MARIK: Finally, I said, enough is enough, yeah. And just, what was the transfer...10... I don't know, 10-98? Something like that. I can't remember the name of the form.

COHEN: Oh, for the transfer...

MARIK: The form that said, "Go to Vietnam, in like, tomorrow", the thing says, "Yes, you're going!"

COHEN: Were you expecting that?

MARIK: 10-98, I think it was. That might be a tax form for all I know, 10-49? Something like that.

COHEN: So you say, "Okay, I've had enough of this, I want to transfer." Were you thinking to yourself that you might be sent to Vietnam, at that point?

MARIK: I volunteered for Vietnam

COHEN: You volunteered for Vietnam?

MARIK: Yeah. I said, "I want to transfer to Vietnam." Because that's the only place they'd give you a transfer. I mean, if I said, "I want to transfer to Nassau," you know, they would say, "Hold your breath." No, Vietnam was the only place, way I could get out of Florida.

COHEN: Before you get to Vietnam, were people very concerned about the Cuban Missile crisis? Was this a subject of discussion?

MARIK: It's over.

COHEN: I know it's over, but there was it still a feeling of needing to protect against Cuba, or something like that?

MARIK: No. No. We're just... and I had no contact with the, I mean, not contact, of course, but I had no interest in the Cuban military, because we I've got these Cuban alleged spies running up and down Highway One, transmitting in Morse.

COHEN: I see, I see...

MARIK: And they drive up and down because they don't want to be direction-ed. There's a 'direction find', so you find out where the bad guys were. In Vietnam, that was an important thing. So, you know, it was a boring job

COHEN: I see. So, when was it that you had to leave to Vietnam?

MARIK: What's the date, it's like in April, I think. April, May...something like that

COHEN: '67, I think?

MARIK: No, '68, I arrive after Tet.

COHEN: You arrived after?

MARIK: After Tet, after Tet. But there's still a little bit of Tet going on. The hotel that the ASA guys stayed at in Saigon, waiting for their clearances to catch up, waiting for orders to go where they were gonna in country was the St George Hotel, and it was in Chợ Lớn, which is the Chinatown in Vietnam. And the NLF was still trying to hold on to a portion of that Chợ Lớn area, and they were bombing. So, the big thing was to take your lawn chair, which was what everybody did, they bought a lawn chair when they got in country, and we went up to the roof and we watched them to see if they were going to bomb. And that was always exciting, you know, we're in the war.

COHEN: I take it there wasn't any concern that the hotel would be bombed?

MARIK: Oh yeah, Tet's over, you know.

COHEN: So how long was this waiting period in Saigon?

MARIK: A few days, four days, maybe.

COHEN: And what was your impression of the country when you arrived?

MARIK: Well, I knew that it wasn't going to be like Turkey, because I didn't take Vietnamese. You know, the communications was just too tough. So, that's one of my big regrets, was that I didn't learn enough about the country, about the people.

COHEN: So, where were you asked to be stationed?

MARIK: Then I went up to Phu Bai, which is another huge SIGINT base, it's in Marine country, but, again, it's a purple base. It's got Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, everybody. Big NSA contingent.

COHEN: So, I understand that there had been some artillery action at the base during Tet, and like, were they still feeling the aftermath when you arrived?

MARIK: We used to get rocketed quite a bit. We never got artillery, I don't know if it was artillery,

COHEN: Maybe during Tet itself, though?

MARIK: Yeah, I missed it. But we still got our rockets. I never got anything bad aimed at me, but we'd have to go to the trench, you know, the usual Army way. When something bad happens, follow the protocol: do this, do that, you know?

COHEN: So what did you have to do?

MARIK: You go to a trench. You sit there until somebody says, "It's over, go back to work, go back to the rack."

COHEN: Were you staying in buildings? Were they tents? What was the base like?

MARIK: It was like, big trailers. Air conditioned, except when the power went off.

COHEN: And was your role there as a traffic analyst for what was going on, on the Ho Chi Minh trail?

MARIK: It was great. No, I had three jobs while I was there. The first job was a new guy, but I was a senior new guy. On paper it looks like I've been to two operation sites already. And the NSA guy looks at me and says, "Woah," you know, "You're experienced, so we'll have you do that" But essentially, I did the same thing as the new guys did.

COHEN: Which was?

MARIK: Which was try to find COSVN after Tet. [47:00]. COSV, Central Office of South Vietnam was the VC [Viet Cong], we always said NLF [National Liberation Front], that was one of our conceits. We never said VC, ASA guys always said NLF. We always said COSV, so we chased COSVN around. Then I was the analyst for the North Vietnamese 304th division. Essentially that was one regiment, the 66th [Infantry] Regiment. I saw, the one little thing I saw, we didn't know what the 3rd regiment's number was. The North Vietnamese Army was a division, it really was one regiment that fought, one regiment that was in reserve, and one regiment that was the administrative funnel for guys coming down the Ho Chi Minh trail to reinforce the main regiment. Except they'd move up. They'd move to the reserve one and get trained some more, then they'd go to the 66th which was the operational regiment of the 304th division

COHEN: So, what was your role?

