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# JOHN BEED

*Interviewed by: Carol Peasley*
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## INTERVIEW

*Q: Thank you. Today is September 8, 2023, and this is Carol Peasley with interview number one with John Beed.*

*John, first, we're delighted to have this chance to interview you. Could you please start with where you were born and a little bit about your family life so we get a feel for who you were before you joined AID (United States Agency for International Development).*

### Childhood, Family, Education, and Early Background

BEED: Thanks, Carol. Great to have this opportunity.

So, I was born in 1963 in Saigon, Vietnam, which is now, of course, Ho Chi Minh City. Back then, you may remember 1963 as sort of a very auspicious year. It's when President Kennedy was upping the number of military advisors in Vietnam. There was a lot going on there. But of course, I was blissfully unaware of any of that. The reason I was in Vietnam is because my parents met at the U.S. embassy in Vietnam, at the water cooler, I was told.

*Q: So, what were your parents doing there?*

BEED: So, my father, he had a couple of different roles during his posting in Vietnam. This was his second – in 1963 he was serving in the U.S. embassy and my mother was, I think by this time she was working for USAID as the executive assistant to the deputy mission director. And this was back in the days when either the mission director or the deputy mission director had to be a State (U.S. Department of State) officer. At any rate, that's how they met and that's why I was in Vietnam.

*Q: Wow. That's amazing. Did your father work elsewhere overseas as well?*

BEED: Yes. He was a very accomplished French speaker, so he worked a lot in East Asia and in Francophone Africa.

*Q: Was this after you were born? Did you move around during your childhood? Was his career still overseas then?*

BEED: Yes. We went on all his subsequent assignments after I was born. We were all together as a family. There was—we were posted, after Vietnam, to Laos and that's really where I had my first memories of anything, growing up in Vientiane. We were there for three years.

*Q: Right. And when was this, the years that you were in Laos?*

BEED: Yes. So, in Laos we were there from 1967 to 1970, I believe.

*Q: Interestingly, because I joined AID in 1970 as an IDI (International Development Intern) and was originally supposed to go to Laos. So, then you were traveling around as a kid and grew up as a, can I use the term embassy brat? Is that the right terminology?*

BEED: Yes. And then, from then on it was always sort of working in embassies, my dad, and so I went to school—I went to DOD (Department of Defense) school in Korea. That was after—well, I should go, should say, after Laos we were in the U.S. for a little bit and then we went to Thailand for five years. So, I went to the International School there and then we later went to Korea and that's when I went to a Department of Defense school. But yeah, very much an embassy brat, if you will, kind of growing up until high school, really. So, we came back in 1977 and I went into high school in Rockville, Maryland.

*Q: So, you were in Bangkok at the time the Vietnam War was pretty much at its height and there were a lot of families with "safe haven" postings there. Do you have any recollection of the Vietnam War while you were in Thailand because you might have been old enough to know people whose parents were there?*

BEED: Yes. Not so much Vietnam, per se, but very vivid memories of Thailand. It was a very tumultuous time in Thailand, periodic sort of major riots or protests in the streets, civic unrest. Usually, I remember sort of the very sort of at that time very calming, stable presence of the king in Thailand. Enormous U.S. mission there across the board. It's funny though, I don't have so much recollection or at least now of sort of specifically

Vietnam-related things because there were so many things going on in Thailand as well, yeah.

*Q: You must have been in Korea when Vietnam fell and everyone was evacuated out? Because that was in 1975.*

BEED: Yes. You know, we were in Korea, let's see, 1975 to 1977, and yes, that's right. So, in the very beginnings of when Vietnam fell, we were there. We were also in Korea during the—there was a very kind of tense incident along the Demilitarized Zone called the Poplar Tree Incident when the UN force troops began trimming some trees that were obscuring their ability to observe at the border. North Korea interpreted this as a hostile act, and it led to the killing of several UN/US officers. I'm sort of forgetting the history now, but it was tense for a while between North and South Korea. And I remember, I was in junior high, and my dad was able to take me up on a tour of the Demilitarized Zone, which was just fascinating, just seeing kind of (laughs) the differences of both sides and the different ways they approached sort of patrolling and managing either side of the border.

*Q: I believe USAID was still in Korea then, although it was getting close to the time when AID left Korea. Did you have any exposure as a kid to what USAID was doing or even hear the term USAID at all?*

BEED: Yes, absolutely. I heard it and I was familiar generally with what USAID was doing. I must admit, I was maybe a little bit of a nerd in how I sort of looked at the embassy because I was very interested in how the embassy and the U.S. government was organized overseas. My parents told me I memorized the telephone directory and who was in what section, and it was very strange. And of course, in Korea we had enormous military presence as well, so I knew all about that and I got very familiar with how the, you know, different parts of the military in Korea were working. So, yes, I knew about AID and I knew about the other agencies as well.

*Q: You probably became a walking security risk.*

BEED: Yeah, probably.

*Q: No, that's very good. But then, you did return to the U.S. to go to high school? And you went to Wootton High School in Maryland?*

BEED: Yes. Correct. Yeah.

*Q: So, how was it like being a kid who'd spent your childhood overseas, how was it integrating back into an American high school?*

BEED: Well, of course, so I'm coming back to the United States at, what, age fourteen having spent basically twelve of the—my fourteen years outside the U.S., living in other countries, and really enjoying my time in each of those countries. Of course, I don't

remember Vietnam but Laos, Thailand and Korea I remember very well and loved those countries. And I remember boarding our plane to leave Korea being very, very sad to leave Korea. So, coming back to the United States and going into high school and trying to make friends with people that, you know, have been going to school forever, it was as little, you know, it was challenging at first. And then, I would say after about a year or two, two years maybe, really settling in and having good friends and enjoying it to the point that when my dad had another offer to—a couple of very good offers, you know, I think to go to Paris and then another one that was Australia maybe, he would come home and say, "So, what do you think? Do you want to go?" And I said, "No, I don't want to go." Can you imagine turning down France? I mean, just—but that stuck with me. Of course, my dad's approach to his job, which you know, he took very seriously, obviously, and did well, but it always sort of took a backseat to, you know, the family.
So, I think that really stuck with me as I, you know, later in my career.

*Q: When you had the other responsibilities.*

*I assume that your mother had stopped working when your parents were married or did she continue to work when she was overseas?*

BEED: She—initially, she went to—when she went to Vietnam she went as a research assistant for Rand Corporation and then she moved over to the embassy after that stint was over. And I'm trying to think if she worked, I don't believe she worked in Laos or Thailand. She really kind of devoted herself to the kids, my sister and me. My sister's younger but I think that sort of put all that on hold and she didn't really work overseas until we came back to the U.S.

*Q: Okay, I was just curious. That would have been the normal route during that period of time anyway, I think.*

*Just out of curiosity, did your sister end up in a career related to international affairs as well?*

BEED: No, very different. I mentioned Korea, how sad I was, crying and tears on the plane leaving Seoul and my sister was the opposite. She was jumping up and down. She couldn't wait to get to the U.S. And she went to MIT and was an aerospace engineer so yeah, very different trajectory. She has not really lived overseas since.

*Q: (Laughs) Okay, a different trajectory.*

*Going back to Korea for a minute, you said your father took you up to the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone). Were you able to travel around the country very much? Korea is obviously one of the huge development success stories and I'm just curious whether you have any memories of change that you probably saw while you were there.*

BEED: Yes. Some of the places we went out into the country. Different times we went to Busan, the big port. Daegu. Yeah, we traveled around a bit. I don't think it was super extensive, but we did get out and about, yeah.

*Q: Have you been back to either Bangkok or to Korea in more recent days to see how much they've changed?*

BEED: Yes. I've been back to Bangkok a couple of times, one time for a USAID Asia mission directors' conference and one time on a family holiday trip. And then, one time I was finally going to get back to Vietnam. We were living in Japan, and we had it all set up and R&R (Rest and Relaxation) with other families and then the 9.0 earthquake hit so then I was working all the time. So, Korea I covered when I was serving in the US Embassy Tokyo as the development counselor, so I got there as well and that was a lot of fun to go back to Korea.

*Q: Well, I bet in Bangkok you couldn't find where you used to live.*

BEED: You know, that's funny because as much as that has changed in Thailand a lot was so familiar to me as well.

*Q: Oh, good. I'm glad to hear that. (Laughs)*

BEED: And neighborhoods. And I went back—because we lived in a couple of different houses in Thailand and I found the street and I wasn't quite sure which house it was just because of the high walls and my parents couldn't remember the number. But I was actually surprised how familiar it felt.

*Q; That's very nice and also encouraging.*

*Now, let me jump back to where we were with your high school in Gaithersburg. After a couple of years, I assume you decided you liked it in the States and were beginning to think about college. Did you have any idea of what career you wanted? Did you decide early on you wanted to work in the international field?*

BEED: Yes. You know, I think one of the things growing up, one career field I was really interested in was I wanted to be an international correspondent but somewhere along the line I stopped thinking about that. And then, when I was in high school, toward the end of my time there, my top choice for universities, I wanted to go to West Point and I wanted to be in the—I wanted to be in a U.S. Ranger battalion and just the—anyway, I got a congressional nomination to West Point but I didn't get in but I did get a four-year army ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) scholarship to Tulane University, which is where I ended up going. But I was going down there with the intent that I would apply again to the academy after my freshman year. But I enjoyed New Orleans so much (Peasley laughs) and there's a whole long story about how my enthusiasm for the career in the military started to wane. And then, I sort of got more interested in, well, what can I do in the way of international relations, building global connections?

*Q: Yes. I can't think of two more polar opposites than New Orleans and West Point, so that's interesting.*

BEED: Yeah.

*Q: You said an ROTC scholarship to Tulane. Did you select Tulane and then the ROTC option was there or was it the ROTC option that was directing you towards Tulane?*

BEED: I was awarded the scholarship and that followed me to the school that I ended up going to.

*Q: So, you made a conscious decision to go to Tulane then?*

BEED: Yes. I think I applied to five universities and Tulane was one of the ones I got into.

*Q: Did you have to declare a major at the outset?*

BEED: No. I think I was able to wait on that. I think it was sophomore year, that's when I declared political science.

*Q: Political science. Right.*

*Just going backwards again, you said that at one point you had thought you wanted to be an international correspondent. Did you do any journalism, for example when you were in high school or college? Or was that something that you did as an extracurricular activity because you liked writing?*

BEED: Yes, I was on the high school paper for four years.

*Q: Okay. So, you liked writing and reporting?*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: (Laughs) Okay. We'll get back to why you decided on USAID versus the State Department (laughs) in a minute.*

*So, you decided then to stay at Tulane because life in New Orleans is kind of special. And you majored in political science. Was there a specialty within your political science major? Any focus on international relations?*

BEED: I didn't really have a concentration other than I did minor in psychology and I was very interested in sort of politics and personality and historical leaders. I've always been very interested in biographies and those kinds of stories, human stories but it was at

Tulane and the political science curriculum where I did some Latin America courses, but that's also where I started taking Russian, was at Tulane, yeah.

*Q: And what prompted the decision to start studying Russian?*

BEED: I was interested in it for two reasons. One was I was always—I play the piano and I was always—liked the Russian composers and their piano works, Mussorgsky, Rachmaninoff, and really the culture always kind of interested me, the literature. So, there was that. And then, there was my thinking that at the time in the early eighties that Russian studies would be a good thing to have to try to get into the government, the Foreign Service at the time. So that's why I started that.

*Q: Interesting. Remind me at the end I'm going to show you a book that I've just almost finished reading. It's called "Lost Pianos of Siberia."*

BEED: Oh, wow. Okay.

*Q: I believe that Tulane and New Orleans have a long history with Latin America as well. Is that correct? Because I know a number of Central Americans studied at Tulane. Did you have much contact with the international student body at Tulane while you were there?*

BEED: Not so much with the international student body but you're right, especially with respect to Latin American studies, Tulane is very renowned. Actually, public health as well. And I've run into and worked with people, of course, in the USAID health world that had Tulane roots as well. So, those, yes, those two areas in particular. And I remember the Latin America courses I took there I really enjoyed. One was led by Paul Lewis, a professor there —this is a tangent, but he wrote a book called "Paraguay Under Stroessner," and of course, I was assigned to Paraguay years later and I was glad I had some of the background.

*Q: In studying political science did you—as part of the curriculum – also look at Louisiana politics at all? It's an interesting state and interesting politics.*

BEED: Oh, it's fascinating. I don't think I took any courses on Louisiana politics but yeah, it's amazing.

*Q: (Laughs) Okay. And since your father was a good French speaker, had you studied French in high school?*

BEED: You know, that's actually a little bit embarrassing for a Foreign Service officer. Growing up, of course, in Laos I went to a French school and my parents said I was basically bilingual in it, you know, for that age. But then, when I came back to the U.S. it sort of went dormant and I resisted it. I did take it in high school and I did take it in college. I did not do very well in French either in high school or in college and I don't know the reason for that. But I think having French early on and then learning a little bit

of Thai when I was in school, I did develop a facility for languages and I can pick them up relatively easily but I didn't do well with French in the classroom.

*Q: Interesting.*

*I know that you went directly from your undergraduate work into graduate school. Is that correct? Were you always intending to go to graduate school immediately, or were you also exploring different professional opportunities, job opportunities?*

BEED: I didn't start graduate school immediately. I started interviewing at different kinds of places after college and I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do. I did not have an interest in immediately going back to Washington and starting right out of Tulane. And a very good friend of mine, actually was my freshman year roommate in Tulane, and we've been very close friends ever since, he was from Tampa, Florida so I decided to kind of go there and live with him and various of his friends. And I don't know, I interviewed with some PR firms, large banks in the South and insurance companies while I worked at several jobs -- in hotel reservations, as a YMCA camp counselor, and low-level clerk in a law firm. You know, just odd jobs but also kind of having a very good time as a young person. (Laughs)

*Q: Nothing wrong with that.*

BEED: And then, I started thinking, Well, you know what? I think I want to get a graduate degree in Russian studies. And there weren't so many programs nationally. There were maybe twenty, twenty-five, and one of them was in Florida and I was now a Florida resident, having lived there two years. So, anyway, I ended up taking Russian language and Russian courses at night at the University of South Florida while I was working and then I went to Florida State University in Tampa—in Tallahassee for a master's in Slavic and East European studies is what my degree was in.

*Q: And so, that continued your Russian language study as well?*

*How good was your Russian language skill when you left Florida State? Were you able to maintain it, or did you need a refresher course before you went on assignment with USAID to Moscow? Or, perhaps there was not a language requirement.*

BEED: Yes. I wasn't very fluent in Russian at grad school -- I didn't do so much language there. I did a little bit. It was primarily other area studies courses and history, all on the region, and I also did a lot on the Balkans as part of my program. But I had taken Russian with a tutor in Tampa on the side and then, when I went to Washington, after I graduated from Tallahassee, Florida State, I—that's when I decided, okay, now it's time to get a "real job" and I want to do it in the, you know, in the U.S. government sphere. And I—sorry, I'm jumping ahead, but I did take language—I did take Russian later when I worked on Capitol Hill.

*Q: That's fine. I was just curious about what language study is like at the university level and how helpful it is.*

BEED: Yes, it wasn't very intensive.

*Q: Okay. (Laughs) So, the master's was on Eastern European/Slavic studies, but did you focus primarily on the Soviet Union? Was your major attention on that? And the Balkans, I guess you said, as well.*

BEED: Yes, those two.

*Q: How long was the master's program? Was that a one-year program, a two-year program?*

BEED: It was a one-year program because I was able to use credits from the—I got a Russian studies certificate from the University of South Florida and courses I was able to transfer, so.

*Q: Okay. Is there anything special that you want to say about the master's program at Florida State? Anything about that period you'd like to highlight?*

BEED: Well, I remember enjoying my classes a lot, which is not something I could necessarily say about my, you know, my whole undergraduate experience. There were different things that I pulled out that I really liked, you know. For instance, if I were to do it again, I wouldn't have majored in political science. I would have been—I would have honed in on an area, a specific area. Or if I were going to do a different major, I think I would have picked art history because of the exposure to so many different aspects of history and culture. And again, I've always had a—that's how I got interested in Russia was really the arts and the culture principally. But Florida State, I found the professors were really knowledgeable, very interesting. For instance, a major course I did on Balkan history involved reading four different novels written by authors from the Balkans to really kind of round out the experience and some of them are my favorite books of all time.

*Q: Do you want to mention them in case anyone wants to start reading them?*

BEED: Yes. Okay. Well, let me see. "Memoirs of an Anti-Semite," is one. "Bridge on the River Dvina," was another one. I read "Master and Margarita" in the context of my program at Florida State as well, and that's absolutely one of my favorite books of all time.

*Q: That's interesting to use novels as a learning technique.*

*Was the faculty mostly academics or were there some who had also worked in government or had any kind of foreign policy background? Or were they purely academic?*

BEED: I remember almost exclusively them being academics but some real experts. There was one, Dr. Wynot, who had received his PhD in Russian history from Indiana University, i.e., Bloomington. And he was the author of several books on the region. He was really quite knowledgeable and a highly engaging instructor. And another being my Balkans history professor. But I think they were all primarily academic.

*Q: Given your father's work experience, did you and your study of the Soviet Union, did you ever have discussions with him or friends of his about all of this? I'm just curious whether those kinds of discussions took place.*

BEED: You know, not so much on—of course, he was really kind of known as an East Asia hand and he had Africa experience. So, really, he did not have, you know, kind of the—well, Russia and Latin America.
Very different. So, not so much with him or associates.

*Q: Okay. I was just curious what those conversations would have been like. (Laughs)*

*So, you're finishing up and you've said you're then looking for a serious job as you finished up at Florida State. You ended up working on the Hill, but were you also looking at the executive branch. This would have been 1988, so George H.W. Bush is president at this point, right? Yes. the end of the Reagan Administration and the beginning of the H.W. Bush Administration.*

BEED: Right, yes.

*Q: So, you're looking for positions in Washington.*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: And how did you go about doing that and where did you end up?*

BEED: Yes. Well, I, one thing I did was I just went up "cold calling" on Capitol Hill and I started knocking on doors. I knocked on fifty plus doors, just different congressional offices, House and Senate, different think tanks. I also went by several think tanks, at Brookings and several others and just, you know, dropping off my resumé and trying to talk to somebody. And for a while, nothing. I think I did this for about a month and then suddenly, I got a call back from—he was the chief-of-staff to Congressman Frank Wolf of Virginia. His name was Charlie White. And he was the one I had spoken with when I knocked on the door and he said, "John, we've got an opening here for a special assistant and are you interested?" And then, at the same time, I got an offer from another organization too. So, it was wow, it's all done. And I decided, well, I think this job with Congressman Wolf could be kind of interesting. So, I took it and started there and worked in his Capitol Hill office covering all the financial issues, tax, budget, transportation, commerce, which were big issues for Northern Virginia, obviously. And he at the time and for most of his time in the House he was on the Appropriations Committee, so he was

very influential and was a real advocate throughout for federal employees. And the other thing, well, I guess at the time, I guess I was a Republican (laughs). I am definitely a Democrat now. I really had a—I really had quite the metamorphosis over time but I was back then what I would classify growing up as a Massachusetts-type Republican, socially liberal but I believed in free trade and free markets and you know, open business climate and a strong foreign policy, all things which are obviously dead now. So, Wolf was much more conservative than I was, but he was so dedicated and so principled. You know, he went on the floor of the House once and he defended Nancy Pelosi when the Republicans were all attacking her over something. And he worked very closely with her on China. Anyway, he—and his best friend in Congress was Steny Hoyer, a Democrat. So, he was—he could be very bipartisan and that's how he operated. But it was an amazing experience. I got a ton of experience, you know, and I was always kind of shocked at how much sort of influence you could have as a young congressional staffer, whether you're dealing with state government, federal government, executive branch or military. But it was just a lot of fun. And working with a great group of people, so.

*Q: Can you give an example that would illustrate how young people have opportunities for influence?*

BEED: Yeah. Well, I'll give you one—I'll give you two. One was domestic related and had to do with constituent service to Northern Virginia, which he was very good at, Congressman Wolf, and very attentive to. We had a complaint from—a series of community complaints from the Fairlington-Shirlington neighborhood. They were really upset with these helicopters that were buzzing the neighborhood constantly, daily. So, Congressman Wolf asked me to investigate this. So, I started calling up all the services and I ended up, you know, with General So-and-So from the air force, General So-and-So from the marine corps, you know, a navy captain, you know, convening them all, okay, asking, "Whose helicopters are these and what can we do about it?" It turned out the most offending helicopters were the Marine One (Peasley laughs; unintelligible) helicopters. So, in the end we couldn't do too much about it, but we certainly had the entire Defense Department's attention on like, let's get to the bottom of this. So, that was one.

The other one was, the one aspect of my job which touched on international issues and that was I handled trade. So, we wanted to set up an international trade symposium for Northern Virginia businesses to expand their ties to other—commercial ties to other countries. So, I organized a large Northern Virginia trade conference, and I had either the economic ministers, the chargés, in some cases the ambassadors or the, you know, DCMs (Deputy Chief of Mission) from thirty-five different countries come to participate in this conference that I coordinated. You know, of course, obviously, you know, they're coming because you have the name of Congressman Wolf behind you.

*Q: Yes, right.*

BEED: But you do have the ability, you know, based on that to get people's attention and to have them take you seriously.

*Q: Yes. It's actually an important skill and one that is very much needed in USAID, the opportunities that come out of USAID's convening authority. It is great that you saw that firsthand even working on the Hill.*

*So, you did this for three years.*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: And at some point, you began to think of what else you wanted to do. Were you continuing some studies on international affairs while you were working for Congressman Wolf? Was that still in your blood system somewhere?*

BEED: Yes, it was. And two kinds of manifestations of that. One is I—if you remember, the U.S. graduate school that USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) ran on these different courses. I took Russian through that at night. So, I did that. And then the other thing is I was interested in okay, how do I get into the Foreign Service? So, I took the test, the Foreign Service exam, and I applied to USAID. And the first year for USAID there was a hiring—you know, the first year I didn't get in, you know, I didn't really hear back or whatever. The second year, there was a hiring freeze. I had advanced and just didn't get in. And then, the third year was finally the charm. It was like a nine-month process but yeah, I finally got accepted. So, each year I was kind of thinking about okay, what next, even though I really—I was really enjoying my time on the Hill I was thinking—

*Q: Did you also look at the State Department as well as USAID?*

BEED: You know, not as closely as USAID, but yes.

*Q: Was there something that pushed you in the USAID direction as opposed to the State direction?*

BEED: Yes. You know, I think in retrospect, of course, you know, looking at it now, I know why I was drawn to USAID. I'm trying to think back to when I had those same sorts of thoughts. Now, of course, I grew up in the developing world. They were all developing countries with USAID presence. So, there was that. I don't know at what point I realized that for me USAID's sort of practical way of engaging and implementing projects and bringing countries together was the most interesting. I'm not sure when that happened but that was always my interest in foreign service, i.e. how can I bring people together, people, countries, teams, ideas together, to connect people. So, that's what drew me into AID. It was not "how can I eliminate poverty or, you know, solve diseases or other issues." It was very much instead how can I bring countries together in a strong connection. Yes.

*Q: When you applied, did you have to apply for specific backstops, or did you just apply and then they decided what backstop you should go into? Did you have a special area that you were initially focused on?*

BEED: Yes. You did apply to them. And I remember looking at all of them and thinking, Whoa, there are three that are most interesting to me, the so-called 02 program officer role, the 94 project development officer, and also the private enterprise officer. And I ended up being hired—at that time, it was IDI (International Development Intern) as a Program/PDO (Project Development Officer).

*Q: Right.*

BEED: So, that's what I came in at. As a program officer in USAID, you play a large role in budgeting and strategy. And I really got fortunate, I think, on my panel interview for AID because at that time, they made you look at a fictional country situation and write a country development strategy. Give you about forty-five minutes to do that. Okay, these are all the problems of the country—the name was Caramba --- and it had all sorts of issues, every bad, you know, development issue you could think of from low literacy to unemployment, etc. And I remember, I said, "You know, what? I think we need to really invest 75 percent at least in public health and have a very big health emphasis. I know we've got these other problems." So, that was my strategy and that goes into the panel. And they read it and you go in there and I answered questions and there were six FSOs (Foreign Service Officers) in there and four of them were health officers. (Peasley laughs) So, they were, this guy's going to be a great program officer, I think is what happened, so.

*Q: Oh, that was very fortuitous. (Laughs)*

**USAID Hiring, International Development Intern, 1991**

*So, when you—so you came into USAID in 1991 as an international development intern, an IDI. Was there a group of you that came in at the same time?*

BEED: Yes. There were eight in my class and I'm trying to remember the make-up. We had three education officers, we had two Program/PDOs and one private enterprise officer. We also had a couple of health officers. Yes. There were eight in class.

*Q: And so, you did some general training together? Did you have a country of assignment when you came in? How long did you stay in Washington? That process has varied a lot over time.*

BEED: Yes, it was interesting. You were not assigned to a country right away and you really had to kind of do some advertising of yourself to line up the assignment. And I remember thinking, I really would love to go to South Africa. Apartheid had just ended and USAID was working with the new government. And I remember the USAID mission director was in town and they said, "Well, you should go talk to Cap Dean." And I must have not made any impression on him because he kind of like—he got out—you remember the staffing patterns and he said, "Well, you know, we don't really have a place for an IDI here." And so, anyway, he was very negative. But then, there were a couple of

people in town from the Egypt mission and I started talking to them. I'm jumping ahead a little bit but just this little aspect of lining up an assignment, it didn't happen until late in that year in Washington of training that I had.

*Q: Now, go back because I'm trying to remember my history right now. Had the Berlin Wall already come down? Then, the Soviet Union dissolved at the end of 1991. Is that right?*

BEED: Yes. The Berlin Wall came down before that but the Soviet Union ended in late December of 1991.

*Q: Given your background in Slavic studies and Russian, wasn't the new Eastern European bureau eager to get you?*

BEED: Well, okay, listen to this. So, as an IDI I was assigned to the Bureau for Europe, okay? And my very first boss was Jerry Hyman who headed the democracy and governance office. And Jerry and I became friends after this but man, he was a tough boss initially. Super smart guy – and I wasn't. But I was just kind of detailed to his office and I did some stuff for him. Then separately this regional mission for Europe was getting stood up and we were just getting ready to put a permanent presence in the at that time the new independent states, NIS. So, what I did, this was one of my first big assignments, is they asked me—it was Bob Nachtrieb, I think, who asked me to, "Could you do position descriptions and do a staffing plan for the New Independent States (NIS) and just, you know, come up with what it should look like and do the positions?" And okay, I love the stuff. Now, remember, I'm the kid who loves how embassies were organized and all this kind of stuff, so I'm like heck yeah, I can do this. So, yeah, well okay, we need a principal officer, and we need a project development officer, we need a program officer. And you know, I looked up position descriptions from other countries. I was a good writer – really helped from my days on the Hill where I had a great editor (Janet Shaffron our legislative director). And so, I put this staffing plan together for what the NIS missions should look like and I remember, like, Bob thought it was great and then Dave Merrill, who was the DAA (Deputy Assistant Administrator) for the Bureau, he said, "Who's John Beed? I want to meet him." You know, "Get him in here."

