

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training  
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**ROBERT J. BERG**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy*

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Background

Born in Los Angeles, California	1940
BA, University of Southern California	1958–1962
Innovated University’s first honors program	
MBA in Behavioral Science, University of Chicago	1962–1965
Employed at Security Pacific Bank (6 months)	
Employed in industry (6 months)	
History of U.S. aid programs	

Joined USAID

Civil Service appointment	
Washington, D.C.—Rotational Junior Management Intern Program	1965
Africa Bureau, Policy Office	

Washington, D.C.— USAID’s Africa Bureau, Office of Capital Development and Finance, Capital Development Officer	1965–1970
--	-----------

Chaired Project Committees

Ibadan Water Supply Project	
Projects in Nigeria	
a major highway in Eastern Nigeria,	
twelve teacher training colleges in Northern Nigeria	
rejecting locomotives for Nigeria	
encouraging entrepreneurs	
First USAID trip to Nigeria heard the ground truth	
Technical and business skill assistance to small business	
Impact of the Nigerian civil war	
Observation of Malawi	
Observation of Zaire	

Observation of projects in Somalia	
Comment on airport in Monrovia	
Evaluation of USAID from non-government authors	
The politics of aid	
Washington, D.C.—Civic Activism at home	1965–1970
Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty	
Urban League’s Education Committee	
Helping local kids to get education and recreation	
Emergency Committee for East Capitol Recreation—President	
Building of Aquatic Center	
City’s Recreation Board	
Working on new housing, setting up ten community credit unions	
Martin Luther King’s assassination and riots	
Lagos, Nigeria—USAID Mission, Capital Development Officer	
Assigned as an FSO	1970–1972
Changing Nigerian Officials’ perspective on USAID	
Post-war Nigeria	
How to plan for future oil revenue	
Helping rebuilding of East Nigeria	
Period of strained Nigeria-US relations	
Washington, D.C.—USAID Office of Development Policy and Review, Policy Bureau, Special Assistant, a Civil Service appointment	1972
Impact of Vietnam War	
Involvement in Watergate	
Continued Civil Society Activism	
Membership in Society for International Development (SID)	
Influence of the non-government Overseas Development Council	
Worked on legislation in wake of failures in Vietnam	
Implementation of new legislation	1974
Adding a social scientist angle to aid	
Personnel reforms	
Field trip to enhance the role of American universities	
Working with the Carter Transition team	
Washington, D.C.—USAID, Bureau of Program and Policy Coordination, Program Information and Analysis, Deputy Associate Assist Administrator	1977

Comments on Director  
 Involving the Statistics Department  
 Discovering USAID historical documents  
 Criticism of money for political purposes not development  
 Food aid procedure builds unreasonable amounts of local currency  
 Lessons from food crisis in Somalia  
 The role of indexing  
 Self-initiated project evaluation studies  
 Evolution to Logical Framework  
 Carter Administration's transition team  
 Comments on new bosses

Washington, D.C.—USAID, Office of Evaluation 1979  
 Function  
     Conduct ex-post studies on impacts and lessons of AID's  
     completed programs  
     Coordinate all offices regarding monitoring and evaluation  
 Building the staff  
 Reviewing the impact of Camp David Accords  
     Discrimination against Israeli Arabs  
 Coordinating evaluations with OECD Development Assistance Committee  
 Helping draft the landmark Basic Human Needs legislation  
 AID-NGO Relationship Committee—Co-chair  
     Reagan administration changes the U.S. policy on aid.  
     Bolton, Assistant Administrator for Policy, ideology wins  
     Reprise on the value of evaluation  
     Reprise on politically appointed ranking AID officers  
     Stories of competence and incompetence  
     Reagan Administration staffing cuts  
     AID absorbed by State Department, consequences

Retired from USAID 1981

Post retirement activities

Washington, D.C.—Overseas Development Council, Senior Fellow 1982–1986  
     Experiences in a Development Think Tank and in Academic Studies  
 Studies on international aid, in private sector  
     Michigan State University  
     Roosevelt Foundation

Publication: <i>New Challenges, New Opportunities: U.S. Cooperation in International Growth and Development in the 1990s</i>	1988
Staff a study re AID and HBCUs	1992
Washington, D.C.—Society for International Development Joined the Board and become vice president	
Washington, D.C.—International Development Conference Joined the Board, became Chairman Major conference	1999
Washington, D.C.—World Academy of Art and Science Joined the Board	
Washington, D.C.—Alliance for Peacebuilding	2007–2013
Washington, D.C.—Equal Access	2009
Washington, D.C.—QED	
Washington, D.C.—National Capital Area chapter of the UN Association, Director of Graduate Fellows Program	2004–2011
Washington, D.C.—Peace Corps	1988
New York, New York—UNICEF and the World Summit for Children	1989
New York, New York—Training the top 300 UN officials	1994
New York, New York—Focusing UNICEF on women’s issues	1995
New York, New York—Advising UNESCO’s World Education Forum	2000
Washington, D.C.—Formed a blue-ribbon commission on Africa co-chairmanship of Lawrence Eagleburger and Don McHenry Committee on African Development Strategies	1992
Washington, D.C.—Responding to massive famine in Africa	1984
“We are the World” Raising funds to fight African famine Advisor to Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa Reforms introduced Projects introduced	1985
Reflections on civil society and development institutions	

## INTERVIEW

*Robert Berg was founding director of evaluation at USAID and founding chair of evaluation for the OECD Development Assistance Committee. With private sector, non-profit sector and think tank experience, he also became senior advisor to four different parts of the United Nations. He worked on legislative and institutional reform in USAID in an unusual sequence of positions running the gamut of USAID’s main work.*

*(Personal Note: I am grateful to Ambassador Kenneth Brown, President of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training who suggested I be interviewed for his excellent series of oral histories. And I am grateful to Stu Kennedy, Director of the Association's Oral History Project, for his patient questions over long hours of taping, and to Marilyn Bentley for her outstanding transcriptions of the interviews. The last several hours of the oral history were given at a time when I was undergoing radiation therapy and upon reading them I felt they needed a major re-do, so those parts are not in oral history Q & A form, but do draw upon those interviews.*

*The presentation is in five Parts:*

- I. *Early Years*
- II. *First Years at USAID*
- III. *Establishing USAID's Office of Evaluation and the OECD Donors' Group on Evaluation*
- IV. *Some Reflections on AID*
- V. *Careers after USAID*

*Comments are welcome and you can reach me at [BobBerg500@cs.com](mailto:BobBerg500@cs.com).*

*Q: Today is the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, 2012. This is an interview with Robert J. Berg, Bob. Bob, let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?*

BERG: I was born August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1940 in Los Angeles, California.

*Q: All right. Let's talk about the Berg side of the family and then we'll come to your mother's side. But what do you know? Go back away and where do they come from and all that?*

BERG: My father's family came from what was then Russia and is now Ukraine, from the town of Kremenchuk. His father was an engineer for the family granary business. He had been sent from the family headquarters, as it were, in Poltava, to Kremenchuk to convert their granary from water power to diesel power and then to operate it. And so my father was born there and raised in Kremenchuk, a kind of transport hub for trains and ships on the Dnieper River.

There he went through about six years of schooling and was apprenticed to a hides dealer where he kept the books and learned how to deal with customers.

When he had just turned 17 in mid-1917 the Russian Revolution came. Their first, but short-lived, Prime Minister was Kerensky. At that time the new government was looking for officials and the pool was shallow. Because my father was well liked by laborers he always palled around with them and could do accounts, the new government made him their commissar of wheat for a large area of the Ukraine, which was a breadbasket for the whole of Russia. He was clever and popular. And he was successful, always

underestimating production so when even a normal year of production took place he was a hero. During these post World War I years there was considerable public disorder from militia (Cossacks) and a war of Red versus White Russians. Food was often in short supply in large parts of Russia. Some parts of my Dad's family that had already come to the States and they worried that my Dad and the other family left in Russia were starving. On the contrary, my Dad was highly favored and even had a private train at his disposal. The family in Kremenchuk lived well. Dad had liked Kerensky and considered him a Russian FDR. But what he saw of Lenin was less likable.

One evening in about 1922 he was at a cocktail party where he expressed the view that he didn't understand Lenin's policies, because Lenin was supposed to be for the worker, but my Dad was constantly getting orders to divert grain from the workers to the Red Army. For that remark, he was arrested for treason, tried and sentenced to death. Clearly the sentence wasn't carried out, because otherwise I wouldn't be here (*laughs*).

*Q: No.*

BERG: Dad was being marched off to be shot when the local Commissar of Labor happened to see him and asked the nature of the trip Dad was on. Hearing the explanation, the Commissar wanted to know what court had sentenced my Dad to death. When told that it was a military court, the Commissar raised a loud objection, because if my Dad was talking about workers and their right to food, then his own Labor Court should have had the honor to sentence him to death, not the military court! In a rage, the Commissar ordered the soldiers to take my Dad back to prison and while the relevant political leaders were working out the jurisdictional issues, my Father's parents sold every one of their positions, except for a nickel-plated samovar and some few other little trinkets and with the proceeds bribed my Dad out of jail.

Then Dad and his family quickly decamped leaving on a train in the winter. In a scene from *Dr. Zhivago* my father was on the outside of the train, because he was a wanted fugitive, and the rest of his family were nervously inside. The train took a great northern circle route, going through Moscow (where a great uncle of mine was in a leading orchestra) and continuing northward through St. Petersburg/Leningrad. Finally they reached Antwerp, Belgium. There they waited in an atelier while relatives who were already in California worked very hard to get them visas to come to the United States. They tried everywhere, particularly with the Jewish organizations in their area. Finally they went to the Pasadena California Chapter of the Salvation Army, who asked the Antwerp Salvation Army to help. My Father, his parents, a brother and a sister, learned about this one day when a Salvation Army brass band came down their little street playing their drums and cymbals to rescue them!

*Q: Oh my God.*

BERG: So, after finally getting their visas, in September 1924 they were able to take a ship to New York, arriving in October, 1924, where on Ellis Island one "Markus" Feinberg was listed as arrived with his family. His actual Russian name was Mutia, but

Markus it was at Ellis. And so they arrived and immediately traveled to join the four brothers of my Dad who were already in Southern California.

*Q: Pasadena, or?*

BERG: Yes in a small house Dad's brothers had bought and furnished for their arriving parents, two brothers (Dad and his younger brother) and one sister.

Two months later (December 1924) my Dad applied for citizenship and at the same time formally requested that his name be changed to Mark Fein Berg. This was part of a family decision to Americanize, and it was part of my dad's Decision to leave behind everything Russian he could. He never wanted to speak Russian or discuss his experiences there.

In Los Angeles he joined his older brothers, who had already established a then modest (what we would now call) recycling business focused on scrap steel, newspapers and glass. Because there wasn't much else an uneducated person who didn't speak English could do, his first job was to sort used bottles by color. Within about, oh, a dozen years, he was the manager of a much larger business, Berg Metals Corporation, which had a steel mill and a very large scrap steel business. He later established other businesses for the family. By the time his career ended he was finding new uses for jet engines and led sophisticated businesses, one of which involved carrying an inventory to supply over 150,000 separate types of airplane parts. And while his ownership shares of these businesses were modest, he made his family and himself quite a bit of money. He did not believe in showing off his wealth, but in so many other ways, he truly lived the American dream.

*Q: While he was in the Ukraine, were there any stories that came down about life in the Ukraine? Because one thinks of pogroms and all this sort of stuff. And then you had the Red and White Armies.*

BERG: Yes. Although my Father didn't really like to talk about those years very much, he did say that when he was five years old, the abortive 1905 revolution was going on and suspicion fell on his family, not without good reason. My Dad's oldest two brothers, who were teenagers then, were active in that revolt and in the end, they threw their guns down a water well and escaped the country to come to America. In those years, when pogroms were going on, my Dad's family fortunately always got advance warnings of these awful organized riots so that there was time to hide between 200- 300 girls in their silos to keep them from being ravaged by the Cossacks or the Chekka, which was the old name for the Russian secret police.

My Father, then five years old, was sort of the front man for the family as he spoke an unaccented Russian. When the Cossacks came knocking, he would go out and meet with them and they would ask him certain questions that would indicate whether he spoke with a guttural (Jewish) accent or not. He was convincing enough they would decide they were barking up the wrong tree and would leave without searching the house or the silos.

*Q: In Los Angeles, what was the secret to his success, would you say?*

BERG: People talked about him as one of the most ethical people that they had ever met. Dad's oldest brother and the majority owner of the businesses, Mischa Berg, was by all accounts an honorable guy. Indeed he was a high ranking leader of many charitable organizations and he later became the founding chairman of a well-regarded bank. But my Dad was the face of the family businesses from the time I was a child. It was obvious that he was admired and trusted. One of the biggest banks on the West Coast told him that he was so trustworthy in running what they called "his" businesses that he and his businesses would have unlimited credit. He just named what he wanted and he would have it. And that was and remains a very unusual thing, particularly because some Jewish families felt discriminated against by the banks, which was the main reason later on that my uncle and some of his friends started their own bank.

Dad was a fair person: fair to his many employees, fair to his brothers (who did not necessarily reciprocate), responsible for his poorer relatives (although he was the fifth of six sons he took on all the arrangements to provide a good life for his mother), and kind to his friends.

He was also smart. The scrap steel business was called a bellwether industry: the first to rise and the first to fall in an era of recurrent business cycles. Somehow Dad knew when to buy and when to sell. His scrap steel yard would accumulate literally mountains of steel and then one day he would say "sell" and within 24 hours trainloads would be filled up and shipped. All that was left would be level ground. He didn't make his decisions on the basis of pure intuition: he talked to a lot of people and he read carefully. Indeed, a cousin of ours who was an historian on General Douglas MacArthur's staff always came to see my Dad when he was in town in order to learn what of importance was happening in America.

Finally, he loved new technology and he wanted his companies to be at the forefront. In the 1930s the business expanded from a scrap yard into a full service steel mill and metal refinery. The part of the steel mill and refinery that my dad liked best was the laboratory where scientists in white coats worked with sophisticated spectrographs and chemical analyses to make sure their products were as they were supposed to be.

Dad generally did not get involved with the politics of his industry, but he did one time. Former President Herbert Hoover headed a commission on government spending from 1947-52 and it was followed up under President Eisenhower's direction by a Second Hoover Commission on Government Efficiency to help implement the basic findings of the first Commission. The Institute of Scrap, Iron and Steel for some reason was asked to name somebody to represent them on the second Commission. Dad was well known to the head of the Institute, an Eastern Elite patrician who was also a very nice man, Edwin Barringer. Ed nominated Dad to the Hoover people and he became a commissioner.

*Q: Oh yes.*

BERG: Dad came back to Los Angeles from one of their Washington meetings and said, “I was telling them about why a businessman like me could buy from the Army and sell to the Navy,” and that while I was making a lot of money buying and selling from one branch of the military to the other, that just didn’t make any sense at all for the U.S. Government to foster this kind of business. He said he was offended as a taxpayer. Then he rolled up his pants leg and said, “When I recommended that the Armed Services stop selling to outsiders what they needed themselves, the Executive Vice President of Sears Roebuck kicked me right there.” And he showed me the bruise (*laughs*).

So he was a decent and smart guy. And he was well liked in his businesses and his industry. Then about 1965 when my Dad was 65 his oldest brother decided he’d spend all his time at his new bank where he was chairman and he wanted to get rid of all his other businesses. So he sold them all. My immediate family worried about what my Father would do, but he rather quickly opened up a tiny office just for himself and brokered huge width pipes for major construction projects such as were used to build harbors. In his new business he operated without the complications he had had for decades of a big payroll, numerous cranes and trains and piles of inventory. Amazingly, working with a telephone just a few hours a day, he made more money than he had ever made.

*Q: Well, did your father ever talk about the political situation in California? I mean labor was a big factor. I mean California politics were very interesting in this period.*

BERG: That’s an astute question. The Berg companies did a lot of exporting. And so they had to deal with the Longshoreman’s Union. And the Longshoreman’s president, Harry Bridges, was thought to be a communist. I do not know whether he was or not, but he was certainly one—

*Q: He was an agitator.*

BERG: He was a real rough guy to work with.

*Q: Yeah.*

BERG: And when he opposed you, he wanted to put you out of business as an example. And my Dad, nice guy that he was, did not bend to that, did not appreciate Harry Bridges’ strong arm tactics which had created a “do or die” situation for the business. But Dad knew how to negotiate and so they came to an accommodation finally that allowed the companies to continue to export without labor problems. What Harry Bridges did in his harbor operations was to build in featherbedding. After settlements with companies like my Dad’s, you would just see a lot more equipment being used to load ships and the people who had become technologically replaced were there just sitting and watching. They had to show up, but they had no work to do and they got paid for it. They would come to the docks every day and just sit. I would see this myself.

There were two other episodes I should mention when my Dad and the companies he helped run got into political issues.

At the beginning of hostilities between Japan and China in 1937, Japan was by far the largest market for the Berg exports. Dad and his oldest brother feared that that steel would be used against America and its sons. So unilaterally they not only stopped exporting to Japan, they put up billboards in Los Angeles urging all steel and scrap exporters to stop shipping to Japan. Dad was patriotic in ways unfathomable to most people today. He was actually proud to pay taxes. He relished this land, a land of opportunity and justice, defective (yes) but a great country. And he felt a keen pride in FDR, Truman and Eisenhower as persons.

*Q: Exports to Japan for armament was quite an issue at the time of scrap iron*

BERG: That's exactly right.

There was a kind of bookend to that episode at the end of World War II. Dad was invited to go to a plush hotel in Santa Monica to meet with a whole bunch of U.S. generals. Dad was told to meet them at the swimming pool. He said he couldn't tell one from the other because they were all in bathing suits! If some guy introduced himself as General So and So, you had to take it for granted, which shows you a defect in the military. It should have issued bathing trunks showing the rank of the wearer. At any rate there was a nice conversation at the end of which he was offered the clean up of the entire Pacific War theater. There was an immense amount of steel and metals involved and maybe hundreds of \$millions to earn.

*Q: Oh God, yes.*

BERG: And he turned it down. He said, "I do not want to profit from the blood of Americans." So that was that. Other people with different standards made that money.

I don't want to finish talking about my Dad without mentioning that there was one time when he was not law abiding except at perhaps a higher level than local law. He and his older brother willingly broke the law by exporting to Israel via Mexico in 1947-8 aircraft engines marked "agricultural machinery" so that the new and very badly equipped Israeli air force was better equipped to fly. During World War II, he had been unable to help the Jews in his hometown in Russia (where we later learned the large Jewish community had been completely wiped out), but he could and did do acts to make sure that then little Israel could survive.

Dad worked until he was about 80 and then, alas, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and after a long decline, during which his comfort was assured by my Mom, he died at age 89.

*Q: All right, on your mother's side. What do you know about her and her family?*

BERG: Her family came from Poland and settled in Canada and then in the Cleveland and Pittsburgh areas.

*Q: Are they Jewish too?*

BERG: Yes. She is a remarkable woman who turned 104 on February 14, 2014. Her father and mother worked as a photography team visiting cities all around the South to photograph school classes, social events and the like. They were in New Orleans in 1910 when their first child, Pearl (Synenberg) was born. They returned to Pittsburgh where he made a living as he could, including as owner of a nickelodeon (the movie theater of those years) And then he got into the automobile business, which was a big leap forward, and sold new and used cars, like auto dealers will, in an era when automobiles were still relatively new. Through the “Roaring 20s” they made some money until a year after the Crash of 1929 in which he did not sell a single vehicle, because nobody was buying. That’s interesting to me because we’ve just come through a major economic crisis that people have compared to being almost as severe as the Great Depression. But during the Great Recession of 2008-11 U.S. vehicle sales were still over 10 million units a year, whereas in the Great Depression the make of auto my Grandfather sold, the Hudson/Essex, lost over 80% of their sales and soon went out of business. Now that’s a Depression!

*Q: (laughs) Yeah.*

BERG: Like many families facing economic disaster at that time, they sold what they could, packed up everything they had and moved West to Los Angeles for a fresh start. And after some business tries, he went back to being a photographer. My mother was then a very bright 19 year old. If there had not been the Depression she would have gone to college where my grandfather thought she should study law. She not only could not afford to go to college, she couldn’t afford to finish high school. She went to work in Pittsburgh after a little secretarial training.

In Los Angeles shortly after they arrived she met cousins of the Berg family and they soon suggested that she date this old man who was nine years older than my Mother. And they hit it off. So they got married in 1931. In a few years, alas, he came down with what was diagnosed as Addison’s Disease (the same ailment that John Kennedy suffered from) and after treatment at the Mayo Clinic, he managed that illness until the end of his life a period that some doctors thought a record of longevity for someone with that disease.

In 1937 they had a son, now Dr. Alan Paul Berg, and I was born in 1940.

*Q: Well, with your family, first place, how Jewish was your family?*

BERG: Another question on religion! Well, on my Father’s side, his mother remained orthodox. Of her six sons five were kind of socialist or at least liberal free thinkers who weren’t observant. My Dad was moderately observant. My oldest uncle, while an atheist, also was President of the Los Angeles Federation of Jewish Charities and a big wheel in

those circles as a rare rich Jewish guy in those days would be. He and my Dad supported a lot of Jewish causes, in part as a reaction to then recent history: you could not be indifferent to the Holocaust and its aftermath. My parents decided early on that they would join a Reform Jewish congregation, which was Temple Israel of Hollywood. It was an amazing mix of show business and intelligent thought. In its early days its fundraisers were held very late at night after all the stars had finished their evening performances. Big names. It was a different place. I recall being in a temple theatre production where we actually used the costumes from the movie "The Robe." Our rabbi, a modern Jewish intellectual named Max Nussbaum, was a leader in his era. He brought people like Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. to preach. And when special music needed to be played you had the Jascha Heifetz's of the day there. It was Hollywood after all. *(laughs)*.

I went to Saturday religious school at the temple, and was thought of as *compos mentis* enough that I was asked to teach the confirmation classes of 15 and 16 year olds that I had just recently completed myself. The topic I was asked to teach was comparative religion, which I knew very little about, but quickly learned enough to become convinced that nobody had a monopoly on good thinking and that there were interesting ethical perspectives in most all religions and that indeed if you took a buffet line approach, you might come out pretty well: Well I'll take one of Jewish legal ethics, one of Christian love, and one of Muslim concepts of the community (*umma*) and a dollop of Hindu caring for all creatures.

I also studied Jewish ethics with Rabbi Nussbaum. He decided to hold a weekly evening gathering for eight people my age (half of whom decided to become rabbis) and we had marvelous discussions that were influential in my life. While I respect religious thinking, I did and do feel freed from having to defend the flaws of institutionalized religion. I identify as a Jew in a cultural sense more than I do in the religious sense. The history of the Jews is one of the most dramatic we know. And the injunction in that religion to help heal the world resonates with me a lot.

*Q: You were in Los Angeles, but did you identify with any particular area of Los Angeles, or did you move out at all?*

BERG: I want to first speak some more about my mother, Pearl Berg. She was a homemaker, a loyal supporter and occasional activist in charitable organizations, and a rock for her family. She was an asset of immense help to her husband, two sons, and her husband's businesses. Dad's business friends doted on her and her dinners for them created not just good meals, but a welcome home, sparkling talk, rapid humor and deep acceptance. Overall she is widely considered a font of common sense. Amazingly, as we edit this, she recently turned 104 and is still a good reader, socially active, intelligent leader of her home, and matriarch of both sides of her family.

I was born into a home located in the Los Feliz Hills section of Los Angeles. Many successful people moved from my part of town and other similar parts to the WestSide of Los Angeles (Beverly Hills, Brentwood). Indeed my oldest uncle, who I mentioned before, actually lived in 33 residences during his life in Los Angeles which must be a

record, I think, at least at his end of the economic spectrum. Normally people settle down.

The Los Feliz area was the area my Mother always wanted to live in. It was the home area where I was raised and is where my amazing mother still lives.

When I was a kid this upper middle class neighborhood did not put on airs. Our home was maybe 2700 square feet. The neighbor across the street had a home that looked like a two unit apartment building with no back yard and a front garden of maybe 600 square feet. Al Gock was the chairman of the board of Bank of America, then the largest bank in the West. As a young child I would talk with him while he was on his knees almost literally manicuring his lawn. He told me the first dirty joke I ever heard. A block away was a slightly larger home that had a swimming pool. It belonged to Walt Disney. The man next door ran the Community Chest, the largest charity in Los Angeles. Nowadays houses of these sizes would be the guest house of similarly placed titans. And the interesting thing is that the children of these homes went to public schools. One of my public school mates was the daughter of the owner of one of America's largest aluminum companies. She and I were side-by-side with children who lived at all other parts of the economic spectrum. Public school was where I learned about what America is and what American society was.

Sure there were show-off houses and people who were crass, but that wasn't my or my parent's set. My folks were sensible and not showy people and socialized with equivalent people.

*Q: Well, how much did sort of the culture of Southern California impact on your life? I mean the schooling and the movie business and all that?*

BERG: Nice question. There were several aspects of the cultural setting that helped shape me.

First was the optimism of Southern California in the post-World War II years that lasted through the 1950s and into the 1960s. It was beautiful (this was pre-smog). It was a high growth, everything is possible setting. Businesses were growing from provincial to global. Intellectual centers were being established. Freeways were being built and driving to the mountains to the deserts or to the beaches was easy and gas was cheap. There was a feeling that you could go anywhere and be anything. The optimism that you could change things got rooted in my soul.

Second, arguably, at the time the cultural center of America was shifting from New York to California. California lifestyle, fashion, literature, movies, songs, were giving New York a big run for its money, and California was winning. The process of suburbanization, of the informal lifestyle, of radio-speech (that careful national brand of speaking without a regional accent that originated in Hollywood) was taking over. The idea of getting into a suit and out of your little apartment, getting on the "L" or into the earth for the "A Train" and spending the day in a cubicle was being challenged by sun

most of the year, wearing a sports shirt, driving a convertible or a sports car, and barbequing in your backyard.

Later I found Washington DC life a kind of compromise between the formality of the East and the informality of the West. A different kind of mix than Kennedy termed Washington (“It has the efficiency of the South and the courtesy of the North.”)

Third, going to Washington, DC or to the UN neighborhood of New York I found oodles of people who were concerned about larger issues than themselves. And this was in contrast to my native area. My contemporaries in my family and many friends and families I knew in Los Angeles, and I love ‘em all, had as their reference point themselves. They may “do” charity, but by and large, they were and their friends are self-oriented. This is prototypical Los Angeles, in San Fernando Valley and definitely in Beverly Hills. People are not unaware of themselves. More to the point: I found few in that home area who were willing to devote their lives to public service.

*Q: As you grew up, was there anti-Semitism or was it something you were concerned with, or not?*

BERG: There were some hateful people in my junior high. And I would either get chased around by them or I’d turn around and chase them (*laughs*). But I did not feel that it impacted on my life in any significant way. Of course I was aware that there was certainly anti-Semitism in some institutions in Los Angeles. My Father was prominent enough that he was asked by some of his business friends if he would join the Jonathan Club, which was the main social center for prominent society and business in downtown Los Angeles. But, said his backers, we can’t tell folks in the Club what your religion is. My Dad said that whenever you can tell them, let me know. He never heard further. I have belonged to the Cosmos Club for half of my life (I came in as their then youngest member) and it, too, went through that transition of first accepting Jews, then Blacks and finally women. But the Jonathan Club was even slower than the Cosmos Club to change. The last I had heard was that in 1985 of the Jonathan Club’s 3,000 members three were Jews.

As I mentioned, a number of Jews felt that Los Angeles banks were not as favorable to them as to non-Jews. My Dad did not feel discriminated against by the banks. He was not among the top clients of those institutions; he was not Howard Hughes or the Head of Standard Oil of California. He was in the next tier or two down. But I remember being taken by him to the Chairman’s Office of Security Pacific National Bank, then the second largest bank in the West, where he was treated with warmth and courtesy.

More fundamentally, in an era just a few decades after World War II, one could not easily forget an indifferent America to the Holocaust; the active efforts to prevent Jewish and other refugees from coming to this country; and the amazing ability of the Communist hunters in Washington to zero in on Jews as (mainly) alleged or actual members of the Communist party. One couldn’t let one’s guard down entirely as there were those all too ready to not give you the benefit of a doubt.

*Q: Let's talk a bit about school.*

BERG: As I noted, the social set that my parents were in almost all opted to send their kids to public school. They could have sent them to private school, but they had a solid spirit of the need to impart civic education to their kids. So I went to public schools at elementary, junior, and senior high school levels. And I got a tremendously wonderful civic education. When I started junior high school a freeway was being built in downtown Los Angeles and it ran through a junior high in one of the poorest sections of the city. So the city merged those students into a couple of its other junior highs, including the one I was in. That was where I met kids of different races. I cannot remember a black kid in my elementary school, but in junior high there were lots of Hispanics and a good number of blacks and lots of Asians. And the economic range covered the gamut.

No one I knew went to private school then except two kids. The star musician at my elementary school transferred to a fancy private school in Los Angeles. She was the only one who I knew who made that jump from my elementary school. We had been boyfriend and girlfriend in the third grade, so it was a great loss to me!

Private school in L.A. at that time was practically synonymous with going to a private school with kids so snobbish that no one I knew even wanted to know them or going to military school, like a cousin of mine, because you needed “discipline” that your parents couldn't manage.

*Q: Do you recall what books particularly turned you on, or turned you onto fields of study? As a kid?*

BERG: I think my first mania was science fiction, later it was around political biographies and histories, and later still it was around certain strains of literature such as Russian, French and English novelists. I have always loved the short story form. And in recent decades I have been a follower of the Man-Booker awards and through them have been introduced to a lot of new writers, which is also what I gather from reading *Granta*, regularly, a journal featuring new writers that was introduced to me by my daughter, Belinda. And I am a devout reader of the *Times*, *Post* and the *Economist*.

From early on I followed current events. I was in junior high during the time when Senator Joseph McCarthy was trying to panic Americans into thinking the Communists were taking over the country. In California one ripple effect was to ban teaching about the United Nations, then considered by the extreme Right Wing as a Communist organization. I recall asking my junior high social studies teacher to talk about the UN and whether it was a dangerous organization, which even then I knew was a false accusation. She turned pink with embarrassment since if she answered the question she could be fired!

*Q: In school, were you one of the smart kids?*

BERG: I suppose so. I wasn't athletic, but I studied well, was a student leader of the honorary service societies, and I could make speeches and chair programs from literally the second grade on. When I entered John Marshall High School in Los Angeles, there was an active and well known debate program and I was picked up quickly to be in that program. It was very fortunate in a number of ways. We had a strict and interesting coach. He taught debate, public speaking, how to respond in impromptu situations, and I got a great deal of practice speaking extemporaneously and debating, including how to research public policy topics. I loved debating and got into speech and debate competitions right away. And that was fortunate, because the tenth grade for me was a defining moment. The national high school debate topic that year was "Should the United States have a foreign aid program?" I researched that topic thoroughly and felt I knew more about foreign aid as a tenth grader than I did when I was in the foreign aid agency (*laughs*). You know, the sureness of early knowledge. It was particularly useful to learn both sides of that topic and to have an intuitive understanding that there was some truth on both sides.

*Q: Yeah.*

BERG: Then there was a quirk that the same general topic focusing on foreign aid came up again when I was a twelfth grader. Normally they rotated topics much more than that. So I updated my research, had a fine partner and we debated it fairly successfully. We won the California State championship and then I went on to the nationals where I came in second.

There were a few other formative incidents during high school. They involved Boys State and high school politics. In both cases I sought key backroom roles rather than being the up front personality. At Boys State rather than running for governor, I ran for State Treasurer (and won) and got to see the inside of the California vaults, hold stacks of million dollar bonds and otherwise playact a key insider. In high school, I opted to be the campaign manager for the friend who became president of the student body government. Later on I became an advisor to a number of multilateral institutions and that backseat role was a very comfortable one for my influence on big issues without the day to day responsibilities.

At about that time there was very soft pressure on me, a kind of expectation, that I would go into the business. Certainly in comparison with my scientist brother, I had a head for business. But the combination of an education about global poverty and how the United States could make a difference, added to my interest in ethics, particularly "Jewish ethics" that focused on healing the world, led to my belief that working on global poverty issues had a compelling ethical side to it, so I was moved in that direction pretty decisively. By the time I was in the twelfth grade, I was able to say that that's really what I wanted to do.

*Q: Where did your family fit politically?*

BERG: They were FDR Democrats.

*Q: It's a breed. ((Editorial Comment: No it was a grounded belief!))*

*Q: Well, were you following events in the world?*

BERG: Yes. I was at the Democratic convention in Los Angeles when Adlai Stevenson was nominated for President. I followed politics and from time-to-time campaigned. I would get news from *The Los Angeles Times*, which was a much better newspaper than alas it is now.

*Q: Yeah, it's been sort of almost destroyed.*

BERG: Yes. Self-destroyed. But I didn't know about such things as *The New York Times* or *The Economist Magazine* until later on. We were, very much as you say, a different culture educationally than in the East.

*Q: What about events beyond the United States? How informed were you about world events and all?*

BERG: Well, because of my debating, compared to the other kids in my school, I was definitely up to date. And I read a lot about what was happening in the world, particularly as it affected poorer countries. But poorer countries got you into the policy of the richer countries, so I couldn't be oblivious to that.

*Q: Did you identify with Israel or not, or how did that*

BERG: Goodness. Another religion-based question!! I was pleased for Israel's existence, because of the Holocaust and the fact that it was a refugee center. The fact that most countries had been perhaps inadvertently complicit in the destruction of millions of people, particularly those who wanted to move out of Europe during the war, to me made a compelling case for Israel to exist. But I did not, until later, think about many of the policy issues (West Bank settlements, treatment of citizens and neighboring Arab populations) that Israel presented. It wasn't until later that I had an appreciation that when Israel really needed foreign aid in 1950-52 when its population was growing at 25% a year, we did not have a foreign aid program for them. We only established a significant aid program after the Camp David Accords when Israel was already a middle class country.

*Q: What about the other side on the foreign aid —how was the reverse side of this presented? We don't want foreign aid.*

BERG: Well, I debated both sides.

*Q: Oh, you did?*

BERG: Oh yes. That was part of being a debater. That was like being trained to be a lawyer, so you could either be part of the prosecution or the defense. So I debated both sides and could make a convincing case either way.

*Q: What was the convincing case against it?*

BERG: Waste, inefficiency. There was a study during the '50s by Senator Green of Rhode Island that gave you all the arguments about problems in the U.S. aid program. how difficult it was, and how mismanaged. But even reading that lengthy study cover to cover, I did not conclude that we shouldn't have a foreign aid program, but that it had to be better. If you were sensible, you could not ignore the negative stuff. You couldn't just have rose colored glasses and say, "This is a Panglossian world." It was because of the Green Report that I felt it would be important to learn the theoretical and applied lessons of private sector management so that when I became part of the foreign aid apparatus, I could be a better manager of public resources.

*Q: Being on the West Coast, was the Far East in a way more in your purview than say Europe, or not?*

BERG: Actually, I didn't think of a geographic specialty until I was in college. And then I thought about Africa a little more. And the reason I did was that in my naïveté at that time, I thought that developing Africa would be relatively simple and that once I learned from Africa I would then be ready to take on the far more complex challenges of Asia. I didn't appreciate that Africa was pretty damn complex, too! During my high school debating, I came to realize how important the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries were at the very least in strongly influencing Africa's development agendas. And, of course, this was a very exciting time, because it was the end of colonialism and a tipping point for an independent continent of independent countries.

Much later, I had an appreciation of how important the Far East was to Los Angeles. I had reason to meet a few times with Tom Bradley, the Mayor of Los Angeles. Tom, an African-American, wanted to help foster Africa, but his office displayed the presents given to him by his visitors and it looked like a Kyoto gift shop. All the pressures on his 'foreign policy' were for stronger LA-Far East ties.

*Q: And you were in high school from when to when?*

BERG: I was in high school from the Fall of 1956 through the Spring of 1958, and in college from '58 to '62. And I earned my graduate degree in '65.

*Q: Well, in high school, as you got close to being a senior, what did you think as far as where you wanted to go to college?*

BERG: First of all, I was being recruited to go to USC (University of Southern California) by their debate squad. And that meant something to me. Two alums from my

high school were in the law school at USC and they were hot shots. One of them later became chief clerk to Earl Warren when Warren was Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. These guys came to my home one evening and made a hard sell to come to USC where I would be treated like a king, etc., etc. Secondly, I had a very provincial view. It was sort of like the pre-Columbus area, only the edge of California was the end of the world. A few of my high school classmates went to Berkeley or Stanford, but very very few ventured out of state. We had this feeling, a lot of us, that those East Coast preppy graduates and their Ivy League schools were a right of East Coast upper class privilege and that they had a lot more preparation than we had. To us they were a whole different order. It was sort of like my feeling before I met anybody in Russia, that from what I learned in the early Cold War, all Russians must be about eight-feet-tall, particularly those in the military. Then when I'd see little guys in the Russian military, it was a shock to me! You know, how could I be scared of these guys?

So that's how I felt about those East Coast schools. Later on, I would lecture there and not find I was on a planet where the IQs had added digits. But as a high schooler, I was dealing with unfounded fears and prejudice. And so the notion of going into debate at USC where I was desired was very strong. So I went to SC. One other factor was somewhere in my mind. As I graduated high school my brother had just finished his first two years at the California Institute of Technology ("Cal Tech") and a local school wasn't harming him!

## B. University Years: Innovating a University's Honors Program

*Q: What was USC like in 1958?*

BERG: It was provincial. There were two shocking things about it. One, the heavy role of athletics. And secondly, what I considered the juvenile role of fraternities and sororities. This is a terrible story. But during pledge week in my freshman year, an old friend of mine and I went to check out some of the fraternities during their open houses. I proposed to my friend that we play act. I told him that I was going to act as if I was the child of enormous wealth and that he should act as if he came from an impoverished home. In actuality my friend's dad had retired at age 40, which was something of an achievement. My dad still worked every day.