MARIK: To listen to those guys, find out whether they were doing anything funny. And if something happened, we would send this huge immediate message back to NSA saying, "Something funny is happening", and they would come back and tell us what to do. Or, just follow them day to day, make sure they were in the same place. They'd come up in the morning, we'd listen to them. We'd say, "Eh...they sound like... let's DF [direction find] them." and we'd DF them and found out kinda where they were, "They seem to be in the same place."

COHEN: What does it mean to DF?

MARIK: Direction find.

COHEN: I see. So, had you learned some Vietnamese?

MARIK: No, no. Didn't need it. I needed a little bit of Russian, and they taught me that, a little bit of Russian. Because the Russians, their encrypting, they screw it up a lot. And then they start in Morse to talk in plain text, saying, "What's going on, what's wrong here?" you know. And that's what we look for, too. They say, you know, it's like, if you've seen *Imitation Game*. It's not math and science that breaks the enigma codes, it's operational error. They always say, "Heil Hitler" or... I can't remember it's a movie, they say, "Heil Hitler" and something they have this weather station that always begins with the same stuff. So they know the opening and they know the end, so that gives them the- Brits call it a crib- the crib to really cut down on the possibilities on what the encryption system is doing right then and there. So, the Russians did that too. They screw it up, they can't communicate, they're not talking to each other on their encrypted radio teletype, and then they go on in clear text, and say, "What's going on, what's wrong?" So, we know, "What's wrong?" in Russian. [Laughter]

COHEN: Right, there's a problem there.

MARIK: You've got the wrong card in the machine, that sort of thing, you know. In Vietnamese, it wasn't like that. They encrypted, but it was a simpler system and they didn't have mistakes. And sometimes they were too clever by half, and those were number things. Those were protocol things that gave them away, but it wasn't voice things. First of all, they didn't have a way of, sure... I made a mistake there, they could have done that... but anyway, they didn't. I didn't know Vietnamese.

COHEN: So, their mistakes tended to be-

MARIK: Well, I had a landlord who tried to teach me some Vietnamese, and I was just, either I wasn't up for tonals or something, or I'm tone deaf. But tonal languages, I don't think I'd be very good at.

COHEN: Where did you have a landlord? I guess I thought you'd be living on the base.

MARIK: Yeah, a little bit I did.

COHEN: Where?

MARIK: In town, pardon?

COHEN: Where were you living off the base? Was the town called Hué or something like that?

MARIK: No, we called it Phu Bai.

COHEN: Oh okay, it was also Phu Bai, the same as the name of the base.

MARIK: Phu Bai, everything is Phu Bai, it's, it would be, a lot of the times, people looking back at the Vietnam war would say the 'Hué hospital'. Actually, it's the Phu Bai hospital. Because I, when I was off base, I was right near the hospital, which is near the air base, which is really Phu Bai Air [Combat] Base. And it's right now as we speak, it's Phu Bai International Airport, not Hué International Airport. So, the Vietnamese know where things are, but people are so fixated on Hué that they call things that in books and articles, they call it the Hué hospital, you know? 'Oh, he got transferred to the Hué hospital.' No. it's the Phu Bai hospital, you know?

COHEN: I see. So, after you're involved in intercepting the Northern [North] Vietnamese Army, I think you mentioned there were three jobs?

MARIK: Third, then there was research and development. We had, we had intercept operators who didn't know what they were copying. So my job was to take a first look at it. As I say, military doesn't do much that's really important, we just point NSA in the right direction, or we wake them up. We say, "NSA, Plasetk missile test range is operational." And then NSA gets going and does what it does. So mostly that. But I would be the first guy, when we see something, we'll DF it, and if we DF it and it looks interesting, we see kind of where it is, where this transmitter is, but we don't know what it is. So then we try to see what it is, to see if it's new business, you know. If it's interesting. So I would do things and then give it to the civilians who would say, "Ah, that's interesting."

COHEN: Would you ever hear back the results, like of this, of your initial--

MARIK: Oh, we used to get screamers when we made mistakes. There was, we had Big Daddy, NSA was called Big Daddy, and Big Daddy's -- there was no word for the opposite, so I'm going to tell you the bad one, Big Daddy's nasty 'gram said, somebody would tell me that, "Big Daddy's nasty 'gram said, "blah blah blah"" there was never any, 'Big Daddy's good 'gram.'

COHEN: Ah, I see. Wow, you really hit the target. What were the relationships like working military and civilian at this MOS?

