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WILLIAM S. ELLIOTT

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Leon Sullivan

Eugene Terre'Blanche

INTERVIEW

Q: This is John Pielemeier, January 19, 2017. I'm beginning an interview with William Elliott, a long-time AID (United States Agency for International Development) senior official who worked mostly in the Africa Bureau. Will is on the line with me here. Will, I wanted to ask you first of all where you grew up and how you got interested in international development?

ELLIOTT: I was born in 1951 in Hartford, Connecticut and we moved down to Florida in 1961. My father worked for the aircraft engine manufacturer, Pratt Whitney Aircraft. I finished elementary school and the rest of my education before college in Florida in a small town called Tequesta, not that well known, but it was right across the river from Jupiter. I graduated from Jupiter High School in 1969.

What first captured my interest in international affairs and development? I would say that listening to my Uncle Wayne, my dad's youngest brother, and his wife, my Aunt Barbara, talk about their time living overseas with the Air Force. Uncle Wayne had a career in the Air Force until he went into a few other professions in his '50s or '60s. But I remember as kid falling asleep looking at his slides of his time in the Philippines, and so I think that was one of the things that perked my interest in things outside of the U.S. borders. Another influence was Levering Evans, a Baptist preacher from Richmond, Virginia, who retired Tequesta when I was in high school. His parents had been medical missionaries in China. Levering, very much like his parents, had a world view. He'd been to many countries and been decorated by the Republic of China (Taiwan); so he, too, gave me a world view. So when I did my engineering degree as an undergrad...

Q: Where did you do that, Will?

ELLIOTT: I did that at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), and that's where the article that I sent you a few days ago, John, appeared in their alumni journal (WPI Transformations, Summer 2003, page 7: <https://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1053&context=wpjournal-all>). When they offered a program to study abroad in the heart of London I jumped at that, and had a marvelous semester abroad, September-December 1972, at The City University of London. I graduated from WPI in 1973.

Q: For the record, Will, where is Wooster

ELLIOTT: That is actually Worcester, Massachusetts, 45 miles west of Boston. It's the third oldest engineering and science school in the country. Robert Goddard, the missile pioneer, attended school there. Members of J. Giles Blues Band were all associated with the school before they went off on their rock star fame. I digress -- pardon that.

There may be a few other things that led to my interest in international affairs. In reading your own oral history, John, this morning, I noticed that National Geographic issues were things that you read as a kid, and, we had those in our home too. I guess while that didn't bubble up into my consciousness as I was thinking about how to answer this question, that probably too was an unseen force. But I would say that my relatives who had served abroad and also Levering Evans who had a world view were the key influences.

Q: And when you were in your year in London, what were you studying there?

ELLIOTT: It was electrical engineering.

Q: So it wasn't focused on the third world at all?

ELLIOTT: It wasn't, but I lived in a 17-story dormitory and a large number of the residents were from other countries. A 46-year-old Nigerian and an Egyptian going for his PhD in civil engineering were in the same hallway. Those are two people with whom I struck up friendships. When I left to go back to the U.S., the Egyptian student invited me to take any memento off his wall, so to this day we have a bronze or copper plaque of Ramesses and his chariot that adorns our home. So I said to myself "Whatever job I take as an engineer, I would love to continue learning from people from other cultures, from other nations." I had a sense that the British were living with less in terms of their home size and their material possessions, but I would say that I came away feeling they had a higher quality of life. There was a greater satisfaction in their lives. The bug to live overseas - I wouldn't say international development work - had become my focus; certainly doing some work overseas to continue learning, meeting and benefiting from other cultures.

Q: And then what happened next?

ELLIOTT: Well, I then graduated and as I sought different jobs (I considered the Peace Corps as you did) I was of a mind to not spend a full two years in any one country, but to see more of the world. So I was fortunate to join General Electric (GE) - a cadre of engineers who installed General Electric equipment in overseas locations. So after a three-month training course in Schenectady, New York, a very big center for GE at that time, I started roaming the world for the next five years: 55 airplane flights and working in seven countries. I first worked for five months in the south of France, not far from Marseilles, at a steel mill and then went to South Africa, to Newcastle, Natal, for 15 months. That's what really spurred my interest in South Africa, which came back to play in my USAID career.

One person I met was Frank Mdlalose. He was a medical doctor and mayor of the black township which because of apartheid was separated from the white residents. He later was a negotiator in 1993 with the apartheid government and then South Africa's Ambassador to Egypt. We have remained in touch over the years.

After South Africa, there were others assignments with GE: short ones in Jordan and El Salvador, a three month one in Brazil in a steel center called Volta Redonda, a short one in Japan and then finished up with six-month in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, the largest industrial city in the southern part of the island. I then took a leave of absence early before going back for an MBA (Masters of Business Administration) degree. I left Taiwan in March 1977 and visited many countries in the Pacific and Asia on my way to southern Africa and later through Zaire and Nigeria.

Q: You were just traveling by yourself?

ELLIOTT: I was traveling by myself in the Pacific and Asia, but linked up with some friends who were working for reconciliation in Southern Africa and then went to a conference center for reconciliation in Switzerland that I'd been associated with for many years. I began my MBA degree in January of 1978 at Boston University (BU), but then switched to Columbia University in the Fall of 1979, because I wanted more of an international flavor to my MBA. I lived in International House next door to the Columbia University campus in 1979-1980. I was in the International Fellows Program which was operated from the School of International and Public Affairs but included students from all of the graduate schools -- law, journalism, business, arts and sciences -- so that was a great melting pot. One of my friends through that served under Zbigniew Brzezinski when he was in the NSC (National Security Council). Again, contacts from that time, more on the international side rather than the business side, remain.

Q: Did you do any international travel as part of your degree that year in London?

ELLIOTT: Can you repeat the question again, John?

Q: That year in London, did you travel doing thesis work or did you travel overseas again from there, or were you only in England for that year?

ELLIOTT: Well, actually it was from September 1972-December 1972, so it was just four months. It's a good question you ask because for Christmas I went to Goteborg, Sweden by ship to link in with a biomedical engineering professor that was known to my academic advisor at WPI. I stayed with the professor, but then spent Christmas with a colleague of his who, hearing that I had no place to go for Christmas, invited me to join himself and his fiancée and his fiancée's family on an island where the fiancée's family lived and enjoy Christmas with them. It was a very typical Swedish Christmas. From there I took a train down to Paris and joined up with some classmates from The City University of London and one from WPI.

Q: Here I thought you were going to say it was the setting for a mystery novel! (laughter)

ELLIOTT: (laughter) I could spin a good yarn or two but it wouldn't be true.

Q: All right, all right...

ELLIOTT: Yep...

Q: And then from that program, did you have to go back to more time at school in Massachusetts -- or, I mean Columbia?

ELLIOTT: Well, the time in London, that was part of my engineering education. The time at Columbia...

Q: Oh, right, that was your MBA.

ELLIOTT: During my summer months of 1979 I volunteered my services to the Reverend Dr. Leon Sullivan, author of the Sullivan Principles on employment practices in South Africa. I worked out of the public relations office in the General Motors office (Rev. Sullivan was on the GM Board), near Central Park in New York City. I performed research and traveled to Philadelphia (where Reverend Sullivan has his office that was implementing the Sullivan Principles) to report on my findings. And then I would say that ...

Q: Do you remember how you learned of the Sullivan Principles?

