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FREDERICK BARTON

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INTERVIEW

Q: Well, I am absolutely delighted to be here with Frederick, to use his formal name, Frederick "Rick" Barton, for the first session of his oral history. It is the 15th of April, 2022. Rick is someone who has had a wonderfully varied and diverse career, and I am looking forward to hearing all about it. So, Rick, let's get started. I noticed from your CV, that you are the son of an American diplomat. So why don't you tell us a little bit about the beginning of your life, where you were born, and what you remember about your childhood, where it was spent and anything that you see in those early years that was influential in directing you towards what you ultimately became and are still becoming.

BARTON: Great. Well, my father was a Marine in Iwo Jima. And so that was a searing experience for both of my parents, who had gotten married just before he went overseas in World War Two. They committed at that point to help make the world more peaceful. I did not really know that until we read my dad's self-authored obituary- wish we had more of a conversation with both of my parents about that. It meant that when he got into the Foreign Service, he did mostly Cultural Affairs work for USIA (the US Information Agency) with a few years working for AID (USAID, the United States Agency for International Development) in human resources development in the Dominican Republic and then back in Washington when there was a revolution there in 1964. So, I was born in Argentina, his second post, after Uruguay where my middle brother was born. I'm the youngest of three sons—

Q: What year were you born in?

BARTON: 1949. With no memories of my life in Argentina, we then moved to Spain, where my memory kicked in. The first school we went to—we always went to local schools, which was my parents way of really getting us more in touch with the local culture. I actually spoke Spanish before I did English, there's still a few words that I have trouble with that I pronounce in a more logically Spanish way. But my Spanish is sort of stuck at about age eight.

When we moved back to the US, my mother wanted us— if we're going to be American, she wanted us to live in the US for a while. My dad went to work for the Institute for International Education, and then for Columbia University. And so we lived outside New York for seven years, but he missed the international work. When I was about 14, he went back to work for AID in the Dominican Republic, and then got back into USIA doing cultural work in Bolivia and Guadalajara, Mexico. So those are the early years.

Q: When you were 14, you were still with them. And you were with them in the Dominican Republic, at the time that your father was working for AID?

BARTON: In a more limited way, just on vacations because I did go— I went away to school in the fall of 1964. Instead of going to school in the Dominican Republic, I went to Deerfield Academy in western Massachusetts. The common thread throughout was that we always felt we were representing the United States. It was a family responsibility— and public service was elevated in our household as something important.

Q: And your mother was, at this stage, a Foreign Service wife, which meant that she really could not maintain a career of her own?

BARTON: Right. I mean, in those days the spouses used to also have so-called efficiency reports. So they actually— they not only rated the officer, but they also rated the spouse, which was fortunately a practice that was given up. I remember my mom finding that pretty insulting as life went on. She got wonderful efficiency ratings, but in some cases, her efficiency ratings were probably better than my father's, which could not have been career enhancing for him. So, you know, it was just a stupid system. And it was just one of many, many abuses that the State Department and our Foreign Service took its time to work its way out of.

Q: Dominican Republic, what year was it?

BARTON: The 60s; 64–65. So they had that— So my father was evacuated (due to the 1965 Dominican coup d'état), my mother happened to be back in the United States at that point. When he was evacuated, my dad went from being a human resources officer in Santo Domingo, where he was working on issues like family planning and interfacing

with the Roman Catholic Church, and other officials in the Dominican Republic, to then being kind in a hallway at the State Department working for OFDA—the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. For a short period of time, before he got back to the USIA—which was really his love, he loved that. The scholarships and fellowships, the cultural exchanges, that soft power, public diplomacy side of the U.S. My mother was very much into that too, because she was an artist and had been a concert pianist. And she got to know the arts community,and they had an ease with that whole side of the host country society. And it's a wonderful way to represent the United States and to get to know a place.

Q: Did you receive any of your mother's musical talent?

BARTON: She would encourage me to sing but I don't get as much encouragement from others.

Q: So you don't play the piano, for example.

BARTON: Very, very poorly. Three songs. And I played the clarinet for a while. My mother got us— when we lived in New York, we had a little swing band, and my brother Bill played the trumpet. I played the clarinet and she would play the piano. And then we had a fellow named Tex Kidd who was our drummer,— my mother and Tex, were the musicians. And we were, you could imagine a swing band with that kind of level of talent.

Q: Did you actually play for social events?

BARTON: Certainly not for commission.

Q: But you're one of the few people growing up, who came to work for AID that probably knew what AID was, as an adolescent?

BARTON: Somewhat, though I didn't have as good an idea. And there was still a little bit of snobbery when Brian Atwood offered me the job of starting OTI—the Office of Transition Initiatives. I started to ask around and there were quite a few people who said, "Well, that's an interesting idea, but it's AID," so they were a bit snobby about it. And fortunately, I had a friend and mentor in Maine, Dick Wolfe, who did know AID— he had already done some work with the retired executive corps. He not only was encouraging and favorable about AID but then he said something generous that has stuck with me: "Rick, wherever you go, there will be a bright shining light." That was a generous way to get out of the inside Washington caste system conversation.

Q: Your experience, even on vacations with your dad in that brief period he was working for AID, at least you knew what the initial stood for, right? So—

BARTON: Oh yes. In La Paz, Bolivia, most of our best friends were the children of AID people. So there was where the best parties were, and at this point, we were late teenagers, so that was a favorable image. And they seem to have, you know, they had resources and they did creative things. They weren't quite cut from the exact same cloth as the State Department folks - all good impressions.

Q: Do you maintain, or did you maintain, any friendships with those kids that you knew at that period into your adulthood?

BARTON: Yeah, not as many as I'd like but Charlie Ries, who's an Ambassador—retired Ambassador, several postings including Greece—his stepfather worked for AID in La Paz, Bolivia. I see him every Saturday, almost every Saturday morning on the next tennis court when I play with my regular group, and he was at RAND (Corporation). It is a bond though we don't talk too much about that time.

Q: Sure. But at least, there is that link?

BARTON: Yeah, that's the one that I think right offhand. But there are others. Irv Tragen comes to mind.

Q: Okay, so you're at Deerfield. But is that for your sophomore year? And—

BARTON: Yes.

Q: And did you stay there for the rest of your high school?

BARTON: I stayed there for three years and then went to Harvard for four years.

Q: Deerfield is obviously a very prestigious and well-regarded prep school. Are there friendships you made during that period that last on and other people who have gone on into similar areas of activity - or are you kind of unique in that crowd?

BARTON: It's interesting, I do have some great friends from that period. But many of them were renewed at our 50th reunion. We had not stayed in touch with a few exceptions. Because I'm an extrovert, and friendships really matter a lot to me, I tend to stay in touch with people. The 50th reunion allowed us to have several days together. And now we have, I would say every two months, we have a zoom call. And there are a couple of people on the call who are doing wonderful international work. Rob Walbridge, who ran the American School in Cote d'Ivoire, and still lives there.

And another, Ted Higgins, who's a surgeon in Kansas City, who started a seventy Haitian person surgery center in Fond Parisien in Haiti. I'm trying to help him get the health care

community organized right now. In fact, I've been working through AID, the State Department, and the embassy, and others and the mission down there to get them to provide quite a bit more cover on these issues of insecurity. Because they're not getting their supplies, their patients aren't able to travel to get their required surgery, and even their staff has been attacked. These are by pretty amateurish gangs. Personal safety is a difficult issue, with a tough history in Haiti. But the healthcare community is probably the premier employer in Haiti: the biggest number of people, the most respected, the most regularly paid. So how do you use this great strength which the gang members need as well, to cut out the extortion, the kidnapping, and the other practices, which are sinking Haiti. Trying to help the health care community think of itself as more political, so they get a little bit more tuned to the necessity for some level of political organizing. They can then pressure the government and the embassy and others to take more action so that it doesn't put the individual Haitians at risk, which is the tradition.

Q: That's great. That's wonderful. Okay, so you've finished at Deerfield and you go to Harvard. What did you major in?

BARTON: I majored in government, which was Harvard's version of political science, and sort of minored in Spanish literature. It wasn't formal, but that's probably the second largest group of courses that I took. And I would say that I majored in community. I did a lot, a lot of things. I was a sports columnist. I was on the varsity tennis team. I was on the Committee on Rights and Responsibilities (a new Judicial Board, which was a sort of a failed Harvard attempt to spread justice beyond administrative justice). And ran a two week art festival. I was very, very, very active in the community and less so in the classroom. In small classes, where I had a personal relationship with the professor, I performed better.

Q: But you got through all right, right. But, did this major in government give you exposure to any particular region? Or was it about the US government? How much international focus was there in the work you were doing in college?

BARTON: It was quite theoretically structured. All the preliminary courses were taught by a distinguished group who came to the United States from Germany in the early days of the war— Carl Friedrich, Karl Deutsch, Henry Kissinger, a number of people. And then when I tried to get a tutorial on Latin America, I ended up with one on Ghana. That was Harvard's government department then.

Q: That was pretty close!

BARTON: You know, there really wasn't much capacity in the Harvard government department in those days, for other parts of the world. There was some development in Asia because Reischauer and others were teaching courses and Vietnam was such a prominent factor of that stage of life. But I would say that I got my excitement about

politics or government and political science right after I graduated from Harvard going to work for a congressman who was running for the Senate in Maine. And then suddenly, all that stuff I had studied was just much, much more relevant but also much more exciting on a personal level. And it turned out I was a pretty good community organizer, because that's essentially, you know, pulling together friends and creating new coalitions of people. That was kind of at the heart of a lot of my own experience and what gave me the greatest pleasure.

Q: So when you were still in Cambridge (Massachusetts, home of Harvard), your activities were pretty much focused on campus, not reaching out into the Cambridge community on political issues and so on?

BARTON: Not as much. I mean, I remember going to the Boston Garden for a Eugene McCarthy rally. One of my good friends had invited me— but being more of an observer of it, taking it in and processing it more than getting fully involved.

Q: Did you graduate from Harvard in 1972—

BARTON: '71.

Q: '71. And how did you get to Maine? I mean does your family have any links to Maine or?

BARTON: Yes, so my mother was born in Boothbay Harbor, and my dad went to Bowdoin. All the years we were overseas, that was our legal home.

Q: I see.

BARTON: We had a home and my mother's mother, grandmother Marion Whitten, was really the anchor of our family. My other grandmother lived in Foxborough, Massachusetts, where my parents had gone to high school before they went to college. And so Boothbay Harbor, Maine, was really our home. We had a house there, it was a summer house.

Before starting to work there in May '72, I thought I was going to be drafted. I had a "bad number", eighty-two or something, which came up early in my senior year, when I had a student deferment. Then the Selective Service law ran out. The renewal was finally passed by the Congress, then it was challenged in California. And so the implementation of the new draft law had been in limbo for, let's say, six months. In the fall of '71 I got a call from my draft board saying show up for your physical. I went in, I passed my physical and I prepared to either join the reserves, the officer corps, or be drafted. I had those three choices.

Q: This is after you graduated from Harvard.

BARTON: Yeah. So this is like October, November, and early December of 71. So my number— because they've gotten past me I was right there at the very top of those eligible. So I went into the Boston naval shipyard and stood there in sort of a cattle car type situation with people getting examined and everything else. I was more or less ready and I passed the test for the Officer Corps and the Reserves. I wasn't sure what I was going to do. I really wasn't a conscientious objector, but I was not wildly enthusiastic about the opportunity either. So I prepared everything. And then I just got impatient.

My father was in Guadalajara, Mexico. He was the PAO, the Public Affairs Officer there, which is a very big consulate because it's the largest population of Americans on Social Security in the world, outside of the United States, or was back then. And so I just said, "I'm just going home for Christmas, I will just take my chances on being drafted." And I was sitting at home early in January, reading the Mexican English language newspaper. There was a little story around New Years that said, "Melvin Laird, the Secretary of Defense, has announced that there'll be a 0 draft call for the first three months in 1972." Which meant that anybody who was exposed in 1971, instead of being at the top of the pile, they will have gone through their year plus three months. And they'll go to the bottom of the plan. So 82 was then added to 365. Reading the paper one morning in Guadalajara, Mexico, it looked like "Oh, I'm probably not gonna be drafted."

So I did a few things in Mexico for 3-4 months. Spent lots of time with my parents, played golf, had a little radio show and a few other things like that. Pretty much underemployed. And then it came time. Well, I think I better get going and I went back to Bronxville, New York, to see my elementary and Junior High School little league coach, a guy named Oliver Quayle, who was a great pollster. He was one of John Kennedy's with Lou Harris, partnered with Harris, the pollsters for 1960. And LBJ's (Lyndon B. Johnson) major pollster, when he was president. I went to see him and I said, "You know, I'm interested in working in a campaign, Mr. Quayle, what do you think?" He said, "The only place you'd have any value would be here in Greater Westchester County, or in Maine, those only two places you know anything. And it just so happens that I've got candidates running for Congress and the US Senate." So he literally—it was a great lesson and I've tried to apply it because I help younger people look for work—He picked up the phone, he called these three congressmen. He reached one of them right away. And he said, "I got a young man here, I'd stick my personal reputation on. And I'd like you to give him a job." And I was like, wow, this is amazing. But I didn’t hear back from them right away.

Then Bill Hathaway, who was the congressman from northern Maine, running against Senator Margaret Chase Smith, called me a couple of nights later at my grandmother's house in Winchester, Massachusetts, and said, "this is Bill Hathaway. I've heard some really good things about you and understand you'd like to work on my campaign", I said,

"Well, I've heard some really wonderful things about you." And he said, "You have to stop talking to my mother." And he sent me up to meet his campaign manager, Al Gamache. He offered me a place to stay at the Eastland Hotel in Portland and I started on the campaign a few days later – no pay, expenses covered, and growing responsibility every day.

It was a wonderful, positive campaign. We were instructed never to say anything critical of Margaret J. Smith, she was an icon. And we didn't. I got started organizing a part of the state and within a short period of time, I was organizing probably two thirds of the geography of the state. You get frontline promotions all the time.

Q: But you knew Maine, at least part of it, pretty well, because of the long time that your family had been up there. So it wasn't a totally alien area as far as you were concerned.

BARTON: Oh, but of course I was on the coast. I was there usually in the summer. Now I was everywhere. I learned the state and loved the people, the geography, the traditions, the diversity and the culture. A political campaign is a spectacular way to meet people.

Q: And Margaret Chase Smith was in the House (of Representatives) then or—?

BARTON: She was the only woman in the Senate.

Q: So Hathaway was running for the Senate seat.

BARTON: And he was the congressman from the northern half of the state, which is what I pretty much organized.

Q: I see.

BARTON: From Rumford to Millinocket and Calais/Eastport to Bar Harbor and down the coast to Boothbay Harbor.

Q: And did he win that election?

BARTON: We won that election 53 to 47. I was very excited. We just didn't have time to think about winning and losing. We're just working every day and enjoying it, just having fun. And she had a tough primary opponent, Bob Monks, who had kind of highlighted that she was getting old. She was seventy-four. A career starts at that age in the US Senate today. She never had any television advertising. We had some wonderful television advertising by Sid Aronson, but it was a modestly funded campaign —a $200,000 campaign. And I remember just driving down to the victory party and we heard

one of the network's come out and said “there's a big upset in Maine. They'll have Congressman Bill Hathaway, a very popular Second District Congressman who has just defeated national icon Margaret Chase Smith.” And we were just beside ourselves. It felt good. I actually organized Margaret C. Smith's hometown, Skowhegan, Maine. A couple months later, she said, "I had a wonderful time, I loved serving the people of Maine. My only disappointment was that my hometown did not vote for me in this last election."

Q: Boy, you must. So why did you ever leave political work? I mean, that was— to have your first campaign, your first right out of school essentially, and to have a victory in a Senate campaign. That's not too common, I think, in this arena.

BARTON: You know, it's hard work. And it's a grind. Knocking on doors or leafleting, in obscure towns with a bunch of junior high school students filling the car that you borrowed for a two hour drive up to Millinocket, or out to Skowhegan is, you know, demanding— newness is an important part of its attraction.

Q: Right.

BARTON: Political campaigns have gotten worse, in so many ways. But they also haven't gotten better in terms of modernization and whatnot. So if I volunteer now to campaign, I'm stunned that we're doing stuff that we were doing 50 years ago, exactly 50 years ago. And that's disappointing, but it does speak to the malign influence of political professionals, the experts.

Q: I saw that— you had this victory, and then what did you do?

BARTON: So, again, I hadn't planned on much. I came down to Washington, and was offered the job of opening Hathaway’s new offices and running them in Southern Maine. As his field representative. Because he'd been representing the North of the state he did not have an office in Portland, the largest city. And then he also wanted to open one in Biddeford, which was in one of the fastest growing counties, York Country, right on the New Hampshire border.

So I opened those two offices and sort of kept an eye on the Lewiston office. And I would drive around the state almost every day, let's say three days a week, and just meet with people, have office hours, with little notices in all the local weekly papers saying Senator Bill Hathaway's Representative Rick Barton will be at the town offices from 10 to 12 today to meet with constituents, and most of them were individual meetings. Social Security, Veterans Affairs, individual problems with the government, farmers home applications. But every so often there would be a town undertaking a large project or fuel prices would jump quickly and the local fuel dealer would say, "Look, I can't do anything about it. You should go see Senator Hathaway's representative" and there would be dozens of people waiting to see me— that happened in Livermore Falls. Instead of

having one person waiting for me there was a town meeting of about sixty or eighty people, with pitchforks. These were all good training sessions, because I hadn't done any of those things before. I got to know the state, a wide range of people, many local officials, how the US government works on a personal basis, and much more.

Then when the senator was in the state, I would drive him around the southern part of the state- from Kittery to Fryeburg and up to Belfast. I was very young and very inexperienced. I mean, I remember picking him up late, not filling the car with gas. There were lots of lessons— it was a pretty simple job, but I hadn't done it before and compared to his veteran, who was up in Bangor, who would advance every trip by pre driving them and measuring the time and everything else. I was much, much more interested in getting out and helping people. I was adequate at the job and not brilliant.

Q: But that did sound like something that would be absorbing — going around and listening to what people have to say. That has been a feature of some of the jobs that you did have later with AID and at the State Department.

BARTON: Absolutely, and then looking for the solution. Because if you listen, and you don't take it anywhere, then the people are even more frustrated. And so I love that part of politics. I love that part of AID as well. It could be one of the things we do best with OTI. So a lot of the stuff we did with OTI was grounded in this kind of general exposure that I'd had in 20 years in Maine, because I did that for the Senator, I had been a candidate myself, I've been a state party official. So I stayed with politics for quite a while and really enjoyed it. But I never made a living off of it.

It is important to do these jobs when you're most enthused and excited rather than just because you're experienced. When I started campaigning I was the last guy to leave a place because I wanted to meet one more voter. Later, I was still oftentimes the last person there, because I knew it was the right thing to do. And that became less compelling.

Q: How long did you do that job?

BARTON: Just for two years, because our congressman in the first district, Peter Kyros, was one of the few Democrats to lose in 1974. And after he lost, I thought, "well, there's a new Republican, David Emery, and maybe I should run."

Q: No democratic candidate for—

BARTON: No Democratic candidate. My ambition soared. The Democrats had control of the State Legislature and I gave a brief thought to pursuing the Secretary of State job (as a stepping stone), which would be selected by the House and the Senate in Augusta. But that was crazy- I was unknown in the Capitol.

I mentioned running for Congress to Bill Hathaway, and he said, "that might be exciting, but you'd have to leave my staff." And so I walked myself out of a job. But that then gave me a huge advantage over what became a rather large field, because I got an early start (and didn't have any distractions, like another job). I didn't scare anybody out of the race. In fact, I stopped going to see some people because I'd gone to see somebody for support and two weeks later, he was a candidate. And I thought, "oh, that's the impact I'm having on people." They say, "That guy's running, why shouldn't I?" And so I had the advantage of starting very early, because then suddenly I had all kinds of time on my hands.

I didn't have a lot of money. But my grandfather had died, and I'd been left $20,000. And so that was like a fortune- or at least enough to live on for the year. Not enough to buy an election. 1975 was a very complicated year. I got married to Kit Lunney in Boothbay Harbor (she was from Wisconsin), had a television show, Maineweek on PBS, taught at Bowdoin (College, located in Brunswick, Maine)- but the compensation for those two jobs was probably under $5,000 for the whole year.

Q: Being married didn't pay you.

BARTON: No, but Kit was the best office manager in history. And then my brother, Bill, was going through a divorce in Texas. He came back looking like Charles Manson. He became my campaign manager in title because he would clean his act up and he ended up being the best, fabulous campaign manager and later a senior vice president for American Express. So a very talented guy. I started with a core team that included one paid staffer, John Smart, a livewire from the Portland area.

Q: Right

BARTON: —talent that was raw, but I kind of knew the campaign thing. I had an intuitive skill set. And well, I worked a lot on a couple of years of campaigns. We ended up winning the seven way primary against, you know, the party chair, the majority leader of the house, and the mayor of the largest city. It was a complete surprise to all of them because they all thought they were somebody and I had one big advantage. I knew I was nobody. The voters liked my energy, enthusiasm, lack of pretense and ideas as we ran against the Mayor of Biddeford, Democratic State Party Chairman, a State Senator, the head of the Housing Agency, the Majority Leader of the House, and a Portland civic leader, etc.

Q: But then in the general election, the Republican won?

BARTON: Yeah, he was the incumbent. He was sitting, he was just sitting there waiting. He had quite a bit more money, twice as much money. And he had been, you know, he'd run against a pretty tough incumbent two years before, so he was just more seasoned and

we ran out of juice. Ultimately, the judgment the voters made, I believe, was that "Mr. Dave Emery just got there. And Barton's got a great future- we'll get another shot at Barton." They made a clean choice and it was competitive. It got as close as single digits but I lost by 57-43.

Q: But, you know—

BARTON: The weekend before the general election, my brother Bill said, "If we get over 100,000 votes you will win. I got 108,000 votes, more than any loser in history – it was a huge turnout year in 1976, with Carter and Ford running for President and Senator Muskie running for reelection. Phenomenal stretch experience. It took everything I had and more and I learned so much. We started from zero, made lifelong friends, and grew. Few experiences that are so total.

A family friend, John Gardner, the former Secretary of HEW said to me at the beginning, "Make sure you don't become bitter. I have seen so many people run for office and grow bitter." That did not happen to me. I respect the process, admire people who run for office, and believe it is essential for democracy to work.

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Q: Okay, so you have lost the election. But it was not a ridiculous thing to be doing and sounded like it was a worthwhile experience. So what do you do then?

BARTON: Losing an election like that, we had done one thing for about a year and a half, nonstop, doesn't prepare you very well for the next step. And I think I was also quite a bit ahead of myself, because I was twenty seven years old and I've been a very prominent person all over the state, and now I was back to being a twenty seven year old with limited experience.

All of these experiences played into how to look at problems at OTI, and how to make sure that there was a political sensitivity. And that's part of what Brian Atwood wanted: a political development office, one that was going to be sensitive to political opportunities and he didn't really know what it would look like. But he wanted it to advance the political development of a place and beyond the democracy center that he created, which was one of the more formal structured elections and systems models.

Q: You must have been exhausted, too --

BARTON: It was physical exhaustion, I saw some pictures of myself on TV news stories from that October where I was walking into a store in Winthrop, Maine, and it was a

cold, late fall day, and I looked pretty much like death warmed over. The Boy Wonder was looking a bit worn down.