So, anyway, this is going on in the Bureau for Europe so these positions aren't established yet but they're about to be. There are people going over there. Jim Norris is already over there as the director and different stuff like that. But there's not really a job for an IDI or they're not really set up to take an IDI yet so that's when I started looking at these other possible countries to get my assignment for my second year lined up. And then, in Egypt, there were two opportunities, one in the program office and one in the private enterprise office. The program office took another IDI but the private enterprise office was interested in me. So, I said, "Whoa, I want to do this."

**USAID/Egypt, Private Sector Officer, 1992 – 1994**

Of course, I was advised by my boss at the time to NOT go to the Egypt mission, because it's such an atypical mission, it's just, you know, it's so different, you know, go somewhere—you'll get lost out there. Well, anyway, Egypt was my assignment and I'm really glad I went to a place like USAID/Egypt because it had everything out there and I met a lot of people and I learned how to do a lot of stuff. And I was assigned as a project officer in the private enterprise office, so.

*Q: And at that point, who was the mission director?*

BEED: Hank Basford.

*Q: And they had a very strong private sector office, I would assume.*

BEED: Yeah, very large. And Egypt was so large, actually it was—you know, they had what they called associate mission directors then. And they had two office directors under one sort of trade and private enterprise directorate, and I went in the finance and investment office, which—

*Q: And who was the associate director?*

BEED: It started out it was Greg Huger, but when finally I got out there it was Priscilla Del Bosque.

*Q: Okay. So, was the private sector program a policy-oriented program? I've heard many stories about the policy reform efforts of USAID in Egypt. Were you all involved on the policy front or was that being done by other people?*

BEED: That was being—we had six economists, mind you, in Egypt and they had their own directorate.
And Paul Duester and Paul Mulligan and I can't remember all of them, but they had the program assistance, the big sector program. So, private—our office, our directorate didn't work on that. We worked on—we had privatization, we did do that. We had all the small and medium enterprise and the microenterprise stuff. And we had the commodity import program as well, all of that.

And then, what you're, I think what you're talking about, those kinds of reforms tied to, you know, cash transfers, were all run by the economists.

*Q: Right. But some of those reforms must have related to privatization and private sector development? So, was there a lot of communication with them?*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: What were the policy issues that should be on the agenda?*

BEED: Yes, there was. Now, of course, I'm out there as an IDI, with more than 300 people in the mission and over 100 direct hire officers--

*Q: Yes, right. (Laughs)*

BEED: And so, I was not privy to stuff that went on. And Egypt was very stove-piped and there were a lot of different rivalries and things like that. But yes, theoretically, ostensibly, you know, we had linkages and connections between these things, so.

*Q: Okay. Which of those programs were you most involved with? You mentioned microenterprise, small business development and privatization. Were you focused on one area in particular?*

BEED: I started on doing the design for the privatization programs, so I wrote the project paper for a new privatization program. And it was very well-received, the paper, and it was—Chris Crowley was the deputy mission director at the time and acting mission director when it went for review to the, what they called the ExCom, the executive committee, and you can imagine these meetings. I'm sure you've been in a few yourself. But just everyone lobbing bombs at your project there, you know. And in a lot of ways the private sector office was looked at as kind of a renegade office, if you will. You had the controller saying, "Oh, the roof is going to cave in on this thing, you know, this isn't going to work." However, at the end of the day we won, we got the project paper approved and Chris Crowley said, "You know, this is a great paper." (Peasley laughs) So, anyway.

*Q: What were you privatizing? (Laughs) Or trying to privatize?*

BEED: No, and this is a little bit of criticism of the program, and it leads into other observations I have on how I evolved because I had the opportunity to serve in Egypt years later. And so, I'm coming into—I came into Egypt as an IDI, very focused on okay, I did this design for the privatization project, but I wasn't managing it. I became the project manager for a new think tank that the mission wanted to establish, sort of based on the model that had worked very successfully in Latin America in several countries where you support a group of local thinkers and change agents to do independent economic research and analysis. So, I did that project paper and design and then I was responsible for managing the project. But then to fast forward my time in Egypt much later, thinking back on what I did in my original assignment, I felt that I must have had complete blinders on because when I was in Egypt I didn't think very deeply about things—for instance how much of the reins of power and the economy are controlled by the military. And you know, I look back on it now and it's like, you idiot. But that's—I was just focused on doing my thing.

So, back to your question about the privatization program, it was criticized for now really tackling or making major structural changes. It was privatizing, you know, houseboats and hotels and things on the fringes, not really making a major economic transformation.

But of course, you really didn't have that opportunity given the power structure in Egypt at the time.

*Q: It's interesting that you were managing the think tank program because that was one doing economic analysis and I would have thought that would have been run out of the economic directorate of the mission. That's interesting.*

BEED: I think it has to—it maybe had to do a little bit with—I mean, it was really kind of the mission director Hank Bassford's vision because he had just come from El Salvador and of course, they have the FUSEDAS (Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social, the Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development) model, you know, very successful, so he really wanted this to work and I think he was very comfortable with the people we had in the trade office. And I got the assignment.

*Q: Selective placement by who in the mission will buy into it. (Laughs) Okay.*

*I remember hearing stories about a think tank in Egypt that one of Mubarak's sons was involved with. Is that this one?*

BEED: Yes, he was on the board.

*Q: He was on the board. Yeah. Okay. Right. I think ultimately that program did move over to the economists because I remember Roberta Mahoney mentioning this program.*

BEED: Yes. And it didn't become successful until I was gone. (Laughs) I had a lot of startup challenges with that.

*Q: Right.*

*I know that USAID/Egypt has had a very strong cadre of Foreign Service National employees, some of whom have done their oral history interviews. I know that some were working with the economists and involved in the reform agenda. Were there FSNs working in your division and what it was like as an IDI coming in and working with some very senior Egyptian employees who obviously knew their way around? How did you work out those relationships?*

BEED: Yes, that's another reason why going to Egypt first was very fortuitous with me because of the Egyptians. I always get a little bit choked up about this because they have always been so influential, I think, and such a powerful part of the USAID workforce and I think I was able to recognize that very early on in Egypt and you know, I can point to every mission, you know, extremely influential FSNs in terms of influencing positive outcomes, influencing and helping me in all of, you know, those assignments. And in Egypt, it was a very senior financial analyst, Mohammad Mounir. He was, you know, Mounir was just somebody I could go and talk to about issues I was having getting the think tank going, you know, what do I do, how do I work through this. He was just so

wise, measured and calm, and he had deep insight, and he was someone I could always talk to on a confidential basis. So, that was a very important lesson.

*Q: Yes, indeed.*

*You were in Egypt 1992 to 1994. That was before the drawdowns began to occur in Egypt. Is that correct? Was this still the billion dollar a year period?*

BEED: Yes, 1992 to 1994 we still had an annual budget of $815 million, yeah, of aid. It was very large. We had—there was a lot of tumult there. They had assassinated the interior minister while I was there. There was an earthquake in Cairo which there hadn't been one in dozens of years. We had a lot of different things kind of happen at that time. But yes, still very much—we had, what, 100 U.S. direct hires and about 200 FSNs, 200-plus.

*Q: Was this a period in which you were able to travel around the country with relative ease?*

BEED: Yes, everywhere. I don't remember any restrictions then. We could drive into the Sinai, which obviously, later was not possible. You could drive to the Libyan border, all along the coast and yeah, we traveled everywhere for business, for projects and for tourism.

*Q: As an IDI, you probably spent most of your time internally within USAID, but did you have much opportunity to see how USAID worked with the embassy in Egypt? Did you have much contact with the embassy and other agencies and get any experiences in that first assignment that you later applied?*

BEED: Yes. (Laughs) I'll give you one quick vignette. It was my second week there and the RSO (Regional Security Officer) gave me a call and said, "It says here you speak Russian. Is that right?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Well, we just got somebody who walked into the embassy. He's Russian. And he wants to defect. Can you come interview him and see what he's all about?" So, this is on a Saturday so I said, "Sure." So, I went in and it turned out he was—I interviewed him in Russian, the whole thing was taped, and then I sat with the security officers. It was the chief and the deputy. (Laughs) And I told them, "This guy's just a bus driver. Anyway, he's not—there's nothing here." I told them what he relayed to me and said, "Oh, thank you very much." So, this was on a Saturday and then the country team was on Monday. This is my second week at post at this gigantic mission and the security head in the big country team meeting, he turns to Hank Bassford and he says, "I want to thank you for your guy, John Beed. He was extremely helpful over the weekend interviewing, interpreting this Russian guy." And Hank goes, "Who?" (Both laugh) "Who are you talking about?" I hadn't even met him yet.

So, anyway, we had friends in the other sections and agencies. We worked—I'm trying to think back then on the first tour if we worked a lot with other agencies. We mixed a lot with them. The ambassador's wife, Pam Pelletreau, was—Bob Pelletreau was the

ambassador and Pam Pelletreau was a USPSC (United States Personal Services Contractor) working in our democracy office.

And anyway, there were a lot of—there was a lot of intermixing at the time. We were in a building that was just a block away from the embassy chancery so yes, there were a lot of, like interchanges, and I knew a lot of the people over there.

*Q: Since you were working on private sector issues, did you have much contact with the Embassy Econ Section? Was there a Commerce attaché there? I'm just curious whether they were interested in what you all were doing.*

BEED: You know, that first kind of posting there I don't remember working so much with them. Of course, we were so large, USAID. And of course, my—what level I was, it wasn't really a part of my work. So, not as much, basically.

*Q: But it sounds like it was a great first post in spite of the advice that you'd been given that it wouldn't be a good place for you to go.*

BEED: Absolutely. Yes, it really—it was so good. Because every—it had every aspect of a mission. You know, we had, my gosh, we had four lawyers, we had, you know, ten U.S. contracting officers, fully delegated. The authorities there, much broader than most mission directors had at the time for Egypt. So, it was—and I also got to rotate around. I worked in the program—project development office. And that was very useful. So, it was a great IDI experience, Egypt.

*Q: If you were advising USAID on placement of younger people without a lot of experience, would you recommend that they be sent to large missions as opposed to the smaller ones?*

BEED: I think so. I think, yeah, I think you just get, well, you get more exposure. I think it's better for them and more opportunity to see different things than if you went to, you know, a smaller post. Yeah, I do think that's a more optimal way to handle a first assignment for somebody overseas, yeah.

*Q: Okay. When you went, and you'd been working in the Europe bureau before going to Cairo, and if there had been positions available in the former Soviet Union posts or in Eastern Europe, they might have grabbed you then but instead, you went off to Egypt. And you were in Egypt, I believe, for one tour. Is that correct? For two years?*

BEED: Yes, just two years. It was supposed to be a four-year assignment—

*Q: But, the Europe/Eurasia bureau started realizing that this Russian speaker who saved the Embassy's bacon in your second week at post started calling(laughs)—*

BEED: Now we have a place for an IDI. I think that's, yeah.

*Q: Okay. So, they took the initiative to say, "We want Beed to come to Russia"?*

BEED: Yes. And they were very aggressive about it and I was not the first, you know, it wasn't just me. There were other people from missions who were being very actively recruited, if you will, from the NIS (Newly Independent States) to break their assignments and to come staff up these new missions. I remember Hank Basford sending a cable into Washington at one point, this was before I got assigned, but saying, I need your help to stop the hemorrhaging. I have, you know, X number of officers who've been shipped out to go to these posts and I need these people to keep running Egypt.

*Q: Right. So—but the positive this is, that AID-Washington and USAID-Russia were the aggressors, so you weren't burning bridges in Egypt. You were being pulled, so it helped to protect you from any ill will that might have been generated out of this, I assume.*

BEED: Yeah, I think that's how it came out. And at the end of the day, it was, you know, I was due to move into the program office in Egypt and they were counting on me being there. But then, this sort of Moscow push came, and I think maybe it became a bit of an issue (laughs) at one point, but Chris Crowley was—I think he was the acting mission director at the time. He's the one who said, "No, he should go to NIS. This is—he speaks Russian, he knows the area. We can get somebody else for the program office in Egypt." (Laughs) So, yeah.

*Q: Okay. So, reason prevailed.*

BEED: Right.

*Q: Well, I'm going to suggest we stop here for today.*

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*Q: Today is September 20, 2023, and this is interview number two with John Beed.*

*When we finished up last time you had been asked to go to Russia from your initial IDI assignment in Egypt. Perhaps we can start there. Did you go on home leave or directly to Moscow? And did you have language refresher training or did you just jump right in?*

BEED: Yes, I jumped right in. We did go on—well, as far as the language, we did go on home leave to start because we'd just finished the two years in Egypt and thought that was probably a good idea, to take home leave before heading out, if I'm remembering correctly.

*Q: And to get some cold weather clothes. (Laughs)*

BEED: Yes, that's right. One of the few, actually the only time in my Foreign Service career where we were ever awarded the wardrobe allowance, making a two-zone transfer from Egypt to Russia. The measly $600, which didn't nearly cover it. (Laughs) Even

back then. But yes. And then, we were very excited to kind of start on the new adventure and finally get to Russia.

**USAID/Russia, Private Sector Officer, 1994 – 1998**

And I remember arriving in Moscow and not having worked previously with anyone there in the mission—obviously, I was new to AID to begin with—but I did know of some colleagues and bosses to be sort of through the grapevine.

*Q: How big was the mission at that point? Because you went in 1994 and it had been open for only a year or perhaps even less. Right?*

BEED: Yes. It was still very small and handling quite a bit of money. We had a billion-dollar OYB (Operating Year Budget) when I arrived but only—let's see if I can remember correctly—about a dozen, a dozen, maybe fifteen tops U.S. direct hires in the whole mission. At that time AID in Russia was relying quite extensively on U.S. personal services contractors, offshore hires that had language, Russian capability and other background that they needed. But yes, as far as the Foreign Service contingent it was maybe a dozen people.

*Q: And at that point did you have a full complement of Foreign Service Nationals or were you all still very actively hiring Russian staff?*

BEED: We're still hiring and expanding but yes, there were, when I arrived there were very capable, strong Foreign Service Nationals. I can remember one in particular who actually—Olga Stankova who actually was chosen to run our capital markets division at one time, which was kind of rather unusual for USAID overseas in missions, to have somebody, you know, have a senior FSN, no matter how good, in charge of a division or an office like that. But—

*Q: Sorry. I should have asked at the beginning. What position did you go into when you went to Russia?*

BEED: So, during my four years there the office changed names and sort of configurations several times but when I went to the office it was in charge of a privatization program, the post-privatization program, small business development, the, I believe the—commercial law program. So, all the sort of elements of the private enterprise, most of the prime sort of private enterprise programs. There was one exception and that was the land privatization and sort of housing and all of that. That was under George Deikin in a separate office. But we had, you know, the famous or infamous, whatever you want to call it. in the office, the economic reform and privatization programs, yeah.

*Q: Right. And who was the office director at that point? And the USAID Mission Director?*

BEED: At that time, when I arrived the office director was Tom Rishoi.
Jim Norris was the mission director and Bob Burke was the deputy mission director when I arrived. Yes, you know, with so few Foreign Service officers, you know, people were wearing different hats. Gene George arrived the same time I did to handle the energy portfolio and then I would ultimately end up working for Gene when he took over the—we renamed the office, Office of Economic Reform, and that had all the private sector stuff underneath it.

*Q: Okay. So, when you first arrived, what was your portfolio? What were you tasked with when you first got there?*

BEED: Well, I'm going to get into the nitty-gritty here.

*Q: That's fine.*

BEED: Yeah. They wanted me to—Tom Rishoi wanted me to really handle the post-privatization restructuring program, which was just beginning. You know, they had essentially concluded the mass privatization program and they were now kind of thinking about the next wave of assistance.

*Q; And the mass privatization program, was that the vouchers?*

BEED: The vouchers, yeah, yeah. So, I was not a part of that. That was—and actually, that program was primarily set up and run from Washington, you know, when it began.

So, when I arrived in 1994 we were in the midst of, you know, developing the program, the sort of next wave, and a big chunk of that was going to be restructuring companies that had recently privatized or changed, you know, ownership. As well as working on the next wave of capital markets development, commercial law reform. So, there was all of that. And Tom wanted me to handle the post-privatization stuff, that restructuring portfolio, working with the Russian Privatization Center, RPC, and of course those reformers, a lot of whom had come out of St. Petersburg, you know, Chubais, Anatoly Chubais and—. And I do have to confess of (laughs) getting dropped into the middle of that chaos, obviously, it was a polar opposite to what I had experienced in Egypt, you know, fully delegated mission, lots of very strong, capable staff, systems, very strong systems in place, some might say bureaucracy and all of that but—. Then, into the absolute Wild West of (laughs)—of USAID-Russia in those days. And I have to say I did not love my initial sort of project management responsibilities and seeing the way things were done, the way we were drawing up budgets, decisions, you know, that were—a lot of which seemed to be made primarily on the advice of very few people, a very selective group. And by that I mean outside of USAID. In other words, we put too much—

*Q: You mean the coordinator's office?*

BEED: No, I'm not even speaking of that. Well, that would come in but I'm talking in terms of developing programs and planning and setting priorities, so much of that was

coming from, at that time, this Harvard Institute for International Development, the head grant and the people under that, people who were very knowledgeable about Russia, very connected, essentially bilingual or you know, fluent, and really plugged into this group of reformers in the Russian government that the U.S. government was seeking to engage and to partner with very closely. And this is not Monday morning quarterbacking. I can tell you just from outside I was very uncomfortable with the way things worked. And I didn't enjoy that, sort of that kind of—the way things were programmed, the way things were done and you know, how fast everything was moving.

*Q: Was that in part because the HIID (Harvard Institute for International Development) people were not only well-connected in Russia but also well-connected back in Washington? Did they influence budgeting?*

BEED: Absolutely. That certainly would be the case. So, the mission did not really have the latitude at that time to really push back that much. In other words, you had the kid with, you know, strong connections back to Washington, so you know, it's hard to think of specific instances but there were plenty of times where I think the mission maybe raised objections or wanted to do things differently, the HIID people would go back to Washington and say, "You know, the mission doesn't get or," or "They're slowing things down," and so, you know, that's basically kind of the difficult dynamic that Jim Norris and others in the mission had to manage. You know, obviously at my level I wasn't part of that. So, in other words, I don't think there was a lot of opportunity to exercise a lot of independent judgment in being a project manager, sort of in that milieu, and I also, I probably did not have the highest confidence in myself. I was coming into an environment that I didn't know especially well even though I had studied Russian history and all of that. Obviously, everything had changed. Didn't know the people. So, I was, yeah, I was very uncomfortable in that role. So, those two things together, not really being able to influence things, not really feeling fully confident in my ability to contribute, so it was an uncomfortable period where I was focused on that part of the portfolio. Now—

*Q: Just one other question. Was your part of the portfolio, the post-privatization work, being implemented by HIID, by Harvard, or were there other implementing partners that you were directly engaged with?*

BEED: There were other implementing partners but HIID had a very—again, this was a very extraordinary, unusual role whereby HIID was basically kind of functioning as, you know, a program office for the mission, if you will. (Both laugh)

*Q: Okay, they were managing it, okay.*

BEED: Yeah. So, yeah. So, it was just across the board uncomfortable. I did not enjoy it.

Now, on the other side of the portfolio, the more sort of hands-on, grassroots enterprise level stuff or working with entrepreneurs, the whole small business portfolio, was fairly large at that time, maybe close to $100 million they were programming. That was headed

up by a USPSC and—a team of USPSCs that also had a good Russian background. But they were doing some interesting things, it seemed to me, and much more interesting than this other highly political, you know, unusual sort of way of programming on the economic reform side, privatization side. The small business development portfolio I really liked. I did get exposure to that. I started working on some projects. I did, you know, I did a lot of travel in my first year and throughout my four years. You know, I went to every time zone in Russia. I went to the Far East, I went to—traveled to the Urals frequently. I went there probably five times, to Yekaterinburg. Went to the Arctic Circle, went to Southern Russia. So, I even went to Sakhalin Island where we had some programs. So, that was, you know, very interesting and fascinating to me and I really enjoyed the—what the small business team was doing. So, I think it was in about a year that I had the opportunity to take over that portfolio, which I quickly, you know, ran to as fast as I could. (Laughs)

*Q: (Laughs) Okay.*

*Interesting, I remember hearing someone from CARANA, an early implementing partner in Russia, talking about the hidden success of the privatization program, that there were a lot of smaller scale industries or companies that had been privatized. They saw that as very successful. Did you see that yourself?*

BEED: Yeah, I think there were some examples at that level, certainly, and even—actually, I'll tell you another program which I became the manager of early on and it was mainly sort of an on the ground manager before because it was a COTR (Contracting Officer's Technical Representative) or the, you know, the principal project officer was in Washington but I was responsible in the mission for tracking the U.S.-Russia Investment Fund (TUSRIF) which had a very troubled start but then ended up being very successful. And you know, it's unfortunate, I think the Congress/U.S. government is still arguing over what to do with the funds, you know, the TUSRIF investment returns. But I enjoyed that, and it also gave me an opportunity to learn about venture capital and some new areas. I worked with and learned from a very capable, very thoughtful guy who had come right out of the venture capital industry, Jim Hansley, and we worked together in the management of the fund. So, that was one. There were certainly others, but none come to mind sort of in that post-privatization area.

*Q: Okay. I've lots of questions and I'm not sure of the logical order for asking them. But since you did talk about HIID, the Harvard Institute of International Development, you were there when it all blew up. Do you have any thoughts about it? Did you experience much from your perch in the mission?*

BEED: Yes. I think a lot was happening sort of under the surface and again, by that time, when it did blow up, I was managing a very different part of the portfolio, small business development. But again, that's why I kind of said, I don't want to just be a "Monday morning quarterback," you know, in looking back. But clearly I was very uncomfortable with the way things were and how they were operating so it didn't surprise me that people associated with those key advisors, you know, had some big issues there and the

issues developed as a result of, you know, again, I think, a strange relationship with USAID.

*Q: Did you, in the period that you were involved with the program supporting the economic reform efforts, did you have any personal engagement with Chubais and other high-profile economic reformers? Or, was that all above your pay grade?*

BEED: Yes, though not at that level, not at the Chubais level. But other levels, another prominent person who became the head of this Russian Privatization Center. I also did have interaction, which was positive, with Boris Nemtsov who was a governor at that time. But yes, most of the top economists and reformers, that was way above my pay grade at the time.

*Q: (Laughs) Okay. I would only say that because of the blow up of that program by the time I got there in late 1999 those people wouldn't talk to us at all. They were still angry about it. (Laughs)*

*You briefly mentioned the State Department's coordinator's office. I have heard about the heavy hand of the coordinator's office during the early days of the program in Russia. Did you have any personal experience with that? Did you participate in the annual budget meetings with the coordinator's office? I think it evolved very much over time but I suspect that it was very different in 1994-95 than when I got there in 1999, so I'm wondering if you have any thoughts about the evolution of that office.*

BEED: Yes. I think actually in a way my time in Russia is really kind of a tale of two eras, if you will. Kind of the first one, again, which was marked by working on that one side of the portfolio which was troubled and which I didn't enjoy and that was when Jim Norris was mission director and I really contrast that with the last two years of my time there when Janet Ballantyne was the mission director and I was working on the, you know, small business development, I was head of the business development division for—in Gene George's economic reform office and that was much more fulfilling. And during that time, those two years, I had a lot of contact with the coordinator's office, even its head Ambassador Richard Morningstar, and actually, it was, I think, for our portfolio, for the most part very supportive. Although we were, you know, always trying to advocate for a higher share of the funding it was, I think, generally what we were doing and working on was well-received by the coordinator's office and supported. That was helpful. There were a couple of times when we wanted to introduce some efficiencies to the portfolio because this was when Russia's budget was going from $1 billion to the next year, when it was $100 million overall for the mission. And I remember that as being particularly difficult. We originally had about fifteen partners in the small business portfolio -- from Deloitte and big contractors to the University of Alaska, a big grantee, to all sorts of smaller different organizations and managing sort of the downsizing and the prioritization of what would continue to receive funding and small business was a real challenge. There were a lot of people coming to my office, chiefs of party, you know, in tears basically. So, that was a real lesson.

So, through this, sort of managing this $1 billion to $100 million and everything else going around, we had a lot of contact with the coordinator's office and we did a lot of, you know, collaboration. That said, sometimes when we tried to introduce some efficiencies or do some things that we thought were going to have more impact, you know, one of the grantees made a phone call (laughs). I had worked with our contracting officer, Orion Yeandel, who was just fantastic, and we had developed, we thought, a fantastic RFA (Request for Applications) and this was going to really help efficiency in the portfolio, we were going to get more impact out of it, but it was going to involve going from three or four players in one sector to one or two, and that just wasn't sitting well with the heads of a couple of the organizations so they called the coordinator's office and the Europe bureau head and said, "We've got to kill this RFA." And of course, you can't do that unless you get the Office of Procurement going with you, but they got the head of the Office of Procurement to call Orion and say, "You've got to take down this RFA and do something else." So, anyway, we worked through that but there were small incidences of that where politics, you know, trumped what we were trying to do with the programs in Russia.

*Q: Speaking of politics, I suspect there were a fair number of CODELs and STAFFDELS, did you have any experience on that yourself?*

BEED: Yes, quite a few, quite a bit of interaction with them as well. And again, a lot of this was my final two years there with Janet. We had the VP and cabinet-level Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, we had a lot of meetings around that. And for those last two years, yes, I had a lot of interaction with the vice-presidential delegation, with CODELs that were coming. And I was also meeting at high levels of the Russian government. They had just set up a new small business administration equivalent in the Russian government so the head of that, Mr. Prokhorov, was my counterpart. And a lot of these sort of bilateral meetings, Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission and others, we were involved in a lot of that.

*Q: There were several of these commissions around the world that Vice President Gore had, and I know they created some interagency angst for some AID missions, especially around funding expectations. That may not have been a problem since you had a coordinator's office that had to deal with those issues but I wonder if there were tensions with other agencies because of expectations?*

BEED: Definitely. And two in particular but I think we were able to really kind of manage them quite well. But it's where I really, I think, got a lot of—we had talked a little bit in Egypt about sort of interagency and for the most part, we were so big and so compartmentalized, didn't have too much with that. That, for the last two years of my, well, my whole assignment in Russia there was a lot of interagency work. There was some great collaboration, there were some real challenges. The two that I'm thinking of, two challenges, one was in the framework of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission and this creation of a new Russian SMA (Small Business Administration). There was, of course, the movement for SBA to have a role. And I can remember, you know, initially meeting with the Russian government and as diplomatically as I could saying, "Don't try

to put too many eggs in the U.S. SBA basket. You know, we can work with you on your—," but he very much wanted this relationship with the head of the U.S. Small Business Administration, Aida Alvarez. She was fortunately a very nice person, very competent, very thoughtful and she was—had cabinet-level rank so you know, there was all of this impetus, so we've got to do something because they're going to meet for Gore-Chernomyrdin and they've got to do something. So, anyway, I was able to work with SBA on an arrangement that worked that didn't involve, you know, giving SBA a whole bunch of money for something that they couldn't do. But that was one that we were able to work through, I think, effectively. Then there was, you know, just competition for resources, especially on participant training and exchanges, a big one. I think it was still USIS (United States Information Service) at the time but there was a big battle between State and USIS, or perhaps it was State Public Diplomacy by then, so it was this competition between State and AID for increasingly limited resources to do participant training, education, all of that, which I thought was always an important part of what we were doing with Russia and we had things we wanted to continue to do. So, actually, it was the coordinator's office that created a joint agency committee at post to work on this and so, it fell to me for USAID and Rosemary DiCarlo, for State. Rosemary was the Embassy's extremely competent public affairs counselor who would later be deputy UN ambassador. Anyway, Rosemary and I had a very good relationship, and we were able to manage this competition and sort of carve out, okay, USAID should do this, State Department should do that, and that committee worked well in the end.