ELLIOTT: Well, it may have been something as arcane, John, as reading the English daily newspaper in Volta Redonda, Brazil, some AP (Associated Press) or UPI (United Press International) report that this had been formed, and just being fascinated by it. During my time working with General Electric in South Africa I came across the Norton Company that was and still is headquartered in Worcester, Massachusetts. I met some people that worked with that company, and they had a very enlightened view of their corporate responsibility. This goes back to 1974-75. Norton would match one of their executives or middle managers with a black South African to do mentoring. They employed one of their people to coordinate that program. So that gave me a new view on corporate responsibility. I was like many young people: you get a certain view of corporate titans who you feel are filled with an inordinate amount of greed, a bit more than the rest of us. So this started to give me a vision of how corporations could be a positive force for change in a society, whether it be South Africa or any other country, where they wanted to be a good citizen. That's how I wrote up my applications for the MBA degree. When I was able to have face to face interview with the associate dean of admissions at Columbia, as opposed to applying from Taiwan, he appreciated that motivation. That probably helped me get in the second time I knocked on Columbia's door.

That explains why the Sullivan Principles were of very great interest to me. It was a very interesting summer. I remained in contact with the Sullivan Principles and was very welcomed to attend group meetings with the US corporations who had pledged to adopt the Principles. Most of those meetings were in New York City, and I became friends with the persons running it for Ford Motor, for Exxon Mobil, and several others. As I finished out my degree, I would attend the meetings, and even when I rejoined GE -- GE was also a member -- and I would just go along and attend as an observer at some of these

meetings. I stayed in contact with Reverend Sullivan, and met him when he would come in to see some of the AID (Agency for International Development) folks as he established some of his own overseas development programs

Q: Did these include "OICI" (Opportunities Industrialization Centers International)

ELLIOTT: OICI, and then later on IFESH -- International Foundation for Education, Support and Help. He had that headquartered out in the Scottsdale, AZ area where he was in retirement.

Q: Just jumping ahead, did you run into any OICI programs in Africa when you were later working for AID?

ELLIOTT: Not directly, I don't recall that they were in Botswana... I'm thinking, I mean over the years they must have been involved in South Africa just because Reverend Sullivan was so deeply ingrained, but I can't say that I had any direct involvement with their programs.

Q: I'll just tender up briefly that when I served in Liberia there was an OICI program there that was basically job training, and the fellow, Reggie Hodges, who ran this program had come from Sierra Leone where he had worked with a similar program with OICI. So, they were mostly, I think, in West Africa.

ELLIOTT: Right, right...

Q: But back to you. You're finishing your degree, you're involved with the Sullivan Principles, you're rejoining GE...

ELLIOTT: After Columbia University, I rejoined General Electric and worked at their headquarters building. Not their corporate headquarters which had been in Fairfield, Connecticut (now in Boston), but its international headquarters building in midtown Manhattan, and was a program manager in its international construction business division. The Division went through a reorganization and the job that I was in was deleted, giving me an opportunity to look within GE. I looked at various opportunities within GE but nothing panned out so I moved to a company just a couple of blocks down in midtown Manhattan called Ogden. They were an old line holding company conglomerate, and I was part of a staff of merger and acquisition/strategic planning professionals. We would do some analysis of firms that the chairman and the executive team wished to purchase. That was an interesting type of work for about a year and a half or two. However, the executive vice president and seven of the ten of us on his team were let go. This opened up a great opportunity to discover if I wanted to remain in corporate life doing international marketing or sales, or wished to move more into the governmental side of international work.

You had asked initially, John, how my interest in international development grew, and I have been describing that. From my high school days I was interested in government and

politics, and was very much involved in the student council. The student council advisor, Eric Bailey, encouraged my interest in government and politics. Our high school was very active in state leadership for student councils, and I participated in Boy's State and the Florida Youth Workshop. It was natural that during one of my summers, during my engineering degree, I interned in Washington, DC for my congressman from Florida.

Q: What was the Congressman's name?

ELLIOTT: Paul Rogers. His father had been a congressman before him. Congressman Rogers served with great distinction on the Health Committee (known as Mr. Health by his colleagues) and did a lot of work with Senator Kennedy who was also very much involved with health. He also led legislative work to approve the Clean Air Act of 1970. That was the summer of 1970. I attended two national political conventions: Republican in Miami 1968 and then the Democratic in 1972 in Miami. So it was a natural progression for me, when I was leaving Ogden and searching for the next right thing, that I would come down to Washington and knock on some doors. The VP of Public Relations at Ogden had contacts for me in Washington. The person who took over for Congressman Rogers also had a contact at USAID. So there were two contacts that led me into USAID. Over a couple of days, I met Norm Cohen, Bob Pratt, Bob Bell, Fred Schieck, and a few others in what amounted to exploratory interviews and information gathering for myself to learn about what USAID was doing.

Q: These were all senior probably capital development officers at the time?

ELLIOTT: Right, and Fred Schieck was Deputy Assistant Administrator of the PPC (Policy and Program Coordination) Bureau. At the end of the day when I submitted an application, Betty Lynn in Personnel said to me "Well, you've met everybody that I would have you meet if we'd had you down for an interview. The only person you haven't met is the EEO (Equal Opportunity Office) person, and there's no sense in bringing you down from New York to do that, so let me get back to all these people." And that's how the offer came to be. I entered with a service date of Christmas, December 25, 1983.

Q: So explain -- did you come in as part of a program for new Foreign Service Officers, did you come in as some sort of a special program for engineers, or how did you come in?

ELLIOTT: I entered as a mid-career direct hire.

Q: Ah, ok.

ELLIOTT: And I have to think...this was at the beginning of the Reagan years...that they liked my private sector background, both the engineering side but maybe more so the business side with General Electric and then with Ogden. I had actually wanted to come into the Private Sector Bureau, which had been newly created, but I actually came in as a PDO.

Q: "Project development officer"

ELLIOTT: Right, and was assigned to the Central and Coastal West Africa section which was headed by Howard Helman.

Q: Oh, yes.

ELLIOTT: Julius Coles was the counterpart Office Director for the desk, so I had a lot to do with Julius during that year and a half. That's when you and I first met, John, when I came out for the month of June in 1984 and I was subbing for the PDO who went on leave. And very, very sadly...and I'm forgetting his name, his first name might have been Jim...he died of a brain tumor several years later...

Q: Not Murray Molde?

ELLIOTT: No, no, but anyway...

Q: Oh, oh, I know who you mean, oh, yes, oh my goodness...

ELLIOTT: A very fine person. It was Jim Pagano.

Q: Oh, yes, I remember him.

ELLIOTT: Yep, tears one's heart out. Doug and Barbara Kline were at the mission,...

Q: Yes, this is in Liberia...

ELLIOTT: Yup, so that was an important TDY for me. My wife, Angela, and I had been married for I guess a year and a few months, and I brought back some nice Liberian flowing gowns that she could wear very beautifully as she was expecting our first child.

Q: Well, now I was going to ask you about this! Were you...I didn't know if you were a confirmed bachelor all this time? I know you aren't now! Where did you get together and what does she think about this Foreign Service stuff? At the time?

ELLIOTT: Well, she is originally of a German mother and a Welsh father. We got married on New Year's Day, January 1, 1983, in Cardiff, Wales.

Q: Where did you meet her?

ELLIOTT: I probably set eyes on her at this conference center in Switzerland or in a home in London that was used for work of reconciliation. Her mother was one of the first Germans, a group of 20, that was allowed to leave Germany after World War II to go this conference center in Switzerland to start the long process of reconciliation. Angela was over with a family living in McLean, Virginia, when at least from my side things started

to get serious. Anyways, we got married in Wales on January 1, 1983, and began married life in a brownstone on 78th street on the east side of Manhattan and then came down to Washington at the end of 1983 when I joined USAID.