I ended up having a radio talk show, which was fine, except that I was tired, and it started out as a four hour a night live talk show, with a very limited signal. It was a decent enough show, it was number one rated in the market, in a very small market where few people listen at night to begin with. I appreciated the value of media and communications, which I've used to great advantage, I think through most of my life, most of my career since that. We were pretty much dependent on Kit, my wife's working. She was a lawyer and had gone to work for a statewide organizing effort to get more community voices into local crime, policing and injustice, supported by federal grant. I thought I might find something in the federal government, but again, I was a bit too young and too inexperienced for some of the things I wanted. And then Secretary Joe Califano took over health, education, welfare and he decided to hire in each of the 10 regions. He had a regional director and then he decided to add two political jobs; one was the Director for Public Affairs, and the other was the director for Intergovernmental Affairs. I heard about those jobs, and a couple of people encouraged me to apply for them. I went in to see Speaker O'Neill because he had control over all the jobs in New England, and he had been a generous donor to my campaign (around $750). His lifelong colleague from the state legislature, and now his executive assistant met me just as I came in and he said his name was Leo Diehl. He said to me in about 45 seconds, "Rick, nice to see you. How are you? You're interested in that job? Oh, the Speaker filled those jobs yesterday with the Secretary on the Cape when they were out fishing". I thought, wow, and then he said, thanks for coming by. The whole thing took a minute maybe. But then that evening I ran into John Gardner, who was a family friend and he had been the secretary of HEW. And he said, "you know, Rick, it's entirely possible that that's the way it happened, but you're a pretty attractive candidate and that might have been speaker O'Neill's way of getting you out of the field". And he said, "You should still go ahead and submit your papers". I'd never conceived of somebody doing that. I mean, that was a strategy way beyond my sophistication. So I filed the papers, and then about --

Q: With whom did you file the papers? HEW (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare). I see. Okay.

BARTON: So then I was working for Bill Hathaway on his 1978 reelection campaign, just filling in and helping out since I needed some money, and Rep. Bill Cohen was challenging him. I was in that office in December 1977, and I got a call—no cell phones in those days. I got a call from HEW saying, Could you be in Washington, the day after tomorrow for an interview, and I thought they were just padding the roll to say that they looked at some other candidates, but it's already a done deal. I couldn't afford it. I said, "Can you pay for the plane ticket" and they said fine. I got out just as a snowstorm was set to hit. I got to Washington and first walked into the Hubert Humphrey Building, a new building at the time, there was a guy there to meet me at the door. I thought he was one of

the interviewers, he was really a functionare; somebody who just takes you to the meetings. I was treating him like he was the most important person on earth. He was quite flattered by that.

Q: That's the way of a political figure, right? Of course, you would do that.

BARTON: So I didn't have a clue. And then I walked into the first interview with Gene Eisenberg, a great guy who went on to work at the White House. But he's one of these guys who was talking on two phones at the same time. Then he asked me a question. Maybe he listened to the answer, then back to the phone calls. He was managing people coming to the door. And in the course of that half hour with him, I got to speak maybe for two or three minutes. But he said, "You're exactly the kind of candidate we want for this job. Now, we got to figure out how to work our way around Speaker O'Neill. Can you get Senator Muskie, who's the chairman of the Budget Committee, Senator Kennedy, who's the chairman of the Health Committee, and Senator Pell who's the chairman of the education committee, to endorse you? Then we can say to Speaker O'Neill, hey, we can't just blow off the Senate." You got two of the three jobs in Region I (New England), but we're gonna have to get one job to the Senate.

I went to see Bill Hathaway that afternoon. And again, one of these great lessons, just watching him. He just picked up the phone right there. Senator Kennedy was in China. Ken Feinberg was his assistant, the guy who went on to be famous for the 9/11 settlements. He said "Senator Hathaway, I'm sure Senator Kennedy will want to help you out, I will prepare a letter for him even though he's in China." Senator Muskie was no problem at all, because he had run for re-election at the same time. And he had a senior staffer, Gayle Cory, who loved me and was wonderful and took care of all Muskie's personal stuff. And she played two or three critical roles in the next three weeks, where Muskie was in the hospital for back surgery. Humphrey was in the hospital, it was in the front page of the Washington Post, these two great statesmen in the hospital calling each other and catching up on when they'd been on the ticket together and whatnot, and Washington was consumed by that and Gayle Cory, wrote a letter for Muskie saying, I'm in the hospital right now", which of course, everybody in Washington knows. And there's nothing more important to me than Rick Barton's appointment or whatever it was. I'm not sure Muskie ever saw the letter. And Senator Pell said, look, as long as the guy's not from Boston, and not one of O'Neill's guys, I am for him, but I want him to meet with my education advisor. So that all came together.

There was still one more scramble: they were going to appoint me the Director of Intergovernmental Affairs. It turned out that O'Neill's candidate, Kevin Boyle, did not want to do the Public Affairs job. And so they switched me at the last second. They did a switch and took me from intergovernmental affairs and put me in public affairs, which again, put me back with the press, the public, which I really enjoyed, as opposed to government officials, which Kevin liked.

But there was still one more problem and that was that Eileen Shanahan was Califano's Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs. I've been appointed to the job and flown to Washington for my first day and some training. I went to see Gene Eidenberg and the one thing I had said to him was, will somebody please be sure to talk to Eileen Shanahan because I'd seen her on Washington Week In Review on PBS. And she was a New York Times reporter. And she looked to me like she was no-nonsense. And I wanted to make sure that she knew what was going on. I walk in to see her, I sit down at a table, that's about a two person round table in the corner of her office. She's now left the press, which is a big deal. You only get to leave the New York Times, once in life she told me later. And she's there as his assistant for public affairs. And first thing she says, "I want you to know that I believe you're woefully unprepared for this job and I almost quit over your appointment." Now, I just desperately needed this job. I mean, there was no wiggle room. My grandfather's $19,000 had gotten used well during the campaign. So I said to her, "Well, I'm really sorry to hear that. But I want you to know, within three months, I will be your favorite employee." And she really liked that. That's a lot of chutzpah. I had to have it; I was pretty much hanging.

Q: She accepted that assertion.

BARTON: And later, at her farewell party, everybody said "you do the toast", you are her favorite. I thought, really? She could be really tough on people when she screamed at you. That happened once. Eileen was calling me from Washington wondering why we had scheduled a press conference for the Secretary in Boston just as Senator Kennedy was announcing a competing (with President Carter's) National Health Care plan. She was not happy. I had somebody sitting opposite me on the other side of the desk, and they could hear the whole conversation coming through my skull as I pressed the phone closer to my ear to shield them from her outrage. So back to the toast. I stood up and said, "Well, I first like to say that I'd like to invite all of you to stand with me and salute Eileen, if you've never been screamed at, you can just stay in your seat." Everyone stood. And she turned to me after the toast, thanked me and said "I never screamed at you." And I thought, oh boy, I wonder what she did to the other guys. She was a great boss. And I loved her. And I learned a ton from her too. We became lifelong friends.

Q: But her opposition to you. It was not linked to O'Neill or anything like that. She just, she just had her vision about what that job entailed. And--

BARTON: She thought she should be able to hire her own people. Because this was a public affairs position. And she was the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs. And even though it's a matrix design, I reported my day to day boss was really the director in New England Jack Bean. She also felt that she should have some influence and furthermore, that she had had her eyes on a young woman for that job who got finessed in this whole trade off.

Q: Anyway, did you enjoy the job once you got into it?

BARTON: I did. I commuted down from Maine, two hours each way. That was probably a mistake. I stayed with my wonderful grandmother Whitten in Winchester on Monday and Wednesday night and got an MBA at night at Boston University. I went back and did something I did in Maine, when I worked for Bill Hathaway, which was to go out and meet with the publishers, editors and editorial boards and reporters of the various newspapers and news outlets all over New England. And I really enjoyed it because I got to know New England and they had not seen anybody come out from HEW/HHS, the largest civilian agency with social security and all the health care issues.

Q: The job was in Maine, wasn't it?

BARTON: No, it was in Boston. So I'd commute down to Boston on Monday morning. Initially by a regional carrier, there was a $14 flight if you arrived in the last 20 minutes, and got standby tickets.

Q: And there were still seats available?

BARTON: The good news is it was 6:40 in the morning, so it was not oversubscribed. And it was a small prop plane. There were a lot of reasons people didn't want to take it. Then I started driving every day. You know, I went down Monday came back Tuesday went down Wednesday came back Thursday, Friday, I did a round trip. It was crazy.

Q: But you got an MBA while this was all going on?

BARTON: I did and that was again really helpful. In particular in my work at AID, because I knew what net present value was I knew, I mean the financial skills in particular, even when I looked at some of the contracting that AID was approving. It was ridiculous. I mean people were telling us that they were borrowing, they had a credit line, and they were borrowing at 40% interest. And AID was recognizing it. It was stupid.

Q: Well, so you stayed in that job for three years? And then--

BARTON: I got bounced. When the Reagan administration came in they kept me on for about three months or so. Those years allowed me to get the issues. Califano brought forward every issue, student loan defaults, national health insurance, second opinions, smoking bans, asbestos, vaccinations. I mean, all of these issues that have really dominated the domestic marketplace since then, took off. Califano was an administrator who felt that he should have 20 important things going on and succeed at as many as possible. It was a spectacular, dynamic period.

Q: So it was a great education for you, as well as an opportunity to reach out. So when the Reagan administration came in and you had to leave that job after three months, what did you do?

BARTON: I finished up my MBA because I'd been going to school just one or two courses a semester. And they had two summer semesters. And I could go full time during the summer, two courses each, get four courses done. And then I think I did two or three more. I finished up that fall. So the rest of that year, I finished up my MBA. I got it in January of 1982.

Q: Where did you get it? I'm sorry, where were you?

BARTON: Boston University. It was a great MBA, because they had initiated a joint MBA public management program - an MBA, with a public management emphasis. Public budgeting from the former head of the New York City budget office, Fred Hayes; I think it was Fred Hayes. Who had done that in New York City for seven or eight years; spectacular course. A good mix of practitioners. But then a lot of core marketing courses, finance courses and whatnot from the MBA. Turned out to be one of my most interesting set of classroom experiences. The operations courses are great for a place like AID, because they ask you how you're going to bake a cake. And you don't just start with getting out the Betty Crocker. They said, Well, where are you standing in the kitchen? You got to walk over, you got to open the cabinet. You got to reach in every one of those is an operational step. And there are a lot of people who don't know how to operate things. I mean, they think it's as easy as well, you just buy the Betty Crocker. Well, how'd you get to the store? What kind of car were you driving, how'd you get out? How many steps was it in? I mean, all of those things, and computer programming as well. I was a terrible programmer, but when people tell me that you can't do that on a computer I know what they can do.

Q: So you had that degree, then what?

BARTON: What was possible in Maine in a tight job market? It's not a big state, and poor. Choices were not obvious. In 1982, it turned out that our Democratic Governor Joe Brennan was coming up for reelection and he asked me if I would be his Finance Director. It was a working role. Maybe I was Finance Chairman. But either way I had to raise the money for his reelection. As a result of this campaign, we became closer but he never quite offered me a public position (though his chief of staff Dave Redmond asked me about running the State Lottery and being Director of Economic Development on different occasions) because he thought I was a candidate. That was probably my profile because I'd run for office at a very young age. But he needed to raise the money and I could do that. I organized that really well for him. And he ran a successful reelection and he was in the black.

Q: So you actually enjoyed raising money?

BARTON: You know, I don't mind it. I mean, for good cause; you got to believe in what you're doing. And political fundraising is easier than many because it's got a ceiling on how much you can ask. Or it used to anyway.

Q: Yeah. I think you'd find it different now. But that was only part of what you were doing. Your vitae says you started the Barton and Gingold Firm, a consultancy firm.

BARTON: Yes, I started a firm that was called Barton Management Associates originally. The associates were a loose collection, because it was mostly me. I had a small cable television company that had come up with a model for how they could make money in smaller towns in rural parts of America. I helped them get a couple of contracts and was paid by the hour for that, with a tiny piece of ownership. Not very enriching. And I did some marketing stuff for a biotech firm and for a clean energy manufacturer. A small client base was built. And then I got some colleagues. And we built a nice business, which continued after I left Maine to work for USAID and then it was bought by a global engineering firm. During those dozen years, I went back to majoring in the community, because that's really where my heart was. Serving on boards, and becoming the State Democratic Party chair. These are all volunteer jobs. But it would take many, many hours. I was an excellent state party chair, because I knew what needed to be done and wasn't promoting myself. I didn't use it to enhance a lobbying practice. Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell asked me to do it as he was coming up for reelection. And he wanted somebody there who would keep the state party from passing resolutions condemning their own Majority Leader every week or every month. I kept the State Committee busy doing what mattered: electing Democrats, providing them the support they needed and advancing the progressive ideals of the party. Kept a bright group of people focused and busy. Something I learned from my grandmother Whitten, my mom and from Deerfield's headmaster, Frank Boyden.

Q: Who was Gingold, just to clear that up.

BARTON: Art Gingold was a person I met, he came and rented our house in Boothbay Harbor, Maine. He was in the real estate business, about 10 years older than me, in Chicago. His wife wanted to come back to Maine where she'd grown up and spent much of her early life. And I got to meet him and liked him. There was quite a lot of real estate development going on. I thought we could do some work in that space. And he was a senior, knowledgeable guy, plus had a great, wonderful temperament. We decided to become partners, and we grew a nice little firm up to about 12 or 14 people. And we did quite a lot of public policy work, crisis management, marketing and some human resource development. Working in Maine really helps in a place like AID, because to make a living, you work in many areas—from the largest bank in the state, the state

Supreme Court, the Maine Turnpike Authority, a university that was firing its president. You end up having a wonderful mix of problems to work on.

Q: You stay at this, according to your CV, for about 12 years. After listening to you, I find it hard to understand how you ever left the political world. You seem to enjoy it so much, the interaction with people and bringing people together and the politics of it all.

BARTON: Yes, I did love it so much but I was not growing and Kit was ready to move to Washington. In my AID work, I tried to replicate that as much as I could and, obviously when I go into a country like Haiti or Rwanda or Angola or any of the countries, I would oftentimes say, "Well, look, if I was president of this country what is most important, what really needs to get done? What are people telling you all the time?" Even when I was at CSIS, the think tank, I would say, "if I was president of the United States, what advice am I not getting right now." Once you know how the national security guild works, it is possible to imagine what would be missing. That's how we came up with a full plan should the US invade Iraq - what should be done after the invasion? I thought, oh, everybody's going to be imagining that. We raced to get it done in the fall of 2002, because if you're the second into the marketplace with that idea, you would have much less impact. We thought, these are things the President is not hearing. His National Security Adviser doesn't have the time to come up with these ideas and the bureaucracy is not feeding them. Even working at CSO with Obama, we constantly searched for new ideas – recognizing that the system wasn't capable of producing alternative thoughts. It was predictable that we would end up bombing the crap out of the north or, you know, whatever it was.

Q: Well, we don't want to get ahead of yourself here, because those are all important parts of your career after this, but how did the AID connection—

BARTON: Oftentimes in my business job, I was trying to help people understand what the public's view of a problem might be and how we could speak to that. Problem solving was the essence. In one case, a Saco defense manufacturer had polluted its back 40 with toxic waste. The lawyers in the room might be counseling, don't say anything about it. Yet the neighbor's water is coming up rotten. I would be the person in the room who would offer, "Look, you're the president of this place. I don't know how long you want to live with it. But I would say get out in front of it, and change your manufacturing process, and let everybody know, you're going to clean it up, because that's what you're going to end up doing anyway. And you can have 10 years of litigation or you can go, you can face the music now." That was often a singular piece of advice. So I got quite a lot of political satisfaction.

To answer your question: I decided to leave when Brian Atwood recruited me at the end of 1993. Earlier in the year, I visited Washington to try to get something after Clinton got elected. I had helped Clinton early in Maine. But then he got in big trouble and skipped

Maine and went straight to Georgia to turn his campaign around. We didn't really get to know each other, but I thought there might be an opening. It turned out that every job in the administration already had a long line of candidates- so that did not work out. But leaving Maine was hard - the treasurer of my campaign, who was also my tax accountant, told me, "Rick you have such you have so much political inventory here. How can you leave it behind?" For years, discussions about the next governor's race or something like that, my name would always surface. It was hard to separate, but there had not been much progress in years – and running for office is all consuming. We now had our daughter Kacy and Kit saw more opportunity in Washington.

On the other hand, when it was clear that I was coming to Washington, and I had to clean out all my business files, it took me about two hours to get rid of all of my papers, from all of my work in that business. And when I left the AID, five years later, I took 15 boxes home. My passion, my love for my *work* was so much greater here than it was there. I mean, I just love being on the public side of things.

Q: That is interesting, although you were essentially on the public side of things. the way you describe your political life. You were in the private sector but you were politically engaged.

BARTON: Right, I tried to be but for example, I would have a client that was trying to build a 15 story high rise in downtown Portland. So my job was to organize the neighborhood and make sure that people were comfortable with whatever we did. But you know, I got an unflattering article once that said, if you want to build a condo on Katahdin, the sacred mountain of Maine, Barton is your man. We were not always on the popular side of an issue.

Q: That must have hurt.

BARTON: Yes, but looking back on it, I find it amusing. Just the other day I contacted the author of that line on LinkedIn -the reporter's name, Don Kreiss came to mind. He's now the public consumer advocate for the state of New Hampshire and we connected. And he wrote me back a very nice note, so it's, you know, it is what it is.

Q: That's terrific. So you'd work on the Clinton campaign in Maine, and you decided it's time to look for a job in the new administration. Is that what drove you down here?

BARTON: Kit was eager to put some of the political stuff behind as well. I don't know if you remember the baseball player, Rocky Colavito. He was the Italian Stallion. He would pose on the on-deck circle, he always put the bat behind his head and stretched his back. And I felt like I'm the Rocky Colavito of Maine politics. I'm always on the on-deck circle, stretching. I knew it was time.

George Mitchell was a friend and was the majority leader. He set me up to see anybody I wanted. But what I discovered quickly was that every job in Washington had 10 people in line already, they'd already visualized the job and they've been, they've been writing pieces about it. So that was one problem. There was already an existing line. The second thing was all the people that I went to see, they wanted two things, they would say, are you an expert on Cambodia or someplace? Not really. Or have you spent a lot of time on the Hill and I'd worked back in the state rather than on the Hill. The political appointees were trying to cover their weaknesses, or things they didn't want to spend a lot of time doing. While I met with The NewsHour cast of characters, they said, "Well, we really like you. But we don't have anything that would fit or we got somebody else in mind for it." So this was in March of 1993, after Clinton had taken office. We went back to Maine and months later we got invited to a Christmas party at the White House. Kit and I said, "Well, let's go down."

Q: You mean nine months later?

BARTON: Yes, nothing had happened. We thought, you never know when the Democrats are gonna win again. We're going to that party, we're showing up at six and we're not leaving till they kick us out. But at the same time, I asked my secretary in Maine if she would call all the people I'd seen and arrange appointments. The only person who followed up was Brian Atwood. I'd seen him in the first round, when he was on Secretary Christopher's transition team. And he had a bias for Maine. He had worked with Muskie and really liked him. And he knew George Mitchell and the rest of it. He had a favorable view of Maine. And he said, "Well, send me some examples of your work." And I sent him a funny combination of letters and other things I worked on in my business. I put together a loose-leaf binder, literally, I don't know if he ever saw it. I haven't asked him about it. At that point, he was not the head of AID. When I saw him in March, he was designated to be the Assistant Secretary for Management at State and then the AID Administrator contest became a standoff between Senator Harkin's wife and Congressman McHugh, and when that became intolerable Warren Christopher asked Brian Atwood, if he would come in and settle the tie, and become the administrator, pushing those other two people into other jobs and other positions. And that's how he became Administrator.

Of all the people that I had seen, the only one who was not in Moscow or was too busy or whatever was Brian Atwood. We walked into that great old office, my favorite office, in the Old State Department, Dean Acheson's office where Brian sat. I was dressed as informally as I am now, because my wife and I thought we're going to go to some museums. Ten minutes into the conversation he said, "You know, I've made a promise to the Senate in my confirmation hearing, that I would do something about these countries in transition. I've got a couple of people working on it, the bureaucracy is eating this process up. And I think I need somebody a little different to run it. Would you be interested in it?" And he said, "It's a $30 million office with 10 people." I've been running

a business with a million and a half dollars. I mean, that seems like plenty of money. And plenty of people. I know ten people can do a lot of things with some liquidity. So he sends me down the hall to meet his Deputy, Carol Lancaster. Carol could be abrupt and awkward and was also a real professional. I walk down the hall and she gives me sort of the Eileen Shanahan greeting, which is, "So why are you the right person to run a $20 million office with four people?"

Q: I can just imagine this because of it. I did know Carol very well. So I can imagine her saying that.

BARTON: That is her greeting. So I said, "I just left the administrator's office, he told me his 30 million and 10 people; I walked in here it's 20 million and 4 people. The little bit I know about Washington, I don't think I'm the right guy to do this job. I just lost 10 million bucks and six people." She says "did he say 10, I've told him what it is." And she picks up the phone. They argue on the phone for three or four minutes. And that's pretty much my interview with her. She then sends me down to meet Doug Stafford, who's going to be my day-to-day boss. I walk in the door, Doug says, "Oh, so you're the new guy for OTI". My feeling is if the place is this easy to get into how selective could it be? So I said to Doug, "Doug, this is really all very wonderful. But could I come back and talk to a bunch of people about the job? Would you set up three days of meetings for me to talk to people around this building and see what the idea is and how we can apply it."

Q: You only had these two conversations, which weren't really focused on this job. It was just--yeah.

BARTON: And Brian's description of it was mostly the former Soviet states, which the regular bureaucracy was already getting excited about, because there's a lot of money, and the places were plenty safe - more traditional development work. So I came back in January, and they set up three wonderful days of meetings all over the building and around DC. I probably still have the notes from those meetings. And that really gave me a running start. I then started OTI in March of '94. And Brian really wanted it. The one thing that this had in common with CSO at State is that Brian at AID and Hillary at the State Department both wanted these babies to take off fast. And so that presented another really huge challenge. Where do you land in these places? Because you have to actually do stuff in real places pretty quickly.

Q: Well, in following up on that, how did you begin? I should say, by the way, that when I did Brian's oral history, one of the things he was so pleased about was that he thought he had got a really terrific team of people in at the very beginning, and in which you are, of course included. He was quite pleased with that. But how did you get this new entity off the ground? As you say, you were expected to move it quickly. How did you do it?

BARTON: Thanks. Well, you know, Steve Morrison had been there. He'd been one of the guys working on the paper on this thing. So he'd been thinking about it. Another key person was Mike Mahdesian, Doug's deputy.

Q: Was Steve Morrison there as a career AID person at that point?

BARTON: No, he was probably a Schedule A or something, you know, a subject matter expert or something like that.

Q: But he was a health person, right?

BARTON: No. He'd come out of Ethiopia and was more of a political scientist.

Q: I see. Okay.

BARTON: He developed his health expertise. One of his key contributions was to introduce the NGO world to the landmine issue and doing something practical. On this issue, we were the first funders for CARE, Save the Children UK and Halo Trust in Angola. That was Steve's lead. Impressive.

Q: I see, but Halo already existed.

BARTON: Yeah, Halo existed, but they hadn't really had government funding and none from the US. He really brought the US into it. But Care and Save had not done the work in this field.

Q: Okay, so but again, back—

BARTON: We had to refine the OTI idea and then apply them in real places, fast. And I remember about a month into the job Brian asked me to make a presentation at the senior staff meeting on what OTI was going to be. I described it as the "just do it" part of AID (after the Nike ads of that time). I had a series of flip charts that were pretty rough, just my handwriting on them. In those days, this was pre-PowerPoint. It was different and the senior staff meeting looked pretty darn confused.

But I made a number of points. One was that a typical AID program took about two years to develop from conception to reality, and that the countries that we're going to be working in, I listed quite a few, if we didn't move much more quickly, we would be irrelevant. And it turned out that many of these countries were not that appealing to regular AID because you could get killed there. Among other things, you weren't gonna get a lot of money, and they were dangerous -two reasons to stay away. Often, there was no regular mission, which again, was sort of the anchor that everybody was familiar with. We would be catalytic and grounded in the local reality.

During that time, there were a lot of things going on. People like Larry Garber, were lining up weekly briefings from a range of fascinating scholars and practitioners: Amartya Sen, the Nobel Prize winning economist would come in and have a luncheon—I went to every one. There was a weekly democracy caucus. And I went to every one of those meetings. I was learning and selling at the same time. And then, pretty soon thereafter, somebody said, there's a ceasefire in Sarajevo. Why don't you go over and see what might be possible there, that would be a great thing. Steve Morrison and I flew out, and within a few hours we're in Sarajevo, ducking behind smoldering trash containers, for safety.