I would walk in during those pledging parties and I would look for the fraternity president. And I would treat him like a coat hook. I'd hold my coat out to him and just drop it on him and act like an arrogant son of a bitch. And my friend, who was a sweetie who later became a neurosurgeon, would smile at everyone. When they would ask him what his father did, which was generally what the first question was, he would say in a hangdog way, "Oh, Dad doesn't work." Which was true, but not exactly the way it sounded. Well, everybody wanted me to join. For one thing, I wore a cashmere jacket and I heard about that wonderful jacket for months afterward; what an impression it had made. But nobody asked my very rich friend to join. So neither of us joined a fraternity.

So here I was in a strong sport-oriented, socially-oriented university, but in fact it was still a university, and I treated it like a candy store. In my first weeks on campus, I went to every department just to find out what they did, including a great many schools that I knew I would never otherwise see, I would go and see the chairman of the department or program and ask, "Tell me what do you guys do and please show me around." And oddly enough, these professors were happy to share their empires with this lowly freshman.

In my first semester I took an unusually heavy load of courses and at the end of it, I went to my dean and said, "This place is not challenging me. I just got all A's and I shouldn't have. I took so many courses that I should have flunked at least a couple of them. I think I have to go to another university where there's more of a challenge."

He asked, "Is there anything that we can do to keep you?" And I said, "Yes. You can give me an honors program."

And he asked and this was typical for USC knowledge about academia: "What's an honors program?" So I explained to him what an honors program was. I had read about some of those programs while researching venues for debate tournaments and in searching out potential colleges.

And I said, "I'll tell you what. In the second semester of my freshman year you give me nine credits of independent study, and I'll also take my required courses. For my independent study, I will write a paper for you (what I would now call a feasibility study) on "honors programs at other colleges and universities and what establishing an honors program at USC would imply for the students, faculty and administration." So I did. And a few days after I turned in a paper analyzing honors programs in 35 colleges and universities, and the cost, time and program implications for a USC honors program, my dean said that the University's Vice President of Academic Affairs wanted to meet with me. That good chap was considerably impressed with the fact, it seemed to me, that somebody actually wanted to study in his university.

It took me a little while to understand what made that university tick, and it wasn't intellectual endeavor, nor sports, nor social life. It was real estate. The university's president at that time, Rufus von KleinSmid, was the largest landlord in that area. And many of the units that he rented out to students would lead a fair minded person to determine that he was also the area's largest slumlord. He and his secretary actually controlled the land and the rent surrounding the campus. So that was the business that he was in. And the people who were struggling to establish departments, like the head of the International Relations Department, really had to be entrepreneurial if they were going to get ahead.

Fortunately, the Vice President of Academic Affairs was such a find. He wanted to move the university ahead and maybe I gave him an opportunity to do so. In any case, my deal with him was that I would be their guinea pig as the university's first and only honors student and that they would see how I turned out. And I knew immediately that if you're in a situation where you can write your own rules, you have just been admitted through

the Pearly Gates! So I stayed. And I immediately went to see the professor who taught international development, James Calderwood. And I said to him that, "Next semester," which would be my first semester as a sophomore, "I want to take your 699 seminar on international development." He said, "Well, that's just for people getting PhD's, and there are 25 perquisites to get into that class."

And I said, "Yeah, I know, but I'm the honor student." And I was in, and lived to tell about it. I got a good grade in it. And he introduced me to a new professional association that was just starting, called the Society for International Development. And in that association I made *lots* of contacts.

As the honors student, I was really on my own. My own school could only advise me on their programs. So I had to guess which departments and courses in other schools would be useful. Generally, I had wonderful experiences in cherry picking the good faculty to study interesting topics through independent study or just to take an actual course. I always considered that I was on the search for outstanding puzzle pieces. I didn't know whether they fit together, but I loved the search. It was great. I sit on a board now with a former head of state of a European country. He recently gave me his autobiography which I found consisted of thematic discussions drawn from a mix of episodes presented in non-chronological order. That was my undergraduate education. My theory was to permit my mind to keep in kind of loose leaf fashion my educational experiences and to later try to order my thoughts and make sense of what I had learned.

Sometimes, of course, I would not choose the very best professor to study with, and one time I made a colossal mistake. I wanted to study the cultural impacts of development. There was a journal called *Economic Development and Cultural Change* that had been started at the University of Chicago. I was impressed by it. So I wanted to do some work on culture and development. I figured I should go to the sociology department. I went to the top of their faculty list, a professor emeritus, and I proposed that I study Japan to see what was happening to it since the end of the Second World War, because they were rapidly industrializing and their culture was definitely being changed through all the socio-economic changes going on. Three months later I handed him what was definitely closer to a master's thesis than a term paper. If I say so myself, it was a good piece of work.

He reviewed it. And two weeks later he was ready to discuss it with me. I went to his office and he said, "I have several points to make to you." And he pulled out his top desk drawer which was full of what looked like journals standing on their side all with hand printed tabs that had been carefully placed. Turned out that they were the last five years of *Reader's Digest*. And he pulled these out to cite them to me as evidence on one point or another. And I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. I mean it was the most astonishing thing.

*Q: For somebody reading this now, the Reader's Digest used to be just about the most popular magazine. It took human interest stories from magazines and boiled them down so this was sort of the everyman's guide to knowledge. It was found in all doctor's offices.*

BERG: The *Digest* had no academic qualifications whatsoever, any more than some humorous piece in *The New Yorker* would be considered academic evidence.

So anyway, I made a mistake or two along the way. But I never enrolled in debate or volunteered to debate at USC. At the end of my first year at USC I decided I had better see the director of the debate program and explain my absence. I told him that I was going to be the university's honors student and that I had decided to pursue full time studies. He said, "You're making a terrible mistake. You may learn 20 different things, but you'll only be able to express them one way. But if you're with me, you may only learn one thing, but you'll be able to express them in 20 different ways."

"Yes," I said, "I think that's true." And that was that.

*Q: So you didn't go*

BERG: Never did, never gave him 10 minutes more as he had given me the perfect reason not to shift from honors to debate.

And I did have an invigorating undergraduate education. By the time I became a senior, the university decided to open up the honors program to one other person who they thought deserved it. And that was a guy named Richard Perle.

*Q: Known as the Prince of Darkness.*

BERG: The Prince of Darkness in the Reagan years, Pearl was the Reagan Assistant Secretary of Defense who never saw a nuclear disarmament agreement that he could like and killed them all. And later he was a chief instigator of the war in Iraq.

At the time, however, he became a friend of mine and he was a delightful friend. But he was the most liberal person I'd ever met in my life. He not only claimed to know all the Communists in the Southern California area, he would take me to where he said they gathered. I worried that knowing Perle would jeopardize any possibility that I would later be able to get a security clearance. But in the years to come, Perle worked for Senator Scoop Jackson of Washington who helped turn him into the arch conservative on foreign policy that he is today.

It is a pleasure to mention that at USC that today the honors program is institutionalized throughout the university and it is an important feature of USC's academic offerings. I couldn't be happier about that. In addition, the University as a whole has become a true center of learning with a growth in quality which I would not have predicted. It is a very pleasing development.

*Q: On politics, you were at the university when Kennedy was elected. Did that election engage you at all?*

BERG: Yes, those were the beginning of tumultuous years to come, kind of the calm before the storm. Kennedy campaigned at USC in 1960. He came to the campus one evening and spoke from the back of a convertible car standing up on the trunk to address us. He started out by saying it was a thrill for him to be at the Harvard of the West. We drowned him out in laughter (*laughs*). But it was an exciting time as it was the hallmark of a major generational change in American politics.

I was active on some of the public policy issues at USC. A couple of friends of mine and I circulated the first petition on a political issue ever at USC, an amazing statement, but one that was consistent with the decision of USC in the 1930s to ban the perennial socialist candidate for president, Norman Thomas, from speaking on campus. USC did not like controversy. The topic of our petition had to do with ending capital punishment in the State of California. The issue focused on Caryl Chessman, a convicted rapist who had been sentenced to death and who was being threatened with execution at that point. Our petitioning was an interesting education in civics. Some professors, mind you, opposed our activism because they thought it was illegal to petition. And so we had to educate them on the Bill of Rights and the right of petition. Others, professors, went the other way. They thought the issue was so important that they *required* their students to sign the darn petition, which also was illegal (*laughs*). But the biggest breach of justice was that Chessman was killed by the State of California in 1960.

*Q: Well, with all this were you sort of a disaffected USC student?*

BERG: No, my best friends there actually were very pro USC. The people who petitioned with me were the editors of *The Daily Trojan*, the newspaper on campus, one of whom, Joe Saltzman, has been a leading professor at USC for decades. But it would take several years for the unrest of the 1960s to find a perch at USC.

*Q: Well, no. I mean as you talk about this, I'm speaking as a guy who went to an all-male prep school and an all-male college, Williams. And I think about the golden girls of California, draped on the campus of USC and I think, "What the hell were you doing?"*

BERG: Well, I had a girlfriend from high school, Ellen Ziskind, and sometimes we would double date with the first English instructor that I had at USC. That's a little far from golden girls being draped across my car. As close as I got to glamour dating involved enabling some cross-cultural dating. I "dated" a beautiful Chinese American woman so that I could turn her over to a young Black friend. The girl's mother was herself in a cross-cultural marriage, but had forbidden her daughter to date this Black guy. I knew and very much liked them both. Nancy was gorgeous and later became an actress. Ted Jones was a prince, and a fine gentleman debater and friend. He was Lena Horne's son and he was brilliant, an intellectual and well to do. So anyway (*laughs*)

*Q: You're speaking of she wasn't aware of it, but I had a love affair with her. I mean I'd be sitting there panting. Beautiful.*

BERG: Yes (*laughs*). So anyway, I would date Nancy and drive some blocks from her house where I would turn her over to Ted. Little did I know in those carefree days that in a decade or so they would both be gone. Tragic.

At the end of my junior year at USC I married Ellen, my high school sweetheart. She had been at Reed College and had come to Pomona College to be nearer to me, and when we married she transferred to UCLA near which we lived and she completed her last year there while I completed my last year at USC. She was and is a good person with a fine mind.

Ellen was lovely and came from a lovely family. She was the eldest daughter of a leading lawyer in Los Angeles, David Ziskind, who had been a lawyer in the New Deal, in the War Production Board during World War II and in the Justice Department until he decided to return to Los Angeles once it was clear that Dewey would beat Truman (!) He had two brothers. And these three brothers were very close. They were each leaders in their own field. One was a leading psychiatrist, married to a leading psychiatrist, whose son-in-law was a psychiatrist. Another of the brothers was a pioneer in mental halfway houses to reintegrate people who were emerging from serious mental illnesses back into society. My father-in-law was a leading labor lawyer and a strong civil rights advocate. My mother-in-law, Sylvia, was a talented high school librarian and an author who shortly after we married became the dean of library science at a well regarded college. This was the first family that I met that could be considered intellectuals and they had quite an impact on me. Wonderful dinner time conversations, terrific parties (my father-in-law represented the radio and television artists union so there were stars around who sometimes would sing and who certainly had marvelous stories), and a house of serious readers.

So life at USC was an easy life for me, and I enjoyed it. And life as a newlywed was delightful. I felt that when I went to graduate school I would get *really* serious. And I did.

*Q: Well, where'd you go to graduate school?*

BERG: The University of Chicago. I applied to only two graduate schools in my naiveté, because now it's normal to apply to lots. I applied to Columbia and Chicago. And I was accepted by both. Columbia sent me a blurred mimeographed postcard, literally a postcard that said, "You have been accepted to the class of whatever and please show up at 9:00 am on September whenever and classes will begin." I didn't know how these schools operated so that notice seemed o.k. to me.

But then Chicago's dean wrote a letter to me saying, "We read your application, we like this, this, and this about it," which indicated they'd actually read it. "We'd very much like you to come and we'd like to give you a Ford Foundation Fellowship to cover your tuition," which I hadn't applied for. That was compelling reading, you know (*laughs*).

*Q: Oh yes.*

BERG: Beyond Chicago's regular fine programs, the University was home to what they called The New Nations Committee, a sort of intellectual Knights of the Roundtable. The Committee consisted of top leaders from many of their schools, including: Michael Davies from public health, the innovator of Blue Cross; Gus Levy from the law school, who later became the university's president; Ted Schultz from economics who received a Nobel Prize later for his work on the economics of development; Bert Hoselitz, who was the founding editor of the journal *Economic Development and Cultural Change*; Ed Shils a major figure in sociology who with just a B.A. degree was a full professor simultaneously at Chicago and Oxford; and Cliff Geertz who was a leading anthropologist. As soon as I arrived on the Chicago campus, I started sitting in on their meetings. They would just throw a problem out in the middle of the table and have at it. It was fabulous. I had that, "Honey, I'm home!" feeling. So I decided I would take a mixture of fields. My major was something called behavioral science, which allowed me a lot of latitude. I was still focused on the development of Third World countries. I took a mix of business, economics and sociology. Unexpectedly, I was exposed to the rightward drift of economics at Chicago, which was a little unsettling but interesting, because the Chicago School became a dominant approach in American and developing country economic life. It was a serious time of study.

*Q: Well, did you find Chicago—I mean it's somewhat the antithesis of USC.*

BERG: The Chicago way of examining issues was to focus on first principles, which impressed me. For years afterwards if I was listening to the radio and heard someone talking on first principles I would think that person probably came out of Chicago, and often I'd be right.

*Q: This would sound like the Great Books, Hutchinson?*

BERG: There was an approach there that essentially said, "Our comparative advantage is that we are preparing the future professors for America." I went to the business school because I was interested in questions of effectiveness and efficiency, because I had already determined that I was going to join the foreign aid agency at some point, and I needed to learn about institutional effectiveness and the just beginning field of impact analysis. But you go for one thing and find another, and I found first principles learning the theory being that one searches for the underlying major questions and you can apply that learning to a great many situations. One could easily juxtapose the Chicago emphasis with the case method of Harvard's business school, which more recently I'd been well exposed to. Harvard believes we learn from situational problems and somehow pick up larger principles. Too bad we don't have a nice synthesis of these approaches.

I liked the intellectual grounding in Chicago. I liked the fact that behavioral economics was just beginning to be thought about. That rational economic choice is a nice theory, but in practice personal beliefs and even the number of choices before a person or institution will affect the rationality of the decision. This behavioral view was the basis of a major course in accounting, taught by the person who took George Shultz's place as dean in 1969. Shultz was dean of the Business School in the years I was a student at

Chicago; this was prior to his taking just about every position in the U.S. Government except president! The head of the accounting department taught accounting as a behavioral system. In essence, the measures of performance given in a situation (firm or government) affects behavior by creating incentives and disincentives in organizations. That is a theme that I think is extremely important. It explains, for example, why quarterly reporting on profits has distorted the performance of American corporations so much. I was also taken with the emphasis of some of the sociology scholars there on the dynamics of institutions. Later on I would find my intellectual compass turning to Douglas North on institutions and Gary Becker on behavioral economics both of whom received Nobel prizes for their work.

I learned a lot in Chicago and I loved it as a place to learn. But I would go to meetings of the Society for International Development in Washington and learn what people in AID and the World Bank were thinking about. Often I felt acutely the difference between town and gown. And I was more than a little worried that I was missing something important by not knowing more about the current problems I was hearing about in Washington, versus the theoretical knowledge that I was hearing about in Chicago. In short, I got ants in my pants to get involved in Washington. So I settled for a master's degree and then my strategy was to get some practical experience in business before I went into government. I felt such experience would make me a better public servant.

*Q: Well, how was all this going with your parents?*

BERG: I thought pretty well actually. My brother and I were the first generation in our immediate family to go to university. He was interested in science and I was interested in the world, as it is. He went to Caltech (California Institute of Technology) and went on to get a PhD in biochemistry and then later in life he got an MD. I went on to do the work I had wanted to do since I was a teenager. So I know they were very proud of us. We were accomplishing something that they hadn't had any opportunity to do.

*Q: You graduated, you got your master's from University of Chicago. And where'd you go?*

BERG: I wanted to have some business experience, so I went back to California just for fun, because I was tired of that cold Chicago winter weather. And I went to two businesses and said "I am going to join the government," of course I hadn't applied to government yet, but I knew I was going to join it. And, "I need to know the lessons of efficiency and effectiveness from the private sector if I'm going to make a difference in government, so I want an internship with you guys." So with family connection, I got an internship with Security Pacific Bank, as the intern/assistant to the head of their National and International Banking Department. I spent some time with them, with various rotations around. And if I had a view in high school that the California border was the edge of the universe, they did too (*laughs*). It was kind of funny. Because if a banker came in from some far off place like Atlanta, I mean it was a big deal.

I was allowed to get involved in some of their larger and dicier banking, to see how families and corporations and even the Catholic Church, managed their resources. I was particularly interested in how power was delegated and how people were made responsible. At that time, a vice president at that bank would probably control about 25 million dollars in resources. Maybe that would be \$200 million in today's money. But also, their accounting systems were rigorous. One night a team of us had to stay late to find one penny on an account that involved thousands of transactions on hundreds of ledger pages. When I asked the boss if I could scotch tape a penny to the ledger "No, no, no!" Every penny had to be accounted for. This was before you had all the very welcome computerized accounting. Four of us worked hours to find that penny.

This was just at the very beginning of the sea change in banking that took place. Regional banks like Security Pacific were being forced by their customers to go where their customers did business, and increasingly that meant overseas. Five years later when I came back to visit the Bank, their top officers were still astonished at the speed at which they had changed "Can you believe we are lending money to communist countries?" In retrospect, being at the bank at that time was like being on horseback just before the automobile came along.

And then I worked in an industrial company where I was looking at efficiency and productivity. I spent six months at each firm. At the end of that time, I felt I understood some basics about how the private sector operated, so I felt ready to join USAID and live my dream.

*Q: OK. Today is the 11<sup>th</sup> of January, 2013 with Bob Berg.*

I applied to the Junior Management Intern Program, which, I was told, was a highly selective program intended to bring young professionals into the U.S. Government. Applicants were given a test much like an entrance exam for graduate school and less than 1% of the applicants were accepted. It was not an impressively hard exam and I was admitted to USAID and told to show up at the end of summer, 1965.

BERG: Well, I had wanted to join USAID and I wanted to join them at their headquarters because of those profound organizational strategists Gilbert and Sullivan who in one of the early management texts, *H.M.S. Pinafore* reported that "I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor, and I polished up the handle of the big front door." It always seemed to me that you had to be in headquarters to understand an organization and perhaps to influence its direction. Moreover, there was the other top research finding of the infamous 1930s bank robber, Willie Sutton, who when asked why he robbed banks, said with astonishment at the question: "Well, that's where the money is!" So headquarters seemed like the place to be.

I was part of a group of about 30 new USAID interns.

## A. A Short History of USAID

I want to explain where USAID was at this point. Let me start at the beginning of U.S. foreign aid. I made it a point to talk to people who had been at the beginning of the extraordinary and unique post World War II period in U.S. and world history when a nation (my nation) began the peacetime transfer of huge resources to other countries to help their people towards transformative progress. The U.S. Government had a humanitarian streak that went back to President Jefferson sending relief supplies to earthquake victims in Venezuela in 1807. We helped Liberia since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and provided vast relief supplies under Herbert Hoover for World War I – devastated Europe. But it was new to the world to go beyond humanitarian help to seek to bring FDR’s Four Freedoms to whole countries.

At the end of World War II, as the United Nations was started, it organized some major relief programs. The one that’s probably best known in literature was in the Middle East, a program that continues to this day. But two later friends of mine, Harlan Cleveland and James Grant, were director and deputy director respectively of the UN program in China, which was then in civil war, which had 8,000 employees. It was massive, probably the biggest relief program that the UN has ever conducted.

When the U.S. made the historic decision to help Europe rebuild, a big issue arose as to whether that help should be given bilaterally or through the UN. Almost all the senior Truman officials felt the program should be bilateral. For one thing, there had been numerous reports of Russians hijacking shipments of aid to the Middle East, re-bagging them, so that instead of saying “From the United States,” the bags of flour and other supplies were labeled as coming from the USSR. But the holdout to starting a bilateral program was Eleanor Roosevelt, who was our Ambassador to the UN. She insisted that our program remain a multilateral program through the UN. She was powerful enough that the Truman Administration would not move unless she agreed. The chap I considered my bureaucratic grandfather on AID matters, was a gentleman named C. Tyler Wood. Ty Wood was in charge of getting the legislation through for the Marshall Plan but he couldn’t even begin that work if Mrs. Roosevelt opposed the crux of the proposal. He went up to see Mrs. Roosevelt in New York and she refused to see him, because she didn’t want to have to face the issue. So he sat in her outer office until she came out of her office and he said to her, “I know you’re going to be driving to your next appointment. I’ll just sit along with you and drive with you for the rest of the day.” So that’s what he did. He stayed the whole day and every time she got in to go to another appointment he gave her another 10 minutes worth of discussion as to why we needed a bilateral program. By the end of the day she agreed with him. So the Truman Administration went ahead and established the first bilateral aid program in the world.

Another older friend of mine, Phil Claxton (Philander P. Claxton, Jr.), who had critical positions in the Truman Administration, met with President Truman after he had retired as president. Truman told him “If I am ever remembered for anything, I hope it is for the Marshall Plan.”

The Plan, of course, first aimed at European reconstruction. Officials who worked in that first aid agency whom I met in the '60s talked nostalgically about what an easy thing it was to run that first aid program. You had one sheet of paper, it was called an E-1 Form, and you filled it out, and you agreed to finance, say, \$200 million dollars worth of imports to France.

Another person I worked with when I entered AID was Steve Christmas, who said that at the end of World War II he was in the Far East on some island as the aid representative. He was given a chest full of money that he kept under his desk. When somebody came in proposing an idea Steve liked, he would just reach down and hand him the money!

No wonder these old timers were befuddled as to why we needed "procedures." And certainly there were those in Congress who felt that the quick recovery of Europe was a blueprint for the rest of the world. If we got Europe back on its feet in a few years, why shouldn't we be able to do the same for Turkey, India and South Korea? Well, what they didn't quite understand was there was a heck of a lot of capability in Western Europe. Our program in Europe was intended to both seize on that capability and to give people enough confidence that the United States was solidly with them that they would not be tempted to vote for the then rising communist parties in Western Europe. Further, we knew that with more confidence in them, people would pull out the savings they had in their mattresses and invest in their own future. So we had both a development and a political agenda in very unique circumstances.

Then in the mid-1950s our aid program came under the control of essentially a banking mentality. The view was that what was good for commercial banking was good for development. And this was not withstanding the fact that there had been other streams of thinking from the Marshall Plan years, and even back into World War II. Some of the leading anthropologists of that era, Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, for example, advised the U.S. Government on its early aid program on how to cope with different cultures. And a chap named Glenn Leet (who I worked with when he was the founder of one of the world's first micro-finance programs) was a pioneer in community economic development who worked in that early aid program. So they had the roots of community development, cultural sensitivity and behavioral economics.

But all that early work at using social and community knowledge to assure that aid programs were fitting and appropriate was overtaken by that banker's mentality. And no one, oddly, represented this more than Harold Stassen, head of the aid program from 1953-55. Dwight Eisenhower had seen the young governor of Wisconsin run for president in 1944, 1948 and 1952. Apparently he made a deal with Stassen that he could run the foreign aid agency if he didn't run for president again. Stassen must have had his fingers crossed as he ran for president SEVEN additional times! When he was running the aid program he felt that "soft" professional backgrounds were inappropriate: social science and such had to be weeded out. So he took it upon himself to read through a pile of personnel folders each day. If he spotted someone from a profession he didn't like, he had them fired, "stassenated," as it became known. So for many years we were left with a staff with a rather mechanistic, banker's mentality.

By the time in 1965 I entered USAID, the still “temporary” foreign aid agency, but had been overhauled in 1961 by the Kennedy Administration as a major organization. It was a 16,000 person enterprise, with missions in most countries of the world, and it was filled with economists and finance people who held the power, plus a lot of highly talented technical experts. It had also come up with a record of pioneering innovations in the aid field such as Sectoral assistance, Budget Support, and Housing Investment Guarantees that provided U.S. mortgage funds for housing in poor countries. It felt it was good at implementing programs and the power barons in the regional bureaus (where the power resided) were extremely self-confident often to the point of arrogance. Yet this was a time when no foreign aid program in the world from any donor and few if any U.S. Government domestic programs had quality controls through detailed program monitoring and ex-post impact evaluation, so the results claimed for aid programs were not verified.

## B. First Assignments

So I entered USAID, ready to roll. My graduate degree claimed I was an expert in Behavioral Science and that caught the interest of the head of AID’s personnel department. He asked me to see him and said he wanted me to be on his staff as his special assistant, thinking that I must have specialized in human resource management. I politely declined the honor to which he replied “Don’t worry, it won’t be for very long.” I asked “How long?” And he said “Well, five years.” Which seemed like an eternity.

I finally convinced him that I had come to USAID to work on development, particularly African development, and so I was luckily given my first internship rotation of three months with the Africa Bureau with the idea that after a couple of other rotations I would return to the Bureau for assignment.

My next rotation was with the Policy Bureau, a Dickensonian place best and worst of times. The worst was a long assignment to pump up the figures on total foreign aid flows in an effort to show that the United States was giving more in aid than it actually was. There had been established under U.S. leadership a peer ranking of OECD donors in which the ratio of one’s aid program in relations to total GDP was the holy of holies. When that ranking system was established the Marshall Plan was still spending heavily and our aid program had been in the neighborhood of 2% of our GDP. But by the mid-1960s it was a tenth of that. The U.S. did poorly on that rating since our GDP kept growing briskly and our aid levels never kept pace. So the next best measure was absolute size and we were ahead on that score and wanted to make sure we didn’t lose our lead. So, one of my early jobs was to figure out what our foreign aid to Puerto Rico was. I pointed out that actually it would not be good foreign policy to treat Puerto Rico as a foreign country, because Puerto Rico’s status was then a fairly big domestic and international issue. And I thought the U.S. government had the view that they should remain part of the U.S. (*laughs*).

*Q: Yeah, there was an item Free Puerto Rico the colonial countries and the Soviets kept bringing it up all the time.*

BERG: Absolutely. Luckily I was also witness to some of the best of times in that Bureau. I was allowed to be a fly on the wall of meetings of the AID Administrator's Advisory Committee. And this was my second encounter with an Intellectual Knights of the Round Table setting. Sitting around that table were some of the great minds in development of our time. Max Millikan (he and Walt Rostow had written the most widely read theory of economic development "*The Stages of Economic Growth*,"); Emile Dupree, who was probably the greatest monetary theorist of that time; my old professor, Theodore Schultz, who later went on to win a Nobel in economics; and such. They met with our then administrator, David Bell, who had been appointed by Kennedy and who was himself a very distinguished scholar on domestic and international development. I liked the thought of having leading advisors in a setting where free flowing conversation and advice could take place, but I couldn't help but notice that economists were absolutely dominant in representation and viewpoint. I remember with a smile the main advice one time that Ted Schultz gave Bell. He leaned across the table and said, "David, I want you to get a map of the world and get a set of poker chips and call each chip 50 million dollars. And put those chips on the map where they will do the most good." Well, this was probably the first 10 minutes of any economics 100A course, and I was in hysterics internally. But you can't laugh in a situation like that. The kind of notion that you ought to make the best use of your money was such a beginner's way of thinking. Bell was taking careful notes, so maybe it helped for Schultz to stand back and give that kind of advice. But I figured you could probably have such a group there for more subtle issues.

After my various internships, I was asked to join the Office of Capital Development and Finance in USAID's Africa Bureau.

AID actually had two main businesses going on under one roof. One was grants, and grants were for technical assistance to train people and to build up institutional capacities. And the other business was loans for "capital" projects such as roads, schools and other infrastructure.

The project officers for grants generally were people who were fully mature experts in education, health, and other sectoral specialties: substantive experts who led these programs of capacity building, who had special knowledge of how to match up the universities of our land with particular needs abroad. In contrast, the project officers for loans were in their 20s, 30s and early 40s: hotshots like me. They were finance people and we picked up our technical knowledge on the fly. It was really ridiculous because we had the big money.

On my first day on the job, my new boss settled me into a little office more like a long closet in which three of us sat in a row in a windowless room, like half of a subway car and we practically had to hang onto the straps. The new boss also gave me a stern lecture saying that I had been in the wild and wooly private sector, but now this was government

money and you had to be very careful with public funds. They were going to start me out slowly to see what I could do. He handed me a portfolio that in today's money would be about \$300 million dollars, a higher figure than most bank vice presidents had. Surely, I had multiple levels of authority over me and I was in Washington not the field, but I was a Capital Development Officer in the office that had 90% of the power in the Africa Bureau. I chaired a bunch of project committees, and on each committee I was easily no more than half the average age. At that time we had no Capital Development Officers assigned to any Africa aid mission, so we in Washington had a heck of a lot of power. We also had a very bureaucratic structure of Office, Divisions and Sections.

The head of that Office was an autocratic guy who spent 20 solid quality minutes every year in his office all by himself. And at the end of that time, he would come out, much like Moses came down from Mt. Sinai, to announce "These are the projects we will do this year." Sure there was a formal de jure programming system that included elaborate feasibility studies, but this was the real program system and it involved many hundreds of millions of dollars all decided in secret.

Perhaps that arcane way of programming was responsible for the fact that there were lots of implementation problems. As a newcomer I was given many of these long-standing problem cases to solve the office's rather standard hazing process for a new guy. Some of those problems were documented in up to four drawers of files. It was clear that these problems had been worked on by lots of people, yet the problems still existed. The boss of my division was a career guy who astounded me by actually being against the foreign aid program. Maybe that was why there were so many big problems. But my immediate section supervisor knew his business as a finance person. He and his other mid-30 year old colleagues with a chuckle would hand me projects to see whether I could survive. More on these troubled projects later.

My first project was the Ibadan Water Supply, a huge project and it needed a major infusion of money. I did the feasibility work to analyze the case, drawing upon the expertise of engineers, lawyers and contractors. It took months of work and resulted in approval of the additional funding. Because it was my first funding approval, I decided to personally walk it through each of the approval steps so I could meet the people up the line of authority and so that I could see how money got approved. As the last step, I went to the AID Controller's office where I met a lovely old woman who sat on a high stool at a big architect's table on top of which she had the Agency's financial ledger. When she wrote your proposed financial funding into that ledger, you had the money. Who knew?

Most of my other projects were also in Nigeria: a string of 12 teacher training colleges being built in Northern Nigeria (a brilliant intervention), a major highway in Eastern Nigeria, etc. And soon to come were projects in West, East and Southern Africa. A representation of those were airport improvements throughout Ethiopia; equipping the National Youth Service training program in Kenya; an ambitious highway in Malawi; and a new campus for a university in Sierra Leone.

I didn't think there was much quality control over the young staff in the closet in which we three junior staff sat. One chap, who had a nice PhD from Columbia University, as his major contribution to the office read *The New York Times* from cover-to-cover every day. And so, he was a news source. But he didn't do much work.

The third chap in this threesome (who rose to prominence in the Agency) and I did our work. And the work actually was exciting. It was real money moving for real consequences.

What was wonderful was that you could travel. I was 25 years old when I made my first trip on behalf of AID, a very young official but with some authority since I held the power of the purse. Mission directors had to actually give you the time of day. And mission directors in those days felt, much like the director of my office, that they had divine powers and didn't really need to deal with mere mortals.

*Q: I've heard stories about the mission director in Athens who would sometimes deal with the American Ambassador, but not too often. And the Greek officials dealt with the mission director and not the Ambassador.*

BERG: Sometimes that was a good thing, as when an ambassador (particularly political appointees) got carried away by short-term political opportunity and forgot to use his critical thinking or his staff's advice. In Nigeria one time our ambassador wanted the whole program to finance locomotives. Well, the railroads were notoriously inefficient and corrupt, and the U.S. locomotive manufacturers (GM and GE) were known to pay high sales commissions, so the incentive of local officials to ask for locomotives was rather strong. I had to explain that we would never finance locomotives under those circumstances, and my decision held. And it held because USAID was an independent agency and we had the money.

Let me get back to my point about mission directors. The first mission directors under the Marshall Plan were really viceroys. They were powerful. As the aid program branched out to Turkey, India, and then post-war Korea, the tradition of powerful aid directors continued. Often they functioned well, but sometimes the deployment of our directors was unwise.

In the beginning of the post-Korean War program in that country we actually had two ambassadors in Seoul. My old friend Ty Wood was Ambassador for Development at the same time that we had an Ambassador for Political Relations with South Korea. It turned out that having two people of equal rank running things was probably not the best idea, even with a decent gentleman like Ty. (Ty went on to be our first aid director in India working with the very difficult Nehru.)

Another mission director model I experienced was in Congo Kinshasa, then called Zaire. Our AID director, Don Brown, was simultaneously the embassy's economic counselor. As the economic counselor, it was his job to tell the Mobutu government that what they most needed was to buy very expensive United States aircraft to carry their troops. This

responded to the Government of Zaire's keen desire to own C-130 Hercules aircraft so they could have the same ability as the Belgians to move troops around. Don even had a picture of that aircraft on his office wall. But as AID director, it was Don's job to say, "Don't waste your money on stuff like this." So you really needed somebody who was schizophrenic to have that job.

While most of the AID directors I knew felt powerful, there were many who were highly qualified, top professionals and who earned respect from national governments because of merit. People like John Withers, AID's outstanding regional director in East Africa, and Princeton Lyman, later a highly successful ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State.

I'm a strong believer that you need two independent voices: you need a political voice telling a country often what it wants to hear, and you need a development voice telling them sometimes the hard truth. When you have a crooked election with a government where you want to maintain close relations, you want the U.S. ambassador to maintain great relations, but you also want the AID director to call the election as it was. Further, you want the ambassador to be able to exercise plausible deniability if needed regarding his aid colleagues. That can't be done if the aid director is an employee of the ambassador.

I found that when I first started out, I was intimidated by the aid dukes and barons in the field. But by about my second year I would sit down with these guys and say things that were totally audacious, that I really should have been kicked out for saying. I would say, "OK, we can do this one of two ways. I can listen to you and smile or I can tell you the truth. And if I tell you the truth, I think you've got to get a steno pad and a pencil and take notes." Most times, bullies like these guys often were, could just be out-bullied. We had a director in Ethiopia who was just a terror. I actually liked him a lot and in our first session he sat down and took notes for about three hours.

My first trip overseas for AID was to Nigeria in late 1965. When it became independent in '61, we pledged \$200 million dollars in aid as an independence gift. (In today's money (2014) that would be \$1.57billion.) That money was not moving well and there were lots of issues in that portfolio, which I knew from my backstopping that program. The best learning I had there was actually from outside the official establishment, which was more usual than not. A friend of my brother was a leading Nigerian academic, tribal and religious figure. He was a trifecta all by himself. Kindly, he arranged for me to come with him to the christening party for the child of the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. At the Chief's estate there were about 400 people at a garden party. It was fairly obvious that as a Caucasian I was unique in that crowd.

Nigerians are often thought as not too subtle, but this time they were nicely coordinated and low keyed. First they handed me a plate that was as big as my hand and on it was a two or three-pound hunk of cold beef. And they gave me a spoon. It very effectively incapacitated me. While I stood in the middle of the garden party desperate to get rid of my plate, one official after another came up to talk to me to tell me what was wrong with

the USAID program. Essentially they said ‘We propose something locally. It goes to our provincial minister, then it goes to the provincial minister of finance, then it goes to the federal minister of finance, then it comes to your AID mission, then it’s sent to you in Washington. And at each step it is tweaked a bit here and there. By the time you approve it and it comes back to us, we don’t recognize the project anymore and we aren’t even sure we want it.’ While I countered with examples that I had seen, they had indelibly made their point. We clearly needed to ground truth the proposals brought to us, an issue I would address systematically some years later.

I heard worse and blunter from others in the course of my two month visit. One leader, who was vice chancellor of a big university and who later became Nigeria’s Permanent Secretary of Finance, was the beneficiary of millions of U.S. aid for his university, but he gave me both barrels.

Four and a half years later I was assigned to Nigeria and had much more direct responsibility, and then I could work on core relationship issues.

### C. Early Micro-Credit and Evaluation

During that same trip I stumbled upon an activity that was to occupy me for some time in subsequent years. Sometimes out of failure you can make something interesting. One project in Zaria, Northern Nigeria was aimed at giving technical and business skills so folks could run small businesses. The theory was that you could practically pluck people off of the street and voilà! you could turn them into entrepreneurs.

I had heard that this was not a very successful effort and I wanted to see for myself. I told the person who was backstopping this program in our Lagos mission that I was going to go up to Zaria to visit the project on a Wednesday afternoon. I lied. I actually got there late on Monday and came after hours to look through the windows of the big warehouse where the project was housed. I saw a bunch of large packing crates all in a line. I came back, as advertised, two days later and by golly there were no packing crates in sight. Instead there were lines of brand new machines all installed and being operated by people learning how to use lathes and band saws working so industriously, a regular Potemkin village. I met our expat staff and marveled at how clean they kept their place(!) I told them I had worked in machine shops and had never seen one where there wasn’t any sawdust or machine shavings. It was just wonderful how neatly they kept it. And when I came back to Lagos to talk with the mission staff, I said, “My first instinct is to close this down. I don’t like frauds on our payroll.” As we talked about it, my AID colleagues and I realized that the whole concept of the project was wrong. Yes, there was very little industry in the North. But there were micro-entrepreneurs: they just lacked credit and often they lacked training as well. If we worked with those folks who already showed an entrepreneurial spirit, the odds would be so much greater than a hit or miss strategy of picking up trainees randomly.