Q: And she thought when you joined...you joined as a mid-career but you were a Foreign Service Officer, you knew you were going to be posted overseas.

ELLIOTT: Yes, and since she was part of an international family and had spent some months in India -- her folks had also spent several years there -- she was not averse. Actually, I think she bought into the whole idea of working overseas and serving abroad.

Q: Great, great. All right, so you joined AID, you started working with west and central Africa in the early '80s, and did you find AID very surprising, a difficult place to work after all your private sector work?

ELLIOTT: I had been warned about working in the government by a fellow I had a chat with before joining AID, who was working at the U.S. Trade Representative's Office. He had worked in the private sector and just wanted me to know there was a difference. It was really helpful to carpool from home in Bethesda, where Angela and I were renting, with USAID veterans Bob Pratt, Tom Tiff, and a couple of others. That was a great tutorial, going in in the morning and coming back at night, to listen to what they were doing in their offices, but to run past them some of the interesting things I was finding in this government bureaucracy.

I had worked for a Congressman and another summer, during my engineering degree, I worked for the Department of the Army in the Forrestal Building so I wasn't totally new to bureaucracy. But this was the first full-time career job in government. Any bureaucracy has its procedures you need to learn. But I'd have to say that Howard Helman was a real delight to work with and he and I have kept in touch. I haven't spoken to him in the past couple of years, but even after I left his office and left AID, he and I would talk from time to time. It was a really fun office to work in. Going to meetings where there were sometimes 15-20 people trying to make decisions -- that was rather new! There were various projects, PIDs, PPs that would come in and I would manage the review of them.

Q: Just for transcription, PIDs -- project identification documents, PPs are project papers, correct?

ELLIOTT: Thank you, John.

Q: All right. Mostly you were working out of Washington, traveling to West Africa and then handling the processing of new projects and their review in Washington?

ELLIOTT: That's correct, and we also backstopped the West Africa regional affairs office.

Q: In Abidjan?

ELLIOTT: No, in Washington. You probably know the name Minnie Sebsibe?

Q: No, I don't know that name.

ELLIOTT: She was a long-term GS (General Schedule) person but then served in Nigeria before she retired. She was in that office. My only TDY (Temporary Duty), I believe, was to Liberia. While I was in Liberia I went over to Abidjan to work with the contracts officer there on one of the pieces of work I was handling for USAID/Liberia. I served in Washington until July 1995 and then went out to Botswana for five years.

Q: Did you, were you talked to about where your post might be and did you have a choice, or were you simply told?

ELLIOTT: Yes. Botswana was one of them, I forget what else I put on my bid list, but Botswana was number one. Paul Guedet was the Mission Director, Ed Butler was the Deputy. I had a phone interview with Paul Guedet. I think Paul liked the fact that I brought an MBA, a business orientation. When I arrived at post, while I was the PDO for the mission, I was also was project manager for the Botswana Work Force and Skills Training Project II (BWAST II). It had a private sector element to it, with which we did some really terrific things. We continued sending people to the U.S. for mainly Master's degrees and bringing out what were called Operational Experts or OpExers to fill in some of those vacancies while the Botswana citizens were away.

Q: Was that program still run by Dave Benedetti under contract?

ELLIOTT: Yes. Dave and I spent a lot of time working together.

Q: Say a little bit more about the private sector OpEx's work that you designed/established.

ELLIOTT: One of the things we did was to send individuals for short-term skills training. One of the more effective programs was something run by Entrepreneurs International. I remember very distinctly someone from a drug store or chemist as they called them there, and someone from a grocery store going off on this program to the U.S. Participants would go on a short course of a week or two that was full of good technical input, but then they would be matched up with a business owner, business manager and, as much as possible, shadow that person not only at the work place but also with their family so you could get a sense of how this business owner, this business manager, actually ran his life. As I say, in a couple of cases at the drug store and at the grocery store, people came back with very refreshing new ways of running their business and approaching the customer base. Those were funds that came out of the BWAST II project.

We also engaged a couple of consultants to look at what were the impediments to growth, whether it be customs, immigration, or other policies. We then took that study, which

included both the Chamber of Commerce and two or three different government ministries, and had a weekend meeting up in Francistown at the main lodge there to consider this report and to try and provide some options for improvement for the government. That was, I think, very useful both in terms of there being an identification of these impediments, but also to encourage conversation between the Chamber of Commerce and the government.

The last thing that I would mention on the private sector side was our use of the Loan Guarantee Facility that was a mechanism from a central Bureau in Washington. We had agreements with three banks -- BCCI (Bank of Credit and Commerce International), Standard Chartered, and Barclays. Going along with the financial guarantee, in which USAID would take half the risk for any bad debts, was very effective training. This training was done by Management Advisory Services out of Seattle. The training was given not just for the loan applicants, the entrepreneurs, but also for bank staffs to help them move from just saying "no" to being more helpful. For the entrepreneurs, we ran a couple of sessions where 40 would come in the morning and receive their training and 40 would come in the afternoon to receive their training. We did that so that none of the entrepreneurs would be away for their businesses the entire day, away from running their business and keeping a watch on their cash register. We did that twice, and after we did those two trainings, which amounted to 160 entrepreneurs, we did an evaluation. Like with any evaluation, you don't get everyone to respond. But 25 people responded. Of that number, they said that the training they received made a very strong contribution to their receiving an aggregated \$500 million worth of new loans into their business.

The training sought to teach the entrepreneurs the language of the bankers so they could know what the loan officers would look at in terms of evaluating their financial statements -- current ratios, equity ratios, and other such ratios that loan officers calculate to use in making the loan approval/denial decision. This was highly empowering for these entrepreneurs who previously weren't familiar with some of this terminology and in some ways would just get confused by the loan officers when they would go in to make their argument. But now they were empowered with this language, this understanding and, frankly, some better financial management skills because that's what the course was about. That was a very, very good program, and I think Management Advisory Services did a great job of giving people skills that made a difference.

Q: Five years, that's a long time. Was Paul your director the whole time or did that change?

ELLIOTT: That changed. Paul was there for about a year or so and the same with Ed Butler, and then the Mission Director and Deputy Director changed. The Mission Director became John Hummon and the Deputy Director became John Roberts.

Q: He was once my boss in PPC. He was a budget whizz.

ELLIOTT: He came from the budget chief's job in PPC out to Botswana.

Q: Your position was project development officer the whole time?

ELLIOTT: Correct.

Q: Who were the other key members of your staff while you were there?

ELLIOTT: Dorothy Dambe was still there. Do you recall Dorothy Dambe? Was she there when you were there?

Q: Absolutely, she remained a good friend until she passed away recently.

ELLIOTT: I'm glad you knew she passed away. I spoke with the youngest daughter, it was very quick and very traumatic. Dorothy continued to be the training officer. The education officer was first Ann Dominion and later Barbara Belding. The Ag (Agricultural) officer was Paul Daly.

Q: What was the focus of the program? Again, this was before the change of government in South Africa. It's after Botswana became a Mission after the Soweto riots when students came flowing out of South Africa and landed in Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland and overburdened their education systems. USAID said we're going to have to help build up those education programs to handle these additional students but also try to make these three countries more economically independent than they had been previously. That was the focus of the program when I was there. What was the focus as you remember it when you were there?