MARIK: That's -- this is a conspiracy theory. And I think that's why they did an ASA. I think the military didn't like the civilians. Because we did nothing with military officers, other than, "Here we are, we're at work.' Or the NCO's. It was a terrible job for military intelligence officers. They, all they did was push troops and write their own reports in some way. I saw the commander of -- I'm telling the truth now because I counted. I started off, you know, I started off in military high school. Nine months, ten months whatever it was at West Point. So I'm kinda military-wise, you know, as an enlisted man, even. So I watched it, I saw the commander of Phu Bai, the base, he was an Army lieutenant colonel, twice in my life when I was at Phu Bai. Twice, that's all I saw.

COHEN: So, it was a very little contact...

MARIK: Right. Now he has a lot of face stuff with the Turks, with the Brits, maybe with the Brits, I'm not sure if he dealt with the Brits. But, he's got town stuff. In Turkey, it was traditional, the Turkish, that was the union, that had all the workers on our base, the ones that cleaned our little apartments, and the ones that were the fire force on base, they would strike once a year, and they would dicker and dicker and dicker, and I can't remember whether we could go off base or not. But anyway, there was, it was a pain. But it traditionally lasted three or four days, and then a new agreement would come about. So, you know, the Army dealt with that stuff, with housekeeping stuff, the uniformed guys. And NSA did the work stuff, the civilians, watched us do what we were supposed to do to warn NSA back at Ft. Meade [Maryland]. So I think, the Army didn't like that over the years. So, after the war ended, they did in the Army Security Agency, but it into INSCOM, that's what INSCOM is, [US Army] Intelligence & Security Command [0:57:09], and now they say, "Well, you're going to train some of our military officers to be what the civilians were. And we're gonna put

some discipline in this program.” So, I don’t know what happened. It happened after I left, so...

COHEN: Did you meet any fascinating people, within this work?

MARIK: All the time.

COHEN: Because it sounds like a very potentially interesting thing? Anybody stand out in your mind?

MARIK: Bunches.

COHEN: Bunches?

MARIK: Yeah. Um, well, you know, we were just a weird bunch. And nobody got into real trouble, I mean that we were past the trouble weird, you know? One person got in trouble for marijuana and got his clearance, security clearance lifted, and then went off to some place, I can’t remember. But he wasn’t in one of my close groups. We were just... past trouble, you know?

COHEN: Past, post-trouble.

MARIK: Post, right, post-trouble. Post the, you know, “We’ve got to go down to the bar and...” and we were also intimidated in Phu Bai, because that’s Marine country. So we’re just the lowly little Army guys running around in Marine country. So we don’t want to get in trouble with anybody else.

COHEN: So, what did you and some of your friends do in your spare time if you had spare time?

MARIK: Not much spare time in Vietnam. I have to admit though, I went on three R&R’s. NSA-

COHEN: Where did you go?

MARIK: I went to Penang, for an R&R. Not my real R&R. Everybody knew that one flight a week left from Đà Nẵng, which was very near Phu Bai. Phu Bai is twenty-five miles north, roughly of Đà Nẵng, to Penang Island. Now nobody knows, now remember I’m going to make kind of an aspersion here. These are Marines, nobody knows where Penang is. So, they don’t want to go there. So, every plane that goes once a week from Đà Nẵng to Penang, has empty seats. And all you have to do what get it to be okay with your boss that I’m going to be gone for a week, and he says, “Why don’t you go for a week?” You know, this was, I mean,

we worked twelve, sometimes eighteen hours a day with no breaks. Even when things were quiet. When they shuffled around and moved, that's when we were the busiest. When they were in combat, they stayed in the same spot. It was busy, but it wasn't that busy. It was busier for the guys down in the, there's SIGINT guys down with the troops too.

COHEN: So, what did you do in Pinang?

MARIK: Pinang was R&R, you know what guys do on R&R.

COHEN: Was it--

MARIK: It's an island off the coast of Malaysia. Gorgeous.

COHEN: And what were your two other ones? The two other R&R's?

MARIK: One, my real R&R, was to Hong Kong, and my other fake one was to Pinang. Can we take a break?

[CUT 1:00:35-1:07:02]

COHEN: Okay, so is there something else about Vietnam that you'd like to talk about that I didn't ask about?

MARIK: Um, well, certainly. It was the country that I felt more like a GI, you know? Because we spent so many hours at work. I'm not trying to say we worked all the time. We sat around waiting for people to start talking to each other that was the big part of the job. And I didn't have, that's why I got this place off base, you know, to try to feel a little more with the people, you know? And I never had any security problems, Phu Bai was a safe place, except for when we got rocketed. That came from a long distance away

COHEN: Were you ever in combat in one way or another? Or called upon to--

MARIK: No, I went out, just a few times, with troops because we were looking for radio operators. And I would be with regular military intelligence guys, like myself except human guys, and we would look for prisoners who might be really radio operators who would be hiding as just troops. But I was never in any danger.