I recognized that I didn't know anything about this. Dayton Maxwell was also with us from OFDA. And I thought, we don't really know what's going on here. We've got to meet with a lot of local people and listen. I don't know if I'd already seen Bob Gersony by that point. He had come in and made a presentation to Doug Stafford on the Nicaraguan Atlantic coast, and I just loved his methodology as well. We got very lucky on the first day in Sarajevo. There was no infrastructure at all there for us to build off - we were making everything up as we went. I was meeting with the mayor of Sarajevo that afternoon, and I said "we really need somebody to take us around and serve as a translator." And he said, "Well, we've got this young woman here, who I will assign to you for as long as you're here." And she was one of these wonderfully literal people who if you said, what's life like at the frontline, she would say "we will go to the frontline." Why are people having babies? "We will go to the maternity ward." Why are these young people studying English? "We will go to the English language class." Is anybody doing exercise? "We will go to the rhythmic gymnast class tomorrow." Who are these people wearing more traditional Muslim garb? "We will go to the traditional women's organization, and they produce a newspaper that reaches 50,000 people." We went to the Jewish Community Center; they had gotten all their kids out in the first few weeks of the conflict, flying them out on a Yugoslav military carrier. They were able to bring cash in somehow, almost nobody had cash, though you needed Deutschmarks in the city. So, it reinforced the approach that when you don't know anything, the best thing to do is to talk to local people, and enough of them that you start to get a weight of the evidence, or a sense of what's most important in their minds, or what opportunities might exist. And we did that. And so that was very important.

Then we came back and of course, everybody in Washington wanted to know what magic we might have come up with. We went into brief Brian and Carol was there, and Doug Stafford. It was a pretty high-powered meeting in Brian's office. And I described what I had seen. I thought there was a really good chance that fighting was going to break out again, and there'd be about a 10% chance of success. And my idea was essentially to try to get stipends to the remaining skeleton of a middle class of women, teachers and nurses, because you have to have to start with some building blocks. If these people were not secured, then rebuilding Sarajevo or the surroundings would be impossible. And Brian

basically said, the Congress hates cash programs, which was true at that time, and I don't like the chances of success for your first program. I want you to be a post bullet program, which I welcomed.

Many of the lessons that I later took to Afghanistan and Iraq, came from Bosnia. In those places, where we tried to do so much, it was still a live bullet time, which is stupid. If people are getting shot, they're not thinking about much else. And even if you pay them a lot of money, and you bring in a lot of Turks to work alongside them, whatever. My initial thoughts for Bosnia were not a success, but it was great for developing credibility and a model. As we left that meeting, Mike Mahdesian said "that was a really successful meeting." And another one of Doug Stafford's deputies, Lois Richards, came by my office a week or two later, and she said, "after that disastrous meeting in the administrator's office." I was taken aback by it, because I thought, you know, I had been extremely honest and we probably got the appropriate result, which was not to go ahead and do something at a very precarious time in a place where people are going to get killed. We learned many valuable lessons, including, sometimes it is better to not do anything. Especially if the place is not ripe.

Q: Do you ever regret that you did not sustain that program in Sarajevo?

BARTON: Well, I regret it in the sense that it was probably the only lifeline that some of those people that I interviewed had at that point, and I would have liked to have extended that lifeline. Not in terms of OTI's future or my own judgment.

Q: Just in terms of there being a need there. Did the UN have a special--?

BARTON: Yeah. I don't know if they had a special envoy there at the time, SRSG. We met with them in Zagreb before we went in and then there were several offices that we spent quite a lot of time in in Sarajevo that were either UN or EU or whoever.

Q: The reason I ask is that there was an American Foreign Service Officer, former Ambassador who was the UN representative in Sarajevo and his major preoccupation, I think, was trying to get the water supply working again. I don't know the years of this very well. And the reason I ask is because my son went out while he was still a student to work for this UN operation and at that time the bombs were still going off there. So it may have been roughly the same time.

BARTON: We did go to the water project and Fred Cuny. They were sort of piping it through the mountainside out there. We visited it and his team in their house on one of the hills there in Sarajevo. So we got around, we were there for, I'd say 14 to 17 days and we probably talked to a couple 100 people.

Q: Okay, so you came back and there was this successful meeting, where your judgment was that you shouldn't go to a place where there was 10% chance of success and bullets still flying. So what did you do?

BARTON: So right at that time, two other things happened. One was that the State Department wanted to send its first post genocide mission of a handful of people led by the Assistant Secretary for human rights, DRL, Democracy Rights and Labor, John Shattuck to Rwanda. He wanted somebody from AID and the administrator said I should go. So, about three weeks later, I'm on my way to Rwanda with this team flying all US military flights the whole way, pretty much. Refueling over Tripoli or someplace. I remember Brian's administrative assistant saying to me, Rick, weren't you just in Sarajevo? Yeah. And you're going to Rwanda? Yes. She said, "Does somebody not like you?" Again, naivete goes a long way, because I was flattered and I thought it was a great honor.

Q: What did your wife think?

BARTON: She was probably in denial, though she always is so positive about these challenges and dangers. Never second guessing or adding to my worries. I am blessed.

I also just started working on Haiti. Haiti ended up being our big breakthrough. They were all important. Wes Clark was the general, the P-5 for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which is the strategy planning office, at the Joint Chiefs. He was known as one of the brains of the US Army. He called over to AID to Carol Lancaster, and he said, "I believe that there's going to be an invasion of Haiti in some time. And I had a very bad experience in Vietnam and I don't want to replicate that here. Do you have somebody that you can put me in touch with and we could start working on this preparation." And Carol made an absolutely critical decision for the entire future of OTI. Rather than sending Wes to Mark Schneider and the geographic bureau, she put him in touch with me and I went over to see him at the Pentagon. And he said, "You know, I consider these things, a three legged stool, there's the political, there's the military, and there's the economic. And we got to get all three of these legs working together." I said, "Well, the problem General, is that the stool looks like this to me. I said, you got one gigantic military leg, and then you got two tiny toothpicks holding up the other part of it, maybe the political is a little bit bigger. And unless we put these things into the ratio with each other, we're not going to have anything that's going to work." So right from the very beginning we developed a very good working relationship. And he hosted most of the meetings, so we were not dependent on the NSC. He was a convener and we started designing some ideas that might work. Again, there were so many people at AID that already had exposure to Haiti. But what I noticed was that the guild was a little bit stuck. And their view was essentially “I love Haiti, Poor Little Haiti, what can we do for Haiti? Nothing works.”

Q: Charitable NGO look.

BARTON: I thought it was. We had the Haitian government here in Washington in exile. Aristide was sitting here in Washington, getting a pretty good lesson in democracy, because he was watching Clinton be vilified every day in the front page of the papers or whatever it happened to be. I mean it was not a honeymoon period for Bill Clinton at the beginning there. We met with Aristide's bright two lieutenants, Leslie Voltaire and Leslie Delatour regularly. And we really came up with two core ideas, which then led to a lot of the future programming of OTI for the next 25 years.

The core ideas, one was grounded in the fact that Haiti was the most centralized government (the French system) and most rural populace in the hemisphere. We weren't going to save it from the center out – Port au Prince would be impossible. We needed to move from a system of intimidation to one of participation. Because you had the Tonton Macoute you had the centralization and a lot of things that made it scary for people. And the two critical elements there would be what do you do with the former military and how do you start to mobilize the populace? We thought we were going to be able to start with the mayors. We were not going to work through the central government. And we ran all this by Aristide's people and they said, great, because when we get back to Port-au-Prince, we're barely going to be able to find our way to our offices. It's not going to be simple. And it was also the most rural country in the hemisphere. So that if you were going to actually find the people you had to get out of Port-au-Prince. That's a little less so now. It's more urbanized. But nevertheless, taking on a huge problem and trying to make it addressable. That was really a core idea.
Q: But in Rwanda, did you do the same thing? We can go back to Haiti in a minute, but I just wondered.
BARTON: Yeah, so we flew into Rwanda. With a small team of Josiah Rosenblatt, Crystal Nix, John Shattuck, myself. That was it.

Q: Rosenblatt was the head of the American Rescue Committee at that time?

BARTON: No, this is the brother, not Lionel.

Q: Oh, what did he do?

BARTON: Josiah was a career Foreign Service Officer who worked with DRL. So did Crystal Nix, who had previously been a New York Times reporter, but she was now working for DRL. And then she became a US Ambassador to UNESCO in Paris during Obama. So, a talented group of people, but we flew in. And we flew into Uganda, and then we would be flown in every day by one of the US small military planes. At this point we put 300 soldiers at Kigali Airport. They were just there kind of as a comfort zone, and weren't doing much. But their presence was, this was after the killing stopped, like three weeks after two weeks after. I mean, you could still smell human remains in a lot of places. And we flew over to Goma one day, and that was hell on earth. Because

there were a million plus just camped out there. And they were literally clearing the landscape for fuel to cook with. There was this low hanging smoke everywhere in the hills. Goma is a very pretty town. I only discovered that it was beautiful when I went back there a couple of years later, and there weren't a million refugees and there wasn't the stench of destruction and desperation.

Q: So what did you think you could actually do there?

BARTON: I was a classic State Department extra wheel. They had me there because they thought that we might have liquidity. They didn't have a clue that we might actually bring value added. Really great people, but the motivation was, this might be a way to get some AID money. So I got to see how that worked. We stayed a couple of nights at the Diplomat hotel. I got to know the Ambassador, Davis Rawson, there. And got to know the remains of the AID mission. There was one Rwandan who was still in the embassy, who helped me find other people to talk to. So I started to do a little bit of talking to people, not much. Bob Gersony was there kind of lurking, he had already been given an assignment.

Q: By the State Department?

BARTON: It was actually a UNHCR assignment, but the US paid for it, to find out if there were any killings going on afterwards. Something that's made him very unpopular with the Rwandan government of today, because he was quite sure-- he did his usual thorough job and showed that there had been quite a lot of killing after the genocide.

There wasn't much that OTI could do from that initial trip right after the genocide. The Shattuck group was looking at things like how do we start a new constitution? In my book I describe one of the early meetings with the acting Attorney General for Rwanda. And he told us in the meeting, there were three things that Rwanda would want, he would want to have the trials in Rwanda. They would want to be able to have the death penalty. And they would want to get started with justice right away. John Shadduck effectively told him, "Well, we can't do this, because of our allies, we can't do this, or that. Trials here will not be seen as fair. Our allies will not favor the death penalty, even though it's legal in the United States. And we have the Bosnia Tribunal all set up in the Hague so it should be easy to move ahead with speed. We basically told them, no, no, no. And I thought, well, what's the point of going around and talking to these guys? We ended up with the trials in Arusha, which did not turn out to be a good decision. Slow. I thought what you're doing when you go out to listen to people is that you're actually going to hear some of the things they say. And this was a fine group of colleagues. When we got back to the hotel in Uganda at night, they were almost drafting the constitution. Presumptuous.

Now later on, as a teacher at Princeton, John Dower described that this is what MacArthur tried to do in Japan. He gave people a week to write the constitution. These are all good lessons.

When I got back to Rwanda, about nine months later; I had been sort of promoted as "Oh, they've got this great stuff going on in Haiti, and Barton is going to have solutions for you." Unrealistic pressure. I drove around for about two weeks again, and met with every kind of person I could find. And there were not a lot of people hanging around in Rwanda. Jack Hjelt and his wife were the AID team. We sat down one night in the embassy, or wherever we were, and she had come up with a list of all the transitions going on in Rwanda at that point, from French to English, from Hutus to Tutsis, etc. As we went through this list, we decided that the only opening we had was to work with women, because we didn't want to do Hutu Tutsi again; we didn't want to go with any of these existing things.

The country was about 70% women. If we focused on women, they would be our most promising political change agents because they'd been underrepresented in the decision making beforehand. And we found the new ministry of women and families or women and children or something, and it was run by the RPF's chief fundraiser, the only woman in the Cabinet. And having been a fundraiser, I knew that was an important job. So she had standing with Kagame. But she also had the weakest ministry and we then built a program around her; got 12 Rwandan women into her ministry. We started with Greg Beck, who was excellent and then got a Texan, Buddy Shanks, who was in country and had worked for AID on various contracts. And this Women in Transition Initiative became a spectacular success. It started to position women in a way that they would have not only the responsibility they had always had but also some authority. This came after the first time visit when Rwanda was just too raw.

Q: In Haiti, did you have success in moving along with decision making after that first visit?

BARTON: Yes. I'd been in Haiti for the election as an NDI volunteer monitor out of Maine. From three or four visits in 1990, I'd gotten a little sense of the politics of the place. For the election, I was part of the Jimmy Carter election monitor team and was sent out to Gonaives, and other tough places because I was the lowest prestige member of the delegation. They had Andrew Young, Robert McNamara, the Carters, and so they sent me out to the boonies, which is great, because the Haitian revolutions often started in Gonaives—a good place to get a sense of what Haiti feels like.

We were very, very lucky. One week after the US military invasion, we flew a team into Port au Prince. The USAID mission was exhausted. Larry Crandall was running it and he was skeptical, let's say. We had to make all of our own arrangements. We rented our own cars. We sublet Sarah Clark's house, she was the deputy mission director, but she had

been evacuated. She wanted to make sure somebody was in her house and would pay her cook and gardener. We moved the whole team in there. And then we just spread out all over the island. With a dozen people, we sent six teams of two all over the island. Working with Johanna Mendelson at OTI and Bill Hyde at IOM, we opened up offices in seven parts of Haiti. We used IOM because we could do the contracting with them right away, there being an international organization. We could reach an agreement with them, sort of a hybrid, that was more like a grant but we treated it like a contract. They hired all the people that we identified and we ended up having offices in six/seven parts of Haiti within weeks. Then we expanded to wherever there was a special forces grouping of a dozen soldiers, so we had offices in about 13 different places in Haiti.

Q: And these were all staffed by Haitians?

BARTON: Staffed by Haitians. And usually we had one or two internationals.

Q: And were these Americans, or did you get them from--?

BARTON: No, we intentionally wanted to have people from all over the world because it was supposed to be a multinational force in Haiti, even though it was almost totally US, and US dominated. We had an Argentine, Uruguayan, Spaniard, South African, Dutch. I've seen these people now they're all over the place, and a few Americans. And they would go out and hire 10 Haitians right there in their community. We decentralized the liquidity. We didn't say that the office in Port-de-Paix would only have $100,000; it was very much demand driven. Wherever we had a dynamic person or a great opening or an active community, we would just run the money in and most of the grants were in tiny, tiny amounts. We built 500 schools or so for an average cost of about $3,000 a school.

Q: But you had total freedom and what you did with the money? I mean, I don't think AID normally is able to just go out and hire people from other parts of the world?

BARTON: Yeah, so that's why we worked through IOM. IOM had never done anything like this either. But they're an international organization.

Q: So you gave IOM a grant, and then they did what you wanted them to do.

BARTON: Yeah. And this is where my naivete paid off again. I didn't realize that I wasn't supposed to be telling them what to do all the time.

Q: And was the head of IOM in Haiti, someone that had worked with AID in the past?

BARTON: Nobody had had an experience like this before, though we found Chuck Brady, a resourceful Kansan who had led AID projects during the war in El Salvador. Bill Hyde was the head of IOM's emergency office and he was our bridge. He literally moved

into our office in the State Department. And he wrote the proposal right there with us. And we already had some people. Every time we talked to anybody about Haiti, we said, you know, anybody who might be good to work there. And we created a roster of potential talent. We were calling those people 24/7.

Q: How long did this take you to pull off?

BARTON: About six, eight weeks. It was really crazy.

Q: That is incredible.

BARTON: We didn't get all the bodies there. But we got the bodies there for that first, we got those 12 people there, including some AID people like John Grant. So it was a mix; each of the 12 people that we sent out on the six teams to the different parts of Haiti to see what was going on, what was happening in that part of the country, what was most needed, to talk to local people. I think my memory is that every one of those six teams had one regular AID person plus what would become the anchor six for these first offices. There was some turnover. But every person we hired got us going, built a local team, developed a good feeling for the community. It was a bit of a made up team, it was a brand new team. It was an expansion team, let's call it.

Q: John Grant was Jim Grant's son, right? He had an unfortunate early death.

BARTON: Having him was great. He was at that point, I think working for Food for Peace. He had real standing in AID. So the credibility-- that's something we did as we went forward. We got people who had like minded views of things, but they were regular AID like Tom Stukel, for the Philippines. They were respected, known, and we would integrate them into our operation. We called it our “bullpen”--a resource we could use in short order.

Q: Did you have a meeting of the kind you'd had in Sarajevo with Brian and Carol, where this whole operation was described before you could go ahead, or did you have pretty much free rein to do this as you want it?

BARTON: I don't remember those meetings but I remember almost daily meetings with Mark Schneider and Susan Reichle, who now runs the International Youth Program. She was like a PMF, a presidential management fellow. It was something like that in Mark's office. And he assigned her to try to smooth over Larry Crandall who had daily concerns, and work with us because Mark was very practical. He thought we would bring more money to the problem.

Q: But Mark was very supportive. Right?

BARTON: He was helpful. My sense is that he probably needed some encouragement from Brian Atwood on a few occasions. Doug Stafford, you know, Doug took care of the management side of things. Doug was having a scotch every night with Larry Byrne, the guy who was running to the whole management office in DC. We were protected from many of the alien forces. By the way, the alien forces at AID can be challenging but they're not anywhere near as rigid as say the State Department's traditional forces.

Q: Well, that's, that's one of the best things I've ever heard about Larry Byrne!

BARTON: He was critical to us because we were able to get to Sarajevo, there were travel freezes and whatnot. And we worked with Larry Byrne on a couple occasions. I'm not a big fan of freezes. I think it's a bad way to run things. But what we did is, we never asked for more people. We never asked for more positions or more overhead. We did everything with PSCs. And we would take money rather than FPEs (full time position equivalents?). And that gave us more liquidity and more flexibility, and then being willing to use our secret weapon, notwithstanding authority.

Q: And is it your impression that Doug Stafford's evening drinks with Larry Byrne were critical to making sure that this whole process worked?

BARTON: Absolutely, Doug used to say, fellas, I'll do the blocking and tackling.

Q: That sounds like Doug.

BARTON: It was huge. Yeah. Doug got emotional, sometimes he would throw what he called a shitter at a meeting somewhere at State or AID. And he would come back and he'd say, "Douglas through a shitter." And he would do whatever it took to disrupt something if that's what was required to stay focused and allow us to do the work. And I watched him one day when we were in the administrator's office. Carol Lancaster was asking some very tough, more intellectual than practical questions. It was about Mostar. The bridge in Bosnia that had been blown up. And they got going on. And I thought, Oh, this is awful. But the good news was when we got back, whatever argument that OTI had been part of was totally lost in the shuffle.

Q: I mean, so much is dependent, in my experience, on some of these individual personalities. Yours, Doug Stafford. I mean, it's a wonderful combination.

BARTON: By the way, Mike Mahdesian was the guy in the office next to me; a political appointee from California who had done Armenian humanitarian stuff. And Mike is a really subtle political interpreter. Len Rogers. Lois Richards helped us at a critical time. We didn't get the right staff right away of the four people, a couple of them weren't quite right. And Lois helped to redirect their careers elsewhere. Because we had such a small office, everything had to work. We were literally furnishing our office at nighttime when

people would put their sofas out in the corridor at State and we would salvage them. If we saw something that we liked, we'd grab it and pull it down to our office.

Q: Was this still when AID was in the State Department building?

BARTON: Among the most flattering things I ever heard, when people would walk into our office they would say, "This feels so different from the rest of this building. The energy." That was before all the doors were closed all the time and security ruled the place.

Q: Oh, yeah, it's terrible.

BARTON: That drives me crazy.

Q: Well, on that note of triumph, I mean, obviously, there's a lot more about OTI that we're going to talk about, but I think that a couple of hours of this conversation is probably enough for any single occasion. Even interrupted as we were. So let's call a halt to this right now and plan on getting together again soon. And I'll talk with you about that in a minute.

BARTON: All right. Sounds great Alex. Thank you so much.

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Q: Okay, this is now session two. It's Alex Shakow, along with Rick Barton, and we're doing his oral history. He is doing this one from Princeton, New Jersey, where he is a professor. When we left off a few days ago, Rick, you were describing the excitement associated with the first effort by the new office, OTI [Office of Transition Initiatives], in Haiti and all the innovative efforts that you were undertaking in that very critical situation, including—what amazed me—your ability to contract with the International Organization of Migration to do your bidding, and to hire people locally and get spread out all over Haiti in ways that I can't imagine anybody in AID has ever done before. OTI, as you have described, was a new creation, and Haiti was your first big operation. Tell me more about what trying to create, build, establish, and sustain OTI was like in this 1994–1995 period as you were just getting started.

BARTON: Sure. Well, thanks, Alex, and I'll try not to repeat myself too much here. I think we really had two main objectives in Haiti. One was to move from a system of centralization to one of participation. That required a local governance initiative. The other one was to move away from a system of intimidation. We saw the tip of that, and that required us to deal with the Haitian military. That was always a slightly tricky issue

for AID [U.S. Agency for International Development], but what we were doing was retraining the military to not be a military, so we're taking the individual soldiers and preparing them for life outside of the military. We did not know when we started that when the president, [Jean-Bertrand] Aristide, got back into the country, he was going to abolish the military. But what we were doing really ended up complementing that quite a lot as well. Maybe I can just spend a minute on the military program because it's pretty interesting.

We didn't know how many soldiers there were because of the padded payrolls and all the other things that happen in many fragile states, but we thought there would be about five thousand soldiers; that was what U.S. intelligence estimated. We also had the prime minister, who at that time—René Préval—was in Washington, and he met with us. We had a memorable meeting with Wesley Clark a couple of weeks before the U.S. invasion, where Wes Clark kept asking him, "Well, how many soldiers are there and what are they getting paid? And how often do they get paid?" And René Préval was very modest. He said he didn't have a clue, and he found it all rather humorous. Wes Clark, who was the head of the Joint Chiefs strategic planning office, finally said to him, "Mr. Prime Minister"—and there were just about four of us in one of these rooms in the State Department—"Mr. Prime Minister, I'm from the United States Army, and we like to get from point A to point B in as direct a line as possible." There was just no way that was going to happen.

But anyway, there had been an exhaustive AID study about demobilization. DDR was very fashionable then—disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. We were trying to do that, but it was like a hundred-page study, and it seemed like it had at least one or two critical points that we could follow up on. One was, don't deal with the soldiers in their barracks. Do not deal with them as a unit, because what you're trying to do is bring down the unit, so start dealing with them as individuals. Secondly, as much as possible, involve their families, so that when you sit down to counsel them on what to do next, make sure that you have their spouses, their children, their grandmothers, whoever they're close to as part of the equation. IOM [International Organization of Migration] had been doing some work in this space in Central America because those wars were wrapping up.

We found a Spaniard, an Uruguayan, an Argentine, and maybe one other person from their team that we brought into Haiti, and we rented a building in downtown Port-au-Prince. Every day, dozens, if not hundreds, of soldiers would come through and get individual counseling on their futures. We had a great old Belgian guy from IOM, Jacques, in Geneva who came, and he started working with all the vocational programs—the existing private vocational programs, because there are almost no public vocational programs in Haiti. They arranged contracts with a number of those places all over the country to take the soldiers as paying students that would go through a curriculum that we helped to develop as well. So very quickly, we got literally hundreds of them into mostly construction trades, but there were a couple hundred who wanted to

learn how to use computers. There was a Haitian U.S. Army veteran who had opened a little computer school in Port-au-Prince, and we sent almost two hundred of the Haitian soldiers there. They were like the first generation of computer techies.

There were still a lot of tricky elements to it. You wanted to get these people out of the way because with the police they were the official protection for the *Tonton Macoute* [secret police], but you didn't want to make them a privileged class. If it looked like they're getting more than everybody else in society—the society already didn't like them-. that would be unpopular for the government. But we also wanted the government to pay something, because we didn't want to carry the whole thing; we wanted the government to have to own some of this.

Q: So what did you do about that?

BARTON: The key was that we were paying the vocational schools and we were giving the soldiers some other benefits. There was a stipend that covered their travel to and from the course every day, as well their luncheon. We negotiated with the government for them to pay that.