*Q: Did the coordinator's office at that point have a representative at post? Was there someone in the econ section who was the coordinator's person?*

BEED: Yes. Yes. It was Susan Johnson.

*Q: Oh, I didn't know that.*

BEED: Yes, Susan Johnson. And then the AID mission, when I first got there, had a position, a person to work with Susan, and that was Earl Gast at the time.

*Q: I didn't know that. Interesting.*

*Going back to the coordinator's office, during the latter part of your tour, I believe the coordinator's office started its regional investment initiative to focus resources. Samara was an early site; also the Russian Far East to respond to the earmark from Senator Stevens.*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: Were you involved at all in the early development of these regional initiatives?*

BEED: Yes. For USAID, Gene George was the lead for this, and I think I was kind of his principal deputy, if I'm remembering correctly, for this regional investment initiative. And on the State side it was Monica O'Keefe. Monica O'Keefe and I became the

co-chairs of the working committee for the regional investment initiative. But yes, I was very involved in the design of trying to come up with what we would do. At the time, we had business development centers in various parts of Russia and we were seeking, one, to incorporate them as hubs into this regional investment initiative as well as other aspects of the program that we had going on. But yes, I was very—until you mentioned it, I had forgotten all about that but yes, I was right in the middle of all of that.

*Q: Did you all help to determine where the sites would be, where the initiatives would be located?*

BEED: Yes, and I was on the first scouting team and we decided—I remember, we took several trips. We went to Samara, we went to Nizhny Novgorod, we went to Novgorod, and that's—and we came back from—we should do Novgorod, and I remember (laughs), yes, yeah, was a big part of that.

*Q: Could you talk a bit about the Russian Far East. USAID was being asked to put significant resources into the Russian Far East, including partnerships with Alaska. Could you talk a bit about that because much of it, I think, revolved around the Small Business and Small Business centers and training?*

BEED: Yes. There were some, I think, very good programs that we had out there. A big one, of course, was that University of Alaska-Anchorage program. There were several others. So, UAA, the university, also had several business centers out in the Far East. I think there were four or five or training centers, if you will, kind of hubs to work with small businesses and entrepreneurs and train people. There were several others and I'm really trying to remember what the programs were. But the Far East, I remember one trip going out there with—Gene George and I flew out to look at different programs and it's such a different place, as I'm sure you know or can appreciate. It's, I don't want to say, well, yeah, it's unto its own out there, really, and obviously, places like Sakhalin are so remote, you know, you can—it's difficult for Moscow to manage, let alone, you know, think about what we're going to do. There were also some good environmental programs, I think in Khabarovsk, that we visited as well. But yeah, it's, I mean, it's an area that's so different, it's remote, it's fast, so I think it's difficult to think abouts a development strategy or an investment strategy there that would have, you know, major impact, I think on any level.

*Q: You had mentioned the training programs and participant training. Related to this, another important part of the overall approach in Russia was community-to-community and people-to-people programs between Russia and the United States. I believe on the private sector side there were some like the IESC (International Executive Service Corps) and farmer-to-farmer programs, were you involved with those at all? And if you have any thoughts about those kinds of people-to-people programs.*

BEED: Yeah. I'm a big advocate for those types of programs. They were all in my portfolio, the small business portfolio or business development portfolio, we called it. We had IESC, we had CDC (Centers for Disease Control), we had ACDI/VOCA,

Farmer-to-Farmer, you know, all those volunteer-type programs, which were, I think, doing great things and having an impact. You know, it's often difficult to measure the impact of those kinds of programs, but I think they can have enormous benefits, especially if you're doing it at scale. We had a very successful Junior Achievement-Russia program at the time. It was the one time I had a lot of interaction with Ambassador Collins because Junior Achievement was in my portfolio and he loved it. He said, "You should be doing more of this." And I said, "I agree with you Ambassador. We want to." But yea, there were a lot of those people-to-people programs that I thought were—I think they make a lot of sense in any context, in any country.

*Q: Right. One of the things Ambassador Collins, during my day, did was invite all of the Junior Achievement people to Spaso House when they came to Moscow for their annual meeting. It was so fun with kids running all over Spaso House. Did he ever do that while you were there? (Laughs)*

BEED: You know, I think he did. I think he had a big reception for Junior Achievement when I was there as well.

*Q: I have neglected to ask earlier on about your personal life. Were you single or married when you went to Moscow? Can you tell us about living in Moscow and, if you had a family, what it was like for them as well?*

BEED: Yes. So, I was married before I got into USAID. Let's see, I got married the year just before I joined USAID. So, yes, my wife was with me in Egypt and Russia, both places, and I think part of—maybe part of the rough start, I'll call it, in Russia was also due to difficulty in finding the right housing. I remember, I mean, I'm sorry for any war stories that I'm telling, but when we got off the plane, Christine and I, and arrived in Moscow for the first time, we were picked up by our sponsor, he was the mission economist, and taking us to our apartment he said, "Oh, you guys just missed out on a great house in a great part of town because we're getting a new deputy mission director, and he and his wife saw it and they really want it so we're giving it to them." So, this is the introduction to Moscow, coming in and—. You know, I'm sure you can appreciate, housing's important to families and my wife was pregnant when we, you know, got to Russia. So, I mean, they're struggling to try to find a place for us and it felt pretty haphazard you know, because we're coming from Egypt and very, you know, nice living conditions and environment and we're coming into—anyway, a little bit of chaos and just, it didn't seem like the mission was really that welcoming, if you will, you know, when we got to post.

*Q: And at that point, AID was not part of the embassy housing pool. AID was arranging its own housing. This also ultimately became a sore spot with the Russian government.*

BEED: Right.

*Q: So, where did they put you? Did you have to stay at a hotel or were you in a temporary apartment across the street from the embassy?*

BEED: (We were in a temporary apartment for nine months right across from the—that annex that they were building, you know, that was full of electronic bugs.

*Q: Yes, I stayed at that temporary apartment too for a while. (Laughs)*

BEED: But we were there. It was nice that it was so close to the compound and all of that. And then—but of course, my wife along the way, she saw Rosinka and people living out there and we said, "We would like to live in Rosinka." So, we kept at it and we stayed in that temporary apartment nine months until something in Rosinka opened up.And so, that was great, when we finally got in Rosinka for our last three years, as a place for our growing family – our two daughters were born then -- to enjoy living there.

*Q: Right. And for the record, Rosinka was quite far out so you had a much longer commute after the move.*

BEED: Yes. But you know, we made it fun. There was a group of us on the bus, Orion Yeandel and Rick Scott and I, and you know, we would—the bus rides home, we would, you know, do work and talk about the crazy day.

*Q: Right. And I believe I remember hearing that many of you would have breakfast at the cafeteria at the embassy and be joined by others in the mission. Connie Carrino always talked about the breakfasts with you all.*

BEED: Yes. Those were a highlight.

*Q: I assume that you enjoyed the many benefits that Moscow provided for—just on a personal basis for living there.*

BEED: Yeah. We traveled, go to St. Petersburg. We went to the Baltics. We'd travel around. We went to Sochi a few times. And we would go out and stay at the Near and Far Dacha with other friends from the mission. So, yes, we—and you know, we really soaked in the culture, the Bolshoi, the Marinsky, you know. Really enjoyed that.

*Q: Right. So, for a lover of piano, this was a good place for you.*

BEED: Absolutely.

*Q: We spoke a bit about high-level visitors, including the Vice President. Did President Clinton go to Russia while you were there? If so, were you a control officer or did you have to do various things in conjunction with that? If so, can you talk about how AID manages to support those kinds of visits.*

BEED: Yes. The one presidential visit that I was very much a part of Janet Ballantyne delayed my transfer to Southern Africa, to Namibia, because Clinton, President Clinton was coming. And this was just after Monica Lewinsky and all of that. He was arriving in

Moscow and I was appointed—I was Madeleine Albright's control officer, secretary of state. So, yeah, I saw the president frequently during that visit. I wasn't super, you know, involved in high-level meetings there, obviously, but as Secretary Albright's control officer I was at a lot of the events, and I was at his speech at MGIMO (Moscow State Institute of International Relations) that he gave and had a lot of interaction with the White House staff and Secret Service and all of that there. But I remember how tired he looked at the time, President Clinton.

*Q; Looking back at the experiences you had during your four years in Russia, a lot of it was really wonderful training for a career because you got exposed to many things that not all AID missions get to experience.*

BEED: Yes, that's right. And I think that's probably been the distinctive aspect of most of my assignments. There are some outliers but a lot of my work with USAID and the things that I really enjoyed doing were things which had a foreign policy implication and an attachment to a strategic relationship that was bigger than the development program but that the development program played a, you know, a very important role, I think, in furthering that relationship.

*Q: Given what you've just said, could you summarize how you think the AID program while you were there contributed to those objectives in the U.S.?*

BEED: Yes. I think in Russia, of course, overall, it's probably a lot of missed opportunities. I don't know that things could have been done fundamentally differently but I think maybe if different parts of U.S. assistance and our overall program and the level of our investment, if we had emphasized different things, we may have seen something a little different. For instance, I think about the work on land privatization and the voucher program, sort of this real attention to what do you do with a military in a country that's faced a huge issue, so the officer resettlement program. The programs that George Deikin had, I think those were—those are enormously important aspects that need to be tended to. And when they're not, say Iraq, you know, you have a real issue. You've suddenly thrown 50,000, you know, Bath military officers out into the street and you're not thinking about what comes next. So, I think there's that. There's obviously, you know, the debate I remember a lot of us having on the ground in Russia at the time, you know, what should we invest more in, that Glasnost and democracy or restructuring and you know, Perestroika and economic development. And I was clear—at least back then, I always thought we ought to be centered on people-to-people, economic development, how we can make people's lives better, as opposed to democracy and governance. But I would, many years later, really change my views on that and I think that's, I think over time, you know, it's debatable whether or not if that had been the sole function of what we worked on, democracy and human rights, independent media, we did a lot of great work in all those areas that got, you know, unfortunately tossed out the window later on. But I think when USAID is focused on those types of structural changes, and again, I don't think you can ignore the people-to-people. I think that can have, you know, an enormous benefit on the strategic relationship. I felt this very strongly, those two aspects of it, people-to-people and democracy and governance when I was working in Mexico

years later. It's like, wow, you know, this is really what we should be doing, what we should be working on.

*Q: Yes, although I think many have felt that the support for small business development was very much in line with the democracy and governance work, especially in developing a middle-class that might have great influence on policy.*

*One more question: can you talk about the Russian staff in the mission? Any observations about how USAID made use of them and how important they were to the program?*

BEED: Yes, I think absolutely, they were a very, very talented group of people, ones I was working with and others throughout the mission. And I think in certain cases I remember the promotion of one in the capital markets division, which I thought was, you know, a great move. I think most of the offices, if I remember correctly, FSNs were really incorporated. You know, in Russia, of course, we had a real tension there with the—you know, you didn't have anywhere near the type of engagement by the Russian security services back then, or at least that was how it appeared on the surface. I mean, they were still active but there was a little bit of tension there in terms of how State and the rest of the embassy treated and worked with FSNs. I think that was particularly a bit of a constraint probably in Russia and you know, going a little bit further but as it is in a lot of countries sometimes.

*Q: Okay. Other thoughts about your four years in Russia? In retrospect, anything you would do differently? Either at a macro level or even just within the things you had control over?*

BEED: Well, you know, I do—I mean, I think a little bit inward when I think about Russia and how I approached it. And it's—I guess it's the one thing I would always tell people who were relatively new in their career, a young professional—for instance, I used to get asked this question when I was a mission director, you know, what advice do you have (laughs) for people. And the big one for me, if I could do it again, is just having more confidence in yourself. I mean, I remember just not really feeling very sure, very confident of a lot of things. And I think that hampered my effectiveness, no question, early on until I really got my footing and had a different portfolio. So, that really started to change in Russia but early on, that sort of, oh, I felt like just a bit of a bobbing cork in the sea here. So, I think, I guess that would be the one major thing that I would do differently, is I'd approach something like that from, you know, whether it's fighting imposter syndrome or a lack of confidence, is to, you know, really be more confident in yourself. And I know that's hard to, like, snap your fingers and have happen. But that's the one piece of advice I might give.

*Q: Yes. And you were put into a position with a lot of responsibility very early on in your career. You obviously did very well at it because you (laugh) were spotted by people as being very capable during that period.*

*So, you've been in Russia for four years. You're looking for a new assignment. You ended up going to a place which has to be 180 degrees from where you were in Russia and I'm how this came about? Were you bidding on things to be as different as they could be? How did you approach your next assignment?*

BEED: It's interesting because it may have been my one traditional bidding process that I had, you know, where everything else was a little bit different.

But this one was, okay, I've done my four years in Russia and you know, one year prior you're submitting a list of where you want to go, and in my mind, I really wanted to go to Latin America. And I began sort of reaching out to different missions there and looking at what was coming available. And I was also really thinking about moving out of private enterprise and I wanted to be a program officer. So, I was looking at program officer jobs in Latin America primarily and I think you had to submit five bids and my top four were, I think, El Salvador, Guatemala, I don't remember them all, but El Salvador was my top choice. And then, but I think I had to put one other bureau on or something else.

*Q: Yes, I'm sure there was a requirement to do that, yes. (Laughs)*

BEED: I listed Namibia number five, okay. And you know, thinking well, Salvador, I've been talking to the deputy mission director there and she says, you know, it's looking good and everything. And then, all of a sudden, Carole Palma is named the mission director in Namibia and she dug her teeth to recruit a program officer. I guess she started calling different people and she said, "We've got to get John in as the program officer in Namibia." And I was like, oh my gosh, I'm asking, you know, what should I do? Like, I thought I was going to LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean) and all of a sudden I'm going to Namibia, you know. What's going on, you know. The Africa bureau went "Bam!, you're going to Windhoek."You could have been the Assistant Administrator at the time even, and—

*Q: (Laughs) I think I do recall this*

BEED: John Winfield was the AMS (Administrative Management Staff) and anyway, there was like, no contest in the—whatever the assignment process. Africa and Carol got—and I'm so glad. Namibia was great. And talk about an opportunity to sort of, you know, when the director's gone, be the mission director, get a lot of interaction with the ambassador and it's just a wonderful place to live, and a very interesting country. You know, it sounds like it's small and not strategically important on the continent, but the country is making this profound transition from apartheid to independence and all that. You know, that was—proved to be very interesting to me and it was just a—it was great. So, anyway, that was my one sort of traditional bidding process.

*Q: And, the process did you well.*

**USAID/Namibia, Program Officer, 1998 - 2001**

*Q: (Laughs) So, maybe you could tell us about the Namibia program?*

BEED: Yes. Again, Carole and I came in at basically the—well, she came a little bit—no, she came in six months before I did and—

*Q: And that was her first mission director job, I believe. She had been the deputy—*

BEED: Yes. She was the deputy mission director in Zimbabwe.

*Q: Yes, of course.*

BEED: You know how much USAID runs on corridor gossip, okay, and I remember just different people saying, "Carole is going to be a tough task master" But Janet Ballantyne though relayed to me from the Zimbabwe director Rosemary Depp whom she knew well that "Well, you know, Carole's tough but I'm sure you'll do well." And she was right. I loved Carole's style and working with her. So, anyway, we were a great team I thought, you know. It was a good balance.

*Q: Yes. And as you said, there were very strong relationships with the embassy. And the ambassador when you were there was—?*

BEED: It started with George Ward and then it was Jeff Bader.

*Q: And good relationships in both cases?*

BEED: Very good, very good. And it was—primarily we had Jeff Bader but George Ward for the year I was—one year I was there. You know, he would come over to the AID building. We were in our own separate building, in a commercial building. Yeah, just very collaborative and you know, the overall U.S. mission was not that large to begin with. We had five direct hires at USAID including a great executive officer, Mike de la Rosa. We had a very convivial team, you know. The FSNs, because they were new, you know, they weren't like in some of the other previous missions or you know, later on, they were new to USAID but they were good. And it was a great group and it was a really interesting program, again, very much focused on—our strategy was how do we help historically disadvantaged Namibians in the newly-independent country. And then, when I got there, we really started to try to build up what we were doing in the private sector with entrepreneurs, small businesses.

And the other big thing that happened was HIV-AIDS. That was just starting to hit. And it really changed after Ambassador Holbrooke came with Senator Feinstein and this was his first trip to Africa. He was UN ambassador, and he was making, I think, a seven-country Africa trip and Namibia was his first stop. And Carole asked me to, as part of the agenda, to put together an HIV- AIDS-related visit for him. So, we set up this thing where he would talk to HIV positive support group people and then come out and address the media. And we set it up and I remember Ambassador Holbrooke walking in there and Jeff Bader as the ambassador to Namibia at the time and he's shaking his head, he goes, "Jeff, you know, this isn't my thing. What is this issue, HIV-AIDS, all about here?." At

the time it was not really a big point of focus. Well, Holbrooke was only supposed to spend about ten, fifteen minutes with the group. He spent a half an hour with this group. And there was a Namibian army major who was part of the group and Ambassador Holbrooke asked him very pointedly, "Is the Namibian government doing enough on this?" And he said, "No." And Holbrooke came out of that meeting and he was fired up. He was like, this is—he addressed the media and he said, "This is—we can't have this. And much more has got to be done." And he made this a focal point of that whole trip. And then, when he got back to the U.S., but back to New York, that's when he declared HIV/AIDS a national security issue. So, Carole and I felt like we had a part in that.

*Q: Yes, absolutely. That's great. And this was still during the Clinton Administration and before PEPFAR (United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief). Rights?*

BEED: We started a program there, so I got involved in the design of that very first HIV-AIDS program in Namibia. We had some difficult negotiations with the minister of health once we had our design and our concept. The minister was very dismissive. She said, "You know, you should just work on palliative stuff. You know, this is—don't bother me with this program. Well, we finally ended up gaining her trust with the program to the point that when U.S. companies would come to Namibia, pharma companies and others, you know, we would help them sort of think about how you work with the Health Ministry because she would tell them, "Go talk to USAID," when they would see her. So, anyway, we ended up starting the very first HIV/AIDS prevention program there, which was USAID solely, and then became PEPFAR, obviously.

*Q: That's very interesting.*

*You mentioned that Namibia was a newly independent country, and you were doing some work on supporting the democratic transition as well? I vaguely recall there was some legislative work at some point in time.*

BEED: Yep. Good memory. Yes, we worked with the legislature. We had a—our biggest program by far was education and we had a large cooperative program with the Peace Corps, as a matter of fact. They had a very large contingent of volunteers and we had this large basic education support program, did curriculum development, teacher training, all sorts of stuff. It became a bit of an issue because the Peace Corps volunteers actually were driving USAID four-wheel drive project cars (audio drops; unintelligible) (Peasley laugh). You might imagine what kinds of things could go wrong with that.

But at any rate, the education program was—we had a fantastic relationship with the ministry. It was having a lot of impact. We had a very interesting environmental program, the community-based natural resources management program. It was a cooperative program with the World Wildlife Fund and they were doing tremendous stuff. So, it was not a large program and budget. Before HIV-AIDS started I think it was like a $10 million annual budget.

But we were really doing some interesting stuff and having an impact.

*Q: Yes, I think there's been a long history of that in Namibia.*

*So, you stayed three years, and it sounded like it was a perhaps somewhat accidental assignment but one that turned out very fortuitous.*

BEED: Yes, absolutely.

*Q: So, when you were getting ready to leave and thinking about what you were doing next, you probably started again thinking about Latin America.*

**AID/Washington, Latin America and Caribbean Bureau, Economic Growth Team Leader, 2001 - 2003**

BEED: I did but the bigger thing on our minds at that time was okay, we had been overseas close to ten years, and we wanted to come back to the U.S. That was the main focus. So, I petitioned to come back early. My parents were getting older and just—we thought it was time to come back to the U.S. for a little bit. But yes, with Latin America on my mind I bid on a job in the bureau, and it was the Regional Sustainable Development Office. That was, you know, the technical office inside the LAC bureau. And I came—I was assigned as the economic growth team leader for Latin America.

We thought we would be back for four years or five but I really did not like that assignment. Working in Washington is the main thing. I just did not enjoy it all. It was so different from all my experience in AID up to that point. And it was difficult too because we were getting a new—a new administration came in, we were getting a new AA (Assistant Administrator), there was a lot of change. The bureau wanted to—I take that back. Actually, even before the new AA and administration—do you remember when Andrew Natsios wanted to make Washington offices and bureaus much smaller and have fewer staff, get the money out to the—

*Q: Oh, that's right, reducing technical staff in the regional bureaus and centralizing in central bureaus. It's very cyclical.*

BEED: So, I'm going into this office that had previously a sixty, $70 million plus annual budget, lots of things going on, and then all of a sudden, it's been downsized. We've got to shrink the staff. We had a lot of USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) advisors in my—on my team and in the—I think even in the office overall, who were really technical experts and playing a big role in what we were doing, so the other sort of phenomenon going on is, oh, we've got to get this more back into the hands of direct hires and change the staffing emphasis and all of that. So, having to deal with, okay, how do we move the money away from all these Washington technical managers and also the thinking that we should not have so many of these USDA advisors on the payroll anymore. So, that's like, I came in, this was a team of fifteen, and I think we had kind of like marching orders from the bureau, like, can you cut that in half, and you know, move stuff out to the missions. So, that was my focus there, which was not fun.

*Q: So, it was a disassembly effort, rather than a growth effort?*

*I recall that the counselor then, Janet Ballantyne – your former mission director, was reviewing all the regional projects in the agency. I'm just wondering if you could describe what it was like to have Janet looking critically at all these regional projects.*

BEED: Yes, and she had a real bias, rightly so I think, on the field. I remember trying to get one regional program, regional trade capacity development going and we ultimately started the first relationship with USTR (United States Trade Representative). I got that going. And—but we had—anyway, I'm jumping around but this trade capacity development program that we wanted to start and get support for (laughs) the mission directors in LAC did not love it. And I remember traveling out to the missions, trying to get some support, you know, just a few million bucks to get this thing going and they were not having it. And then, you have just the general impulse from Washington to let's get it out to the field, which is an overarching approach that I agree with.

*Q: So, did this result in more regional activities being managed out in the field or did it result in fewer regional activities? Do you recall?*

BEED: You know, certainly our staff shrunk, you know, there just wasn't—there were fewer things to manage or keep track of in my office. Some of the other offices, excuse me, teams in our technical office they also downsized. So, that's the climate inside. Not a particularly good one. I'm trying to think, at the end of the day (laughs), yeah, certainly the volume of funding overall was more for the field. But you know, the other phenomenon which, of course, I think is even—can be even more problematic is that the central or pillar bureaus have large pots of funding. At least the regional technical programs are grounded in what's really happening and going on and what the priorities are in a region and certainly foreign policy as it pertains to that region. So, I found much more troubling the central and pillar level of investments and kind of working with those than I did sort of what the regional bureaus were doing, and/or managing.

*Q: From the field?*

BEED: In the field and then my perch in Washington as—actually, my—I remember thinking, this is just a modest $40 million total portfolio working in democracy and governance, economic growth, health, across twenty-five plus countries in the Western Hemisphere. This is not a big investment. This is not some enormous elephant that needs to be downsized. So, I thought it was really kind of pointless. But you know, of course, the bureaus wanted to be responsive to this mandate from the Administrator, so they wanted to show hey, this is how we cut. So, I think we were just cutting off little stuff cosmetically. That's what I think.

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*Q: Today is September 26, 2023, and this is interview number three with John Beed.*

*When we finished up last time you were in your position in the Latin American bureau, the chief of the regional economic growth section. Any final thoughts about that assignment and then the process by which you got your next assignment to return overseas, however you would like to start.*

BEED: You know, I guess I had mentioned that, you know, really coming back to Washington was something that we wanted, having been overseas for about ten years and wanting to come back home and see what that was about and be close to parents. It turned out to be a very chaotic time in Washington. It—in the less than two years that we were in Washington, which we thought was going to be much longer but the two years that we were there we had 9/11, we had the anthrax scare and incidents, and then we had the sniper in the Washington, DC area. So, there was a lot going on in those two years and then, of course, all the sort of tumult in terms of remaking some of how the Washington programs and bureaus were organized, which really occupied a lot of my time.

I guess the one thing that I did enjoy was starting a new relationship with the United States Trade Representative's office, USTR. I think trade capacity building was really starting to be an area, a niche for USAID where we had capacity capability and I think a lot to bring to the mix. And that really led to establishing relationships with the USTR people. In my case in Latin America, it was with two different parts of the executive office. It was with—they had sort of a general trade capacity building group and then they had the group overseeing the free trade area of the Americas, which really didn't come to fruition, and then the team that oversaw the U.S. Central America Free Trade Agreement, CAFTA. And I found that to be a, well, first, an important relationship to start building in Washington. I think it helped USAID in Latin America advocate for funding in certain cases to do things that we thought were important, either in agriculture, rural development or in economic development, trade development more broadly. So, I enjoyed that aspect, trying to build a new relationship and trying to see where the connections were and how we could mutually help each other. And you know, that was in large part why I joined the Foreign Service. It was to really try to make connections between people, organizations, agencies, different ways of thinking and you know, to try to come together in a partnership. It's the aspect of my work I most enjoyed and really is what led to the job in the first place.

*Q; Just a quick question on the trade front. I seem to remember that there was a lot of congressional interest in that. Was Jim Kolbe, who was on the House Appropriations Committee, was he one of the prime advocates for USAID doing more on the trade front? If so, did you have much involvement with the Hill on these issues as well as with the trade representative's office?*

BEED: Yes, in my job there in the Latin America bureau we did have some involvement with the Hill. I would not classify it as extensive. I think a lot of sort of the outreach we were doing and advocacy involved working with other parts of State Department, INL (Bureau of Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs), for instance, really kind of looking

at them as a potential force multiplier and funder of things that we wanted to support in South America in particular that were, you know, could be related to alternative livelihoods and you know, supporting that interest in developing more licit ways of income generation and economic growth in cocoa producing countries. So, we had a lot of interaction with USTR and State Department and not so much, if I recall, at least me directly or my team with the Hill though it was, as you said, really a point of interest. I would work closely with Congressman Kolbe's office in my next assignment in Mexico, where he had an interest.

*Q: Right. I recall, President Bush, because of his Texas experience, spoke early on about his strong interest in Latin America. There was a lot of enthusiasm in AID that Latin America was going to make a strong comeback. As you were there for that transition, was there enthusiasm in the Bureau about the reemergence of LAC?*

BEED: Yes. I mean, there was a lot of hope and enthusiasm that that would come about but unfortunately September 11 intervened, and I can remember the large global mission directors' conference that USAID held, and I participated from the bureau in one of the meetings and then came for one of plenary sessions, and there was an address by Jim Jeffries, who at the time was the national security advisor. I remember he got a question from the floor, a couple on Latin America, kind of along the lines, you know, are we missing the boat here? And Ambassador Jeffries at that time, said, "Well, we just have a lot of other more pressing priorities." And I guess that, you know, not just for that time period it felt like it's been a, you know, an overlooked part of the world. Our—you know, the part of the world in which the United States resides and—but particularly, as you stated, during that Bush Administration there was a lot of enthusiasm, and that might change, but it just didn't materialize.