COHEN: So, you didn't feel in danger while you were there?

MARIK: It's not the danger part, I didn't particularly want to be in any danger, but I mean, I would have like to have been with a South Vietnamese army unit to do

the same sort of thing, but I never was. And I don't know if anybody really... Phu Bai had one voice intercept office that had South Vietnamese Army people, and Americans working with them, Americans had gone to language school, learned Vietnamese. I had one friend who was learning Vietnamese when we were in language school. They were up the hill, we used to say. Because they were- they were up the hill, further, they were separated off. But this one, we played touch football so

COHEN: You played touch football in your spare time?

MARIK: In language school, yeah. That's where I met this one guy, yeah. But that's why I got the off-post place.

COHEN: Did you enjoy the off-post place?

MARIK: Oh, sure, yeah, mostly just getting shoved around. They tried to teach me Vietnamese, there was a bunch, they were neighbors that would always be there. They tried to teach me Vietnamese, that didn't work. They tried to teach me mahjong, because actually, truth be told, they were Chinese-Vietnamese. People, if I say that to anybody now, they say, "Oh, they're Communists?" But, just the opposite of those types of Chinese. And, they would say, they tried to teach me mahjong, and I didn't have enough time really to learn mahjong, and I'm not really a game person, so that didn't... So they kinda gave up on me and I bought a radio for the house and, you know, there was some interaction, but without the language, it's hard. I've always pushed for language study in schools, I have no influence over any grammar school, but I pushed for that in my high school. And the high school does teach Chinese, and now I'm pushing for Arabic.

COHEN: That'd be good. Have you studied Arabic in recent years?

MARIK: Because I worked in the area, but they never sent me to language school, that's considered a waste of tax-payer dollars, I know the letters, I know how to say hello and goodbye, you know, things like that. But no, I never really, like for example, somebody said, "Oh, you should get Rosetta," whatever that Rosetta thing is, I'll sit on it. I won't do it, I'm sure.

COHEN: So how long were you in Phu Bai, and what happened after that?

MARIK: I was there about nine months, maybe ten months, something like that. And got an early out to go back to college. And, went back to the University of Illinois. I was saying goodbye to my landlord one day, and five days later I'm walking the

streets of Champaign-Urbana trying to get myself into classes that are, some of them are already filled.

COHEN: Oh, so you came in just for the beginning of the semester?

MARIK: In fact, I missed a few days of the semester, that's why I was having so much trouble! I didn't have a lot of trouble, but you know, I didn't get into every class I wanted.

COHEN: So what was your major?

MARIK: Political science. I knew I wanted to go into human intelligence.

COHEN: I think you'd written in the questionnaire that you were interested in getting into the CIA? Had you known that at the time, as well?

MARIK: In college? Oh sure. As soon as I was in Turkey, I knew that this was what I wanted to do. Even though, it was SIGINT, it wasn't the same thing, not HUMINT. But, I knew that I wanted to be in intelligence. And in fact, I did apply to the NSA, after I got my master's.

COHEN: Okay, so you stayed in Champaign, did you...

MARIK: But I knew that entry program for the CIA program that I wanted to go into required a master's. So, I really didn't apply to anything until I got the master's.

COHEN: Okay, so you continued the master's in political science and you had...

MARIK: International relations.

COHEN: I think you mentioned your readings on Ataturk served you--

MARIK: Right, very well for master's. And I had a model, I forgot, I should have looked and seen, I still have the book, I have a model from my master's, too. I looked it's something, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, and it won a prize. And I wrote my master's thesis, I copied that format. It's not plagiarism, because it's about Ataturk and his political ideology, but I copied that framework, and I had a lot of the speeches translated.

COHEN: So after the master's, you applied to the CIA? And did you get in right away?

MARIK: Mhmm. Takes a while, I mean, they give you a test. Well, they first see you in a motel room. And then they say, "Okay show up to this woman on campus for a test." So, I showed up and I took the test, which was like the GREs, and I took

that test. And then they said, "Okay, come to Washington, DC for four days." So they paid for me to go to Washington, DC for four days. And they interview you and they test you, and the final thing they polygraph you and that was done, and then after that it wasn't so long, I found out pretty quickly because they have career trainee classes starting at a certain time, my time, it was twice a year. So you've got to either get into this class or not, they hurry it along. And I've got to defend my thesis, my master's thesis, too, so I'm a wreck! I'm a wreck during that time. [Laughter].

COHEN: So what was you work in the CIA, I mean ...sounds like it was a whole career, but, in general, what..?