Over a period of months we got the Ford Foundation to set up a loan guarantee fund of only \$500,000 so we could leverage the extremely traditional and risk-averse commercial

banks in Northern Nigeria. Our deal with them was that we would guarantee 100% of their loans to small entrepreneurs, as long as we signed off on each proposed loan. We would sign if an applicant was qualified and had appropriate skills. But if they did not have the business and/or mechanical skills we would train them in our well equipped center in Zaria so they could qualify. Furthermore, we insisted that the banks not give cash to borrowers under our guarantee, but instead give vouchers to buy specified equipment from reputable dealers.

Within a few years, enough entrepreneurs had been fostered so that our ex-post study showed 10,000 jobs had been created, plus a whole lot of stronger enterprises. Repayments were strong so the guarantee hardly had to be touched. We were then able to say to the banks that we were going to bring their guarantee level down to 75% and then later on we moved the guarantee to 50%. So we were weaning the banks off of this guarantee system and onto being regular commercial bankers for enterprises. Previously most bank lending to local businesses had been for 90 days to cover inventories and collateral had to be about 300% of the value of the loan. Our scheme opened the eyes of these banks to be part of the building of a more modern economy.

The revised project turned out to be one of the very first micro-lending programs in the world. And the study of it was one of the first real project evaluation studies that AID conducted. It wouldn't have taken place if there hadn't been a failure that had been caught in time to be re-engineered into a success. This raised for me a very significant issue: in the dynamic world of development how could we spot projects in trouble while there was still an on-going USAID relationship because once the books closed and the team went home, it was nearly impossible to resurrect project support.

#### D. Early Indications of Civil War

There was a sadder kind of learning from that first trip. I came back to the States in late 1965 convinced there would be a civil war in Nigeria. I had visited various cities in Northern Nigeria (Kano, Kaduna, Zaria, Maiduguri) and I kept seeing posters all over with pictures of prototypical Igbo faces on them that said "Report Strangers to the Police." I knew the Emirs in the North were agitating against the millions of Igbos in their midst as these Easterners were commercially aggressive and successful, a real source of resentment by Northerners. Outbreaks between Muslims and Christians, which some said were orchestrated by the Emirs, were taking place with considerable and increasingly deadly violence. It was very disturbing.

So when I returned to Washington in late 1965 I went to see folks at the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research and reported what I had seen and that I had concluded that civil war was inevitable if these trends continued. They asked perfectly correct questions How well do you know Nigeria? How many times have you been there so do you have a basis of trends and comparisons? I truthfully told them I was just a kid, this was my first trip to Africa, etc., etc., but that the facts on the ground were too dramatic to ignore, that there was a real power struggle going on between the North and the South and the Igbos were at the front line of that struggle.

I was grateful when the Bureau sent a message to our embassy in Lagos and to the three American consulates around the country (Ibadan, Kaduna and Enugu) asking if any of them saw anything wrong going on. I got a call telling me that none of these posts saw any signs of a coming civil war—a position they maintained for 18 months until just a few weeks before civil war broke out in July 1967.

That war was a disaster for Nigeria, particularly for those in the East the breakaway Biafra and for our aid program, part of which, in the East of the country, had to be entirely suspended and the rest of which was greatly slowed. One casualty was the microfinance program in Northern Nigeria. Just before the war broke out the Government of Nigeria asked us to replicate that program throughout the country. But with the war, any such ideas were suspended and by the time the war was over, the Northern Nigeria program had concluded and new AID monies were spent on other priorities, such as repairing the country's damaged economy.

In 1966 the biggest event in my life was the birth of our daughter Belinda, who has always been and remains an enormous joy. She was raised with books, little musical instruments and knickknacks from all over the world. And as an only child she was always part of our dining room table in which she would surprise my colleagues by piping up with sensible observations and comments.

Another place I visited early in my career was Malawi. I went there on trips when I was ages 27 and 28, a period in which I was in the sub-basement as far as rank was concerned. Still, I was considered to be the senior U.S. visitor in those years. The Government would roll out the red carpet to meet me and their treatment of me was a chance to understand colonialism run by Africans. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, the President, was not actually a Malawian. He was born in Zambia. He was trained as a doctor, practiced in England, came back, and didn't have a particularly high regard for Malawians. So he didn't trust them to be in his own government in part because he felt they were not yet competent. He believed that he would have more power and could gain more trust from foreign civil servants, so he hired them from Manchester and Liverpool, and such. When I would visit there in the late '60s, every official of any consequence was British. And Banda made it plain who they worked for saying "I want you to carry your passport with you at all times because if you screw up, you will go straight to the airport and you won't have time to go home and pick it up!" It was a highly effective strategy for every time these officials touched their coat pocket and felt their passport they were reminded that they were on a short leash.

The 60 top people in the country would hold a welcoming cocktail party for me. They were all white. They had a modest understanding, it seemed to me, of the local people they were working with. Here are two examples from the biggest project we had financed, indeed the biggest project in the country at the time, was a really great concept, a highway from the then capital, Zomba, northwards along Lake Malawi. I asked officials of the government how they had negotiated the right of way, which went through a number of villages and small towns. Oh, they said, we published notices in the

government's gazette. Lovely. Except I then found out that the gazette was published in editions of 200 and was available to subscribers only in English. When I went to inspect the project I found that the government actually was using convict labor from debtors' prison (!) as their labor. If you worked three years you were given a "Debt Free" certificate. I had to explain to our mission director (who claimed he was too busy to visit his largest project which started just 12 miles from his office) and to our Ambassador that forced prison labor was against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (*laughs*).

The top official of that government, who I'm sure was on some secret U.K. payroll, was head of the Civil Service, Secretary of the Cabinet, Secretary of Defense and Chief of Staff. He took me aside at one of their welcoming parties to explain to me that there was only one country in the world that was backing the United States in Vietnam, and that was Malawi. He asked me to go back and tell the State Department and the White House that on the road from Hanoi to Washington, "Malawi stands astride" It was very reassuring, particularly since in the afternoons in the Lilliputian capital, Zomba, the entire Malawi Army would be on a hillside napping after lunch.

I helped us to find a better mission director for Malawi who would keep closer watch on the programs we were financing. I really liked the people in Malawi and wanted them to have the best possible help.

In general in Africa, governments were having a hard time figuring out what to do because even those that were hereditary feudal societies, like Haile Selassie's Ethiopia, were in a new era. They knew an old traditional style of leadership mixed with the colonial style, or they knew how to gain power. But they did not necessarily know how to use power in a modern era. And the donors maybe also didn't fully understand the painful transformations these countries were going through or needed to go through. Some donor officials felt that Africa was on a fast track to development, and others felt Africa would never get on that track. The truth most often was in the middle: Africa was on a track to development, but it was a highly difficult journey.

One country was definitely off the tracks and that was Zaire, a kleptocracy under Mobutu and a country that was barely holding together. David Shear, one of the most dynamic people in AID in the following decades, was the Congo desk officer. For two years running, in 1967 and 1968, he asked me to lead teams during the summers to see if there was a basis of changing the Zaire program from a security-based Economic Support Fund country in which development criteria would continue to be downplayed, to a Development Assistance program in which development would be the name of the game. The country was a feudal society in mild- to-serious chaos with a strong king (Mobutu) and generally weak dukes (the provincial leaders) who were shuffled around regularly. There was such instability that often the aid mission officials would be restricted to Kinshasa and at times cash was literally sent out in bundles to local leaders to carry out road improvement or for some other rarely verified purpose. This kind of situation was very much the mode of the more recent early phases of aid in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

I was given use of the ambassador's plane and also extensively used the Wild West local airlines. Everywhere I went there were plentiful signs of the deterioration of the economy. Belgium had left some 60,000 km of roads, most unpaved, agricultural research institutes and many other development investments but only a dozen college graduates. By the time I got there most of the infrastructure was in very sorry shape. Zaire was epitomized to me by a trip I took to Kalemie, formerly Albertville, at the extreme central eastern part of the country, on Lake Tanganyika. There the lake had risen by over five feet and the Lukuga River had begun to flow out of the lake, rather than into the lake. To keep ahead of the rising water, the streets of Kalemie had been filled in to raise them about five feet, so that many people now lived on the second floor of their homes. Nightly there was gun fire as Cubans battled Lebanese who battled Greeks who battled Congolese, who battled Chinese. When fortunately I was able to leave by the weekly four-seater plane, the Belgian ex-colonial who ran the railroad pulled me back as I was getting onto the plane to tell me "Zum people sink zat ze lake is rising, but is ze Congo zat is falling." He was right.

Back in Kinshasa during my second summer study mission, I met for three full days with the young and dynamic (Berkeley PhD) Minister of Plan, Bongoy, and we tried to make sense of Congo's development and whether there were prospects for more rational development. Despite his office being entirely flea-infested, we persevered and made a lot of progress. But it was probably a felony to make progress because during my trip back to Washington not only was Bongoy fired; his ministry was abolished! Our aid program continued under the Economic Support Fund to prop up a hopeless Mobutu government.

Zaire couldn't be helped very much but most African countries wanted help and were making valiant efforts to develop. In my early years in AID, I had many excellent experiences going from country to country. It was great helping put together new initiatives and working with a variety of people who were trying their best to make good things happen.

Around my third year at AID there was a change in the director of the Office of Capital Development and Finance. Bobby Freeman became my boss. He had achieved a string of firsts: founder of the first life insurance company in Ghana, founder of an early life insurance company in Nigeria, and first head of administration of the Peace Corps. I spent two very enjoyable years working with him in Washington. He was smart, easy to work with, and thoroughly decent. And fortunately for me, in short order he made me the Bureau's senior financial officer and gave me some wonderful challenges. Only on the last day that I worked for him did we figure out that it was my father-in-law who had given him his first professional break. Bobby, an African American, earned his first professional level job from my father-in-law in the 1940s when my father-in-law insisted that the Justice Department open professional level positions to minorities. I'm glad we didn't know that history during the time we worked together so that our interactions could be based on merit and not be based on sentiment.

Because I had a growing reputation as someone who could straighten out projects in difficulty, I had more than my share of exposure to the consequences of poorly designed aid commitments.

#### E. Self-Inflicted Wounds at USAID

I'll tell you three instances of the kinds of challenges I faced during my third, fourth and fifth years at AID.

I was sent to Somalia, because we had a program that was filled with difficulties. Perhaps relatedly, we also had a great deal of difficulty with the Somali government. Just as I arrived the Ambassador gave a party for all the Somalis who had studied in the United States under USG auspices. Four hundred invitations were sent out, but no Somali showed up!

*Q: Why was that?*

BERG: Because there were already stirrings of resentments against the West. Somalia had broken off relations with the UK, there was instability and a year later Said Barre came into power. There was a lot of Russian influence going on. Politically it was a difficult time and in the midst of this we had an aid program.

One of the biggest projects we had there was a fish freezing plant, right at the tip of the Horn of Africa. A Boston company, backed by AID, had built and was running it, de jure. De facto, it probably had CIA involvement, because it was a perfect listening post. Surely there were fish there and surely there were fishermen. But there was something else going on. As soon as we set up that plant, the Russians went about dynamiting the fishing grounds to drive the fish away. It was their way of getting back at us for having a listening post. With no fish, the company went belly-up. I suppose it couldn't perpetuate the façade that there was a viable business to be done there. The factory had been empty for a couple of years and had become an embarrassment for the U.S. So my boss said to me, "Please go out and hire some bulldozers and push that thing right into the ocean."

So I went out. We had an advisor on our payroll assigned full time at the Somali Development Bank which was our agent in finding a future for that fishing plant. He was an American banker. He said, and the records seemed to verify, that he spent most of his time trying to get the fish factory going again. He was being paid something like \$100,000/year, which was a king's ransom worth about \$600,000(!) today not including living expenses. When I met him it was clear that he was enjoying a terrific life. Mogadishu, and it's hard to think of it now, was a *delightful* place to go. In the evenings after work he would dive into the ocean and pick up a couple of lobsters and take them home for dinner. Nirvana with sand. So I went through his very extensive files and it turned out that he had lots of prospects to return this plant to production. Companies in Panama, in Japan, in lots of places had expressed interest. But he had reported that he had no prospects to take over the plant. I figured that the longer he had no prospects, the

longer he would be allowed to live the “Life of Riley” (as we used to call it) out in Mogadishu.

I also found out that the Somali Development Bank owed the USG a lot of money. So I collected that. And then, I went through his files until I found the best prospect to take over the plant. It was a company in Genoa, Italy. So I called them up and said, “Can I stop by and visit you guys?” And the result was a 10-year lease that I signed with this company. Of course our legal staff was furious that they were not invited for the negotiations, because they missed their chance to go to Genoa. So the general counsel for the African Bureau went out and renegotiated exactly the same contract.

It was clear that a fiasco like having this banker on the payroll doing nothing indicated very weak supervision by the AID mission. I had found some very dedicated staff in our Somalia AID mission, particularly a truly great engineer and human being named Lou Hummel who had turned down being an AID mission director because he wanted to be of more direct help to people. But most of the staff did not like to leave their air conditioned AID offices, which explained why money owed us from an institution located only a few blocks away had not been collected, why a banking advisor was living large with no results, why we built a brick factory that couldn’t make bricks, a school project with shoddy materials from Sears Roebuck (of all places!), and we had huge problems with the Corps of Engineers creating a harbor in Chisimaio. That harbor, by the way, finally got completed and the Barre government promptly went out and hijacked a U.S. CIA vessel, *The Midnight Sun* (the name alone is a giveaway) which became the first ship to be brought into our port(!)

Another difficult project handed to me was a proposal to supply some \$10 million in navigation and landing aids for the airport in Monrovia, Liberia. There had been a terrible plane crash in which 170 people died because the airport manager had decided to go home so he turned out the lights. A plane came in and made the best landing they could. But unfortunately, it wasn’t on the runway. The notion was that we would provide navigational aids and runway lights to make the airport much safer. It was a fairly major airport stop at that time. Most of the flights going down to South Africa and coming back towards North America would stop in Monrovia. So the airport had importance to us and many others.

At that time, the OMB (Office of Management and Budget) decided that they needed to approve every single new USAID project that involved 10 million dollars or more. When the Liberia project came up they gave it a very hard time, threatening to kill it. I was sent over to meet with the OMB Director for International. I said to him, “I just have one problem in the feasibility analysis for this project. It’s really hard because what you’re trying to do is save lives, and you don’t know what the hell those lives are worth. It’s been driving us nuts over at AID. And you could help us in this. Could you please tell us what your life is worth?” We got the money.

The project with the most paper (five drawers worth) had stumped the most people who had tried to solve its problems. It involved three contracts when there should have been

just one contract. Under the contracts Firm A was supposed to do such and such and pass their product to Firm B. Firm B would then take that information, massage it some way or other, and pass it to C. C would pass it to A. A would pass it back to C. C would go to B. B would go to A. There were dozens of such planned steps that required these firms to efficiently interact with each other. In short order each of the three firms agreed that they hated the other two firms. Each took it upon themselves to try to make the other two firms look bad. They would do everything possible to make that project a contracting precedent that would never be repeated. I was then at most a GS-11, i.e., still pretty low on the totem pole. And I called the presidents of these three firms, and I said, "Next Thursday at 9:00 we're going to negotiate an agreement to get this work done. If you're not present, we'll negotiate for you." So all three of them showed up. There were ground rules that you could go to the bathroom, but otherwise you had to stay in my little office until we finished. And we finished at about 6:00 that night by signing a three-page, single-spaced agreement. At the last minute, the firm that came from New York said, "Well, one of these guys is from New Jersey, but he was actually in Washington. And the other firm is based in Arlington. So we had to fly down. And it's unfair that we had to pay an airfare," which at that time was \$29. So he asked whether \$29 could be added to their contract. I said, "Let's write it in."

The contracting people got very upset that I had disturbed a fixed price contract by adding \$29. Apparently they weren't disturbed that they had set up a contracting schema that had cost us years of delay and very serious money in trying to straighten up the problems they created. Classic displacement. To make this kind of meddling in their work an example, the head of contracting talked to my deputy assistant administrator about the need to punish me for this \$29 felony. The decision: to tie up a then pending promotion for me for several months. I thought about quitting, but felt I could stay with and outlast these petty fools.

Years later I was in an airport with the head of that New York firm and I apologized to him for AID's not paying the \$29 I had agreed to. He told me not to worry. They had simply charged that travel to a Pentagon contract (!)

*Q: Well, were you considered a problem solver? A hatchet man?*

BERG: I was considered a hotshot. And the problem is that when you solve something that somebody else hasn't solved, they're not happy. Particularly supervisors who have supervised numerous people with all of them failing to solve a problem. But you know, I figured I was there to do this job and I wanted to get on to the real work and quickly solve all these stupid implementation problems that we had largely created for ourselves.

*Q: When you said implementation problems, what do you mean?*

BERG: I mean just the quotidian issues of getting things built, delivered on time, carried out with quality.

My Agency had agreed that a road needed to go someplace, or an airport had to be improved, or a water supply system built or a school system established. That's laudatory, you can defend it, generally. But you both want to be sure the good things get done well and to clear out the nonsense and end the projects that were terrible decisions or had turned into terrible decisions.

As it turned out, the project where the three firms were wrestling with each other was a road project from Port Harcourt, Nigeria to the great metropolis of Umu Ezeala, which, when the project was agreed, just happened to be the home village of the sitting Minister of Finance. There were so many things wrong with that decision that it would be hard to list them all. I'll list just three. In the first place the planned road had aspects of a 100 mile long driveway. It would serve a very limited use. Secondly, the Minister of Finance, Festus Okotie-Eboh, was a crook and it was bad enough that the Mission rented an apartment building from him (which had been given to him as a bribe) where at least we got value for money. The road was strictly a political deal. Third, Okotie-Eboh was killed in 1966 and so there was no longer a living justification for the project. It should also have been killed.

Those kinds of projects needed to be weeded out. Many implementation issues were simply cases where we tied our shoelaces together and then tried to run. So to me it was very important to sort out all this stuff, so you could get on to the basic relationships, the basic problems, because otherwise we looked foolish, we couldn't get folks to focus on the truly important development issues and in a slightly competitive environment vis-à-vis other donors, we were not deemed to be at the head of the pack.

*Q: Well, were you feeling in Africa at that time that the Communist Chinese, and particularly the Soviets, were able—they were putting up sports stadiums and big showy projects. How did you feel about this?*

BERG: I don't think that anybody thought that at that time China was important to Africa's development. The Chinese weren't getting anywhere at that time except for the famous Tan-Zam (Tanzania-Zambia) Railroad. That was real competition, ostensibly to find the best way to export copper from Zambia. The United States in its wisdom decided to build a highway right alongside the railroad that was being built by the Chinese to show that we could build faster and better. But actually when you're carrying really heavy freight like copper ingots, it's better to use a train as heavier loads can be carried on trains and roads get torn up quickly by heavy freight. The guy who was pushing this contest was the sitting assistant administrator for Africa at that time, whose most important distinction was that he was part of the Sulzberger family.

*Q: The newspaper.*

BERG: *The New York Times* family. R. Peter Straus, a Sulzberger-in-law, had been in charge of their radio stations. He was a sweet guy and I liked him. But honestly! We had had a range of assistant administrators for Africa. When I came in, there was Ed Hutchison, who was quiet and capable, with a low political profile. Then we had a series

of people who were mediocre, like the nice Sulzberger relative. One time Peter called me in along with our outstanding communications engineer, Sam Lubin. He told us that we had to set up a regional telecommunications network in Africa and pointing to Morocco and Mozambique on his large map of Africa he asked, can we connect these countries? The engineer and I looked at each other and asked in response, Why would anybody in Morocco want to call anybody in Mozambique? We added that the fact was that everybody in Morocco wants to talk to people in Europe.

Even at the political level you really have to have some knowledge, some grounding in reality and you have to be able to listen and you have to have solid thinking about and knowledge of what development is. Development, like management, is not some pick up game. It takes training and talent. I will jump ahead to say that only way after I had left AID did an Administration find somebody to run that Bureau who actually knew development as well as knew and was respected by the senior-most political figures in Africa (both before and after leaving that office), and that person did spectacularly. But I'm biased, because she's my wife, Vivian Lowery Derryck, who served in the second Clinton Administration.

So, back to my story, I spent five wonderful years (1965-70) getting a lot of experience working with development professionals in Washington, the majority of whom really had substance and interest, finding some difficulties in how we programmed, and cleaning up a lot of messes that some powerful officials had gotten us into without much thought. I pretty quickly learned to work with the cream of the crop as life was so much easier and the results were so much better.

*Q: Well, did you find—you know, something I've heard about, I've not been involved with AID projects particularly in where I've been, but did you find that you had mission directors or people who say, were dairy men or were peanut growers or, anyway, they would have particular expertise. And no matter where they went, that was the solution, ground nuts or dairies or something like that? And many of these projects, I've heard, you know, would have a magnificent dairy herd and after the mission director pulled out or something, I mean they would have a lot of mistakes. And the dairy herd would be gone.*

*Q: Did you find much of that?*

BERG: No, I didn't. Most of their backgrounds were in law or economists, and some came from politics. I do remember a grain merchant. He was our Ambassador to Malawi. But he didn't push grains. What he did, unfortunately, was to convey the impression that he and the President of the United States talked every night. So the president of the country, Banda, would say to the Ambassador, "I'm worried on this highway that we need a rail guard at this bend," or some other amazingly small detail, "Can you agree to that change?"

The Ambassador would have his staff write to me and I'd say, "OK, we can do that."

And he'd go back and say to the President of Malawi, "President Johnson says it's just fine to do that, and sends you his greetings," (*laughs*). Anyway, It seemed to work.

We certainly did have people in leading career positions in AID who favored one strategy or another. Tom Niblock was a very powerful mission director and wherever he went, notably the Philippines and Indonesia, there was sure to soon be a major rural electrification initiative. He was practically an apostle of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. But who could seriously argue that rural electric systems were a bad thing?

But more centrally to your basic theses. Surely, I was under no illusions. Sometimes even when we built good things they did not last. That was brought home to me by a scathing book.

In the early 1970s William and Elizabeth Paddock, who I believe were at Iowa State University, became so angry that people were vilifying the foreign aid program that they decided that they would use their sabbatical to research and to write a book talking about the fabulous accomplishments of the foreign aid program. Well, they couldn't travel very far with the resources they had, so they decided to drive down to Central America and take a look. First they went to AID and said, "What are your best projects in Central America? We're going to go look at them. We're going to be your PR people."

AID dutifully gave them a list of highly recommended projects. And they went to these projects and they found one disaster after another. First of all, some of the projects couldn't be found. Parenthetically, recently I heard the Inspector General of Assistance to Afghanistan give a damning presentation on U.S. military and civilian assistance there. He talked about missing buildings saying we paid for them, we just can't find them! (*laughs*). At any rate, the Paddocks were flabbergasted by what they found. Projects shut down or limping along, neglected. So they wrote a very different book from what they had anticipated. It was called *We Don't Know How: An Independent Audit of What They Call Success in Foreign Assistance*. Later (1980) Frances Moore Lappé and co-authors wrote a book called *Aid as Obstacle*, filled with misinformation, that got her to be one of the most popular campus speakers in America. (I debated her once on television and backed her into a statement where she said that all Peace Corps volunteers were ineffective, a ridiculous position.) A far more balanced view was produced by my friend Robert Cassen, then a senior Oxford scholar and now at the London School of Economics. His book *Does Aid Work* (1987) rightly said that the great majority of aid works well and some of it doesn't work or doesn't work well.

In any case, there was some evidence that USAID was on a positive but slow learning curve in the decade after I joined AID. There were still a lot of practices that were difficult and a number of disciplines that we didn't have on board people whose background would have provided us with skills to do things better.

## F. Early Lessons Learned

In making my own assessment at that time about aid, I started with asking just what should we expect of programs working in almost all of the most difficult political and economic environments in the world. Even in wealthy and capable America there are potholes in the streets and unsolved health and education challenges. Can we expect to do a whole lot better in tougher neighborhoods than in our own? On the other hand, I and my colleagues soundly rejected the view that ‘the poor will always be with us.’ We were generally very constructive optimists looking for doable solutions.

While I never expected AID to be perfect. I just wanted us to get better than the average grade. I used to say later on when I was director of evaluation at AID that if a mission director in Singapore (were we to have one there) got an A-, we should fire that person because everybody should get an A in Singapore. All you have to do is have an interesting idea and it gets done. But if in Congo Kinshasa your mission director is getting a C-, promote that person because everybody else there is getting an F or a D.

Nobody’s going to be perfect, but you want to be better than the others or at least as good. And over time you want your organization to learn more and get better and better.

Well, I did have a chance to help create a number of projects. I found and later verified through my work in evaluation, that the most interesting moment in any project’s life is that moment of creation which generally we don’t know about or see, much like some other acts of creation. So the most interesting question is often: whose idea was this project and why was it proposed? And the next most interesting question is: who chose the implementing ministry/agency and why? Too often such decisions were and still are made at some political level without a great deal of reflection.

Almost invariably, the more projects are chosen for political reasons, the worse they turn out. Such projects never get rigorous feasibility study because they are considered pre-approved. And they lose their urgency whenever the political backers of them leave office.

Particularly dangerous were the very high level political visitors who often wanted to leave a present to the host country leaders in the form of an aid package. You had to be very careful about letting certain U.S. officials loose with host country officials, because they might make commitments that you’d spend the next several years trying to live through. We set up a police training academy in Nigeria because the escort of the then visiting USAID Administrator had to go to the bathroom during a cocktail party. By the time he came back the Administrator and the head of Nigeria’s security establishment had cut a deal. This was despite the fact that at that time we really did not want to help a relatively repressive government train their repressive agents. At a minimum that trip to the bathroom cost \$3million.

## G. Civic Activism in Washington, DC

I'm now going to take a little break in the history of my paid career to cover an important other dimension of my life in the 1965-1970 period and that was my start in civic engagement in the Washington, DC area. It seemed to me paradoxical that I would be working on post-colonial development in my day job while living in a colonial enclave, Washington, DC, that was fighting for as much self rule as it could get. These were the years that Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty was started. There was immense excitement in the air, the whiff of the possibility of big local and city-wide political change taking place all around America. It struck me that Washington, DC not only needed civic engagement, but it could be a practicum on development, kind of my night homework to help me better understand the process of independence and self-governance.

We in Washington, DC had been ruled for over 100 years by the U.S. Congress. And it was a corrupt rule. Our city commissioners had been appointed by Congress for 100 years. In 1964, just before I moved to Washington, DC, local residents were at long last able to vote in U.S. presidential elections. Only in 1968 did we first get to elect a school board; then we were allowed to elect our city council members; then a mayor was appointed by the President, and only in 1975 could we elect our own mayor. These steps to local political maturity were merely dreams when I arrived in Washington.

Because of the civil rights revolution and the War on Poverty, community activism in the mid-1960s and 1970s grew to historic highs throughout the country, and particularly in Washington, DC. Civil society groupings in DC popped up like weeds. Community empowerment was a key strategy in the War on Poverty as was community aid programs, particularly in the area we lived in, Capitol Hill, at what was kind of the border of restoration, an economic and racial border near the Marine Corps Commandant's house at 9<sup>th</sup> and G Streets, SE. It was a marvelous neighborhood and on my block alone we had a local progressive journalist (the best story teller I have ever heard) and his local historian wife, a young lawyer who clerked for the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, a community clergyman, and a school teacher named Roberta Flack who was trying to become a singer. There were robust friendships amongst us.

My involvement in local civic society was both planned and unplanned. The planned part was joining such groups as the Urban League's education committee where I served with another new DC citizen, Marion Barry (our future mayor), who was then a super smart, dashiki-wearing young man. Meanwhile my wife started an association with a ladies support group at Friendship House, an historic social service center modeled on Chicago's Hull House that helped to transform our community.

Our first summer in Washington we became alarmed that both our local school and our local recreation center would be closed for repairs. We worried that the local kids would not get any kind of attention. So we volunteered our garage as a recreation center, hired a high school senior as a counselor, and ran a program of games, recreation and learning.

Observing this local commitment, a local group, the Emergency Committee for East Capitol Recreation, as funny a name as one could choose, was looking for a president and asked me to take over the group. We ran a petition drive to show that residents in the

Capitol's Northeast and Southeast wanted an indoor swimming pool. The city agreed and built the "Aquatic Center" near 7<sup>th</sup> Street, and North Carolina Avenue, SE, a marvelous indoor swimming facility.

That activism got me noticed by City Council people who proposed me for the City's Recreation Board, and soon I was on a bunch of city and local committees and boards. All of these experiences provided learning on how to exercise power. And they were also opportunities to learn how colonialism had corrupted the city to advantage the rich.

The Recreation Board gave me my first schooling in senior city politics. The Board was largely advisory but it had political clout. We wrestled with the City's old line recreation director who would bring a bevy of very large women to our board meetings to cheer for him and try to unnerve us with the unsaid message "Don't mess with Joe."

Joe Cole operated a recreation system that had been set up by colonial administrators whose role was to keep the lid on the city and to favor the rich. The Recreation Department divided the city into eight equal geographic areas. Each area got a recreation facility, tennis courts and a pool. Fully equal, right? But the area in the far northwest had maybe 12,000 people living in it and the area in SE Washington (Anacostia) had maybe ten times that number. Not so equal.

Libraries: Each branch library was allocated a budget based upon its circulation of books. The more books a branch circulated, the more budget it got. Equal? Not when you understood that in a poor neighborhood a library might have had a starting collection of 10,000 books while in the Palisades neighborhood where I moved in the mid-1970s the starting collection was 100,000 books.

Schools? Somehow the music and science and arts were available in the public schools in the richer neighborhoods but not the poorer.

Add to this the corruption of Congressional leaders who clung to their power over the City in order to enjoy personal benefits. I was in one City Councilman's office when a Congressman called asking for a set of tires. No subtlety there. Just, 'you want your budget, be nice to me.'

So civic activists at the end of the colonial period had to discover what the system's tricks were and to set up new rules. And we had to help new leaders on the school board and City Council learn how to be effective political leaders. The Councilwoman from Georgetown, Polly Shackleton, a patrician Eleanor Roosevelt type of insightful activist, needed no training as she was an amazing pro, but most others did and when we weren't lobbying them we were training them.

We worked on new housing in one case near where I lived a group of us under the sweet activism of Rev. Ralph Dwan, helped to rehabilitate a block-long row of houses only to have the Marines invoke eminent domain and tear them all down just after they had been sold to their previous renters on very advantageous terms.

We worked on helping to set up ten community credit unions, including one less than two blocks from my Capitol Hill home. My approach was to see if we could expand their customer base in quantum leaps. All of us were outraged that poor people were treated like dirt when they walked into the city's banks. Indeed, at Second and Constitution Avenue, SE, just two blocks from the Capitol, you would see old women standing in line outside during winter to buy food stamps in the only part of the bank that sold them the drive in window. This led some of us to try to capture all the food stamp business in DC for inside transactions at our credit unions. I had an easy negotiation with the leaders of the city's main banks over lunch at the Metropolitan Club in which I obtained all their food stamp customers. They were so anxious to get rid of those customers! We were anxious to have them as with every food stamp transaction we invited those good folks to open an account, or put in a deposit of 50 cents for each grandchild. All the kinds of savings promoting, friendly to the poor services that in later decades became the hallmarks of the global microcredit field.

I was a modest local hero in my local credit union where I was treasurer. One time I was trying to give my report and the crowd was naturally a bit unruly hearing all this financial stuff. At which point one of our loyal customers who liked me a lot stood up to lecture the crowd: "SHUT UP! The Man is talking. You're hearing it straight from the horse's ass." Who could continue after that?

But one of the most effective initiatives was my wife's idea to raise money for Friendship House, our local settlement house. She initiated sales of local crafts at Christmas time at the local farmer's market, "Eastern Market." It was so successful that in time it led to weekly markets by hundreds of craftsmen and marketers, a huge flea market and a major City gathering place that has outlasted Friendship House.

Standing back and looking at the City, my development planner mind led me to believe that the Anacostia River Basin could be developed to heal the major socio-economic divide in the City consisting of the impoverished Anacostia area on the East of the river and the lower middle class-to-upper economic class to the West of the river. If we could bridge that divide as well as to greatly pump up development in the Eastern part of the City, this would be a big deal. I talked this over with Sharon Powers, the first and maybe the last Special District of Columbia full time liaison on the White House staff, a big gift to the city from Lady Bird Johnson. Sharon convinced a star urban planner, Lawrence Halperin, to do a planning design of the river basin. Halperin had already led the redevelopment of central Portland, Oregon and would later design the wonderful FDR memorial near Washington, DC's Tidal Basin. We needed the cooperation of all the stakeholders: the military who had bases along the river in case the British came to attack Washington as they did in 1814, the Interior Department, our City Government and Congress and we needed money to produce the 14,000 jobs and housing for 21,000 that we envisioned. We brought all the right people together to consider it, but got nowhere. The idea sat for over 30 years before it began to be implemented only a few years ago.

One of the most profound lessons for me as a development person was to work with the mayor of our city, Walter Washington. Walter was appointed by Lyndon Johnson with the full concurrence of Congress. He was the transition leader from colonialism to independence. He was decent and he was politically safe. In developing countries there were many such national leaders who were trusted by the colonial powers to make a country independent in a way that the colonial masters felt would assure that they could continue to work with “their” country. Walter was the first such personality that I worked with personally. You just had to like him. But he was there not to be the activist leader, but to make sure the boat was not rocked. You would see him with ideas for change and he would say, “That’s a really great idea. I’m all for it. But just have a word with my deputy to work out the details.” And his deputy would tell you, “You must be crazy! We can’t afford to do that! This will never happen.” So as a city we just treaded water at the governmental level while a great deal of the action was taking place at the local community level with the support of Federal War on Poverty money.

Tragically, on April 4, 1968 Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated and some provocateurs literally lit matches in a number of Washington, D.C. neighborhoods, including the shopping corridor a block and a half from my house. First there was major looting of the stores with folks carrying armloads of goods, balancing TVs on bicycle seats, streaming home with new clothing. Most of the looting was by Blacks, but this being the dawn of equal opportunity, there was also some looting by Whites. Then the matches were struck to burn down the looted stores. Ashes rained on our roofs for two days. Then the police came in force, commandeering buses and using them as mobile prisons collecting so many people they had to use the city’s sports stadium to hold them.

After the riots were over, there were a lot of economic and political pieces to be picked up. We activists had to face a lot of leaders who just wanted to leave the charred buildings so they would serve as a permanent reminder that insurrection doesn’t pay. The fun had gone out of the War on Poverty, and local political leaders around the country were quick to seize back the power they had reluctantly given to local community groups. My city was different. Walter Washington panicked and promised the radical activist Stokely Carmichael, former chairman of SNCC (the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) and then chair of the militant Black Panthers, that he would have the main say in the re-construction of the City. I had quickly organized a major coalition of local organizations to work on reconstruction as two of the three main riot corridors were in the greater Capitol Hill area. I called Carmichael and said my co-chair and I would like to meet with him to talk about reconstruction. He said “Brother, come on over at 9pm where we are interviewing people with ideas.” This was not a usual meeting time. But my Black colleague and I duly showed up and when they saw I was not the color of the Brothers they wanted to work with, we weren’t even allowed to speak. Rebuilding from the riot turned out largely to be carried out by self-help until many years later when the City had the next generation of political leadership.

There are parallels of this story in developing countries. Often the skills of the first indigenous leader of an independent country was succeeded by people who knew how to manipulate government for good or not so good purposes. And like a number of

developing countries, the mayor who followed Walter Washington started boldly and then got greedy.

In all these experiences and more to come, I felt I was in a vast classroom learning about development in ways I would never otherwise experience. Overseas I would merely be an observer of political evolution. In Washington I was both an observer and a participant.

H. 1970-1972, in Nigeria

The U.S. aid program in Nigeria continued to be difficult enough that by the second year after I joined AID (1967) we had to open up a Capital Development office within the AID mission in Lagos (the political capital then) to expedite implementation of that program.

In 1970 I was asked to take over that office. At the same time. I was told that I was in line to become the deputy director of the War on Poverty's important mid-Atlantic regional office. This would be a much higher position than the Lagos job. I was forced to choose between whether I wanted to continue my day job (aid) or my night job (domestic empowerment). It was not an easy choice. I was on five boards and seven civic committees. I would go to meetings many nights a week and multiple meetings a night. So I had deep commitments to local development.

I had to remind myself of my ethical commitments to reducing global poverty and it seemed timely to learn what the foreign aid agency's work looked like in a foreign posting where you could develop daily relationships, rather than the short term visits I had been used to. Besides, I really liked the Nigeria I saw when I got out of their nearly impossible big cities. And I enjoyed working with their officials. So I resigned from all my local work and my wife, three year old daughter and I packed up and moved to Lagos to a ground floor apartment in the then newly settled Victoria Island neighborhood. A friend told me that when he had lived in Lagos a decade before, the main sound he heard was the tinkling of bicycle bells. When I got there the main sound was honking. The traffic and city conditions were horrendous. It was New York without the amenities. Now it is much worse. I think you just have to be born on the side of the street you want to be on.

I arrived in Lagos to work for a curmudgeon of a boss who didn't believe in welcoming parties (except for him) a chap who later worked for me. The mission director was my friend, a power baron, Mike Adler, whose wife ran an imperial household. Between her white glove style of socializing and my immediate boss's refusal to be social, we had the polar opposites of what a Mission could be. Our own style in my wife and my household was between these two completely unrealistic styles.

I had an office of a few finance officers, a group of engineers and an industrial development staff. And I had a tribally balanced support staff.

Knowing the portfolio and the players on the Nigerian team, I determined that my main mission would be to somehow change the mindset of Nigerian officials regarding USAID's help. Instead of their saying "your projects" when they found a problem in them, I wanted them to say "my projects need help." There was already ownership of development at the local level, but not at the national level. I wanted the Federal Ministry of Finance, particularly, to take ownership and to stop sitting and pointing fingers at us. And I wanted to clean up the portfolio by ending a few non-starters that had been promised by over-exuberant former mission directors. An early meeting yielded agreement to not pursue a \$1million study that could only have led to a request to finance a questionable project bigger than the entire Africa Bureau's portfolio.