Q: Did you give them the money to pay for it?

BARTON: Well, they were getting the money from all over the place, obviously, but not from us. We wanted them to have to partially own this program, and that was a key to a lot of the OTI programs. For example, in the local governance program, we were not just building the schools that I mentioned before. We were providing one essential element, and then they had to provide the labor—oftentimes the design and the construction teams. So whatever else was needed, they had to make a contribution.

Q: But in this case, the Haitian government—this is before Aristide—

BARTON: This is Aristide.

Q: Oh, it was Aristide. He was clearly very cooperative with you in this, right?

BARTON: Yeah, because we worked closely with his chief of staff—Leslie Voltaire, a wonderful guy. We'd gotten to know him in Washington when they were in exile, so we'd sit down with him every so often. We'd say, "Leslie, this is going to cost you this much money, and we recognize that you hate the military as much as anybody, but if you want to get these guys off the street, your owning it is part of the equation." And they did. I mean, it was not a straightforward conversation, but it happened and it took place. So I think it was generally pretty effective.

One of the things that happens after a period of turbulence—there really wasn't a war in Haiti. There wasn't that much violence other than tightly directed human rights violations at individuals, rather than conflict around the countryside. But nevertheless, when things begin to stabilize in a place, there's quite a lot of construction, in particular by people who have been delaying their own projects. Then there were things like gas stations, 7-Elevens that opened up all over the island. Creating a cadre of people who had plumbing, electrical, and carpentry skills was not that bad. Many of them were able to stay busy and support their families. Then we had these outliers—computer skills and other things.

We were really addressing two central elements of Haiti's future—building a farm system of local government leaders, and whether there should ever be elections, and whether there should ever be a kind of local rule, which we thought was inevitable, and then dealing with the military, which was protecting the *Tonton Macoute*, so that you can move on and not have not have the same system of intimidation that has dominated Haiti for centuries.

Q: So what happened? If you look back at that, over two or three years, how long did this continue?

BARTON: You know, one of the things that shocked people at AID was that we said we were going to start very fast. We'd be on the ground within weeks, our programs would start, and then we would only stay two years. That really challenged the orthodoxies of the development community, which often says, "Just give us more time, we need time, more time." It wasn't really that we were only going to stay two years—it's just that I wanted that sense of urgency of feeling like we were only going to stay two years, so we could keep the whole thing moving. Otherwise, we would fall back into the patterns of a more deliberate system.

Q: Did it work?

BARTON: Yeah, it did. First off, it shook a lot of people up. Our contracting was always as fast as the humanitarians. We learned a lot from OFDA and used the same mechanisms, like notwithstanding authority- and hired many of their people. We ended up having our own contract officer assigned to us. That was Mike Walsh, who was fabulous. We went through several contract officers before we got to the point where we were actually able to do this stuff. There were a lot of things going on at the same time that were very confusing at AID. There was going to be a new enterprise system, which was anything but a functioning computer system. You might have some memory of that.

Q: Luckily, I was not there, but I've heard about it. That was another one of those Larry Byrne [assistant administrator for management] things.

BARTON: It was an experiment. I can remember we had a very tiny staff at OTI, and our contracting guy, Chris, was right outside my door. I remember his waiting almost an entire day or two to enter one or two pages of information into a centralized computer system. But anyway, we always found workarounds—lots and lots of workarounds.

Q: You said you were only going to be there for two years. That was kind of a spur to action. How long did you stay in Haiti?

BARTON: I don't remember exactly, but I would say four years probably.

Q: And so these programs—

BARTON: They were still very catalytic. Our culture was: you're there to catalyze something good that the Haitians can build off of.

Q: Did that happen?

BARTON: I think so—for sure the Local Government Initiative. We trained and engaged literally thousands of Haitians. We built something like five hundred schools. We probably did one hundred and fifty water projects, and then everything else was in much smaller numbers, but it was what people most wanted and that was driven totally by them. So those places were all assets in the community.

The whole point of the program was to develop this future leadership cadre—not just a cadre, but a kind of spirit of public involvement and of owning a problem and coming up with your own solution. I think right from the beginning, we felt that if everything goes to hell in Haiti, and nothing works, at least several hundred people will have gotten through one of the most sophisticated political development institutes on Earth. It was sophisticated because it was not only theory, but also instant practice. It was a laboratory rather than a classroom. I know we got that out of it. Now, whether those people ended up staying in Haiti and becoming ever more capable and moving up as a country is another question.

There were still macro political decisions that were made after the fact that I was less than admiring of—for example, when they reinstated Aristide. The U.S. basically reinstated him, but then we counted all the time he had been in exile as part of his service time, so his presidency was cut short by all the time that he'd been in the United States. That was done partially because of this old frame our government has about certain kinds of politicians in the Western Hemisphere: that if they're left leaning, they may be potential [Fidel] Castros. That whole mindset was an issue. And Aristide was a religious leader. He'd never been a politician, and Haiti's not an easy place to run. George Washington would have been challenged in that setting.

Q: (laughs) Did AID ever do a formal evaluation of these programs? Did they more or less follow what you've just described?

BARTON: Yes. They were very flattering. Jonathan Moore led the first. I've always been a little bit concerned about many of the evaluations and how truly independent they are. I mean, this was a flattering one—it had former AID people, a mission director, Jonathan Moore was on it; the Center for Naval Analyses had a researcher assigned to it as well. It was a combination of the usual, star-studded, small cast. They spent several months out there and came away very impressed. At the very least, what you could say was that it was incredibly relevant to the moment. It had chosen the correct issues.

This is one of the things I loved about OTI and still love about it and that I love about CSO [Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations] as well. So often, when I would walk into a room in the U.S. government, I could tell you before I walk in what people are going to say, because they're there representing certain roles. If they have a warehouse full of health care plans, they're going to bring their existing inventory to the room. If they're the Haiti desk, then they have a responsibility to deal with the embassy and protect. Almost everybody in the room is either there for a geographic reason or because they have an existing product. OTI was actually the only one in the room who could say, "What's the problem? What do people want?"

Where this really killed me was in the UN, where there would be a Haitian crisis and the UN would send a mission down there. Guess how many people would be on the mission? Forty-one different people. Every one of them represented a different interest. There was an AIDS program—it's not that Haiti didn't need AIDS programs, there would be whatever it happened to be—but you'd come back with a report that said the following forty-one things are needed in Haiti. And AID has a limit to that as well. If you really want to be responsive to the people, don't start with the answer. Oftentimes people would be a bit dumbfounded that somebody who knew nothing about a place could be in the room with the experts. But there was an advantage to being able to say, "Tell me what the people want and what's most necessary."

I think we were very much on point there. We did a lot of great countrywide research right away. I don't think I mentioned the team that went to Hinche, kind of a rural, larger town. When they arrived there, there were two people hanging from a tree that were *Tonton Macoute*. Without our team visiting, they wouldn't see that the balance of power had shifted and that the people who used to control the town were now not in a very good spot.

Q: Fascinating.

BARTON: These are the kinds of insights you only get if you get out and you spend time actually living there for a while.

In Haiti, we built what our key on the ground organizer, Steve Siegler, called “the process is the product.” We didn’t care what local people chose to do as long as they had an open decision making process, engaged the community, brought something of worth (usually labor) to the project, and accounted for all contributions in a public way (usually posted on the site.

At a team meeting early in the process, Steve gave us a test. “What is democracy?” We all came up with sophisticated answers. His was the best: “Of the people, by the people and for the people.” That was defining for OTI – and I embraced it throughout my AID, UNHCR, and State years.

Q: Fascinating. All right, but Haiti was not the only place in which OTI was active. Obviously, there were some lessons from the Haiti situation for you, but what else was OTI doing, and what were you learning through that process? You spent five years leading OTI, more or less.

BARTON: In the first year, we worked on Bosnia, Haiti, Rwanda, and we started to work on Angola. Those are four places that almost nobody really wanted to spend time in. (laughs) I started around mid-March, and by mid-June—so at the third month—Brian Atwood [USAID administrator] sent me to Sarajevo saying, "There's this break in the fighting. NATO bombers have neutralized the Serbs in the hills for the moment. There's a ceasefire and a promising peace. Go over and see what's possible."

The break of the action wasn't that promising, but we had gotten introduced to Bosnia, and we now had—because we spent several weeks there—Steve Morrison and Dayton Maxwell, as I mentioned before. Dayton was an OFDA [Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance] guy. We had a sense of some things that might work, so when there was the first negotiated peace agreement—before the Dayton Accords, there was a governance structure that was set up—we were the first people to actually be in a position to try to help it get some traction. That did not happen in that first year, but we spent a lot of time there and we sent a big team because we had gotten familiar with the landscape and the players and the rest of it. That first mission was really important—to be the tip of the spear of the AID effort in Sarajevo and in Bosnia. Steve Morrison did a lot of that; he'd lined up academics, experts, field people, and reporters. So we sent quite an elaborate team out there.

In fact, they got stopped at a checkpoint and their SUV was stolen, and they had to walk back into the town. I think Ambassador Peter Galbraith in Croatia registered a complaint and the car came back the next day, but it had already been painted camouflage. The car had already been converted.

Q: Well, that was good because that meant that your guys were safer, right? They could drive around without fear.

BARTON: (laughs) It was no longer a black SUV—it was now camo. That kind of stuff happened. Two of our guys got stopped at the Croatian border driving back into Bosnia a little bit later, and they thought that they had diplomatic immunity. They had diplomatic plates. They wouldn't let the Croatian border guards check out their cars, so they spent twenty-four hours as prisoners in their car as this standoff had to be negotiated through the U.S. embassy in Croatia and a local lawyer. It cost us a few thousand bucks to sort that problem out. There are a lot of these adjustments that I kind of lost track of until I had a chance to talk to somebody like you. So that was Bosnia.

Rwanda, same thing. Obviously, right after the genocide, it was way too early to do anything, but we were invited back by the ambassador and by Jack Hjelt and his wife, Christine who I mentioned before—wonderful AID representatives. She was spectacular. We worked very closely with her because Jack was doing everything else that AID was thinking about at that moment, mostly humanitarian stuff.

We got going there, and then Angola seemed promising again. There were ceasefires and potential elections coming up. We started doing some of the landmine work there, again just trying to figure out the central issues that nobody else was addressing in each of these places. Developing those programs took up much of the first year, but Haiti was at the heart of the action because that one was ready to go. The minute the U.S. invaded in mid-September 1994, they were ready to go.

Q: But you're not suggesting that the ideal arrangement is to have a U.S. invasion after which OTI can do its work.

BARTON: I always said we should be a “post-bullet" program since we came back from Bosnia. I took that quite literally forward. It's a critique that I have of the gigantic U.S. efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, that the safety has not been established. When I was working on the USAID transition for the Obama administration—I was on that team from 2008 to the end of 2009—we got a report that said hundreds of USAID subcontractors had been killed in Afghanistan. Hundreds. I mean, it wasn't a question of dozens. Now, none of them were Americans. Most of them were Turks that had worked on a variety of road projects. But I felt it was a glaring and an awful indictment of our model—that so many people had worked for us and gotten killed and there had been virtually no attention paid to it whatsoever. And so that, to me, was a sign that AID was not “post-bullet.”

Q: But despite your role, very little changed on that score, I take it.

BARTON: I couldn't even get a newspaper story out of it, which surprised me. I mean, I talked to a reporter once and I said, "I think this is one of the most scandalous items that we've come across."

Q: Did you tend to respond on your own initiative to country cases as they arose during this period? Or was there a more regular system within AID in which the administrator, Brian Atwood, or someone else would point out some important countries that you ought to be looking into? How did your selection of places where you could go "post-bullet" occur?

BARTON: We always wanted to be in places that mattered to the U.S. government. I thought the problem with these programs before—I took this attitude to CSO as well—was that they became the favorites of orphaned embassies or underfunded countries, so they were naturally pushed off into the second tier. Doug Stafford [assistant administrator for food and humanitarian assistance] has said that the best intelligence report is a Reuters news story. If you heard that a hundred thousand people had left their homes in Mindanao, there's probably something going on.

We tried to be in places that we thought really mattered. It was a combination. Initially, we got some direction from the front office. We got some requests from Doug; for example, Doug said Liberia was ready. That was one that I was never quite sure about, but we put it in because he had been a Peace Corps volunteer there. He had been an administrator of the Peace Corps in Liberia, so he was eager for us to go to work there. I never found it that promising, but we had to go. I went there for the thirteenth peace accord to see if there was an opportunity, and I met with Charles Taylor and the other interim presidents. There was a co-presidency at the time, and it was like, wow, this is ripe. This is what ripeness looks like. It was very authentic. We went ahead and did something modest there. I remember Doug and Lois Richards and Sylvia Fletcher, who worked on it, always suggesting that things were much more promising there—that the Liberia train is coming down the track, I remember Doug saying that to me once. I was like, "Yeah, right."

We got direction from different people, but then we also started to get progressive AID mission directors who knew they wanted to mix up their portfolio. I mean, they were stuck with a portfolio that they couldn't do anything about, or the ambassador was not happy that the central issues were not being addressed. They started to show up because we had the reputation for having agility and liquidity. One of the ways we fostered that reputation was that I would tell anybody from our office who went to any other meeting, "Consider that you have our entire portfolio available to you for this country. If we have a twenty million dollar budget the first year, consider that you have twenty million dollars." I had seen that working with real estate developers in Maine. I mean, they would leverage the Texas teachers pension fund into a twelve-story high rise in downtown Portland, so I knew that you could do that. As long as we went into every room saying we had twenty

million bucks or ten million, everybody wanted to talk to us. It was plenty of liquidity to get us into the conversation. One of the things I said to Hillary Clinton when she interviewed me for the CSO job was that I've got to have some liquidity, because I know for a fact that with one million dollars, I can buy the loyalty of any U.S. ambassador anywhere in the world.

Q: (laughs) What did she say to that?

BARTON: She had the same reaction you had. She said, "That's pretty funny." Remember, OFDA had an emergency ambassadors' fund or something that was like fifty thousand dollars or seventy-five thousand dollars, and that immediately gave them entry to any country that had an emergency. We kind of raised the stakes a little bit.

Then we ended up working with people like the AID Mission Director Terry Myers in Indonesia. He was just a gift of a partner because he had identified all these great influencers in this society. At that time, they were frustrated with the Asian economic collapse, and there were random targeted attacks on the Chinese community in Indonesia. There was all this turbulence. President Suharto was crashing. He had a terrible successor. Terry Myers was just beautifully positioned, but he needed a really agile, flexible tool that could work on the political development of the country, and he knew that, so that ended up being another one of our flagship programs.

Q: What did you do in Indonesia?

BARTON: It was really quite wonderful. Again, you know, it's a country—at this point, it was 210 million people, something like that. They're spread out all over the place, basically from Bermuda to Alaska. That's the length of the country.

It struck us that there were two openings. One was that Suharto created this customized satellite network to improve communications to connect his country. That was something he was very proud of. So, the country had a sophisticated system of communication that we thought we could use for television, local radio stations, and other media. And regarding Suharto's oppression, he had pretty much chased down every human rights protester, but he had been a little bit more open with the media. He wasn't great with them, but that was as liberal as he got. We thought we had the existing news organizations and this network of television and radio stations, and because of the economic collapse, the television time was almost free. I mean, it cost very, very little—sort of like what we had found in Sarajevo at an earlier stage.

But this time we were more engaged, thanks to Terry Myers. He pulled together a roundtable of people. We took Mike Stievater, who had been our head of our operation in Bosnia. He had seen a lot of different things for several years, and he'd worked for IRC [International Rescue Committee] out there beforehand. We kind of stripped the IRC of

their talent. A lot of the humanitarians had gotten tired of feeding the same people for multiple years. They now wanted to see if change was possible, and we were ready to move into that political change space. We sent him to Indonesia, and one of the first meetings—I think at Terry Myers's house, but I wasn't there—had sort of the George Gallup of Indonesia, the Ralph Nader of Indonesia, and the Larry King of Indonesia. He collected these people who had all these skill sets—and Garin Nugroho, who was the premier documentary filmmaker of Indonesia. He had been a human rights lawyer but from a family that Suharto had never really gone after. They got together and they started talking.

Again, I had a huge bias towards dominating communications. I mean, with my family I had grown up in countries where when somebody took over a local radio station, that meant they took over the government. They started with a local radio station, they announced there was a new government, a few tanks took over the palace, and that was it. There were still pretty centralized communication systems. We worked out a series of commercials that ran nonstop on central political development issues, including how Indonesians could disagree within a family about a political issue. There was no history of articulating disagreement. Those ran nonstop, but then they were complemented by local radio stations—lots of local talk shows and things of that sort that really involved the population of Indonesia in a way they'd never been involved before. It also connected all the islands because they got the same message at the same time. That was a critical element of it. There was some local development money as well for civil society groups and whatnot. I don't remember as much about that. And because we had the pollster, we did polling before and after, and like 85 percent of the public was fully aware of these commercials in our after surveys. Again, you're reaching 210 million people with probably about four or five million dollars total.

Q: This was post-Suharto?

BARTON: Post-Suharto. Yeah, the government just didn't have the ability to crack down. Things were opening up everywhere.

Q: But Terry Myers had worked this out with whoever in the government was responsible. The AID programs were not totally without reference to government approval.

BARTON: I don't know that part of it as well. I know the U.S. ambassador loved it.

Q: Do you remember who was ambassador at the time?

BARTON: I think it was Stapleton Roy at the beginning. Then I remember going up to a meeting with Mitch McConnell's [foreign policy advisor] Robin Cleveland, who was known as a piranha. When AID threw a cow into her river, it was generally devoured within seconds and not in a friendly way. But she and Senator McConnell naturally

understood political television advertising really well. He thought it was a brilliant way to reach a lot of people and start to get involved in cultural issues.

Q: Well, you know, Robin Cleveland spent part of her childhood in Indonesia.

BARTON: Correct. She really knew a lot. She knew it well.

Q: AID had used communications before, particularly with the family planning program in the Philippines and a lot of other places—I think in Indonesia in the 1970s, actually. So, the use of public communication systems was not unique, but you were using it in a much more political area. You were not focused on something like family planning if you were worried about agreements and disagreements within families. Was democracy an issue for you?

BARTON: We had to do a report on OTI about that time, and I remember staying home and writing it for about a week—

Q: A report to Congress?

BARTON: To AID and to the universe. People wanted to say, "Oh, so you've been in business for three, four years. What does it mean?" The phrase that came to mind about OTI was that we were **advancing peaceful democratic change**. Each one of those words was quite pregnant.

"Advancing" was a modest word—it was moving things in the right direction, it was catalyzing them, it was initiating, but it wasn't as if we were delivering. These are pretty big challenges, and cultural, too. That was the first word. "Peaceful" because almost everybody would rather do it without somebody getting killed if they had a choice. There are a few people who would like to kill people, but generally people see peace as the highest art form. "Democratic" because we never went anywhere where people wanted somebody telling them what to do all the time. They wanted to have some voice; they wanted to have some license. And "change" because in most of the countries we worked in, we couldn't go back to the status quo ante. You had to be in favor of a different system. That became our mission, but it also became my personal mission, because that pretty much captured how I felt about the potential of moving things in what I consider a more stable and peaceful direction.

Q: When you were doing these programs in Indonesia, for example, the key players were all Indonesians, not Americans. This was truly a form of participation.

BARTON: Absolutely. That was central to our mission. There was actually a subset of people that Brian Atwood had brought in—some of them ended up in the Democracy Center—who had this deep-seated belief in participation and had been proselytizing. I

had been going to those meetings that Larry Garber and the democracy advocates had been hosting every week. Most of what I heard them saying made a lot of sense to me. I was like, "Yeah, why would I want to be the stepparent of Haiti for the next twenty years?" It's not going to work.

We also worked in Mindanao. Paul Randolph, who had worked for us, was an old OFDA guy who was overseeing from Washington our operation in the Balkans. He went to Mindanao, where there was a very successful AID classic development program—roads and farms and the like—but it was an integrated program that was done through Berger. We then started this kind of reintegration program for the Muslim rebels in Mindanao, and he ran it there on the ground. We went around meeting with all these rebel groups. It was a peaceful time there; the only group we had to stay away from was the Abu Sayyaf. But we met with all the others, MILF [Moro Islamic Liberation Front] and MNLF [Moro National Liberation Front]. They all basically said, "We've been in the bush for decades, and we'd love to get out." We initially started working with the women because they were not in the bush, but all their husbands and some of their sons were there. It turns out that the second and third generation rebels aren't that enthusiastic about that life.

We started a whole series of agriculture and aquaculture programs that took many of these rebels and gave them a plot of land, gave them their initial seeds, and guided them through the first couple of growing seasons. Paul Randolph, who'd grown up in Iowa on a farm and whatnot, ran that program just beautifully. I think as we got into the global war on terror, we probably screwed that up a little bit, because shortly thereafter we started leaning probably excessively on the Philippine military. Abu Sayyaf was so small, and all the other groups were huge. We were dealing with all the other groups, and they were containing Abu Sayyaf, because Abu Sayyaf was way off the ranch. But we had intelligence that these guys were tied to Al-Qaeda or whatever. Pretty soon we were doing the same stuff that the Philippine military was doing. It takes a great deal of self-discipline to stay focused on this.

Q: You started doing what might be described as more than the traditional aid programs. You were doing agriculture and setting them up to do that kind of work.

BARTON: That's what they wanted. When we met with them in the bush, they said, "Get us out of here."

Q: How long were you doing that before it shifted into doing more of the association with the military and so on?

BARTON: I think Paul was out there for two years, and he was living with his family in Davao City.

Q: Well, all this talk about all these countries—first of all, I'm amazed that you are able to remember the details about these places as well as you do. I suppose that writing the book, Peace Works*, refreshed your memory, but still, it's pretty impressive what you're able to remember now.*

BARTON: Thank you, but it's a sign of just how much it meant to me.

Q: Are there any more lessons that you want to capture that you have not already stressed or any particular country case that was important to you—a lasting element in your own thoughts? We don't want to leave OTI before you get a chance to say something about that. On the other hand, I'm sure you could talk about OTI for hours and hours. I find this absolutely fascinating because before reading your book, Peace Works, I knew very little about OTI. I was long out of AID at that point.

BARTON: There are two others that come to mind that I think are worthy of attention: Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kosovo. There was a push after OTI had gotten through three years of stuff—I think that it takes about three years to get your bureaucratic roots in place—

Q: You wanted to do that? I thought you wanted not to get bureaucratic. (laughs)

BARTON: I believe that what OTI was doing was vitally important for AID—that if AID was going to be relevant, it needed to have this kind of instrument, this sort of a tool. It takes about three years for it to get accepted inside by enough people. It's not accepted by everybody. There are still people who think that OTI is a crackpot organization or a cowboy-run place or whatever. But it takes about five years for the culture to stick, and I had five years at OTI.

The culture that we were developing was being incredibly relevant, being timely, being catalytic, bringing liquidity, and not having contracting become the issue instead of our work. These are valid criticisms of AID to this day. Those things were in a good place, but once we got to that first three-year mark, people said, "Well, how are you going to be accepted by regular AID?"

We always had a hard time attracting FSOs [Foreign Service Officers]. There were not a lot of FSOs who saw going through OTI as being career enhancing. We were outside the geographic bureaus. Just like the State Department, if you want to be an ambassador or a mission director, you better have a geographic bureau that's going to host you. The most ambitious people—the organization then follows them if people realize that's the way you get there. So, I went in to see Brian Atwood at one point, and he said to me, "I'd like a quarter to a third of AID to be OTI."

Q: (laughs)

BARTON: I said to him, "Please don't make that a goal. If you do, tomorrow every one of these bureaus is going to report back to you that 56 percent of their work is already OTI-like or 74 percent." Certainly nobody's going to accept that only 35 percent of their work is OTI-like. We know that's not the case. I mean, that's just not the deal.

Around this time, both Kosovo and Congo showed up in different ways. In the case of the Congo, Mobutu Sese Seko was collapsing or was about to collapse. There was this great excitement that significant change could be initiated in the Congo, so we organized a rather diverse group of AID people to go, under Mike Mahdesian's leadership, all over the Congo to see what the opportunities and options were. That was one of the first integrated missions.