*Q: Okay. The rest of the world intervened.*

*You mentioned that you went off to Mexico. Was this at your initiative, or did the bureau encourage you to go there given the importance of the program?*

**USAID/Mexico, Supervisory Program Officer/Deputy Mission Director, 2003 - 2006**

BEED: Yes, so, to be honest with you, it was about a year and a half into it, all of a sudden an opening in Mexico developed for a program officer, which at that time Mexico didn't have a formal deputy and they were really kind of looking for someone to, you know, be acting mission director when the MD was gone. At that time, it was Paul White. We did not have a large mission there nor a really large program, but the administration did see this relationship as, you know, very important. So, I thought—anyway, when they proposed, they said, "Hey, we're looking for a program officer for Mexico," (laughs), I basically went home and I asked my wife, Christine, I said, "What do you think?" She had the same reaction I did (laughs), let's do it! And you know, what was going through my mind is, I can't wait to get out of DC. Not so much with what was going on, you know, all the sort of 9/11 and all that and coming out of that but just the work. I really wanted to get back out into the field and get back into a mission again. And my wife had

the same kind of thing, she wanted to go overseas. So, that was very fortuitous that that happened.

*Q: Good. So, in 2003, presumably in the summer, you head off to Mexico?*

BEED: Well, it was actually—so, I was told in the summer of 2002 that it was happening. I didn't have Spanish yet. I wasn't a Spanish speaker. So, they allowed me to go—I had to get a 3/3 in Foreign Service language proficiency to go out there. So, I got three or four months of one-on-one language during the fall and then January, the very beginning of January of 2003 we transferred out there, yeah.

*Q: Okay. And did—do you have children at this time? Were they school-age kids and so—*

BEED: My two daughters were in elementary school and my son had just been born, you know, a 9/11 baby. (Both laugh) Yeah, he was not even a year old when we went.

*Q: Okay. So, you mentioned that it wasn't a large mission. Was Paul White still the mission director when you got there?*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: And what were the main elements of the program at that time? I know it's changed over time.*

BEED: So, there were—the largest portion of the program was the democracy and governance portfolio. And we had a very active, very engaged, very plugged in and very, as it turned out, extremely successful democracy and governance portfolio, working in the rule of law, a lot in the area of transparency and good governance. That was, in fact, really the top priority of Vicente Fox, who had been recently elected president of Mexico. And as luck would have it, a member of Fox's, one of his senior advisors, was an advisor to Fox when he was governor of Guanajuato, and they had worked closely with USAID on an ICMA (International City Management Association) program, a local governance program. And they had such a good experience with that when Fox got elected president he and his advisors said, "Let's get those USAID guys back in here and see if they can help us with some of our agenda." And when I say it was a priority, it was really kind of the centerpiece of what the Fox Administration was able to accomplish during his six years as president. Mexico developed an eGovernment set of policies which the UN called one of the best in the world. They passed a Civil Service reform, real reform with pay levels and laws on patronage and other things. They put all the government accounts online and accessible to the public. And then, they began a very large nation-wide and state-by-state effort, to move from the written inquisitorial justice system to oral trials. In every one of those reforms USAID played a supporting role to the Fox Administration in getting those reforms passed and implemented. So, democracy and governance were the largest parts of our portfolio.

We did have work in the environmental sector, a lot of which—a lot of the funding came out of the big fire situation where there were large wildfires in Mexico, and you were getting bad air quality across the United States in key cities. And that led to congressional funding and as a result of that funding USAID was able to get a lot of environmental programs started. A lot more work with environmental NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), helping them grow and expand and do the work and that really accomplished a lot. So, not just direct sort of forestry-related stuff but a variety of things in—

*Q: Did some of the environmental work relate to NAFTA and ensuring adequate environmental standards on production in Mexico. I believe some U.S. manufacturers were raising this potential issue. Was AID involved with that?*

BEED: Not so much in terms of a direct tie there, really. NAFTA was really, by that time, healthy and was really recognized as a highly successful agreement. Really what it served to do was bring the United States and Mexico much closer together.

And then, we had a small but effective microenterprise finance program which we had started relatively recently. So, environment (including work in clean energy), democracy and governance, a little bit of microfinance. We also had a public health program and (laughs) there was a very—and this was kind of one of my first tasks when I got there that Paul asked me to lead and that was to get this congressional earmark on tuberculosis control moving. It had not gone anywhere. I think it was $15 million or $20 million, I'm forgetting the exact number. But the Mexican government was objecting to the program. The country had exceptionally capable public health leaders and professionals and systems and for whatever reason the tuberculosis program hadn't moved at all. The earmark, they said, "No, that's great. Your Congress has appropriated money. But we don't really need the money." And so, I started engaging with the vice minister of health on this and—as well as sort of the technical leaders that worked on TB control in the government and we were finally able to get the program going after a lot of negotiation and you know, building a partnership and where, you know, really trying to find out where we could add value.

*Q: Since they thought they had the program in good stead, what did they finally decide the U.S. could provide value in?*

BEED: Well, if I'm remembering clearly, some of it had to do with better surveillance. They were also interested in some ways that we could fortify and provide additional professional development to some of their key technical people. And here we did some programming in conjunction with the—with PAHO, Pan American Health Organization, there. But you know, it was not easy negotiation as the Mexicans were always rightly very focused on what's the return on investment, what's the cost of the program. They were quite clear that they did not want a bunch of U.S. contractors coming, charging high rates. In fact, they rejected a very large Global Fund set of programs, both in TB and in HIV AIDS. Ultimately, we found agreement to work in surveillance monitoring, and professional development support for technical leaders.

*Q: Were you working with CDC (Centers for Disease Control) as a part of this package?*

BEED: No, not that I remember so much in Mexico.

*Q: Okay, I assumed they would have been but okay. (Laughs) All very interesting.*

*On the democracy and governance work, do you remember who the implementing partners were? It sounds like they were doing some really very important work with the Mexicans.*

BEED: Yes. We had a range of different partners including contractors like Casals and MSI, and grantees like the IRI (International Republican Institute) and NDI (National Democratic Institute) and they were doing good work and they were sort of logically split and working on different parts. I think —IFES (International Foundation for Electoral Systems) was also there. But you know, the Mexican electoral system and their institution, IFE (Institute for Federal Elections) was the name, was very, very well developed and very effective. The Mexican electoral processes in general were generally regarded, you know, really kind of a standard in the Americas. So, in other LAC countries I remember, there was always an interest in trying to secure IFE as an impartial, independent elections observer.

*Q: There was an election in 2006 in Mexico, is that correct?*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: And it was a very controversial election. Were you there for the election and was AID very much involved in the lead up to the election?*

BEED: We were involved in supporting a range of Mexican democratic institutions but not engaged in the political process.

*Q: Right. But the ruling party was elected out of office, is that correct?*

BEED: Yes, it was—actually, it was the candidate from Vicente Fox's party that won, PAN (National Action Party), but it was contested for a long time in the streets by — And so, there were large sit-ins in the streets and everything, but Felipe Calderón was elected and then became president. He was in Fox's party, the PAN, which had overturned sixty-plus years of one-party rule in the previous election.

*Q: Since democracy and governance was a big part of the portfolio, you all must have been working very closely with the embassy. How were relationships? How did you all coordinate across multiple parts of the embassy?*

BEED: Very, very closely. And yes, with multiple parts of the embassy. We really had a great country team in place. And the ambassador, Tony Garza, was very supportive of

what we were doing, and very interested in what we were doing. So, we, you know, it was easy for USAID to sort of approach him and to work with him. And we had a fantastic DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission), John Dickson. He was an exceptional leader and very adept at, I think, strengthening and helping us sort of work very hand in glove with the political section and other agencies in Mexico, of which we probably had close to forty. You know, we had even the U.S. Marshal Service there, you know, agencies you don't normally see in a country and very large, obviously, contingents of DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration), FBI, and Homeland Security, all of that. And John was just so good at coordinating all these different parts of the Embassy. I also worked very closely and very directly with the front office of the State WHA (Western Hemisphere Affairs) bureau. Now, historically WHA and LAC have always kind of worked closely together in Latin America, USAID and State. And I remember when I first joined AID their desk officers were co-located, you know, they were in the same office, which I thought always made a lot of sense. So, anyway, it was a lot of fun and the people were great to work with in the embassy.

*Q: It's very funny because I noted down a question to myself that in a program like Mexico, which is very much a foreign policy-based program, I wrote down to ask if you were you getting direction, leadership from the State Department or from AID-Washington?*

BEED: Yes. To be honest, and this was always my frame of mind when I was overseas, that really the most important person that I always tried to stay sort of, you know, coordinated with is the ambassador. And so, that, yes, we got much more interest from State, I don't know, we just had a lot more interaction and joint work with the State Department, than USAID. And because—rightly so, all that democracy and governance work, you know—

*Q: Right; the centerpiece of what you were doing was in fact what they were most interested in. Did you ever get crosswise with your AID-Washington colleagues, just out of curiosity, or did you have to carefully manage any issues with them?*

BEED: No because I think they also took that sort of same approach.

I'll just tell you a very quick vignette, I won't diverge too far. But while I was in Mexico AID commissioned someone to write the history of USAID in Mexico. (Laughs) And it was—I'm trying to remember his name. He was one of the former AID reps or mission directors in Mexico and I'll have to think back but he told us some fascinating stories and he told us when he first came to Mexico, AID-Mexico, John Negroponte was the ambassador and Negroponte had been in Washington as the assistant secretary maybe before he came out as ambassador. And he had made it clear to the AID rep going out to the country, they arrived at the same time, that you know, AID's done a great job in Mexico, but we want a very different relationship in Mexico, I want to close the AID program. So, you can imagine the AID director coming to Mexico and at the same time the ambassador, the ambassador wants the program closed. So, he said, "Give me a plan for how you're going to do this," and gosh, what was his name? I'll just call him the

director. The director said—gave him a plan in typical AID fashion, in five years this is how he's going to phase out the program. The ambassador said, "No, no, no. It's got to be much—." So, they went back and forth and finally this had to go up to Washington and the director and Ambassador Negroponte went up there and in front of the assistant secretary, Bernie Aronson, and make the case for why AID should stay open and why it should close, and AID won the day so they had to go back. Anyway, yeah, I don't know why I got off on that tangent.

*Q: No, that's an important fact. I vaguely recall hearing about that as well because the program had gone up and down through the years.*

BEED: I think Art Danart was the AID rep.

*Q: Ah, that sounds right.*

*Were you all involved at all in anti-narcotics work, or perhaps it was not relevant during the period you were there?*

BEED: No, not really. As I mentioned, DEA had about seventy-five DEA agents, U.S. agents in the country and INL had a large program, maybe $50 million annually. It was about the same size as our OYB. We were about fifty, $60 million in Mexico maybe. And so, all that sort of direct counternarcotics-related work was really INL and DEA and the other Homeland Security—all the law enforcement agencies, yeah. However, we did coordinate together with INL on our rule-of-law related programs, which grew substantially after the Merida initiative.

*Q; Okay. What was the security situation like in Mexico during that period? Were you able to travel relatively freely throughout the country? Was much of the program outside of the capital and if so, were you able to travel with relative ease?*

BEED: Yes, we were outside in a lot of different places, for instance, in the environment a lot was in the Yucatan. We also had clean energy work in different parts of the country. Democracy and governance, of course the rule of law work. The bulk of that was being one at the state-levels and a lot with border states so we had a lot of state-level programs. We also had a municipal finance program that worked with different states —so we were all over the country and we—it was easy to get around the country and easy to travel. You know, just once example, when I was in Mexico you could drive, take your family and vacation in Acapulco and take that road, no problem. After my tenure there, traveling became off-limits. You couldn't drive there, and you couldn't go at all to some of these spots. There were very few places, I don't recall any that were wholly off-limits to U.S. personnel. That has obviously changed substantially since.

*Q: Even in a place like Chiapas, was it open?*

BEED: Yes, Chiapas, you know, we would go and we had some programs and yes. I think we had to notify, if I remember, you know, we would just let the RSO (Regional Security Officer) know we were going. But I don't think there were any places totally off-limits.

*Q: Right. So, it shows how quickly things deteriorated. Interesting.*

*I believe that I had heard Paul White or perhaps others talk about something else that you all were involved with – consulting with Mexico as it was developing its own assistance programs. Were you involved with that at all?*

BEED: Yes. That's interesting. Of course, Paul had just come from Tokyo where he, you know, really blazed the trail on U.S.-Japan cooperation on development. I don't remember really working with their aid agency or even having discussions on that until much later when I was in Central America – when we developed some very interesting trilateral cooperation. But you know, that reminds me of another big part of the portfolio and was—we had something called the Training Internships, Exchanges and Scholarships Program, the TIES Program. And that was a $50 million university partnerships program that Paul designed and developed which had multiple universities in the United States and multiple higher ed institutions in Mexico working together on all sorts of different programs, health, clean energy, democracy and governance, you know, all the parts of our program. It was a very highly visible partnership program and I think very successful in terms of leveraging other funding and getting people engaged. I thought it was a great program. But I just remembered that.

*Q: Yes. That's important to record.*

*Were there other donors in Mexico or was the U.S. the only bilateral? I assume the multilaterals were there, the World Bank and the UN, but were there any other bilateral donors?*

BEED: The multilaterals were big. I don't really recall—let me think. Oh, of course, Japan and Canada were there.

*Q: Okay, Other things about Mexico? You mentioned that it was a relatively small mission, as was Namibia. Any thoughts about how AID operates when it has a very small staff and a small footprint in a country? Because it's quite different from Egypt.*

BEED: It's very different. And very different dynamics. You know, we had a—it was—I'm trying to think how many U.S. direct hires we had, maybe six, six or seven tops. But mainly USPSCs, American off-shore USPSCs who were quite good. And in contrast, you know, the FSNs were not long-tenure, long-serving types of FSNs that you see in other missions. So, I think we were about half and half, I'd say, between U.S.—between the USPSCs, off-shore and local, and the direct hires and then maybe it was about thirty staff, thirty-five. And it was like, I don't know, seventeen on each side, something like that.

But—so it was a very different type of staffing arrangement there and dynamic. And of course, we were working—our offices were in the embassy, which in the case of Mexico really was—facilitated everything and it was—it really worked out well being there in our own, you know, part of the embassy.

*Q; Yes. So, your program was a very focused one and probably in some sense different than what it might have been in earlier days?*

BEED: Yes. You know, for instance, in some of the eras that I'm familiar with just in terms of the history that was written about the mission but a lot of the work of AID-Mexico in the early days, I think, was really trying to get, you know, sort of people-to-people connections established and I think they did a lot of work through small grants. And I think that was, you know, just the nature of the U.S.-Mexican relationship, which, you know, there was a very good book on the relationship called *Distant Neighbors*. But as important and as crucial as this relationship is to so many things and notwithstanding the deep connections cross-border in so many aspects of life and of course, you know, our water, our environments and everything are intertwined, there's this tension, I think, in terms of honestly how the U.S. and Mexico have related to each other over the years. While I was there, we really benefitted, I think, for a Fox Administration that had seen some of the benefits of what U.S. cooperation had done at the local level and that sort of opened the door to strategic level cooperation on democracy and governance, supporting some of his, you know, biggest priorities and really leading to real change in Mexico. But I think, you know, some of the other stuff is hard to measure but super important, you know, these ties and connections between U.S. universities and Mexican universities, people-to-people exchanges, people that had studied in the U.S. and vice versa, the cross-border collaboration on the environment. It's just—I think it speaks to, you know, USAID really needing to sort of judge, you know, what's going to work in a particular environment, and you know, what is going to have the greatest chance of success. And I think in most cases, nearly all cases it's, you know, locally owned, locally driven kinds of things. But I think it's just important to be attuned to what those needs and opportunities are and then use the expertise in the mission to really empower the ideas and make them happen. That's kind of a meandering statement there but to me it was—my nearly four years there were, I still say, the best time in my life. Every day felt like a holiday to me – I didn't need the weekend as I enjoyed the work so much. It was important. I didn't have to remind myself why I was doing something. You instinctively knew how important the U.S.-Mexican relationship is. The people, the connections, the culture, it was a dream assignment.

*Q: I should not ask any more questions about Mexico because you have provided the perfect end to the discussion of your time in USAID-Mexico. And obviously, you did a good job because you went off then to become a mission director in Paraguay in 2006. Had the bureau encouraged you to bid on the position?*

BEED: Well, it was really two-fold, and I had a couple of things in my mind, right or wrong. (Laughs) I felt like after my role in Mexico and I really worked primarily with Paul White but then with Ed Kadunc, who came in to replace Paul. And both of them,

actually, gave me a lot of latitude, you know, to work directly with the ambassador if I needed to and with Washington and gave me a lot of trust and room to explore. And then, of course, when they were gone, I was—that was, I think, the first place that I served as acting mission director—is that right? No, well, I guess in Namibia I did too. So, in my head I said, I've effectively been a de facto deputy mission director here, I think I'd like to be a mission director next. I don't need to be a deputy mission director. So, that was in my mind. As a matter of fact, right before left Fred Schieck, who was the deputy administrator of USAID, he came to Mexico on a visit and sort of in my closing time with him—I was the acting director at the time and I said, "You know, we really should have a formal deputy mission director job in Mexico. The program's gotten to the point where I think it would merit that." So, Mexico ended up with a new SMG (Senior Management Group) position after that, a deputy mission director job. So, anyway, in my head a mission director role is what I wanted to have next. Now, of course, I was still junior. I was a—well, not junior but I was not in the Senior Foreign Service. I had only just been promoted to FS-1.

*Q: FS-1? Okay.*

BEED: And thanks to Paul White's evaluation of me I was—actually, I was ranked number one in my class. (Peasley laughs) This is—you know, it's—I tell the story when I talk about mentors. Mentors can be so helpful to you but you know, one of my main mentors, you know, telling me don't go to Mexico, it's a dead end for your career, AID doesn't care about it, and it ended up being the one place where I learned a lot, I had, of course, the best assignment of my career, and I was promoted to FS-1, ranked number one because of Paul White's write-up of my work.

*Q: Well, this should be a lesson learned for all young people. Don't always listen to the guidance you get. (Laughs) Follow your instincts.*

*Did you interview in Washington for SMG level positions with the DAAs in the various regional bureaus? Did you have to do that?*

BEED: So, this was my first experience at that, bidding on SMG positions. And I—it was at the time when really it was primarily the AA's decision. I think that's really—somehow you had to, if you wanted to be a mission director ,you had to convince the AA. So, I had a pretty good relationship with the AA at the time for Latin America and I said, "Well, I see these two mission director jobs are coming open in Brazil and Paraguay. I would very much like to go to one of them." And so, I bid on those two —it was basically talking to the AA about that.

*Q: For the record, the AA had to get the approval of the rest of the agency (laughs).*

BEED: Yes, that's correct.

*Q: Just so people don't think there was that much freewheeling.*

BEED: No, no. Absolutely not.

**USAID/Paraguay, Mission Director, 2006 - 2009**

*Q: So, you go off to Paraguay then in the summer of 2006?*

BEED: So, the winter of 2006 in Paraguay, right. (Laughs)

*Q: Right. I know that the Paraguay program has been in place for many years, but it has also ebbed and flowed over the years. Was it in ebb or flow form when you were there?*

BEED: It was in flow form. And what was going on at the time—the OYB was very small. It was maybe $10 million a year in Paraguay. And—but what had just happened, well, not just happened, but the MCC (Millennium Challenge Corporation) was now a part of the landscape and Paraguay had been awarded the first MCC Threshold Program in Latin America. USAID was responsible for managing MCC Threshold Programs at the time. So, we had $35 million for two years for the first Threshold Program and that was very high-profile, you can imagine, in a country the size of Paraguay with everything that's going on and directed at anti corruption, primarily.

*Q: So corruption was the indicator that it was unable to pass to get a MCC compact. And you had a threshold program of $35 million – very significant effort. What all were you doing?*

BEED: So, there were really two sides to it. One was a DG side and the other was an economic formalization side. And there were ten components. There was one working with Congress. There was one working with—to set up inspectors general at different ministries. There were several rule of law related components, working with the Fiscalia, the attorney general, the justice department there in Paraguay. Let's see, what else did we have on that side? Oh, there was a sort of digital government trying to move toward—well, that was on the economic formalization side, moving to sort of one stop shops to get up businesses and a national ID, a new identification system for Paraguayan citizens. Let's see. We would also later get awarded a second Threshold Program, another $30 million, with additional components.

*Q: So, we did well but not well enough. (Laughs)*

BEED: There was progress and there was enough interest, I guess, in trying to move Paraguay along but yeah.

*Q: Was that second program also focused on the corruption issue?*

BEED: Yes. It was a little different. That one I was actually—the first one I was not there for the design. Wayne Nilsestuen was the mission director then and a lot of that had been worked up with the government which would be defeated in an election, the Colorados, another sort of defeat of a party that had been in power for seventy years, uninterrupted

power, if you will. But the second one, the second program followed the historic election of a Roman Catholic bishop, Fernando Lugo, and there was a real political interest, foreign policy interest in engaging and supporting this new government.

*Q: The new government was headed up by a bishop?*

BEED: Yes. Yeah. Former bishop.

*Q: I thought the Catholic Church had at one point told people they couldn't be in political office. Or, I guess that was why he was former. (Laughs)*

BEED: Yeah, yeah. So, anyway, that was sort of the impetus behind a second Threshold Program, it's like, well, the U.S. should be engaged with the new government and new leader. So, anyway, that was a little—that program was a little different. I think instead of ten components we had six or seven. For this program I took the opportunity to work with the Paraguayan government to see if we could do something in conjunction with their ministry of health because our health program had been essentially phased out and this was a way to stay engaged. We had a fantastic health office lead, FSN, Graciela Avila, and we had a very dynamic health minister who had just come in under the new president, Lugo. And so, anyway, we directed at—we designed the program to support sort of supply chain integrity and security and reduce corruption in the health sector.

*Q: That was a very clever—*

BEED: (Laughs) I thought we were very clever. But it was a great way to keep supporting good stuff.

*Q: And so, at the end of these two Threshold Programs did Paraguay ever qualify for an MCC compact?*

BEED: I don't think they did.

You know, we made progress on—I should say Paraguay made progress on particular aspects against the indicators but there's just some pretty ingrained, difficult types of systems and ways of doing things there that I think the corruption is a hard one to tackle.

*Q: Right. And it's a very unusual country in that it was ruled by a terrible autocrat for many, many years. Is that right, as I sometimes confuse it with Uruguay?*

BEED: No, you've got the right one. Paraguay has a very difficult history and Stroessner was the dictator for thirty-five years and you know, did things like throw people out of planes and windows and yeah, awful stuff. And it, yes, had a very difficult history, you know, fighting all its neighbors at once in the War of the Triple Alliance and losing three-quarters of the male population in the process. So, there's a lot of tough stuff. But just wonderful, wonderful people, in a unique part of the world, you know. The only

country that's landlocked in South America, and a lot of things are, you know, just different there.

*Q: Were Paraguay and the mission involved in any regional USAID activities that were supported out of Washington or the field? For example, on the trade front?*

BEED: No. I mean, you know, there was some work around the edges there but not much that I recall.

I mean, they have—for instance, when I was in Latin America doing trade in the bureau you know, we were supporting CAFTA, we were trying to do something for the Andean countries that had a trade pact. I don't think there was really any work that we did with Mercosur that Paraguay's a part of because of course, you have Brazil and Argentina in there, and Chile— not involving USAID presence countries to the same extent that Andean and the CAFTA does.

*Q: Right, Okay.*

*You earlier mentioned that your anticorruption work included regulatory improvements. I believe that the World Bank's "Doing Business" reports during this period also focused on the need for improvements on the regulatory front. The AID Administrator Andrew Natsios was also very keen on this report and was encouraging programs to help countries improve their rankings on the World Bank's measures.*

BEED: Yes. And that, in fact, was a big part of the metrics we used on the economic formalization, yeah, how long does it take to start a business, how many steps you have to go through to get a license, that kind of stuff was yeah, yeah, captured in doing business and yeah, we looked at it and the MCC used that in effect for its scorecard as well.

*Q: Interesting that countries can make improvements in many of these things but still not crack the corruption nut.*

BEED: Yeah. Well, the—I don't know if the scoring system has evolved since then but back then, you know, corruption was the big first among equals there. If you don't improve on that you can't get to a compact.

You could do all these other things but then, you know, the sort of where you fall on the corruption index, if that doesn't go green you can't proceed with MCC discussions for a compact.

*Q: I assume this was a relatively small mission and that you might have been co-located with the embassy. What were relations like with the embassy generally?*

BEED: Yes, so relations were quite good. I had two ambassadors, the first one being Jim Cason, who was—he had just come from Cuba. He was the one who put up the electronic

bulletin boards to broadcast news from the U.S. interest section there in Havana. Anyway, he was a career diplomat, with a lot of experience in Latin America. He also made a real effort to learn Guarani, which is the indigenous language, which you could argue is more widely spoken than Spanish there. They even have a combination of the two that they call Jopara. It's Guarani mixed with Spanish. But anyway, he also started singing songs in Guarani (laughs) where he would go—so he really made an effort to culturally reach out and engage in Paraguay and he was great to work with.

*Q: Did he get you singing?*

BEED: Oh, you don't want that.

We were not co-located. We had a beautiful compound not too far, maybe ten, fifteen minutes in traffic away from the embassy, a building all to ourselves, a two-story, ornate, beautiful building with our own compound and parking. And our staffing was heavily FSN. There were only three direct hires and we didn't really have any USPSCs. Not initially. There's three Americans and twenty-seven FSNs. And you know, it's hard to sort of rank great teams but when I think about the capabilities of the Paraguayan FSNs it was really the dream team. I mentioned our health office leader, we had a strong program officer who was Paraguayan, a fantastic FSN who oversaw rule of law in our DG office, and many others. We had an FSN financial analyst who basically functioned like a controller and she ran all sides of the financial management office. So, just really, really talented—

*Q: In that case, just like on the financial management front, did you have an American controller as well or did you have a controller from a nearby mission that would come in periodically?*

BEED: Yes, nearby mission, yeah. And Peru was our, you know, our regional service center. Yeah, so there was a U.S. EXO (Executive Officer) who would help out occasionally from there. We got our—actually, I don't know why they did this but when we had a mission in Bolivia the lawyer in Bolivia was our lawyer but everything else was from Peru, contracting and all of that, yeah.

*Q: I think this financial management mechanism is particularly interesting. I suspect there are probably many countries where you could exist with periodic visits from an American supervisor.*

BEED: Yes, totally.

So, we had separate compounds but we got together frequently, you know. And we worked well together, I would say, and got a lot of support from the ambassador and the DCM. And after Jim Cason, who was a great career diplomat to work with and he really backed me a couple of times when I had some really very difficult disagreements with the Paraguayan government about an aspect of the MCC program. It was great to have him in my corner.