I tried everything I could to get the national government to take ownership. They would talk about "your project" and I would say "I don't have any projects," that we were just there to help them on their projects. When we found a problem in a project I would call the PermSec and say "You know that your project in the far northeast is facing some serious difficulties now. It happens that I can line up and cover an airplane charter to go up there if you have anyone you want to send up there to straighten this out, and if you do send someone, I could send our engineer up with that person to carry his briefcase." Invariably the ministry would choose someone from the home area so he could visit his kinsman and show off how he could get things done. I knew that the ministry didn't have the funds to supervise development, so we just pitched in to help them do their job.

Over time the Ministry of Finance saw what we were doing by helping them take charge of their development and they were enthusiastic actors. We had great relations. Whenever I would pop into the Ministry or if I was called into the Ministry, the Perm Sec would break off what he was doing (even if he were negotiating with the World Bank!) and come out to see me.

One area of the country that really hurt was post-war Biafra. My family and I took an auto tour of that area and saw an absolutely devastated land. On the other hand all the people we met and saw were determined to rebuild. In other parts of Nigeria there would be trucks with signs on them saying things like "God Protects Us All" but in Eastern Nigeria where there were few trucks. Instead you would see wheel barrels with signs on them saying "We will Rise Again." The University of Nsukka which had received tremendous help from AID and Michigan State University and was considered by the winning military to be the intellectual center of Biafra, had practically been erased. Now classes were held in an open field with the students sitting on the ground and the professors standing leaning against sawhorses.

We were inspired by the humanity of many we met there. One tribal leader, in his mud compound, met us in his little office, tiny desk, three chairs, the only other object being a poster on the wall: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The chief said the Declaration was all he needed to decide the disputes brought to him. As with all the tribal leaders my title at the time resonated. I was Chief of Capital Development and Finance, a fellow chief!

We tried what we could to help rebuild the East, but the Federal Government did not have that as a high priority. Nonetheless, we had plenty of work to do to help deliver what was then the largest portfolio of projects AID had in Africa. And in addition, my immediate boss, the Mission program officer, managed to be away during two budgeting seasons in a row, so I got to have that experience, too, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

With most of the implementation problems under control, I could concentrate on the future of the program. Naturally, our attention focused on what Nigeria's oil would mean for their economy. We had no doubt that the oil was abundant. One of the projects I liked best (because it was a clear economic winner and I really liked all the people involved in it) was a highway that went north from the city of Calabar, the sweet port city of Calabar, straight north to Ikom half way up Cross River State. When I would tour its construction I would see the usual excavation work aimed at making a level road. But these were different. Even in the low cuts with six and eight-foot-high embankments you would see oil trickling down and collecting in the gutters. It seemed like any woman in high-heeled shoes could make oil wells just by walking there! Everybody knew there was plenty of oil in Nigeria. The oil companies were already pumping, particularly in the Port Harcourt area where flaring gas lit up the sky at night. But nobody, particularly the Government of Nigeria, knew just how much oil was going to be produced, and the oil companies weren't saying. I wanted to find out.

I called in our mission's economist, a bright and dedicated PhD holder from Kansas who was used to rigorous routines of analysis, and I said I was going to finance his research budget. Out of my wallet I handed him the equivalent of about \$75. He rightly wanted to know what he was going to do with that paltry amount and I said "Buy Star." Star was the best local beer. I asked him to go to the Lagos Yacht Club, a hangout of expat oil company managers, and drink beer with that crowd until they told him how much they were going to pump over the next five years. It was years until that Club had a Nigerian member (!) so I knew expats relaxed there and were off guard.

Our fine economist came back from his dedicated labors and drew up a simple chart showing oil production for the next five years. It showed production would boom and his analysis turned out to be almost perfectly accurate. So then the question for AID was what do you do when you know a country is going to be rich? How do you help it best? We had an idea or two on this and I quickly got an OK from my colleagues in Washington to table an ambitious offer of aid. The mission director and I went to the Minister of Planning, an infamously arrogant chap who later became the Head of the Economic Commission for Africa, Adebayo Adedeji, with whom I later worked closely.

We said, 'You guys are going to be rich, and here's the chart. You're pumping this much now and in five years you're going to pump that much more. So the question is, how do you use this money? And we think there are three options.'

Mercedes Benz and every other consumer supplier in the world could get the benefit of your oil if you permit a consumer bonanza of luxury goods in a huge shopping spree.

Everybody who can get in on the oil act is going to be well dressed, eat fancy foods and live a fine life. Most of your people won't get any benefit from the oil money. Or,

Secondly, your military could hijack it. They can go through all the military hardware catalogues and check off every single item on every page. And they'll be the best equipped military in Africa, if not in all the developing world. Again, your people won't get any benefit from your oil. Or,

Third, it's possible that your civilian economy could substantially benefit from your windfall in two ways.

- One is when you deal with the oil companies and other people who are putting in big investments, you really need some sharp negotiators. It's possible that a pot of money could be provided that allowed you to get the world's best negotiators to deal with your potential investors. You could have your cake and eat it too. You could get all the petro-chemical plants that you want, all the refineries, all that stuff. You don't have to put up the money, you just get a heck of a deal because you have a good negotiator. We pointed out that for each \$billion in investment in petro-chemicals (which we knew they wanted very much) you create only 150 jobs, so if someone else puts up money for those kinds of investments, so much the better.

- The other kinds of things that they should be doing, we advised, was to have plans ready to roll for domestic development in areas the private sector wouldn't invest in, so that broad based development could compete in the cabinet discussions for the big money that would be coming. I said the private sector isn't going to come, for example, to invest in smallholder agricultural production in Northern Nigeria, the most under-exploited area of the country. We projected Nigeria was going to have huge food deficits and they either were going to have to spend a lot of their oil money importing food or they could spend some of it to stimulate sustainable food production for domestic consumption. We estimated that the latter course could save \$billions while giving employment and benefit to literally millions of families. We showed our calculations that for every billion dollars, you could take 700,000 families out of poverty in the North and make them into productive farmers. But to do that kind of domestic investment you needed to plan.

So we tabled an offer of \$40million to help them plan and get investment negotiations advice. We said that naturally there would be questions as to whether this would be tied aid, but this package would be entirely untied. I literally said they could use Albanian standards, if that made sense to them. I said this would be a grant. And it was a lot of money. In today's money it would easily be more than \$200 million, an unusually large grant.

The Minister of Planning came back to us after some weeks and said they had discussed our offer in the Military Council and they had no idea why the United States was misleading them so. Their view was that the U.S. wanted them to make a huge blunder by making massive plans for monies they would never see. We would make them a laughing stock.

My colleagues were incredulous. I asked why in the world we would ever want to mislead them and the answer was because we were still secretly backing Biafra. I said: "Biafra doesn't exist anymore, why would we back it? And what's your proof?" And they explained that when Richard Nixon and his wife Patricia went to St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York during their civil war, Mrs. Nixon gave a contribution to the Biafran poor box. The one time in her life that Pat Nixon did something on her own and we now got tagged for secretly backing a non-existent government!

My colleague (the Mission Director) and I tried to get them to change their mind, but they were not buying. So I told the Minister that this was our very best advice and the very best way we could help them. Their decision was certainly theirs to make, but we also had to make decisions as to what to do when our best offer was rejected. I said that we couldn't justify having a local office that put together major projects if there were no major initiatives to be done and that we would have to move my office's functions to our West Africa regional office to backstop the remaining portfolio.

It really broke my heart. We knew what was coming (which was in fact a consumer splurge and corruption that literally tossed much of their oil money away). To this day I don't know how we could have gotten a better outcome. Unfortunately, Nigeria continues to be in an enormous food deficit. Since 2011, FAO has given the country the distinction of being the largest country in food insecurity in the world.

So I packed up my office and my household, and prepared to take off. When I left Nigeria, the officials I worked with couldn't come publicly to see me off or to thank me as we were in another period of strained Nigeria-US relations, but I got calls from them at my house thanking me and wishing me well. I had been in Nigeria only 22 months.

## I. Washington and its Policy Bureau

I came back to Washington in 1972 with a lot of interesting ideas about what works in development.

I was fortunate to get myself assigned to the Policy Bureau in their rather powerful Office of Development Policy and Review. It was headed by Arthur Handley, a peach of a leader who had very effectively led Michigan's Office of Employment which had some 9,000 employees. And he had been an exemplary, subtle and highly effective head of public administration in our huge Turkey program. I was his special assistant: a great boss, a powerful function and an office facing 21<sup>st</sup> Street with a balcony (one of the few in the State Department Building). By unscrewing two screws I could open my door onto that balcony and hold meetings outside. This drove the guards nuts and they would put bigger and bigger locks on my door, but those same two screws allowed me to go outside whenever I wanted. So my balcony continued to be a popular gathering place for meetings.

My job was to help review all new proposals for funding on behalf of the policy bureau. Art was a delight to work with and we were a terrific team. While I often worked with the

regional bureaus on their program and project proposals, Art was the clean up hitter who seemed to hit a home run whenever he was at bat. This was a well positioned office with a fine leader and that meant a lot of influence.

#### J. But first Vietnam and Watergate

But what was going on outside of AID was a major preoccupation for me. The Vietnam War was in full swing. Three times over the years I had been asked to take an assignment with the AID Mission there, including being their industry officer. Each time I refused saying that it was impossible to run a long-term development effort in the midst of a raging civil war. I also had serious doubts about whether either side of that war was worth our intervention. An illegal war against Cambodia also was going on. And Watergate would soon take place (June 1972). It was impossible for me to remain oblivious to these events. So I did three things:

First I got involved with a group of State Department officers from various levels who were far closer to the Cambodia issue and they firmed up my resolve that our bombing of Cambodia was an illegal act of war. We met with people like Marvin Kalb (CBS News) who reinforced our views and who shared information hard for us to get. We decided to express ourselves publicly by organizing a full page ad in the *New York Times* stating our reasoning that this war was illegal. Some 200 Federal employees and other leaders sponsored that ad. Officials outside of AID/State had their names listed in the ad, but those seventy or so of us in the foreign policy establishment were prohibited from publicly putting our names on any foreign policy protest so we could only be listed in the ad as “\* “ and the footnote said “ \* This is a Foreign Service Officer or an official of AID who cannot legally give his name but is backing this effort.” We learned that the White House went ballistic over the ad. Either Ehrlichman or Haldeman in President Nixon’s office called Secretary of State Kissinger to demand that he find out who these asterisked people were and to fire each of them. Kissinger, to his credit, is said to have replied, “They are within their rights and I will not fire them.” Kissinger also backed the setting up of the Secretary’s Open Forum which allowed many of us a platform in which to discuss internally the issues of the day. This is a side of Kissinger that history needs to record.

*Q: Apparently Kissinger could read Nixon fairly well. And the way I hear it is Nixon would late in the evening get into his cups and get rather vindictive. And Kissinger would sit and listen and say, “Ya vol, mein fuhrer.” But made very sure that nothing happened.*

I’ve read similar accounts.

Second, there were noontime protests over the war and Watergate in both the front and the back of the White House in which Federal employees dressed in nice suits and dresses would gather and tell Nixon what he could do with himself. I would go there, shout obscenities and then return to the State Department for my afternoon’s work.

Third and more strategically, in the Spring of 1973 I realized that Watergate had gone quiet. There was a pause in which Congress was deciding whether the issue was really important or not. Opinion on the Hill seemed evenly divided between those who just wanted the issue to go away and those who thought Watergate raised serious Constitutional issues that had to be pursued. I had grown up in Southern California and I needed no persuasion that Nixon was behind Watergate. I was a boy when he viciously smeared Helen Gahagan Douglas with lies to win his Senate seat. My friends in high school and university felt Eisenhower was right to distrust his vice president. So in early 1973 I asked my boss to allow me to take a month of leave without pay for reasons I couldn't disclose. Art gave me the leave but asked if I could share confidentially why I wanted the month off. I told him I wanted to help impeach the president and with a smile he gave me his blessings.

I had called the major politically active civil society groups to ask what they were doing to keep the Watergate story alive. Common Cause said their members were divided on the issue so they weren't going to touch it. The ACLU there was no need to act as the Watergate situation would be resolved in a matter of weeks. (In fact it took more than a year) So I called Ralph Nader's office and they said to come on over as this was a big issue for them. I arrived the same day a colonel from the Pentagon came to volunteer. The Naderites naturally thought this was a plot to infiltrate them, but the colonel and I worked licking stamps for a few days until we won their trust. Then we worked the phones calling newspaper editors and publishers all over the country urging them to keep the story alive. Many would express wonder at all the fuss going on in Washington and honestly inquired as to why it was an important story. Our take that literally the rule of law and Constitutional governance in the U.S. was at stake made many of them say they would pay more attention to the story.

While I am mentioning activism, I should note that when I returned to Washington from Nigeria I resumed Washington civil society activism but not with quite as much of a frenetic pace as I had before. One of the organizations I chaired in the 70's was 2W, which involved 77 Washington, DC public schools that channeled into Western and Wilson high schools the 2 Ws. We gave teacher training to 900 teachers; worked hard on curriculum reform to try to eliminate the disconnected curricula between primary, middle school, high school and university education; we established 17 remedial reading and math centers; ran enrichment programs (some with embassies); and in total regularly brought \$10million a year into the public school budget, by far the largest extra-budgetary contribution to the schools. And we did so despite shall we say capricious leadership of that school system.

One of my proudest achievements involved the smallest amount of money. In honor of the country's bicentennial we in 2W established an embarrassingly small \$7000 grant for an initiative to bring DC history into the DC curriculum. Before then there was no sense that we had a local community that interwove with the national agenda. Kathy Smith, later president of the DC Historical Association and chair of the advisory committee of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, diligently worked seven years to establish

and institutionalize that curriculum. In the process she produced the best books on DC history this city has. I feel that giving our kids a sense of place was a huge contribution.

#### K. New Legislation for USAID

I had returned to Washington with the conviction that our legislation was completely wrong, that we had a top down way of programming, enriching the rich, often helping the government with its pet projects. And thus we were missing the really important parts of development.

I based my views not only on what I saw in Africa, but on the thinking of some of the leading development thinkers of the time whom I knew well. I know that sounds grandiose, but through my membership in the Society for International Development (SID) I had unusual opportunities. SID is a professional association started in Washington that had quickly gone global. I was one of the early members and I was privileged to know their leaders. Unlike, say, a society of surgeons where you would have had to have all kinds of professional qualifications to talk with their leaders, and where if you were head of a department you could only talk to another head of a department, somehow or other in the Society for International Development I could sit down next to a minister of planning and we could have a talk. I was then a GS-13, but it didn't mean anything in that setting because the power of your ideas or your questions or your interests were what was germane.

I knew and liked people such as Mahbub ul Haq who was the senior economist at the World Bank who then became senior advisor (and innovator of the Human Development Report) at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and later a very distinguished senior cabinet member in Pakistan holding the Finance and Commerce portfolios. I would see top leaders from many countries at these meetings and we would talk about what was going on. I knew Dudley Seers, who looked very much like you, Stu, actually.

*Q: Ah.*

BERG: Dudley, a very distinguished academic at the University of Sussex, became the President of the Society for International Development in 1969 at a meeting in New Delhi that I attended and his speech about turning development on its head was so powerful I acted like his publicity agent in Washington. Between 1969 and 1973 I had been mulling over Dudley and Mahbub's views. They were saying that development in general and its foreign aid supporters mainly were benefiting the top and we needed to think about how to get aid to the poor majority. They were asking how aid and national development generally could really address social and economic deprivation.

At that time (1973-75) AID was not very much in touch with the intellectual leaders of the development field. The Administrator's Advisory Committee had lapsed and the leadership of the Agency was not known for their intellectual curiosity. John Hannah, a former president of Michigan State University, who did know development (particularly

implemented by universities) was followed in 1973 as Administrator by Daniel Parker, scion of Parker Pen, who did not. That meant that in those years intellectual stimulation had to come more from the outside than from inside AID.

The most influential outsider by far was the Overseas Development Council (ODC), on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington, then the country's preeminent think tank on international development. ODC was led by the extremely dynamic James P. Grant, who I mentioned earlier. ODC was working with an AID chap named Ted Owens who had seen some very interesting innovations in development taking place in Bangladesh. He needed help in writing this down and so ODC paired him up with a fine mind and able writer named Bob Shaw (Robert d'Arcy Shaw, who later was chief of staff of the Aga Khan Foundation in Geneva). Owens and Shaw co-authored the book *Development Reconsidered* which emphasized bottom up poverty reduction, and which put their case powerfully. This book was getting read. And Jim Grant, a persuasive salesman with a missionary's zeal (he was the son and grandson of medical missionaries) was just the guy to promote its message of concentrating on the basic human needs of education, health, food production and poverty reduction, the message Mahbub and Dudley had been urging.

Jim was pushing on the outside for new foreign aid legislation and the people in AID's legislative office were responding and pushing from the inside. So in 1973 I arranged with my Policy Bureau colleagues to take a temporary assignment to work where the action was, with our legislative staff on new legislation that emphasized poverty reduction.

We were a small group of insiders working with a small group of ODC outsiders. We insiders proposed new legislation and as often happens, everybody up the line, including the White House, opposed us. But as 1973-4 came along, it turned out, as the phrase was at the time, the chickens (from Vietnam) came home to roost.

The U.S. military failure was well known. Alas, that failure was matched by an aid failure. Along with the U.S. military buildup led by the Johnson and Nixon administrations, there was a huge aid build up. Whatever Congress appropriated for AID in whatever gift boxes and categories they had it in, 40% would go for the Vietnam program. At the end of that program an assessment was made as to how many of the activities that AID had financed in Vietnam made development sense. Two-thirds of these initiatives did not even have a stated development purpose. (Parenthetically, the same observation has been made about current day Afghanistan, particularly the militarily-led economic assistance part of it.). So the Vietnam aid program caused a crisis for AID. It was one of the ways that Congress could say, "This administration is not trustworthy. They took 40% of our aid money off the top for this program that went awry."

Of course for Congress to say this was much like that famous scene in *Casablanca*, "What? How did this happen?" (*laughs*) and

*Q: Round up the usual suspects.*

BERG: Exactly. So Congress got on its high horse and in due course, in '74, they voted down the whole Foreign Aid Act. And because of the politics at that time, this was a center-left repudiation of the center-right. It created a policy vacuum in which the center-left could come in with its own ideas of how to operate the U.S. foreign aid program. And thus we had our opening because Congress particularly the House Foreign Affairs Committee was looking for ideas.

In comes our set of proposals co-authored and backed fervently by Jim Grant at the Overseas Development Council. The Administration had other things to attend to, namely the transit from defeated Nixon to interim President Ford, so they had no bandwidth to pay attention to us. So, by a miracle, we won. Congress enacted a Foreign Assistance Act (1974) that focused on Basic Human Needs and this was promptly called the New Directions for USAID.

I thought “Wow, I am 33-years-old. I have just participated in creating the best legislation you could have. We are now going to address poverty. This is why I came into this business, to really work on poverty. These are the issues of the poor in the world, livelihood, health, education, food security. Man, this is great. I could retire right now as I have helped put AID on the right track.” And, as it turned out, that track in its essence has remained as AID’s main mandate.

I was so enthusiastic about the new legislation, and I talked about it at home so much that my wife decided to make the history of that legislative change the topic of her master’s thesis. She interviewed extensively on the Hill and at ODC and AID. And she wrote an excellent account, particularly emphasizing how little empirical data we had to base our recommendations. (See Ellen Ziskind Berg, Howard University 1976). We were just lucky that no one else had a well-supported counter-proposal.

After the legislation passed, I sat back and waited for the engine of progress to gear up and roar. But I didn’t hear any engine. Silence. Months later one of the key power barons, our mission director in Indonesia, wrote to me and said, “Hey Bob, I hear there’s some new legislation. Should I read it?” So yeah, it’s the law actually (*laughs*). And at that point, I decided that I should devote some serious time to inculcating that legislation into AID’s life, to just rivet it in so that it couldn’t be changed. I realized that we had to have a completely different project design system, implementation system, and measures of effectiveness. We would have to reinvent the internal workings of USAID. We had the right substantive mandate; we just didn’t have the right institution to carry it out. So I shifted my priorities to reforming AID as an institution.

*Q: Today is the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, 2013. Interview with Bob Berg. Bob, I’ll let you start off.*

L. Reforming USAID, 1974-1980

My boss in the Policy Bureau agreed with me that we should start the reform at the beginning of the project process, i.e., the design system, and work our way through implementation until we tackled monitoring and evaluation.

We knew that the project design system was seriously flawed. I previously mentioned its over-orientation to commercial banking practices. In addition, our design system was getting confused. We had this parallel system of grants for technical assistance (one system of procedures) and loans for infrastructure (another set of procedures). We couldn't cope with the procedures for the increasing use of grants for infrastructure and the occasional use of loans for technical assistance, nor for programs that mixed technical and capital assistance. You couldn't have these confused systems jeopardize efficiency and be so far from the substantive emphases of the new legislation. In fact, it was a wonder that the really good things the Agency was doing, such as our work to foster the Green Revolution in Asia, could get approved at all.

My boss saw the design system problem in terms of the need to scotch tape our loan and grant systems into one system. I wasn't so sure. So I asked him for two things: that I would be able to work from my home on merging the systems and that in order to avoid the risk of a hernia carrying those heavy procedures home with me, I'd leave them in the office. (Working from home was really rare then.)

A month later I came in with that old 'Moses coming off of Sinai' feeling, with a new project design system for the agency. It had two features. One is it had a much more organic feel to it in that it set up a kind of dialogue between missions and AID Washington so that they could get approval to proceed to design and we could get a chance to look at an initiative before they got too far down the road with a host government. Missions could even easily get money for a trial project to base their design on a field testing of the proposal. Unfortunately, our staff had problems coping with the new flexibility and the view that projects were a lot more dynamic than they had thought.

In the end, my main lasting substantive contributions were to add environmental and social considerations. With a little encouragement by lawsuits from the environmental community(!), I included a requirement for environmental analyses in all our projects. And with no requirement in legislation or outside pressure, I felt it was time to require social analysis as part of our feasibility work. Both these analyses required people of talent to go in and find out what folks on the ground really wanted. Good development planning needed to know if their relevant governance structures would support change, whether the proposed intervention fit in, whether there was enough interest so that people would actually want to operate and sustain it and so forth. It turned out that these two innovations of environmental analysis and social analysis were the first of their type of any donor organization in the world.

*Q: It would seem that for social analysis, you'd have to be rather careful because you could flood an area with social analyzers.*

BERG: Well, we had almost nobody on our staff who could do these analyses, so we had a drought not a flood. Basically we had the wrong mix of people on our staff. We had a good number of people who had experience programming. There were also engineers, lawyers, and a number of senior sectoral experts in education, agriculture and health. But we had really weak institutional analysis to find out which institutions really were important, which ones could care for the kind of development that we and local governments wanted to pursue. And to me the most critical weakness was our lack of people who could quickly and professionally learn from local residents and leaders what would work best in their societies to advance them.

Naturally the need to have a different professional mix hit people hard and was one of the reasons that all nine of AID's assistant administrators, including my own(!), came out against the new system. But in various meetings I told them the experts I had consulted and the studies I was relying on and would ask them what experts and studies they had consulted in coming to their views. I did have the deputy administrator, John E. (Johnny) Murphy, on my side and since, de facto, he ran the Agency, that was a heavy-duty trump card. The long and the short of it was that the entire system was approved in less than 90 days. To say this was a record would be a great understatement. It was more like a miracle.

I immediately wrote to leading social science organizations such as the American Anthropological Association, the American Sociological Association, the Rural Sociologists, and said, "We're going to be hiring social scientists like you folks as consultants and direct staff. Why don't you tell your members about the opening of USAID to social science, and if any of them have interest and want to be considered, send me their resumes." So I was getting tons of resumes. And what I did was send them to the regional bureaus and say, "We know you're going to be wanting experts to work on the new requirements for social analysis and environmental soundness, so to give you a head start, here's a pile of resumes of people who say they are specialists in, e.g., Latin America. Why don't you look through them and see if there's anybody of interest to you." In economics we would call this a supply-led initiative. None of these bureaus even had set up job slots for social scientists and environmentalists. But I was certainly guiding them and saying, "Not only do you need help, but such people as you need are actually available."

Missions began writing to me saying things like, "How could you expect us to work on major social change in development? All we have in our country is agriculture." And then you would write back and say, "But 80% of your agricultural workers are women. They are suppressed. We don't know in your program how you will be of any help to these women. The research is extraordinarily clear that added income received by women goes to the education, clothing, and feeding of children, whereas unfortunately in your country added income to men goes to second wives and too often to alcohol. So if you know how to reach women agriculturalists then you're really doing something in your country. And if you don't, then you need help to figure out how to reach them. And, by the way, there's a research institution, you know, two blocks away from your mission that has a sterling record in this area and maybe you ought to go talk to them."

So that was a period of figuring out how to help make these analyses happen. Over time we hired dozens of these social scientists and they got into the woodwork of the organization. And we hired experts on the environment. Both disciplines made a big difference.

Let me give you a couple of examples. One fine chap joined USAID as a social scientist and later became our mission director in Mauritania. As part of his duties he guided a Congressional staff delegation to see the AID program. He took them to villages that the government said were model villages. The Congressional staffers were just thrilled. Every village they saw was picture perfect. At the end of the day, the mission director told the staffers that he was glad they liked what they saw, but he was sorry to advise that these were fake villages. The staffers wanted to know how he could tell. And he said, "Well, one reason I could tell is that all the tent poles that we saw in the tents were brand new. And the only way they could possibly be brand new is if they had been set up just for you."

Now, most people in engineering, law, economics, would never have noticed that and if they had noticed, they would not have paid it much attention. In fact, the Government of Mauritania was a pretty lousy and corrupt government and so there were serious questions about that program.

Another social scientist did a study that showed that administering infrastructure projects through the local governments in Nepal would result at better built projects and would come in at 15%, (that's not an error 15%) of the cost of implementing programs through the national government and this was for two reasons: the engineers in the national ministries felt it was beneath their dignity to use labor when you could have high cost heavy equipment do the job, so their style was very high cost, and money disbursed by the national government for local projects had to go through a lot of sticky hands.

In general I felt confident that the new professional mix would help us in a lot of ways that had been difficult for donors: how to get programs sustained at local levels, how to foster national policies that had relevance for local cultures on issues we cared about, such as gender, such as addressing minorities that had been discriminated against. So I actually feel that this was one of my major contributions professionally. I continue to feel that if an aid organization does not have adequate socio-cultural knowledge they will likely carry out pretty inferior programs. At AID it took us about five years to add about four dozen social scientists to our ranks.

At the same time, the World Bank over a period of 15 years from that point, let's say from the mid '70s, had one full time social scientist on board. And he was working on one major issue, which was resettlement of populations. A nice issue, but they were making far less progress in that issue, and at the same time the Bank was making horrendous errors in its structural adjustment problems which cost untold millions of people great hardship. I feel that had the Bank had a better professional mix such disasters might well have been avoided.

*Q: Well, I would think that the universities, for example, would think this is a delightful way to fund our anthropology department or what have you. And so this will be the summer task and, you know, they'll rake in money and the students will be supported? In other words, it would become driven by universities as a cash cow?*

BERG: Ah. Thank you for that interesting view. Anthropology departments are notoriously disorganized, so in theory and practice they did not find this a windfall for their departments. Of course, it was a major source of jobs for their graduates and consulting for some of the faculty, so that was great. But only for a portion of these departments. In my guesstimate, I would say that at most about 10% of anthropologists were interested in current development issues. Most were in branches looking backward or in other fields of interest (archeologists, forensic anthropologists and the like). The applied anthropologists at that time were a relatively weak group, particularly the internationally attuned branch of this branch.

If I was concerned with undue influence it was due to the heft of land grant universities on AID. We had just had an Administrator of AID who had been the president of Michigan State University and needless to say he was very pro land grant. I will come back to the role of universities in a moment, but I want to first conclude on the role of social science in AID.

We were hiring social scientists as consultants and staffers. And that was what I was aiming to accomplish. I wanted people on the ground, responsible to us, seeing our work, being part of project teams, interacting with local academic and community colleagues. And this resonated with that 10% of the community of anthropologists who, for example, probably belonged to the Society for Applied Anthropology, which surprisingly made me a fellow because I had provided important service to their field., i.e., jobs! Those people were working inside corporations, inside major federal agencies, getting the core jobs done. We needed their smarts for an awful lot of work that we were carrying out.

The secretariat of the OECD donor development community picked up on what our new design system was and invited me to lead a special meeting on project design for the governments in the Development Assistance Committee of OECD. This took place in Denmark. About that time (1975) I was proposed by family and friends to be a member of the Cosmos Club which I was admitted to the following year as the then youngest member of the Club. At the same time, another group of members of that Club proposed for membership the then retiring chairman of the Development Assistance Committee, Ambassador Edwin Martin. He was twice as old and nine times more distinguished than me, so I was honored to be considered along with him.

(( I did give a stipulation to those who kindly nominated me to the Cosmos Club that they had to know that if I were elected to be a Member, I would work for the admission of women. And I said that if that would embarrass them, they should withdraw their nomination. Instead, that stimulated them to quickly form with me a committee of Concerned Members of the Cosmos Club that worked to get women admitted as

members. A retired Assistant Secretary of State very kindly backstopped our Committee for many years. A decade later (!) women were admitted, and we have had a number of women presidents of the Club since. One of the benefits of being on my staff is that we often held in-town retreats at that Club.

Also about that time I started holding periodic meetings with the section chiefs and higher levels of USAID's personnel department. It struck me that these people needed to know about the systems and policy developments of the Agency if they were going to hire and place the right kind of professions in the right kind of jobs. No one had ever paid them attention before except to criticize them, so they were responsive and grateful for my periodic briefings. Later, they performed magical tricks to help me set up the offices I ran in AID.

I also became interested in the incentives in the organization, particularly its awards program. I was put onto the AID Awards Committee and helped guide awards to people who really were making a more fundamental difference in the quality and performance of the organization. I had been appalled, frankly, that there was this one chap who had helped reorganize AID's Africa Bureau. He had done a terrible job. A couple years later he was asked to reorganize it again, so he put it back to where it had been in the first place and then he got an award for all this. (*laughs*). So getting the awards structure right was important.

I confess that another motive I had for working with personnel staff and the awards people was to correct the kind of problems I faced within the Agency. Case in point, I was asked during that time to be the deputy director of our Regional Office in East Africa, with the explicit promise that after a year or so I would become their director. It was itself an honor to be asked by the incumbent director, John Withers, one of our very best field executives. And being director in that regional powerhouse was one of the great plum jobs in AID. To give you an example of how fancy that job was, one time when I was in Nairobi they showed me the house I would live in as deputy director. It had an enormous circular driveway. I paced off the distance between the entrance driveway and the exit driveway. It was hundreds of feet. I mean this was (*laughs*) a serious thing! I figured that I could make dormitory space for university students on about two-thirds of this manorial residence and still live quite comfortably.

Family came from California to say goodbye and we were getting ready to go. Then the personnel department decided that I was two months shy from qualifying to go back into the Foreign Service. I had been in the Foreign Service in Nigeria. I had transferred my Nigeria department to the West Africa Regional Office when the Nigerians had decided that they were not interested in our best offer. I could have been a lifer and stayed out there as long as I wanted, but I didn't and since I had 22 months of service rather than 24 months of service in the Foreign Service before I returned to civil service in Washington, under their rules then, I was two months shy of qualifying to go back out to the field again. That kind of capriciousness, particularly last-minute capriciousness, was something that led a lot of my colleagues to believe these personnel people were hopeless. I'm glad I decided to work with those people rather than join the chorus who

wrote them off. I think my work with them assisted a lot of their better decisions. But in the meantime, even I was a victim of their silly rules.

I promised a bit earlier to talk about the role of universities in AID. I had worked with a number of university teams in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa, but this provided only a fairly narrow knowledge base on what universities could do and were doing. So I was surprised to be asked to be a team member of a high level group to look at our basic relationships with U.S. universities. Our global study was run by the Technical Assistance Bureau of AID, and the team was led by one of their staff named Ray who looked like he was a character in a Damon Runyon novel all black shirts and flashy white ties, red jackets; filled with “Dees” and “Dos.” Remarkably and most enjoyably, he had the largest collection of vintage wines I had ever seen.

As part of our study we split up and visited a number of different campuses in the U.S. and then the teams headed for different parts of the world. I was extremely fortunate to be paired with C. Tyler Wood to go to the Middle East and Asia. I had mentioned Ty earlier as one of the founders of American foreign aid and a wonderfully fine person. Ty’s job on that trip was to say something like “My dear Prime Minister. It is so good to see you again and to again enjoy the splendid hospitality of the exceptional people of \_\_\_\_\_.” We are here for a special study and now my colleague Bob Berg has a few questions for you.” And at that point he would sit back, take out a piece of paper and a pencil, put a dot in the middle of the page and create a drawing much like my grandmother would crochet a doily. Only his designs would subtly weave our conversation into his design. If we were talking about aquaculture pretty soon there would be fishes swimming in his design. All eyes in the room were on his evolving design as we talked. Amazingly, every now and then Ty would look up and ask the perfect question.

At the end of our travels to Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and the Philippines, we returned to DC to compare notes with the teams that had gone to Latin America and Africa. We had a number of ideas on how the partnerships with U.S. universities could be improved, including ending the kind of assistance in which teams would advise governments on how their basic governance should be structured.

An added learning from my first time visits to these missions came from seeing how our posts in Asia maintained the Raj by denying local professionals on their staffs equal treatment. I didn’t like what I saw and when we had a more favorable leadership in AID in the Carter Administration, I was able to get our Administrator to make some substantial changes to raise the status of local professionals.

I loved the people and the job in the policy bureau, working on all kinds of interesting policy issues as they came up. But it was time to move to the next step of implementing the New Directions legislation to review the nuts and bolts on how we implemented our projects and programs to see how we could better mesh the ways we worked with what we were supposed to accomplish. I was asked to be deputy director of a new multi-pronged office and a rare honor: I could negotiate which prongs were in the multi. Here was the deal. AID had a senior person that they needed to place. He had a reputation

for delegating roughly 140% of his work. That is, he didn't ever do work. He gave it all away. He was a terrific raconteur. He was an outstanding person to go to lunch with because he had great taste and knowledge of the best places to eat. He knew how to order exquisitely; he could speak the language of any waiter in town; he had these great social skills. But he was completely uninterested in any of the work on his desk. And so he just sent it to somebody else. I understood this from the get go, that I was not senior enough to run the office, de jure. But de facto, I was going to run this office. The office wasn't as central to policy as my past post, but I knew it was absolutely necessary work and that few if any others from the policy arena would work on these matters.

I negotiated my new position to include study of implementing the new legislation. I wanted this office to backstop a task force that I would chair on implementation policies. So they gave that to me and then they said, that in exchange, that I was also going to have to take on the statistics function of the Agency, a well known neglected backwater of the Agency. So there were four very different divisions: implementation policy, statistics and two divisions to devise new ways to track the economic and social progress of the world's countries.

Some of the staff was located in the State Department building. Some of these functions were located in Roslyn, Virginia. And some were located in a building on Connecticut Avenue across the street from the Washington Hilton. I asked for three parking spaces, which of course our administration wizards would never provide (*laughs*). I was told to take the shuttle buses, but using them to get around could kill a whole day. So I ran up significant parking and taxi bills to manage that office and my boss.

Typically at about 10:00 am each day, after he'd written my name on the upper right-hand corner of every single piece of paper on his desk and put it in his outbox, my boss would come in and discuss the very critical problem of where he should have lunch. Often where we should have lunch. I felt it was important that I should have lunch with him, at least once a week, maybe twice. After all, they were good lunches, it was fabulous conversation, really great gossip. But each lunch took about two and a half hours. Once he liked the main course so much that he asked that we each get a re-order! And I had to go back and do his work and my work, too. I was sacrificing a lot to have these lunches, not least my waistline!

Part of what I wanted to do was to better deploy the statistics department and I knew a lot of work was needed to change it. The first time I visited that Office I found it was located in a place where you could look out at the Washington Hilton swimming pool, which I'm afraid a few of that staff spend an inordinate amount of time doing in the summer. That first time I walked through and met the staff. The staff ranged from people who would spend three weeks figuring out whether a figure should end in .0006 or .0007 versus the person who always got *The New York Times* telephone calls because any figure you wanted she would give by saying something like: "Let's see. Two years ago there was 2% growth in that country and last year it was 4% growth so it's probably 6% this year." I mean it's the kind of thinking that can get you into a huge amount of trouble because there is no guarantee that something on a two-year trend is going to be the same the third

year! At any rate on that first visit I met the chief statistician. He was standing outside his office door in the reception area. We had a nice chat. After a while I asked him, "Al, can I see your office?" And he asked, "Do you have to?" And I said, "Well, since you put it that way, yes, I have to," (*laughs*).

So he reluctantly opened his door and we walked into this huge long office. It looks to me to be about 30 feet long and 15 feet wide. It had all the furniture that the federal government has ever allowed you to have, an aircraft carrier desk, credenzas, overstuffed chairs, a conference table, lots of chairs around it, additional side chairs, and a sofa. Every piece of furniture had not stacks of paper on it, but more like sand piles of paper. Symmetrical piles that started at the very edge and rose to a mountaintop in the middle and fell off to the other edge. This included his desk and the chair behind it. So naturally I said, "Al, where do you work?" "Oh," he said, "I work in the next office," which he was in the process of filling with its own sand piles of paper. Along the long wall of his main office was a stack of boxes that went the length of the office, went right up to the ceiling and was three boxes deep. In those boxes were three copies of every report that AID had ever produced. At that point, we did not have a well functioning library, so this was the mother lode. And it was of course completely inaccessible to anybody.