ELLIOTT: On the education side, Ohio University had a large program, three or four long-term advisors working with the Minister of Education. Dr. Peter Sephuma was one of the main government officials with whom people worked. Work on curriculum design and also training of teachers. The agriculture focus was on research. There was some regional money that went into a regional research activity just north of the airport that served the entire region, not just Botswana.

Q: Was South Dakota State still there? Still involved with the Ag College?

ELLIOTT: No. There was a full-time Ag officer, full-time education officer, Dorothy as a training officer, and that was it in terms of the working line staff, and then myself as a PDO.

Q: Did you travel outside of Botswana very much at that time?

ELLIOTT: Of course, I went to the yearly October scheduling conferences at REDSO/East (Regional Economic Development Services/East Africa) in Nairobi. Within Botswana, I made site visits to the Botswana Renewables Energy Technology Project, BRET, when I first got there. A daughter of President Masire was working on the project. In terms of travel outside, it was all, except for the professional trips up to Nairobi,

personal going down to Pretoria or Cape Town or back to Newcastle, Natal, all for vacations or to visit friends.

I can say on a personal side our son was born in 1988 while we were there. We went to Pretoria for his birth. In 1986, we went out to the bush to observe Halley's Comet. We went out with a family that really knew how to travel out to the bush and had done it many times before, so that was a great experience.

Pope Paul II visited Botswana in 1988, and that, too, was a great experience. Angela was expecting our son so we were kindly given good seating at the stadium and also waved him farewell at the small airport. And Eric Clapton came to Botswana and performed in a very small venue, so that was a personal highlight. In five years, there were many wonderful things. For four of my five years, Ambassador Johnnie Carson, who then went on to be ambassador in Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Senior VP at the National Defense University and Assistant Secretary for Africa at State, was Deputy Chief of Mission. He was a great person to work under.

Q: Did you get out to the Kalahari?

ELLIOTT: Yes, we were very fortunate to get a trip out there. A German cousin of Angela's and a young daughter of one of my USAID colleagues went out with us. We stumbled across four tickets that an older couple couldn't use. We had a wonderful time, first flying out to Maun, then flying into Okavango Delta, and then going on a motorboat for another 30 minutes to tented site. It was great!

Q: Oh, wonderful! Great! It sounds like one of the things Botswana can offer you.

ELLIOTT: Yes, yes. And from the Botswana time, Botswana is an example of good governance. I've often said when my relatives asked me how was my time in Botswana, because most of my relatives -- my dad comes from a large farming family in Illinois and few of them had been overseas -- I would say it was a great time, and if I got a telegram that said "Will, you have to spend, along with your family, the rest of your life in Botswana," I would say "terrific, when do we go?"

Just before going out to Botswana, I worked in the PD division for Southern Africa in Washington, headed by Wendy Stickel, working on a new housing project. We came up with a wonderful purpose statement that got approved in DC. When we arrived in Botswana, we presented this to Baledzi Gaolathe, who was Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, one of the finest civil servants I think there ever was in Africa -- he's now deceased -- an impeccable, quiet spoken gentleman. See address by his son at his funeral

(<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=6&aid=2823&dir=2010/June/Friday11/>). He just simply, quietly said "we will change the purpose statement." It went to one that was far more acceptable to them and didn't question their sovereignty. I think however we worded it, it was a bit in their face. Frankly, what I would tell my relatives is we in the U.S. could learn a thing or two about how to run a government and keep things within

budget, because I was very impressed with how serious they were about the work, particularly out of the Ministry of Finance under his leadership. I found that corruption was minimal. I remember that the Botswana daily newspaper, not the private one but the government one, came out with a headline that the auditor general couldn't account for 80,000 pula out of the total national budget, and this was a great scandal.

Q: This was the equivalent of what, in dollars?

ELLIOTT: It was about \$40,000.

Q: \$40,000 in the whole budget? [How big was the whole budget?] Approximately Pula 1,200,000,000

ELLIOTT: In the whole budget! Botswana was a place that because of the moral fortitude that was set by Sir Seretse Khama, the founder and first President of Botswana, people were schooled to toe a certain line. You can learn more about the vision and leadership of Sir Sereste Khama by reading [Colour Bar: The Triumph of Sereste Khama and his Nation](#), by Susan Williams and watching the film, *A United Kingdom*, based on this book.

Q: And your son was what, four years old when you left, so he wasn't in school yet?

ELLIOTT: He was born in 1988, so he was just two years old. We then went on home leave and my next port of call was Jordan. I was recruited by Jim Bever, who was on the Jordan desk at that point. It was a week before I arrived in Jordan with the family that Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Barry MacDonald was there, he was actually the person I reported to, Jim Dempsey was there, and Tom Oliver was the Mission Director. Things got increasingly tense. It was the first time that I put into practice all that we'd learned in the security briefings that we go through, of taking different routes to the office at different times of day.

We received a very warm welcome from the Jordanian people. Again, as they teach you, you need to get to be known by the community, so our first morning there we were out walking in the neighborhood with our toddler, Christy, and in the stroller, Jonathan. Within 15 minutes we were in a Jordanian's apartment. A gentleman had come along and said "Oh, you have young kids, you should go meet this lady, she's got three daughters and her husband is off in Detroit managing his hotel." So there we were within fifteen minutes with the kids playing on the carpet with three daughters of this wife whose husband was off in Detroit. We were in Amman for about two months, because then scaling down evacuation orders were issued. I would say, with a young family, I was not unhappy to leave Jordan at that time. I had worked there before with General Electric and really enjoyed the Jordanian people and was sad to leave in one way, but, under the circumstances, I was glad to be out of harm's way with the family.

Q: What was your position there in Jordan?

ELLIOTT: I was a private enterprise officer.

Q: And then where did they send you next?

ELLIOTT: Well, I came back to Washington and I went into this very interesting bureau whose name was Asia/Private Enterprise. The wonderful thing about it was it was headed by Henrietta Holsman Fore. I can remember very distinctly to this day two things about Henrietta: one was her bringing the bureau together in the Loy Henderson Auditorium in the State Department and speaking to us. The words she used and the way she spoke -- to this day I've never come across a person who I felt was articulating a corporate culture that she aspired for us all to buy into, where I felt that she was really communicating to each person in the seat where they were sitting. I don't know how you want to describe it: her charisma, her enthusiasm, her magnetism. I remember it to this day and I just felt it a real privilege to be working under her. I was in a PD (Project Development) division was headed by Gene Morris. It was in a technical and PD office headed by Phyllis Ditcher-Forbes. Tom Nicastro was head of the technical division. At some point we moved over to SA-22 across the street.

Q: Were you traveling overseas during that...how long were you in that position?

ELLIOTT: I joined in late 1990/beginning of 1991. I backstopped some private enterprise work, including the privatization unit, but also backstopped Indonesia where Jim Bever was the program officer. Then I moved back to the Africa Bureau to the Office of Southern African Affairs (AFR/SA), headed by Cap Dean with Keith Brown as Deputy.

Q: What year would that have been?

ELLIOTT: That would have had to have been early 1992, John.

Q: All Right, all right.

ELLIOTT: There I was backstopping Angola, Namibia and the Southern Africa Regional Program.

Q: One of the intriguing things I think people would be interested in, before the end of apartheid in South Africa, AID had some programs working with South Africans, if not in South Africa. Were you knowledgeable about those, were you involved with those?