*Q: Can you talk more about that disagreement?*

BEED: So, the lead Paraguayan counterpart for the MCC Threshold Program was an extremely difficult person to work with. My whole team was at the point now where they did not trust this individual. And there were all sorts of disagreements over how the program should be run. Anyway, at one point this counterpart went to the ambassador, said, "Oh, I really want to see you for a drink." (Laughs) So, you can imagine the look on his face when I also show up for this same drink at the ambassador's residence. I mean, his face just fell. He thought he was going to be able to tell the ambassador, you know, this AID director's getting in my way and is hurting our important bilateral program and relations (laughs). So, anyway, that was his first chance to try to undermine what USAID was—you know, our role. And then, the second time is when he went to Washington and I'm sure you had this a lot in your career, but you know, when a delegation goes from the country where you're serving it's a big deal and they go to different parts of the State Department and USAID. And when he got to USAID he just, you know, they had a bunch of pleasantries but then he just proceeded to talk about how the USAID mission is just, you know, killing the MCC program. And you can imagine what bureau—Mark Silverman was the DAA for LAC and he was the one, you know, getting this. And Mark calls me after the meeting, he's like, "Wow, he doesn't like you too much." (Both laugh) But anyway. And I said, "Mark, you know we'll work this out." He goes, "Oh I know you'll work this out." So, when I heard this, that is the way he represented the program and USAID and everything back in Washington, the next time I talked to him he called me on the phone to tell me how wonderful the trip to Washington was and I just lit into him. I just absolutely—I did not hold back. Which I had never done with any host country counterpart before…or since. You know, at a certain point you know how people—there's a word for it, this type of behavior. It's called projecting, right? Where they start accusing the USAID—or in this case the USAID contractor --- of doing untoward stuff then perhaps there is something else afoot. So, we had a large U.S. contract, we had two main implementers, two U.S. contractors. And he really wanted one of them gone, okay, so he made some unfounded accusations of corruption in the program. So, I said to the minister, "Hey, you know what we should do is let's—I'm going to call the IG (Inspector General) in El Salvador. This is our independent inspector general. Let's have them come down and look at this contractor and the whole program." So, that's what we did. I called Tim Cox who was the regional IG, terrific highly professional guy, to bring a team down. Tim came down himself and they looked at everything and basically came up, you know, with a report and then another sort of summary of opinion, finding nothing relating to the USAID contractors, but coming away with the opinion that there is likely something else wrong in terms of how the counterparts were proceeding. So, anyway. It's kind of an obtuse way of describing the situation, but suffice it to say it was extremely messy, very contentious, and it was one of the most difficult relationships I've had to manage in my entire career.

*Q: So, the IG basically criticized the minister and his approach?*

BEED: Privately, yes that's correct.

*Q: Right. So, what happened then to the program? Did it continue?*

BEED: Yes, the program continued – it was a clean bill of health for the contractor. And there were other well-performing, active government counterparts getting results—despite this challenge.

*Q: Was there ever any discussion of ending the program? If you're working with someone who doesn't want it to succeed, is it worth continuing? Was that ever discussed?*

BEED: Well, the tricky part or the complex part is you know, we had ten components.

*Q: Oh, okay.*

BEED: And some were going very well. and some really didn't involve this person other than he was the lead coordinator. We had some other quite good Paraguayan counterparts responsible for the different components, whether it was the attorney general, interior minister, or the head of the economic crimes unit. So, many parts of the program were getting good results.

*Q: When you went to phase two of the program, did he still have a role in the second program?*

BEED: No, the wonderful part is—the wonderful news was this was when the Roman Catholic bishop was elected, Fernando Lugo.

The new government, a different party comes into power, new coordinator, someone who we'd worked with very closely when he was minister of finance.
So, you know, new president, new coordinator and new ambassador. That's when Liliana Ayalde came to Paraguay.

*Q: Oh, yes. I'd forgotten Liliana was ambassador there. How was it like working as an AID director for an ambassador who had been an AID director?*

BEED: Yes, it was super easy, and it was a great experience. In Liliana you had somebody who, you know, was not interested in also being the AID director, getting in your business, or micromanaging. She had her own shoes to fill as Ambassador and a lot going on there. So, that was a great situation.

*Q: And did she continue the same traditions of the ambassador?*

BEED: (Laughs) No, but she established a very productive relationship with the new president. This was particularly important as there was some concern in Washington given his background and coming out of liberation theology about where he might have wanted to take the US-Paraguay relationship. There was also a lot going on next door in Bolivia, where USAID and other US programs were being kicked out of the country.

we've got to be careful with this guy, which way is he going to go? Well, Liliana established a strong bond of trust with him about what, you know, what the U.S. is prepared to do and to support him with and that got us off to a great new start with the second Threshold Program, MCC program. I think he also allayed most fears about what his intentions were. Now, I will say this. Paraguay is the first country where I served—it was the first where I served as acting DCM quite extensively and even as chargé once. And you know, I can remember, you know, toning down some of the reporting that was coming out from other agencies about what the intentions of this government were and who they are, and you know, what they're trying to do. Anyway, you know, there can sometimes be various philosophical differences and opinions in certain countries among the agencies that are often healthy and good for our foreign policy. And that's one of the reasons why I believe USAID has a very important policy advisory role to play on all kinds of issues in a country.

*Q: Right because we have a different set of relationships with people. Interesting to manage different agency perspectives about political leadership in a country.*

*So, how long was he president?*

BEED: He was one term, yeah, yeah.

*Q: Did his party win or did the previous ruling party win?*

BEED: He was not eligible to run again and so, it was different—I'm trying to remember who succeeded him. I was gone by that time.

*Q: Okay. I was just curious. But you saw it as a positive change for the country, the new government, when it came in?*

BEED: For my blood pressure, number one, yes. (Peasley laughs) There was an immediate change. It was really, you know, it was, I think, the most difficult relationship I had to manage. There were certainly different things going on. And the MCC programs, rightly so, were constructed really to be driven by the benefitting country but USAID really has always, I think, had an influential role there in doing good, supporting reform and yes, it was just good that we could start fresh and move on from that chapter.

*Q: Well, obviously it's important that the ambassadors supported you during that process. Were there other parts of the embassy that might have been giving him other advice on that? Do you know?*

BEED: I don't think so. No, not in that case.

*Q: Not in that case. Okay.*

*Is there more to say about Paraguay? It sounds like it was an interesting three years but not an entirely pleasant three years either.*

BEED: Well, I'd say, it was ultimately very fulfilling. You know, again, we were doing wonderful things with rule of law, with democracy and governance there. The other thing that really marked the program in Paraguay, and I always use this example, is virtually the entire portfolio, with the exception of the MCC program, of course, but all of our implementers in every sector where we were operating – health, environment, economic work, DG, even elections work, – were all primarily through local partners, local NGOs.

*Q: So, even Chemonics and Casals were working through local organizations?*

BEED: Well, I should say those were the exceptions working on the MCC threshold program.

*Q: But the regular USAID programs worked primarily through local organizations?*

BEED: Yes, you know, the $10 million OYB in health, environment and DG— I think, all the partners were local. And the thing that sticks out to me is, you know, for instance, instead of IRI and NDI on the elections or IFES it's, you know, we had local, very, very, good partners there that we were channeling, funding through.

*Q: Well, that's good. Since localization has become an important mantra in USAID these days, any thoughts about what you saw in Paraguay working through local organizations or contrasting it with other places where you've worked?*

BEED: Yes, I think particularly in Latin America there are so many institutions that are more than capable of being very effective and judicious stewards of assistance and development funding. We probably have not—well, I know, not probably, you know, we don't use them enough. We could, in Mexico, for instance, you know, just in environment, in health, democracy and governance, Paraguay it was my experience, Guatemala later, the same thing, there are institutions that are quite capable of being the lead implementers of our programs. And where one country may not have sufficient capacity, I think that's where you could also make use of regional institutions, with similar languages, cultures and history, better than just kind of defaulting to a U.S. implementor.

*Q: What are the obstacles to doing that? Did you see obstacles in Paraguay? You said your contracting officer was based in Peru. And the financial management unit was overseen by a controller in Peru. Presumably, they were fully supportive of working with local organizations or did they have to be convinced or did they ever raise issues?*

BEED: No, I think, you know, they would visit and get good reporting from us. And again, we had trusted managers in the mission who were really on top of their programs and projects. So, yeah, I think people were totally onboard from that standpoint, our regional support center and of course, our mission. Yes, it would have been difficult for the MCC program, given the size, but that said, there's a lot of unexploited opportunities, I think, to use local institutions more. And that goes for everywhere.

*Q: Everywhere, right. Okay. No, that's an important point and certainly one I agree with totally. (Laughs)*

*So, more to say about Paraguay or as you—the three years were up and again, the Senior Management Group, decision making process begins and people start recruiting people for jobs and looking at the various options. And again, you went off to do something very interesting. I bet there were people who told you not to do that. (Laughs)*

BEED: Yes, you know, sort of toward the end of my time in Paraguay it was another one of these I wonder what I should do next, you know, and I was really—I didn't necessarily know, okay, what should I do next. I didn't have that clear in mind. But I was visiting Washington maybe six months before my tour was up, I think, something like that, and—or the fall before I left and I was making the rounds there and I went (laughs) I went by to see the head of HR, who at that time was Gene George and Gene was my boss in Russia so it was easy to sit down and talk. And as I'm going through the different ideas in my mind and not really—nothing's really clicking, I can't remember if I said it or he brought it up, but he said, "Well, what do you think about Japan? Karen Turner was just in the office and she's having trouble finding the right person for Japan." I said, "Whoa." I said, "Well, that sounds really interesting. I would love to do that." So, then I set up a call with Karen and we clicked right away on what she needed. So the SMG panel subsequently assigned me to Japan which I was really excited about.

**Embassy/Tokyo, Counselor for Development Cooperation, 2009 - 2011**

*Q: Okay. We're now in 2009 and this donor coordination position had been in place for a while. You mentioned that Paul White had been in it before he was in Mexico. Paul may have been the first person in that position. I don't recall. But there had been several people in the position over the years.*

BEED: Yes. Paul was the first and it may have been Chuck Aenenson after him and then Connie Carrino had it for two years. Alan Reed filled in for a year before me, and I think there was one other.

*Q: Right. So, tell us about this job. It's a very unusual job and probably different for every individual who's in it.*

BEED: Yes. I really benefited from consulting with Jonathan Addleton on the job. I just kind of—I sent him a note. He was in Brussels at the time or he—and he sent me a whole guide to how to approach the donor development jobs and it was fantastic. And he wrote it almost entirely from the perspective of Brussels but you know, referred to the other jobs and the opportunities and the differences and I thought, you know, that really helped in terms of like, what the possibilities were. I felt I could really develop a very fruitful partnership between the U.S. and Japan at the time, the two largest bilateral donors in the world. They had a lot of historical cooperation that Paul had started but then it seemed to, I don't know, it was either dormant or had tailed off a bit by the time I got there so I

really approached it with a lot of enthusiasm from that standpoint. That said, it was not a priority or really an area of interest of AID in Washington at the time. When I got there, Raj Shah wanted to phase the jobs out and get the senior people that were in those jobs back into missions.

*Q: And that was right after you got there, right?*

BEED: It was pretty soon after so you know, unfortunately, it was not a major priority initially for the new USAID team.

*Q: Right and Karen Turner, was she the Asia bureau DAA, or was she in the policy bureau?*

BEED: She was in the policy bureau. So you know, maybe it coincided, too, with an erosion of interest there. There weren't a lot of people in USAID Washington interested. That said, for the State Department, once again, it was an area of interest, what we were doing. We had a new ambassador coming in, John Roos, an Obama political appointee from California. He was a terrific leader to work with. And the State Department Asia bureau, EAP, was also interested in the kinds of issues that we were working on. So, I spent a lot of my time just trying to be—or to find ways that I could be relevant, and you know, build the profile of USAID and maybe rekindle the partnership. And one thing I got involved in is I started becoming a cable writer or I did a lot of cables, a lot of it on Afghanistan because Japan was involved in supporting reconstruction and development there, a lot of the counterparts I was working with and you know, I had really good access to—not just JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), the USAID counterpart, but also the foreign ministry in Japan, which is really—they really drive Japanese foreign assistance and also the trade agency a bit too. So, I did a lot of reporting on what Japan was thinking about and doing related to Afghanistan. I put together a concept paper. It was like, twelve pages, for things that the U.S. could do together with Japan on global development, sort of long-term actions, medium-term and then short-term things we could do right away in different parts of the world, in different sectors.

*Q: And who did you share that with?*

BEED: So, I sent that into our office in Washington, which was—what was it? Was it a policy bureau now?

*Q: So, you shared it with Susan Reichle, the head of the new policy bureau?*

BEED: Yes, Susan and—the donor office. But the problem is, it was, you know, Susan had a lot of other stuff going on and then, you know, anyway, just the whole donor cooperation function got downgraded in terms of, you know, it's standing in the Agency. But I thought I would pursue three things. One is, you know, trying to—I put together a strategy, or action for different ways the U.S. and Japan could cooperate on development in other countries. Two, I started reporting on Afghanistan developments and reconstruction from Japan's perspective and talking to a lot of different counterparts on

that. And then, finally the other thing I focused on was thematically really trying to get the Japanese government interested in engaging more with the private sector.

So, I was talking about the different sort of currents, things I was working on with Japan and I have always been interested in how you work with the private sector more in development so I sort of really emphasized that as a theme to try to work together with JICA on as something that we could jointly do in other countries and do a lot of interesting stuff on that together. There was a senior highly competent guy, Murata-san, who served as the director-general of private sector partnerships at JICA and we decided that we would go around together to different industrial cities in major centers in Japan and speak to Japanese industry about what they could do with JICA and I would talk about USAID and how we partner with companies. We called it the "Caravan" and we went from Tokyo, to Nagoya, the city with Toyota's manufacturing operation, we went to Osaka, and were planning to travel to Fukuoka when fate intervened – more on that later. It was a lot of fun and I believe that our tour generated more interest and attention from both large and small Japanese companies in partnering with the government and investing in overseas development.

*Q: Was there also discussion of trying to get partnerships that would have involved U.S. companies and USAID and Japanese companies and JICA, all four together? Was that part of this?*

BEED: Yes. And I think we were able to do that in a couple of different places. And you know, I would reach out to missions directly. I remember talking to Cheryl Anderson in Ghana about, "Hey, on this nutrition program you're doing we've got an American company, we've got a Japanese company, a spice company, we've got JICA and USAID, all interested in similar things - maybe we could all do something together." We were able to get something started there and in Asia with, what do you call it, quadripartite—four parties involved in Bangladesh in global health working together. So, we got some things going, concrete cooperation going as well.

*Q: What was it like working with JICA? I've always had the impression, at least many years ago, that it was very different in Japan than it is in the United States. Japan is much more centralized and therefore you might think you've come to an agreement with someone at the local level, but you haven't really because they've got a long chain to run it up first. Any observations about how different it might be working with Japanese organizations?*

BEED: Yes, I think you hit the nail on the head there. It is very different in terms of, you know, how decisions are made, both in terms of JICA and Tokyo really playing the predominant influence versus our field mission-driven model primarily, even though that's shifted a little bit. So, that, I always thought, spoke to the, I think the importance of reaching out to our missions and the role in Tokyo, trying to represent or you know, build support for certain things with different parts of JICA or, more importantly, the Foreign Ministry, in terms of funding or new emphasis on something. So, that was an important role I believe and something I enjoyed doing. The frustrating part is, once again, this was

not a high USAID priority, so you were really trying to sell people hard on it. You know, to try to get them interested.

*Q: Do you recall if there were any cases where USAID missions might be in touch to say they're having problems coordinating something with Japan and could you help out in any way through headquarters? Did that ever happen?*

BEED: I think there was—you know, I'm trying to remember specific instances where a mission came to us first. Well, you know, I think Bangladesh, we were working with them. Primarily it was us trying to be proactive. There were connections made through the global health bureau in Washington which you know, was already meeting biannually, I think, as part of—that was one of the ongoing things from the U.S.-Japan common agenda that Paul had started. That was still going on so we had, I think, some fruitful meetings there and they would occur in Tokyo and then in Washington. I think I may have only done it once in Tokyo. But that was useful, having USAID global health leadership meet with JICA and foreign ministry leadership on health, yes. I did encourage mission directors from several Asian countries to include stops in Tokyo to meet with counterparts at JICA. So that did happen on several occasions.

*Q: If you were a JICA person in Washington in the same kind of job that you were in, you would be talking to the government, but you would probably also be talking to the U.S. NGO community about development issues. Is there an equivalent NGO sector in Japan? If so, did you have any involvement with them?*

BEED: Yes. As far as wholly local or Japanese organizations, that was still nascent but the large multi-lateral NGOs and UN-related and you know, very capable engaged people, Japanese in that community, and I know my predecessors have done a lot of, you know, engagement with that community. I did some with them as well on various issues. One issue was related to how the Foreign Ministry managed and funded NGOs. It was very difficult for a Japanese NGO to manage a Japanese foreign aid program, for instance, because at the time, you know, they were really—weren't eligible to get much more than, I don't know, any kind of indirect rate, you know. In other words, they basically had to do the thing at cost. So, some of it was trying to sensitize different parts of the Japanese government to—but that's a constraint and you could get more Japanese organizations involved if, you know, if you—in your grants, contracts, you know, you do have an indirect rate that you can provide because for so many years a lot of the Japanese foreign assistance was tied to commercial interests or other things. That had changed significantly by the time I was there and under Madam Sadako Ogata's leadership at JICA Japanese aid had become less tied to trade, tied to commercial interests. They had merged two main institutions of Japanese aid, one—the lending, which used to be under the trade and commerce people, and the grants and technical assistance of JICA and put them together under JICA. That made JICA a more powerful institution.

*Q: There have also been a number of large international coordination meetings and conferences over the years, including the big shindig on AID effectiveness in Busan,*

*Korea. Was that while you were in Tokyo? Did you play any role in that process, either in talking to the Japanese about their positions or with the policy bureau in Washington?*

BEED: I was involved in some of the preparation. I was not there when it happened. But one thing that I did start, which was another part of my job serving in Tokyo was a relationship with the Korean government on trilateral cooperation. I traveled to Seoul several times and met with the foreign ministry and with KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency) and did some speaking engagements there. We began some initial cooperation, and I negotiated the first bilateral US-Korea agreement on development collaboration, which was signed ultimately by Secretary Clinton, the USAID Administrator, the head of KOICA and Korea's minister of foreign affairs.

*Q: In those discussions did any of the Koreans ever talk about the fact that USAID had been in Korean?*

BEED: Not so much that however, the people at KOICA in particular (laughs) were, I think, very appreciative of USAID and were very interested in the model, USAID's model, if you will, for development and very interested in whatever we could share. So, the foreign ministry was maybe a little bit more sort of reserved about it and questioning the value of why we should do this? But they got more interested when the higher level-ups said, "Yes, this is worthwhile and would be a good deliverable for the two governments."

*Q: (Laughs) Okay. Speaking of deliverables and higher-level discussions, I suspect that you got dragged into some of the preparations for either G-20 or G-7 meetings. I believe that the Obama Administration's food security initiative is trying to get the donor community more generally involved with and focused on that issue. Were you at all involved in that?*

BEED: Yes. And the main thing that we did was I started discussing with the agriculture minister counselor in Tokyo the idea of doing stuff together on global food security, which USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) was, you know, a part of. So, we would periodically talk about that and when Secretary Vilsack, the secretary of agriculture, was planning a meeting for Tokyo myself and Geoff Wiggin, the ag minister counselor, we came up with the idea, let's do a forum on global food security and let's, you know, we'll have Secretary Vilsack speak and we'll—I'll see who I can get from USAID to come out, maybe Raj Shah or somebody or somebody and we'll have the U.S. ambassador, obviously and their counterparts in the Japanese government. So, we set up this great conference, a lot of big companies came out and NGOs and we got some great speakers. Secretary Vilsack, you know, I helped write his remarks with my USDA friends, and we had top people in the Japanese government participate in the conference. However I could not get anyone from the USAID or our bureau of food security to come out to Tokyo or to give two hoots about this conference. It was a great conference with a lot of business and commercial participation. There were a lot of great remarks, and it got the U.S. and Japan thinking, oh well, we could do some things together on this. But it was

just an example of how, you know, basically every part of the U.S. government but USAID was interested in what I was doing in Tokyo. (Both laugh)

*Q: Oh, goodness. Well, this was probably good training on patience.*

BEED: (Laughs) Yes, true, which you need a lot of, working in Japan and other places.

*Q: Right. But it does sound like the embassy itself and others within the embassy made very good use of you.*

BEED: Yes. It was, again, a great country team and a lot of collaboration, different parts of the embassy. And wonderful with the Japanese counterparts too.

*Q: Anything else on this today?*

BEED: Yes. You know, the big thing that happened is the disaster in 2011, the earthquake and tsunami.

*Q: Oh, I forgot all about that, yes. Let's talk about that now.*

BEED: Which—so before I get into that, just real quickly, the reason that we were able to do a lot of interesting things in Japan was the woman that Paul White originally hired, Rie Yamaki, the FSN who's still there, and she's unbelievable. She was the USAID FSN of the year twice I think, and she deserved it. She was just responsible for getting me connected with, you know, everyone in the right way, providing, you know, the right advice and suggestions and she was just fantastic to work with and a real key to everything in that office. So, when I say "we," I mean Rie and I (laughs), things that we were able to do together. There was a lot of frustration that like, hey—and I don't know why it bothered me so much, but it just did, not being able to get Washington's attention. You know, we would have these regular monthly donor calls with Washington, all the donor cooperation counselors and Washington, and I won't say who but, you know, one of them would say, "There's nothing to do here," you know, in so many words, this is boring. And I'm thinking to myself, you've got to make your own way with these types of positions. But I definitely—that frustration of not getting USAID-Washington's attention on certain things was—it really contributed to my thinking okay, do we really—and also, I had two daughters in high school, so and can they graduate from here or not, so like, can I make this a five-year assignment so that they can graduate or do I need to do four and can I really go another two? So, it was all this. And at the same time, Raj Shah was downgrading the positions, with the view that our senior people should get back out to leading missions. So, I'm thinking oh, maybe I should go out to a field mission from here. I didn't know which way I should go.

*Q: I think it is an important reminder that these kinds of jobs really depend upon an individual making it what it's going to be. People who can't operate that way ought to stick to more traditional positions. (Laughs) Since we've been going for two hours, let's defer talking about the disaster until next time.*

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*Q: This is September 29, 2023, and this is session number four with John Beed.*

*When we finished up last time you were in Tokyo as the counselor for development and cooperation and we had not yet gotten to the big event that took place during that period, that being the earthquake and tsunami. Would you walk us through it, including how the earthquake affected you in Tokyo?*

BEED: Yes. So, I arrived in Tokyo in 2009 and in March 2011, March 11, 2011, is when the 9.0 Tōhoku earthquake hit and it was a triple-headed disaster. The earthquake itself, because of Japan's sterling building standards and construction, caused very little if any damage per se. But the quake caused a—not one tsunami but a series of tsunamis, I think six or—I think there were six —the first of which at certain points when it crossed the shore it was over 100 feet high and then went, you know, miles inland and just was devastating for the coastal communities in those areas. Ultimately there were more than 18,000 people who died from the earthquake and almost all were from the tsunami, which was tragic. So, yes, the day that it hit -- some think that actually the 9.0 was actually an aftershock because the day before, two days before we had had a 7.3 an —I was in the embassy at the time. It was in the afternoon. And it shook the building for six minutes, over six minutes. And of course, you know, they tell you "Don't evacuate a building when the building is shaking, that's the last thing you should do," but after about minute four of the building and looking out the window and seeing these huge skyscrapers, you know, swaying. We were on the fourth floor, the USAID offices, along with some Homeland Security offices, I remember going around and saying, "Let's go. Let's get out of here." And I think most people were coming to that realization because when we got to the stairwell there were, yeah, lots of people exiting the building at that point. So, we all went down and then convened in the large sort of driveway, if you will, in front of the chancery and you know, seeing all sorts of people. And I looked for the ambassador quickly because I knew, okay, I'm the mission disaster relief officer technically here, so I better get that whole thing going. And then, I got a call from Thailand, from Bill Berger, who was there, you know, as the regional disaster relief officer attached to OFDA (Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance).

And Bill and I had worked together before on other disaster planning efforts. So, anyway, Bill said, you know, "What's going on there?" So I went, and I talked to the ambassador, I said, "Well, you know, we can immediately now do a—you can issue a disaster declaration, it will trigger $100,000, you know, just to start, get things going. We'll have a DART (Disaster Assistance Response Team), you know, that will be mobilized, what do you think? Do you want to do the disaster declaration?" And Ambassador Roos says, "Well, John, that sounds like a no-brainer to me. Let's do it." (Both laugh) And you know, everyone's trying to figure out what's going on. We did not know yet about the tsunami nor the third disaster, which was going to hit the Fukushima nuclear reactor. And cellphone service was knocked out. So, anyway, we're all trying to get sort of a handle on

the situation. But I do remember being able to talk to Bill and then getting this initial—the initial wheels turning with the ambassador on the disaster declaration.

And then, I don't think I slept for the next forty-eight hours after that. I had—my wife and I, we had two kids at the American School. Our son was home on the embassy compound at the time, alone, and my two daughters at the American School, it was a fair distance away from central Tokyo, where the embassy is, and it took their school bus, it took them eleven hours to get back home just because of, you know, all the chaos and traffic in the streets.

*Q: Did they have cell phones? Were you aware of where they were and what their status was?*

BEED: There was erratic—you know, what would happen is somebody would have a connection or communication and so we were able to sort of—to track the bus somewhat on its way home so we knew, you know, it's going to take a long time before they get home, but—

*Q: Another question since you mentioned swaying skyscrapers. Was some of the Embassy housing in tall buildings? Were your wife and child who were at home in a tall building swaying for six minutes?*

BEED: Our son was home alone playing with friends. We have a young, you know, a young boy. He was nine years old. I guess he was in fourth grade. They were off, the elementary school at the time so he was home playing. My wife was getting her hair done somewhere in central Tokyo and you know, they all came out into the street, you know, and she had her hair, you know, in the midst of being done and there were people who were getting massages at her salon, you know, out in the street in towels. (Peasley laughs) Anyway, my wife was able to get in touch with someone on the compound and my son was playing with friends and, you know, they were okay. But it was difficult to connect and you know, communicate with people because the phone service was in and out.

*Q; So, did the U.S. end up doing more than the initial $100,000 declaration?*

BEED: Yes, quite a bit more. The declaration—well, that started all the wheels in motion. And there was a large outpouring of U.S. assistance after that, a lot of which came from the military side, DOD (Department of Defense). But I think the crucial intervention, the critical support that USAID provided was in the form of the DART that was mobilized which became a real focus in the early days, including getting Japanese clearance for the U.S. Disaster Assistance Response Team to come, including the search and rescue teams from both L.A. and Fairfax, finding where should they go, just working out with the government where should they land, where should they go, what should they work on. That took a little bit of high-level negotiating with the government because in a lot of cases the Japanese government would prefer to just handle things on their own.