At about the same time, the Kosovo War was taking place, or it was shaping up. The U.S. bombing hadn't started. Brian Atwood was an important part of the deputies committee at the White House National Security Council. He had Hattie Babbitt working on it as his deputy, taking the lead, and he decided that OTI would be the lead at AID. It was a shock to the geographic bureau, which was one of the powerhouses at the time because so much of that post-Soviet money was going through it. Don Pressley was the head of it. Don turned out to be a really good partner, but his first role was to protect his bureaucratic interests, and this was a major incursion into his sacred ground.

We said we would have a single AID team—I was in charge of it—and it would be populated by whoever the other bureaus put on it, which obviously meant several people from the Bureau for Europe and the New Independent States. They gave us a few people. We had daily meetings where we would determine what we might do. We started off by sending— again, very much the same model we used in Haiti—about seven or eight teams of two to Kosovo for one month, spread out all over the countryside. Kosovo is about the size of Rhode Island, so when you get that many teams out there, they're living in those villages for a week or two or three at a time. And that's exactly what they did. We took some of our most skilled people from Bosnia—some of the people that Don Pressley had assigned—and they went out there.

U.S. intelligence couldn't tell you what was going on the ground, but our guys could tell that there were Serbian tanks going by their front door just from the building shaking. We got a very good sense of what was taking shape, what was about to happen, and what the possibilities were for potential activity there. We were then able to take that real time information because we were not classifying any of our reporting. All was by email and by phone, so we had instant reporting—you can imagine how classification short-circuits the whole system. The system is one of people clearing, clearing, clearing, clearing, clearing, clearing, until it's no longer relevant.

I remember being at the deputies meeting at the White House one day. Every single meeting started with the intelligence briefing, and the intelligence briefing was usually, "Things are going to hell and they're getting worse." One day, the briefer started out by saying, "We've had a week of heavy fog and rain, and we just haven't been able to really see what's going on." So, I went over to him afterwards, I said, "You know, I had seven or eight teams"— maybe it was five or six—"there for a month, and they've just come back." I mentioned the towns that they had lived in and what they had covered in the regions and how we'd broken up. I said, "Would you be interested in having them brief your teams on what they saw on the ground?" And he said, "Oh, yeah, we'd very much like that. We don't have anybody on the ground."

Here was U.S. policy being driven by this kind of aerial reconnaissance or phone tapping model that was missing pretty much everything that was happening on the ground. Again, we wanted to keep that information moving because we thought if the U.S. government actually knows what's going on, it might make better decisions—there's a really good chance. We didn't consider ourselves intelligence gatherers. We just considered ourselves people who wanted to know what was happening. That was an important bureaucratic moment; it was an important approach and as close to an integrated team as I saw.

When I got to CSO, I pretty much thought that's what the State Department should do. The State Department should be the premier convener not just in the country, but in Washington. The State Department's failure to convene leaves a lot of stuff undone, or it goes to the National Security Council, which is ridiculous because they've got a crisis every two weeks. Furthermore, they really should be a collection house rather than an administrative house. I never quite got that argument. It shows up in my book, and it showed up in my memos to Secretary Clinton.

I still think that one team, one leader is the best approach, and there has to be agreement on who the leader is going to be. If it's a natural disaster, it's probably going to be somebody at AID. If it's a political disaster, it's probably going to be somebody from another part of the government, but you always have to have the other agencies represented. CSO and OTI would naturally be the providers of talent to that one team, but they would also help to shape the strategy.

That's one of the things that frustrates AID and I think rightly so. Somebody somewhere seems to come up with a strategy and AID then has to buy into it, so right away we're a little resistant to it. First off, it's not that good of an idea. It's not that well informed and it's not going to work. So why should we all be enthusiastic about it? I think the more that people have ownership and know that they've got ownership—and know that they better deliver with ideas—the better. If you're a wallflower in a meeting, see you later. You need to be a contributor. AID often goes into meetings with an attitude like, "Well, they didn't ask us our opinion, and we pray to hell that they won't pick our pockets." Well, that's not a good way to be an equal player, and I believe in equality in these settings.

Q: I think you're right about the State Department being the convener. The presence of AID and its leadership in National Security Council meetings should be one way to contribute to that—not the solution.

BARTON: I agree, but I think a lot of stuff should happen between State and AID and between State and the Department of Defense. State does a crap job. When they have a good ambassador in a country and a good country team, it's one of the most beautiful things around. I'm not convinced that's always the case.

Q: Well, it's also a problem in Washington. It doesn't work quite so well.

BARTON: Not even close. I think it could work better.

Q: (laughs) Anything more about OTI? Congo? Kosovo? Lessons learned?

BARTON: I'll just say one other thing. When I started at CSO, I was invited out—OTI used to have, under Rob Jenkins, an annual or biennial global meeting, where they bring all their people in. They happened to have one meeting in Annapolis and they invited me out to it. I remember they were nervous because the State Department was going to take over OTI, but that was never an interest of mine. I like having competing centers of excellence, because I think you're much more likely to get good ideas, and you just never know where good ideas are going to come from. They don't come by over centralization. I don't believe that one dysfunctional organization, the State Department, should take over another dysfunctional organization, AID, and that they will both be better for it—I think they both have a lot of work to do on their own. So, I made it clear that I had no interest in taking it over and that I really looked forward to working with them. I did ask that group—about a hundred and fifty people—"How many of you are career Foreign Service Officers?"

Q: These were all people who worked for OTI? One hundred and fifty people?

BARTON: A hundred and fifty people. How many people do you think raised their hands? How many FSOs were there in the room?

Q: I don't know. Three?

BARTON: I think there may have been one. It was either zero or one, I forget.

Q: Because of the same problem you had mentioned earlier, that it wasn't a career path for anybody?

BARTON: Yeah, it was still seen as sort of an outlier operation. AID takes the most pride in OTI when they're defending themselves in front of Congress. It's a very popular initiative in Congress, more popular than other parts of AID. It's heralded as an incredibly relevant and effective tool of development assistance. That's proven by how many other federal agencies run money through OTI or find ways of working with OTI because they don't have the ideas or the initiative, and yet they need to do something on the ground in wherever it happens to be—in particular Iraq and Afghanistan, where the Defense Department plays a significant role. But I think it's still a little bit of an outlier.

It has cultural elements, which I believe AID has to seize if it's going to be more effective long term. We were always very comfortable with any kind of evaluation, any review. When I went to CSO, I constantly did employee surveys, because how else are you going to find out if you're doing stuff that's working? Otherwise, it's all my narrative on how things are going. Furthermore, when I got to CSO, for example, there were 180 people there, and I knew that many of those people were not appropriate for this work. They had kind of just ended up there because it was available. I didn't want to run into what I had seen happen at AID a lot. Every time I met with anybody at AID, they would tell me that morale has never been worse—that was a chronic complaint.

I thought, well, the only way you'll know if morale is getting better or worse is if you're actually surveying people and you can show what the pattern is. The first thing you have to have is a baseline. If you don't start somewhere, you can't know if you're getting better or worse. There was a bit of a defensive element to it, but it was mostly an offensive element because your employees really want to know that you know this stuff. They take very little satisfaction in inaction. Instantly, they want to know what you're doing about it: "Now that the obvious is plain for you as well, what's going on?" That reporting cycle was all part of the culture of OTI, even though it wasn't as refined in some ways, because we didn't have SurveyMonkey and all the other stuff that has developed over time.

The incident reporting, not classifying what we were doing—there were just a lot of things that made it more open and engaged. We knew we had to have mission directors that would like us; that's something that I took to CSO. It had to have ambassadors that liked us. To do that, you had to have really good people on the ground, so we hired and trained a heck of a lot of people. We were able to do that because we had notwithstanding authority and because we didn't look for positions when Larry Byrne and the others were introducing freezes. We were never looking for additional positions. We just wanted to have the money so that if we needed people, we could hire them as PSCs [personal services contractors]. PSCs became really important to OTI.

Q: Right. It sounds like you also had, throughout your entire years at OTI, the support from Brian Atwood.

BARTON: Yeah. Then he left, but his successor was also supportive. Doug Stafford left, and his successor, Hugh Parmer, was supportive, too. Doug, Brian, and Carol Lancaster [deputy USAID administrator] were the initial team, and then people like Mark Schneider [assistant administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean] really helped us get started. In Guatemala, we had a wonderful working relationship with our mission director, Stacy Rhodes, who went to the Peace Corps as the chief of staff later. He was one of the most revered mission directors. Having really revered mission directors, and using Tom Stukel as an example, as I mentioned before, a retired mission director—widely respected—was crucial. When he walked into the cafeteria as one of our ambassadors it gave us access and credibility that we probably wouldn't have gotten any other way. So we made a pretty conscious effort to figure out how to get into the weeds of the institution and make sure that we had really good agents.

Q: Your next job after OTI was as deputy high commissioner at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. How did that come about?

BARTON: That's a really good question, because it's a fun story. As you can imagine—

Q: All your stories are fun stories!

BARTON: (laughs)

Q: That's one of the things that makes this so interesting.

BARTON: Well, so much of this stuff you sort of discover as you go along—the elements of it. I'm not sure I have the whole picture, but I'll just give it to you as I know it. The United States had certain top jobs in the UN system. Every so often, when we didn't want a job, we would trade with one of the other members of the P5 [five permanent members of the UN Security Council] or the other major donor countries for that job. Doug Stafford, in a way, had been finessed out of UNHCR by a trade that had taken place several years before, which took his deputy—he had been the deputy at UNHCR, and we'd given up that job and the deputy job at UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East] for the top job at UNDP [United Nations Development Program]. It's just like a baseball trade.

Q: But I thought we had the top job at UNDP for years.

BARTON: I think we had to get it back or something. Gus Speth was the selectee. His term was coming up in 1999, and he wasn't going to be reappointed, or he didn't want it—I'm not sure what it was— and the U.S. wasn't really coming up with a candidate. They had talked to Brian Atwood about it, but I don't think he was quite ready for it or didn't want it for some reason. So, we came up with the idea of giving it to a Brit, Mark

Malloch Brown, and then we would take back our two deputy jobs that we hadn't had before. There was a mega-trade well before I arrived.

But as usual, the State Department is a pretty rotten recruiting organization. It's sort of like, "Who's that retired ambassador that I saw last week at DACOR [Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired]?" I mean, it doesn't use its LinkedIn aggressively. They hadn't come up with many candidates, and it turned out that Sadako Ogata, the high commissioner, had at about this time heard from [UN Secretary General] Kofi Annan that she was not going to be reappointed—that at the ten-year mark, it was over, and she was not happy with that.

So, the United States had to come up with candidates for these two positions; Julia Taft was responsible for them because they fell within her purview as the assistant secretary of state for PRM [Population, Refugees, and Migration]. Sadako Ogata was not pleased with her status, and not happy being told what to do. Her deputy was leaving after forty-one years of working at the UN—Gerald Walzer, a great guy. But she had an assistant—a very ambitious Dane [Søren Jessen-Petersen]—who wanted to be the deputy high commissioner. The United States was telling her, "No, we're going to put somebody into that job because we're the biggest donor and it's our turn." She works out a deal with Julia Taft: the United States can have somebody, but Ogata gets to choose from rosters that Taft provides.

So, while the U.S. is coming up with the roster, I'm in Indonesia, and I get a call from Nisha Desai, who was at this point Brian's special assistant. She said, "Would you be interested in being the deputy high commissioner for refugees for UNHCR?" I'd seen UNHCR everywhere, but I really didn't know it very well.

Q: Were you still at OTI?

BARTON: I was still at OTI. She said, "Could Brian put your name up for it?" I said, "Sure, why not?"

I got back and it turned out I had to fly out to meet Sadako for an interview. Doug Stafford, I think, weighed in because Sadako trusted Doug; he had been her first assistant when she got there. Now Sadako had already looked over the first list of retired generals and retired ambassadors and had shown that she was in charge by saying none of these people will do. So I was, let's say, on the second list—I mean, I might have been on the third list, but it was not the initial list.

I remember flying into Geneva—actually, flying to some conference that she was at and meeting her there, then going back to Geneva for the formal job interview. She was pleased that I was over fifty years old, because her senior management team had all been there twenty years. When we met as a senior management team, Sadako was the next

junior-most person to me. She'd been there ten years, and then everybody else had been there twenty plus years, so they were the same class. I was the only person who was new to the organization, which is both a significant disadvantage and something of an advantage, because you could take a different look. You would say, "Is that person really not worthy of this job?" Someone would say, "Well, you should have seen him in Sudan twenty years ago."

Anyway, what I didn't realize until I was several months into the job was that—and George Moose was the [U.S. representative to the United Nations in Geneva] there. I was over there meeting with him one day when I was the deputy high commissioner. He said, "Well, you know, Sadako didn't want an American in this job at all." I had never heard that. She wanted Søren Jessen-Petersen, but the U.S. insisted. Somebody could have easily mentioned that to me at an earlier stage; it might have been more helpful.

But she had an idea of how she could use me. She felt that the humanitarian community kept getting stuck—in Bosnia, Afghanistan, you name it—and finding the same exit strategy problems as the military. She called it "the gap." That was the way she defined this: the gap between humanitarian and development assistance. She had stopped in Washington a couple of times, and I had been part of briefings for her that Doug Stafford had arranged in his office about how we were dealing with this transitional period, which is essentially right there in the gap. She wanted to develop that muscle at UNHCR, which already had its own rather significant divisions between the protection people and the service providing people—the pure humanitarians and the human rights people.

That became a central piece of what I was working on—something called the Brookings process, which was the World Bank, UNDP, and UNHCR coming together to try to design a way to work in these cases. It just so happened that the other two institutions were very early in their development. Mark Malloch Brown was reorganizing UNDP and that was taking way too much internal energy for them to really focus on this. Even though he assigned his deputy, a guy from Burkina Faso, and had a high-ranking vice president from the World Bank, UNHCR really carried the process. We made some progress, but again, I tried to ground it in some practical initiatives early and a couple other places. But the three institutions all had their own internal braking system, which was tough. Anyway, that's sort of how I was selected. It was this high-level trade—a lot of negotiating that I totally missed. I think Sadako was just having trouble digesting it as well.

There were moments when it was the most stimulating job on Earth. One of the first missions, I headed out to West Africa. I went out to Guinea and Sierra Leone and Liberia and met with thousands of refugees and local leaders and people from the *New York Times,* BBC interviews. I felt like every ounce of my talent was called upon on that trip. Then there were other times—the organization chart that I described was a gigantic box at the top for the high commissioner, and then a line that dropped very quickly and for a

long distance, almost down to the floor, to a tiny little box, which is the deputy high commissioner. Sadako was larger than life and very detail oriented, let's say. I got to be much more trusted and a better friend of hers after I was her deputy. I think that was largely due to the fact that Kofi Annan had really thrown her for a loop by telling her that her leadership time was up.

Q: (laughs) Was she there during your entire tenure?

BARTON: I had Ruud Lubbers as her successor. I had two very strong individuals, among the most independent people I've ever known—in the case of Sadako, among the most competitive people I've ever known. So, it was a demanding job. In terms of the things that I could say were accomplishments, one was that I humanized the executive floor quite a bit. It had gotten to be, I'd say, imperial. These are very bright and talented people—among the most talented teams that I was ever part of. They want to be heard, they want to be understood, they want to be involved, and they want to be influential. That's why they do this work. I was able to do a lot of that, just by being in the cafeteria, having regular coffees in my office—just doing stuff that was accessible. I had to do it, because it's the only way I could get to know the people in the institution. Everybody else knew everybody.

Q: So you listened. Listening was important here again.

BARTON: Yeah, accessibility and listening both were really important. People could come to me. It was frustrating because I couldn't always solve the problem, even though as a deputy high commissioner, you think I would have had some of the authority, but the authority was highly centralized.

Jonathan Moore told me to go and see *Rashomon,* the movie. He said, "Before you work a day at the UN, you have to see *Rashomon.*" I couldn't find it. Finally, after I had already been working in Geneva for six or eight months, it popped up in the local bookstore in Geneva. I bought the cassette—CD, whatever it was in those days—and took it home and watched it. It's the story of a rape and the surprise attack in the woods of her soldier/samurai husband, and then the recounting of the events by four witnesses. All their accounts are totally different. It's a confused mess. So it was helpful to watch that.

Also, I was able to say to people, "You know, when we have somebody we don't like, we're going to have to find a way to move them out of organization, rather than putting them over in Siberia"—in Geneva, we had a separate building, and the word was they were “on the complement.” But nobody would call on them, and then they would come over to see me every so often and say, "Gee, you know, I'm one of the top officials in UNHCR, I'm getting paid all this money, and I like the student program for my kids. I don't want to go anywhere, but I haven't had any responsibility now for six months, a year, two years." That kind of stuff was disabling to the rest of the organization.

Part of the problem was that we only had about thirty big promotions a year and we had forty people at that level. That didn't leave us any room to promote middle-level managers. The middle level managers were suppressed, we had ten surplus people that went over to the complement, and then we had thirty chosen. It was a lot like NY Mayor Robert Wagner's line about why he hated patronage—you made fifty enemies and one ingrate.

That was good, and then Sadako gave me one really fascinating internal job. The financial people reported that with two months to go in the year and about a billion-dollar expected budget, we were 175 million dollars short. She asked me if I would sort it out. It gave me real responsibility. (laughs) The first thing I did was go around and meet with all the senior managers, and I found out that many of them thought that the finance people always cried wolf—that this was a familiar pattern and everything would be fine. I tried to settle on what the number was if it wasn't 175 million. I settled, I think, on eighty-two million. Then I did a jotting of where the money was, and I figured I needed to get most of the money from our largest operation, Bosnia.

So, I went to see Jacques Mouchet, who was the head of that operation—a great Frenchman, smoked like crazy, just a classic guy. I said, "Jacques, here's my problem. It's not 175 million. It's eighty-two million. I've got to get a certain amount from you." I think I'd written down the number: exactly 50 percent. I needed forty-one million from the Bosnia operation, but I didn't tell him. I said, "What can you do? Can you help me?" And he said, "Rick, I can't give you a penny more than forty million." (laughs) That was fine!

We started with that, and then only one guy, who was a good friend, Anne-Willem Bijleveld— he was running the newly independent states operation—he was the one guy who told me, "Oh, Rick, I can't do it." And I knew he had twelve million bucks! I knew he had it because he had all kinds of money left from the last quarter and there was no way they were going to spend it. I had already collected enough information from enough places. I said, "Geez, you know, you got like seven million sitting in your account in Russia alone. What are you planning to do with that? Couldn't we look at that?" He looked at his three deputies like, "Who the hell gave him that?" (laughs)

Q: How much did you get from him?

BARTON: I got ten or twelve million, so we got to the eighty-two million. Sadako was happy, the finance people were a little grumpy, and when we made it to the end of the year, everything was fine. It worked out well. She wanted to spend her last year on the road on a bit of a victory tour—she wanted to see the ayatollah [Ali Khamenei], she wanted to see Fidel [Castro], but she also wanted to visit all our big programs. She was constantly traveling, which meant I had to be at home. I ended up being kind of an internal leader. Later on, a couple of people asked me if I was interested in being the

deputy at AID, and I had decided at this point that I would rather run something than be the deputy of almost anything.

Q: While Sadako was away, were you the acting high commissioner?

BARTON: Not really, because every night she would get about eighty-five pages of papers faxed to her. Wherever she was in the world, she would go through them and mark down what she wanted. I think she was a historic figure and really lifted up the organization, but by this time she was overcontrolling and could get petty.

I remember John Horekens, who was one of her favorites—he was in charge of external relations. She'd been given a huge painting on one of her trips and she wanted to put it up somewhere in this funky building that didn't have a lot of walls. There wasn't a lot of space for paintings and whatnot, so he put it in one place, and she didn't like it there. I remember during a senior staff meeting— just five or six people in her office—she said, "Where's that painting anyway?" And John Horekens said, "It's down in the basement where there's a wall." She said, "It can't be there! Do I have to hang this painting myself?" There was this attention to some details that could be petty. The same thing happened to me at CSO, where the larger leadership responsibilities get distracted by things that are probably not that consequential.

Q: (laughs) But they're personally very important to somebody.

BARTON: Yeah.

Q: You mentioned earlier this effort to work on the so-called transition period. I do remember Doug Stafford had this in mind when he was at UNDP, stressing that the missing element, the gap that needed to be filled, was this period in which the humanitarian aid shifted over to development and that there needed to be some leadership in that area. I think he thought it was a role that could be uniquely played by UNDP. That subject is still very much with us—that many of the humanitarian organizations think they need to make this transition. I guess that during the time you were involved at UNHCR, this wasn't something that you could really point to as having been sorted out very well.

BARTON: I spent an amazing amount of time trying to get the World Bank and UNDP on it. It was Sadako's idea to pull them together; she considered them frontline agencies. She was a little bit disdainful of UNDP because she didn't think that they were as relevant as they should be. But she liked working with the president of the World Bank and the head of the Brookings Institution at that time was a good host. He was the convener for this. They would meet at that level, and then we tried to operationalize it at the deputy level.

We created a tiny office at UNHCR. I think it got undercut a little bit by Søren Jessen-Petersen worrying that it might be a dilution of some of his responsibilities. He was getting ready to run for high commissioner, so he was very much feeling the need to have his own model of control. I heard about people coming to me to have meetings and then afterward they would have to go in and debrief the assistant high commissioner, because he wanted to know what was going on and what effects it might have on him. That kind of stuff was decent bureaucratic training. But I'm not terribly possessive about these things because I think the problems are much bigger than all of us combined. If we all do our best work, we'll be lucky to be successful.

Q: What led you to leave the UNHCR?

BARTON: Well, when Ruud Lubbers came in, he really wasn't clear on what he wanted. Even though he had been the longest serving prime minister in the Netherlands' history, he didn't really have a particularly good handle on the bureaucracy. Where he was most effective was when he became the desk officer for Afghanistan. He was very engaged, and he was a super bright guy and could be really fascinating. I got to know him a little bit over three or four months, but I felt after Sadako left that I was ready to take on quite a bit more responsibility. I didn't feel that coming. I felt like this was a very different leader but a similar result, so I went in to see him and I said what I thought had to happen. I gave him a memo. At one point, he asked me, "Would you want to be the high commissioner?" And I said, "That's never going to happen, because Americans are not the high commissioner. I'd like to see this organization run this way. I think this is what needs to happen." I don't think he was quite ready for that clear of an idea.

At one point, Brian Atwood asked me if I would be the deputy in the Africa Bureau at AID. I spent a couple of weeks thinking about it and gave him a full plan of what I thought needed to happen at the Africa Bureau, but I also decided I didn't want to be the deputy. So, I went in to see him and I told him exactly those two things. And he said, "Well, this is exactly why I want you to be the deputy." I said, " I don't think I could pull it off as the deputy. I don't want the frustration of knowing what needs to happen." I hadn't really related these two things together before, but that was what I thought.

Then at the same time, there was a change of administration in Washington, so the new PRM [Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration] was trying to come up with its own candidates and having the usual trouble of who it should be. It was just an odd period, and I just thought it was probably better to leave. It was a mutual decision; I didn't get any affirmation from Lubbers—that "you're the guy and you need to stay."

I didn't really know what I was going to do next. I sent out a thank you note to the entire UNHCR and I said, "I'm unclear on what's going to come next, so I welcome your ideas." And actually, one of the senior representatives out in Serbia, in Belgrade, wrote me back and he said, "Have you ever thought of teaching? I've got some connections at

Princeton." I said, "No, I've never thought about it. But I happen to know the person that you know at Princeton, Michael Doyle. Let me reach out to him." I think he might have sent an email. Within a week I got an offer from Princeton. Now this is a fun story—again, because these things are so unusual.

Michael Doyle got in touch with me and said, "Rick, the deal would probably be that they pay you about eighty thousand dollars. You'd have to teach two courses in the fall and two in the spring. That'd be about it."—something like that. Then he said, "But I'm going to put you in touch with the assistant dean at Princeton." The assistant dean wrote me back and he said, "Look, what we'd like you to do is teach three courses, and we'll pay you one hundred thousand dollars." I wrote him back saying, "Well, this is all very interesting. Let me talk to my wife this weekend." Ten minutes later, I got an email saying, "Look, we have a special professorship that will pay you one hundred and twenty thousand dollars, and you only have to teach one course each semester and deliver one campus-wide lecture." I had a British secretary who had never seen anything like this—and this is all in the span of an hour. I said to her, "Maybe we should write them back and say, 'I got to talk to my daughter and my dog.'"