ELLIOTT: I wasn't directly involved with them from the USAID point of view, but certainly followed things in South Africa as closely as I could. The only time I worked on the USAID program was when I was stationed there beginning in 1993, for that whole year, and then returned to Washington in early 1994 due to an illness (our son was diagnosed with leukemia) in the family. I worked on the South Africa program in AFR/SA.

Q: So you were mostly covering...did we have programs in Namibia? Was it independent at that point?

ELLIOTT: Yes, we had programs in Namibia; it became independent in 1990.

Q: Well, this is good. You had a chance to move to South Africa, they offered you a job, or were you just bidding in the bid cycle and found a job you wanted in South Africa?

ELLIOTT: Cap Dean became Mission Director in South Africa in 1992. A PDO (Project Development Officer) slot opened up, I bid for it, and was selected. I worked for Dennis Wendel. There were three of us in the PD shop in South Africa.

Q: And you were all located in Pretoria?

ELLIOTT: We were all located in Pretoria. One of the main things I did was to help design, along with Dave Evans, the education officer, a new higher education project that would provide assistance to all of the historically black universities in South Africa. Not the University of the Witwatersrand, not Stellenbosch University, not the University of Pretoria, but all the ones that were either for Coloreds, or Asians, or black South Africans. Earl Yates actually headed the design team. Do you know Earl?

Q: No.

ELLIOTT: When I joined USAID in 1983, Earl was serving in AFR/SA (Africa Bureau/South Africa). Earl was a freelance consultant in 1993 and he led the team that helped us design the program. We had many, many meetings around the country with the universities, but also educationalists that could advise us on how the program could be designed to best serve those institutions.

Q: Was the AID program welcomed by the new government in South Africa?

ELLIOTT: I would say that by the government of the day it wasn't welcomed with open arms because the U.S. Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 had as its purpose the dismantling of Apartheid. So, I would say that it was not welcomed, but it was tolerated.

Q: Was it easy for you all to travel around?

ELLIOTT: General speaking, yes. The work travel to design the higher education project was not constrained. However, at some point, the U.S. Embassy limited travel due to the security situation. For example, do not go into the black townships by yourself. Be taken in by your counterparts. There were some very troubling times -- this was 1993-94 and there were negotiations going on -- but there were still some tensions and some violence going on that one had to deal with. There was a young woman called Amy Biehl who had once worked with Brian Atwood (USAID Administrator at this time) at NDI (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs). She was working with an NGO (non-governmental organization) in Cape Town and was killed going home one night. For the most part we could go around, but I would say going into the black townships was the one area where we needed to be very much aware of security issues.

Q: If I recall, wasn't there a memorial foundation established in Amy Biehl's name?

ELLIOTT: Correct, correct. Her parents established that.

Q: Interesting. Well, wow. Did you have a feeling that the power was going to be successfully transferred, or were you all worried that it might fall apart?

ELLIOTT: I think there were enough signs from the Apartheid government that they were serious. Whether it was F. W. de Klerk, who was the President, or Rolf Meyer, who was his main interlocutor, and the series of meetings that were happening at Kempton Park, very close to the Jans Smuts Johannesburg airport, there were some very serious, well-constructed, well-facilitated discussions going on. They would have their fits and starts. A vigilante, hard-right group, headed by Eugene Terre'Blanche, drove a big vehicle (twice or three times the size of a Humvee) into the meeting place. There were things like that that were attempts to derail the negotiations because the far right felt that de Klerk was selling the country down the river. This was not an easy walk, but Mandela was one of these monumental statespersons that the world was grateful for after his 27 years in prison. I would say that we had some confidence that things were going to find a good end game because people on all sides saw it was to their advantage to do that.

Q: And did AID have any part of their program trying to facilitate this process?

ELLIOTT: Very much so, and Dennis Wendel by that time had moved from being the head of the PDO division to leading USAID's electoral support efforts. There was quite a lot of political party training including NDI, IRI (International Republican Institute), and, I think, IFES (International Foundation for Election Systems).

Q: Right. And with your work which was mostly private sector, I could see two ways you might have gone. One was to help build up capacity for black enterprises, and secondly maybe find ways to marry black enterprises with white enterprises. What was the focus of the private sector program?

ELLIOTT: It was focused on black private enterprise. Part of the work was done with the Black Chamber of Commerce to strengthen it as an institution that could assist its membership but also at the firm level.

Q: Did you run into any personal hostility, you and your family?

ELLIOTT: No, I can't say that we did.

Q: Ok, well, that's probably good to know.

Your son was apparently diagnosed and you had to come back quickly?

ELLIOTT: Yes, it was a slow diagnosis, and this is not unusual for leukemia. It sometimes is elusive in terms of its symptoms. But suffice it to say that eventually we discovered what it was. It's a very moving story in that we'd been to various physicians and the Embassy medical unit and so forth, and things just continued on and our son, Jonathan, continued to feel poorly. We were at a Friday social evening at our daughter's Anglican girls school and ran into a couple, Doris and Andrew Mafojane. Their daughter was a classmate of our daughter's. Andrew at that time was the only black neurologist in the Southern Hemisphere and had broken the color bar as a professor at the University of Pretoria. His wife, Doris, was a nurse that helped him with some of his research. They said after listening to us that if Jonathan had not had a blood test that looked for specific things they listed, then we should go immediately on Saturday morning to have it done. We did and Saturday afternoon we had the diagnosis of leukemia. That was February 1994. Years later, in 2006, when Jonathan had gone through his 39 months of chemo at Children's Hospital in DC, we went back to South Africa to visit. It was moving to visit Andrew and Doris in their home. During the visit, Andrew rose from his seat in the living room to go across to Jonathan, extend his hand, and compliment Jonathan on his courage. Circling back to 1994, we were offered various places to go for treatment, but I think at the end of the day State Med requested us to return to DC. Jonathan received wonderful treatment from Dr. Gregory Reaman and his team of physicians and nurses at Children's Hospital. I really want to salute USAID beginning with Frank Almaguer, who was head of personnel. He instructed Bob Nachtrieb, who was head of assignments, "to handle the Elliott case with the heart, not the handbook." Ambassador Princeton Lyman, USAID Director Cap Dean, and my USAID/South Africa colleagues were extraordinarily supportive at this challenging time. I also wish to note for this oral history a great deal of gratitude for the many other friends and complete strangers in the USAID community who through the voluntary leave donation system gave me days or in some cases weeks of their unused vacation leave so I could spend time with my son and my family when my own leave ran out.

Q: Wow. That's impressive.

ELLIOTT: So I'm ever so grateful for that. Keith Brown was now the Office Director of Southern African Affairs for the African Bureau. I returned to his office and he also was welcoming and supportive. We were staying with some friends in McLean not far from Roberta Mahoney and David McCloud, who would kindly pick up my mail at the USAID office and be my "shuttlers" — I would run things over to their house, they would take it in, and would bring things out.

Q: So you were working from home?

ELLIOTT: Well, I was probably doing some work from home, but during the time when I was still on leave sometimes there would be things that I would need to get from Keith Brown and they would bring it out or I would need to return it and they'd bring it back in. I don't know what you and Nancy have found, but I have found that for all of USAID's bureaucracy and quirks as any organization has, when it comes to family crises as ours was, they are very supportive.

Q: That's great. That's great.

This is John Pielemeier. I'm talking second interview with William Elliott on the 24th of January, 2017. We left off when Will was back in Washington working with the Office of Southern African Affairs. I will encourage him to start at that point.