*Q: I was going to ask if they were reluctant to have people come in, or did they see it as countries that are strong partners helping one another? How did they view it?*

BEED: Yes. I think it, you know, initially it was a little bit of well, you know, what's going to be the purpose and you know, how is this going to help, and you know, we will do this ourselves. But it didn't take too long, I think, to get agreement that the USAID DART will have some value and can help. Of course, with the time difference and the sort of negotiating and the distance in general for people to get there, for search and rescue teams, you know. They are needed in the first seventy-two hours. They were mobilized very quickly once we got the okay. But the real, immediate benefit that we got from having the DART come is that Raj Shah, the administrator at the time, is that he had the foresight and I, as far as I know, really before we had a lot of knowledge about what was going on with Fukushima or that that was really going to be a big problem, the nuclear issue, he had the foresight to put three specialists, two from the NRC (Nuclear Regulatory Commission) and one from the Department of Energy proper onto the DART and as it turned out, at least one of them was quite knowledgeable about that type of reactor at Fukushima and what all the issues were. So, as soon as those experts landed, we raced them in to get them into the ambassador to, you know, really explain kind of what's going on, this is what could happen, this is what we must deal with. So, they were from, very early on, I would say from day two on, I think it was 3:00 in the morning we finally got them together with the ambassador, they were instrumental in helping shape the response and helping the ambassador think through the situation and what kinds of things we needed to do to try to protect lives and stay safe.

*Q: They were presumably working with the Japanese as well?*

BEED: Yes. You know, we got the DART members engaged with counterparts in the Japanese government. We started an intergovernmental bilateral working group that the DCM led from our side, I went from USAID, and we had all our different agencies there. We had a Department of Energy rep in the embassy as well and that was useful. And meeting with the Japanese government officials from a variety of different sectors. But you know, ultimately the dynamic changed but initially they were a little bit hesitant to share a lot of information at the very, very beginning.

*Q; Was there ever discussion within the embassy or the broader international community about evacuating people, or did the experts who came in on the DART team help to reassure decision makers on that front?*

BEED: There was a tremendous amount of debate and discussion about that and ultimately what was decided upon was—because, of course, you're not just talking about a very large U.S. community, U.S. mission community, you're talking about enormous military community, 50,000 service members and their families and so, it's—it was a lot to think about. The ramifications of every decision would be big and of course, they all had foreign policy and political considerations behind that too. But ultimately the decision was made, and it was the right one to have ordered departure for family members and so, my family left on day three or four, if I'm remembering correctly. And

of course, the plane they got on to fly to the U.S., it's on the tarmac and suddenly there's another aftershock, 7.5 quake, and the plane is shaking. And a friend of mine who was head of Volvo was on the same plane with my wife and he was going—he's saying—we were thinking, okay, we've had one, two, three disasters, what's next? Is Mount Fuji going to erupt, the volcano? Anyway, it was good that the family was able to leave because then I would spend, you know, the next month pretty much working non-stop.

*Q: Non-stop, right. Sometimes ordered departures are easier, and are most effective in freeing people up to work 24 hours a day.*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: Did you ever travel up to the area where the tsunami hit?*

BEED: Yes, I went up on day three or four when Bill Berger—then Bill Berger came to the country so we both went up there together. And then, by this time we had a full-fledged DART. We had communications officers, everything, working out of USAID office space in the embassy. Well, you know how it is. Basically, it's 24/7 focused on disaster response.

So, we did get up on day three with—to look at some of the initial UN relief operations and how things were going in the Japanese response. And the military was already—the U.S. military was already engaged. So, I mean, it was just devastating, you know, just the site. And then talking to people on-site about you know, in those communities that a lot of the local government leadership, they were all, they were killed. So, it was really, you know, devastating for communities in the tsunami's wake.

*Q: Right because there was then no real local government capacity. Everything was destroyed. Were other embassies providing assistance to the Japanese for this disaster, do you recall?*

BEED: Yes, I think there were some others but there was nothing on the scale, obviously, of the U.S. because of the U.S. military presence all over the country.

*Q: And they had partnerships with the Japanese military so that was probably military-to-military cooperation?*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: So, your last couple months at post were pretty much consumed by response to the disaster. Did you ever go anywhere near the nuclear facility?*

BEED: No. No and you know, it's—you know, they're still trying to figure out what to do. They've only just now, twelve years later, allowed for the release of the water from the site to be released into the ocean.

*Q: I guess they're monitoring it very closely though.*

BEED: Right. So, we did not go up there and of course, there was a—there were a couple points during the first few days when if the wind had gone a certain way Tokyo was going to, you know, get some fallout. And I remember at one point we had a—on the DART there was an HHS (U.S. Health and Human Services) health specialist for responding to nuclear events and I remember he came by, said, "Okay, time to put on the gasmask and personal protective equipment" because it looked like it might be coming toward Tokyo. It didn't.

*Q: And that's why there was the ordered departure, right, was the concern about that?*

BEED: There was concern about that. You know, early on, you know, there was a lot of concern – Will there be more chain reaction? Will something happen further? And of course, we had a very large navy nuclear presence in Japan, and they have a, rightly so, a zero tolerance policy for, you know, as far as responding to possible nuclear exposure and yeah, there was a lot of debate about how to respond to the incident when it happened, what could result from it, and how the U.S. should react to it. So, there was a lot of healthy debate. I think this was an enormous contribution that the USAID DART team members, the experts made. I'm speaking particularly about the nuclear experts that came out on the DART that were able to really provide better context and knowledge and guidance, I think, for the ambassador to round out what, you know, he's hearing from a, you know, very influential military presence as well.

*Q: Right; it was a unique experience to have had that level of disaster in a country of such foreign policy priority in such a large embassy where there are so many different voices and perspectives. It's interesting that the DART helped the broader U.S. government decision making process, not just in terms of traditional service delivery.*

BEED: Absolutely.

*Q: Yeah. No, that's very interesting.*

*So, you ended up leaving Japan a couple of months later, is that correct?*

BEED: Yes, that's right. And I, you know, we really went back and forth in terms of whether to stay or go. I think I had described our interest at one point in staying in place for the kids' schooling. But there was also a tug and pull of me wanting to get back into a traditional type of mission leadership role. I went back and forth in my mind on this. And as a part of what the U.S. did to respond, the other thing I was involved in and really which, you know, after the initial response took up most of my time was really thinking about a long-term U.S.-Japan response to support rebuilding and recovery in the region. And we ended up putting together a public-private U.S.-Japan initiative, which was called the Tomodachi Initiative, the Friendship Initiative, and it involved a lot of—this is what I worked with the ambassador on directly, is going to Japanese companies and U.S. companies and seeking their support and partnership in this initiative. And we were

successful in getting that pulled together and a lot of impetus and a lot of visibility behind it. So, it's an initiative that has grown into really something focused on supporting young people, young professionals in Japan through scholarship, education, training, different things. And it's run by the U.S.-Japan Council.

*Q: So, that was a nationwide scheme and not just related to the disaster area?*

BEED: Not just with those communities, correct.

*Did U.S. government money go into it as well? You say a partnership but was it mostly the U.S. contribution? Were there also in-kind contributions?*

BEED: In-kind and the design and the coordination of all that. And I really, I proposed it to the ambassador based on the experience that USAID had in responding to the Pacific tsunami and you know, I had a lot of phone calls with Washington to, you know, get the support behind this. And ultimately, because of the kind of major strategic ally Japan is, you know, the State Department wanted to have a lot of input and that was of course understandable. But what it meant, really, is we weren't really looking for U.S. assistance, subsidy or public funding for it, rather to design it to harness and leverage the huge outpouring of private and citizen-level interest in both Japan and the United States in doing something supportive for recovery.

*Q: Okay. Do you remember some of the U.S. companies that were involved?*

BEED: Yes. GE, Google, let's see, there were a large—there were a lot of them—Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Merck.

*Q: Some of the banks? Because I know there's a large banking community in Tokyo.*

BEED: Yes. Citibank. And I'm forgetting—oh, and there were some pharmaceutical companies as well. And then, on the Japanese side some of the biggest companies, Toyota, Sony and SoftBank. What were some of the others? There were a lot that, you know, put their hands up and did a lot of their own things as well.

It was an enormous outpouring of private contributions. The other thing, of course, that USAID did was try to provide coordination and management for this outpouring of assistance. In other words, we tried to, you know, encourage people to send cash, not send water to places that don't—need water and things like that. So, we worked a lot with our USDA friends as well on this and just with lots of different parts of the U.S. government in Japan. But I think putting a structure around that and helping to coordinate all these different aspects was another, I think, important role that USAID and all of us played.

*Q: That's a good example and one quite different from the usual AID disaster response experience.*

*One more question on Japan. I assume you did not speak the Japanese language. Was that a hindrance at all or how easy is it working in Japan without Japanese?*

BEED: Well, it's actually very easy to work because all the senior Japanese counterparts speak good English. I did try to get a basic knowledge of Japanese just for living and getting around the city kind of thing so I took language lessons I think two or three times a week for an hour with a tutor.

*Q: I have always heard that a lot of Japanese business is done through socializing after work in the evenings. Is that true, and did you have to adapt in order to develop the relationships you needed with Japanese officials?*

BEED: Yes, absolutely. That was a big part of the job and again, it's really getting to know counterparts, whether at the foreign ministry or at JICA, the aid agency or private sector, inviting them to lunch, going out to dinner and yeah, that really went a long way in terms of establishing rapport, trust and then, you know, really being able to put some things together. Those were big—you'll be familiar with the rep allowance. It was not large enough in Tokyo. I remember several times the controller for our office in Tokyo was in the Philippines and I remember several times I think we need to get some more rep allowance here. It doesn't—didn't go very far in Tokyo. And given that that's such a big part of the job, an important part of the job, yes.

*Q; Does that present difficulties for families? I assume that most of this was just you and whoever you were networking with and it wasn't family dinners.*

BEED: Yes, rarely, it was almost always, just our work counterparts and Rie Yamaki and me normally at these events and functions.

*Q: So, I suspect another challenge of working there, to be effective. Not a good place for a strong introvert, I think. (Laughs)*

BEED: You know, of course, I would not necessarily describe many Japanese officials as highly extroverted. So, yes, you're right. If you end up with two introverts together maybe things will take a while to get done.

*Q: When we started, you mentioned that Raj Shah was not so enthusiastic about these coordination positions in Europe and Japan. By the time left, had his views changed at all? Had he begun to appreciate the value of them?*

BEED: I would like to think so. I will tell you that at one point—and I really, I didn't engineer it and if I had engineered it, it would be pretty impressive, is that the head of Japanese aid, Sadako Ogata, Madam Ogata, who was a real legend in the development world, she sent a letter to Raj Shah saying, in a very understated way, saying this is a very important time for U.S.-Japan relations and Mr. Beed is doing good work here. It would be great if he could stay here, (Laughs) So, I mean, that was really nice to get that type of support from her. We would stay in touch. And I saw her when she came to Egypt on a

later visit. But yes, I don't know, I think, overall whether that was an area of—whether it ever became a priority or interest to Raj. I think—I did, later, when I was in Egypt and there was a mission directors' conference in Washington and I filled in, there was a meeting with both Don Steinberg and Raj Shah. I took the opportunity to talk about—because we were talking about global issues—I said, "One area we ought to really look at is engaging with these emerging donors, like the Koreas of the world," and there seemed to be interest in that and I think an appreciation from both Don and Raj. So, yes, I think it is an area that all donors should be thinking about.

*Q: Right. So, you then went off to Egypt. Was this done through the formal bidding process or primarily negotiated through the corridor and then formalized through the bidding process? I know you needed a place with a high school so that was probably a determining factor.*

**USAID/Egypt, Deputy Mission Director, 2011 - 2013**

BEED: Yes, schooling for the kids was uppermost in our minds, that and you know, that was a main consideration and I wanted to go to an interesting mission where I could contribute. And where we ended up, there were really sort of two possibilities. One was the director in Vietnam, and there was an opening. And then, the other thing, which was suggested to me as a possibility, was the deputy job in Egypt, which we had served, of course, many years earlier. And there were, you know, pros to both assignments. The—Egypt, we knew the school well, we knew the country. It would be a lot of responsibility. Jim Bever was the director there. I thought, okay, Jim and I would work well together. There's a lot going on in the Middle East now, the Arab Spring. That could be super interesting. And then, Vietnam really appealed to me. It's where I was born, I'd never been back. So, you know, a lot of interesting things are going on in that country. Anyway, we ultimately decided to take the deputy job in Cairo.

*Q: So, you go off to Egypt. What's it like going back to a country where you had your first overseas assignment? What are some of the pros and cons of returning to a country and how different did it all seem to you?*

BEED: Yes. Well, on the level of the job, it was obviously so different. I was, you know, I had come from the perspective of being a new entry IDI and project officer. And as I would really come to know, I was very micro focused then and I had blinders on to the larger situation in the country, which I really became aware of when I came to Egypt the second time. So, the job was enormously different. But living (laughs), it had changed. There were things that had changed and were maybe a little bit—well I should say living had changed substantially because it was a very different time. The first time we were in Egypt there weren't these tensions, palpable tensions sometimes in the streets, there were far more women who were veiled in Egypt, that was a very big difference from the first time we went to the country. That said, you know, a lot of things stayed the same. And there was more development. So, it was really kind of a mix of things that were radically different and things that were familiar and you know, maybe helped us to assimilate, you know, very rapidly, obviously.

*Q: And as the deputy, you were kind of the COO (Chief Operating Officer) for the mission, involved in everything, I assume, to some extent?*

BEED: I was. And I would say for about a third of my time there I served in the acting mission director capacity because unfortunately, well, it turned out to be fortunate because of who came in, but I didn't get a chance to really work with Jim Bever. He left suddenly. But Walter North came in, whom I'd never worked with before. And Walter was, you know, I think of all the people I've ever interacted with in USAID that I probably learned the most from, just by watching and working with him. I learned a lot from Janet Ballantyne in Russia as well, but I would say for Walter, Walter's someone that I would subsequently ask myself, okay, what would Walter do in this case? You know, how would he handle this? So, that was a great experience.

*Q: Yes; that's nice. And who was the ambassador in Egypt while you were there?*

BEED: Anne Patterson.

*Q: Was the program like the program that was in place when you were there as an IDI? Or, had it changed significantly?*

BEED: Yes, well, for one, it was smaller. Still very large but we're talking about an annual OYB of $250 million versus $815 million and then all the pipeline and local currency. Both missions—both periods of time, obviously, an enormous amount of local currency that had been generated over the years. As far as sectors, remarkably, a lot of the same sectors we were working in, slightly different emphasis. The one part of the program when I arrived that was, of course, much larger and of much greater interest than it was the first time was the democracy and governance portfolio. And obviously, a very, at the time, a wariness, but also an interest in Washington in reaching out to the new government following Mubarak's resignation.

*Q: So, Morsi had been elected before you arrived?*

BEED: No, not yet, but shortly after.

There was enormous interest to do more outreach to local organizations and to do more in that civic engagement, democracy, and governance front as well. So, that was substantially different. There was less infrastructure. There were gigantic infrastructure projects the first time I was there. There was, I remember the first time I was in Egypt we had a billion-dollar wastewater project, $1 billion. So, anyway, we were doing a lot less of that. But some of the other things, working antiquities, some of the environmental work, agriculture, we were still engaged.

*Q; It's interesting, working on the DG front with this new government that had been elected, were we able to work constructively with them? Were the implementing partners able to work with the new group of people?*

BEED: Yes. And you know, this was the tension and I really—Ambassador Patterson was great to work with too and she was, I think, navigating the terrain very artfully and doing her level best to engage constructively with the new government. In the early days, we were finding, I think, ample room for cooperation with, for instance, the new minister of education. We were finding a lot of points of commonality and interest in working with the U.S. on continuing programs and maybe doing some new things. So, there was, I think, some hope at the time that we could really make this work, no matter what perceptions or ideas that people have in their heads about what a Muslim Brotherhood-led government is going to be like. But in the backdrop, there's a very deeply entrenched power system in Egypt and that's essentially the military and you know, this is one of the things that I didn't appreciate at all on my first tour. And I think to people who were maybe more clued in than I was or could read the tea leaves better knew that the military was only prepared to let this new government go so far and you know, then would be prepared to step in (laughs) as they did a couple of years later, you know, to right the ship. But there was—and of course, you have U.S. and other interests who are also very skeptical and hostile to the idea of engaging and working with the new Muslim Brotherhood-led government, so that—

*Q: So, there were pressures from the U.S. side as well?*

BEED: Oh, yes. You can imagine from conservative members of Congress, I would say primarily, but probably other interests too that were skeptical about how much we should engage. And that really—that put a lot of eyes and controls and parameters around what we could do with the money, okay? And how we could program it and what we're supporting. And at the same time, even during the Muslim Brotherhood's time leading the government, entrenched interests were still prevalent in the ministry for international cooperation, which was USAID's primary counterpart. All our—we still had bilateral agreements for everything. And it was very difficult to manage those old, historical relationships which expected one thing and were not supportive of the leadership or of the Muslim Brotherhood government. So, there were all these different interests, you know, and trying to navigate through that was, you know, an ongoing challenge.

*Q; That's very interesting. So, within the government itself there were changes at the very highest level, at the ministerial level and maybe a little further down?*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: But most of the Civil Service was part of the traditional and long-time power structure?*

BEED: Correct.

*Q: You said that there were a lot of people wanting to influence how money was spent and what the program funded. Does that mean that there was a lot of engagement with*

*Washington in the decision-making process? Were there lots of laborious meetings and debates and discussions involving lots of folks?*

BEED: Yes. It was a, yeah, it was a constant and you know, USAID-Washington also had to work with a State assistance coordinator, Bill Taylor. It was the second time I'd had some experience working with him.

He was the NIS (Newly Independent States) assistance coordinator when I first met him. Anyway, he was very easy to work with. But yes, we had to kind of work with the coordinators and then there was the State Department proper and then you had other interests at the State Department. Of course, you had the NSC (National Security Council) and you had the Hill, so there was a lot of Washington coordination. And I'll just give you one example, for instance, to get a large tranche of our OYB released, dispersed to the Egyptian government and those negotiations, those negotiations really involved Mara Rudman, who was our AA and Bill Taylor as the leads, along with myself and Sean Callahan, who was our regional legal officer. So, the four of us would have these negotiations with the ministry of finance on how this tranche of funding, I think it was like, what was it, was it a lot of the OYB or some of it? I can't even remember all the specifics. But it was a big chunk, $250 to $300 million that we had to—the four of us had to have these negotiations with the Egyptian government, you know, to actually—so it's that level negotiating to get this bilateral deal done on the ground, so.

*Q: But among the four of you there was a consensus on the Washington side?*

BEED: Actually, I think there were disagreements and differences of opinion between USAID and different parts of State. But I would say primarily on tactics or, you know, how we approached certain things as opposed to what we would use the funding for. For instance, we were able to get approval for a very large education, training and scholarship initiative, particularly focused on women and everybody was supportive of that. But it was not so much about how the funding should be used because we had already sort of gotten past the very large effort to go out widely to local grantees for democracy and governance and economic growth, which by the way, all happened, the design and the issuing of close to 100 grants, many new organizations became involved. That was an enormous success story that all happened before I got there but that, and here's what I mean by entrenched interests, I don't know how much for prime time I can say, you know, can say on this.

*Q: No, go ahead, as much detail as you want.*

BEED: I'll give you the example of the very large IG (Inspector General) audit that was done on our big new grants program. It was initiated a week after the grants were issued, which is ridiculous, okay? So, we're working and dealing with the IG audit, you know, right after the grants are out. I suspect that the decisions for the IG to launch that audit came from employees of the inspector general, likely local employees who were sympathetic to the former regime and still predominant power in the country. That's my own suspicion about why we had this big IG audit leveled at the mission right away. And

the fact is, the audit found that these grants were all issued in accordance with policy and the process—it was done in record time. The new grants program I think is a tremendous success story in terms of how efficiently USAID can work and carry out a directive from Washington, which was to get, you know, reach many more entities with assistance, engage them more in development across the spectrum in DG and in economic growth. And it was—but the IG audit, you know, found little things but it became a way for them to sort of get involved and you know, put up—anyway, it's a long story that I would have to get—organize my thoughts more around it to really give a coherent description of it. But it's an example of how politically fraught the program was and sensitive and it just—it ended up, you know, creating an enormous amount of work and burden on the mission that wasn't needed.

*Q: Was the mission's own FSN, Egyptian staff, supportive of this shift to more local grants?*

BEED: I think many of them were. I think many of them were. There were some that were not, and you know, that's just the reality. Yeah, many were but many were not, I think.

*Q: And similarly, probably many were supportive of working with the new government and others were not?*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: Were there any special challenges managing staff during this very heated political time? Or, did the Egyptian staff understand that they should argue on their own time, not in the office?*

BEED: Yes. I don't think that really was a big issue. We did, from time to time, you know, issue guidance and advice about participating in—because there were demonstrations every week. There was something going on every week. And this, you know, this was a big part of my concern and my ongoing worry there. The USAID compound was separate, many miles away from the chancery. We did have some security, but it would not take much for people to go over the wall. While I was in—posted to Egypt somebody, you know, people did go over the chancery wall and were wandering around for over an hour during one of the big protests downtown. Anyway, I was concerned that the USAID compound would be a target on an ongoing basis. But as far as political—I don't think that was one of our bigger problems, you know, having to manage that.

*Q: What was the diversity within the Egyptian staff of the mission? I remember many years ago when they first looked at this and they were shocked to see that a rather large majority were Coptic Christians. Was there more diversity by this time?*

BEED: It was more balanced. And we had, you know, we had new key people who were outstanding technical specialists and USAID managers, and many more senior women playing important roles in the offices. So, the mix and faith diversity had gotten much better. There is a lot of history in the mission, there's no question about that (laughs).

*Q: Right. So, you ended up working for three different mission directors? For Jim Bever briefly and Walter and then Mary?*

BEED: I thought I was going to be working with Jim, but he was gone by the time I got to country, so I was acting for a while and then, shortly after that, Walter came in and then Mary Ott for the last part of my tour.

*Q: There are lots of different models for director-deputy relationships and how responsibilities are divided. Did it vary with the different mission directors?*

BEED: Yes. I think with—you know, of course, there was this—it was really kind of the tale of two jobs because I was acting for a good stretch of it.

I think for Walter I was more of a traditional deputy in the sense of being a chief operating officer and I really enjoyed that. I enjoyed, okay, my job is to support and advocate and manage the office directors and you know, help make it easy for them to do their jobs, manage problems, which you can imagine, you know, every mission there are always kind of workforce issues. I did a lot on the political side too just because I—in terms of talking to the bureau and the coordinator's office and working with the ambassador in a lot of that, so. But it was—so, mine was internally focused but I think I was happy, happy to do that. There was so much to do.

I think Mary, we might have kind of divided it up by office and/or sector, but I don't remember that well.

*Q: That's fine. Since there was a major focus on democracy and governance programming, can you talk a little bit about what kinds of things we were supporting to help ensure that this new democratically elected government would remain democratic and at least potentially succeed?*

BEED: Well, l think all the things that we tried to do in other places to be supportive of those principles. The democracy and governance front, of course, you know, we had—IRI and NDI would become, you know, the focal point of some Egyptian government ire and they ended up, you know, jailing, imprisoning some of their staff for—

*Q: Was that during that period or was that later?*

BEED: Yes, it was my period.

*Q: Oh, it was the Morsi period. So, the Morsi government also went after IRI and NDI?*

BEED: Yes, during that period.

*Q: Oh. Interesting. What were they objecting to?*

BEED: Well, it wasn't—again, it wasn't so much the—Morsi, but you know, the core interests in Egypt, recognized—well, IRI and NDI guys, they're talking to our parliament, you know, they're—I think, you know, really the military saw it as a threat, these kinds of, you know, building up stronger institutions or supporting different parts of, you know, the government was not a good thing. And certainly, they objected vociferously to support for NGOs and civil society in Egypt because, you know, a lot of those NGOs were quite vocal and active, so—

*Q: Was this the Morsi government and the Muslim Brotherhood not wanting to support civil society and political institutions, or was it the more traditional structure of Egypt and the military which objected to them? Was it coming from the very top or was it coming from the middle that ultimately then became the top after the coup?*

BEED: You know, the unseen government. Well, unseen's not the right word but the military still had enormous power.

*Q: Power, they still had power. Okay.*

BEED: Enormous power. So, that influence, and that power extended throughout the government and—

*Q: So, the newly-elected government had no chance to succeed, in essence, really?*

BEED: I don't think so, no.

*Q: And how long after it was elected did the coup take place? Was it about a year or something like that?*

BEED: It was—boy, am I—I want to make sure I'm getting my dates. I mean, my memory is that it was for the—it was the two years that I was there we had the Morsi government and then, a week after I left was the coup.

*Q: Okay, so you weren't there for the coup. Okay, so Morsi was in for two years then?*

BEED: So, my memory is bad here. So, I'm trying to remember because it says Morsi was just the one year, my second year there, but oh, well, of course, I was there for the election. I don't know why I forgot that.

*Q: So, you were there for the election and really throughout the Morsi period, but you could see that it was an uphill battle. (Laughs)*

BEED: I should have remembered that. Of course, I was there, and I remember now, you know, the whole lead up to the election and who the traditional candidate was and the Salafi party candidate. I don't know why I thought that was after, but—

*Q: Right. And was it a shock that the Muslim Brotherhood won or was it expected more or less? Do you remember?*

BEED: Yes. I don't think it was a true shock. But I remember being surprised that the traditional candidate didn't have more traction, yes.

*Q: Okay. No, it's interesting because USAID is usually very excited to support a newly democratically elected government and yet you were having to face challenges from the very outset, that it really couldn't institutionalize itself within an Egyptian structure. And so, was there increasing violence throughout the time—demonstrations and violence throughout the time you were there?*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: And how did you all manage that? How did it affect work and life in general?*

BEED: Yes. Well, a couple of different things is—maybe I'll give three examples. And this is, again, my biggest worry was ensuring the safety and security of the USAID compound. We were off on our own and—we were shoring things up but, in my view, didn't yet have top security in place. And then, there was also sort of an increasing instability in certain parts of the country, for instance, the Sinai Peninsula, and this is another program where we had a large earmark that had not moved. It was $40 million for development in the Sinai Peninsula and that was something I turned my attention to. I started working on—with Walter to get that moving. We finally did get it moving (laughs) but we had all sorts of visions for how this could broadly support development in the Sinai, but of course, our interlocutors for the Sinai were essentially the military and we had to negotiate directly with them. They had other ideas for how the funding should be used. So, that became even more of a problem when we couldn't travel to the Sinai. And there was a period where no Americans could go and you know, there were some people thinking, oh, well, that's okay, FSNs can travel out there. And I sort of made a decision that we're not just going to send FSNs out to a region where Americans can't travel. (Peasley laughs) So, yeah, everything had to be coordinated and approved with the RSO and then, there were just a lot of limitations as to parts of the country that we could visit. So, that affected a lot of things.

*Q: So, on the Sinai program, you finally came to an agreement with them on what would be done, the money was obligated and made available, but then they wanted to do other things afterwards? Is that what happened?*

BEED: Yes. And you know, I thought we had agreement by the time I left and as I understand it after I left (laughs) things got contentious and came to a head because it became clear that actually what the funding was going to be used for, at least the intent,

which rather than benefiting a broad group of citizens and communities, fishing communities and all of that, it would actually benefit like, just a handful of people. (Laughs) And so, it resulted, I'm told, in us saying we couldn't support the plan and then the Egyptian counterpart throwing a shoe at the U.S. side, I think at the ambassador.