MARIK: It was human intelligence. What CIA overseas guys do is, they, the interesting thing at the beginning, is the training. You go to Camp Perry [Virginia]. You have other training, there's interim assignments, they give you three-month assignments in parts of the CIA ,so you see how the CIA works. And then you go to a couple courses on places where they can't give you, really, interim assignments, and they tell you about these other things that go on. And then they send you, if you're an operations officer, a case officer not an agent, not a spy but a case officer, they send you to Camp Perry, right across the highway from William and Mary college. University? I don't know if they call themselves a university now. And you're there for six months. Now fortunately, there were CTs [Counter Terrorists] before my time, maybe just a couple classes before my time, you used to have to take paramilitary course because they were sending everybody to 'Nam. But that ended

COHEN: Right, right.

MARIK: So I started in '72. So CIA is cutting back, over in Vietnam. So they now -- CT's don't have to take paramilitary course also and I just had to take the operations course, the case officer course. So, it's a total simulation, and it really sold me on simulation as a training device. That's another thing I'm trying to push for my high school, I want more real world kind of thing. They already have a big advantage: they have a company system when you go to St. John's Northwestern Military Academy. You're in a company, so you can have company competitions, I mean, it's real stuff there. So anyway, that's beside the point. So you're a case officer when you step on, the first night you're there at Camp Perry, you go to a cocktail party with a mission. You've got diplomatic cover, you know, you're in an embassy. In my time, it was called, you were in the Republic of Virginia. And you, they had an American embassy there because Virginia had won the Civil

War or something, they didn't talk about it, anyway, later it flapped it got into the newspaper and it flapped so they changed it to something else, I don't know. Anyway.

COHEN: And you would have to carry out a mission?

MARIK: You were supposed to meet this person at a cocktail party, you've gotten a description, and they know somehow, you've gotten this cable, a fake cable in your mailbox, in your inbox, and it says, you've got to meet this guy, it's at this party, and he looks like this and he was a good agent for six months, then he kinda started missing meetings, then he dropped out of sight, [laughs] but somehow you know that he's gonna be at this cocktail party. And you've got to find him, and you've got to make sure, you're pretty sure you're going to meet him someplace else and ask him, what the hell happened, why did he start missing meetings? So that's what you do. [Laughter] And some guys didn't do it, couldn't find the guy, and some people did. You started the first night. They started you off with that. And then you have this scenario, where you're given an agent. An instructor is the guy you're replacing, in a scenario. So your instructor is leaving, and he's going to introduce you to your new agent, and it was his agent, but now he's leaving the country and you've got to take this agent over. So you go in and you meet this, so there's three of you- there's two instructors and there's you. One guy is playing the role of the agent, one guy is playing the role of the outgoing case officer, and you're the incoming case officer. And he introduces you, and they always give you trouble, "Oh, this guy never..." and he'll leave, it's kind of usual. You let the guy, you introduce them, you make sure the next meeting is in place, that next meeting, everybody knows where it is, when it is, where it is, how it is, you know. You make sure you're wearing a red cap and blahblahblah. And then that instructor leaves. And you're stuck with this agent, and, sometimes, your new agent and, sometimes, he badmouths this guy, sometimes he badmouths you, "Oh, you did something stupid, you're never going to be as good as this, you're getting me in trouble," and they constantly challenge you with what you're going to get overseas with agents who give you all kinds of trouble. [Laughter] So that's the training at Camp Perry, and then after Camp Perry you're accepted into a division. I was Near East division, and I had kind of a bad career bounce in that my language was Turkish, and they took Turkey out of, the State Department [i.e. US Department of State] took Turkey out Near East Division and put it in EUR [European] Division, because of course it was going to go into the EU- oh yes! State Department says, it's going to make it into the EU. It never did, but that's a different thing. So, my language isn't great,

but it's not bad. I was not going to go over to EUR, Europe[an] Division. I was going to stay in NE, and I stayed in that division.

COHEN: In the Near East?

MARIK: The Near East and South Asia.

COHEN: So where were some of the places you were based?

MARIK: Started out in Turkey, I'll kind of give the high points. I was in Afghanistan, my wife and I -- let me back up a second. I was given integrated state cover, so I went to the embassy in Ankara as a State Department officer, and I've got diplomatic immunity so I can't go to jail if the Turks catch me. They can only throw their Turk in jail, I get sent home though. Not good for a career, but...

COHEN: But Better than going to jail.

MARIK: Better than going to jail- or worse. And, we were in Kabul, as I said, when the Russians came in. One of my big learning things for my career was, I was in a place on the side of Saddam Hussein, and I was in a place when we were against Saddam Hussein. So I got to learn about foreign policy a lot, through experience that way. I had a good time. And I had kind of a, it sounds bad, I left the agency, really, because I was forced off of the promotion track.

COHEN: At what point were you...?