So Al and I, his staff and our other staff worked on a lot of things, including new statistical indices. The World Bank at that time was not doing very much in benchmarking the social progress of countries. And its measures of economic and other progress seemed to us to be limited. So we established lots of indices, the statistics folks and other parts of this new conglomerated office got extremely busy to establish, source and compile these new indices. Our work absolutely stimulated the Bank to take on many of these tasks and that was worth our investment.

After a few years, Al said that he was past the age of retirement and he would like to retire. I asked him not to retire except from our payroll as I wanted him to come back for however long it would take him to go through all those papers.

We brought somebody in from the National Archives who verified that this collection was unique and together we determined that one set of the papers should go to the State Department library and be reserved for whatever AID library was going to come into being, one would go to the Library of Congress, and one would go to the George Marshall Library, just out of sentiment, because Marshall had started the whole business with his Plan. Al spent about five years organizing those papers. It was a free service. Cost us rent, I guess. But it was extraordinary and a real legacy for AID.

In another part of that office we ran a task force carefully thinking out what we actually needed in bureaucratic processes, financing tools, authorities and the like to carry out the New Directions legislation. We asked whether we could dovetail what the legislation substantively wanted as end products with the procedures that we had to get our work done. I had been intrigued with this issue ever since my first months at USAID when I had walked through my first \$10million item to that little old lady with her ledger who got you your money.

At long last, an effort was made to look at often arcane procedures there were being blindly followed. Not many people wanted to look at them, but we did. We looked at the various kinds of programs and designed ways to make them more effective and efficient.

One issue was the control of cash transfers. It almost goes without saying that cash is a very easy thing to misuse. In Nigeria, for example, we had designed a post-civil war cash transfer program but were worried it would be used for shall we say unwise purposes. I'd helped to assign somebody from our staff to their Central Bank to actually carry documents from one desk to another to make sure that our documents were actually paying for clean stuff.

Judging from the recent record in Pakistan and Afghanistan, it is an area where we have continuing problems. Our cash payments may be the only efficient part of their economies i.e., our cash gets transferred from Afghanistan and Pakistan to the Gulf States within a day!

*Q: You're referring to the Gulf states being the repository, or at least the intermediary between it and what we would call Swiss bank accounts.*

BERG: That's right. There's a lot more than Switzerland. Prior to the New Directions legislation there was a belief rooted in our aid program to Pakistan that if you just enriched their 21 richest families then the wealth would trickle down to the poor, literally the rich would build factories and hire the poor. Some people thought that that money stayed in Pakistan less than 24 hours and was on its way to Zurich. But today's Afghan leaders have their own local Zurichs and they can go visit their money in Doha. The basic question in such political situations is how do you give as much local authority as possible but with as much clear-eyed oversight as you need?

*Q: Did you feel that you were working under the gun? Because I mean you could see the problems. I mean this was money being poorly used. I mean this is what you were dealing with and trying to develop a system. And I would think they would be equivalent to individuals and agencies and all who were looking around for this particular weapon to use against the government. I mean I'm talking about quite legitimate Republicans, Democrats, whatever.*

BERG: Sure. You had three separate businesses going on. You had the political money in which there was a lot of pressure not to have any oversight. The quid pro quo was not economic development. The quid pro quo was a political alliance as far as the State Department was concerned. But that's not what Congress felt. Congress felt they were appropriating that money for development impact. Maybe some chair of a committee would know that the quid pro quo was political and military alliance. So political aid was a kind of double-speak. Our late viceroy to Pakistan and Afghanistan, Richard Holbrooke had instituted a political program. He established as policy giving as much money as possible to local entities. Give it to the local governments, give it to the local contractors, give it to the local NGOs and certainly give it to the national political leaders. AID was

instructed to do that. And AID did an assessment a few years ago that finally asked how many capable (i.e., professional and reliable) institutions are there in Pakistan and in Afghanistan? They found 36 in Pakistan, in the whole country. They found three in Afghanistan. And Transparency International verifies this by ranking both countries at the bottom of their list. Nonetheless, AID was accountable for development performance and our Missions and their main contractors were caught in a Catch 22 squeeze of trying to get development performance from patently inappropriate institutions and governments.

*Q: We're talking about Richard Holbrooke.*

BERG: Richard Holbrooke. The point is we need the political support of these governments. Now, an honest discussion would probably be to say, "Did the Pakistanis allow us to operate the drones?" I mean was that a core part of the quid pro quo. "Did they reign in the Taliban enough?" Instead, AID is charged in these highly political contexts to run a program that produces development performance. And its job is not political performance. So there's a hell of a dilemma there. And the question is can you do both? And you could do both and oftentimes that has happened through the happy median of sector assistance. But if the stakes are really high and the political performance is paramount and also not immediately popular locally, the quid pro quo is not going to be development.

Are there options in highly political cases? What if a Karzai wants our money to go in this ministry rather than that ministry? OK. We can do that, but the quid pro quo is we've got to have monitors, financial monitors in that ministry. And if so, we're happy with having it go there. But we can't just give it to the ministry without a lot of real follow-up, without at least assuring there is some existing and/or teachable institutional capability. And dishonest governments should not be given cash budget support.

Too bad that we didn't have much more of a say with that Afghan bank that received all that U.S. and Afghan government money. With no controls there was \$900 million missing, which on an Afghan scale is enormous. That government has two billion dollars a year in revenue and \$900 million is missing from one institution! That makes Madoff look like a petty criminal (*laughs*). So anyway, that's one business.

The second business was development assistance. Development assistance, easy quid pro quo, monitor it, evaluate it. At that time, we were monitoring somewhat. We were not evaluating. We were evaluating a little bit, not very well.

Third food aid. Food aid is given as projects and it's given as budget support in a different guise. The quid pro quo is supposed to be food security, but it had some peculiarities. In a large part of our food aid program we wanted governments to purchase food aid with local currency so that it would be competitive in the local market and not undercut local prices. Well, at one time we owned 20% of India's money supply and we simply couldn't spend it, because if we did, it would have created massive inflation in India. So we hadn't worked out that problem. And there were very big control issues. I

remember I attended an interagency meeting at one time that was chaired by the guy in USDA who was handling PL-480, i.e., food aid. He was as great a power baron as I can recall. There may have been 50 people around a very long table. And of course they seated me just about inside the exit door. Didn't really make a difference that I was from the agency carrying out all this stuff. And so the guy at the head of the table made some outlandish statement and I piped up in a loud voice because it had to carry the whole length of this long room. I said, "We can't do that."

And he looked at me and said, "Of course you can" and I said, "No, we cannot do that." He acted as if he had never been told no before. It was not an easy negotiation. But I did gain a certain decent reputation in Agriculture. Indeed, I got to be very good friends with people in that department and I felt more people in AID needed to work with these people on a regular basis at the policy level.

The Assistant Secretary who was most interested in international work and I got to be good buddies. There was a major drought in the early '70s in the Horn of Africa that was supposed to be a once in a hundred years drought. Very desperate situation. And one of the things that happened conterminously was that the price of fertilizer went up dramatically. The combination of drought and no fertilizer created a serious crisis for a lot of countries. And so an NSC task force got put together to look into this fertilizer problem. In essence: Why in a time when demand went up a few percentage points did the price of fertilizer go up by a couple hundred percent? At one of the early meetings, I expressed puzzlement over the price trends. The Assistant Secretary said to me afterwards, "I was interested in your comment during the meeting. What level of security clearance do you have?" I said, "Top secret," thinking that that was the top clearance. But it turns out

*Q: That's only the beginning.*

BERG: That's only the beginning (*laughs*). So he said, "Well, *no wonder* you don't understand what's going on in the fertilizer market now." So he made a couple of calls and in due course some guys from the CIA came to my office and swore me in to a level of security clearance that I shared in my Agency only with the AID Administrator. That made it very difficult for me to talk to my boss and his boss because they weren't cleared for the information that I had (*laughs*).

*Q: Well obviously, we can't get into details on this. But what sort of factors would play on commodities or whatever, we're talking about?*

BERG: Well, information as to whether the markets were crooked or not.

*Q: You mean somebody's cooking the books?*

BERG: No, you could raise the price of anything in the world if the major suppliers were in cahoots with each other.

*Q: OK.*

BERG: So that kind of information a security service might have.

*Q: Yeah. Were these things we could do something about, or was this beyond the power of*

BERG: Well, let's just say that AID, a temporary agency of the U.S. Government was in no shape or form to go after the corporate world, particularly if this meant using evidence that the Government could not acknowledge it had. But we did come to better understand the markets we were in, because we were a big buyer of fertilizer. And I feel that knowledge came to us as a result of dealing frankly and openly with the Agriculture Department.

Later I was part of the U.S. delegation to a world conference on fertilizer held in Rome in which the centerpiece was collecting emergency pledges to help poor countries buy fertilizer. When we had collected about \$400million in pledges, I asked the unpardonable question of how much of this money was new money. Not much was. That was the first time I had proof that a lot of international pledging is merely repackaging existing pledges.

So, going back to discussing that new office I was explaining. By the time I finished working on implementation and statistics and indices, I developed a high regard for indexing. I began to get a notion, which later on I saw developed with my work in the UN, how valuable indexing can be.

*Q: Could you explain what indexing is?*

BERG: In official statistics indexing measures the relative performance of countries in their development or governance and then ranks countries according to how well or poorly they have done in that single measure of performance, or in some combination of measurements. It could be a single measure such as GDP growth or the attainment of a specific health status, or it could be some combination of measures like a gauge of material standard of living. You show this country does better in this index and this measure than that country. Some countries care a lot about that. They want to maintain a high rank. And if they're ranked low on something that's important, particularly something that donors might use in deciding how much aid you get, or that the private sector might well use to help them decide which country to invest in, then they might work hard to show that they are performing better than they had been ranked. Or they might come to the donor and say, "Look, if you guys really care about that index will you help us to attain a better, a higher rank here?" In other words, indexing creates a nice incentive to improve performance.

One of the most effective rankings currently is the World Bank Report on "Doing Business." The Bank uses simple measures of how easy or hard it is to do business in a country. They ask such questions as how long it takes to incorporate a business, and how long does it take to settle a business dispute in the local court system. The Bank people

who run that index say that just after an annual edition comes out ambassadors run to them and say, "This year's report shows us ranking number 37, whereas, last year we were 35. How could you say we slipped?" Then after a few months those governments decide on how they can improve their ranking the following year. Ranking matters because they have a bearing on investments. So rankings are a delicious soft power.

#### M. Beginning Interest in Evaluation

Another area we worked on in that office was how AID should judge the quality, the performance, efficiency and the effectiveness of its work. This meant that we looked hard at how we should monitor and evaluate our projects and programs. At this point, 1976-78, evaluation was in its early stage of development. It was being used in a couple of domestic programs, like Head Start. Head Start was a program to give kids from deprived families in the U.S. a leg up in education, because it was determined that other parents, middle class parents or parents that were literate or parents that were better parents, were teaching their kids to read before they got into school and giving them a head start. But kids from very poor families or families where the parents were illiterate or ineffective or couldn't afford books and magazines had kids who were starting slower in school. They were behind before they even showed up at school. So running effective pre-schools to give kids a head start was a big initiative. The evaluation evidence after a year or two showed those programs to be really helpful. But after year five the evidence was not very clear. And after year seven, the evidence looked a bit better. So it turned out that there were a lot of variables and a lot of unexpected results from what you might think was pretty straightforward business. Domestic social and economic programs were a lot more dynamic and complex in their outcomes than had been thought.

If domestic programs had such complex results, what was the result of initiatives in overseas countries and cultures? AID had some scattered evaluation evidence but it was impossible to generalize from a small bunch of highly individualized evaluations. Most projects were only routinely monitored. Few were evaluated and those that were evaluated were done mid-course, a kind of enhanced monitoring in which early impacts were identified but the real impacts, particularly whether the program or project was producing sustainable impacts and was being implemented in a sustainable way, were only matters of speculation while the project was still being put in place.

Moreover, we knew that the evidence that we did have from our own studies and other studies was only occasionally fed into new policy and guidance. The connection of past evidence and current action could not be well demonstrated.

Let me get ahead of myself by a couple of years to illustrate the old way that foreign aid examined its record.

When the hostage crisis took place in Iran in late 1979 I sent Deputy Secretary of State George Ball a report which had been done in the mid 1950's. In the mid 1950's (around the time that Senator Green was criticizing the aid program) it was determined that it would be helpful to do some, quote, "evaluation work" and that the State Department

would take the lead in that. The idea was to send to various countries some of the top people in the Department. People like Foy Kohler and Loy Henderson, who later had State Department auditoriums and meeting rooms named for them. In teams of two, these distinguished people were sent to do what I guess was considered to be grassroots analysis. They would talk to the head of state, the ambassador and maybe the head of the Central Bank and the Minister of Finance, and then go home. This was more a bluegrass than a grassroots approach.

I didn't show George Ball the report on Korea, which was done in about '57. That report said Korea is a basket case and will always be a basket case; that these are lazy people who don't know how to work. "If you put 100 tea cups on an assembly line to be painted, you will be lucky if only five of them don't have chips by the time they come to the end of the line." That was three years before Korea started to go stratospheric, with the help of AID people, by the way. ((AID sent an export expert, Micky Most, to Korea and he insisted on a weekly meeting with the kind of people the evaluators met with, i.e., the head of the Central Bank, the Finance Minister and the Ambassador. Soon they hammered out policies and launched some experiments to see if despite Korea having almost no natural resources (besides its people) it could compete. Their first experiment was to import Philippines timber to make plywood for export. Then they imported Australian wool and got a bunch of people to knit gloves and hats for the Scandinavian market. Both tests were such wild successes that the Koreans became convinced that an export led economy was their future.)) So somehow I forgot to send that wildly incorrect "evaluation" of our Korean aid program to Secretary Ball.

The mid 1950s study I did send had the following conclusion: If the Iranians do not decentralize their political power, particularly if the Shah does not decentralize his political power, there will be a severe backlash. The backlash could come either from the civilian or the religious side. We think it will come from the religious side. If the backlash comes from the religious side and they gain power, then the lives of Americans in Iran will be in danger.

That study was many years before Khomeini came in and I'm afraid I left the impression with George Ball that all our studies were as accurate as that.

While State's evaluations in the 1950s of major aid programs were mixed in their accuracy, there were enough stimulating reports for me to wonder why they had stopped. So I looked into it. It turned out that a Congressman who wasn't friendly to foreign aid asked the Eisenhower administration to see all these evaluation studies. He'd heard about them but he couldn't see them because they were all classified as Top Secret. Indeed, even when I saw them in about 1978 they were still classified that way. The Congressman's position was clear: He said these studies were paid for by taxpayer money, so as a representative of the taxpayers, he ought to have a chance to look at them.

The issue actually went up to Eisenhower, and Eisenhower checked the box that said don't show the reports to Congress. The Congressman got good and mad and put into the law that any evaluations done on our foreign aid program must be made available to

Congress. Back went another memo to Eisenhower, and he checked the box which said, “Don’t do any more of these studies,” (*laughs*). And none were done through the rest of the 1950 and only a few were done by an enterprising mission here and there in the 1960s and much of the 1970s.

Starting in the mid-1970s, as part of our work on evaluation systems, I was looking at how AID was assuring the quality and planned impact of its work. We had only one basic initiative at that time regarding quality and it was called the Logical Framework. It was an aid to design projects and programs in which the proposed inputs of the activity had to be related to the planned physical or governance outputs. And these outputs similarly had to be logically related to the development purpose to be achieved, and finally that the development purpose had to logically be shown to serve a higher-level development goal. One had to show that at each level there was planned action that was necessary and sufficient to achieve the next level. So X dollars and Y experts could lead to the construction of Z schools, and those schools would lead to ABC% increase in national enrollment of girls and boys (our development purpose) , which would help in specific ways to fulfill the national education goals of preparing youth for employment, let us say.

In this chain of logic, one would have to specify what needed to be measured at each of these levels and how this measurement would be accomplished. For example, an architectural or engineering firm would be employed to assure the schools were built within budget and on time, and at appropriate quality. The Ministry of Education would keep statistics on enrollment and completion. Finally, the Logical Framework required for each level of analysis an explicit listing of the key assumptions outside of the project that needed to happen in order for the project to succeed. For example, an adequate supply of trained teachers would be deployed to the new schools, etc.

The Logical Framework (called in shorthand the LogFrame) was fairly primitive, but in the world of evaluation it was the only game in town and is still the primary tool of design and evaluation in many donor and national systems. AID had actually paid for its development. We figured that the LogFrame was vital to the design of projects and programs as well as to their future monitoring and evaluation. So we helped to evangelize it. Our approach was to massively teach it to our project officers in Washington and around the world. I helped to make sure that a lot of the staff learned about this system so that they could incorporate it into their design work. As I recall, we did this in three day workshops and I participated in them in Washington and the field. It certainly was a bottom-up approach. And the difficulty was that bosses make decisions on systems, and you can’t treat such decisions as if they were popular referendums.

I knew we were in difficulty in getting the LogFrame accepted when the Agency’s biggest project power baron, the chap who ran the Middle East-Asia projects office, told me that he wasn’t interested in any new monitoring and evaluation system. As he explained it, “I evaluate each and every one of my projects when I shave in the morning.” Later he grew a beard and I went back to him to tell him that he now needed an alternative system and I had one for him. Actually, what we decided to do was to give a half-day seminar for our top Washington executives so that they could send the right

management signals, which indeed they did giving the Agency a needed green light to institutionalize the LogFrame system.

LogFrames were beginning to be used as required in our design system. We proselytized all over the world, giving LogFrame workshops to some 3,000 local officials. The Government of Indonesia decided to adopt the LogFrame as part of its official budgeting system. Without a LogFrame you couldn't get a project approved by that government. So we built support in Missions and governments around the world.

The Gerald Ford presidency ended and with it the de facto AID Administrator, the Deputy Administrator, John E. Murphy, had to leave his post. He had been a consistent and super effective ally to the institutional changes I had worked on in the 1970s. A former McKinsey partner, he understood how to change management practices. As a parting gift, Johnny asked the incoming (Carter) transition team, which came to AID in early December 1976, to spend an hour or two with me.

The Carter Transition Team, like most transition teams I have encountered, treated the existing staff as 'holdovers' who clearly couldn't be as smart as they were. But they made good on Johnny's request by asking to see me for an hour. They were indeed a bright group, run by an outstanding and experienced development expert, Tony Babb. I liked his questions and he must have liked some of my answers as the Team immediately got me assigned to them where I stayed for the next seven months. We did the things transition teams do: moved some organizational boxes around, advised on who we wanted on the new management team, ran a bunch of studies, and helped settle in the new leaders, led by former Governor of Ohio, Jack Gilligan, an easy to get along with political pro who was liked as Administrator, but who also had some top aides who were unfortunately crass.

Our transition team did something else that I don't recall having been done before. We conducted a hanging. Some of us were concerned about the lavish lifestyles of some of our field leaders and we believed that a clear signal had to be set to show that free spending was not going to be tolerated. So we held a kind of contest to find the worst abuses of local expense accounts. My favorite was the mission director who was found to have four large refrigerators in his kitchen. Our little inquiry as to why this was necessary brought a blistering note from Mrs. Mission Director: 'Don't you doofuses know that you can't have shrimp and fruit in the same refrigerator? Don't you know you can't have cakes and meat in the same refrigerator?' Etc. But the clear winner of the contest was the mission director who had claimed he needed \$75,000 to improve the security of his home. His security system was a set of very fancy driveway lights. He got fired and we were not shy about saying why.

After my work on the transition team, I returned to my work where I held the tongue-twisting title of "Deputy Associate Assistant Administrator for Program Information and Analysis in the Bureau of Program and Policy Coordination." There was practically no room on my business card for my name! I had received a Superior Honor Award the previous year for work on the new project design system and now I was the

Agency's nominee for the Jump Award, a U.S. Government-wide award for the most notable achievements in the efficiency and effectiveness of public service among public servants aged 37 and younger. I was honored by the new AID team nominating me. I came in second.

I continued my work on systems change finding very nice support from the new Carter team and its friendly Administrator, Jack Gilligan. At that time they made Alex Shakow the Assistant Administrator for Policy and Program Coordination. He was an outstanding pick. Graceful, extremely smart, kind. I know I tried his patience with a series of memos entitled "Jumping Off the Deep End" Roman I, II, III etc. in which I pilloried proposed policies that didn't make sense to me. But he stuck to the merits and often sided with my views. And when he didn't, I respected his positions.

In the transition team, I had made the case that we create a much stronger institutional base for evaluations, but that was not high on the new team's agenda, my only big disagreement with them. Change came unexpectedly. Less than 18 months into his tenure, Jack Gilligan ran afoul of the Israel lobby by saying some perfectly sensible things about the need for better balance in U.S. policies regarding Israel and Palestine. Unfortunately, he said those things to the *New York Times* putting Secretary of State Cy Vance in a position where he had to choose sides. The outcome was predictable: Jack was out.

Because the still new Administration needed to fill the AID slot quickly, it picked Douglas J. Bennet, Jr., then Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, to be the next Administrator. Doug had been confirmed easily for his State post, so he was a safe bet, and, as it turned out, an excellent pick. ((Parenthetically, Jack Gilligan is the father of current Secretary of Health Katherine Sebelius the only father-daughter pair in history to have been governors, while Doug is the father of current Senator Michael Bennet of Colorado.)) Doug had a PhD in history, was highly intelligent, had a strong interest in socio-economic progress, and was as decent a human being as could be.

I had missed getting evaluation institutionalized under Jack Gilligan and I felt we needed to make sure we didn't miss a second time.

Doug Bennet was quickly confirmed by the Senate and took up residence as the new AID Administrator. One of his first acts was to ask me to head up a new Office of Evaluation. A decade later, after Doug had served as President of National Public Radio and was then President of Wesleyan University, he and I had lunch. He told me that he was glad for all my evaluation work and felt it was a fine contribution, but that for a long time he had felt badly that he had not told me the real reason he had set up the evaluation office. He said that during his confirmation hearing Senator John Glenn had pounded him until he promised to set up that office. I thanked Doug for his candor and asked if the Statute of Limitations had expired on this matter, and we agreed that it had. So then I asked Doug whether he had any idea who had written Glenn's questions. It was an absolutely delicious lunch conversation!

The next step in my work with AID in 1979, the third year of the Carter Administration was establishing AID's Office of Evaluation. After working on design and implementation systems, I felt that crafting the Agency's evaluation work was the last challenge to institutional Basic Human Needs in USAID. AID had a predecessor office at one time in the 1960s that worked on evaluation systems, but it had faded and had never undertaken evaluation studies.

I realized that heading a real evaluation office that had oomph on systems and undertook real studies of impact for policy learning might well be my last position in USAID since I used to advocate that the next step for the head of evaluation in an organization was to leave as otherwise evaluations might be inadvertently or purposefully tilted to help that part of an organization where the evaluation chief next wanted to work. I was confident we would do well because creating the office had the backing of the next two layers up.

First was my immediate boss, the Assistant Administrator for Policy, Alexander Shakow, the #3 position in the Agency. Alex was (and is) highly intelligent, dedicated to development, had an excellent preparation (PhD from the London School of Economics), served in the Peace Corps and had relevant Asia Bureau experiences before taking over AID's policy and budget functions. A decent and good citizen who after the Republican takeover in 1981 had a sterling two decade career at the World Bank that included many years of service as Secretary to the Board of the Bank.

At the top was AID Administrator Douglas J. Bennet Jr., another perfectly excellent mind (Harvard PhD in history), assistant secretary of state in both Carter and Clinton Administrations, president of National Public Radio, and for a dozen years, President of Wesleyan University. And a total joy to work with.

The Office of Evaluation had two functions: to conduct ex-post studies to demonstrate the impacts and longer term policy lessons of AID's completed programs, and to coordinate all the Agency's work in bureaus and missions regarding their monitoring and process evaluations of on-going projects and programs. So we set up two divisions: a Studies Division to conduct impact evaluations and an evaluation Systems division.

The first decision I made was to determine that the symbol for the Office of Evaluation would be "E." This was *extremely* controversial, because unless you have at least four names and five symbols you can't be legitimate (!) but I stuck with it. After I left AID the name was changed to the Center for Development Information and Evaluation with the unfortunate acronym of CDIE which seems just a bit forbidding to me.

I had an agreement to create within E's Studies division an intellectual roundtable. I wanted experts from a broad group of disciplines who would interact with each other not just to conduct ex-post evaluations, but to literally identify and teach the lessons learned to national officials and to AID colleagues throughout the world. This gave me the chance to draw on the best of the two roundtables I had ever seen: the University of Chicago's New

Nations Committee and AID Administrator David Bell's Administrator's Advisory Committee.

In assembling the team I was so fortunate that coming on board with me was Richard Blue, an extremely talented political scientist who had excellent management skills, who knew AID well and who was (and is) an extraordinarily wise and good person. I wanted a much broader group than Bell had. I liked the gathering of top talent, only I wanted mid-career and some older pros who could travel a lot and who could work across disciplines. I was already fairly well known in a number of the social science communities because I had introduced social analysis as part of AID's work and was active in those groups. We were very fortunate to have the help of a number of external academics to identify candidates. I was also able to draw upon the goodwill created in periodically briefing the personnel administration leaders. So with our own networks and others we began finding excellent people inside and outside the Agency who jumped at the chance to join what quickly became the intellectual center of the Agency.

Beyond identifying candidates, my friends in Personnel gave me periodic on-the-job mentoring on how I could use the regulations to our advantage. With their coaching, one time I called a friend, a dean at the University of California at Berkeley and said, "Congratulations! I hear so and so has just been added to your faculty. She is just fabulous." He said, "What the hell are you talking about? I don't have any vacancies." I said, "Don't worry about it, I have just borrowed her from you."

Using every trick in the trade (assignments, loans of staff, consultancies, special assignments and the like), we assembled our dream team. Among many stars it included: two outstanding anthropologists, Barbara Pillsbury and Twig Johnson, both of whom were among the last doctoral students under Margaret Mead; a wonderful historian, David Steinberg, who is now a distinguished professor at Georgetown; terrific micro and macro economists including Josette Murphy; and a newly minted geographer, Dan Dworkin, who had been a very successful entrepreneur who retired early and came to us at age 44 with a brand new PhD indeed all the experts in the Studies Division were PhDs. We borrowed professors from Harvard and Boston University. Begged, borrowed and stole!! One time the legislative assistant (Bill Anderson) of AID's key Congressional appropriator came to lunch with me and saw I made iced tea the old fashioned way (hot water, brewing the tea, pouring it over ice). He said, "Wow. You are really serious about appropriate technology. Can I work for you?" He commenced an excellent career in AID with us. Richard later succeeded me as evaluation director. When he set up his division Richard brought in as a research assistant a colleague of his from Minnesota, Cindy Clapp-Wincek, who became one of the most knowledgeable students of AID's evaluation work ever and now directs evaluation at AID.

In addition there was Herb Turner, one of the most outstanding evaluation experts in the entire donor community who set up our Systems division to foster and oversee the Agency-wide system of bureau and mission led monitoring and process evaluations. Herb had been instrumental in operationalizing the now famous LogFrame system integrating design and evaluation. He had lectured on this throughout the world. Herb gathered into his

division Molly Hageboeck, also a pioneer on LogFrame work who later became director of evaluation and then chief of staff of AID. Senior Foreign Service officers completed the staffing of this division.

Finally, and often most importantly, there was Cookie Loisel, without question the very best secretary in AID. Cookie had received offers of employment from both the Administrator and the Deputy Administrator and turned them both down so she could ask me for a job saying “I need to be busy and I wouldn’t be busy enough in those offices, but I hear you would keep me busy.” I had worked with fine secretaries in the past, but working with Cookie was a whole other experience. She was the fastest, most perfect, smartest secretary God ever created. She was beyond phenomenal. These were the days when you dictated letters. I would come in at 7:30 or eight in the morning, dictate for an hour, make some phone calls, and by 9:30 everything would be on my desk ready to be signed. And I would never read anything that she prepared because it was always absolutely perfect.

As the staffing came together, I formed an advisory group to meet with me once or twice a year (basically on demand) consisting of the smartest people I could identify from outside the Agency with whom I could raise basic issues in an off-the-record setting. There were six members of this group and the one I recall advising most insightfully on the most fundamentally important courses of action was Judith Tandler, then a consultant living in the Bay Area of California who afterwards obtained her first faculty position as a fully tenured professor at MIT. Others in this group were Michael Horowitz, a leading development anthropologist (SUNY Binghamton) and Thayer “Ted” Scudder (Cal Tech) who was responsible for the longest term ex post studies of change probably ever undertaken.

One of the first things Cookie and I did was to talk about how the AID part of the Main State Department building (where we had our offices) had no visible sign as to what business AID was in. When you are at a field post just opening your window brings you the smells of vibrant life and the noise of development. But in the old part of Main State our hallways of marble and old fashioned offices looked as if they could be the corporate offices of an ossified insurance company. They had no character. So she and I got the public affairs people to show us the best 200 photos of development in action from their archives. We worked hard to differentiate pictures of real development taking place from pictures of development tourism. A wonderful photo printer in Seattle made copies that when framed decorated our reception room and our offices. (All this at personal expense.) Soon the Administrator’s conference room had photos of development and from there the idea spread.

So we had the people and the facilities and we were ready to roll. I figured with all the talent I had that my job was the care and feeding of geniuses, and that was pretty much the truth.

*Q: How did AID handle the political imperatives to fight Communism and such?*

BERG: Well, you know, there's no excuse for throwing away money, no matter what the situation. You may cater things for different reasons, but you've got to have consistency and integrity for what you're doing.

I'll jump ahead a little to one example. When Zimbabwe became independent after their civil war, Mugabe became the head of state and we threw in a lot of political money their way very quickly. Whenever there was a political program where the stakes were really high my team would come to me and suggest that I personally lead the impact evaluation study. So I went to Zimbabwe with a fine team and found that AID had done a terrific job. When we finished that study, I said to the ambassador, "I need to talk with you privately." But he said to me, "Anything you have to say to me, you can say in front of the whole country team." I said, "I'm not so sure in this case. I think I need to talk to you privately." But he refused to meet with me privately.

So I had to say before the whole country team what I had wanted to say privately. And what I said was that the political aim of our program in Zimbabwe was explicit and crystal clear. It was to demonstrate to South Africa that an integrated society could work. I said it makes it extremely difficult for this country team to make that point when all of you are white. The ambassador turned about 10 shades paler than normal and unsuccessfully tried to suppress our report, but the next appointment to his senior country team appointment was of an African American who later became Assistant Administrator for Africa at AID.

So in these political programs, you had to be clear about what our main point was and the aid program had to reinforce that political aim.

Another case is both larger and of greater regional consequence. The biggest assistance program AID administered at that time arose from the Camp David Accords. In all the years when Israel was really struggling in the early '50s immigration was huge leading to a population growth rate of a staggering 25% per year and some people lived in cardboard houses. You can only imagine what a similar growth rate for the U.S. would mean if suddenly 75 million people a year suddenly showed up on our shores. But in those years we had no aid program with Israel.

Our AID program for Israel came only after the Camp David Accords even though by that time Israel had already become a lower middle class country moving rapidly to middle class status. The aim of our program with Israel and an associated program in Egypt (in which Egypt received an amount equal to two-thirds of whatever we gave Israel in any given year) was to promote peace in the region.

Almost all the development aid we gave to Israel was in the form of cash transfers and it was impossible to trace where that money went because it all became an integral part of their national budget. The study I led in 1980 looked at the exception to our aid program there, a program to promote housing. Over a period of years \$750 million in the form of mortgage guarantees was given to Israel, the only part of our aid program where you could actually see the specific physical facilities we had helped finance. There were 15,000

housing units that received the lowest market rate mortgages through that guarantee scheme.

When we looked at those housing units, they were absolutely terrific. A little bit of maintenance problems here and there. Nothing that you wouldn't find if you had 15,000 apartment units in any city in the United States. Most of the apartment buildings were taken care of very well and some even were in park-like settings designed by international architectural stars. Anyone would be proud to have fostered such results.

However, I had my team look at who had actually benefited from those housing units. Indeed the question of who benefits is a pivotal question for any government program.

I should say that we extended very generous terms for this program. All we required was that the beneficiaries should be in the lower 50% of the income scale. As it turns out, a quarter of that segment of the population in Israel are Arabs who are Israeli citizens. Alas, we could not find a single Arabic name in those 15,000 families. So I went to the Ministry of Finance with our findings and asked what their explanation was. Literally we were told by a quite senior finance ministry official "You Americans should understand this more than anyone. Don't you remember the stories from Ellis Island, where people would come in and change their name from Zabazutski to Jones because they wanted to have an American name? That's what these people have done. They want so much to be part of Israel that they've changed their names to Hebrew names. And so naturally you couldn't tell from that list of mortgage holders which ones were Arabs."

I said, "Oh, of course. I'm so sorry to have even raised this. Such an obvious explanation. Thank you very much. Could you introduce me to 10 such people?" And that's the last we ever heard of it.

So I shifted my team's work to find out why there was a pattern of discrimination against Israeli Arabs. We discussed housing issues with the mayors of Arab cities in the Galilee, with the key newspaper publishers of the Arabic community, and with all five of the then incumbent Arab members of the Knesset. We found and verified a consistent pattern of stark discrimination against those Arab citizens. I could describe that for you, but take my word for it. Absolute discrimination. These people *could not* benefit from any government housing program because of that discrimination.

Now then, most of the Arab political leaders that we talked to said, "We tell our cousins and brothers in Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, not to trust this government (of Israel) because they discriminate against us and we're citizens in this country. If they have a peace treaty with you, how are they going to treat you in neighboring countries where you're not a citizen of Israel? What kind of fairness are they going to give you?"

So in our report on that aid program, we said that this is clearly a political program. It was executed perfectly, except it set back the peace process rather than fostered the peace process. And the peace process was why we gave that money. I can tell you that the State Department went berserk over this. I was just leaving AID when the report was ready to be

published but the pressure on the staff I left behind was so great that the report was suppressed and still hasn't been published.

*Q: Yeah. Well again and again, you know, those who are professionally dealing with Israel turn up this discrimination. And some compare it to the apartheid. I mean it's there. And also the housing is not done to ease the housing situation, per se. It's designed to help the housing situation strategically locate this housing, these zones.*

BERG: No, our money did not go to a single housing unit that was beyond the Green Line. No, no, no. Both the U.S. and Israel were smart enough not to do that. But the discrimination within the Green line was so clear. I mean how could the embassy have missed this? How could the AID people have missed this?

*Q: Well, they missed it, didn't they, because they were told to miss it?*

BERG: No, it was news to them. It wouldn't have occurred to them to ask those questions. It just wasn't in their brief. They were told that our guarantees would only be given for housing where there was appropriate zoning. But they were not told and didn't know that the Government of Israel had systematically denied Arab cities approvals of their city planning and their zoning proposals. Of 106 Arab communities NONE had received planning and zoning approval and some of these cities had been negotiating zoning approvals for over 20 years.

The mayors of Arab cities would tell us: "You have to have approved zoning to qualify for a government mortgage. For a generation we've been trying to get an approved zoning plan for our city. We tell the government that in this area where it's all rocky, this is where we want to build our municipal buildings and other buildings. Now, this area over here where it's flat and it has good earth, that's where we want to put our vegetable gardens. And the government comes back and says no you can't do this. You've got to put your buildings where the vegetable gardens are in your plan and put your farm land where the rocks are. And we say we can't do that. Or the government just turns down the plan without telling us why. This has been going on for 20 years."

So I went to Teddy Kollek. Teddy Kollek was the dynamic and amazing Mayor of Jerusalem. I said to him that in 1967 his city had picked up some rather special territory, namely Temple Mount, the holiest area of the country, including the West Wall, one of the most sacred areas on earth. I asked whether they had gotten that area re-zoned and he said of course they had. How long had it taken to get it re-zoned? Ninety days.

You know, in reviewing programs there are misdemeanors and felonies. A misdemeanor is a mistake that isn't fatal to the program and does no harm to people. But a felony is a big error which harms people. In this case thousands of Arab Israelis should have been living in better housing, and the Government of Israel should have been pressured to change a politically (excuse me) stupid policy. It is simply not forgivable in a political program to pay our money in ways that actively work against the political aims of that program. And that's what I hold our officials most accountable for. I don't know if in the current merged

USAID and State there are frank discussions of whether aid is helping or hurting the achievement of political aims, but I sure hope people are thinking carefully about long term political aims and the suitability of various aid programs to help achieve those long term aims.

Returning to the institutionalization of evaluation, we collected these brilliant people. Almost all of them in their graduate training were used to working within their own disciplines, and their post-graduate research was also intended for the journals of their disciplines. So it was hard for a number of them, particularly those who were fresh out of the academic community, to work together because they weren't used to working across disciplinary lines. One time a Harvard professor who was on a two-year assignment with us came into my office and burst into tears, saying it was just so hard to work in this interdisciplinary manner. I pulled out my major management tool, which was a box of Kleenex and said, "Would it help you to know that you are the fifth person today to come in like this?" (*laughs*) It wasn't quite that bad, but it was hard for people. But it was also extraordinarily exciting. And quicker than I would have imagined, the beauty of the work and the extraordinarily talented supervision given by Richard Blue grew the intellectual roundtable into full function. Our staff meetings, office retreats and substantive conferences sparkled with intelligent discussions and soon our reputation spread. We were seen as Doug Bennet's big achievement and he was certainly one of the best customers for our reports and recommendations and the other senior officials soon took note and followed suit.

As I noted earlier, we had one division working on monitoring and evaluation systems. We wanted everybody who was working on programs in AID to be quality conscious, to regularly monitor their activities with appropriate and sensitive measurements of physical accomplishments, capacity building and early indicators of socio-economic progress, tailored to the actual activity. We wanted that quality consciousness to begin with good design work that was centered on the desired development consequences of their activities.