*Q: Okay. But the U.S. side were tough negotiators. If they start throwing shoes at you then you know you're negotiating vigorously—*

BEED: Yes, benefitting large Bedouin communities and fishermen in the region and improving the ports, you know, for more economic development was one thing. But doing something that is just going to benefit a few people, that was a non-starter for us once it was learned that that's where this was headed.

*Q: Right. So, they never got the money to do what they wanted to do?*

BEED: I don't believe so.

*Q: Right, okay. Just to clarify. (Laughs)*

*In many ways this sounds like a nightmare assignment, John. I hate to say this, but you were sort of fighting an uphill battle the whole time.*

BEED: It was my least—well, actually no, my—looking back—

*Q: (Laughs) Not the worst?*

BEED: I mean, I didn't enjoy being a junior officer in some of my earliest AID assignments, to be honest. So, for Egypt the second time there were some things that I liked, being in the culture and connecting to people, but yeah, it was a super difficult assignment. That said, I was able to, you know, get an assignment that was a lot of fun after that. (Laughs)

*Q: Well, that's good.*

*Q: Since this was all so political and so contentious, can you talk a little bit more about the differing U.S. government perspectives and relations with the embassy. How were all these positions coordinated among the Ambassador, State Department, Coordinator, and senior USAID Middle East Bureau parties? Was USAID able to influence positions?*

BEED: Yes. We had a really, I think, very closely coordinated, everything we did with the ambassador and the embassy. And this was another part of the sort of logistical headaches of the job being so far away. It was basically an hour in traffic each way, so I would be going into the embassy daily, sometimes twice a day, so I spent a lot of my time in traffic, in an armored car, to get over to the embassy. Then, you know, there were the nightly or early evening, late afternoon secure video teleconferences with Washington and you know, we were always represented on those calls, and you had, of course, the panoply of

agencies in Washington on those. So, it was a lot of back and forth and managing that and you know, trying to keep everything together. So, again, for me, as I always tried to center it on, okay, where is the ambassador on all of this, you know. We had a lot of competing voices out there and interests. Whatever we do, we're going to stay very closely coordinated with her.

*Q; So, hers was a more equal voice among equal voices?*

BEED: Yes, I'd say. Well, and even if people didn't see it that way, that's the way I felt we should operate, yeah.

*Q: Right, that's probably the best way to survive. (Laughs)*

BEED: Yes. But it's funny because I just came back from a—I visited a good friend of mine who was the senior Defense official, the Defense attaché in Egypt. At the time he was a one-star general. He's now the superintendent of the Air Force Academy. And (laughs)—and so, anyway, we were staying in his house, we're good friends with him and his wife, and he was saying, "John, I didn't think you liked the military then, you know." And I realize now that I really kind of kept them at a bit of a distance because of all their mil-mil relationships.

*Q: Right.*

BEED: And you know, we're trying to get this, you know, we're trying to help a new government succeed.

*Q: Right, it's a very difficult situation to be in. I think this is AID being — and I'll use a pejorative term — in its Pollyanna spirit of trying to help a new government succeed and yet, there are other factors that are making that more difficult. So, it sounds like a terribly frustrating assignment. (Laughs)*

*But you did then get to go off and do something that you really wanted to do. And I assume that Washington was very appreciative that you stayed the two years, that you helped multiple mission directors, that you served in an acting capacity yourself, that you should get a good onward assignment.*

BEED: Yes, I think so. And I was in a position, I think, then. They were interested in having me go to West Bank Gaza, the Middle East bureau was, but then the Asia bureau contacted me about India. And I really debated on this about both options. I thought both would have been super interesting to do. And we elected to go with India and yeah, it was great.

**USAID/India, Mission Director, 2013 – 2015**

*Q: So, in December of 2013, you go to India. Who did you replace and what was the state of the AID program at that period? Because again, it's one that has ebbed and flowed a bit over the years.*

BEED: Yes, it was a great time to go to India. Bill Hammink was there, and he was leaving to go to Afghanistan, that's why the opening there. And Bill had started sort of the beginnings of a trilateral cooperation, U.S. and India working in other parts of Africa and Asia together on development. And then, we were able to really build on that, cement it into a real government-to-government agreement and that was a lot of fun to bring to fruition. And then, but the main sort of part of that time was an interest in really shifting the whole emphasis or makeup of the mission away from this traditional donor to recipient to how can we work together, one, but also how can we leverage all the human capital and resources of the private sector, the philanthropic community there, the companies, the dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem out there, how do we get that integrated, you know, into what the U.S. is doing there. So, that, I mean, for many ways was kind of the dream job. I didn't want the U.S.—USAID, I shouldn't say U.S. but USAID to be making any investments or doing any things on our own. I wanted to—whatever we do is to find another partner. And in some cases, you know, maybe that was the Gates Foundation, which had a large investment there or you know, even better, Indian organizations, businesses, corporations, individuals that we could combine forces and do a lot more. Because OYB, $90 million or so a year, two-thirds of it in health, it's not going to go very far in a country that size with that size economy.

*Q: Right. So, you focused on developing those kinds of partnerships. You said that most of your funds were in the health sector – were you able to develop partnerships for those programs?*

BEED: Yes. We had health, we had some work in education, clean energy and the environment was probably the second largest thing. And then, we had some catchall stuff that we were doing in sort of disaster resilience, different kinds of things like that. Am I missing anything? I think that's—that was the real focus. But the full range of public health, really.

*Q: And who were some of the Indian partners you were able to bring in? Perhaps you can even mention a specific program and the relevant partners?*

BEED: Yes, there were so many. Well, another program that was started before I got there was called the Millennium Alliance and that was done in conjunction with one of the main Indian Chambers of Commerce. But it involved funding. USAID designed it, set it up, created it, but we leveraged funding from DFID (U.K. Department for International Development), British donors, from the Indian government, from their science and technology funds, from a range of Indian companies. I'm trying to remember specifically which ones but there were Indian banks, private banks, and information technology companies, big ones, that were also contributing to the effort. So, it had dozens of partners.

*Q: Were they contributing money into a fund that then got used to do grants?*

BEED: Yes, they would do grants, yeah, Indian entrepreneurs and different projects, yeah.

*Q: That's very exciting.*

*I know that in India during that period, a lot of very creative work was being done in the financial sector, including e-payments. Was AID involved in any way in any of those programs? Because many of them were being then emulated in other countries.*

BEED: Yes. We were not directly involved with that. It was an area of interest, sort of digital finance and different ways that we could support that. So, we did some things out of—what was the name of the innovation initiative in Washington, the Lab. So, we had Lab funding to do different things. But as far as a real impetus behind that or chunk of support, no. But those were the types of things that we were seeking to promote throughout the portfolio – innovation, bringing in more advanced use of IT, and stronger partnerships. Those were all kinds of important things that we were—for instance, in health, in the area of TB control, we set up a program designed to promote more innovation in the TB—in TB control. And HIV AIDS, same thing, maternal child health. Every part of the portfolio we sought to involve an Indian local partner and have groups of partners involved and we were successful in doing that.

*Q: Right. I assume that much of this was relatively small scale, but providing models that other parts of India could adapt for their own use through that kind of Indian-led initiative?*

BEED: Yes, I think that was certainly the strategy. A lot of, for instance, the Millennium Alliance was really intended to be early-stage proof of concept and then also support for scaling. I think some things have expanded quite rapidly that have been very successful.

*Q: You mentioned at the outset trilateral work with India and partnering with the U.S. to work in other parts of the world. Do you have any examples of that that you could talk about? I think you mentioned that there was work done in Africa.*

BEED: Yes, there were several countries in Africa and several countries in Asia which we ultimately agreed with the Indian foreign ministry that these are places where there was a fair amount of either Indian commercial investment or Indian development assistance. Indian foreign aid was growing, and a lot of it was in the agricultural innovation space. And I'll have to think of, like, specific innovations that were supported, but there were a variety of those that were going on in other countries in Africa and Asia. Cambodia was one, another country where we were working together on the ag portfolio. We were also jointly bringing African, primarily African leaders for training at one of the prominent Indian agricultural institutes near Delhi and that was an ongoing program, very successful, very interesting. And then, on HIV AIDS, that was an area where a lot of best practices from India were shared with other countries, such as Ghana and there were a

range of other African countries where we promoted this three-way exchange of best practices in HIV-AIDS prevention and control.

*Q: USAID obviously worked for many years in India and was, I think, a major factor in helping to establish some important Indian institutions, for example, the Indian agricultural universities, the Indian Institute of Technology, and the management institutes. I think AID, along with Ford and Rockefeller, were early partners in those. As the USAID director in 2013 in India, did you ever visit institutions that USAID was involved with in the 1950s and sixties? If so, were there interesting discussions about that earlier USAID work?*

BEED: Well, there were a fair number of events like that. The unveiling of a Norman Borlaug statue about the Green Revolution at the Indian institute. I'm forgetting the name. But there was a lot of that sort of hark back to those days and things which had come out of that. I'd go to a meeting in the health ministry and there's a large plaque commemorating that USAID built the building. (Laughs) In India there were a lot of things like that, and I think a fair amount of appreciation for, you know, things that had happened through the years, notwithstanding the occasional tensions that would happen.

*Q: (Laughs) Right. That's part of the relationship.*

BEED: Yes. And I'll tell you what. My takeaway from those kinds of moments and, in a lot of different contexts in AID, I really was struck by thinking two things. One, that there are very few new ideas under the sun and two, man, we are just kind of—when I say "we" I mean me and my contemporaries, we're really this kind of, I don't know, shadows compared to the people before us. I sort of feel like, you know, USAID back in the day, in its heyday really had a lot more groundbreaking, profound impact in development in so many sectors that you could name than we do now. And I, you know, I don't have any empirical way to measure that but it's certainly something I've thought about.

*Q: India is certainly the place where that would come to the fore but also, I assume, inspiring and something to be proud of as well. And good to have the partnerships to work in third countries.*

*Working with the embassy, what was it like? Again, it's a country that's important to U.S. foreign policy and the USAID program is probably not at the center of that relationship these days.*

BEED: Yes, it was—we had an excellent relationship. And USAID was in its own building. There were other agencies there, but we were the predominant agency. And just a few short steps over to the chancery which looks like a mini part of the Kennedy Center if you know it. So, there was a lot of interchange. I had a daily sort of interaction with the ambassador, DCM. Yes, sorry. I don't want to confuse it with another post. Yes, we had daily senior staff meetings every morning in the ambassador's office just for the top members of the country team in which the USAID director participated. So, there were,

like, maybe just ten of us in there. And then, you'd have the country team once a week with thirty-five in there. So, that was a really great way to, you know, stay in touch and in tune with what others are doing and obviously, sort of direct communication and interchange with the ambassador and DCM.

*Q:. Again, India being a longstanding AID mission, I suspect that some of the Indian staff had been there for many years. I know at least one former FSN who was here in Washington for a while and wowed all of us in various aspects of her work. I'm wondering if you have any thoughts about the Indian staff in the USAID mission.*

BEED: Yes, wonderful, really it was a fabulous group of Americans there and fabulous Indian professionals. We had three very senior, we had three FSN-13s in India when I was there, I think. We had one in the program office and two in health. And just, you know, super adept in their relationships with technical counterparts, great managers of their work and excellent relationships, obviously, with the government and really embracing sort of, for the most part, our charge, while I was there, to really let's engage with the private sector here, let's get out and let's do things in partnership much more widely than we do. And you know, great advocates for that across the portfolio. But just in each sector in every office is of very high quality. By the same token, on the Indian government's side, oh my gosh, the Civil Service, I mean, you would have people that could be a number two or three in one ministry and go over, you know, go from finance over to health and in a short period of time really be conversant, if not expert, on the issues over in health, just the depth, the knowledge and then of the private sector very dynamic, just fantastic counterparts. And so, you know, we were also blessed in the AID mission to have that kind of quality of people working with us in the mission.

*Q: At various times historically, people have asked when the time is to close the mission or to change the way we work in India. Did that question ever arise while you were there? Or was the way in which you were developing partnerships and working differently satisfy that itch?*

BEED: Yes, I think the way we were answering that question was we need to remake this mission. It needs to be different. But there's still a vital role which we can play as a real catalyst, you know, in part because of that—and this was something that struck me right away when I got there was, and you referred to this, I should have thought of this example, is the, reverence isn't the right word, but the appreciation for what USAID had done in the past, whether it was related to, you know, health or you know, disaster response or you name the sector. But I remember being in a sort of very large global conference with more than 500 attendees, and USAID was just a participant, it wasn't something that we were convening. And several people talking about USAID-related work, bringing it up in this very large public forum, and that happened a lot, you know. So, whether it's the, you know, homages to the Green Revolution or USAID plaques on core public buildings or people bringing this up, there was a, I think, I real trust factor, if you will, for USAID and I think using that as a convener and a catalyst and a way to bring difference forces together, we were well situated to play that role. So, instead of, like, hey, there's no role for USAID here, so close it, it was instead USAID should

leverage its trust and knowledge to build a new relationship, which was a lot of fun. It was Let's think about our role here in a different way and let's do things differently, let's bring people together. So, yeah, it was a great time to be there because it was—there was a clear answer to that question as to USAID's relevance and value.

*Q: Right. Were most of your partners local? What was the breakdown between U.S. implementing partners and Indian implementing partners?*

BEED: Yes. I think I would say the majority were Indian. And a lot of that because of this remaking of the portfolio. I mentioned the Millennium Alliance, and we wanted to have a major local partner in place for each major sector. For early education we got a local partner to be our hub for doing grants and further outreach to the community in that sector. We did it similarly in clean energy and our support for off-grid energy solutions. I would say it may have even been 75 percent Indian by the time I left.

*Q: Right because India probably has one of the strongest civil society sectors and private sectors of any country that USAID works in. So, localization was not a challenge; it was the mode of operations?—*

BEED: Right, yes.

*Q: Okay.*

*Other thoughts about working in India in the period that you were there and what you thought was most effective in what we were doing?*

BEED: Yes, again, I think, you know, I'll give you an example of, again, sort of USAID maybe playing a larger role than one might expect, given all the different facets and stages of the U.S.-India relationship is you know, we had the president, Obama, visit twice while I was in India and in the leadup to his second visit, which we were a major part of planning for that, but—so every agency was engaged (laughs) at post in developing that. But I will tell you that two weeks before the president was going to come in, two or three week (laughs), I got a call from the chief-of-staff to the prime minister, Modi's chief-of-staff, essentially the most senior career civil servant in the Indian government, and he said, "So, John, I'm a little concerned here. I'm looking at this statement of collaboration between the U.S. and India, which is everything, you know, nuclear, trade, everything, and it's a little light. I think we could work together to improve this. Would you be able to come into my office?" I said "of course!" So, I let the DCM know about the call and then invited someone from the econ section to come along so they can report on it. I went in and we worked up several new partnership ideas, including on water & sanitation, workforce development, and higher education. We ended up developing a knowledge partnership on sanitation between the U.S. and India that USAID put together, which became a national initiative that the two presidents announced. We did something else on education, created a new tie up between an IIT and it ended up, I think, being Duke University, but the beginnings of sort of more higher education work. What else did we come up with? Oh, some workforce development stuff.

Anyway, there were a range of things that we were able to—that USAID had the lead to put into the declaration that the two presidents signed. Anyway, it was an example, and this would happen a couple times where we really played, USAID played a lead role, even in this, you know, in that type of a relationship.

*Q: Now, had you known the chief-of-staff before he called you?*

BEED: No.

*Q: So, he just called you out of the blue because he knew USAID—*

BEED: He called me out of the blue but I'm pretty sure I know how that came about. My main counterpart was the joint secretary of finance. We had a very good relationship with him, and we would periodically go and review our portfolio together with them, even though we didn't really have many bilateral agreements, necessarily, traditional types of program bilaterals with finance. Anyway, he's the one who relayed to the chief-of-staff, that "USAID's got some great ideas." (Laughs)

*Q: That's a wonderful story.*

*These briefings for the joint secretary and the ministry of finance – was that something you had developed, or what is an ongoing thing? And could you talk a little bit more about it because I suspect there'd be great value of it in many countries, even if not working directly with the government. Does USAID need to proactively reach out to ministries of finance or other parts of governments to do that?*

BEED: You know, it's interesting because my experience has been—and you know, every country's different and you have different people in different roles at different times, but generally, I would say, the ministry of finance is a great counterpart for USAID. And where we, I think, have had more difficulty—for example Egypt - our main counterparts are more often at the ministry of international cooperation, or ministry of foreign affairs. In the Egypt example for instance, our negotiations seemed to bear more fruit when working with their ministry of finance. So, yeah, it does vary, but my personal experience in different countries has been generally very positive working with the finance ministry.

*Q: Was that relationship with the ministry of finance well in place when you arrived?*

BEED: Yes, longstanding. And, they've always been the main counterpart, I think, to sign bilaterals in India with USAID.

*Q: No, that's an important point. Other things to say about India before we move on?*

BEED: Yes, it was just a—it was a wonderful time and the mission was enormously successful in leveraging a lot of funding and getting people together, I think. It was a uniquely and very talented group of people – U.S. and Indian – when I was there.

*Q: You mentioned President Obama came twice. Was Raj Shah still the administrator when you were there?*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: And I assume that Raj went at least a couple of times.*

BEED: He did.

*Q: And what was that like, having the administrator come with his own ethnic background being from India?*

BEED: Well, it was great, and it got—obviously, Raj had a star status that went beyond just being the USAID administrator with the Indian government. And we were also involved in a lot of interesting things—like clean energy was a big issue, so we had a role in those discussions and Raj. And obviously health, we were really, I think, kind of really a key donor then. And there was—and you know, food security, we were getting some things going with that with Raj. So, there was a lot for him to be involved in and a lot of receptivity on the other side in seeing him, so he could engage at a very high level when he came to India. I contrast that with the time when we had an acting administrator try to come and we tried to get meetings for him and it was just very difficult to get anything over like a joint secretary in a ministry, you know, so it was very beneficial having Raj there. And just a real interest, from Raj, from the Asia bureau, with what we were doing and trying to remake in India.

*Q: You mentioned earlier that Bill Hammink went from India to Afghanistan, and I believe that at various times, the Afghanistan program tried to build in some activities related to regional trade and regional collaboration. Were you involved at all in any of that with vis-à-vis the Afghan mission or other missions within the bureau?*

BEED: Well, one, and this is maybe a little bit more specific, but USAID-India had responsibility for a couple of things which kind of crossed borders. One was an effort to work on cross border training and management of energy. And we had a board of directors, you know, USAID-Nepal was involved and Bangladesh and India and Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well. And our teams and our projects and our programs met and counterparts together, that was a regional working group on energy, and we would meet together periodically. And then, there was an effort to really stimulate sort of direct Afghanistan-India linkages and we did that in various parts of the portfolio, including trade. There was a big trade linkages conference, India-Afghanistan, that the mission set up after I left, I know that occurred. And there was one other thing I want to mention about that. But yes, there—oh, the other thing that we did, not along the lines of regional trade but we also managed the assistance to the Tibetan Authority.

*Q: Ah, yes, of course. Did you ever get a chance to visit the Tibetan Authority?*

BEED: Yes. Yeah, yes.

*Q: So, did you meet the Dalai Lama?*

BEED: Well, I'm going to give you a sob story about that. (Peasley laughs)

*Q: Oh, no; they wouldn't let you.*

BEED: The Embassy and Washington at the time were careful about having senior U.S. officials meet with the Dalai Lama. Long story short - my wife and son got to meet him, but I never did. But then, of course, the situation changed and Jonathan Addleton, who took my place when I went—when I took the War College group to go to India, I'm going to my old house there and see a photo of Jonathan and the Dalai Lama.

*Q: Well, you were very, a very good citizen abiding by the instruction from the embassy. I now remember that it's controversial every time he comes to Washington as to who will meet with him or not meet with him or get a picture taken.*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: Yes. That's a good lesson.*

*One other thing occurs to me mainly just because India has been in the news recently. Modi was the prime minister, and he still is. There have been more questions about his commitment to democracy and diversity within India. Was any of that ever discussed as a potential issue or did people begin to raise any concerns during the period you were there?*

BEED: You know, when I was there, I would say—well, we had a couple of different ebbs and flows. Of course, we had a major incident when the U.S. government, the U.S. attorney's office arrested an Indian diplomat posted to the UN in New York. That resulted in a variety of things that strained the relationship. Ultimately, we got through that, and things got back to normal but overall, for my two years there was such a foreign policy interest and strategic priority from the Obama Administration in cultivating our partnership with India that that superseded any concerns that people may have had.

But you know, that—overall, the context when I was in India was very positive and very hopeful. And at the same time, Modi was doing, in the beginning, I think a lot of important things. I mean, his first address to the nation, he spoke out about violence against women, and you know, his focus on sanitation, on addressing poverty, sparking development, and his openness to partnering. And so, that, I think, in large part overrode the concerns for many. I think over time now these have come back.

*Q: Yes, perhaps it is inevitable, how long one stays in office syndrome.*

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*Q: Today is October 3, 2023, and this is session number five with John Beed.*

*When we finished up last time you were about to leave India. Was there any discussion of staying in India longer? How did you end up going on to a faculty position at the National Defense University?*

**National Defense University, Visiting Faculty and USAID Chair, 2015 -- 2017**

BEED: Yes, I mean, to be honest with you, I really considered India and the opportunity to work on, you know, creating a new type of program, a new type of partnership with the Indian government and with the private sector and the work that we did there, a dream assignment. And I was, toward the end of my assignment there, really starting to look at that as kind of the pinnacle of my career and that I had accomplished all that I wanted to accomplish. I was really interested in thinking and planning for life after the Foreign Service there. So, that was primarily on my mind, and I started sort of exploring, you know, different opportunities outside of the Foreign Service while I was there, began thinking about it, and began talking to different people. And I was strongly considering retiring from the Foreign Service then. And I think if I remember correctly, I had all the paperwork assembled and I was ready to submit. And then, someone mentioned to me, it was Ann Aarnes, I think, you know, "Have you ever thought about teaching at the War College?" And, actually I had. And it was, you know, I would go back later, after this point, I don't think I recognized it at the time but I think five years previous to that, five, six years previous to that I had sort of mapped out a little diagram with what I wanted to do and I had there serving on the faculty at one of the war colleges. I thought that would be really interesting. So, I started talked with Washington about that possibility, Susan Reichle was the Agency Counselor at the time, and as it turned out, they had an opening coming open at the Eisenhower School, which used to be—

*Q; ICAF (Industrial College of the Armed Forces).*

BEED: ICAF, correct, which to me of all the war colleges was the most interesting just because of the focus on economics and resources and how that influences and interplays with diplomacy and development, and defense, obviously. So, that was very intriguing to me and didn't take much convincing, I think, to sort of put my departure plans on hold, let me do this, this will be a great last assignment in USAID. So, I got the assignment and then, in the summer of 2015, I joined the faculty at Eisenhower.

*Q: When USAID assigned you to the faculty position there, did you know what you would be teaching or what role you'd be playing?*

BEED: Well, actually, a wonderful confluence of opportunity and my major interests, which—you know, I did not know much about the curriculum at the time, but as it turned out, there are really kind of four major departments where you can serve and they had me tagged for the strategic leadership department, which was absolutely my point of greatest interest, the idea of working with senior military and civilian officers on their leadership development, helping them think about, you know, different types of leadership growth

and tactics and ways of really influencing as opposed to what they'd been doing up to that point. Most of the students are at the lieutenant colonel or colonel rank commander, maybe captain rank or equivalent and so, you know, they've been—they've had major leadership responsibilities but if they want to get to the next level, flag officer level, they really have to think about different ways of, you know, how you can lead and influence and be successful at that level. So, that was just a very fortuitous, I think, placement of me there. I would have had difficulty, I think, in teaching strategy or economics or the other areas that they have professors.

*Q: Was there someone else from AID who had been in the strategic leadership faculty position? Had USAID people been in that role before or were you the first?*

BEED: Yes. Actually, I know two that were in the strategic leadership faculty. And we typically have two, USAID has two instructors at each War College and the other one, you know, we often get assigned, our people, USAID's people often get assigned to the economics section but before I served in strategic leadership Erin Soto was in that and, that led to her career as a coach and Neil Levine.

They really blazed the trail, and both were very well regarded at Eisenhower when I got there and a very positive experience, so I think that was probably in the department's thinking, oh, let's put this AID guy in strategic leadership. Well, little did they know, you know, if I'd had the choice, I would have chosen that too.

*Q: Right, that's interesting. What is it like being a civilian leader talking about leadership in the military? I mean, obviously, there were civilian students as well but the majority, I assume, were military. What's that dynamic like? Are they receptive to leadership ideas from civilians?*

BEED: Yes, I think so. And the—at least my experience was positive on that. Now, I should clarify by saying it's really a seminar format so you're not in a position really, thankfully, of really doing a lot of lecturing or delivering of—a lot of the content has been developed over a period of years by the department but—so you do have set content, but they give you a lot of latitude how you deliver that content. And the seminar format was perfect for me. It really provided a way and how I saw the whole instructor role there was to really create a forum in a way for people to share their experiences, get exposure to outside speakers, outside writings on behavioral science and different things that we brought into the mix there, Harvard Business case studies on profiles in leadership. And so, you bring all that in, there's also quite a bit of reading that people do, but the discussion and the structure of the seminar itself is really designed to get people talking about their experience, what worked well, what didn't work well. And so, that was tailor-made, and I really enjoyed that way of, you know, really managing a class.

*Q: I'm sure it was very much a learning experience for you as well. Are there thoughts about different leadership qualities that are needed for the military versus the civilian side? Or, is leadership leadership?*

BEED: Well, a couple things on that is in terms of thinking and the actual course itself was called "Strategic Leadership," really getting people to think about what they need to do to be successful at the next highest level or, you know, at a higher level. And those kinds of qualities, I think, and our curriculum and the course and I think everything we talked about really bore this out that these are skills and attributes that you need in any organization, whether it's business, whether it's government, whether it's the military or non-profit world. These are sort of universal ways of being a successful leader, of really helping influence and inspire people to perform better and to reach their goals. And so, in that respect, yeah, I think I found an openness and a relevance in terms of my background working in embassies, working with a lot of different agencies, also working a lot with the private sector, with companies and structures, I think sharing that type of experience along with the content that we had and the case studies, I think we found, or I found most people in the military very, very receptive and eager to sort of try things out and think about things from a different perspective.

*Q: One often hears that some people are born leaders; other times, we hear about developing skills over time. Were you able to see people begin to develop better leadership skills through the experiences that they were having as part of the program?.*

BEED: Yes, I would like to think that the experience that—they all have a year there and we have two different semesters and two different groups that you get as an instructor, seminar groups and I would like to think of the, well, I guess it was about sixty, sixty-five students that I had in the two years that there were some that definitely advanced in their confidence, in the way they think about things and really benefited from the experience. On the other hand, I do think by that time, say twenty, twenty-five years in government or in the military, a lot of things are ingrained at that point and I think are difficult to kind of change how you operate. And that's one of the things that, you know, always—that struck me then and you know, I've continued to think about is that you can never start too early in terms of preparing yourself to lead effectively. And good leadership is a prime quality at many levels, not just the top level in an organization. So, I do think that while I think people benefited from the experience and it was useful, I think there are things that you could do even earlier in a career, in your life that would have more impact than, you know, at that stage.