Q: (laughs) And see what you get!

BARTON: Anyway, that's how I got to Princeton, which I ended up doing for a year, and it was a wonderful year- a full practitioner professorship, the Frederick Schultz chair. Then I did the think tanks in Washington. I worked at CSIS [Center for Strategic and International Studies] in Washington for much longer than I expected—seven years, until the Obama administration appointed me—but it was really that tip that got me started here at Princeton. Even though I went to CSIS, I kept teaching at the Wilson School for five years. Then when I left the State Department, I contacted the undergraduate office here and they said, "We'd love to have you teach again," and that then led to running this fellowship as well. It's been a wonderful opportunity.

Q: So you have enjoyed teaching, in fact.

BARTON: I have. The students are unbelievable. I learn stuff from their papers. I'm a thesis advisor for four seniors right now. I'm on my second thesis. The one I read yesterday was on COIN [counterinsurgency] in the Iraq War. I learned a ton. And then I took two of the students out for dinner last night and learned even more.

Q: These are their senior theses.

BARTON: Yeah. This young woman who wrote the COIN one, her father was a captain on the ground in Iraq and he was not a particular fan of COIN. It doesn't show up—I asked her that last night—it doesn't show up in her thesis that he's not a fan. She also interviewed [David] Petraeus, she met with [H.R.] McMaster when he was here on

campus a few months ago, and this all shows up in her thesis. The second thesis I'm reading right now is on religious peacebuilding in Israel and Palestine—religious leaders who are actually trying to be peacebuilders. In that market space, they're not in a majority. (laughs)

Q: I guess that Princeton students are very well connected to start with, many of them, and they're bright and able and stimulated both by you and by their own backgrounds.

BARTON: I think that's true. I try to always let them write on whatever they want. So, if they want to write about North Korea, they'll find a paper on North Korea, and many times they do write about places that their family has a special connection to—Venezuela or Nepal, or other places. I've had three junior papers on Korea from Korean and Korean American students. It really gives me a chance to learn.

One of my students a few years ago basically said that ISIS was going to be dead the minute that the caliphate started taking real estate, because then they would be subject to a conventional military counterattack and be wiped out. That was long before anybody thought that ISIS could be controlled the minute they started to actually expand their territory.

Q: It's been fun for you. What did you do at CSIS?

BARTON: That was fun as well, although it was a little scary at first. They had four people running a program that was funded mostly by the Hewlett Foundation, and they didn't tell me the money was running out. That's why all four people were leaving, and I was hired to replace four people: Michèle Flournoy, Bob Orr, Johanna Mendelson Forman, and a fourth person. In those days, you had to raise your own money at CSIS, and they didn't tell me that I didn't have any money. But I came up with an idea. I thought the United States was going to go to war in Iraq, and we would not have a plan for winning the peace—that we would have a decent war plan, but that we wouldn't have a plan for winning the peace. That became my first product, and we started to develop it almost the day I started there around Labor Day the year before the invasion—Labor Day 2002. I had one intern, and we started to develop this plan—

Q: How prescient you were.

BARTON: Well, it was a huge, huge break. I thought for sure somebody else was going to come up with a plan, so we had to have it by Thanksgiving. We didn't get it done by Thanksgiving. I said, "We've got to have it done by Christmas." We didn't get it done until mid-January, but when we put it out, people started to see it and then it got picked up by a columnist in the *New York Times*.

He basically—this is after the war had started—he basically said that it sure would have made a lot of sense to follow this plan. He went through elements of it. Alan Krueger, who was an economist here in Princeton, wrote it. I didn't know him, but I got to know him quite well. We became tennis friends later in life before he committed suicide a couple of years ago. Heartbreaking - none of us had any idea that he was in that condition. Anyway, his column meant that everybody saw the plan, including the lead appropriator for the Republicans in the House for the committees [responsible for] this space—the Pentagon, State Department, and AID—Congressman Frank Wolf.

He was on a commission on post-conflict reconstruction at CSIS that was wrapping up as I took over. I was running the post-conflict reconstruction project. Frank had learned a lot and the commission had done a great job of defining how you should do this kind of work—the gap, the transition. Michelle, Bob, and Johanna—sorry, I'm blanking on the fourth guy's name. He was a great guy, a retired Colonel; he had really created the definition beautifully. But Frank went over to Iraq in the early days with an NGO after the U.S. invasion. He thought there was just too much kindling. There was something going on and he couldn't quite figure out what it was. And he came back, he reported on his trip, and he said that it was time for a high-level second opinion. He recommended that the post-conflict reconstruction project at CSIS lead that effort with John Hamre.

John was the head of CSIS, still is. He didn't have enough time, but he went over with us to get it started; he spent three or four days with us in Iraq. I went over with Sheba Crocker, Johanna Mendelsohn, and Bob Orr. We split up into two teams of two and went to different parts of the country. I went to Basra, Hillah, and the area south of Baghdad. We drove there, flew to Basra, and they went north into Kirkuk and Iraqi Kurdistan. For two and a half weeks, we were all over the country just trying to figure out what was going on. That was a huge breakthrough because word had leaked out. Sheba Crocker had a family dinner the night before we left with a friend from the *Times* (London). She didn't think that he was going to take our trip and put it on the front page. She felt a little bit violated by that scoop, but on the other hand, that scoop meant that everybody was waiting for this first independent second opinion report on what was going on in the early days. This would have been, by the time we came back, July 2003, so we were the first people there.

There was so much interest in it that the Pentagon decided they had to get out in front of it. They hosted a briefing by us at the Pentagon, where we had to report on it. Doug Feith [under secretary of defense for policy], who became the target of an awful lot of abuse during that time and later on, was trying to manage it. We basically just said that we think there's an insurgency—this is not just some stray cats and dogs, which was what the secretary of defense, Rumsfeld, believed. We had five or six major findings.

Q: Why don't you try to finish this up? Then we ought to cut it off. Maybe that's a message to us because it's almost eleven o'clock anyway. So, the Pentagon let you—

BARTON: So, we did this briefing at the Pentagon, but the more important briefing was with Jerry Bremer [administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority] in Baghdad. He was riding high—he was learning Arabic, he was opening up the Baghdad Symphony's first concert since the invasion, he was jogging in the middle of the night, and he was on the cover of every magazine on Earth. He had the most impossible job on Earth and with only modest preparation. He was obviously a very bright and talented guy, but he was also making the people around him very nervous.

After we had done our two-and-a-half week tour, his staff people said, "He'll give you fifteen minutes to brief Bremmer." We had fifteen minutes scheduled for our briefing, but he wanted more, so we stayed with him for an hour. I was the briefer for the team. Since John Hamre had left, I was sort of the leader on the ground. A couple of times, he said, "I think I've got it. Yeah, I understand that. " But we had said to him that there was an insurgency. We'd said that the public communications to Iraqis weren't going very well—we were setting up our own television news stations and operations there and whatnot. The U.S. was already talking about controlling what news was being reported on our own station, so there were some very bad signals that were coming. I thought it was so important. I had done briefings like this in my business life, so I could tell when things were not being heard: "Yeah, yeah, I got that. Thanks very much." This time, I thought, this is really life and death stuff, and this is the only chance we're going to get to tell the story.

There were two points that I made that I'm not sure I had communicated effectively, that I had really wanted to double back on to make sure that I was understood. I went back over those somewhat more pedantically than the first time. But I still had the feeling that Bremer had so much going on, and it was all going to be back to him. It was overly centralized again—the same deal that I had seen at UNHCR and other times in my life when you've got to just empower people instead.

Anyway, we came back to Washington and it was a big, big deal. It ended up being the first report that really said that this is going to get a lot more complicated before it gets simpler. That was useful and it sort of made our reputation, but it also emboldened me to do what I wanted to do at CSIS—it's why I enjoyed CSIS so much for so long. I could consistently see a crisis coming up, and I could almost always tell what the U.S. government is not going to do. What's the President not going to hear? What's the National Security Council not going to have the time to prepare? What's the AID or the State bureaucracy not going to be attracted to? Those were products that we constantly tried to produce at CSIS.

For example, we did the first full analysis of U.S. assistance to Pakistan. All the Pakistan experts in Washington thought we were spending 750 million dollars a year in Pakistan. I went over and talked to the general who was in charge of this at the Pentagon, and she

said to me, "I think the number is a lot closer to four billion." And I thought, "Wow, well that's quite a gap!" So, we put two interns on this, and we got to two billion—we never could figure out what the dark money was, but two billion is probably fair for Pakistan—but we found almost another billion and a half. Then we broke it down to show that 90 percent of it went through the military. That was one reason why people in Pakistan constantly refer to the establishment—their intelligence service, their military, and the U.S.—and they never see any money and they don't like the U.S., except for when there was that one earthquake [in 2005]. That report ended up being the Biden-Kerry-Lugar revision of Pakistan policy. Pakistan at that moment was on the front page as the most dangerous country on Earth.

We were able to target these products and then decide that the way you have to sell them in Washington is you have to go around, see every single person who has any ownership, and give them a personal briefing. That way, everybody understands what the new equation is, as opposed to you getting lucky that they read a *Washington Post* story one day. It all ended up being quite rewarding and really good preparation for getting back into the government.

Q: Well, once again, it sounds like you had a fascinating time and enjoyed it.

BARTON: I did.

Q: Okay, that's a good place to stop. It's now eleven o'clock, and we'll pick it up at a convenient moment.

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Q: Hi, this is once again Alex Shakow. Rick Barton and I are continuing this discussion of his very interesting career. And this is session three, I think. And when we last left, Rick was telling us—it was with a great sense of accomplishment—that when at CSIS, you were working on these studies of Iraq and the success you had at getting attention, ultimately, of the Pentagon, and so on. So, you were at CSIS for about seven years. But is there anything more on that stay before we move on into the next stage of your very interesting and varied career?

BARTON: I think one thing that we started to touch on was how did you get your work in front of people so that it would matter? Because obviously, the idea of a think tank is it'll be a little bit more impactful on sort of daily policy development or current policy development, more than academic work. So, it's sort of between policy— actually being in government—and doing academic work. And one thing that I don't think I mentioned that was pretty important, was spending a lot of time doing television, radio, and newspaper interviews and being regularly available as an expert. And so, visibility was

one way you can reach people that you might not be seeing on a daily basis, senators or other people. And I think I mentioned before that when we did our study in Pakistan, that it was well covered in the Washington Post. And then-Senator Biden read it on the train coming—read the Washington Post story, not the actual report—but he was interested that we were giving that much more aid to Pakistan than had been publicly reported. And so, the other thing about television is kind of interesting. Almost nobody could tell you what you said when you're on television, but the fact you are on television made it important.

Q: But did you arrange these yourself for the CSIS to do this for you with their very active public affairs team?

BARTON: Yeah, it was really an excellent public affairs team that CSIS had, and my little program which was the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project. I was a senior advisor there, but then I was the co director, with Karin von Hippel and Sheba Crocker before her of this Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project. And what we took on as one of our central qualities is that we accepted virtually every invitation to be anywhere.

Q: I take it that it was not unique to CSIS, though.

BARTON: I think we were probably more readily available. We were among the favorites of the public affairs people because we always could fill in for just about anything. So, I remember two funny stories about that. One is that somebody was doing an hour-long show on General Musharraf, who had taken over Pakistan, and was the president. And they were doing a biography and they wanted an expert. And you know, we've done a lot of work on Pakistan, but I was hardly an expert on him or his presidency. And I just remember reading his autobiography for an entire morning and then taking up two or three minutes of this eventual documentary. Last minute cramming. The other one that was really strange was—well, there are two other stories that are kind of fun. Kit is watching me at home one day live on Fox News, and she's not really listening to me but the chyron that comes underneath the screen says Rick Barton, tsunami expert. She goes, "What does he know about tsunamis?" And of course, they screwed up. I was supposed to be on there talking about Iraqi oil or something, and then the next expert was going to be the tsunami expert.

Q: I hope you got a good picture or she got a picture of that. So that you could put that in your resume. I don't see it here, but—

BARTON: I've used it regularly since, established myself in the climate change world. The other one was being on Bill O'Reilly one night.

Q: And you seem to favor these right wing programs, is that right?

BARTON: No, but these are the memorable stories. So, I'm gonna be out there as some kind of an expert on Iraq, the Iraq War. But an American soldier had gone AWOL and taken shelter in Canada, and a columnist for the Toronto Daily Mail or whatever it was, had written a column saying that Canada would welcome anybody—any American soldiers—who opposed the Iraq War. Bill O'Reilly was already into boycotting French fries and other things that were irritating the right wing and the people who supported the war in Iraq. I was waiting to go live, in a studio by myself, camera on my face, but nobody else was in the room. He's in New York, I'm in DC. And I'm watching him absolutely brutalize this young woman who's quite shocked to be somewhat viciously attacked live on air for a column that she's written. So, he finishes with her. And he turns to me, as they go to the commercial break, and he's only coming into my ear. He says, "So Dr. Barton, you're not one of these Canadian communists, are you?" Or maybe he said socialist. I mean, I don't know what it was, but then he goes, "Haha, I'll be back with you in thirty seconds." And he puts me on hold.

I'm still staring at the camera the way you are right now. And he comes back and says, "Well, we've got Frederick Barton, from the Center for Strategic International Studies here. You're not one of those communists from Canada, like my last guest, are you? Ah, ha, ha." And I go, "Bill, I am from Maine, which as you recall, is right next to Canada."

Which brings out one more story, which was that Sheba Crocker, not yet my co director, had just come from the State Department. She'd never done one of these television interviews. And the first one she does is the Bill O'Reilly show. And it's right when the French have come out in opposition to the Iraq War. So, this is at the height of his French fry boycott and the other things. He's invited her to talk about what can we do to the French, and the first guest is from the Hudson Institute, or Cato or something. And this young guy has got a three point plan on how we're going to screw the French. And he lets the guy go on for three minutes. And then he said, "So Ms. Crocker, what do you have to say?" And she starts and nine seconds into her response, he goes, "oh, Ms. Crocker, aren't you just hopelessly naive?" And so, she comes back to CSIS saying, "Whoa, that was quite an experience." We were all watching it. I said to her, "Next time I'm on and he asks one of those questions, I'm gonna say to him, you know, Bill, that's a really great question. If you don't mind—I pull out my cell phone—I need to make a buddy call like on that million-dollar show. You get to call one buddy to help you with an answer. You mind if I make a buddy call?" We had this whole scene. There was quite a lot of fun. So, I'm on the air one of these times with Bill O'Reilly. And my phone is in my breast pocket. I got my little microphone here on my lapel and am sitting in the studio by myself. He's In New York, it is live TV and my phone rings. Of course, the whole scene that Sheba and I had been joking about for a year or two, comes into my mind. It would be very clever, and it would probably become a social media phenomenon, but I would also probably get fired by CSIS for not taking my—

Q: You mean you didn't say, hey, hi, Sheba.

BARTON: No, I'm trying to turn the phone off, and continue to speak as if nothing's going on. So, I missed the opportunity. The communications part of the job was hugely important because it gave your work so much more visibility. And then I think it also helped me later on, as I got to actually be considered for some of these government positions, because people had seen me a lot—I was current, thoughtful, or reasonable or whatever.

Q: Even if you were talking to people that hated the State Department and thought it was just filled with communists and the like, you did appear on other programs, where your thoughtful approach was more acceptable.

BARTON: Well, even with these people who are really much more personalities, the news people, most of the shows, you did news shows, but even with them, they give you a degree of respect as an expert that you don't necessarily get as a public figure. So, when people go on, and they're talking about Iraq, oh, they think, Oh, this is a lot of fun. And then they become the assistant secretary that's responsible for Iraqi oil, two very different interviews. One is aggressive, hostile, and in my case as an expert, they were elevating me because I was there to provide the educational side of things. You really could see the double standard.

Q: That's really interesting. And do you miss it?

BARTON: No, you know, I did so much of it. And there are also other weaknesses, like the network news in particular, NBC. Oftentimes, they knew exactly what they wanted you to say, they come over, they set up, they'd ask you five questions, but they'd all essentially be the same question to get that one snip, that one quote that they wanted to put into the story. However much time you spent with them, you'd have an eight second confirmation of something they were looking for. The shows that I really enjoyed were shows like Ted Koppel on Nightline, or longer interviews where you could develop a thesis, a conversation, you know, actually bring some light to a subject as opposed to the sort of preplanned conversations.

Q: So how were you willing to give up all this public attention and leave CSIS and go into the government? What happened there?

BARTON: Well, because that's what I really wanted to do. I mean, the think tank world, in a big way, was a great staging ground for a lot of talent that otherwise might not serve in the other party's administration. For example, the Defense Department now is just chock full of CSIS talent, the younger people, the secretary of the army Christine Wormuth, was a colleague of mine, the deputy secretary of defense, Kath Hicks was a colleague of mine. The almost secretary of defense. Michele Flournoy had run the PCR project before we were there. Kurt Campbell at the NSC, hired many of us. It was a

useful preparation, because I've had friends tell me that you develop your intellectual capital outside of government, but then you really get to spend it and apply it in government. And you get too darn busy in government. And one of the things I don't think I've said to you, and it worries me a lot—right now, just looking at my friends in the Biden administration, the skinny ones are getting skinnier, and the fat ones are getting fatter, because they don't have any time to take care of themselves. I mean, it's intense. And I've already got friends that are leaving after fourteen months, because they are exhausted. I mean, they've burned out with responsibilities. And the pressure these days is so much more intense, and the expectation, the built-in hostility of one political party to virtually any ideas makes it extraordinarily demanding.

But that's what we wanted to do. I mean, we were there. So, we had the chance to really think about a lot of stuff and prepare. And for example, I could step back and look at my work at OTI [Office of Transition Initiatives] and UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees], and decide, this is really the formula for how we need to approach these places.

Part of what I presented in *Peace Works* is that the cardinal sin is that you don't know these places. So how can you really improve getting to know places? You can't just count on intelligence or five diplomats who served there or one novel. I mean, you've really got to get to spend time with the people. Secondly, how do you find those local partners that are really going to take the lead so you're not in the lead? And then how do you find some catalytic interventions? And then how do you measure progress? And then how do you communicate this to the American taxpayers, to the people of the country that you're in or the global audience, so that is a five-point plan. When I had the time to develop the thinking, and went out on speaking tours—my talk was the three chronic mistakes that the United States makes in these conflict settings. It was too depressing. And I realized that I was leaving audiences without a sense of hope. So, I did something very American, I converted it to the five key elements of success- essentially the flip side of the three chronic mistakes. That helped.

Q: So, your audience's left with smiles on their face rather than tears in their eyes.

BARTON: It was actionable. That appeals to American audiences.

There was one other thing at CSIS that I valued a great deal. John Hamre, with Joe Nye and Dick Armitage, came up with a Smart Power Commission. Joe wrote about soft power, and Armitage had just served as the deputy for Colin Powell. What fits between so-called hard power and so-called soft power? Smart power? I went and talked to John Hamre. And I said to him, I'd really like to be on this commission, you almost never put any of your senior people; you always get all these distinguished people from around the country to be on it. But how about putting, you know, for each of these commissions that we have— that we put together—putting one of our own people on it, because it allows

us to be peers with the people that we need to work with in the future. And John was very gracious about it, so he put me on it. We got some money from a large donor who said that anybody who is staffing the commission—and I wasn't the staff, but I was considered kind of a hybrid—could have a chunk of money to do one piece of research on smart power that they might not otherwise do. And I took it.

I did a listening tour—this is 2007—for early important presidential primary states. Went to Iowa, South Carolina, New Hampshire, and Minnesota for a total of about two weeks, not all the same two weeks, you know, spread out over and talked to about two hundred fifty people, and really had a chance to hear how Americans saw the U.S. in the world. And it was incredibly revelatory, because I would ask people, one of my first questions would be exactly that question: How do you think the U.S. is seen in the world right now? And the answer, whether I was at Bob Jones University in South Carolina, or whether I was speaking to the police chief at a one on one luncheon in Iowa City, or a labor group or the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] in Columbia, South Carolina, whatever it was the answer, in almost every case, was one word: arrogant. And I said, "Do you feel that's a good place for us to be?" And people said "no." This is towards the end of the George W. Bush administration where there was the Cheney, Rumsfeld type of hard power projection. It was striking that it was right and left and everybody shared it. And I came back and then reported at the commission meeting. There was a national pollster on the commission, James Zogby. And he said to me, "I hope you'll keep your day job because what you just did was at the heart of our work." And that was flattering. But I also then noticed the Obama campaign as it unfolded that they had that message, that tone, exactly what I had heard, almost perfectly pitched.

Q: The response to that, or they say the arrogance of it all?

BARTON: The response to it. So, Obama's positioning and understanding of this public attitude was absolutely pitch perfect, based on what I had heard. And he was coming up to Iowa. And I also heard when I was in Iowa, that he had eight hundred organizers there. And then I went to—as we drove around that day—we heard that Chris Dodd—a successful member of the Senate—was running for president as well. And he was holding a couple of events. We dropped in on tours, events, just by chance- at each Dodd event, he had twenty plus people and eight to ten of them were basically paid organizers for issues that were trying to influence the presidential campaign. So, they were wind power people or climate change people or whatever it happened to be, but they were the same organizers. So, you could see, boy, you know, even though Chris Dodd has done a nice job, and he's a perfectly likable guy, that compared to having eight hundred field organizers, he's going nowhere. So, it gave a good reading.

And the second part of that Smart Power Commission was that I spent two weeks doing the same thing in China. Two weeks of asking the Chinese what they thought smart

power was, and how China would approach it. Met with all manner of people - their think tank people, a lot of their national security officials. We went well outside of Beijing, we obviously went to Shanghai, we went down to the Sichuan province area Chengdu, went way down to the border near Vietnam, to the little city of a couple of million people, Nanning. Kit and I got around asking people, what do you think it is, how China's trying to fit? What's your view of the U.S.? And I got an idea of what was really motivating China more than anything else. They were very aware of Joe Nye's soft power because that book had just come out. And they would say smart power? We are familiar with soft power. What is smart power?

Q: Did they think that the way that China was viewed in the world was that it was too arrogant?

BARTON: No. They were going through a harmonious period, where they rediscovered Confucius because Mao was out. And they needed some philosophy to stick to. But the biggest focus by far was that they had several hundred million people who were still in poverty, and they were determined to get them out of poverty by 2050. And everything they were doing, and I think it still drives most of their work in Africa. Most of the global work is driven by how do we create jobs and opportunities for our own people?

Q: It does sound to me that you took very good advantage of the opportunities that CSIS presented, I mean, that your own creativity was very important. You could have sat around and just done routine stuff or whatever people were talking about, but you seem to have initiated quite a few things yourself and that paid off in terms of both the interest of your work and the opportunities that it generated.

BARTON: Okay, well, thank you. I think a big part of that was the ambition to get back in and serve again. And at a responsible level in the U.S. government because I really wanted to be in charge of something.

Q: Okay, alright, so there you are. Obama gets elected and not Chris Dodd. And so, what do you do?

BARTON: I worked on the campaign, and was given the responsibility of trying to lead a couple hundred people who had an interest in the conflict universe. We didn't need that many papers, the campaign was not going to use that many papers. So, a big part of what I tried to do is make sure that the people who had interest in foreign policy were actually involved in the working campaign but keep them busy enough so that they felt respected and had whatever influence we might generate. So, we did a couple of papers. But anyway, I was an early supporter of Obama, which was tough, because I liked Hillary Clinton a lot as well. But it was, you know, that was a choice that we had to make. And so, then I was named to the transition team for AID and MCC [Millenium Challenge Corporation] for that portfolio. Aaron Williams and Gail Smith headed up a group of

fifteen very talented people. Aaron and Gail had to spend much of their time in higher level meetings. I got to be one of the anchors of the daily meetings at AID with one briefing after another—briefings from all the people at AID who wanted the new administration to know what was going on and also to speak to what needed to happen. An extraordinary opportunity, because I got a much deeper dive into every element of AID. Multiple meetings a day, most days of the week, with the top teams within AID and so really got a good look at it. The transition wasn't totally effective, though, for what I consider to be a pretty basic shortcoming that arose. I believe that these transition studies should really be creating almost a strategic plan for the next administrator or whoever it happened to be. But what ended up happening is that, and it was going to be pulled together at an upper level by one individual who was going to pull together AID, the state transition team, and the defense transition team. So those were going to come together as kind of an integrated overview, which I thought was a really good and necessary idea.