MARIK: After twenty-five years. But it was because I supported somebody for Iraq, and the administration didn't go for that person. So, it was kind of a classic Washington experience. You know, I was not gonna change horses, and you pay for it. I mean, it's not personal, it's just the way it is. We've got people who are for the right person to fill that job, or this thing. So, I retired, and then I didn't want to register as a foreign agent, so I helped two people who I had worked with while I was working, but for no money. But I went to Afghanistan after 2004, I spent probably a total of a year in Afghanistan and in Baghdad. I liked Saab Kotela Mujideeni who's dead and Ahmed Chalabi, who's also dead now. So, my basic job was to be the resident American. I mean, I would give advice, but they would do what they want to do.

COHEN: Advisory, yeah.

MARIK: But when they got in trouble with their rivals, the rival says, "Ha! The *New York Times* says that Ahmed Chalabi has done a terrible thing, and he's out with the

Americans!” Ahmed Chalabi would wheel me out and say, “What are you talking about? Here’s Ted.” And they all knew me when I was working, so they said, “Here’s Ted, you know, he’s here, I can’t be in that bad a shape with the Americans, right?” and his rivals would say, “Yeah, okay, you’re not in that bad a shape.” And they know that everything is fluid and changes.

COHEN: It seems like throughout all of your experiences, you don’t seem to experience fear, from Vietnam onward, I mean.

MARIK: Well, I wasn’t in any dangerous situations. I mean, in Vietnam I was, I mean, they could have shot my helicopter down, yes, but you know.

COHEN: And in Afghanistan?

MARIK: I might get hit by a truck outside on Michigan Avenue, you know? I never was in combat.

COHEN: Right, right, that’s true.

MARIK: So you know, you’re afraid in certain situations. I mean, I had anxiety feelings. I, I was on a helicopter, and when I was in Vietnam I could pretty much go and come as I pleased, when I was in the 66th Regiment job. And I was on the manifest to go take a helicopter from Phu Bai to Camp Eagle which is about a twenty minute helicopter ride, and it was so close that it was ten minutes up and ten minutes down. [Laughter] But, Camp Eagle, I can see the helicopter was in line, there’s a line, the helicopter goes in. It gets shot down at Camp Eagle! All right, that happens sometimes. Then the second one, and I’m going to be in the third one, the second one gets shot down! And someone big got killed too, I tried to look for that, who got killed. Somebody with the 101st. I supported the 101st, I was not in the 101st. I supported them, because they were engaging my 66th Regiment. So I’m a little anxious, you know? Can’t they secure the Camp Eagle more? I mean, that’s the 101st’s heaven. [Laughter] That’s an anxious time. And there was one other anxious time...what was it? -- I can’t remember, but anyway. There was one other anxious time, one scary time. But I wasn’t in danger...

COHEN: Right, and later in Afghanistan either, you didn’t...?

MARIK: Well, you know, there’s a certain, when you’re not a participant, there was a scary thing that happened. Radio Afghanistan was, I think it’s they have it as something else. But the radio Afghanistan building, when it’s under control of

the bad guys -- one of the bad guys -- and the Russians try and switch their allegiance from one bad guy faction to the other bad guy faction, from the [not clear] Hulkies? to Parchamies ? there's a huge, they send in the troops in late '79 and there's a huge firefight that goes on right next door to the embassy! So that's dangerous, I mean, some guy could shoot the embassy up, just out of circumstances. But if you're nor a participant, if you're not on a side, it seems like it, somehow, you're not part of it, they're not going to shoot me! You don't really think about the accidents. [1:28:01]

COHEN: Yeah, yeah. All and all, do you think your experience in the Army served you well for the CIA?

MARIK: Oh sure, sure. Being overseas, that's one of the requirements for that one entry level thing. One is a master's degree plus activity overseas. Now, being in the military is kind of cheatin' but I did my best not to cheat. You could be in the green machine, there are Army people who have been to many countries and have never been off the compound, as we say in the CIA, never been off the compound. Never been outside the wire, the Army says, now... And they don't know about foreign countries and things. That's not what the CIA wants, they want some proof that you've interacted with the culture, and don't get freaked out by it, or develop antipathies because they have two wives, you know, and things like that.

COHEN: That was something that you wrote that was interesting, in the questionnaire, it was like, "What was your philosophy toward the enemy?" and you said, "I had no animosity to the enemy", and you thought that was helpful to get to know...

MARIK: Sure, everybody is a possible agent.

COHEN: Everybody is a possible agent?

MARIK: No, that's one of the CIA's funny things. And it depends, you put in the nationality- I'm going to put in a nationality the way I heard it -- and it's not just one nationality, it's any nationality, and I'm going to say Greeks. So please, people from Greece don't get offended if you listen to this thing: There are three types of Greeks in the world, there are those who are CIA agents, there are those who want to be CIA agents, and there are those who already have been CIA agents and are retired. And that's what a case officer --- because recruitment of new sources is an important part of being promoted, and an important part of the United States.

COHEN: So part of your work was recruiting?