ELLIOTT: Thanks, John. Yes, I served in South Africa, as I said in the last recording, from 1993 to the early part of 1994 when we were evacuated for medical reasons for my son. He came down with leukemia but is fine now. From 1994 through 1998, I led the South Africa team in AFR/SA. South Africa was a very important country to the U.S. government and USAID at that point. April 1994 saw the election of Nelson Mandela and the end of Apartheid. Obviously, a very, very big deal for South Africa and for the U.S. government and for the U.S. society.

Much could be said about how the U.S. society across color lines had been engaged in the anti-apartheid movement, whether with protests at the South African Embassy, with Congressmen and other leaders and citizens doing civil disobedience and getting put in jail, or the U.S. government's own 1986 Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, which, as I said before, its purpose was to accomplish the dismantling of Apartheid.

During the Apartheid years the engagement between our two countries was, you could say, on hold. The United States did not embrace Apartheid. One of the initiatives that the U.S. government had done with Russia and with Egypt was to establish binational commissions. It would twin/link up similarly mandated ministries between the two countries. Since the relationship between the U.S. and South Africa had been in mothballs, the two Departments of Energy, the two departments of Interior or Natural Resources, the two Departments of Health, of Education, all twinned. Ministers or Deputy Ministers/Secretaries or Deputy Secretaries, led by the vice presidents of the two countries, would meet every six months, alternating the venue between the two countries. While it formally was called the U.S.-South Africa Binational Commission (BNC), it took on the title of the two vice presidents, the Gore-Mbeki Commission after Vice President Al Gore and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

Brian Atwood, USAID Administrator, was very much involved in this process. At the working level, he would lead the U.S. delegation, whether it was in Washington or in South Africa. There were numerous meetings that we had with Brian preparing for the deliverables that were required by Vice President Gore's office. We had many meetings with Leon Fuerth and his staff. Mr. Fuerth was the National Security Advisor to Vice President Gore. That was quite a critical time, as well as for the Mission itself, now operating in a fully open way to engage the country of South Africa in which every citizen could now vote.

Q: Will, give us a little flavor of how the Binational Commission meetings actually worked and what they accomplished, or didn't?

ELLIOTT: They would be held over a one or two-day period where you would, in Washington, be in a meeting room at the State Department. There might have been a dinner the night before, and then the next day, beginning at 9 a.m., you'd have the introductions by the vice/deputy presidents of the two countries to give an overall sense of the work of the Commission. The Commission had different committees, sometimes taking on the name of the ministries or sometimes taking on more of a functional role. For example, the two education ministries might have had a human development and training committee; the two energy departments might have had one called the energy committee. Then the two Commission leaders would turn the sessions over to their committee co-chairs, from the two countries, or their designee.

It was quite high-level, and I think in most cases it was the minister and the cabinet secretary, and, if not, it was certainly the deputy. I think it really indicated at that time the commitment of the United States and the commitment of South Africa to really make up for lost time in the relationship between our two countries that without Apartheid would have been a far, far closer one. Without the governmental ties, there were still many, many ties to NGOs, advocacy groups and colleges and universities between our two countries.

The committees would report out, there would be a lunch, then the rest of the committees would report out. I think there were probably five or six committees, so maybe three in the morning and maybe two or three in the afternoon, and then it would wind up. Then the committees themselves, in the intervening four or five months until then next six-monthly summit, would carry on its work by telephone—it was before videoconferencing at that time. The USAID Mission in South Africa would play a big part in putting some legs onto what the committees would do. We in Washington on the desk where I was would be working very, very closely with our Mission personnel to make this happen.

Q: The agenda was set by the White House and Pretoria?

ELLIOTT: I would say that this was more bottom-up. I don't recall Vice President Gore or Leon Fuerth and his staff being too directive. It was certainly of importance to them and they wanted to hear our deliverables, but I think they left it to the operating agencies in the two countries to do the hard work of seeing what were the priority areas that South Africa had and where we in the U.S. could match up on our governmental talent and know-how to do something together. I would say the deliverables were ones that bubbled up from below as opposed to a White House designated agenda.

Q: You were a fly on the wall in all of these meetings.

ELLIOTT: Yes, and I have a nice photo of Thabo Mbeki shaking my hand with Brian Atwood and Vice President Gore in the background. I don't recall myself being called upon too many times to speak. In October 1995 I did go out to South Africa, but that was not on Commission business, but as the South African government was sitting down with the USAID's Mission: the very first time engaging with USAID in a partner-to-partner way and looking at our bilateral program. Before then, the USAID Mission tried to do

what it could within the Apartheid system. This was the first meeting that they held and I was invited as the senior desk officer to come out and participate in it. I said a few words to lend complete support from USAID/Washington to this new, very important relationship.

Q: Are there one or two accomplishments from the Commission that you would highlight?

ELLIOTT: To answer your question, I would like to refer to, and quote from, Partner to History: The U.S. Role in South Africa's Transition to Democracy, by Ambassador Princeton Lyman, USIP, 2002, page 255:

Initially comprising subcommittees, at cabinet level, on agriculture, science, trade and investment, education, the environment, and energy, it later added committees on justice and defense. The BNC was one of the most important instruments in the new relationship between South Africa and the United States. It kept the relationship from drifting downward, from losing the potential that seemed so great on that sunny day in May 1994, when the impossible happened — South Africa inaugurated Nelson Mandela as its president and the white establishment took its seat behind him.

A plethora of programs have flowed from the BNC. These include programs in solar energy, housing, training of scientists, biomedical research, trade and investment, and law enforcement. But what makes this vehicle most important is that it has provided a basis for resolving issues at high levels, for developing cooperation on major issues, and for developing relationships that will outlast the aid program. It is a statement, as Presidents Clinton and Mandela said at the BNC's inauguration, "by our two peoples that each nation regards its relationship with the other as being sufficiently important to warrant a very heavy investment of time, thought, and energy" on both sides. END QUOTE

Q: One more question in relation to this: when you were back on the South African regional desk, you were going back and forth to South Africa where you had served. Mandela and company had taken over power—was there a change in the way they saw the USAID Mission and the U.S. government role after they fully took power from when you had been there before?

ELLIOTT: Oh, night and day, John, night and day. I say that because we had a very fully staffed and expanding program in South Africa once Mandela was elected in April 1994. I made just the one trip in October 1995. With the USAID Mission up to full strength, it gave a chance for the Mission and the governments to establish a real working relationship. I remember very distinctly that October 1995 meeting I attended was a very, very good meeting: very robust, in-depth discussions about development priorities. Before Mandela was elected, there was no developmental conversation going on with the

government. Where we did have a conversation before Mandela was with the non-white population.

I might put in a personal word here. My son went to a Montessori school, and both parents of his best friend were accomplished professionals and black. When I went back in 1995, one of the parents was seeking to serve on the local PTA (Parent Teacher Association) of the elementary school attended by one or both of their children. I went along to the meeting where the parent's candidacy was going to be discussed. It was very, very interesting because there were white parents who thought the black parent of my son's classmate was a bad person to have on the PTA. It was a very tense and uncomfortable evening for her--she was the mother --and the father and myself witnessed the animosity, haranguing, and libelous type language. But she was elected, not that night, but afterwards. So while our two governments were now finding each other, there was still a lot within South African society that was just beginning to find each other and get over the prejudices and the mindsets that had been going on in an institutional way since 1948, and I would say a good 100 years before that when it wasn't so institutionalized but was part of the way whites treated Africans.

Q: Did you ever personally have a relationship with Gore, with Al Gore?

ELLIOTT: No, I may have shook his hand once, but not anything more than that. I saw his national security advisor many times.