We were the first donor agency to require that there be monitoring and evaluation of all our activities. Our system emphasized ownership of monitoring and evaluation by our responsible project and program staff. On the other hand, I wanted the ex-post studies to be done independently of the responsible mission and bureau so that activities being studied would be seen with fresh, independent and expert views. Such studies were intended to maximize the learning of local and donor officials.

I wasn't trying to get perfect science out of these studies. My experience was that if you are plus or minus 5%, 10% from whatever the true-true is, you're still in the right ballpark. And to get that extra 5 or 10% would cost you so much money as to be ridiculous.

I went to our senior executives one time and sat down with them, and I said, "Now here," putting a big thick report on the table, "is what the British did this year. They spent all their evaluation money on this study, millions of pounds, to do a study of a highway project that they had in Nepal. So many people working on the study, they had to give them special colored shirts so they wouldn't be counted and ruin the traffic tallies. And the result of this study was their conclusion that unfortunately the highway ran north-south and should have

run east-west. A north-south highway was facilitating exports, but also flooding the economy with goods from India that undercut local production. An east-west highway would have knit the country together. I asked my executives, would they like me to spend all our money on one big study like that, or would they like us to have a joint learning across a broad area of our experience? There was only one answer to that question.

I also talked to the senior executives individually. And I said, “Don’t give me the details, but what parts of your program worry you at night?”

One assistant administrator said to me, “Running a three billion dollar program, I don’t have any worries. I sleep tight.” And then when he retired a year or so later, he said, “Actually, I lied. I was worried about each and every one of those damn programs.” (*laughs*). But most of my top senior colleagues were honest and really did want to know how to improve their work. The key point is that we did not do studies where the responsible executive wasn’t interested in the questions and answers. Fortunately, the demands on us exceeded our capabilities.

We designed our evaluation studies very carefully. We wanted rigor and outstanding thinking for these fairly rapid studies, but we wanted the process of evaluation to be comprehensible enough so that AID staff could participate in them. However, we did not allow anyone at all associated with a program to be involved in our ex-post studies of those programs. So if it was an Africa program being looked at, we might get one person out of the Asia Bureau and one person out of the Latin America Bureau to be on a study team, coupled with outside experts of considerable depth. We wanted staffers who participated in these impact evaluations to internalize the lessons and also to experience what a really good study looked like. And we wanted the constituency for these studies to be widespread.

We also wanted the studies to be short in duration, three weeks generally. We wanted the team to write the report in the country and to discuss it with the local government so that they didn’t leave without the government being thoroughly apprised of it. We thrived on linking with informed experts in countries; people who really knew what was going on, and what kind of issues to look out for. Often local experts had key informants in their networks, people they talked with periodically who knew whether things had changed for good or bad because of the project(s) we assisted.

And we paid a lot of attention to style. I had asked our senior executives what was the longest amount of time they would spend reading an Agency report particularly if they found it fascinating. The usual answer I got was that by the time they settled into the New York shuttle flight and had received their cup of coffee and read the newspaper, there was at most 30 minutes left on the flight. I figured that if they were slow readers it would take them two minutes a page. So we established a 15-page limit for any report that we wrote. And we said the style had to be *New Yorker Magazine* style: accessible, lively and intelligent reading. We allowed appendices for weight and glamour, but the report itself had to be short and it had to have a genuine summary of no more than one page so that readers could quickly get the story. We worked to make our reports attractive and consumer friendly.

We decided that we would do them thematically, so that if executives wanted to know the lessons of our work in a particular sector, like rural roads which happened to be our first theme, we would study until we could determine the key issues; we would review the portfolio of projects completed within the last five years and we would pick ten or so projects to review in country with our three week studies. We would then summarize what we learned from the field studies. We might well have a conference of AID HQ, field leaders and officials from a number of developing countries to discuss the findings. Then we would issue a final paper which often had policy recommendations.

The best final papers were very candid. They did not pretend to be all knowing. They said here is what we know helps this kind of activity work well. Here is what we know to avoid the biggest risks that can damage families and communities, that can occur commonly in this kind of activity. And here is what we don't know. These were one of the few documents in government that I've ever run across that actually said here's what we don't know. Because we admitted what we didn't know, people in AID and Capitol Hill (to mention two audiences) believed what we said we did know. These were really well received papers.

With carefully written attractive reports we had to decide how widespread our distribution should be. This issue kind of solved itself. As I mentioned, the first series was on rural roads and I said to my staff, "Excuse me for asking this question, but if you had to guess right now which of the projects we have selected to study is the most successful project, which one would you pick?" One colleague nominated the Colombia road project and I asked that it be our first study.

So our team went down there and they looked at the project of connecting remote mountain communities to the rest of the country. The benefits from such projects were enormous. Our team met with local officials to review our draft report. Those officials were ecstatic and while the team was flying back to Washington, the Government of Columbia translated the report into Spanish and circulated it to their entire parliament. The report essentially said that the benefits are so strong that if this were a stock, you would feel required to buy it. People from those remote communities quickly got connected to health services, education services, economic services, marketing, all that kind of stuff. Their communities just blossomed. Within six months of our report being published, the Inter-American Development Bank followed up this 25 million dollar AID project with a 50 million dollar program of their own. It was the darling of all projects. And the AID administrator was thrilled.

I asked his advice on who should see this report and he essentially answered that it should go to everybody in the U.S. over the age of three! (*laughs*).

So I told him that I planned to send it to the Federal Library Depository Program which sent Federal documents to 1800 public libraries in the United States. Now such distributions are all done electronically. And I said I would also send it to the Hill and other

key audiences. The Administrator encouraged all of this.

But I added that he had to realize all of our reports would be similarly distributed, even if some future reports said we had tripped over our own feet. That caused him some pause. But he agreed.

We had both good and some not so good news to share about rural water projects, about education projects, about agricultural production projects, and on and on.

The key point is that many agencies, including AID, had a history of reporting that their herd (of projects) only gave pure cream, and that kind of polishing the record rightly made Congress skeptical of ANY report given to them. So by sending reports on the mistakes and errors, Congress came to more readily accept the good news reports.

*Q: Well, you know, I mean again, I've never really been involved never been involved with AID. But you hear reports of dairy farms set up. And you go back 10 years later and all the cattle have been eaten and, you know, forestry efforts or*

BERG: Sure.

*Q: These things which have been opened to great praise and all.*

BERG: Yeah.

*Q: And then 10 years the follow through is so often the problem, and that is left to the country itself and they don't do it. What was your impression of—did we have an awful lot of sort of junk programs around, or?*

BERG: Well, we did when there was political exigencies like the Vietnam War. The AID program in Vietnam was just horrible.

More generally, if you looked at the total AID record, what we found was that two-thirds of the programs got a C or better, mostly Bs and more than a few As. And of the remaining third, about half were salvageable if we wanted to make the effort. Considering the terrain we had worked in around the world, there were many solid accomplishments, and I, for one, was proud of my colleagues for much of what we reported.

Now, I compare that with the domestic public sector. And I would have to say the grade is probably a little lower, but not enormously lower. It's not like all the streets in the U.S. are perfectly paved and there are no potholes. But are there more potholes in the poorest countries? Sure.

But in a larger sense it's very hard to attribute the total international development system to the total development outcome. Is there an association? Surely. And isn't it true that somehow the world has seen programs in developing countries over the last two generations that exceeds the progress of any previous era. A marked change. And that is

due to a number of factors. It is due to better government policies of which AID and other donors were very active in their discussions. It wasn't all due to the World Bank and AID and key European countries. These programs had both good and bad, but some of our programs seem pretty darn successful, such as graduate training, capacity building and particularly in leadership training. Aid helped start development momentum often in major ways, but then there was an expanded capacity to absorb increasingly interested and flourishing domestic and international private investment. And it was due to a lot of public services that were established with a lot of help by donors that private investment could yield stronger returns. So it's a very complicated equation, but I am unable to believe that this enormous flowering of an upper lower class or lower middle class and the middle class in the world now took place despite the AID programs. I think that would be an extremely hard case to make.

*Q: Looking at I mean obviously there were AID programs that were done in the private sector, but other governments were involved in a lot of aid. Were we looking over our shoulder and saying, you know, how were the Spanish doing or the Swedes or something?*

BERG: Bingo! That's a very important question, actually. And it is a question inside a larger question. The larger question is whether donors shouldn't be fostering developing countries to manage the quality of their own development. Of course, I felt that being in the international development business, it was our duty to craft our work as transitory, so each important function in development (design, implementation and evaluation) should become normal functions of the local governance of development. Evaluation should not be an exception.

Parallel to this consideration was, as you rightly point out, wondering how USAID stacked up against the quality of development from other donors. Indeed when an AID administrator would ask me how well our programs were performing, I would answer "Compared to what?"

I used to ask that same question within the Office of Evaluation, too. And it influenced one of our most dynamic colleagues in pleasantly unexpected ways. Dan Dworkin was team leader of an evaluation of USAID's village water supply program in Tanzania. He started by going to the minister responsible for rural water supplies and told him this far-fetched tale: "Bob Berg insists that you accompany the project team to review rural water supplies throughout your country." So not only did Dan undertake to compare USAID's performance with all the other donors working on rural water supplies, he did this with the nearly kidnapped participation of the minister. They found a range of technologies and results. At the high end the Australians were producing what seemed like Perrier Water quality. It took foreign staffing: one in each village and another staffer just to run to the docks to retrieve constant imports of equipment and supplies. At the other end of the technologic scale were the Dutch who produced lower quality water, but good enough, with equipment that was simple enough for any villager to manage who had the skills needed for bicycle repairs. Towards the end of Dan's study the minister raced back to the capital and by the time our team finished its work, the official Tanzanian water development policy was changed in their parliament from the Australian standard to the Dutch standard. Our

project, by the way, was right in the middle of the other donors in terms of quality. It did no harm, but it wasn't as sustainable as the Dutch model.

Knowing what the main official donors were doing regarding evaluation became a cause for the then chairman of the Development Assistance Committee, Professor John P. Lewis, one of the most thoughtful and respected figures in development. John felt that the Development Assistance Committee should set up a working group of the heads of evaluation from all the major donor agencies, and he asked me to establish and chair that committee as he was under the impression that USAID was the leader of evaluation at that time. This gave me a fine opportunity to work with the DAC Secretariat, an extremely competent group that provided outstanding backstopping and support.

We decided that the evaluators would meet at the OECD headquarters, in their conference area in the lovely Château de la Muette in Paris. (When I said I wanted flip charts at the first meeting, the staff nearly died asking whether I planned to nail holes in their beautiful 16<sup>th</sup> century paneling!) Because life has to have some beautiful benefits, I set our meeting times in April and October.

One of the first things we tried in the DAC group was to understand the various approaches that donors were using in their evaluation work. Most of the major donors were kind enough to suggest that whatever they were doing should be the model for everybody. This was particularly the view of the World Bank which I had invited to attend as full members even though, of course, the Bank was not a member of the OECD. I quickly became convinced that we would not have a common evaluation approach among the official donors, a tremendous loss in potentially getting donor coordination and in helping developing country officials **not** have to learn numerous donor systems. This lack of coordination became particularly ridiculous when several donors were working on various aspects of the same problem in a country.

So my next initiative was to propose that the OECD Development Assistance Committee be a clearing house for donor evaluations. But this raised some objections. For example the delegate from Germany said: "Are you kidding? I don't even show the man across the hall what we're doing." My answer was, "Yes, but you'll show me." And that's what happened. For the first time donors shared their evaluation evidence and we in the DAC were able to compile that information, but not to attribute specific sources of information.

Essentially we found that donors performed better in building than in coping with people. So that the more that there was a human dynamic in an activity the less sure you could be as to results. At one end of the spectrum of confidence you might have a bridge saving people on both sides long walks to shallow and safer crossing places. At the other end you might have assistance to nomadic people where the human variables are so complex and the logistics so difficult. (Imagine trying to bring schooling or health services to people who move with their herds.) So no wonder when the 2000-2015 Millennium Development Goals called for universal basic education, ministries of finance worked in concentric circles taking the easiest to serve populations first and the most remote populations (crossing geographic and cultural barriers) last.

The next step I took with the DAC group was to invite to one of our meetings the head of evaluation of the Government of India, S.M. Shah. I had met him some months previously in New Delhi during a tour of our South Asia aid missions. Before meeting him I had sent him some of our reports and said I hoped we could chat a bit. He was very gracious. He described the outstanding work they were doing and then told me that the volume of work was facilitated by their 900 professionals working in offices throughout India. He said to me “I have a little meeting going on down the hall where we’re working on the scope of work of one of our studies and I’m sorry to do this to you, but I told them I’d bring you in to say a few words to them.” I knew what a meeting like that meant: I’d had lots of them in my office in Washington involving maybe four to six people. So we went down the hall and there were some 75 people sitting around the largest table I had ever seen working on the scope of a nation-wide evaluation.

I knew that India’s evaluation work was exceptional as I had visited evaluation authorities in Latin America and in other parts of Asia, but to me India’s complete ability to undertake any kind of evaluation was the wave of the future.

So I brought S.M. Shah to a meeting of the DAC evaluation directors at the OECD. And it was pretty much as if I’d brought a horse into a cathedral. I mean these people were a little shocked (*laughs*). Broke all kinds of protocol at the time. But I wanted my colleagues to know not that in theory some of the developing countries already were playing the game better than most of the donors, but that in practice that was also the case. I rubbed it in a bit by saying that Shah had more professionals on his staff than all the donor evaluation services combined. The British delegate took me aside and said, “You’re 30 years ahead of time.”

No, I was right on time as the problems were contemporary. One of my early projects with AID was helping create a School of Veterinary Medicine at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, Northern Nigeria. Nice and important project. Cattle was a huge part of the economy in Northern Nigeria and I had seen herds with all kinds of sicknesses. At the same time AID was creating one school, other donors were creating other schools and/or facilities. Each donor was evaluating its project, but who was looking after the health of the whole university and who would need to think about how that university was doing vis-à-vis Nigeria’s other universities? Only Nigerian authorities could have this optic.

In searching for a way to speed up that purported 30 year timetable, I thought it might be useful to compile a directory of national evaluation authorities around the world so that colleagues in AID and in other donor agencies would know at the very least to whom to send copies of their reports. Some consultant wanted \$30,000 (in today’s money) to put together that directory. My secretary, Cookie, said to me, “I’ll come in a couple weekends and I’ll do it for you,” and she did. She sent messages all around the world and boom, done.

I then went to the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and I said, “Why do I have to produce this directory? Why the hell aren’t you doing it?” At the time this was well

beyond their abilities, but in recent years they have become the donor leader in fostering national evaluation capacities.

One person in the U.S. Government was working very well in building the capacities of developing country governments to have oversight of important parts of their programs and that was Elmer Staats who headed the GAO (Government Accountability Office). I'm a bit biased but I think he was the best leader in GAO's history and I later worked with him on a committee and found him profound. He took it upon himself to foster GAO-like institutions around the world. Within the U.S. Government GAO took a major lead in fostering research and evaluation to improve public policies. One way they did that was to propose a regular meeting of the assistant secretaries/directors of research and evaluation across all departments and major agencies. I was very active in that grouping and found it invaluable to gain a better appreciation of cross-cutting issues of governance being faced by departments and agencies. It was a particular joy to make a formal presentation and have a serious discussion for a whole meeting with that group on the evaluation approaches we were using at USAID.

Technically, GAO was overstepping their mandate in organizing a cross-government group on evaluation. OMB was supposed to coordinate evaluation across the government, but whether it was the Carter or the Reagan Administration, the incumbents in the position in OMB responsible for the evaluation functions in the USG didn't see the need to meet with us. As the Reagan chap told me when I was representing the GAO-led group in a meeting with him, he was too busy running the president's life to bother with us, notwithstanding that the word "evaluation" was in his official title.

Between oversight of all the missions in USAID, our active role in the DAC group on evaluation, our participation in the GAO government-wide group on evaluation and our keeping a watching brief on evaluation by developing country governments, I felt we had a pretty good grasp of our field and how we were doing compared with relevant peers.

We were also active in the Policy Bureau's basic function of making and reviewing the main policies guiding AID.

The one area where I completely failed was in trying to make top individuals accountable for willfully neglecting the consequences of key findings from evaluation. In one example, I went to an assistant administrator and I said, "I have discovered that your mission director in such and such a country has willfully neglected three different studies showing fatal failures in his mission's major rural development initiative. Instead he has proposed and you have funded Phase II and Phase III and in each phase we have really harmed about 10,000 families. This person should be hung. This is criminal. It is the worst felony in the field of development." But the Assistant Administrator would not even reprimand let alone fire that mission director.

*Q: Well, does this represent a problem of getting rid of people within the organization?*

BERG: Yes, there is a problem with that. We had no formal system of identifying development felonies. Instead we naturally reinforced Ten Commandments kinds of rules. But if you're in the development business, you need rules for conduct within your field. And repeating the same mistake again and again and expecting a different result is, as Einstein said, true stupidity.

While I am kicking myself for not somehow getting that mission director canned, let me mention a couple of other mistakes.

I have mentioned that the head of our Systems division was a beautiful guy, smart as can be. One of the great pioneers of the field of evaluation. And I thought I should send him up to the UN to get evaluations started there. So I sent him to the UN secretariat as a gift. And it was only later that I realized that I should have sent him to UNDP, which had more influence on that issue than the UN secretariat had. So that was a big goof. My old colleague had a wonderful time at the UN and surely enjoyed life in Manhattan as his last assignment with AID, but I know he could have had more impact elsewhere.

Just at the height of our glory, a national election was held. And Ronald Reagan won. During that transition period we had one of our regular GAO-led meetings of all the assistant secretaries of research and evaluation across the government and it was really clear that the transition teams had come in and were already taking over. Everybody had the same story, that these people had all the answers and didn't know what the questions were. And it was like a pall had come across this community because we all realized that we were essentially out of business. Facts did not matter anymore. Ideology mattered.

In my case, I had read a statement by a senator from Florida who was talking with Ed Feulner who was the President of the Heritage Foundation. Ed was in charge of the Reagan transition of the entire foreign affairs community. (By the way, the Heritage Foundation placed more people in presidential appointments in the Reagan administration than all minorities combined. I mean they had enormous influence.) The senator and Feulner agreed that AID programs should be in and out in about two years and no more than three. I had a study on this topic that had unfortunately never gotten considered by Dan Parker, the AID Administrator (1973-76) when I had finished the study because he had an overriding problem regarding gifting the host of his borrowed hunting lodge. I had the data on what it took to implement programs and it was clear that two years was an absurdly short period.

So I called Ed Feulner, introduced myself, said I'm the director of evaluation at AID and that he had pinpointed a really good issue about how long programs should take and that I had made a study of 936 of our programs. I wondered whether he wanted me to send him a one-page summary of what the conclusion of that study was, and he said no. So I went back to my staff saying well, having interacted with the head of the transition, having met with the directors and assistant secretaries of research and evaluation, I think we're going to be in for a really, really hard time. I completely underestimated how hard a time we would be in because in very short order it was announced that the number three person at AID and

the person who would be my direct boss was a gentleman named John Bolton. And John Bolton was about as welcome as some of my family felt when they met the SS generals in World War II (*laughs*).

Bolton arrived at the same time as our new Deputy Administrator, Jay Morris. Actually these guys improved upon the old Communist management of factories. In Soviet times there was one guy who ran the factory and there was another guy who ran the ideology in the factory. In AID we had a new administrator to run our factory and we had both Bolton and Morris to run the ideology (*laughs*). They shared a winner takes all political philosophy. So three things happened as soon as they took office. First they wanted to see every single personnel action that was coming through, no matter how small. For example, one of the actions was to approve the hiring for one of my teams of a professor for a three-week assignment. So we sent the papers to Bolton and he called me. And he said, "On page 20 of his resume it says that he was a precinct captain." Of all the stupid things to put on a resume, but any rate (*laughs*). He said, "What party was he from?"

I said, "John, I have no idea."

He said, "Well, find out." So I found out.

And I called him back. And I said, "John, this was 26 years ago and he was young and impressionable but it was for the Democrats."

And he said, "Well, then he can't be hired," (*laughs*).

So the second thing that happened was I got a call from Jay Morris, the central commissar. And he said, "I have somebody who's coming down to join your staff."

And I said, "Well, that's wonderful. Could you send me that person's resume? Because I've been really kind of careful to have the very top people in the world on this staff, and they're all superstars."

He said, "I don't think you understand. I am sending you someone for your staff (*laughs*)."

So in comes this rather nice young woman who was the daughter of the National Security Council director. And she did have a four-year bachelor's degree in English and she did have professional experience. She'd been on the staff of the Miss America contest. So clearly she belonged in this set of high level PhD's that I had assembled! (*laughs*) Anyway, I put her in with one of my most active colleagues and the two of them really hit it off, and she learned a lot. But to think that that was the best use of a political assignment. A GS-9!

The third was much more important. I got a call from Peter McPherson, who was the new Administrator of AID to come to his office right away. Peter had been the president of Michigan State University and executive vice president of Bank of America before he came to AID. He was then married to a nurse and he cared about health issues. To my pleasant surprise, in with Peter was Jim Grant, then the head of UNICEF (United Nations Children's

Fund). Jim had been nominated by Carter late in his term and had recently been confirmed by the UNICEF board. I had worked with Jim in the legislative reform of AID and in the Society for International Development. Jim was already an icon. Bill Gates in his annual foundation newsletters makes more mention of Jim than any other individual. Jim was more than a somebody to me: I would do anything for him. So Jim and Peter said, “Bob, we want you to take on a special assignment. In a few days, the World Health Organization is going to have a vote on a voluntary code of conduct to market infant formula.”

Infant formula is powdered milk like Similac that Nestle produces. Nestle is a Swiss company that has two-thirds of the world’s market for infant supplementary feedings. When you traveled the developing country world, you would see their billboards showing a hefty nurse bursting out of her white uniform holding the largest baby in the world. It looked like it weighed 80 pounds! (*laughs*). Millions of mothers saw that ad and felt if only they served that magical powder, their newborn would be just as big and strong. Alas, what they didn’t understand was that in literate societies everybody knew to boil the bottle and the nipple and the milk and cool it down to keep it all hygienic. But in poor countries with high illiteracy the bottle would fall into the mud, the mother would pick it up, put it back in the kid’s mouth, the kid would get diarrhea and die. Fifty thousand infants a year were dying around the world according to the best estimates because of the mis-marketing of this infant formula. So the question on Jim and Peter’s minds was whether the U.S. could give as much support as possible to a voluntary marketing code that would be voted on at the World Health Organization. We all knew that the U.S. would not vote for the code, but at least it could take the not-so-brave position of European countries and abstain. So Jim and Peter asked me to get the State Department to agree to recommend to the White House that we abstain, too.

I told them that as director of evaluation, I didn’t get into issues as it would undermine my office’s neutrality. But Jim asked me “as a personal favor” to take this one on and he was the one person in the development world I couldn’t say no to. It took me less than two hours to get the State Department to see things our way.

But a few days later, John Bolton came into a senior staff meeting and said: “This is a great day for America. The United States has just voted no on the infant formula code. We have shown to the world what we have stood for.” He had gone above the deputy administrator and the administrator to the White House and got them to overrule the State Department and AID on this issue. And he was right. In being the only country in the world to vote against the Infant Formula Code (189 countries voted for it or abstained), we showed the world what we stood for: profits for the two main manufacturers of infant formula (one of which was Swiss) over the lives of 50,000 infants a year. This was the head of policy of the U.S. agency charged with saving lives and improving the well-being of families in poor countries around the world! And this was just a few months into the Reagan Administration.

After Bolton made his stunning announcement, I stood up and said, “I’m sorry John. This is a day of shame for the United States.” And I walked out. I went outside, and took a deep breath of air and thought, “The free air is really wonderful.”

In the subsequent days I made arrangements to keep on the AID payroll so I could complete my role as chair of the major upcoming World Congress of the Society for International Development, but my role in evaluation was over. I knew that the staff I was leaving behind was in an impossible position working for an ideologue who had absolutely no regard for impartiality. But leaving that staff was my biggest regret. I loved those folks and relished each day working with them. And I knew the team would never be the same. Indeed AID lost a number of those people quickly. One of them, a wonderful agricultural economist, immediately got a position with an international fund at 25% higher salary than she had gotten working for AID. She had turned down jobs to stay in our office, but now it was a different story. One of them joined the faculty of a major university as a full professor. And in due course, Bolton's touch ended the influence and much of the integrity of that office.

*Q: What was Bolton's position?*

BERG: He was the assistant administrator for policy. He was the number three person at AID. And he was just terrible. For example, he was very interested in the private sector. So in the weeks that I worked with him he pestered me to know what the evaluation results were for a major private sector program. I told him the program was only a year old and an evaluation of the program would be meaningless. But he wouldn't hear of it. Ideologues need to have the world conform to them! If he didn't get the results he wanted, he would make them up.

Richard Blue did the best he could to maintain that function, but it was uphill work. Bolton went on to be an Undersecretary of State and then became the U.S. ambassador to the UN, the least welcome gift the U.S. has ever given the UN.

As I edit this in 2014, I should update the standing of evaluation.

Evaluation has become a profession around the world. Each region of the world has a professional association of evaluators, and, in addition, there is now a global professional association devoted to building the capacities of national evaluation authorities. The OECD/DAC has continued and intensified its work to have donors help developing countries assume larger roles in evaluation.

AID's work on evaluation had its ups and down, and the evaluation office ceased to exist for some years. But three years ago it was resurrected under Cindy Clapp-Wincek, a vibrant expert on evaluation whose work started in USAID in our old office of evaluation.

The Department of State approved its own evaluation system in 2013. MCC has its own system. The Peace Corps has its evaluation system. PEPFAR (The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) has its system. And, of course, USAID has its system. FIVE evaluation systems for just one bilateral donor. In a meeting of past and present evaluation leaders of AID and other foreign affairs agencies held at Georgetown University

in 2013, I commented that it was a shame that the U.S. government did not have one system for all its foreign affairs agencies and I outlined what that should consist of.

- Basic principles and values assessed in all programs.
- Special questions:
  - for political programs.
  - for development programs.
  - For public affairs programs.

This idea will not be taken up seriously for some years!

The most important point is that evolving the concerns of donors about the quality of aid to be the responsibility of developing countries should be a key part of the transition to bilateral relationships that are less dominated by development aid and more dominated by mutual interests.

Donors and their contractors and NGO grantees seem ill prepared for this kind of transition and so they keep compounding the problem of the need for transitions in relationships by adding requirements (like the above five systems of evaluation) and by not coordinating with each other. What could become a graceful transition to more mature and productive relationships could well be building up to rough transitions that set back relations. A very recent example (2014) is the minister of finance of India calling aid a “nuisance.” Foreign aid has never been more than seven percent of India’s total budget, and this was on my mind when I put forward the head of India’s evaluation to that 1980 meeting of the DAC evaluation group. Maybe, as the UK delegate said, I was 30 years too early, but maybe we are now decades late in finding better ways to relate to progressing middle class countries.

*Q: OK. Today is the sixth of February, 2013 with Robert Berg. And Bob, I’ll let you take off.*

I was talking about the systemic changes in AID. I will start today by talking about some cross-cutting issues.

*Q: Well, you know, looking at it, AID has a reputation for being extremely slow and caught up in itself. I mean did you see it that way or?*

BERG: Well if we compared the rate of reforms in State versus AID arguably AID, would look pretty good. More fundamentally, I believe most very large organizations, State, Government of Russia, or main line corporations are very much like feudal organizations. The overall creativity and productivity of feudal organizations may not be outstanding, but what you have to do is to seek out the special dukedom or the lordship that is part of a very large organization where the leadership is dynamic and the substance is exciting. Even in poor organizations there are usually some great leaders. You get yourself working with them because that is where you find the excitement and there’s the chance to do new and innovative things. Sometimes those great leaders are leading in the

wrong direction so you have to be careful about which horse you ride (*laughs*). But when you're dynamic and careful you can get yourself attached to areas where there's a great leader and where great things can be accomplished. I was very fortunate to have that happen.

As you get higher up you need allies so you always need to be on the lookout for them. In my case my first great ally was the de facto leader of AID in the mid-1970s who gave me protection and that protection allowed me to do things that increased my circle of allies.

Occasionally you find a void and you try to fill it in ways that are progressive and dynamic. A void can be an organization where the leader isn't leading and if you can help make that leader have accomplishments then you can just do great things. The area that worried me most at AID and later at the UN was the deleterious effect of having unqualified leaders. And unqualified leaders usually came in through the political system in both the U.S. and the UN.

I've already given you an example of an unqualified Democrat appointee, R. Peter Straus of the Sulzberger family, who was Assistant Administrator for Africa in some of the Johnson Administration. And on the Republican side I mentioned Daniel Parker who for a good part of the Nixon-Ford administrations (1973-77), was the Administrator of AID. Both Peter and Dan were nice human beings, both were rich, and both had come to their private sector positions with, let us say, encouragement from their being part of owning families. But to hold high public office you have to have a lot of different qualities and wealth is but one variable that is nice but not necessary and certainly not sufficient.

Dan Parker had the good fortune to be the heir of Parker Pen and he came to us directly from being president of that firm. During his time at AID, if you sported a fancy Parker pen on your outside chest coat pocket, it meant that Dan had thanked you. These gifts came from Parker Pen's R&D department, they were experimental pens, and usually those pens leaked. I think folks at his company really didn't like him as they would send him these experimental models that were often defective. I looked up the profits of his company the year after he joined AID. Its' previous growth had been anemic but the year after he came to AID the company's profit rose 33%. As kids say, "I'm just saying.."

Dan was a very bad choice to run AID not because he was malevolent (we got such leaders in later years) but because in addition to a lack of proven substantive and management leadership, he was almost terminally shy. He couldn't meet with more than one person at a time. As soon as he was sworn in he was urged to address the troops just to greet them, to show he had personal integrity and humanity. He just simply could not do that. It scared him to death. Poor man, because there did come a time a few years later when by law he had to address the troops, that was when he was required to publicly announce the commencement of a reduction of force. Can you imagine your first speech to your whole staff is to announce a layoff (*laughs*)? Of course, even a brave person would have been scared of that.

The difficulty with these kinds of appointments goes well beyond the tenure of a given political person. If you know that the chances are 50/50 that you're going to get somebody out of the appointment system who may not be qualified, then you know that the occasional fine leader will likely be bookended between two appointees who may well be below par. When employees think that is the case they may well pay less attention to the one leader as they assume that the next leader will be mediocre and will backtrack on all the progress a fine leader may make. So the appointment process, particularly the political appointee process can really pervade not only the occupancy time of the poor leader, it also can pollute the chances of top professional leaders.

Fortunately in Dan Parker's case, he had a deputy I've already talked about: John E. Murphy and while Johnny was not a development expert, he certainly was an expert in public administration. So in those years we could get public administration improvements instituted but, frankly, we made less progress on substantive matters as both of the top two leaders were not experts in the field they were leading.

Let me quickly add that it is more than possible to obtain high quality political level executives for public service. Doug Bennet was such a person. My spouse (ok, special pleading) certainly was. Here would be my rule of thumb for executive level recruiters:

- 1) A polished exterior does not indicate a glowing interior. Political skills are wonderful and essential, but internal integrity, good judgment and high intelligence count more.
- 2) It should be a requirement of any political appointee that they believe in the mission of the group to which they are appointed. It is a betrayal of the public trust to appoint someone who thinks otherwise, unless the legislative authority has directed that the function be disbanded or radically changed to a mission the appointee is passionate about.
- 3) Management is an art, and a learned art at that. It cannot be treated as a pick up sport. The UN often appointed high level top substantive experts who had no management track record and could not establish one. In any case, political skills are not a substitute for management skills, particularly those that are necessary for results-based management.
- 4) Top executives need to be of a consistently high quality. A top manager runs two agendas: a proactive agenda to deliver the best substance possible, and an institutional agenda to leave the institute stronger and more dynamic than it was upon the inception of his/her service. A poor manager will quickly lead to a demoralized and disintegrating staff that will take years and years to rebuild. The best will go first.

*Q: How did you handle the thing that I've always found in the government to be both wasteful and often absurd, and that is the end of the fiscal year purchases? You know, the thing is you realize you're going to have excess money so you've got to spend it on something and often it's a quick fix or it's something that really isn't really to the mission?*

BERG: I have three answers to this good crosscutting question.

First, here is what I did. When I had budgets for the operations under my direction I always turned back whatever I hadn't spent. A lot of people told me I was crazy because my next year's budget would be cut to what I had spent in the previous year, but this was never the case. I had the quaint notion that honesty was the best policy and it seemed to work.

Second, I am fully aware that some people played the system, sometimes brilliantly. The best such player was Walter Furst who when I joined AID was the desk officer for India (and later was my curmudgeon of a boss in Lagos and still later worked in my Office of Evaluation). Walter would prepare a project analysis and authorization package to provide locomotives for the national railways of India, a huge system that, frankly, could absorb any number of locomotives and probably would use them fairly well. At the end of the fiscal year Walter would nose around his and the other bureaus to sense how much money would be left over. Then he would fill in the numbers of locomotives to absorb whatever total he thought he could mop up from the rest of the Agency. In a bad year he would only provide 10 locomotives (at about \$5million/locomotive), but in a "good" year he could increase that quite a bit. Was this a bad thing? Well, I could think of worse uses for end-of-year money.

Third, just like all corporations, the donor agencies around the world were under some pressure to "make their numbers." But someone should always stand back and ask whether the behavioral incentive systems are going to get you the results you really want. Do you want to proudly say that you have committed every last cent or that you got the best results possible? A current mantra in governance is to build for results-based performance, but too often full commitment of budgets trumps this worthy goal.

In the United Nations in the years I was associated with it (1990-2005) the way non-personnel budgeting was compiled was a calculation based upon the outputs your division/agency proposed to accomplish. So many reports (number of copies in English, number of copies French) and listed by title, so many workshops, so many conferences were the core around which most UN agencies calculated their budgets. And, mind you, the budgets were compiled a minimum of two years before implementation started, so there was also a lack of reality about large parts of the planned expenditures.

Once while advising the Africa part of the United Nations I asked their outstanding public administration leader what would happen if he were to propose an amendment to his program of work in which he would say: rather than producing 50 reports and holding 15 workshops and 3 regional conferences, instead we are only going to produce one report but with absolute certainty it would increase world GDP by 2% per year. Would he ever make such an offer? My colleague was scandalized: "Are you crazy? My budget would be cut to ribbons," (*laughs*). So these perverse systems are really astonishing.

But in my case in AID, as I mentioned, I was never penalized for honest administration. If I didn't use my budget I still got the budget I needed for the subsequent year. Of course, in all my policy work I was in a staff function and so the amounts were not large. If I had been in a line position running a big project portfolio I would have been sure to

have a backlog of projects ready to be financed so that country programs would not suffer from my not having done the right homework.

There are a couple of other cross-cutting questions that are worth a bit of consideration.

One is the question of who gets credit for accomplishments. If you look at the World Bank or AID or other big financing agencies, the people who made the initial commitment and who got money authorized get a lot of the credit whether or not later on the activities they proposed and funded worked out. There was one major mission director who was very popular wherever he went, because he committed lots of money very quickly. Then people had to come after him, like the people after a circus parade have to come with shovels and buckets (*laughs*). He had been mission director in Nigeria before my arrival and it was part of my self-assigned job to close those of his commitments that made no sense at all. But he had gotten great credit for the commitments and he had gone on to be an assistant administrator. Wouldn't it be refreshing if when an evaluation came in that discovered a real winner of an initiative that was really helping people that part of the Agency's response would be to find out who were the key staff involved in that effort so that it could recognize and congratulate them? (And, equally important, if it was shown to be a truly stupid project, there should be an equal search and penalty for those responsible.)

Any major governmental activity will be touched by many hands. One of the projects that I worked on was the huge water supply upgrade for the large city of Ibadan, Nigeria. Some time after I left Nigeria, I was invited by the manager of that project (a Nigerian official I respected and liked) to the ceremony marking the project's completion and the inauguration of regular water service to Ibadan. I had to decline and he came back saying "I'm sorry you can't attend because you really played a big role in this. We wanted to have you here. But could you list all the other people at AID who worked in one way or another on this project over the years?" So we put together the longest list in the world, probably 300 names and a lot of those people really did deserve some credit for what was a hell of a good project. In the annual football ritual of the Super Bowl game the credit is being given to the game's most valuable player. But in fact, the whole team and a big back office was necessary for victory. Great managers assure that the team as well as individuals receive credit. I fully appreciate that this is complicated in State and AID when your team is continuously changing as people move from post to post. Still, I favor team awards as we want to foster people working together for the best possible results.

The last cross-cutting issue that I want to discuss is coordination. Starting in the Carter Administration there has been a major desire to better coordinate U.S. Government efforts to help poor countries. USAID is the largest USG foreign aid institution, but it turns out that most every major part of the Federal Government has some activities or some programs that relate to development of poor countries. They do this because they feel they have something to offer the rest of the world or maybe some just want boondoggles, who knows? We did a study in the '70s and found 65 departments and agencies that had international programs. If you were in Kenya, which was a very popular place to be because of the beauty of the country and the ease of the lifestyle, you would

find something like 50 U.S. agencies out there, including the Library of Congress and the Fish and Game people.

The Carter Administration tried to coordinate aid through establishing the International Development Coordination Agency (IDCA) to manage all the diverse programs under it and to have the Director of IDCA chair an NSC level group, The Development Coordination Committee. The problem was that agencies quickly squirmed out of the IDCA plan and so by the time the Carter Administration promulgated IDCA in 1979 the only agency left for it to coordinate was USAID. In the world of corporate finance this would be called a one bank holding company.

The Carter people installed Tom Ehrlich as head of IDCA. He put together a policy staff to manage their holdings i.e., to manage AID, and it became an obvious added layer of people making policies for the AID policy bureau. It was the setting for a perfect storm.