MARIK: To recruit, and if they walk in, knowing how to handle them. They walk in always demanding asylum, not always, but they walk in saying, "I want to go to the United States. I'm sick of my situation, I can't stand it anymore, send me to the United States." And, "What's your job, Sir?" Well, "I'm the chief de cabinet," chief of staff, "to the minister of defense." And your jaw drops. And you got to talk him out of the building, make him accept a meeting later on, "Thirteen days from today you're going to be at this street corner and I'm going to be over there, blahblahblah"

COHEN: Wow.

MARIK: And you have to get him out of the building and reporting regularly. So, you have to go, "Yes, yes, yes, but you can't go quite now!" you got to talk them out, and make them happy leaving the building. You can handle it. If you can help us, we're gonna help you, and you're going to feel better about it.

COHEN: Was it true?

MARIK: Pardon?

COHEN: Was it true? Did these people ultimately become agents?

MARIK: Many do, many don't. Many of them are lying to you. You've also got to determine whether he's lying to you or not. When the Soviet Union went down, and everybody was worried about atomic materials being carried out by Soviet scientists, former Soviet, now Russian scientists, who would carry it out to sell to the highest bidder because nobody is paying them, the government's collapsed. The big thing was red mercury. And I don't know where that came from, as far as headquarters could discern there is no such thing as red mercury, but people would walk in and say, "I know where there's a big stash of red mercury" so that was an easy give away, and enough people used it. I don't know how it got communicated around internationally, but it did. And people would walk in, the Marine security guard would call you up, because you've trained the Marine security guard to do, saying, "Sir, there's a message for you from Washington," So you'd get up at 2:00 o'clock in the morning and go out. Now that's, that's one reason why I'm not, people ask me, would you like to go back? Are you unhappy that you're out of the agency? No! Because the agency's all changed! First, because there's no walk-ins. No even chance of a walk in. You go to bed at night, you think, oh, maybe there's going to be a walk-in tonight! So, now, security is so

bad. But in the old days, the Marine security guard would call you up and say, "You have a message from Washington" you went in, and there was this guy sitting there, saying, "Take me, I'm yours"

COHEN: So that's kind of funny, in a way --

MARIK: But do we want you? That's the first question. Do we really want you? Well, that's up to you to figure out, whether the United States' government really wants him or not.

COHEN: So would you have your own sources as well, with local sources, in terms of verifying who the people were, like if they said they worked at certain places?

MARIK: State does that a lot. We use State's materials. State does a lot of biographic stuff. You know it. Agents train you. When you arrive in a country in real life -- there is no Republic of Virginia -- so you know they can't do that as part of the training at Camp Perry. But when you get there, like, I went from Turkey to Afghanistan, with no time in Washington. So, I'm reading books, I'm read things, I went to Kramer's book store on High Street, in Washington, DC, it's gone now, [1:34:15] but that's where we went to get books on countries. The CIA has a bunch of books at the branch level that's the organization level, stacked up for case officers to take. So you do your best to read up but officers train you. You sit in that car, or you walk along with them for a short time, and he tells you, "You know Joe Blow? He's got a son who is now blahblahblah," and you've got to remember that, and you should remember that, and put it in the file so that everybody knows that Joe Blahblahblah, when he goes on and he's got a great job, and he goes on a TDY-- in the Army, we used to, the CIA we say TDY, temporary duty, I don't know-- temporary duty, he goes to Paris and he's a science guy. Valerie Plame, in the old days, before she was outed by the Republicans, came and met him in Paris, and said, "Oh, if it isn't my old friend, Blahblahblah!" You know, "You're the son of Joe Blow!" and this guy doesn't know where Valerie's coming from, but she's blonde, and she's, you know, attractive. "Yes, I know your uncle, and, you know, he said you would be here!" So there's some story that's worked out -- it's true, everything, you know, is true or unverifiable, he can't verify the thing. "And said that you like bonbons. Have a box of bonbons." And you start the development while you got him out in Pairs. You can't get him in the home country. You know, there's a book by a female case officer, and I can't remember her name, of course, but it's popular. It's like Lohan, or something, it's an Irish name. Being a Czech, I know the Irish names. And she talks about meeting someone like that, who was a fabricator, and that

seems to have turned her off. Well, that happens, you know. Somebody couldn't meet this guy in the home country, he said he could go to this other country, he went to this other country, she went to this other country, and she was supposed to pick him up, she did, started talking to him, realized that he didn't know anything about what he was talking about, let him off and said, "Hmm, nice talking to you, bye-bye" and that happens, too,

COHEN: You have to expect this type of thing. Interesting.

MARIK: Yes.

COHEN: How did you meet your wife, and was she also a case officer?