Q: Anything else you'd like to say about that period of supporting the Mission?

ELLIOTT: No.

Q: Then you decided to move on to a new set of responsibilities?

ELLIOTT: Yes. Actually, Sally Shelton-Colby, Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Global Programs, reached out to me quite unexpectedly. I wasn't that aware of Sally. I may have met her once or twice, just a "hello" or a handshake. Sally was looking for another special assistant or senior policy advisor and she asked if I would join her. I was having a very rewarding time on the South African desk. Aaron Williams had taken Cap Dean's place after Cap served his four or five years as Mission Director. I decided to leave the Africa Bureau and work with Sally and her Deputy - first Ann Van Dusen and later, Barbara Turner. All papers for Sally came through me for clearance and review.

A takeaway for myself was being the coordinator of the U.S.-Japan Common Agenda. This had been going on for maybe two or three years. It was a creation out of both countries wanting to find some platform that would complement our trade discussions that, at times, were contentious, as trade negotiations can be. I think there was a recognition that both countries had prosperity and wealth and both countries wanted to make a difference in the developing world. Thus, they thought there was something that could be gained by working together. The focus of the U.S.-Japan Common Agenda, which had annual meetings alternating between Tokyo and Washington, was on health in

Africa, particularly on addressing tuberculosis and infectious diseases. One action I led was to bring our U.S. NGO community into this effort. I remember meeting with Sally with the head of InterAction. We signed a small grant agreement with them to be the conduit for their membership to seek common ground with similar organizations in Japan. Japan traditionally had not had as strong a governmental-NGO linkage as we have had in the U.S., so that was one thing to try to develop.

After that time, I went on to the Europe and Eurasia Bureau. The Cold War had ended and the wall had come down, literally and figuratively. This was a very interesting bureau in that it was trying to find fresh new ways to be working with the state-driven societies that had been part of the Soviet Union. I first was part of the Economic Growth Office, heading up the budget division. Besides those responsibilities, I also, early on, managed what was called the Financial Stability Project. It provided small amounts of money to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, which at that time had graduated. There had been a more substantial program there but they had made enough progress that USAID felt they did not have to have a full-blown program. Yet, there was a desire by the bureau to continue to have some level of catalytic assistance to keep demonstrating U.S. support, and in tangible ways provide more than just seed funding for some activities that had to do with financial management. I made one TDY trip to all three countries, and we had a three-day workshop that brought in practitioners from ministries and associated private sector groups to talk about common issues..

I then, in 2002, moved from the Economic Growth Office to the Operations and Management Office. I was in charge of a division that oversaw the personnel team, the project development officers, and the use of the Global Development Alliance (GDA) Facility. Working on personnel included the assignment process, the EER (Employee Evaluation Reports) process, and awards nominations. There were five officers who were part of the very able, energetic PD unit, all of which were under personal services contracts. Sid Chernenkoff, Dave Smith, Shawn McCarthy, Gary Imhoff, and Carl Mabbs-Zeno. The GDA work, left to Missions in the field, used the facility to quite a large extent, so our role back in Washington was just to facilitate the conversation between USAID/W's GDA unit on the sixth floor and our Missions. Barbara Turner had come from the E&E Bureau to Sally Shelton's office to be her deputy. It was through Barbara's encouragement that I decided to join the E&E Bureau. They were fashioning some different ways of doing things out of necessity because the U.S. had not really worked with former state-driven, communist countries before, which presented its own challenges.

Q: So you moved there in what year?

ELLIOTT: I moved to the E&E Bureau in July 1999.

Q: And Mrs. Colby was, her name is familiar to many, because of her former husband, correct? Did she come with a background of knowledge about USAID, or were you mostly leading her to learn more about the process and the procedures and all?

ELLIOTT: Sally came to USAID with considerable experience in foreign affairs and had already been in her senior role for several years when I joined her office. Sally worked as a foreign affairs advisor to the late Senator Lloyd Bentsen from Texas. She had been an Ambassador in the Caribbean (Barbados 1979-1981) and later DAS (Deputy Assistant Secretary of State) for Latin America. In addition, her work on the Board of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs would have brought her into contact with USAID's work in terms of electoral assistance, multi-party strengthening, etc.

Q: When you joined the E&E Bureau, were you doing much traveling out to the region?

ELLIOTT: I can remember two trips that I took. One was the one, previously cited, I took very shortly after I had joined the bureau in 1999. I think probably within the first six months I made the trip to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic under the auspices of the Financial Stability Project, visiting various government departments where there were stock exchanges or tax administrations and, of course, the Missions we had at that time. And then the three-day conference that was held in Budapest. The other trip was a very interesting one. It was one to Buenos Aires. You might ask: "Why Buenos Aires, Will? And why you?" Well, the why me was that I substituted for Ken Lanza, who was deputy of the Economic Growth Office. Ken, who going back to his days of working in the EGAT Bureau (Economic Growth Center), had worked with Michael Porter of Harvard and Michael Fairbanks and the competitiveness paradigm. Ken had been invited to Buenos Aires for a two-day conference OECD (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development) on competitiveness and small businesses. He couldn't go so he asked me to represent him; I gave a 10-minute presentation on competitiveness with power point slides. The only other American that was there was someone from the Small Business Administration who spoke as well.

I think we all remember where we were September 11, 2001. I was in the E&E Bureau. We were having a meeting when we got the word at 9 AM or so. Most of the leadership of the Bureau was having an in-the-field retreat with all the Missions Directors. One of the office directors was in an acting capacity while the AA (Assistant Administrator) and DAAs (Deputy Assistant Administrators) were out. Some quick decisions needed to be taken on what we would do, and of course take direction from the sixth floor, and then make our way home in as intelligent a way we could.

Q: So the whole office was evacuated immediately?

ELLIOTT: Yes. I think in one way it wasn't quite immediate like with a fire drill. I think it took time to figure out what was happening, and so I think we were probably all out of there I'd say within an hour. For myself, I walked maybe ten-fifteen minutes away to an office building to connect with friends who worked for an NGO and spent the rest of the day there, outside of a government building, and then got driven home mid-way through the afternoon, knowing that the subways were probably not a safe place to be.

Q: Anything else about this last period in E&E that you'd like to touch on?

ELLIOTT: No, I think that's it. I then went through the month at FSI for the Career Transition Program...

Q: The so-called retirement course...

ELLIOTT: The retirement course, and found that extremely helpful. You had mentioned that part of the archive can include life after AID...

Q: By the way, why did you decide to retire?

ELLIOTT: As noted, my son had had leukemia and was under treatment at Children's Hospital for 39 months. After working in Washington for three years, USAID requires Foreign Service Officers, which I was, to bid on overseas assignments. But, if there are legitimate reasons, you can request an exemption, for example, health concerns for yourself or a family member. For several years, my son's physician at Children's Hospital in DC requested that our family remain in the DC area to support my son's long-term recovery. When my mother-in-law joined and became dependent on us, her situation was added to my request for exemption. In 2004, State Med felt that I could go back overseas and they preferred for me to do that. I preferred to remain with my family, so retired with great, great gratitude for USAID and all the wonderful experiences I had had. Still, to this day, I often find myself talking about "we" and "our" as I talk about USAID.

Q: Well, you took the course, what's your thought process in terms of the next stage of your working life, or were you really seriously thinking about full retirement?