*Q: Do you think it would be useful to have a very similar program with military and civilians but earlier in their careers? Lieutenants and first time office directors in USAID or State? Would such lower-level interagency leadership training be effective?*

BEED: Oh, I think so, 100 percent. And I know the military, they put a lot of emphasis on different sort of leadership development at every stage in your career and there are a lot of resources and there are a lot of opportunities, you know, out of, you know, sort of a standard assignment ways to sort of broaden your exposure to other people and to other types of work. I don't think we can do too much of that and especially in the government context, in international affairs, particularly, the more we can do to get—I think it's still valid, the three Ds, to get that together, you know, people from USAID, State Department, other agencies and the military, getting, you know, getting together in these

kind of joint programs, I think, is enormously beneficial. You know, the State Department, I think they've increased some things on that. By the same token, they also got rid of things, like the Senior Seminar and different programs like that and to my way of thinking we should be doing it at, you know, every part of the spectrum. And I think USAID in the last few years has changed that. We've started sending people to the command and general staff colleges where FS-2s can go.

*Q: Okay, so they are doing that now.*

BEED: Yes. But I would do as much as possible, even more than they're doing now.

*Q: Okay.*

*Did you ever have any USAID training, by the way, any kind of leadership training? Did you go to the Federal Executive Institute? Or I'm not sure during your era where AID was doing leadership training.*

BEED: Yes, I did, and I found—I thought it was fantastic. I went to the two-week course—and when I was in USAID and at that level, they had sort of three levels, they had one course that was provided by a contractor, I think, and then they had two at the Federal Executive Institute, sort of two levels. And I did both, the two-week course and I did the one-week course later. And I found the content very useful, you know, how to deal with the media, how to work with Congress, but beyond all of that just really sharing experiences from, you know, colleagues from around the world. And either the second or the first course had senior FSNs in it as well, you got a rich diversity of people in both leadership courses, if I remember correctly, and that was really—that was fantastic. And you develop relationships, at least I did, with some people that you know, I hadn't worked with in the past, but you know, maintained a friendship, you know, moving forward.

*Q: Would it make sense to take this kind of course on the road to posts for a shorter period, a week or something similar that involved interagency people and brought in senior FSNs? I've never heard of interagency training at a post and I'm wondering if something like that would be doable or useful.*

BEED: Yes, I think we even tried to do it a couple of different times whereby incorporating people from the outside or from other agencies in courses because at Mexico, Paraguay, in Egypt and in India I know in all four cases we set up in-country sort of retreat with leadership development, professional development as a part of it and we tried to incorporate follow-on mentoring programs that came out of that. And we got some fantastic facilitators who were—we had a great experience with going back to Mexico and sort of used the same ones, you know, as I went around because they had such an impact, positive impact on people. So, for the most part, we did these things in-country just with USAID staff, but I think there were a couple of times we tried to incorporate people from the outside as well and I do think that would have a lot of value.

*Q: Okay; that's very interesting. It sounds like it was a wonderful opportunity for you but also that you provided great value to the Eisenhower School while you were there.*

BEED: I really enjoyed it and it was, to your point about being something completely new and different for me. For the first three months it was one of the toughest jobs I've ever had. I worked, to prepare one lesson it would take me two full days, you know, all day long working on it. I eventually got to the point where I could prepare a lesson in less than half a day. But when I started, I felt like I was working seven days a week, really, just to get familiar with the material and you know, to have some measure of confidence that I was going to be interesting and deliver something good. So, after that first semester, yeah, I got much better, and I really enjoyed it.

*Q: Yeah. Did you share any of the materials or curriculum with people in AID, in the human capital development office? Are they aware of some of the approaches that are taken by other organizations on leadership training?*

BEED: You know, that is probably an area where there isn't enough—although we certainly—I think there was interest in doing more—I think that wasn't—when you go to NDU or one of the war colleges on the faculty it takes a lot of effort to stay connected—

*Q: (Laughs) With AID. Yeah, they forget about you.*

BEED: Yes. And you are kind of—it's a little bit of out of sight, out of mind and you know, we did have—because another role of everyone, of USAID faculty there is to educate not only your students but hopefully the broader population there about what USAID does and the value that it can have in foreign policy. So, there were certainly different things that we did but as far as a strong linkage back to the agency and interchange of things that we were developing, it wasn't, at least when I was there, terribly connected.

*Q: Or even with the Foreign Service Institute because I know that the State Department and USAID to some extent are investing in leadership training at FSI. But would they have sort of reached out to NDU or did you have any experience with them sharing ideas or approaches?*

BEED: Not so much. And that is actually something that I would think would make sense. But you know, I believe, I'm trying to remember kind of organizationally where we fell, the faculty members. I guess we had a civil military group at USAID, and I think we were loosely affiliated with them. You know, I may be misremembering stuff. It was kind of disjointed.

And I think FSI was certainly something else, yeah, the FSI people. But to me, that would be natural, I think. If they aren't now connected, they should be.

*Q: Well, fascinating. So, you spent two years doing this and it sounds like it was a wonderful experience. You had started thinking that might be the end of your USAID*

*career, but you obviously opted not to have it end at the Eisenhower School at the National Defense University.*

BEED: Yes. And this sort of became, now as I was finishing up at NDU, this was going to be, okay, this is where I exit stage right. And I did not at that point have terribly well-defined plans for what next, whereas when I was in India there were a couple of different sort of clear opportunities that, you know, I was thinking about. So, I sort of reached the end of my assignment there without really knowing what's next except that yeah, I'm probably going to leave the Foreign Service now and do something else. And then, all of a sudden, I got a call from the Latin America bureau saying, "Hey, we really need somebody in Guatemala and would you consider that?" And I said, "Well, yeah. I don't know how much I can—how long I can commit to it but that sounds interesting," having served in Mexico and in South America but never in Central America, that sounds really interesting. And the mission had gone through a lot of, you know, trauma and stress and different things and so, they wanted somebody to come in there and, you know, help, you know, help get it back on its feet. And it sounded really super interesting so I didn't debate too much about it and I said, "Yeah, let's do it." So, I went, got assigned to Guatemala.

**USAID/Guatemala, Mission Director, 2017 - 2019**

*Q: Okay, so the summer of 2017 you went off to Guatemala. Guatemala has been a key Central American program for a long time, but it also has gone up and down because of political and human rights concerns. What was the state of affairs like in 2017 when you went?*

BEED: Yes, it was, well, in a lot of ways it was, again, perfect timing for me just because there was a lot of attention on the region, this whole issue of migration and there was interest in what more can we do, how can we more effectively deal with that. So, it was a high priority, if you will, I think for the agency. And interesting, you know, an interesting set of issues that you don't necessarily find in a lot of places where AID is, this migration to the U.S. being chief among them.

So, we were also sort of benefitting from, you know, that priority interest was also, you know, adding to resources at the time.

As opposed to, you know, closing. So, that was fun. And I thought I saw kind of a clear opportunity. Guatemala really has so many natural advantages to it, people, climate, tourism, just, you know, a lot of expertise and entrepreneurial pockets of the country that had maybe not been maximized yet. The mission, for whatever reason, had started to get away from private sector engagement. It wasn't necessarily a real sort of focus at the time. So, I thought, well, that should be a priority for us and we should really be thinking about how we can engage the private sector to a much greater extent in Guatemala on all our goals. So, I thought it was, again, kind of a clear way forward, I think, to try to lead the mission. And just wonderful people in the mission. Very senior and experienced FSNs, you know, in every part of the mission and every sector office. So, that was quite

fortunate. So, it was a—I'm really glad, looking back, that I decided to do this one last assignment even though it really—we didn't have the—I would be the first assignment and only assignment where I—the family didn't go with me because my son was in high school and we didn't want to switch him out but we felt like okay, Guatemala's close enough that we can get back to visit each other from time to time.

*Q: Was the program there national or geographically focused? Were you working with the indigenous people in the highlands? Any geographic focus?*

BEED: Yes, as we were coming out—you know, Guatemala had been operating on a old strategy that had been extended and extended and so it was really kind of—we didn't really have a new strategy and then, with everything going on in Washington at the time and you had this, you know, new administration coming in, so there was this interim feel to the program where a lot of sort of strategic decisions, again, a lot of input from State Department and from other parts of the U.S. government on the migration question so lots of different interagency strategies floating around so the USAID strategy kind of got put to the side for a while. We just kept operating on an interim kind of basis.

*Q: On the migration front, the idea was to try to do things to encourage people not to want to move. If that was the U.S. government strategy, I assume that then began to help define what USAID priorities would be, right?*

BEED: Right, right.

*Q: And so, you're focused then on the private sector, presumably to create jobs and increase incomes. Was that an important part of this attempt?*

BEED: Yes. And really, for the three so-called Northern Triangle countries, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, they all had a, you know, there were all common drivers of migration in all countries, but the three countries were different in terms of what was really the underpinning problem. For instance, in El Salvador it was really a lack of security.

That was not the case in Guatemala. It was really lack of economic opportunity, lack of educational opportunity, so lack of opportunity writ large that was really the principal fueler. So, USAID and the rest of the U.S. government was typically—everything in our portfolio was somehow to be focused on reducing, you know, or attacking these drivers of migration. And to your point, your initial question about working with indigenous people, that was a focal point of an integrated development strategy that we had in what's called the Western Highlands of Guatemala, a program that had not been terribly successful although it had its advocates that said it, you know, should have been given more time. Anyway, that was winding down so we were, you know, yes, looking at the Western Highlands and looking at how we could focus more on those regions where there was significant migration coming from. As far as a real strategic emphasis on indigenous population in Guatemala, we were working in that direction, but it became really the centerpiece only later, after I left, of a new USAID strategy that was approved after I left.

But yes, indigenous and the way I saw it, if I had been there to work on the strategy, I really would have pushed us to do nothing but work with youth. Guatemala is an incredibly young country, the median age is, I want to say nineteen, and most of the people migrating are young. And I thought kind of thinking forward and I think the mission saw this too but looking at that, looking at the makeup of the country and the migration issues is that we should make youth a focal point for everything, everything, health, democracy, you know, economic growth, and I think that did become kind of a major facet. But then, your original question about indigenous people, that really, I think, became even more of a focal point of the new strategy after I left.

*Q: You had mentioned to me the other day that Bob Gersony did some work in Guatemala for USAID on this issue.*

BEED: He came back after I left and my replacement was Anu Rajaraman, who's now in Colombia as the director. I haven't—I didn't see his report but I did get a summary and I—what I understand the main conclusion was that there's very little that USAID or U.S. can do to slow the migration (Peasley laughs) of those countries, so.

But you know, yes, he went down and he did his thing.

*Q: He did his thing and he knows the country well.*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: A couple questions with the embassy. What were relations like with the embassy? Did you have a career or political ambassador? I know this was a trying time for many in the Foreign Service, including a lot of tensions with Washington.*

BEED: Yes. We had a career ambassador who arrived at the same time I did, and I can look back and I probably worked with thirteen ambassadors in my career and Luis Arreaga may have been the best of all. He started as a USAID economist a long time ago. But if I'm representing what he said correctly to me is AID was a little bit—he was in Latin America, assigned initially as an AID economist, so it was a little too Wild West for him and kind of a boys club and so, he moved over to the State Department and he had a lot of successful assignments and he was ambassador to Iceland a lot of other prominent roles. And he was the PDAS (Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary) in INL (Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) just before coming to Guatemala. Anyway, I would say I enjoyed working with and respected every ambassador I served with -- I don't know how many people can say that. Working with so many different ambassadors, both career and political, they were all good. I was extremely fortunate. I had a lot of regard for every ambassador I ever worked with, but I think working with Luis Arreaga was the most enjoyable relationship of all.

*Q: That's great because it was a country with a lot of political issues and one where it's very easy for AID to get crosswise if you don't have a really good ambassador.*

BEED: Yes. And he was born in Guatemala so he is, you know, Guatemalan-American. He just had fabulous instincts as a person, as a leader and I thought he was a very effective ambassador during a very difficult time to be ambassador.

*Q: I assume USAID historically has had a fairly strong democracy and governance program in Guatemala. Was that the case while you were there as well? If so, was it mostly rule of law, civil society, or other areas?*

BEED: Really a wide range. It's a very large portfolio, fantastic team of FSNs and Americans there, very effective. The rule of law, justice work was especially effective, and had amazing links there to the attorneys general on down and the courts. When there were attorneys general and there was a court that you could trust and work with.

So, we were fortunate to have very strong counterparts in many different DG institutions as well. So, it was a very important and effective part of what USAID was doing there and a group and a team that—and I think the ambassador would tell you the same thing—was providing, I think, well, working hand in glove with the embassy and different sections. INL had a large program there too, but I think our DG program was uniquely able to advise the ambassador, I think, give him a lot of good advice and intel on things that were going on.

*Q: I know that human rights has been a longstanding issue in Guatemala. Do you recall whether USAID saw drafts or made inputs to the Embassy's annual human rights report? Was preparing the report a collaborative process across the country team?*

BEED: Yes, USAID had I think there were major sections of it that we contributed to and then, yeah, would always sort of clear on it, if you will.

*Q: Good. Also, because of the human rights concerns and issues in Guatemala over time, there have often been groups based in Washington trying to influence funding levels for Guatemala. Did you have to deal with any groups like that? During the period you were there, was that an issue?*

BEED: Yes, I think this is one of the strengths of our DG office and how our—and the programs that we were working on. There was a very, I think, strong synergy and commonality of thinking that civil society for the most part in the U.S., I think, was a very big advocate for what we were doing, what we were working on, yeah, especially DG.

*Q: So, they respected what you were doing and therefore they didn't create extra tension. Good.*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: I Googled Guatemala just before we called and the first thing that came up was something I'd completely forgotten about: a big volcano eruption in 2018?*

BEED: Yes. If not a political earthquake there's some kind of natural disaster every place I've been, yeah.

*Q: (Laughs) So, did AID have to respond on this? There were a number of deaths and it seems to have been a quite serious incident.*

BEED: We did. We did, yeah. Both OFDA and the mission and actually, a lot of the thinking like on resettlement and for people who were living in communities right under the volcano who were displaced we were involved in a lot of that sort of how does Guatemala recover from this. And had a respected voice and influential voice on that.

*Q: There have been regional programs in Central America for years and a regional office once based in Guatemala. Did you have any responsibilities for regional activities, number one, and number two, were there regional activities that you all were engaged with, particularly on migration questions or private sector development?*

BEED: Yes. Well, a couple of different things on that. One is you're right, Guatemala used to be the hub for regional activity in Central America, back when I was in the bureau too, in LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean). When they were moving things around, they made the decision to move it from Guatemala to El Salvador, which, you know, in terms of the size of the country, the size of the economy, everything that Guatemala has, the air routes, everything, did not make a lot of sense. But at any rate, that's what happened. So, we did not per se have a lot of regional program responsibilities except for as the lone Central American country to have an ongoing health program. We were the node, if you will, for PEPFAR (United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief), which obviously involved other agencies but our mission got involved in—regionally with other countries in the health area.

The other point of sort of regionalization or collaboration, if you will, which was quite positive, and I don't think I had this anywhere else I served was we had regular interchange and dialogue, communication with our colleagues in Honduras and El Salvador. And that's also how we interrelated to the bureau, LAC, and to WHA (Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs). And you know, the INL directors would get together from those countries, the USAID directors would get together with those countries. The USAID ambassadors and the INL directors would all get together from those countries. When we went up to the Hill, you know, it was Peter Natiello, Fernando Cossich and myself. The three of us would go up to the Hill together to talk about the countries. So, there was a lot of sharing and different collaboration between our programs, so that was really positive, and I think really worked quite well.

*Q: When you were going up on the Hill to meet with committees, were you focused on the appropriators or the authorizers?*

BEED: We saw all of them, including a final meeting with Tim Rieser in the Senate. (Laughs) And we had a great discussion with him, and had I think a strong meeting of the

minds on what was going on in Guatemala at the time and what our programs were trying to do, so that was super positive. I think that was the last Hill brief I ever did.

*Q: So, was there pretty much bipartisan support then for what you all were doing in Guatemala?*

BEED: Yes, there was a lot of bipartisan support. I should say the maybe lone sort of, what do you call it? I don't know, loud noise or problem was that there was a group, several conservative members of Congress who were being courted by conservative elements in Guatemala and being fed propaganda and different conspiracy theories about what was going on in Guatemala that was not constructive, not helpful. And so, yeah, we would face some sort of challenges from some of those senators and members of Congress from time to time. But for the most part, for the main authorizers and appropriators I think a real understanding of what the challenges were in Guatemala and appreciation for what we were trying to do. And up until when I left Guatemala, a fair amount of support for resources and for our programs. Of course, that all went to hell when the administration took the very bad decision, dumb decision to stop aid to the Northern Triangle countries because of migration.

*Q: And when was that decision made? Was it before you left?*

BEED: No, it was two weeks after I left.

*Q: It was two weeks after you left. (Laughs) Did you have any exposure to the White House while you were there?*

BEED: Yes. It was, yeah, meeting with the NSC Western Hemisphere people and Mike Pence's staff, we met with them. He had traveled to Guatemala after the volcano, so we worked with them a little bit. Yeah, so there was a fair amount of contact at, you know, sort of career levels at NSC and Pence's staff.

*Q: It sounds like it was just normal communication, nothing contentious. Right?*

BEED: Yeah. And you know, there was a lot of concern in all three countries, all three USAID missions that, you know, they were going to take a decision then to stop aid and that was threatened, but somehow we were able to forestall that, yeah, until it finally happened, thankfully after I left because that is without doubt not a fun time to be in a USAID mission when you're having to close things down, turn out the lights.

*Q: Right. You mentioned that an important part of your program was on partnerships with the private sector. I assume that was both the Guatemala private sector and the U.S. private sector?*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: Could you talk a little bit more about all that you were doing with them and what kinds of things you were collaborating on?*

BEED: Yes. I think that really became, as I saw it, one of my top priorities was to try to infuse everyone with a desire to re-engage or engage for the first time with potential private sector partners that were in a position or interested in engaging with the U.S. government. And we had the great advantage, again in Guatemala, of USAID having a very, I think, over the years a respected profile and a real interest on the part of a lot of Guatemalan organizations and individuals in cultivating, maintaining a positive relationship with the United States. So, I felt it was tailor-made to begin looking for ways that we could leverage potential private sector funding, technology, interest, influence in different parts of our portfolio really across the board and so, we would see that. For instance, there was a member of the cabinet for—in Guatemala who, his name is Andres Botrán, was a very prominent and successful businessman. But he has always had a driving interest in working on the nutrition or malnutrition issue in Guatemala which has been pervasive, and you know, very devastating for many years. So, he was the president's nutrition advisor. Even after leaving that position, he remained engaged on that front, so we were working with him to put together a series of, you know, nutrition interventions in different parts of the country. There were major employers, technology, information and communications technology with cell phone companies that were supporting USAID programs, putting their own funding into that. There were banks and other organizations that were supporting our work to help people set up bank accounts and look at potential productive use of remittances. In health, we raised a fair amount of private sector contributions for different programs. So, there was a lot of interest, I think a lot of opportunity on that front. Again, that was just getting to the point where, you know, everyone was operating on that basis and then suddenly, okay, they cut off funding. So.

*Q; Were you working with U.S. firms as well?*

BEED: Yes.

*Q: Do you know if the U.S. firms ever tried to influence policy, most especially the decision to cut off aid to Central America?*

BEED: I don't know that they did. I do know that, of course, now with the Biden Administration there's been an enormous focus on engaging the U.S. private sector, the local Central American private sector, you know, with a lot of attention on it and a lot going on now in that effort. But back then, yeah, I don't recall any efforts. And it's difficult to see how they would have had much success dealing with what everyone had to deal with back then.

*Q: Let me ask a more generic question about public-private partnerships. USAID had started some years ago the Global Development Alliance, the GDA, and given the longtime interest that you've had in creating partnerships, did the GDA people ever try to talk you into taking on GDA as an agency priority or did they ever try to grab you?*

BEED: I don't recall that. Yeah, no.

*Q: (Laughs) Because you were sort of doing it but not under the GDA label. You've obviously been doing it with your own philosophical approach to it.*

BEED: But I think it was a great initiative and I think it really got a lot of things going. From my point of view, I was an advocate for it, and I do think, yeah, you know, it was successful in getting more attention back to the private sector. And I know these things ebb and flow. You know, the Latin America bureau will tell you that way back before anyone was talking about it. But yeah, I don't recall, even thought that was—it became my calling card to kind of the point where everyone would make fun of me, you know, like my farewell leaving Guatemala they did a skit with just me saying I think the private sector is key ten times and yeah.

*Q: (Laughs) Okay. Well, being in the Latin America bureau was the right place for much of this even if India was the pinnacle.*

*So, is there more to say about Guatemala?*

BEED: Yeah. I was glad that I had done it and so, it ended up being just a year and a half that I was there. But it was a great assignment. We had great relations with the embassy, and I think we got a lot done despite the environment and the challenges associated with it.

*Q: Did Mark Green ever come down to Guatemala while you were there, the AID administrator?*

BEED: Yes.

And you know, again, this sort of regional approach to things, I think, you know, we all got together in Washington with the administrator and in—I'm trying to think, was it in El Salvador where we all met together with him? Maybe it was Mexico, yes. And then he had a couple of trips where he was supposed to come and ultimately couldn't. But yes, he was very interested and his chief-of-staff at the time was bilingual in Spanish and very bright about how he looked at the region too as well. So, we had a very supportive group in Washington. Barbara Feinstein was—the DAA that we worked with, she was wonderful to work with and I marvel at someone playing that role so well in Washington with everything going on and the political swirl. You know, Central America during that period came close to rivaling what we had in Egypt, I think, as far as different political interests and different points of view and having to negotiate through that, you know, but yes, so, we had a very supportive bureau and team, I think all the way around.

*Q: That's good. So, when you were thinking about what next, was the decision to leave AID and to retire? This is young to retire.*

BEED: I did, yeah. So, what was I when I retired? I was fifty-five, fifty-five exactly, and I retired in April. I retired from post and then went into the transition course, which was fantastic. But yeah, it was clear to me that it was time to get back one, because my son was starting his senior year and I'd missed his junior year so for all sorts of reasons it was finally time to move on.

*Q: So, what did you—you can say a word or two about what you've been doing since then. I know you're working. (Laughs) You can say a little bit about what you've been doing.*

**Retirement from USAID in 2019 – Post-Retirement Work**

BEED: Yes. Well, I mentioned the transition course, which I thought was so helpful because I went into—I approached my leaving the Foreign Service with a goal in mind and my goal when I—before I took the course was oh, I've got to get a job in some big company and you know, make some money. But you go into that course and you get exposed to all sorts of different next steps for people, everything from hey, you could serve on the State Department inspector general groups that go out and assess leadership, management effectiveness at embassies to you could start a business, you could work for a, you know, beltway bandit or corporation, you could go back to work as a reemployed annuitant, you could do this, that, all sorts of different things or you could just enjoy life. And I remember different bits of advice and I remember Jim Bever saying, "Hey, don't rush into anything. There will be plenty of opportunity, just don't jump at the first idea," and I'm really glad that I sort of dialed back oh, I've got to get a job right away and really took my time because I ended up doing several different consulting assignments for international development contractors, in most cases focused on helping them develop corporate engagement strategies, which I enjoyed. And at about the same period a friend of mine from Annapolis, where I live now, our kids have both graduated from the same school, started talking to me and he's from the international education world, he's been an entrepreneur, been president of university in Europe, approached me with the idea of starting a coaching technology company. This was four years ago, really centered on how we could get the transformative power of executive coaching and leadership development to young people and professionals much earlier in their journeys.

*Q: That's what we were talking about earlier. (Laughs)*

BEED: Yes. And so, that's what we did. We founded a company called LifeRamp and we've grown substantially over the four years. We're seeing great results with the many young and global professionals we provide leadership and career coaching to, and have a growing portfolio of partners – large and small companies and universities that want to provide more support to people as they start their careers or start new roles at organizations,

*Q: Are most of the clients private sector or are any government agencies?*

BEED: Up to this point they're all private sector.

A real mix, but mainly concentrated on the healthcare, real estate, higher ed, and humanitarian impact space. Large global companies to small management consulting firms. Several in the international development space, organizations, and we hope to grow that because we coach and provide support in different languages, we do Spanish, Portuguese and French already in addition to English.

*Q: On the international development companies, I won't mention the name of the company but I remember sitting in the office of one of the large firms and seeing brochures about career development. Here was a consulting firm that was thinking about its own staff—it was almost like being in a USAID office.*

BEED: Yes, you really have to I believe and that's, you know, why we work directly, business to business, because we want to help organizations with talent development and retention, keeping people. You've got to invest in your people, support their development, provide coaching and those kinds of things if you want to keep your people.

*Q: John, this has been a wonderful chance for me to interview you. As we conclude, do you have any summary thoughts about your career, some of the things that you most valued in it, are there recommendations you have for people who enter into an international development career? Any thoughts about things USAID could do better in supporting its missions and people? Any final thoughts you have about your career?*

BEED: Yes, I, again, I really think I was extremely fortunate where I got to serve and who I got to work with along the way. That made it, particularly as my career advanced, enormously fulfilling and fun and enjoyable and provided unbelievable exposure to many different cultures and ways of thinking and people across the world. And yes, I, you know, in some ways I miss that but what I miss most is the teamwork, the camaraderie of working with people around a common purpose. There's nothing like it, I think in any organization, certainly not in business, that you can have, that compares to working in a USAID mission. So, yes, I just feel very fortunate that things kind of evolved and progressed as they did.

And I think for people considering, you know, a career, I might have ten years ago I might have encouraged people to do a different track first and then maybe go to the government, Foreign Service. I'm not so sure now and I—having seen different organizations, all sorts of different organizations through my company now and working at different places, you know, it's kind of unique what you get and the exposure and experience. And then, I think for USAID in general is—and I at least hear this coming out of the agency from different people is the role that USAID has goes far beyond just managing assistance of development programs and getting results that sort of advising foreign policy and doing diplomacy, I think, is an enormously important role that we can and do play very effectively and it's nice to see that there's an opportunity for that now at the—in the U.S. for that to be maybe recognized at the top echelon of where decisions get

made. And I think the extent to which we can just recognize that more and do more of that, I think, is—would be important.

*Q: As a family related question, did any of your children get the bug for international work?*

BEED: You know, it's interesting. I have three kids, two girls in their late twenties and my son is twenty-one, finishing his senior year in college. My oldest daughter, twenty-eight, has always wanted to be in Hollywood directing, writing films and she's doing that now. The younger one is working at Johns Hopkins University and doing marketing for the business school. But both have traveled extensively, love to travel. The younger one speaks Spanish fluently and that was one of her double majors in college. So, they're always kind of interested in that—in what's happening internationally and traveling but not as a career, neither of the girls. And my son, you know, he's going to graduate next year and is figuring out what he wants to do next. Lately he's talked about law school. And working for the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission).

*Q: Okay. Well, okay, so maybe not a second generation in AID. (Laughs)*

BEED: So far not yet.

*Q: Not yet. Well, we'll keep our fingers crossed. (Laughs)*

*So, John, thank you very, very much.*

*End of interview*