MARIK: No, but she's might as well have been. I mean, we went as a team, this was not very progressive. I got married right after I got out of the Army, so she essentially put me through the rest of the University of Illinois, and through University of Utah where I went to grad school, and then she came with me overseas. And she's a State Department wife, ostensibly. And that means a lot of handling of, if you're in a big country, and there's a gap... Let's just say in the Middle East, my experience, in the Middle East, you've got servants, because everybody else has servants. Now, servants create a work problem, because they know when you're coming and going a lot of the time, so you've got to work around them. But they're easy on wives who have to entertain. Like we tried to put something on once a week. And we tried to do something outside, once a week. Now we wouldn't keep up to that goal, but we tried to. So you've got to keep the people going by, you've got to keep...

COHEN: That's interesting. And do you miss not having that degree of flow of people in your life?

MARIK: Sure, but, we moved to Washington Island from DC, and there just aren't that many people there. But it wasn't bad, and we're back here.

COHEN: When did you move back to Chicago?

MARIK: About a year ago.

COHEN: Nice, yeah. Is there, do you have any reflections or do you have any thoughts of what you'd like the younger generation to learn, either as a result of your service in the military or in the CIA?

MARIK: Well, I preach so much to my high school! [Laughter]

COHEN: You do it, directly.

MARIK: So the mundane stuff is: take a language. It's -- the world is going to be more globalized, and a language is important. And, that's about it. Talk to as many foreign people as you possibly can. Go to schools that have foreign students if you can choose the school you go to. I like, I don't know why people say -- people on Washington Island, I'm going to badmouth them slightly -- they say, "Oh, well I'm sending my kid to a small school because he's more comfortable there." College isn't a place to be comfortable! College is a place to learn! Go to a big school, I'm big on big schools, where there's a lot of people, a lot of different people. Lot of things to do. Spread your horizon out. That's my preaching.

COHEN: That's your preaching. Okay, and one thing you mentioned, as well, was that you joined the Pritzker because you're interested in meeting other citizen soldiers. On the other hand, I noticed you're also a member of some other veteran organizations. I'm kind of curious about what your thoughts were about that.

MARIK: I with the VFW, well I'm going to be in preachy-preachy mode now.

COHEN: Okay.

MARIK: I wish the VFW and American Legion would join. I know that's trying to join the Crips and the Bloods, but um... I wish they'd join. If they're, you know, it's silly not to join. Second, get rid of these times: "You can join if you served between 22 February 1946 and..." You know, that sort of thing.

COHEN: Yeah,

MARIK: Get rid of those things. And much more can be done. Economies of scale would be great, I think. Now, the leaders don't want to do that of course, because that makes fewer leadership spots. Why are there Crips and Bloods? Because somebody wants to be head of the Crips and somebody wants to be head of the Bloods. [Laughter] Well, it's got to be grassroots. And I'm a Hillary [Clinton] Democrat, not a [Bernie] Sanders Democrat, but it's got to be grassroots. Because those leaders are not going to give up their promotion paths.

COHEN: Is there--

MARIK: Let me talk up the Army too!

COHEN: Yeah! Okay.

MARIK: I mean, the Army, including JROTC, because the Army administers is, pretty much, at my high school, they pay for one slot at my high school, which we greatly appreciate. The JROTC got me to where I wanted to go. As it turns out, as a kid, I didn't know where I wanted to go. But it got me to where I wanted to go the first time around. And it was JROTC, it was the military. Yes, there's a lot of crap in the military, and there's a lot of hierarchical stuff that some people and many people will say, "I don't like." And that's okay. But for the person who is, a jock or in some way competitive, JROTC is great. And, two, the Army got me interested in intelligence. I wanted to go to language school because my Russian teacher told me, "I know what you can do with yourself, you can go into the military and you can go into language school and that takes up a year and it's fun in Monterey, California and whatever happens afterwards, [happens]" The Army, taught me what I wanted to do, and it turns out that's what I did want to do. So I owe an awful lot to the Army. I was only in the real military for roughly four and a half years. A little less than four years in the Army and little less than a year at West Point, where you're really in the Army, as a cadet. You raise your right hand and they cut you straight to the reserves. No raising your right hand to get into the reserves, you just went straight. So, the Army did a lot for me. So, I may bitch and moan about some of it, at the time, may have bitched and moaned about it, some of the time. But, overall, I'm really positive about my military experience.

COHEN: It sounds like it did a lot for you, and your way of giving back is to help the same St. John's school, as well, to give back, and let others have those same chances, as well.

MARIK: Well, I hope. I'm also there to be directed to help, by them. But, you know. I don't have, I see a lot, for some reason, schools like not only like St. Johns -- private schools, I hear from other friends who have went to private schools, there's a lot of people, when there's a little bit of change, they scream and yell. And you ask them, "How much have you donated?" "Well, I don't donate!" You were a customer then, you got your product. It changed slightly. It's not your call.

COHEN: No. Well, on behalf of the Pritzker Military Museum and Library I would like to thank you for your time today and for your service, I appreciate it very much!

MARIK: Well, thank you for an enjoyable experience.