In the end, if you looked at what IDCA accomplished substantively, there was little to see. Ehrlich felt that the one thing that AID was doing that could be abandoned altogether was its work in education, which was, let me say, a deeply flawed idea. We shouldn't help kids get schooling in the poorest countries of the world? His antipathy to education apparently was not extremely deep-seated, because after he left IDCA he became president of the University of Pennsylvania! And IDCA collapsed.

Later, in Bush II, a coordinating role was established in the State Department so that the Director of Development in the State Department was to supervise AID. Randy Tobias was appointed in that position. That, too, turned out to be very difficult, compounded by the fact that Tobias really was more of a political appointee than a professional in development and had a few strange ideas and behaviors. In any case, for reasons I never fully understood two completely different aid agencies were established during George W's administration: the MCC ( Millennium Development Corporation ) to give wide ranging country assistance in very large packages, and PEPFAR ( The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief ) which were sensible initiatives but why have MCC separate when so many macroeconomic and sectoral experts were in AID and why have PEPFAR as a separate organization when so many inter-related health and population programs were in AID?

Currently AID is a subordinate unit of the State Department. Now, there's good and bad about this. Do you want closer coordination with political aims? But what kind of political aims? Well, if we agree on long term political aims, then AID is an appropriate instrument. But if one wants to use AID for short-term political aims then such aid is actually dangerous as it completely devalues for countries and for AID the professionalism that development should have and it delays development all the more as short-term monies are usually more a source of corruption. Indeed in the AID I knew, there was a consistent battle between regional Assistant Administrators and regional Assistant Secretaries of State over aid monies. State always had wonderful ideas for short term budget and project support. Is this move to the short term going on now? Arguably

so as AID has shifted a very large amount of its portfolio to such short term tasks as humanitarian relief, to the detriment of longer term stability and development.

Having AID subordinate to State also entails the loss of plausible deniability, as I mentioned earlier. For example, in Ethiopia a national election in the late 1990s was declared tainted by AID. The Ethiopians were furious but relations held as there was plausible deniability. But when Meles ran a second time (after AID was made subordinate to State) the results showed him losing all the cities (where the international observers were on watch) but miraculously winning all the rural areas. The U.S. simply went along with a crooked election by a political figure we felt we needed in power. He was congratulated by our top officials and there was not even a slap on the wrist.

The coordination issue has grown in importance in our increasingly multiphrenic world with its proliferation of NGOs, international funds (probably 200 such funds now), growing number of bilateral donors (think China, India, Turkey) and a geometric rise of corporate and private foundations. And yet, a shrinking needy population. Now we have fewer countries requiring concessional international assistance. So there is quite a need to have some rationalization of the aid industry. In the 1980s the president of CARE, then managing the largest U.S. international NGO, would call me for advice. One time I urged him to have a mergers and acquisition unit just like a big corporation so that CARE could acquire entities as part of its planned growth. Charitable organizations are hesitant to show such managerial aggressiveness they are too polite! A consolidation of international organizations and programs is inevitable. The fact that many of these actors are non-profits makes no difference, except that the non-profit community is far less used to mergers than the corporate world.

When I left the Office of Evaluation at USAID, I knew that I had at least four years until another administration would come into power, but four years turned into eight, and eight years turned into 12 before Democrats regained the White House. (I had but one meeting with Clinton's USAID to lightly explore whether I should return to AID, but was told that Reagan's chief of staff at USAID had told the Clinton folks that I was not politically reliable (to whom? Bolton?). Clinton's USAID chief of staff believed him.)

At age 41, my career in USAID and the U.S. Government had come to an end. Many of us now look at the mid-to-late 1970s as a golden age at USAID, but, of course, one never knows one is living in a golden age—until it is over.

When I left USAID in 1981 I had two send-offs that were meaningful and emotionally touching. The first was a staff gathering with very warm speeches by Richard Blue and Herb Turner from my staff and a few others, and a presentation of a beautiful and hefty leather bound collection of the office's first major evaluation publications. The second was a special session organized by the staff of the House Foreign Affairs Committee to learn my lessons learned and other observations about AID. It was a rare honor.

For a while, I felt that the main purpose of my professional life had ended, but I could not have known that at AID it was mostly downhill. As then Secretary of Defense Robert Gates put it in his Landon Lecture (November 27, 2007).

“What is not well-known, and short sighted, was the gutting of America’s ability to engage, assist, and communicate with other parts of the world – the “soft power,” which had been so important throughout the Cold War. The State Department froze the hiring of new Foreign Service officers for a period of time. The United States Agency for International Development saw deep staff cuts – its permanent staff dropping from a high of 15,000 during Vietnam to about 3,000 in the 1990s. And the U.S. Information Agency was abolished as an independent entity, split into pieces, and many of its capabilities folded into a small corner of the State Department.”

For a time evaluation ceased, AID lost its policy bureau (and actually tried to contract out its policy functions, an effort I was asked to bid on and refused), and lost its autonomy. Only in recent years has there been some recouping: the policy bureau is re-established, the evaluation function is vibrant again although not conducting impact evaluations, and 850 young professionals are in the process of being hired.

A few years ago a prominent mid-level official at AID saw me at a gathering and told me how lucky I had been not to have spent the 1980s, 1990s and the early 2000s at AID. He had and he so envied me my varied and (to him) far more interesting career.

I don’t know about that, but I do know that a large number of opportunities opened up to me when I left the Office of Evaluation. Since several of them ran at the same time, for ease of presentation, I have divided them up into five sections:

- Experiences in a Development Think Tank and in Academic Studies;
- Helping Civil Society Organizations;
- Consulting with Peace Corps, CARE and the United Nations
- Africa
- Personal life and dreams

#### A. Experiences in a Development Think Tank and in Academic Studies;

The Overseas Development Council was the country’s main think tank on international development. Founded by Jim Grant, it provided much of the intellectual heft of the Basic Human Needs approach to development during the 1970s. Jim had gone to head UNICEF and he was replaced by John Sewell, a former foreign service officer with a quick mind, and Martin McLaughlin, an experienced leader on humanitarian and food aid

When I left AID, I went to see John and Martin. I handed them a proposal of what I could do if I were part of their organization. They generously liked what I proposed and asked me to join them as the first person they designated as senior fellow of this think tank on Massachusetts Avenue near The Brookings Institution. I spent some very useful years there engaged in a lot of interesting studies and discussions, and interacting with U.S. intellectual leaders I had not met before, including a lot of high powered folks on the

ODC board. ODC had heightened interest in the development community given the fact that John Bolton and Jay Morris had really removed USAID from honest and important policy work, so the think tank was a bit like a government in exile (as think tanks can be).

I worked on many matters at ODC, but two major projects stand out. One was to get a more informed idea of what Americans thought about foreign aid and to learn how to better communicate with Americans about aid. InterAction, the trade association of US-based international NGOs, was particularly anxious to inform their members on how to market development work. And there was even a small pot of USAID money available to help educate Americans about foreign aid (money that I had had a small hand in raising during the Carter years).

ODC and InterAction teamed up to propose a major polling of American opinion on international development and aid. I was asked to co-lead this effort in ODC. I had friends at the Carnegie Foundation who were under the misimpression that I actually was expert on this topic! They gave ODC a pile of money to conduct focus groups and extensive national polling. We found out that, as expected, our support was a mile wide and an inch deep, but that organizations that also attacked domestic emergencies and poverty had more credibility, and that there were indeed approaches in public education on development that could be recommended. The findings were so useful that we went back to Carnegie for money to conduct briefings around the country on the findings and to work with InterAction in educating their members on the results. Carnegie came through a second time, and our road shows began. We went to a number of major cities gathering all their non-profits interested in international affairs, usually at least a hundred groups in each city. I would start the presentations by saying (tongue in cheek) that in the last city we had been to, the local groups never met with each other, so it was a joy to be in a city where the local groups working on international relations met with each other. Every time I said this, the group would say “No. It isn’t true, we never meet together.” And our first point would be made.

I learned a lot from this exercise, including the value of careful study of past polling data, and how easy it is to hive onto new polling questions on issues so that you didn’t need to finance a whole polling of your own in order to ask some key questions.

The most important lesson for me was that think tanks, like academic institutions in general, were spending about 90 percent of their funds on production of findings and 10 percent or less on marketing their findings. I felt the proportions were wrong and that 60:40 would be about right. This would require considerable understanding from foundations and other key supporters.

The second project I worked on at ODC was a major study of U.S. aid policies for Africa, reported in the section on Africa, below.

There was actually a third project, a study on U.S. military sales around the world, which I felt should be sharply curtailed. ODC decided not to publish that study, which I both regretted and didn’t understand, until it turned out that John Sewell had written a study on

that topic some years ago and wasn't able to get his study published, so maybe this was somehow a pattern he had to repeat. In any case it was not a pattern to be liked.

ODC put me into a fast-paced track of intellectual high flyers who met at places like Ditchley near Oxford, Tarrytown and Kykuit (the Rockefeller estate north of New York City) and Bellagio (the Rockefeller Foundation conference center on Lake Como in Italy). One could not claim to suffer in such surroundings.

I left ODC in 1986 truly grateful for the experiences (except on military sales!), and networks of people I had met who expanded my thinking on a lot of topics, and thankful for a home when I needed one after leaving USAID. Sadly, ODC ceased to operate at the end of 2000 because while it was receiving \$3million/year in project aid, its funders were not providing adequate core support for it to survive. People asked me to start another think tank to replace ODC and I was toying about this idea when I heard about Ed Scott, who I took to lunch in San Francisco. Ed told me he was thinking about giving a small amount to Nancy Birdsall to start a think tank on development. I asked him what "small" meant and he said "Oh, about \$25million," which in the world of think tanks is a fortune. So Ed and Nancy started the Center for Global Development which is a major and highly effective institution.

The next study I was involved in was under the auspices of Michigan State University. As the election of 1988 was being organized, the common thinking was that there would be a backlash against Reaganism and that with a new Administration coming in there would be a huge opportunity to put forth new progressive policies in all fields, including international affairs. I was active in believing progressives had a big chance to change the government and so I accepted chairing for the (then) Roosevelt Foundation, a \$3million effort to educate the voters in Iowa and New Hampshire on the importance of robust development-oriented foreign aid. We were so successful in those efforts that Michael Dukakis's campaign, poor folks, became convinced that foreign aid was the top issue on people's minds and so he gave his first substantive address in New Hampshire on that topic, a speech on which I collaborated. (As it turned out, our work in these first two primary election states led to six of the seven original candidates in the election to come out with formal positions on economic and military aid. Alas, the seventh candidate won the election.)XXX

Michigan State University caught the same bug as did many other groups. MSU's Ralph Smuckler, Dean of International Programs, coordinated the international work of some 1,000 academics on that campus, and was a fine intellectual and an entrepreneurial figure of considerable standing. Ralph proposed a major study of US-Developing Country relationships and enlisted me as senior advisor and David Gordon, then an associate professor at MSU and Michigan State, as senior scholar. We worked with top notch people and institutions. We had 11 collaborating institutions (including the National Research Council), the support of four large foundations, the contributions of 100 authors, and the benefit of 15 symposia and a major national conference involving 800 people. I thought we had to be the P. T. Barnum of policy work!

The resultant report was written by Ralph, David and me, entitled *New Challenges, New Opportunities: U.S. Cooperation in International Growth and Development in the 1990s*, was released in 1988 just in time for the incoming George H.W. Bush Administration to ignore it almost completely. Too bad as we had wonderful recommendations that seemed to me to broach new ground, e.g., that the U.S. needed to craft far more collaborative relationships with developing countries, anticipating that aid would not dominate a lot of those relationships. Collaboration would need to take over from one-way relationships. We also identified Debt, Africa and Global Environment as three major priorities needing a lot more focus and attention. Our substantive foci was presented through the prism of human resource development, science and technology (probably the first major report to stress this), policy and institutional development, and mobilizing diverse resources such as women in development, NGOs, the private sector, and human rights groups.

All these themes and more were put into a book of outstanding authors, *Cooperation for International Development: The United States and the Third World in the 1990s*, edited by me and David Gordon, Lynne Rienner Press, 1990. Alan Woods, the holdover USAID Administrator under Bush the First would have had an interest in the study had we been able to get it to him, but he died tragically young and there was an interregnum until the next AID Administrator came on board the totally forgettable Ronald Roskens. So we had a fine supply but no demand.

I was pleased, however, that later on David Gordon became State's head of Policy Planning in the Bush II administration.

In 1992 Ralph Smuckler, by this time Executive Director of USAID's University Center, asked me to be the staff on a study on the relationships USAID had with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). I had been concerned about this topic ever since my experience of being on the 1974 study of AID-universities relations when Tuskegee University reported that they had submitted an unsolicited proposal to USAID and a while later were invited to a meeting at the University of Texas where their proposal was on the table and Texas was offering them a portion of their own proposal under a subcontract! The study of HBCUs was interesting and straight-forward, but, alas, Ralph left AID before it was completed and the chair of the review task force, an academic from Clark Atlanta University, took it upon herself to re-write some key recommendations without so much as a postcard to me as staff director. The report accurately noted a sharp decline in contracts with HBCUs in the Bush the First years, but it read more as a diatribe than a careful study. Any fair AID administrator would have acted on the basis of the numbers alone, and, thankfully by that time AID had a decent and fine leader, Brian Atwood.

My next academic work ran from 2004 through 2011. Andy Rice, then president of the National Capital Area chapter of the United Nations Association, asked me to become director of their Graduate Fellows Program. I felt it an opportunity to learn with leading graduate students about deeper lessons on the United Nations and I also found it very hard to say no to Andy as he was a role model, so I accepted. The program had become a kind of show and tell. Quickly I raised the standards so that we had rigorous study,

careful lectures often by highly qualified leading personalities, and required papers. The theme of the program was reform of the UN system. Over the years dozens of first class experts joined in teaching this seminar series . The program ran twice a year for ten weeks each. It attracted outstanding students from a range of universities, particularly Georgetown, American, George Washington and lesser numbers from Hopkins, George Mason, Howard, Catholic and DC University. The students were about evenly divided between international students and U.S. students. Among them were some outstanding stars I still keep in touch with. When illness in 2012 took a toll on my energy (now restored!), we were able to find an excellent scholar loaded with a law degree and PhD to replace me. The program was regarded as the finest such program in the country, and I am proud of the Chapter for maintaining it. The only dream I had for that program that did not materialize was to make it an on-line course, but that would have consumed a great deal of money and preparation time to produce a polished scripted course, when we had neither time nor money for it.

In 2009 Harvard announced a new program, the first time all its graduate schools have cooperated on a program of study. The Advanced Leadership Initiative (ALI) is premised on making leaders of institutions into leaders of major issues, and it is addressed to people contemplating retirement from their earning careers who still easily have a lot of productive years ahead of them. It is a brilliant concept which I relate to (See Global Meeting of Generations, below) since it turns a normally considered liability (the older population) into real assets and it uncovers a second generation to be trained by universities. Vivian, my spouse, was selected to be part of the inaugural group, and as the only non-profit leader in a group of a baker's dozen of mainly enormously wealthy leaders, she was special enough that Harvard said if she came to the program, her spouse could have the run of the university not an every day offer! So I accompanied Vivian for the first half of her program, taking good courses, attending all the special senior management seminars for the ALI folks, and their amazing Think Tanks in which maybe 125 national and many international leaders would come to share with the Fellows, e.g., challenges in education. Indeed education was the focus of their "field trip" which was to Brazil and New Orleans. My main study focus was on climate change, but I also deeply appreciated the high level briefings and the remarkable perspective of Marshall Ganz, a nationally important community organizer (he organized Obama's field staff) who rather amazingly was on the faculty of the Kennedy School.

I have had two opportunities to see the administrative side of academia with service to two very unusual boards: a score of years on the board of the School of Community Economic Development at Southern New Hampshire University (the odd location for America's then leading scholarly program on community development), and a decade of service on the board of the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce at the University of Kentucky. I was asked to join the Patterson board on the recommendation of a student from that school who was a splendid intern for me when I was in the ODC think tank. The two boards had something in common: neither school was the top priority of the university: Southern New Hampshire's president was interested in money and when he landed in the middle of a ton of it as an early innovator of courses delivered by computer he was happy to push community economic

development over the cliff, notwithstanding that it was a glorious program. And Kentucky allowed the School to drift into being largely a preparatory school for the intelligence community. I was glad, however, for many years of happy association on those boards with the likes of the amazingly creative David Miller at Southern New Hampshire (now at UC Davis) and the late Vince Davis at Kentucky, a former Navy captain and icon who taught me more about how to bring international business to an impoverished part of the country than any of my development teachers.

In late 2013 I was part of a study on the Massive Open On-Line Courses (MOOC) phenomena, a project of the World Academy of Art and Science. When I asked a co-founder of Phoenix University what their four year graduation rate was and he said two percent, it clicked that the ALI program and most of those on MOOCs are not pursuing degree programs, but are adults seeking courses to help their jobs, give them a career or post-career option, or just to take courses to satisfy their curiosity. Educational and technological developments like MOOCs are going to transform the world, particularly the developing world, as well as countries like the U.S.

The richness of policy think tanks and professional associations in Washington DC is unmatched, particularly in fields of interest to me, and they enable me to maintain a lot of association with policy issues. Among my favorites are the Washington Chapter of The Society for International Development which has more than 20 separate working groups; Brookings and its amazing programs; the Center for Strategic and International Studies, particularly those programs organized by Dan Runde; the Center for Global Development which has a rich series of programs; the Woodrow Wilson Center; the outstanding annual programs of the Bretton Woods Committee (where I have served as a consultant as well as a member, and have encouraged their formation of their hallmark International Council), the Bertelsmann Foundation (on whose 35 member international council I served with seven former heads of state and several former foreign ministers, including Kissinger), and a range of programs at the Cosmos Club. In addition in my life are occasional conferences of the World Academy of Art and Science and the Academic Council of the United Nations. These offerings can keep a person perpetually busy attending seminars and presentations and they allow one to think they are a continuing work. And if the weather is poor, one can settle in with relevant journals such as that from SID, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (*Daedalus*), the Academic Council of the United Nations (*Global Governance*), *Scientific American* and *The Economist*

All this and I have only begun to think about MOOC learning. It is an amazing world of thought that we are offered.

#### B. Helping Civil Society Organizations;

Working with and through civil society seemed like second nature to me. I have already mentioned what a vibrant local civil society Washington DC was when I came to live in the city in the mid 1960s.

When I was in USAID, I co-chaired an AID-NGO relationship committee in order to try to build better partnerships with developing civil society. Me and my co-chair (John Ulinski) on one side of the table and about 75 NGO CEOs on the other side. At times, things could get tense. One time I tried to defuse a discussion by saying: “Look. I really like so many of your organizations. I give personal donations to many of you.” There was a pause and one of the NGO leaders piped up “Bob. We all give annual donations to you through your government.” Checkmate!

In 1986 I made the decision to spend half of my time working pro bono with civil society organizations, which I did for 23 years. In 2009 I decided to raise that share to 100%.

## 1. The Society for International Development

In 1957 the first professional society for those in the field of development, The Society for International Development (SID), was started in Washington DC. I joined in 1959 while in California and came to one of their first annual conferences. There I met Andy Rice, their executive secretary and a wonderfully smart, humble, and creative leader who established the first journal on development, the first news service on development, and a global professional association, (SID). When I came to Washington in 1965 I quickly joined the Washington chapter of the Society. My young family and I attended the stupendous 1969 world meetings of the Society in New Delhi where I first caught the bug of Basic Human Needs as a development strategy. By 1974 when I attended their world meetings in Abidjan, I felt active enough (and Andy Rice was gracious enough to allow me) to present to their Board of Directors my ideas for reforming the organization. This led to two major task forces, one led by Chief S.O. Adebo (a former UN ambassador from Nigeria of impeccable standing who had been president of SID) and the other led by Ismail Sabri Abdullah, minister of planning of Egypt (and president of the Third World Forum, who would later become president of SID). The result was the start of the North South Roundtable, for years a highly influential meeting ground on development initiatives, and the decision to move the headquarters of SID to a city closer to the global south. The new HQ city was Rome, not exactly the developing country setting I wanted, but the Government of Italy offered an amazing amount of inducements. My appearance before the SID board in 1974 also resulted in some unusual friendships with members of that board for one of my modest rank, e.g., with Saburo Okita who was Japan’s highest level advocate for strong relations with developing countries, which he pursued with vigor when he became their foreign minister in 1979. He and I exchanged correspondence for years.

Every three years SID held a world congress. It was North America’s turn in 1982. I was asked to be deputy program chair under Richard Jolly, then the head of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex and a leading light in development. Richard was just becoming the Deputy Executive Director at UNICEF (which I mistakenly told him not to accept the single worst advice I have ever given), and he was overwhelmed with work, so he asked me to take his place in organizing the conference.

I had organized meetings before, but never on even a tenth of the size we planned, for I wanted the world to see the amazing breadth and depth of the field of development. With a tiny staff even less experienced than I was, we put together what was then the largest privately sponsored conference on development ever held. Kathy Morrell was our administration person who nearly worked herself to death and who with this conference started a career in organizing mammoth conferences. Susan Goodwillie was in charge of “esprit and élan” and remains one of the most creative people on earth, and I pulled together the program: 104 sessions half put together by chapters from all parts of the world; major speakers; 2500 attendees; brass bands, a big daily conference newspaper, tons of displays, and major events put on by the City of Baltimore (whose mayor, William Donald Schaefer was one of the greatest political leaders I have ever worked with). The conference even had pickets courtesy of the nutcase Lyndon LaRouche and his cult members one of whom was the most fanatical in that bunch who held his sign with such anger that his knuckles were white. His sign (for reasons none of us could figure out) read “Down with Anthropology!!!”

Standouts in the program were Robert McNamara who proposed a world central bank, Inga Thorsson (the great UN and Government of Sweden opponent to nuclear weapons), Cesar Verata the Prime Minister of the Philippines, many ministers and heads of donor agencies, and so many others.

The conference was also very very successful financially.

It didn't hurt my reputation either. Jim Grant, who was SID president (1979-82) saw I could organize major meetings and came to me when he had a particularly important one of his own (see World Summit for Children, below). Andy Rice and others at the center of SID's very influential board wanted me on the international board and so I began an eight year period of service with many of the leaders of thought and institutions key to my field of work. But working on the SID conference had no effect whatsoever with my reputation at AID because John Bolton made sure that there would never be mention of me in an AID publication. I first noticed this in a first page article in AID's newspaper. “*Front Lines*,” about a two-person debate on aid held in the State Department as part of the Secretary's Open Forum in which I was identified only by title. For the SID conference “*Front Lines*” issued a special 23-page edition but they happened to forget to mention who chaired the conference.

SID's key officers constituted a Who's Who of development, e.g., Irving Friedman (president 1975-77, personally set the loan limits for countries as the head of international at Citibank this was before the World Bank and IMF took this role); Nafis Sadik, head of the UN Fund for Population (president 1994-97, arguably the most influential woman in the UN); former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (president 1997-2000); former President of the Inter-American Development Bank Enrique Iglesias (president 2001-2007 and the most respected economic authority in Latin America).

Alas, I was on the board and was vice president of SID international during a down time, particularly when Edgard Pisani (Mitterrand's Chief of Staff) was SID president

(1985-88) and a firebrand head of SID's staff (Ponna Wignaraja, 1980-86) was around. I'm afraid the organization has not yet recovered from the pounding it took in the 1980s. But fortunately, the Washington Chapter of SID continues very strong and I am honored to be on their board.

## 2. The International Development Conference

The International Development Conference (IDC) was founded in 1952 by Wallace Campbell, the founding president of CARE, Nelson Rockefeller, and Thomas Keehn, a theologian and promoter of citizen education here and abroad. IDC's purpose was to be the United States forum on international development. In the spirit of Wally Campbell's cooperative (CARE), IDC was run by a large board of organizational representatives. When I was asked to join the board in 1982 to help represent the Overseas Development Council it had a board of 90 members presided over by my friend and mentor, Andy Rice. IDC held its national conferences every other year. After seeing the SID world congress, the folks at IDC asked me to chair the program of their 1983 conference,

We put on a fine conference starring an American Who's Who of development and a number of leaders from international institutions. This time USAID's "*Front Lines*" put out an 11 page special report on that conference. Still no mention of the conference chair.

In 1986 at a time my work at ODC was ending, I was approached by IDC's chair of nominations, Vivian Lowery Derryck, then the Executive Vice President of the National Council of Negro Women, as to whether or not I would agree to become the next president of IDC. We talked about it during a dinner and I couldn't put my head around it. Could I donate a good 30 percent of my time to IDC plus my other civil society commitments and keep a job? Wouldn't I have to become a consultant to fit in part time assignments to squeeze in income with my IDC and other pro bono assignments? And anyway, wasn't IDC filled with a lot of folks who had been on the board for scores of years and were not inclined to like changes?

Vivian had a second dinner with me and her offer still looked too difficult to contemplate. So we agreed on a third dinner, and I looked up and started asking about her and her life and after that "Game Over!" as they say. I was hooked on her and the IDC job was a foregone conclusion. Only it turned out that IDC was in far worse financial shape than the outgoing officers had told me. What they told me was true three months before I took office, but they had not told me that in those three months the financial situation had deteriorated a lot. So my first act as president was to announce a \$10,000 matching grant challenge from an anonymous source (me!), so we could stave off a really hard time for that important sounding, but very underfunded organization. It had two organizational assets: a strong looking board, and a secretary who hated new technology, but who was outstanding in her commitment, experience, war stories (working for Helen Gahagan Douglas and the Democratic National Committee) and plain hard work. We all loved Evelyn Chavoor and she returned that love with pure dedication to IDC.

In deciding to take the IDC voluntary position, I made a commitment to myself to devote my non-pro bono time as a consultant. I wasn't enamored with consultants (a third of whom, in my experience, were mainly expert in stretching out assignments), but I had no other professional model once I made my commitment for half time in organizations where some months I was a full time volunteer and other months I could be a full time consultant. The person whose lifestyle most closely resembled the model I adopted was Andy Rice and he thrived so I hoped I would, too.

The challenges at IDC were to activate the board's best members, start replacing those who stayed on mainly for nostalgia, and to create higher profile, more purposeful and more modern conferences. I learned to my distress that foundations did not like to finance conferences, so I soon appreciated we had to find a lot of creative ways to finance our programs.

Over the next several years we raised IDC's annual budget ten-fold, built up a very active board of 120 members many of whom were new to IDC, held amazing and ever more interesting conferences and reached out more boldly for headliners. We also began a periodical *IDC Policy Bulletin* to keep ideas churning between conferences.

I would start off board meetings with an overview of a major upcoming problem in development, trying to be as thoughtful and helpful as I could be. Many board members (like the CEO of the biggest development contractor) told me they came just to hear those discussions. I was particularly pleased that some key leaders in international development would make a very special effort to make their presentations to IDC a major event in their own public advocacy. Jim Grant always reproduced his IDC speeches in key languages and sent them in print around the world. So did UNDP administrators. We also heard from U.S. agency heads, Secretaries of State, the UN Secretary General, and even a few heads of state. One, Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea, was a new head of state getting outstanding press reviews. But in a dinner at my home the night before his speech, it was clear that the press had failed to mention that he was a narrow ideologue who distrusted democracy. Whoops!

My notion of running a conference organization was not to just provide a platform, but to push people to be their most innovative, to put forth new ideas and to bring unexpected leaders to the table. So well before people were thinking about how the private sector could contribute leading ideas to development we hosted people like the Chairman of State Street Bank to one of our conferences. State Street Bank is one of the most important financial institutions in the world. It backstops trillions of dollars of the world's economy. I said to them, "I don't like surprises, and frankly my experience is that corporate executives don't say very much when they speak. So I want to see the chairman's speech in draft before it's given." I rejected the speech and I helped them rewrite it helping them to come up with bold concepts and ideas. Out of that collaboration was a speech that was important. I then urged State Street to condense that speech into an op-ed which was published in the *Journal of Commerce*. So in this kind of way, our conferences had influence on issues.

After a dozen years, Andy Rice wanted to retire as chairman and I decided it was time for me to move to Chairman and to relinquish day-to-day control of the organization. But I had one more conference in me. Inspired by the thinking of UNDP's chief of development policy, Inge Kaul, we decided to address a major theme that no one had yet discussed in any international setting we knew of, namely, how society could maximize the asset value of youth and age to improve humanity. IDC had been the main U.S. platform for international development for nearly 50 years, but had never aspired to be a global platform. So we had to retool. We formed a formal partnership called "The Global Meeting of Generations" with seven UN agencies and 10 international NGOs such as Help Age (based in the UK), AIESEC International (based in The Netherlands), and many others. I became managing partner.

As we looked at who was promoting youth we found a lacuna: UNICEF programs stopped serving youth once they reached age 14. Ashoka did not like to have fellows in their program if they were under 40. So we felt we had to highlight the extraordinary abilities of people in between and to do so formed the Common Futures Forum, the world's first network of young social entrepreneurs. With the help of many, but particularly UNDP, we assembled a group of 67 young social entrepreneurs (mainly in their 20s) from 45 countries.

As we dreamed up these two programs, we knew we needed extraordinary staff, so I asked AIESEC International, (the International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences, the largest international student run grouping in the world) to find me the best of their best. Melanie Beauvy, who had headed the AIESEC chapter in France was just about to start an internship with a German company. I called her and persuaded her to use a ticket I was sending her to come to Washington and thus started her career in helping youth around the world. Pawan Singh, the vice president of AIESEC's India chapter was also heading to the private sector, but he kindly agreed to also come to Washington. (Pawan returned to India at the end of our program and became a very successful international businessman.) Both Melanie and Pawan took on their work with zest and creativity and in short order we had delegations from 135 countries for our conference, in addition to the young social entrepreneurs of the Common Futures Forum.

Our conference, in 1999, was a huge success in every way you can measure success. And I remain absolutely convinced that characterizing youth and age as drags on society is most often a self-fulfilling prophecy, but that enabling youth and age to participate in building better societies would be an enormous boon to humanity.

After the big events of 1999 I kicked myself up to Chair Emeritus and IDC went about looking for a CEO. They had to hire one and he turned out to be quite qualified in spending imaginatively, but was not quite so good at raising money. I stayed away from our operations to give the new team a chance, but one time I looked over IDC's finances and warned about our precarious state. This was not a particularly warmly received warning. Alas, the events of 9/11/2001 utterly destroyed any chance IDC had for a

planned upcoming conference and washed out its remaining monies putting IDC into bankruptcy. I was asked to come in and help clean up the mess, which I did.

The Common Futures Forum met periodically over the years after the Global Meeting of Generations, but with declining momentum as the spark plug, IDC, was not around to backstop it.

Andy Rice shifted his focus to the United Nations Association where he was a leader at the local and national levels. He passed away in June 2010, one of the best loved, respected persons I ever met.

It would be fair to state that there was a common thread in my hard work for SID and IDC over many years, and it was to try to reinforce a sense of community in the international development field and to move the community of developers to be more prone to learning lessons of development and to participating more actively in critical policy formulation and discussion. It was my view that these professional groupings could enhance the likelihood of life-long learning and thus higher quality contributions by the community of which I was a part.

### 3. World Academy of Art and Science

The World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS) is one of the very few global academies. It was created by Einstein, Oppenheimer, Bertrand Russell and a couple of founders of UN organizations. Their rather amazingly naïve premise was that the brightest people in the world can solve the major global problems. After more than 50 years the best that can be said is “Not yet!” But it is fun to be part of an interdisciplinary, international group of thought leaders. There are about 300 Fellows who are active in the Academy. Carl-Göran Hedén, an eminent microbiologist who was based in Sweden was the president of the Academy in the 1980s. He very kindly invited me to be a Fellow of the Academy and so in 1986 I became associated with some of the great thinkers of our time.

Here is an example of WAAS at its best. In 1998 I was invited to be with a group of 20 Fellows to discuss a typically large topic, “The Future of Human Potential.” We met at a resort north of Chennai, India and some of the people were dazzling, particularly because they approached the topic from such different disciplinary backgrounds. Then we spent time with M.S. Swaminathan, the father of the Green Revolution in India, at his research center. And to top it off we visited some of the most advanced early childhood educational programs I have ever seen.

Harlan Cleveland (former president of the University of Hawaii, former Assistant Secretary of State, and Ambassador to NATO) was president of WAAS for much of the 1990s. He was an acknowledged world expert on governance issues, so when he encouraged me to join the Academy’s Board of Trustees to strengthen its governance, I felt it was a duty to agree. I served on that board for 9 years, bridging three regimes.

First there was the easy-going presidency of an American expert in political science, Walter Truett Anderson. For the last years of his presidency, Walt held board retreats near Stanford University that were very useful. But he did not vet successor candidates for the presidency very well and so his successor was a very personable fellow who quickly began to disappoint. It was bad enough that this international membership organization elected its third American president in a row, but Jeff Schwartz in no way could be compared with his two predecessors. My first hint of trouble was his inauguration on his home campus. I arranged for the two speakers to celebrate his inauguration: Ismail Serageldin, the Director of the famous Library of Alexander and one of the world's great broad-gauged intellects, and Tariq Banuri, a globally known expert on climate matters. Jeff and I conferred often in the run up to his inauguration and I continually stressed the need to find a large auditorium, to have major publicity and to be sure we had a crowd fitting for these important speakers. But we only had a regular classroom, and at best 15 seats were filled. No one from Jeff's department showed up. What did his faculty mates know that we didn't know?

Within 36 months Jeff told that elected board that it was only advisory, that the officers he had hand-picked were not subject to term limits, and that it would take three years to properly revise the organizations by-laws. In that time we had zero program initiatives. So at a meeting on nuclear safety in New Delhi six of us board members organized an effort to gain a reversal of these matters, but even with a full membership vote of over 90% of the fellows behind us there were no changes. With the old board hopelessly split into two camps, the Fellows almost unanimously voted to elect a new board. The Fellows pointedly voted to stop Jeff from constituting a rump board to re-elect him to a second four year term. Instead Jeff sued four of us in U.S. Federal District Court to stop us from stopping him. I had never had the honor of being sued before!

Jeff stonewalled mediation, lost at the District Court level, appealed to the Court of Appeals, but quickly settled on our terms when it was clear he would lose at the Court of Appeals. We reformers could now quickly conduct new elections in which 32 candidates ran for 17 seats. I received the second highest votes as by then I was well known as a leader of the dissenting Trustees.

The new leadership started out very well and hurriedly rebuilt old bridges (Club of Rome) and added many new ones (e.g., Club of Madrid), launched many new member services, etc. As a member of the executive committee I was active in these reforms.

As I write this I am now technical advisor to the board having reached my term limit as a board member. And, alas, I am in dissent again as I believe the quality of our work and our choice of topics are poor, except for our work on new computerized educational systems.

My academic work in the Academy has centered on climate change in a collaboration with our now former president Walter Anderson. With the help of the leading experts on our topic, we explored the risks and implications of fail-safe environmental "remedies" to climate change, like geoengineering the earth's climate.

#### 4. The Alliance for Peacebuilding

In 2007 Charles “Chic” Dambach asked me to join the board of an organization he was now heading that was an association of conflict mediation, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction organizations. Chic is a remarkable person who has done so many different things well that it is as if there were a buffet line of professional choices and he took some of everything! When he headed the National Returned Peace Corps Association, he was kindly on the IDC board, so I felt I owed him and signed up.

The organization was very thinly financed and in keeping it going it nearly killed Chic, particularly in the economic downturn years of 2008, 9, 10 and 11 when charitable contributions to not yet well proven organizations nearly evaporated. But Chic kept at it and held the group together pushing it nicely into more policy activism.

Chic and then California Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi had been instrumental in bringing Ethiopia and Eritrea to the peace table, so when Garamendi became a Congressman and needed a chief of staff he tapped Chic. That left a worrying hole in the organization until filled by the remarkable Melanie C. Greenberg who has been president of the Alliance for a couple of years and has been able to really grow the organization quantitatively and qualitatively. The Alliance has almost single-handedly saved the U.S. Institute of Peace from Congressional annihilation, has taken a leading role in post-2015 Millennium Development Goals relating to peace and governance, and created a huge number of useful linkages and alliances.

I think it is the most enjoyable board I serve on. In 2013 I reached the six year term limit of service on their board, but I have been kept on as an emeritus member.

#### 5. Equal Access

In 2009 I was asked to join the board of Equal Access, an exciting organization that specializes in social marketing/promotion of education, health, livelihoods and community empowerment in some of the roughest parts of the world, currently: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Cambodia, Nepal, Chad, Mauritania, Nigeria and Burkina Faso. Through well thought out concepts, well executed, the organization has steadily gained accolades, awards and new business.

I was the first person beyond personal friends of the founder who joined the board and we have now added a number of very accomplished additional strengths to the board.

In time, I believe Equal Access will be shown to have strategies of impact superior to other strategies.

#### 6. Andy Rice Award

Some years ago there was a bit of money left over from a group of friends who had tried to establish a huge, over-ambitious award for service to international development. A committee worked on this that included Robert McNamara, Nobelist Norman Borlaug, Elmer Staats (emeritus head of GAO), Philander P. Claxton (an early actor in foreign aid), Robert Nathan (founder of a large consulting firm), Joe Wheeler (retired Deputy Administrator of AID), Andy Rice and myself.

When we failed to raise the zillions contemplated for that award we had a small pot of money left over and a few of us decided that we had enough to give a small annual award to a top young professional in development and that it should be done through the Washington Chapter of the Society for International Development. When Andy Rice passed away we named the award in his honor. I chaired the award jury for many years.

Being involved in this effort has been a joy because one gets to see the professional life stories of so many outstanding people who in their 20s have accomplished so much. I love being on this committee and will stay on it until I am kicked off or can't participate any longer!

#### 7. QED

QED is a for profit international consulting firm specializing in monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management. It is wholly owned by a woman who straddles India and America and it has a four person advisory board which I joined in 2013. I have proposed and will edit a series of publications looking at the future of evaluation and its related fields, just to keep my hand in. The owner and I have had a number of discussions about the value of establishing a parallel corporation in India and if that goes ahead she has already asked me to serve on that board.