Q: Who was that individual going to be?

BARTON: My understanding is that it was going to be Sarah Sewall, who much, much, much later in the second Obama administration became the under secretary for the functional bureaus at State and somebody that I had known quite a while—very bright Harvard scholar, but actually turned out to be kind of a disastrous boss for me. But what ended up happening was that Obama kept Secretary Gates as Secretary of Defense. So, there was no real introspective review that took place there. Because it was the same team just carrying on, and they already thought they knew what they were doing. And then when he named Secretary Clinton, a lot of her energy was all the foreign policy people who had been with Obama now were effectively shut out, because she had her own team of people that she had to take care of. So that ended up being a less introspective exercise as well. And then whatever happened to Sarah, I don't know, but there was no integrating of it. And I think that the AID piece ended up being more strategic than the others by far and more introspective, but it wasn't designed to really stand alone. Jeremy Weinstein, a younger Stanford scholar pulled it together.

Q: But there was no AID administrator designate, right? I mean, it took a couple of years to get there.

BARTON: That'd become the other problem. So, it was going to be Hillary's selection. She, I think, had a couple of candidates. I think her first choice may have been Paul Farmer, but I've never had that officially confirmed, I need to ask her actually. So that's one piece, then I think Jim Kim. I think Paul Farmer ran into some kind of vetting problem because of the work he'd been doing outside the country. And, again, I was having conversations with Paul, but I never got to ask him that either before he passed away, but Jim Kim was being considered for the Dartmouth presidency at exactly the same moment. And Dartmouth sped up its search. And I think it's because he had this other potential option hanging out, and so he took the presidency of Dartmouth. And so,

this all started pushing the selection of the AID administrator back and I mean, obviously, that had huge ramifications for not only whatever work we'd done, but for AID - it got further lost for a while there. Which is unfortunate. I mean, leadership matters. It's not the whole story, but wow, it can make a huge difference in Washington. The other piece was—so that only lasted a couple of months. And I kept being told you're on a list for something, and you're near the top of the list for something. And so, I remember I thought, well, one of the things that was possible was the AID administrator, which I would have been very excited to have been offered. But I remember telling my neighbor, Gerry Slater—who had run WETA here in Washington [and] had been the guy who chose to broadcast the Watergate hearings, so a giant in broadcasting, but now retired neighbor—and he's a New Yorker, and he would always say, "Hey, Rick, how you doing? How are you doing?" He wanted to know what was going on. He'd like the inside stuff.

He had started the Washington Week In Review as well. We had a fairly regular poker game with all the old news people who used to be on the PBS show. Jack Nelson of the LA Times and Paul Duke - they love the inside stuff. But he would ask me in the driveway—Jerry Slater—would ask me in the driveway, so how's it going? And so, I said, "Well, you know, I'm standing by I've been told I'm on the list." And he said, "What are you most interested in doing?" "I'd like to be the AID administrator." He said, "Has Hillary called you?" And I said, "No, she hasn't." He said, "Fuhgetaboutit! (forget about it)." I readjusted and I said to Kit, "There are probably ten jobs that I'm qualified to do that I might be fairly good at. I will probably be asked to do the eleventh." And sure enough, Susan Rice called me about that time, and she was jealously protecting her positions in New York because she's supposed to be a cabinet officer. She's one of the few Obama people who's in a senior position because of Hillary and Gates. And Hillary's from New York, so Hillary's got all kinds of friends that might want to be the ambassador to ECOSOC [United Nations Economic and Social Council] or one of her other ambassadors. So not unlike my selection at UNHCR, I may have been selected because of merit and other attractions. But there's also the need to preempt the field and get on with it. But Susan is interesting in that she's like Sadako Ogata, hugely fascinating person, you know, larger than life, Major League competitor, I mean, a very, very competitive person. And so, she interviewed me and then asked me to send her a memo on Afghanistan, and then sort of grilled me on the memo and then said, "Look, if I were to offer you the ECOSOC ambassador job would you accept it?" And I did.

And it took about eight months or so to go through the vetting and the clearing and the rest of it, which leads to kind of a fun story. I finally get to meet Obama during the General Assembly the next year. And we had a nice conversation with him. Small conversation, he'd just been meeting with global leaders on fifteen-minute blocks all day long for two days. At the end, we're at the ambassador's apartment which was then in the Waldorf. We had a smaller gathering with Michelle and the President and probably fifteen, or sixteen, of his senior people [and] his national security adviser. And we're just having drinks [at] 10ten o'clock at night. And so, he says, "so how are you doing?" I say,

“Well, we're a little confused here.” He said, “Well, why? Why did you say that?” I said, “Well, because to get through the White House vetting, the State Department vetting, and the U.S. Senate confirmation, we had to convince everybody that we didn't know anybody, and we were very poor. But to get an apartment at a co-op here in New York, I had to convince the board that I was very rich, and I knew everybody.”

Q: He must have liked that.

BARTON: Good laughs. “Yes,I recognize the problem.” He was gracious and grateful. But anyway, that's sort of how that happened.

Q: And did you? Did you enjoy that time there? I mean, it does seem like a little bit of an odd placement for you.

BARTON: Yeah, there were elements of it that I loved. And elements that were a fairly significant waste of time. The waste of time was that we've turned that office into a negotiator of timeworn language that we renegotiate every year at the General Assembly. So, we negotiate a sentence here, a paragraph there, but it's essentially some kind of established language that somebody's taking on. We spent too much time on distractions. I felt there was real value working with the executive offices of UNDP [United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF [United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund], and the other major UN agencies that are based in New York, but in particular, those two. Peacebuilding was the third, that was the new one. Because obviously, DPA [Department of Political Affairs] and DPKO [Department for Peacekeeping Operations] are almost exclusively the work of the Security Council, which is where three of the US ambassadors in New York—Susan and the two deputies, Rosemary DiCarlo and Jeff deLaurentis—they work Security Council stuff, so I had a fascinating portfolio of human rights, peacebuilding, development, children, UN Women, etc. I was really able to help UN Women creation across the finish line. Those things were worthwhile and challenging. But so many pointless negotiations, I had a staff of about a dozen people, they all were there to negotiate this language, so I had no staff related work.

My personal relationships with the executives of these frontline agencies and key offices that we work with was most were rewarding – Tony Lake at UNICEF, Rebeca Grynspan at UNDP (with Helen Clark), Valarie Amos and John Holmes at OCHA, Ed Luck at the Responsibility to Protect, and others. I often spent time working with about fifty ambassadors, because I had the General Assembly, so I had by far the biggest portfolio of countries that were our go to people on humanitarian issues, whatever. And that mattered and was fun. But the public meetings are such set pieces, with speeches that had been prepared. And what was troubling for me was that the United States speeches were almost always pretty much the same speech that had been written years before, maybe during the Reagan presidency even, and they were being delivered to me as if this had been cleared by everybody in Washington, so you have to deliver it. My interpretations

were quite liberal, designed to advance the conversations and ideas. I felt the United States had a responsibility to bring ideas and provocations and to question the status quo, during these so-called “interactive sessions” at the United Nations. Well, if you have a set piece, it's not interactive. What makes it interactive, is, you say something and then I question or come back to you on a relevant point that you've raised. That was my approach. I also was respectful of my colleagues and felt the United States should always be a model. If you're given two minutes to intervene, you speak for two minutes. And I could see that had an impact on my colleague from Egypt, who was inclined to go on eight to ten or fourteen minutes. But after the United States had spoken for two minutes, he couldn't, he couldn't do that forever without some self-reflection.

Q: When you say that this attempt to be more open and responsible and deviating a bit from your standard text didn't always work to your advantage, what do you mean by that? When you say “who”—I mean, your colleagues in the U.S. delegation, or?

BARTON: Not so much, almost everybody in the room welcomed it. So, it might be my senior State Department deputy. And he might then backchannel his surprise to Susan, and I might hear about it that way. You know, that kind of thing. He was not a particularly effective deputy. He was a great negotiator. If I was ever taken hostage, I might like him to be my negotiator. But he was not a deputy.

Q: Did you report more to Susan Rice or to the assistant secretary for IO in the State Department? Who was that?

BARTON: Esther Brimmer. She was a pleasure to work with - I reported to Susan.

IO was always a very good partner. They were an easy office to work with. And even though they were the source of some of this work, there was not any resistance from them if refreshing and improving that work. Because they knew you were overwhelmed. They had to produce this stuff pretty much on a daily basis, which is why they went to the archives. So, Esther Brimmer was the assistant secretary, and she was a great colleague, easy to work with. Every morning, we had a meeting in Susan's office that included a direct connection to the White House. Samantha Power was the representative for the White House, and Esther Brimmer was on that call. And we'd go over what was going to happen that day. The Security Council business dominated- there was almost no time or interest in what was being done in ECOSOC. I think probably among the mistakes that I made, because I had really full days [was] I should have done a very simple one page, three bullet summary of three things that happened today that I want you, Susan or Sadako before her, to know about. Because both of them would have read it, and they would have liked it. And they would have been much more informed about what I was doing. I was working with the assumption, hey, you're very busy. You got a lot going on. I'm taking care of this. And you don't have to worry about it. They needed that extra bit

of knowledge because both of them like to be informed and aware of what's going on. And I don't think I fed that anywhere near enough. So, I think at times I created the impression that I was off on my own rather than being a good team member. And I think I was a great team member, but I don't think I communicated in a way that was very effective. But I felt that at those meetings that what we were doing was of secondary importance to Susan and the two ambassadors who were fully engaged with what was on the front page of the UN and the world that day.

Q: What was your impression from those meetings of Samantha Power?

BARTON: Well, she was really learning. Bright, engaged, curious, open to new ideas and creative, eager to make a difference. She knew little about bureaucracy or about how things worked or about the system. She's inquisitive, and she was gaining a lot of knowledge. I didn't have many chances, but after I'd been on the job about a month it seemed like a smart thing to go into the White House and meet all my counterparts, the people that had pieces of my portfolio. And one of the things I pointed out was that the United States on the LGBTQ issues was way out on the limb, that we didn't have the support of any Africans or Caribbean nations, and that we really needed to be much more assertive if we wanted to make progress on that issue. And that ended up becoming a major human rights initiative. You know, I may or may not have been the first person to articulate that, but I remember everybody that I met with at the White House was like, oh, interesting. It became a major initiative for the U.S.

But those kinds of resolutions and those issues were coming up almost completely in my portfolio. And we were articulating that human rights meant all human rights, and then we were also finding unusual allies like Rwanda to be our friends, because so many resisted this change. South America wasn't that great—parts of it were fine. Africa was awful on these issues, and a lot of other people needed to be brought along. And the United States really took a principled position. Obviously, Vice President Biden later on was vital in the development of that, but Samantha picked that up. I remember mentioning it to her in a meeting and she saw the importance, the potential of it. She was already a rock star but she was in a staff position, which I think it probably produced a degree of awareness and perspective that has probably been helpful to her in this job, maybe not as much in the UN job, where you're in the boiling water every day. And there's just this constant pressure. The lead individual is so central and a cult of personality grows in New York, but I think she maintains a balanced perspective. But she wasn't intuitively tuned to the bureaucracy, to how the institutions of the U.S. government operated. And she was discovering.

Q: Yeah, I've read her very good and interesting book. And I don't remember what she said about that period when she was on the staff of the National Security Council. But of course, you know, the most interesting thing, and it's reflected in the title, is the conflict

between the reality of policymaking and the idealism that she brought to the table and that Obama enjoyed most of the time. The argument back and forth was, okay, so—

BARTON: So let me tell you one story about her. I'm at a meeting in the White House, I forget what it was, I think about Iraq, maybe Syria, and she offered what I thought was a creative idea – often there's a great shortage of creativity at these meetings. She said, you know, this may be way outside of my lane, but then she offered this idea, and I was so impressed. There were 10 people around the table and I said, "Samantha, I hope you will stay out of your lane more, because we need ideas like that." She was outside the guild enough that she could see things with a fresh set of eyes - and the guild can be stifling.

Q: No. Okay, you didn't stay all that long in this job. How did that change take place?

BARTON: So, I got a call from Cheryl Mills, Hillary Clinton's close aide at State.

Would you be interested in this new bureau as the results of the QDDR, the Quadrennial Defense, Diplomacy and Development Review—the first one that had ever been undertaken at the State Department. It was kind of Hillary's bow to the QDR [Quadrennial Defense Review] at Defense, and certainly, you know, a more strategic step back which the State Department and AID desperately need. It had gotten very bloody, a lot of friends had chopped each other up in the process, and it hadn't been anywhere near as productive as most had hoped. But when it ended, there was this new Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, and that was the big idea that came out of it. And she called me and that was a pretty darn good fit. I helped create the space with OTI, UNHCR and the Peacebuilding at the UN. And they wanted somebody new to start something, so I said, well, I'd be very interested. And we'll have to work this out with Susan Rice. But my family, my wife, was still living in Washington, and so I'd been pretty much commuting by Vamoose Bus, the Hasidic bus service at twenty-three bucks a pop with every fourth ride being free, Fridays coming home and Sundays going back. And it was pretty exhausting. I mean, I got to the point where I knew all the drivers; one walk around Manhattan, I saw three drivers that I knew. That was pretty insane over by Seventh Avenue and Madison Square Garden.

Q: I suspect you are the only ambassador who was traveling back and forth on Vamoose Bus, or any bus.

BARTON: If there was any arrogance developing in my system, when I left the U.S. UN compound on Friday afternoons, and stuff[ed] my Knicks hat over my head and walked across Manhattan to Madison Square, stood on the sidewalk with preachers, beggars, pick pockets and homeless folks, and students waiting to get on the bus. That got old.

But Susan was reluctant to let me go because it was unclear that she could get a substitute selected and confirmed quickly. Just then, we had one of the few team exercises that I had

the whole time I was in the USUN, regarding some Palestinian votes that were going to be brought to the General Assembly. The U.S. did not want the motions, nor wanted to be isolated in the voting. Organizing the calling and talking to dozens of ambassadors—this is much more like being the whip in a legislative body—was something I could do well. I was able to be a valued member of the team and show Susan that whenever I left, I was going to be working until the last day, I wasn't going to be checking out.

This helped as Cheryl Mills, who's a tough competitor, and Susan Rice, a great competitor, negotiated over my little body. Salman Ahmed was then the Chief of Staff for Susan and he made this all come together. He is a consummate diplomat. Susan had Elizabeth Cousens, who had been a friend of hers when they were both Rhodes Scholars, on the team already. And that was a perfect fit for Elizabeth Cousens because she's now the president of the UN Foundation. And she was very interested in the Millennium Development Goals and a lot of these more elaborated processes that I was too impatient and skeptical of their value to have enjoyed it the same way that she did. And she was a great contributor.

So, the succession was worked out. And then I went and met with Hillary for the interview to confirm that I was the right person. But as I later read in some of the Hillary emails that were posted—one day, I had nothing to do, and I said, I wonder if I show up in any of those emails, because they're all getting posted now. And so, I put my name in and the exchange between Cheryl Mills and the secretary [when] they were recruiting me—it looks like we might get him, you know, I was like, kind of exceeding those, it was very flattering, it was very brief, but exciting that I was in their sights, you know, this kind of thing. And so I went and met with Hillary, and she's so underrated as a human being. It's a shame, you know, a really good person. And she's hard working, and she's a real doobie. So, she had prepared beautifully for the meeting. And we had just the two of us sitting there. Probably the only time I had a one-on-one meeting with her the whole time. And which is another weakness of my own. I don't think I called on her enough when I became Assistant Secretary—I probably should have called her [on] two or three occasions to just sort out something that the State Department wasn't quite getting right. Managing up – an area for improvement.

At the hiring meeting, I remember she said, “Is there anything you need?” I said, “you know, yes, there is one thing, I needed some liquidity.” Because I found that when I was at OTI, and I'd learned this from OFDA [Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance], there was a $25,000 Ambassador's Fund, for whenever there was a crisis, and for $25,000 OFDA got into every country right away. So, I said, “Look, I need liquidity. I've learned this from OFDA.” I do not believe that there's an ambassador in the U.S. system that cannot be bought for a million dollars. But I've got to have that million in liquid in an easily accessed spot. And she laughed. And she said, “That sounds about right.” She knew her ambassadors really well. She'd already been Secretary of State for two plus years. And so, I started in October of [20]11. And the other thing that was quite

spectacular about the early days is they recognized that they had to get going. She was really impatient to get this going, because the QDDR had taken much longer than planned. It hadn't produced quite what she wanted. This was one of the big results.

So, on my second day in office, we kept the head of SCRS (Secretary's Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization) Ambassador Bob Loftis in place because he could sign everything. I'm not even close to being confirmed. I mean, my paper hasn't even gotten up to the Hill. But they introduced the legislative shop, set up meetings for me with key Senate and House appropriators and authorizers and they sent me up there without a single talking point, to sell the idea, and to sell that I'm going to be the guy who's going to run this thing. And they've heard about me from OTI, so I've got a little bit of a reputation. But the only person that [was] sent up with me is Dottie Rayburn from Leg and then my colleague Karin von Hippel. They don't want to send up the acting director because the coordinators position, which was the Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice creation, was now quite discredited up on the Hill. Bob was a good guy, an interim and not quite responsible for S/CRS, they didn't want any of that history there. Highly unusual for State, I was up on the Hill, freelancing, by design. I had a good idea of what I wanted to do and how to go about it. They asked, how will you get around the geographic bureaus at State and how will you ever gain any traction? And that obdurate bureaucracy and that kind of thing? So, then Dottie would report back to Cheryl, that the day had been a success. That was my introduction to that. So, we started, we hit the ground at full pace—

Q: How long did it take to get clearance?

BARTON: I didn't get confirmed and sworn in until April of 2012. But that entire period from October 2011, I was working full time doing absolutely everything I could possibly do as if I'd been confirmed. The tradition is don't do anything because it might endanger your confirmation. In this case, it was the exact opposite. So, I know the State Department can do it with complete caution, total caution, or throwing everything into the wind. I had Bob there as the acting, he could sign everything. And he had been back as one of our ambassadors to Africa. We turned out to be a great team, with Karin. I needed a co-leader at that point. He knew all the personalities, I inherited one hundred eighty people. It was so different from OTI, because it was an existing enterprise that wasn't working. It was supposed to be something new. But it was a turnaround. It was a startup. It was a hostile takeover. And at a time when we had very little money, and we had to produce almost overnight. So those are the elements that made it a very intense job. We had to prove the concept in a matter of months, turn over the team, earn the trust of a resistant organization, consolidate our funds and base of operations, develop credibility, and more.

Q: You've just noted one of the major differences between your OTI experience and this one, and that you had zero structure to start with. And you've created all for OTI. But

how would you define the differences between OTI and this job at the State Department? What are the major differences, even though there's certain similarities as well?

BARTON: The number one difference is that the State Department should be the convener of first choice in Washington. And so having this authority clearly stated at the State Department meant that you should have a clear convening authority to bring all the parties together, OTI, whoever, defense or whatnot, because the Defense Department looks to the State Department for that leadership, and others do as well. The State Department's failure to be a very good convener means that the National Security Council has to do much more. It's not a good convener because it's got a crisis every two weeks, and they just get flooded, the zone gets flooded, and they end there. And furthermore, the NSC does not have a group of people who are necessarily skilled meeting moderators. You end up having way too many meetings, badly run with people who are overburdened because they're going to be doing several of these things at the same time. I saw CSO [Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations] as being an honest convener, using that State Department authority, but also being more of an honest broker as to where the resources should go. Because we had this function that had been created that was supposed to be making sure the money was going to who was best suited to spend it. And I thought, in the complex space, that had been done very poorly. And it was also being done in three-month funding tranches - not a terrific planning cycle. We found there were a couple pools of money (1207 funds) that Congress had created and we worked with DOD, AID and parts of State to systematize and influence where the resources should go. A key ally was Jim Schear at DOD. I was less concerned with some duplication or even competition within the USG, because I felt there was a real shortage of ideas and creativity. So, if OTI was coming up with good ideas, great. If the State Department, if CSO's coming up with [ideas], great. Wherever they were going to come from, I didn't really care. But we clearly needed a much more innovative portfolio for places like Libya and Syria, but even north Central America—

Q: But when you say where the money goes, I mean, this is going to operations in those countries or to the countries themselves or to AID to do some job or?

BARTON: Yeah, all of the above.

Q: Really?

BARTON: Yeah. For example, CSO convened a meeting on Syria. It turned out that everything revolved around Ambassador Robert Ford, a great guy. He'd just been evacuated from Syria. But his geographic bureau was over relying on him for everything because they had fires burning all over the Middle East. So everywhere they turned, they had a problem. Egypt was a problem. Tunisia was a problem. Libya was a big problem. Yemen was a disaster. So, they had these disasters everywhere.

We were dependent on Robert Ford, and Robert Ford was negotiating with the Syrian opposition in Europe. Well, if he's in Europe for three weeks, who's running the day-to-day operation back home? Robert recognized that he was not able to be in charge on a daily basis in DC. He agreed that we needed more of an anchor system, with someone running the day to day operation back home.

We wanted to start the meeting with a look back, to see what the USG had done in Syria for about a year. CSO found that the U.S. had spent a billion dollars in Syria at that point of public money (we had no idea of the dark money but thought it was probably comparable) and that 90 percent of it was humanitarian assistance. $900 million had gone for basically just keeping people alive. And one hundred million was for everything else that we were trying to do in Syria. That was a big part of CSO's involvement at that point, much less so in AID at that early stage. As 15 representatives of every part of the U.S. government that were involved in Syria gathered—probably for one of the few times they all got together—we thought, how many people will realize that we've spent a billion dollars here? That was news to everybody in the room. Secondly, how many people realize that we spend 90 percent of it on humanitarian assistance? That was news to everybody in the room. Now, then as the meeting went on, we said how many people feel that we're on a good path? And sure, nobody thought that in the room. Should we continue to spend the money the way we are? Nobody supported that.

Q: Even if they didn't know how it was being spent?

BARTON: Well, now they did at this point because we had spent quite a [bit of time] articulating that it was cross border food [and] medicine, the usual combinations, so then we said, if we were to increase this number, but essentially going down this path, would you feel any better? Nobody felt optimistic about that. Well, that starts to be an opportunity for change, right? Robert Ford said, "Well, what more might we do?" And one of the things that we were worried about, for example, was security in these areas where the opposition was in charge. And the best security that was available in those areas was the former police who had defected to the opposition, and they were still serving as police in places like Aleppo. How about if we were to pay the salaries of those police in Aleppo? Robert Ford loved the idea. It turned out to be about $125 a week; we could keep those people on the job. Later, INL (drugs and thugs) was asked to take a look at policing. They came up with a program that would require taking all those people out of Syria, retrain them in Jordan, probably $10,000 a month. And then most of them would not want to go back. Because who the hell wants to go back to a warzone? It's revelatory about a lot of USG weaknesses.

Then there was the issue of vetting the police since no one wants to fund terrorists. From Haiti and elsewhere, we knew that the vetting, the so-called vetting of these police, was going to be really difficult.

First off, many of them don't want to give their names, let alone the other vital information. Because they've seen what had happened to it when the U.S. got hacked. Names became public. Lives are at risk. Three months into a modest stipend program, just when we got the British and the Danes ready to pay the salaries, because they love the program too, the U.S. takes a two-month hiatus because it decides we have to vet all these people. And we know that the vetting typically produces 5 percent matches. And of those, about one out of every five might be somebody who has a record. And I basically said look, I'm willing to go to the Senate and say, I'll take the chance on giving an ISIS [Islamic State in Iraq and Syria] policeman $125 a week for three months, as opposed to having a perfect police force of 1,200 people, because we cannot secure that city any other way. And this is by far the easiest way to go.