ELLIOTT: Absolutely not, I was too young to do that, and I think, John, there's retirement where you are no longer earning income but, for me, I will always be employed doing something. But I did take quite seriously one of the admonitions that was said several times during the month-long Career Transition Course to not rush into any decisions, but take enough time to see what you would really like to do next. Some people were really clear on that and had something lined up and off they went. I wasn't one of those; I really did want to take the time.

Before we began our phone interviews I sent you an email with a couple of press clips which showed civic engagement in Fairfax County that I did before joining a development firm (Crown Agents USA) in 2006. In brief, a few of us formed Fairfax Citizens for Responsible Growth because we felt that our Fairfax County supervisors were not listening to the people who elected them. We were motivated, in part, by a very large development private developers wanted to put near the Vienna Metro. We called a County-wide meeting at a local high school to discuss growth issues and 500 people came. We invited our local Congress people and our local senators and delegates of the state legislature. We invited all supervisors, but only one came. Several State legislatures and two Congressmen (Tom Davis and Frank Wolf) came. This was quite an interesting period, dealing with the press and organizing citizens to speak at numerous public hearings at the Fairfax County Government Center. We lost the battle, but I think we brought a sensitivity to some of the elected leaders and also to their staff. As they then

turned their sights to redeveloping Tyson's Corner I believe some County decision-makers took a different view on how much density a community could sustain, based on lessons learned from our experience near the Vienna Metro.

Q: All right. What about your work with the...your professional work? You took a job with Crown Agents, was that right away?

ELLIOTT: Well, there was maybe a hiatus of a year and two-thirds between retiring from USAID and joining Crown Agents. In 2006, Mike Deal, who had retired from USAID, became President of Crown Agents USA. I joined Crown Agents in August 2006.

Q: When you did join Crown Agents, did you work on USAID-related activities?

ELLIOTT: Yes. Crown Agents, a UK-based firm with a track record of over 180 years overseas, focused mainly on strengthening government operations, had as its two prime U.S. clients USAID and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. When I joined, we also developed a very specific relationship with the Gates Foundation. Crown Agents had been part of the winning team for the first PEPFAR HIV/AIDS contract that had about 17 different partners led by MSH (Management Scientists for Health) and JSI (John Snow International). Crown Agents was the third partner and we did a lot with logistics and procurement of some of the drugs and all of the test kits and training of local staff and heading up some of the country offices. I dealt with that program for a short period of time, but soon focused on economic growth and business development, looking at trade, customs, and tax administration. An initial target was looking for work Liberia.

In February 2007, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf came to the U.S. for a week, after the civil war had ended in Liberia and she had been elected. I and a couple of Crown Agents colleagues visited the president and her minister of finance to discuss strengthening the customs operation in Liberia.

I spent most of November 2013 in East Africa -- Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda--in preparing for the next iteration of the East Africa Trade Hub. That was something that Crown Agents pursued as a prime contractor with a strong team. I went out with a colleague to prepare for that, recruiting local personnel, and developing good intelligence of what would be the right approach in the bid. The East African Community Secretariat is in Arusha, so spent time in Arusha as well as in Dar es Salaam.

Over the years with Crown Agents I reached out to people at the EGAT Bureau: Virginia Brown who heads up the trade office, her deputy, Paul Fekete, and others. We hosted several brown bag occasions at Crown Agents, and often did those in partnership with the Society for International Development (SID). Jocelyn Rowe and Steve Giddings at the time were heading up the Africa subcommittee for SID.

I mentioned the Millennium Challenge Corporation: Crown Agents had contracts in Namibia, Mongolia, Morocco and Kenya. Early in my time at Crown Agents, I had

involvement in pursuing MCC programs. Later I gave way to those implementing the projects who could also pursue new opportunities.

I mentioned the Gates Foundation. They have a program that's not very well known. We know of Gates in the fields of health and agriculture, but back in 2007 they created the Global Libraries Program. They aimed to wire up libraries so that people could go into local libraries and be able to sit down at computers and be connected with the Internet. The Gates Foundation reached out to a few firms, including Crown Agents, known for their expertise in procurement. A colleague and I made a trip out to Seattle to make our presentation. We were fortunate enough to win one of the contracts that allowed us to be eligible to be bidding on actual country programs. We won a very significant contract in Vietnam that was for an initial two or three years, but because of how well we did and how well the program was received, it got extended for another three or four years. It went from a pilot project to a more country-wide effort. That, too, I spun off to others because that became a real center of activity for us with a very important client.

So I think, John, that wraps up what I have to say at the moment.

Q: Are you still working for Crown Agents?

ELLIOTT: No, I retired in January 2015. I purposefully asked for, and was allowed to, go to a four-day work week, and then in my last three months went to a three day work week. I would particularly recommend the four-day work week to anyone who is in a retirement situation. It was great to have a three-day weekend every work week. In the first year of my retirement, Angela and I spent nearly five months living out of a cousin's home in the southern part of Wales.

Q: Oh, my goodness.

ELLIOTT: The cousin spends half the year with her husband in Nova Scotia where they have a home, so we had this home base in Newport, Wales, not too far from the capital city of Cardiff, Angela's hometown. We had a wonderful National Trust heritage house and land to walk on which was only a 12 minute walk from us. We used Newport as a base to go around the UK (United Kingdom). In our, at that point, 32 years of marriage, Angela had not seen many of her UK friends or her German relatives—her mother was German and her father was Welsh—so this really gave us time, in an unhurried way, to spend more than just a few hours with some very long-time, in some cases childhood friends, of Angela. There were two families who lived half an hour from each other in Derbyshire, in the UK Midlands, who we knew from our days 30 years ago in Botswana, and they knew each other but did not know they were nearly neighbors. That was fun to visit them and also get across to see the German relatives near Stuttgart and so forth. The big event in 2016 was our son getting married in July.

Q: Wonderful!

ELLIOTT: So here we are at 2017. With the sudden passage of my brother in 2014, I feel as an uncle and as a brother-in-law a special obligation to continue to care for my brother's widow and his two kids, one in Tulsa and one in Los Angeles with young families. We do what we can to be in touch with them and see them when we can.

South Sudan is a place we think of a lot. I was at USIP (United States Institute of Peace) last Wednesday (January 2017) for the debrief from Special Envoy Donald Booth, who was stepping down at the end of the Administration, and Princeton Lyman, under who we served in South Africa, was moderating. Lo and behold, I run into a couple of South Sudanese USIP young leader fellows who've been in the country for eight days, are here until May 30th, and one of them was actually part of the training that Angela and I went to support back in 2013. So we had both of them out to house for Sunday afternoon and hope to see a good bit of them.

I think, John, that our connections by Skype, by email, by phone calls with things internationally, with the Botswana reunion group, with family — that's our field of play for 2017 and beyond. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if we don't travel someplace internationally, whether it's back to see some of the Welsh relatives and maybe to someplace in Africa in 2018. We're trying to keep alive and kicking.

Q: I have one last question for you, Will, and that is...if you, and I'm sure you do from time to time, run into young people whether it's USIP or elsewhere and they say "You worked in AID, you had a career there, would you recommend it?" What would you say to them?

ELLIOTT: Is your question "would you recommend it?"

Q: Yes, would you recommend joining a career in AID at this stage?

ELLIOTT: Oh, yes. One practical example of that is my pledge father in my fraternity at college, his daughter is now part of AID. She may have had some inclinations in that direction, but I hope that chatting with Angela and I encouraged her to do that. Any person that shows an interest I would thoroughly recommend that they seriously consider a career at USAID.

Q: Well, thank you very much. We're going to end the interview here. Thank you, William Elliott.

End of interview