That's the kind of stuff that I thought we could have done more with. We needed a system that whenever a crisis developed, the Secretary of State, the head of AID, and the head of political affairs at State, [and] maybe the deputy secretary of Defense would get together and pick a leader. In a major crisis, the U.S. would have one leader of one team, with one strategic approach. This is more than a whole government—this is actually a strategic insertion.

Q: And why couldn't that be done? Is there a general lesson from all this?

BARTON: I think part of it was that a lot of my friends who had been in the QDDR fight, they'd had such a bloody tug of war over whether AID is going to get to hold on to this, and State is going to hold that. And there was so much left over there. When I developed the idea and had the support of the head of IO, the head of PRM [Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration], the assistant secretaries and all those people signed on, Cheryl Mills said she wasn't ready for that discussion, because she didn't want to relitigate the QDDR. So that was part of it. The State Department is the most responsible party because generally when AID is called upon to be a respected peer, they act in a very mature way. Now AID oftentimes goes into the room expecting to be treated like the little sibling, and basically exploited for its money. So, it doesn't always have the self-worth that it should have. But the Pentagon loves being in these meetings. And I found that when we worked with the residual 1207 funds that Congress had passed, [it] was supposed to be a joint AID, Pentagon, and State fund. And it had been really misspent—$550 million had gone out to essentially orphaned embassies, and there was no strategic plan that I could follow at all. And when we came back together, and met with those people, they were eager to actually have a strategy and go to places that matter and put enough money in so that you could feel that you could have some impact.

So, I think it's the State Department's inclination to be siloed. And it has a rather negative effect on a lot of the national security developments in Washington. It is curable. But this is one of the places that I probably should have called on the Secretary of State to say,

look, Madam Secretary, I can keep talking about this for another couple of years, or we can get it done in the next three weeks.

By the way, I raised the vetting problem of the Aleppo police at the secretary's Monday meeting. Secretary of State Kerry said, well, we can't have that happen, that would absolutely set us back in ways that we can't afford. Kerry wanted a meeting. But then he was traveling so much that we should have done the meeting without him. He should have just said, you know, that's what an assistant secretary of State is for, or I should have gone to him and said, look, I'm respectful of the advantage of having you at the meeting. But if you want to have Wendy Sherman chair the meeting, I don't really care. Let's just have the meeting next week because the local police will be left hanging for three months otherwise. That's inevitably what happened.

Q: So, did you have any great successes in this job that you found gave you great satisfaction? Or was it frustrating all the time?

BARTON: Yes, lots of successes. Sure it was a 200 percent job- 100 percent satisfying and 100 percent frustrating. It was really both. The way I got to that higher percentage was actually probably the first time I went to the Hill, when they started asking me how are you going to deal with this quirky element of State. I mean, everybody in the Hill knew all of the idiosyncrasies of State. And they found it to be humorous in a gallows humor fashion. But I would say, I expect that 50 percent of my job will be dealing with countries in conflict, and 50 percent of my job will be dealing with the bureaucracy. At one of my farewell events, I repeated the 50/50 formula. Somebody said, “oh, Rick, you are so naïve! At least 90 percent of your job has to be dealing with the State Department and national security bureaucracy.” And I said, “ah, now I understand why I was so exhausted by the time I left. Ninety percent of my job was dealing with the bureaucracy and the other 90 percent dealing with the countries in conflict.”

The work we did in Syria, Nigeria, Burma and Kenya was phenomenal. The work in the Northern Triangle, and particularly in Honduras, was innovative and promising. We picked places that mattered, and we made a difference. Some of it stuck, and some of it didn't. But when it didn't stick, at the very least, we showed people in the State Department that you could be relevant, much more relevant, you could have much more impact than State and AID were having at that point. Secondly, I say we built a trusted team. So, while we started with one hundred eighty people, we turned over by intent 50 percent of them in two years, because if we didn't have talented people, then the ambassadors wouldn't let a bureau named conflict and stabilization into their countries. We built trusted talent. We also brought new practices like big data to State. We showed that State can do more than talk and report—that merging policy and practice is possible.

Q: So where did you get the talent? Were these foreign service officers or?

BARTON: No, we got some Foreign Service Officers, but like OTI to this day, it remains a challenge. The most ambitious and most talented, really know how to chart their careers inside the bureaucracy. If you want to be an ambassador, don't get too far away from the geographic bureaus, don't get too far away from the traditional assignments, be in a position where you can write some good cables and do the things that have the familiar currency.

Q: Are most of your people from the outside? The new ones?

BARTON: We had a contracting mechanism. Unlike AID, we did not have the advantage of personal service contractors. The State Department requires the use of contractors which meant we had to hire a contractor to often get the people we identified. Even if we knew we wanted to bring you in, we had to bring you in through a contractor. We also used quite a few retired ambassadors and other talented people, so we always had that active bullpen. And then we used civil servants aggressively—we were an attractive place for civil servants. We had a mix of people who were willing to take risks, and some who were playing out their State Department career. I spent a lot of time trying to personally recruit Foreign Service Officers and explain to them why this was going to be the best three years of their lives or their careers, because they'd be really doing stuff. In Washington, they'd be doing stuff that they never got a chance to do in Washington. Too many Foreign Service Officers are worried about their next rotation. If people come in on the first day of work and say, "I took this job because of the next job it's going to help me get," I would encourage them to excel here and then we can make good things happen. That was a challenge.

We did build up the talent, by giving them a lot of great experience and great responsibility. And we put people out into these countries, you know, they'd be attached to an embassy for six months, or a year and a half. And they had some spectacular experiences. And then I'd say the third thing we did is we really tested some ideas; we were a center of innovation. And so, on those three levels, we made a significant contribution. But it's still hard to stick to a new bureaucracy, a new organization inside of America's oldest bureaucracy, the State Department.

Q: Would you give an illustration of an innovation that you think was really interesting and useful?

BARTON: Yes, one that was huge was Nigeria. Secretary Clinton kept saying, what are we going to do about Nigeria? All the students had been kidnapped, and there is all this violence in the north. And she kept being told the same thing that happened to her in north central America. Here are all the wonderful things that State is doing. Those are two places that we heard from the assistant secretaries for those regions—help me out, the secretary is all over me. We're not coming up with any ideas that really recognize the change. So maybe I'll use a story from my book, and then get to the Nigeria thing.

On the Northern Triangle, we ended up having a meeting of the assistant secretary for drugs and thugs, Bill Brownfield, a Texan, real character, idiosyncratic, assistant secretary for the Americas, Roberta Jacobson and the AID deputy administrator for the Americas, Mark Feierstein and myself. We gathered because Roberta was feeling pressure from the secretary through Wendy Sherman, as to hey, what are you doing? What's new, what's different? The secretary is hearing from all the foreign ministers of that area that the region is on fire, and we keep telling them what we're doing and nothing's changing. Brownfield had been the ambassador in Colombia and he started the meeting by saying, let's assume that 50 percent of our problem is that what we're doing right now is not understood. And 50 percent of our problem is we need to do something new and different. That was the most honest self-assessment that I can remember from the State Department, because instead of saying, well, we're doing all this and this and this and justifying it or trying to reframe it or, it's all in our branding, Bill limited the branding to 50 percent of the discussion. And the other 50 percent would require us to do new stuff.

I can talk about the new stuff we did there, but I'd like to use the Nigeria example. Similar conversation, reluctant ambassador. Overwhelmed Embassy, didn't really want to do anything new. We sent three teams over there, three different times to see what we might do. But we couldn't really get work in the north because the embassy didn't want us to go to the north- it was too dangerous.

The other dangerous place was the Delta, where all the conflict started and where all the money came from. Ninety percent of the Nigerian budget is financed [and] fueled by oil and natural gas from the Delta. So, the entire Nigerian political system is dependent on the Delta, and it is a mess. So we ended up having a consul general in Lagos, Jeff Hawkins, who was open, responsible for the Delta, and eager for fresh challenges that mattered. He wanted CSO's help. We sent the teams into the Delta, and we found the usual things, a report on what you can do with civil society, the World Bank's existing small programs, we looked at those and we thought, you know, this is a country of one hundred sixty-five million people. It has a pretty modern communications system. It's got an amazing culture. So, if something's going on anywhere in the United States, it's also taking place in Nigeria. They just had an Occupy Nigeria movement; social media was picking up like crazy. It's a very young country. What can you do to connect to these people and address the dominant national culture, which is *violence pays*—that if you use violence, you're going to get some benefit from it? So, we thought that's a fatal cultural problem. How do we take it on? And we thought, okay, how about if we do something like start a new television series that takes on this issue?

We're meeting in Port Harcourt with the young British educated Nigerian author of an excellent report. We said, we loved your work, that's why we're having lunch with you. How many people do you think have read your report? And he said, eight? And we said,

that is our worry, as well. What would you think if we were to take the substance of the report—the recommendations of the report—and popularize them in a television series that ran for thirteen weeks? And he said, that'd be brilliant. And it's British brilliant, which means it's a decent idea, if not over the top. But we also said to him, do you happen to know anybody in the broadcasting business we may talk to. He said, funny you should ask. I am the second of three brothers. If my youngest brother was here, and we walked out of this hotel down this one block of Port Harcourt, we wouldn't be able to get to the end of the block because he would be stopped so many times. He's the host of "Nigeria's Got Talent." And [this is] one of these moments, you feel like there's a lightning bolt that just comes down and blesses you. And so, we met with him. Through him, we met the premiere Nigerian film director of Nollywood. It's the biggest film industry in Africa—Nollywood reaches all the way to Pakistan—and they're basically $50,000 or so soap operas that are produced on video. And then the video is distributed everywhere. Now it's probably on CDs or apps. But we met superstar director Jeta Amata. He took the lead—the consulate general had pulled together an advisory group—just the way Terry Myers had done with AID in Jakarta—in Lagos and we created this series called "Dawn in the Creeks." It was on all six major networks, plus regular advertising for an all-time 85 percent penetration. And people really got the message. It turned out to be a reality series. The show trained teams of youths from each of three villages, in three Delta states on how to make Nollywood movies; they then make a Nollywood movie in their town. The TV series was about the selection, training, making the movies—and then we had the movies, we had the red carpet, talk shows, town meetings, all focused on how Nigerians can solve problems without violence. A popular phenomenon. High impact, five million bucks to reach 150 million all over Nigeria.

Q: And did you have people in the State Department who were helping to manage this or did you turn to AID or to other organizations?

BARTON: We had a team in the country that was, I think, at its peak, maybe six people. We worked completely with Nigerians. You can go online right now and just write "Dawn in the Creeks" and you could probably watch the series or at least watch a few of the segments. Highly produced, highly entertaining, very much based on this is our country, we have to find better ways of solving problems. But super popularized, by far the most visually attractive thing on Nigerian television at the time, because you had an excellent filmmaker, tiny, tiny, highly portable cameras that were swirling around. So, everything is candid, no set pieces where people are reading scripts. It's all well edited. It turns out the ambassador, Jim Entwistle, became a key part of the success. While he is one of the most introverted people I've ever met, (you could spend four hours in a car with him and have three brief conversations) he was super effective in building off this idea.

Q: Let's see a career, a career—

BARTON: A career guy, it turned out that his son had learning disabilities, and finally ended up at Columbia College in Chicago, which is a theater and film school. Jim was delighted that his son was about to graduate from college—and that he found his calling in this space. And so, the ambassador absolutely loved this idea. And as introverted as he was, when we went on talk shows, he could do Creole or Pidgin English with the best of them. He was a natural when he got in front of a microphone. But, you know, the minute he stepped out, he was just very quiet. He ended up being a huge patron of this thing. And when we went out to the Delta for a day—first time a U.S. ambassador had ever done that—we reached deep into the Nigerian culture in Nembe in Bayelsa State.

Q: And how did the State bureaucracy respond to this? I mean, did you hear from the secretary or from Cheryl Mills or other people? Or did this kind of just go on under the radar?

BARTON: I think a little bit of both. I think that's another thing I could have done better, taking more credit for it in a couple of those places. I mean, really reported back saying this is a breakthrough - because it took full advantage of the public diplomacy tradition, which I had grown up with a bias, because that was my dad's experience. And I think my sense is that there were always people who loved what we were doing. But the other thing that happens in the State Department, and this is more of the dominant culture, there are people who say, what is it that CSO does again? I don't really understand. And one of the problems I had with my deputy secretary, Under Secretary Sarah Sewall, after she took over for Maria Otero, is that she didn't understand what the word "operations" meant. The word operations had been put into the title of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations because the secretaries of state one after another felt that the State Department was doing nothing but writing reports and going to meetings. And then occasionally it had to actually have some impact on a problem, a direct impact, you know, so this was the missing ingredient. I also liked it not because I thought these operations were changing the world, but because I thought they could catalyze some local behaviors that otherwise weren't going to take off—and that was vitally important. The United States can really do that. Even while you're totally dependent on local people, you can still offer ideas and show people creative ways of getting something started that they can then own, if they like it. That was one measure for me of progress.

Q: Does this bureau still exist at the State Department?

BARTON: Yes, it still exists. I don't know if I said this to you before, but I believe that it takes about three years to get something to stick bureaucratically, to stick within an institution. And I had three years to do that. But I think to really develop a winning culture, you need five years. I had five years of OTI, and a winning culture remains. There's still resistance, but it is a cherished part of AID.

At CSO, I didn't get a chance to stick the culture as much, and because the institution I inherited was so abused by the regular State Department, my first deputy, Ambassador Pat Haslach, would say, “These people feel like they've had abusive parents all their lives.”

That was the culture that we inherited, and that's why the turnaround can be so much harder than a startup. When you have one hundred eighty people and you have three offices, and people don't show up for work at some of them and others are reluctant to ever come into the central office, that is demanding. We shut down two offices, and brought everybody into one office and gave everybody a roommate, as a way to try to coalesce the team. That's exhausting. And we were just at the end of that, when I left the State Department, and I thought the pieces I had in front of me were to regularize CSO at the top levels, so the secretary and the under secretaries and the deputy secretaries would fully know. Bill Burns knew what we were doing, but he was so engaged with Iranian talks and other things. He wasn't going to do the blocking and tackling that Doug Stafford had done for us. So, I needed to really energize the front office more, and get this one system model, this one leader, one team, one strategy model going, and then get out in the public more. The State Department is too reluctant to get out in public. Once it was announced that I was leaving, they wanted me to talk to the press and talk about how successful it had been. It was sort of like, why did we do this as a developmental tool rather than as a celebratory tool?

Q: And why did you leave after three years?

BARTON: Because I had this disagreement with the Under Secretary Sarah Sewall.

Q: What was the disagreement over?

BARTON: Basically, the direction of the office. She wanted it to be more of a research center, to be a bit of a think tank that would provide these advisory services to the State Department. And very quickly she got negative feedback from key people like Linda Thomas Greenfield, the Assistant Secretary for Africa, and Anne Patterson, the Assistant Secretary for the Middle East that, no, we actually want a functioning bureau that's going to give us some creative ideas and implement those ideas, test market them, build models, because we got some really difficult places, and this is the only organization that's doing that. Plus she chased out other leaders at CSO. It hurt the development of CSO, limited its role, disappointed the regional bureaus and other partners at State, and left the Department where it had been before – though our development of a big data office and other innovations continued. State still needs something like an operational CSO to be as relevant as needed in this rapidly changing and challenging world. We were on the verge of solidifying this but three years is not quite enough.

Q: But with that kind of feedback from the regional offices, why did she hold to her sense that operations are not appropriate?

BARTON: She's a bright person and can sometimes get caught in her own brilliance.

Q: So, she didn't resist you when you told her you wanted to go?

BARTON: No, she encouraged me to go. She asked me to leave. She said we should part ways. I had been wildly respectful of her authority, as she organized weekly meetings with the assistant secretaries on how she was going to reorganize the bureaus that reported to her, this whole series of bureaus, but actually most of the other assistant secretaries didn't give her the time of day. I was one of the few people who attended the meetings, had ideas, thought I was being a constructive contributor. And I think she just felt that I ultimately would be an obstruction. She'd had a difficult time at [the] Defense Department during the Clinton Administration and that may have influenced her thinking. I haven't really had a deep conversation with her about it because I think it was obviously painful to leave something before I felt I had really completed what I knew I could, and I was probably uniquely suited for doing it, because you had to not only know what you're doing, have the ideas, know how to execute it, but then you had to be willing to give blood at the office.

I think I told you that one of the metaphors that I used when I came home exhausted most days: I would go to the office, they hooked me up to an IV, and I'd give blood all day. That's pretty exhausting. And then later on, I'd heard about how they ate live monkey brains in Vietnam, you know, they cut off the top of the skull. And so, I had that picture in my head one day. And I thought, you know they're not eating my brain, but they've cut the top of my skull off. And I can feel, you know, every gnat that flies over. Every zephyr. Leaving when I did saved my life, because I was really giving more than I had.

Q: Yeah, it sounds like it was the right thing to do. Just, it wasn't being made any easier by your boss, and the life that you were leading was incredible. Well, so you left and what did you do then? I think that that's the end of your government service so far, right?

BARTON: Yes, I took off several months, caught up, traveled around the US, reached out to Princeton about teaching there again and began to think about writing a book. It was a necessary period to catch my breath.

By the way, my farewell event was just a real love fest. I was exhausted for sure, and it wasn't a happy departure but there was a wonderful outpouring of friends and fellow workers. Secretary Kerry came and he was great. He actually said to my deputy Erin Barclay after the event, “I feel really badly about this one.” And she was sort of like, well, you bear some responsibility. She was perturbed. But you know, these top leaders get so active, and I don't think I ever went to any of these offices as a supplicant. Every

so often you need to make sure you stay in front of these folks—don't just work with their loyal deputies. And that's something that I underappreciated with Brian Atwood. He made a huge difference in the success of OTI, as I mentioned earlier, by just occasionally mentioning it, including it on page seven of his speech, the bureaucracy would get the message, and they would see. So, I needed to do a little bit more of that with Hillary Clinton and certainly with John Kerry, who, if he had known more about what we were doing, would have loved just about everything. CSO is very much on the central political development issues of the time, which is, again, a unique advantage.

We could always pursue the priority of priorities at OTI and CSO. And let's make sure we're focused on it. We don't care what field it's in, but it has to produce a political result, because we're looking for political development here. After Bill Gates spent several billion dollars in Africa, he said, I could spend another several billion, but I really need to have the collaboration of that host government. Like, oh, politics matters. Big time, and it could screw up everything. I think both OTI and CSO have a real future.

Anne Witkowsky, who's the Assistant Secretary now for CSO—excellent. She came from a similar office at the Defense Department, and then took off a number of years. So, she's charged and ready to go. And she's got a great personality for being able to work her way. The survival of CSO throughout the Trump administration showed that it does have bureaucratic legs, it still has many of the same structural issues of acceptance within the bureaucracy, there's still a lot of people who need to understand it better. They might say, "It looks like it's doing good stuff. But I still don't know what it does."

In my book, I talked about going to visit the assistant secretary for oceans and the environment, Kerri-Ann Jones. The Bureau was started in 1975. Still all kinds of people say, oh, I don't know what they do. The name is oceans and environment, but they still don't know what it does. And she was bemoaning to me at the thirty-five year plus mark, how [she was] digested/processed by State, a traditional, risk averse organization. And we were feeling quite sympathetic to each other, having a nice conversation—she ended up leaving about a month later—didn't tell me at that meeting that she was—but I walked out, and the pictures of the assistant secretaries were on the wall. And guess who was on the wall? Who had been prior assistant secretaries? John Negroponte and Tom Pickering. So, they put two of the titans of the State Department career service into those jobs. And still they were dealing with it, "what is it that they do again?" And so, you got to take that on. I'm not very combative, because I'm a peacebuilder. But you gotta be competitive with that mindset and basically say, you know, maybe that's on you. Because actually, if you just go to their webpage, and you read three sentences, you will understand what was going on. So, your lack of curiosity is condemning you to a life of ignorance.

Q: Well, that's probably a good lesson on which to end this whole thing. I mean, you may want to say something about your Princeton experience, but this is a fascinating account

of the ups and downs that you have dealt with over these years. And do you want to say anything about the Princeton thing other than that you enjoy working with the students?

BARTON: First off, it's been an unbelievable privilege to work in the U.S. government, supported by taxpayers to try and make the world more peaceful. Does it get any better than that? Mother Teresa didn't have the budget. I could work anywhere in the world on front burner concerns and crises. I was given a lot of leeway by some very generous leaders and built a cadre of absolutely spectacular up and coming professionals who had influenced a lot of places. It's been a great, great opportunity. And I've loved it. It's incredibly motivating. It's allowed me to not only find my life's mission, but to put it into play so my gratitude is total. I obviously have regrets—things I would have done differently, I would like to have done better. But I don't have any bitterness because this has been a gift of the highest order. That's one reason I love going around the United States and talking about this peacebuilding work, because I want taxpayers to know that the United States can fulfill its potential, and its own mission, which I believe is a peacebuilding mission. I don't think we spent all this money to be prepared for war because we like war. So, I'm grateful, and I continue to contribute in any way I can. Right now, the way that I've enjoyed contributing most is to work with these incredible young people whose commitment to public service is every bit as real as anybody I've ever seen. And they're going to make a difference. So that's kind of great stuff. It turns out, we may need them more than ever.

Q: Do you have any aspirations to return to government service in some form? Or another?

BARTON: I think I'm pretty well cooked. It's hard to say if somebody gave you a great opportunity that you wouldn't take it on. But, you know, I like my pace of life a lot right now. I would be up an hour earlier every day and going to bed at about the same time, but just be full of plans and schemes and changes. There's a couple of things that I'm working on right now that I'm really enjoying, because I think it's a good application of some of my talent, and I think I can help. I've got a friend, Ted Higgins, a high school friend, who started a surgery center in Fond Parisien, Haiti, right next to the Dominican border, about an hour and a half outside of Port au Prince. And it's now probably the premier surgery center in Haiti; but the violence in Haiti is having a huge impact on his staff. He's got seventy people, seventy Haitians working there. He's a surgeon in Kansas City. He doesn't really know anything about how to solve a problem like the Haitian violence and gang problem. And I feel like I can very quickly say, you know, we've got to get worried about who's paying the police, because if they're not getting paid, they're not going to do anything. And that's true. And who's going to be the spokesman for this? So none of your people get killed? And who's going to negotiate with the gangs? And who's going to deal with the fact that there's an absolutely rotten government that's indulging these gangs. And I can alert many people in the USG with one email—I can get the assistant secretary of state, the national security adviser, the ambassador to Haiti, the AID mission director,

and a number of people involved, in a way, by reaching out. It is important, I wish there was some progress, but I'm enjoying helping to shape it.

And then I've gotten a call from a foundation in Chicago that's called Chicago CRED. It is leading the fight against gun violence in the city, which has been out of control for about 1,000 homicides a year right now. They came to me because they are searching for ideas. I shared experiences I had in Northern Ireland, with social media, with public messaging, with engaging the families (as we did with the former soldiers in Haiti). In Chicago they are putting out peacemakers, often former prisoners (a highly credible group of people on the street like Northern Ireland), to connect the youth with them and break down the street violence. In these three or four conversations, we've shared ideas that they're internalizing. They say oh, yeah, we got to do something with that.

Q: Wonderful. So, it's quite different from dealing with the State Department.

BARTON: I said earlier that you have to have a perverse fascination with bureaucracies to be good at these jobs. If you don't, you can just get eaten up by them. I think I've got that perverse fascination. But I would say in the CSO job, I ended up spending too much time on that stuff. And I probably should have been more of the coach and mentor, and let more people dig into that, and kept myself more in the creative and inspirational level as a leader. I think I have special talents in that space.. Sometimes if you get bogged down in one, you weaken the other and I think I probably did that.

Q: Well, I wouldn't spend too much time worrying about that. I think that at least my experience in these six hours of fascinating opportunity to hear you talk about these things that you have done, suggests that the U.S. government and the American people and others have been very lucky to have you willing to go through all this. So, thank you a million. Thanks for taking this time.

BARTON: Thanks to you. You've been a great listener and I appreciate your indulging my stories.

Q: Well, I think this is wonderful. Thank you very, very much, Rick. It's been great.

End of interview