#### 8. United Nations Association (UNA)

When I was asked to direct the Graduate Studies Program of the National Area Chapter of UNA I was asked to join the chapter board on which I served for several years, but with a terribly poor attendance record.

When I had a little idea about fostering more open policy and program research in the United Nations, I made an initial contact with the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) which was based in a UN building across from the UN Headquarters building. There I met Pera Wells, the Secretary General of WFUNA. For sheer joy in living, intelligence, wit and courage, she is at the top of the class. I loved working with her and she liked my work enough to engage me as WFUNA's senior advisor. We collaborated on nuclear disarmament matters and other policy work and it was through her that I had my moment of glory in addressing the UN General Assembly.

When dear Pera's term of office ended and she returned to her native Australia, she was replaced by a person with a polar opposite personality and I gradually withdrew from the organization.

## 9. USAID Alumni Association

After many more years not associating with USAID than I had working within it, I have recently been asked to be active in the AID alumni grouping, which is now run by old colleagues from those golden years of the late 1970s who had truly outstanding careers there. So I feel I am closing the loop of that work and interest, and there is a feeling of satisfaction in this.

## 10. Reflections on Civil Society

The above nine cases are by no means all the groups I have worked with, but they are the main ones of importance to me, particularly now. A complete list would include Trickle Up (a microfinance organization on whose board I served 20 years); the Microcredit Summit Campaign under that brilliant political tactician Sam Daley-Harris where I consulted pro bono to help put together a privately sponsored summit that attracted 15 heads of state and senior cabinet officers from the U.S. and elsewhere; the globally important Association of Women in Development where I served six years (1984-90) as the token male on a highly effective board (everybody had convenient conflicts of interest); The Global Commission to Fund the United Nations of the mid 1990s on which I was a member; and so many others.

Civil society has been a huge growth area in most countries of the world. This is a new factor. In 1987 I was invited to a meeting in London of what was billed as all the major international civil society organizations. There were 200 of us. Clearly they were too selective, but the fact is that local civil societies have blossomed everywhere and international civil society has grown as new issues have evolved and as the concept of ICT networking has gained strength. A meeting of all these groups and national civil society organizations would now need to involve several major sports stadiums.

The global system doesn't quite know what to do with all these organizations. Fight them? Ignore them? (at their peril!), Welcome all of them into formal deliberations? (impossible)

In many areas there are too many organizations. When I lived on Capitol Hill in the late 1960s I chaired a coalition of 70 civic organizations made up of citizens who probably lived within two square miles. Sometimes I felt that these same 70 people were in each of the organizations. A number of such experiences lead me to believe that some consolidation is necessary as I noted in Part IV regarding the problem of coordination.

The UN and other major international organizations also have to find a far more productive way to work with civil society. There are many large issues on which the UN and civil society see eye-to-eye but can't get agreement from the nation states. There is room for more creative collaboration on these issues.

In the meantime, it is marvelous to see the better civil society organizations thrive. I have been privileged to be involved with many of them.

## C. Consulting

### 1. Peace Corps

As I noted, I felt when I took on IDC in 1986 that the only career option I had was to become a part time consultant. But I had no idea how to go about this. I couldn't join any major Washington consulting firm since the Reagan Administration had branded me as that most dangerous of critters, an infectious liberal and all the consulting firms I knew were dependent upon AID's goodwill. So I wondered if I would ever make it on my own. In late 1986 and 1987 I was busy building up IDC, so I didn't have much time for paid work, but by 1988 I was able to think more about consulting and this was just in time to respond to a very nice offer by the Peace Corps that I conduct a strategic planning exercise for them. The fact that I had never conducted a strategic planning exercise was no impediment as John Sewell at ODC recommended me and Loret Ruppe, the Peace Corps Director and I liked each other.

Loret Miller Ruppe was an heiress to a brewery fortune, had been co-chair of Michigan for Reagan, and had as a reward been named to head the Peace Corps. I had invited her to give her first speech in Washington and afterwards Loret said to me: "I like you because you didn't laugh when you read my meager credentials." That kind of humility was unheard of in the Reagan Administration. In fact the Reagan team had banked on Loret's inexperience to torpedo her "Kennedy" program. To their horror she fell in love with the Peace Corps and did a bang up job. The Reagan people simply couldn't understand. I served on a board at the University of Kentucky with a Reagan State Department official who reviewed her annual budget. He said that to announce her arrival the word would go around that "Get the Net Loret" had arrived as someone would have to be crazy to really like the Peace Corps!

Loret had to also manage her mother who was a little old lady who went to key offices of senators and House members lobbying for population planning and other causes Reaganites did not adore. So Loret had practice putting up with a liberal like me. Indeed I felt like one of the family.

She was rather insistent that I visit 9 country programs on three continents. Given my schedule, I had three weeks to do that. It was insane, but extremely interesting. My biggest learning came in Malaysia and Botswana. In Malaysia ministers asked me to push for the Peace Corps to return, not because they needed it, but to counterbalance Chinese influence. After a fine review in Botswana, then the largest Peace Corps program, I had to break it to Loret that this program, which she and I thought among the best, was attractive to the Government of Botswana because we had volunteers in about every population center in the country, so that if then Apartheid South Africa ever came over the border each of our volunteers would be a potential trip wire for U.S. support.

Loret loved my idea that Peace Corps programs should be made available to any country in the world where we had good relations, but on a sliding fee scale running from the poorest countries where our programs would continue as a free service, to the richest countries where we would charge enough to earn a hefty profit. I felt the people-to-people component of the Peace Corps made for some of the best international relations our country fostered so we should maximize its potential with U.S. volunteers and other countries.

By the time I finished the report in early 1989 the first Bush administration had taken power. I asked Loret if she would be around to implement the report and she assured me she would. But the day after that conversation President Bush told her she was going to be made Ambassador to Norway and the Reagan holdovers finally got their revenge for her fidelity to the Peace Corps. A year later I visited Loret after a meeting in Bergen and spent a whole day in Oslo with her as she went from one meaningless ceremony to another. She was living what must have seemed to many as a fairy tale life in a huge mansion and an embassy with all the trappings, but with nothing to do.

Needless to say, my report never was implemented. This was my introduction to the high risks in consulting. Good work was no guarantee of impact.

## 2. UNICEF and the World Summit for Children

I felt owed a better outcome for my work and was lucky to have just that opportunity. On June 24, 1989 I married Vivian Lowery Derryck and we soon moved to New York City where she took office as president of the prestigious African-American Institute located across the street from the United Nations.

When Jim Grant heard I was in town he called me to UNICEF to invite me to be senior advisor to his grandiose idea of holding a summit of the world's heads of state to focus on children preventing needless deaths, promoting children's rights, making a precedent for the UN to hold regular heads of state summits to improve the human condition. I would have paid to do the work. The experiences I had in UN politics regarding Africa (see section on Africa below) had whetted my appetite to engage more fully with the UN and this was a grand opportunity.

We soon established a routine. We held end of the day meetings of the core team of about a dozen of us in which the urgent was discussed with Jim always being the compass for where we should be heading. We worked on assignments and urgent tasks until we had completed them. Then we put actions to be approved on Jim's desk in the morning. He signed them and off they would go across the street to the UN Secretariat. By 4pm we would have our answers and most of them would be in the negative. So we would regroup at the end of the day and assess our next steps.

Why did the UN Secretariat oppose practically everything we proposed? In part because it was all new to them. But mostly because we were getting the heads of state to directly decide matters thus breaking the duopoly of power that the Secretariat and the heads of

delegations shared in what they thought was nearly “running the world.” We banked on the desire of most heads of state to get things done. The PermReps and the Secretariat too often enjoyed the prolonged negotiations and endless meetings moving things along.

More pragmatically, there was a shared apprehension of how difficult it would be to safely manage a huge group of heads of state coming to the UN all at once. While 9/11 was 11 years off from the World Summit for Children, we were quite aware of security risks, particularly in holding meetings in what for a large part is a glass house.

The UNICEF team was marvelous. It had imagination and boldness and brains. Kul —Gautam, their head of planning, was so brilliant in negotiating The Convention on the Rights of the Child that I told him I was insisting that he wear a motorcycle helmet even though he had no motorcycle. I told him his brain was so vital to the outcome of the Summit that I wanted it protected. UNICEF’s public affairs team was unique in the UN for being professional, using media sense, and being creative and effective.

The organization recognized the value of organizing campaigns to bolster political commitment to the Summit. So in the run up to the Summit in capitals all over the world there were demonstrations to mourn the daily loss of 40,000 preventable infant and child deaths. Heads of state got into the swing of things and suggested other ways of ensuring a good outcome. The president of little Maldives, an Islamic scholar, suggested that we gather the heads or top representatives of the world’s great religions to attest to the universal moral requirement that parents assure the life and progress of their children. We did this but the Secretariat claimed there was no room at the inn, so we had to hold that particular session across the street from the UN.

While I was involved in just about all the planning, I took on some additional roles: the religion leaders meeting, managing NGO participation in the Summit, holding during the Summit parallel sessions for ministers of finance which including some important ministers and the chair of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (to help mobilize resources for the global health campaigns that would arise from the Summit) and ministers of health (so that they could learn from each other lessons of success in, e.g., national immunization campaigns in which Nigeria’s minister of health, Ransome Kuti, was more persuasive than any UN official could be); and a one day pre-briefing for the press involving the key figures of the summit. I also somehow managed to break impasses in the security arrangements with such brilliant suggestions that when sessions (receptions and meals) would be given in the largely glass-walled parts of the UN building that we close the drapes so heads of state would feel more secure. This was done.

No one now could get away with how I treated the NGOs. I reserved 400 seats in the balcony for NGOs and allocated the seats to those groups that had the most relevance to carrying out the actions to arise from the Summit. They were there to observe and they were happy to be there. But I wanted no distractions from the dynamics we set up which were focused on the heads of state talking to each other and creating peer pressure to act.

We had 74 heads of state and numerous foreign ministers from other countries. We limited formal statements to three minutes from small countries, five minutes from designated regional leaders, and 7 minutes for theme chairs who were to introduce topics and then state their own national position. Jim took less than 15 minutes total for all his interventions. Two heads of state were unusual. Margaret Thatcher spoke for ten minutes: no one could or would stop her! And George H.W. Bush came in only to give his statement and then left for the Waldorf Towers where he held a number of bilaterals. We had the summit televised with an estimated audience of one billion people, and, alas, the cameraman loved to pause to show the empty American seat.

The Summit ended with all the commitments we sought and with the fastest and largest ratification of a global convention in history. (Only Somalia and the United States have not signed. In our case there is a Federal law which says you can't have a treaty that contravenes state laws, and the Convention did that by saying it was wrong to exercise capital punishment against teenagers, something permitted in a few U.S. states. So putting it harshly, the right to murder teenagers has prevented us from agreeing to a major rights convention to help literally billions of children.)

In the closing reception I was standing between the head of the World Health Organization (Hiroshi Nakajima) and the head of UNDP (Bill Draper) and they were both kind of grinding their teeth in envy as Jim entered the room in quiet triumph. I told them that they, too, could have a summit — and five years later UNDP had their event in Copenhagen focusing on poverty and inclusion. Such major conferences and summits continued through the 1990s until specious arguments that they were too costly ended that practice in the UN.

A whole raft of national actions took place as a result of the UNICEF summit, supported by national governments, donors and other UN agencies, notably WHO, including periodic reviews where the peer pressure was kept up. Key parts of the 27 point action plan were incorporated in the UN's Millennium Development Goals and that added momentum. By 2005 we calculated that the lives of more children had been saved by a combination of these actions alone than of all the people who had been lost in World War II, well over 50 million lives, a stunning accomplishment. If we counted those lives saved through poverty reduction and economic growth, the figure would be doubled. These kinds of calculations were made on the back of an envelope, my most sophisticated research tool.

My next assignment with the UN was a “high level” review of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), discussed in the section on Africa, below.

### 3. Training the top 300 UN Officials

Because of my work with ECA, the personnel department at the UN became convinced that management training had to take place at the top levels of the UN, a group that in the past had only been offered language training. A competitive bid was arranged and

Management Systems International (MSI) asked me to be on their team. MSI won the bid.

For much of 1994-5 we held three and four day weekend retreats with groups of 20 top UN executives to give them added background in strategic planning and personnel management. This was not a very adequate covering of the topics, but it was at least something. My role in the many retreats I participated in focused on giving them case histories of where internal change had taken place in the UN. Working with noted UN historians such as Sir Brian Urquhart I honed down the list to 13 cases. My idea was to help reinforce backbone in the UN for change. Sometimes it worked (e.g., the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific launched a reform program they had already organized but its head needed a little extra courage to implement it) and sometimes it didn't (the Geneva UN secretariat leaders absolutely stonewalled the suggestion that they would consider any improvements in their work). In many cases I was able to add more women to our sessions than the hierarchy would have justified.

At the end of the training, MSI compiled a series of recommendations that were directly presented to the UN Secretary General, uppermost being that the UN needed a COO so that the Secretary General could have more time for political work while someone ran the store. Others also called for this reform but no outsiders had the background we did for such a recommendation. The position was established in 1998.

I maintain that no one ever visited all the UN offices in the world, but at least this exercise gave me a good start.

#### 4. System-wide Innovation

The idea of summits to improve human development took hold and so in 1995 UNDP hosted what became known as "The Social Summit" in Copenhagen aimed at reducing poverty, increasing social cohesion, and fostering employment. James Gustave (Gus) Speth was the Administrator of UNDP, then the second highest ranking person in the UN. I had known Gus from his days as founder of the World Resources Institute. He was a revered figure in development and environment. He and I sat next to each other at a dinner before the conference, and we talked at length during a summit "event," an early evening cruise. Both times I told him that the UN simply couldn't keep declaring at conferences and political meetings that Africa had the most severe crisis (in whatever the topic of the conference/meeting was) while at the same time the UN had no comprehensive policy as to what they were doing to help Africa overcome its challenges. By the third time we met during the Summit I stretched the bounds of friendship a bit by raising the topic again and this time Gus said "Why don't you give me a paper on what we should do." So I sent him a detailed one page paper!

A few weeks later I was in Addis Ababa and the grapevine was full of reports that the Secretary General had been sending around "The Berg Mandate" for comment. When I heard that title, I knew the idea would be going ahead. Upon my return Gus called to ask whether I would put together a comprehensive UN response to Africa's development

challenges. The initiative would be a joint UNDP-ECA initiative. My counterpart from the ECA was Sadig Rasheed, a dear friend from ECA who had been a professor of public administration at Khartoum University who then headed ECA's very active Office of Public Administration. He and his wife were some of the dearest people imaginable and always gave me the warmest welcomes when I visited Addis Ababa.

Sadig made a number of trips to New York to confer with me and certain agencies, and I carried the exercise pretty much as a full time consultant with the title of Senior Advisor to UNDP. It was fairly easy for us to assemble the background information and to articulate Africa's main challenges. The question was what the members of the UN family would do in response. It is important to realize that the UN had never operated as a real system. Instead it was akin to the Milky Way, a set of largely and actual independent entities that seemed like a system only when we drew lines between the stars like the Greeks did. Heads of agencies were supposed to meet twice a year in a lowest common denominator group, The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), where for nearly 50 years there had been discussions on a lot of topics, but actual coordination only on personnel matters like pay scales and health benefits. One or two agency heads, like the Director General of FAO (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN) would come to ACC meetings but not enter the actual meeting room, instead asking individuals to come out to a reception area to hold bilaterals. This was Jacques Diouf's way of showing that he was the equal of the ACC's chair, the Secretary General of the UN for, after all, Diouf was elected by his ministers the ministers of agriculture, and Boutros Boutros-Ghali was elected by his ministers the ministers of foreign affairs, so that made them equal!

What Gus at UNDP and K.Y. Amoako at ECA were doing through Sadig and me, was utterly new to the UN. We were putting together the first UN System-wide response to a substantive problem. Understanding a bit about the politics of the system I worked two systems. First we had to assure that the signals to all the agencies were bright and green. This we did by my attending the ACC meetings, a unique happening for a non-agency head who was not actually a UN employee. Gus and I made sure that the Secretary General was well briefed and consistently made highly supportive statements. Next we worked with leading agencies to suggest what they needed to do. And here the fun really began.

When it came to UNESCO I thought maybe they would want to talk about education in Africa, but when I went over to talk with them the director general said that he wanted to emphasize solar power. So I said, "That's great. But don't mind me if I go back to the UN and sell T-shirts that say "UNESCO, the E is for Energy, not Education." And that embarrassed them enough so that they came up with a major education plank for this effort.

I went to the World Bank to meet with my old friend Edward (Kim) Jaycox, the outstanding Vice President for Africa at the Bank. We met in a room with about 75 people sitting around. I'm on one side of the table and Kim with his legion on the other sides of the room. I knew it was very hard to negotiate with the World Bank because

many of them think they know everything. And when you're in that situation, you are at a severe disadvantage because they have you on facts, so I decided I'd better take an aggressive view and so I asked: "Kim, what if you had the services of the best investment advisor of the world to manage your own personal money and what if after five years you came back and met with your advisor and you found out that your advisor all along had known what the best investment was, but hadn't made that investment for you? What would you do?"

So this made everybody in the room a little bit uncomfortable and he looked at me and he said, "Bob, what are you talking about?"

I said, "You have known for five years that the education of girls is the smartest investment you could make in development, and this bank hasn't done very much about that in Africa. Isn't this the opportunity to do something about it?"

So it happened that we had in the room Wadi Haddad, a truly outstanding expert on education who had been the secretary general in 1990 of a world conference on education held in Thailand, that up to that time was the most important global meeting on education ever held. Kim looked down the table and asked Wadi, "What would it cost to really get this done?" Wadi essentially consulted the back of an envelope and said, "Five billion dollars." So I looked across the table and I asked: "Kim, would you ask Mr. Wolfensohn (then president of the Bank) whether we could have five billion dollars please and I'll see you in a couple weeks to learn his answer."

So I came back and Kim said, "Wolfensohn agrees." "That's great," I said, "but now I have another question for you. What if it turns out that the world's best investment advisor who was handling your money also knew about the second best investment in the world and hadn't made that for you either?" With a few groans in the group Kim asked me what I had in mind this time. And I said health clinics. We had hospitals in Africa, but we did not have many good health clinics to extend health services around the countries. Other countries, like Chile, had figured out how to create real health systems centered on good hospitals networked to health clinics that pretty well covered the country.

So we went through the same ritual. How much would it cost: three billion a year. Would Kim ask Jim Wolfensohn: Yes. What did Wolfensohn say: Yes.

So I called Kim up and said, "Can I come by and see you guys a third time?" He said no (*laughs*). So I kind of maxed out on that.

What those meetings did was tell the World Bank that it was an important player with the UN. The World Bank had never paid much attention to the UN and certainly not on anything involving big money. So they rather quickly re-titled Mark Malloch-Brown, their Vice President of Public Relations and made him Vice President of Public Relations and UN Affairs. And he then was their designated person to meet with us at the ACC to reinforce their big commitments. That had a domino effect and pretty soon when I attended ACC meetings agency heads would rush over to see me to tell me that they were

going to initiate some program or other and that they would sign onto the overall package. Wolfensohn himself came up to New York when we announced the whole UN-wide initiative in March 1996, and I briefed him beforehand. He was great about it and so was Boutros (who videoed in from Geneva). Also in the launch was Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia (then Chairman of the Organization of African Unity), the deputy managing director of the IMF, and the leaders of UNDP, ECA, UNICEF and UNFPA.

Sidebar: Mark Malloch-Brown had long been interested in development. He had replaced me when my term as vice chair of Refugees International ended. With his expanded title at the Bank, Mark became deeply interested in the UN, later became Administrator of UNDP and was chosen by Kofi Annan to be Deputy Secretary General of the UN. He is now Lord Brown.

The document containing the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa was signed by all UN Agency heads and the heads of the Bretton Woods Institutions. The package of planned programs totaled \$25 billion and was to extend over ten years. In June the G-7 highlighted the initiative in their meeting with the heads of the Bretton Woods institutions. The Secretary General convened a follow-up session in Geneva in July with donor governments to push for the implementation of the plan. It looked like we were gathering real momentum.

But two things happened that were sharply adverse. I had pushed for the Initiative to be attached to the Administrator's office at UNDP arguing that anything that large in comparison with an organization's total budget would be in the front office of any corporation or major governmental organization. But Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (now president of Liberia and then in charge of UNDP's Africa program) insisted the endeavor be in her, frankly, very weak bureau. I was asked to be in her bureau to help implement it and was very ambivalent, but decided to stick with it lest it be completely lost.

Then back bench politics kicked in. African diplomats at the UN felt that they hadn't been adequately involved in the process. And so they felt it was their job to undermine the initiative to show who was boss at the UN. When Boutros Boutros-Ghali did not get re-elected and left his post at the end of 1996 the vicious word went out that he had only backed the program to get re-elected, so it was political and not a real initiative. (This despite the fact that Kofi Annan, the successor Secretary General, told me he would work to have the Initiative implemented.) The ambassadors were like termites undermining the Initiative both in New York and in Addis Ababa where it was seen as a contest between the OAU and ECA. There was less and less to do and so I left UNDP sadder and considerably disillusioned.

My consolation was that two actions took place within five years of lasting consequence that could trace their origin to the Special Initiative. It was proposed that the UN package their long term development goals (much as the OECD Development Assistance Committee had done in 1996) and these became the UN's Millennium Development Goals, the second and far more successful UN system-wide initiative. And the ACC

morphed into the UN's Chief Executives Board in part to better coordinate system-wide initiatives. The Board has made very important progress in helping the UN become a much better coordinated system, but has an important agenda ahead to really accomplish this.

## 5. World Education Forum

The World Education Forum of the world's education ministers met in 1990 to establish a bold goal of "education for all." Wadi Haddad who had been Secretary General of that landmark meeting so he was asked who should be senior advisor to the tenth anniversary session of the Forum to take place in Dakar in 2000. He kindly recommended me to UNESCO and I wound up advising them and their preparatory committee of 57(!) members. The PrepComm included a lot of former ministers of education. UNESCO undertook education surveys in most countries of the world and established that "education for all" was quite a ways off: there were 113 million kids not in primary school who should have been, educational quality was poor to abysmal in many countries, and the world still had 857 million illiterate adults. (We knew from lots of research that one of the very best development investments one could make was the literacy of mothers.)

In my view the Preparatory Committee was not up to its task. Instead of working to implement the commitment of "Education for All," it narrowed the commitment to a universal basic education goal that was meaningless to middle and upper income countries and to the growing middle class in poor countries. I would bring them cases of amazing educational innovation and they had no interest in fostering innovations. And they did not pay as much attention to the quality of education systems as they should have. There's evidence now that the kids of the richest 20% in developing countries get a worse education than the kids of the poorest 20% in Europe and the United States. So these systems need a lot of work which is likely to be part of the content of the post-2015 goals.

The conference had two bad and two good memories for me. Let me get the bad out of the way first. We mistakenly scheduled a speech by the UNDP Administrator during lunch, but the sound system was awful, the waiters banged the plates unmercifully and people over most of the room were uninterested in a speech so talked right through it. We felt terrible and Jim Wolfensohn was outraged and insisted that we schedule Mark Malloch-Brown to give his speech all over again during a conference plenary session, which we gladly did.

The second bad was that we had a brand new director general of UNESCO, Kōichirō Matsuura. Many of us had worked to get Ismail Serageldin that position, but the Government of Japan came up with a timely \$30million contribution to UNESCO's World Heritage program and so their very unassuming ambassador to UNESCO became the leader of the organization. He was a nice chap and I liked him as a person (and appreciated his later coming to address the IDC Board), but he was very new to

multilateral procedures and so he proceeded to unilaterally amend the final declaration of the conference which truly united all of UNESCO's member governments against him.

Quickly turning to the two goods.

We had a mid-level staffer on our team and we assigned her to put together the final session. We asked to find and arrange for interesting individuals to highlight key education themes. The staffer had not impressed me in the run up to the conference, but she did inspired work in fashioning a memorable closing. First was a young servant from Dakar whose education had ended due to poverty, but who had produced a book of biographies by other servants highlighting their terrible plight, much due to lack of formal education. Then came a woman from the U.K. who had hidden her illiteracy most of her life. When her teenage kids finally embarrassed her to learn to read she blossomed into becoming a playwright. Finally came the real star, a teacher who accepted a nearly impossible location high in the Argentine Andes to earn extra money to put her son through medical school. The teacher suffered inadequate electricity, the need to house all her students during heavy snowstorms, and all manner of deprivation. The person sitting not ten feet in front of her was Argentina's minister of education. The teacher ended her talk by saying that she had only one dream, looking straight ahead she said she hoped her minister would honor her school by coming to visit it. Now that is drama!

Finally, a big highpoint for me was the speech by Gene Sperling, then Clinton's head of domestic policy. He started his speech so poorly that I was ready to claim Canadian citizenship, but he quickly got to a fascinating listing of how the Clinton Administration was going to support basic education, and he described, in essence, the White House organ board of power and how it would be played for this topic. 'We are meeting with the heads of major foundations urging their support; we found money in the Department of Labor and will soon be the world's largest donor to the ILO fund incentivizing parents of child laborers to send their kids to school; we are significantly upping what USAID will do for basic education; the President will give a series of speeches,' etc., etc. Gene's speech made me realize that we each have our personal and organizational organ boards of power and leverage, and that we need to learn the keyboard and the stops we can pull out. Particularly in our organizational life we can make a real difference if we learn how to leverage the resources, institutions and people with which we interact. This was really what Jim Grant taught in so many ways in his wonderful career. Only I realized that most people have no idea of the extent of their organ board and their capabilities to be agents of change.

Since 2000 I continued for a half decade as senior advisor to the Economic Commission for Africa and I had three other interactions with the UN, as a volunteer not as a consultant. These are worth short notes.

In early 2008 the outstanding president of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), a lawyer from Bahrain, decided she would convene a special session of the UNGA on climate change. As a special session she could program expert panelists and allow non-delegates to speak. Pera Wells, the super creative head of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) felt I should speak and she arranged this with the president's office. So two of us from the audience were recognized to speak. The World Bank's

representative wished the session well, but I made substantive remarks urging the UNGA to bolster work on the determinants of climate change: often unchecked population growth and misguided consumer preferences. When I mentioned redoubling our efforts on population planning a delegate hissed at me, a first and I hope last in my life and I realized how changed the politics on population has become. A really bad sign. Pera and I cooked up another collaboration between her organization (WFUNA), the James Grant Trust and the excellent fosterer of social entrepreneurship, Ashoka. Ashoka had pioneered open source competitions to solve major development problems. You carefully define a problem and post on a special website everything you know about the problem and what's been tried before. Then you write your 100,000 best friends (all the social entrepreneurs in the world you know, and in my proposal to the UN I included all the world's national academies of science), and you get a whole bunch of formal proposals with solutions, all of which you openly post on the website as a lot of people will volunteer improvements to ideas much as what happens with other open source systems (think Wikipedia). Staff winnow out 95% of the submissions and the remaining 50 or so get sent to an excellent jury that winnows the group down further to the top five or so. Then you go back to your 100,000 friends who vote on what they think is the best solution among the five top choices. You give the top prize of \$5,000 or maybe \$10,000 to the winner, but usually the real prize is that a foundation or corporation will follow up with major finance. IBM ran an open source competition to identify new products and the top executive who ran that exercise told me that of the ten top winners they expected billion dollar businesses from at least two of them. The cost of a usual open source competition? About \$300,000.

My view is that too much problem solving in the UN is through brainstorming, one of the least effective systems of idea creation, and that if the UN used some open source competitions they would get far more creativity and far more constituency for the UN addressing selected problems and carrying out the top solution(s). I had some good conversations with the policy people in the Secretary General's office but they simply didn't have the bandwidth to take this one on. When Pera's term at WFUNA ended, that ended the last hope that the proposal would continue to be advocated.

Finally, I was so delighted that Sir Richard Jolly (former deputy at UNICEF and senior advisor at UNDP), Louis Emmerij (former head of employment services at ILO) and Tom Weiss (Director of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at City University of New York) teamed to create the UN Intellectual History Project, a 15 volume series showing a range of contributions demonstrating the power of ideas originated and/or fostered by the UN. I reviewed the majority of these books for the journal of the Academic Council of the United Nations, *Global Governance*. The History series is tremendously important for a balanced appreciation of the soft powers of the UN. It had one funny chapter in it, however. Selected former heads of UN regional economic commissions each wrote a chapter on their work. Adebayo Adedeji's report on ECA was simply amazing. One could believe that ECA's world started with him and ended with him. My take on Bayo and on ECA is discussed below.

D. Africa

## 1. The Committee on African Development Strategies

When I left USAID one of my regrets was that I would lose contact with helping the region of the world I most wanted to help develop, Africa. Little did I know. A shocking realization is that in the years since 1972 when I had last worked on Africa's development issues the situation in Africa had not changed markedly and people were already talking about the lost decade, the lost years of development due to the OPEC-induced price rises of fuel, the growing debt crisis in Africa, and, thought many, the rise of IMF and World Bank policies to restructure budgets (called "structural adjustment"). What was clear was that Africa was in deep trouble and I wasn't doing anything to help.

Shortly after I arrived at the Overseas Development Council (ODC) in 1983 their president, John Sewell who also had had service in Africa, began to talk about the possibility of putting together a study group to recommend future U.S. assistance policies for Africa. We knew that although we had a perfectly fine board, we needed more political clout and we needed unexpected people to be on board. Political leaders discount the work of expected advocates, but unexpected supporters get you attention. We approached the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) to partner on a high level commission. CFR's president then was Winston Lord, an outstanding diplomat with a distinguished record on US-Asia, particularly East Asia relations. It is a simple fact that the lowest priorities at CFR at the time were Africa and development, but Lord saw the merit of our proposal and he signed on to be our equal partner, assigning Jennifer Seymour Whitaker as co-director with me. Jennifer and I had both served in Nigeria (she in the Peace Corps and I in USAID), and she is an accomplished author, expert on Africa, and talented on how to get the best from CFR, and we were both senior fellows in our respective institutions.

We needed the necessary time to collect foundation support for an ambitious program of study and during that time CFR and ODC assembled a blue ribbon panel. As co-chairs we easily engaged Don McHenry (a former ambassador to the United Nations, current professor and board member of many top U.S. corporations) and a less expected co-chair, Lawrence Eagleburger, then president of Kissinger Associates whose only association with Africa had been to work with the Government of Angola on occasion. Both were outstanding to work with, and I particularly liked Larry's relaxed manner, pragmatism and sense of humor. Both were old pros in blue ribbon commissions and both were among the best diplomats our country has produced. (Most readers will know that Larry Eagleburger went on to become our Secretary of State.)

We assembled a Committee on African Development Strategies made up of 62 important leaders representing a range of interests, e.g., Tom Bradley (then mayor of Los Angeles), Prescott Bush, Frank Carlucci, Senator John Danforth, Thomas Donahue of the AFL-CIO, Benjamin Hooks of the NAACP, Alex Massad CEO of Mobil Oil, Peter Peterson, David Rockefeller, Donna Shalala, Cyrus Vance and Jim Wolfensohn. Katherine Graham participated in most of the meetings but felt a newspaper publisher

should not sign on public positions such as our final report. Most people we enlisted came on board because of our letter of invitation, but Robert McNamara wanted a full briefing before he could agree. It was one of the most awkward briefings I have ever given. As I briefed him he kept me in his stare. I swear he didn't blink. After a while my throat turned to chalk but I kept on and he kept staring, until in about 10 minutes I finished parched, at which point he slammed his hand on the table (I literally jumped) and exploded "God Damn! That's a Great Idea!!"

We commissioned twenty studies by leading American, African and European experts (several of whom subsequently held very high positions); held seven major sessions to discuss those studies, involving committee members and other invited experts; met with senior African leaders in a very productive discussion on governance held at the Rockefeller Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy; produced a book of the commissioned papers that Jennifer and I co-edited (*Strategies for African Development*, edited by Berg and Whitaker, University of California Press, 1986) which we released on the evening of the UN's Special Session on Africa at which we had a copy of the book on every delegate's desk. We also marketed the Committee's report very widely (e.g., to the mayors of every U.S. city with a population of 25,000 or more) including making high level presentations in the U.S. and Europe.

Four of our 13 major recommendations involved spurring agricultural research and development in Africa at a time when donors were actively retrenching investing in agriculture there. We also stressed the need for debt relief, much enhanced population planning efforts, fostering the private sector in Africa, and we proposed several steps to increase U.S. aid to Africa including consolidating security and development assistance into a special development fund for Africa, using repayments from past loans to Africa to help finance new assistance to Africa, and supporting multilateral efforts for Africa. We felt that the basic bargain at the time of supporting development in exchange for better governance was apt, but needed very careful application. The only casual recommendation in the report was the total price tag that we recommended. After careful study I felt our aid program to Africa could more than double to \$2billion/year. Larry Eagleburger said no, he wanted it to be \$3billion. I asked why and he said "It sounds better." Such is the world of big finance.

The UN General Assembly's Special Session on Africa, was the first time the UNGA had given such intense focus on Africa's development. Oddly, the Special Session was chaired by Edgard Pisani, Mitterrand's Chief of Staff. I was his vice president at the time in the Society for International Development. Edgard unfortunately was perceived (not without reason) as handling the conference as if all the countries were French colonies. The high-level delegates, African and non-African alike, almost immediately ignored him and openly talked during his statements. To me this marked the end of intellectual colonialism but maybe I am being too dramatic. Finally UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, a person rarely provoked to action, replaced Pisani with Adebayo Adedeji, then Executive Secretary at the UN Economic Commission for Africa. Bayo was dejected and desperate as it looked like the Special Session would end as a fiasco. He and I met and I convinced him to adopt the general formulation our ODC-CFR

Committee had recommended, which he did and, amazingly, the delegates agreed. It was a win-win: the Special Session was saved and our report had an almost immediate major impact just after it was launched.

Back in Washington, a group of friends convened to discuss the Committee's report and they hammered out (in bloody awful sessions) recommendations to Congress, focused on creating a Development Fund for Africa, just as we had recommended. To our further amazement, Congress approved the proposal and that fund lasted for many years and was a barbed wire fence against any encroachment of funds intended for Africa.

To score such quick victories at the UN and in the Congress is so rare that it is apt to be a once in a lifetime experience at least it was for me.

## 2. We are the World

In 1984 a huge famine (a result of drought, awful governance, and pest infestations) struck Ethiopia, the second major famine in a dozen years. Some parts of Ethiopia were reported by NGOs to be like deep dust moonscapes; only these were scattered with the bodies of animals and people. NGOs in the U.S. were particularly concerned with the slow U.S. response. Every so often a group of us would put on a public program on Capitol Hill or hold a demonstration near the White House and each time the Reagan Administration would suddenly find another \$50million in relief after maintaining that they had no more money. Later Senator John Danforth showed President Reagan his own films of what was going on in Ethiopia and the President cried over what he saw, and ordered his staff to mobilize the government to work to prevent further famines in Africa.

((Sidenote. The story is that Reagan was so moved by Danforth's pictures that he told his staff that he never wanted to have a famine like that occur again and he ordered numerous task forces (I heard 15) to see what could be done to mobilize food security and prevent famine in Africa. Some weeks later there was a National Security Council meeting on Nicaragua and Reagan looked up and asked what had happened to those task forces. A White House Inquiry was launched not to answer Reagan's perfectly correct question, but to find out who had reminded the President of the task forces. No one could believe that he had remembered them himself.))

To mobilize support for relief efforts and to generate monies to help, Michael Jackson, Lionel Richie and Stevie Wonder wrote the song "We are the World," and enlisted 45 of the best known popular musicians to sing it, including Ray Charles, Diana Ross, Bruce Springsteen, Dionne Warwick, Willie Nelson, Tina Turner and Paul Simon. The song became an instant worldwide hit, becoming the biggest selling single record in history, earning quadruple platinum status and profit of \$63Million. The leaders in follow up, Quincy Jones and Harry Belafonte, asked four of us to allocate the money: a wonderful colleague at the Rockefeller Foundation, two academics and me. We four were raised in a different tradition so we talked about soliciting proposals, reviewing them all standard donor business practices. Jones and Belafonte were horrified. They wanted us to get the money out the door NOW so that they could move on and solve Latin America's

problems in a few months. So the four of us made up our Christmas gift lists and shoveled that money out the door. It was amazing. Most of the money went to groups with real humanitarian and reconstruction relief capabilities.

But I also wanted to leave an institutional residue behind and my approach was to try to get American and African NGOs to regularly collaborate on humanitarian and development issues and programs. I had headwinds from the other three so I asked if we could put just \$50,000 behind the idea, peanuts given our resources. Yes. At the next meeting I asked them to double that so it would be \$50,000 a year for two years. OK. And in a third meeting I said we really should double the doubling to \$200,000 over two years and they agreed if I promised never to bring it up again! Thus InterAction, the trade association of internationally active U.S. NGOs, began formal collaboration with African NGOs.

The only real problem the spending committee had was that every time we felt we had finished our work, in would come a note saying that “We are the World” was the most popular music on Brazilian elevators or some such, and with the note would be another million dollar check. We should all have such problems.

### 3. North South Roundtable and Structural Adjustment.

By 1987 many of us were deeply worried that the results from trying to help African countries adjust their way out of debt by cutting back on social services and the like was boomeranging. The 1980s were now definitely considered a lost decade of development. But what was the real evidence of what was going on?

The North South Roundtable of the Society for International Development decided to hold a meeting in Khartoum to hear views from well informed African thinkers and leaders. Maurice Strong asked me to collaborate with him in putting on the meeting, a great honor as he was and continues as one of the great figures in our world.

((A sidebar on Maurice. He left school at 13, somehow joined the Canadian merchant marines, returned from World War II to find talk of the UN being started, joined their staff and rose in their administration ranks but because of lack of education could go no further, went back to Canada and in ten years ran corporations or was on corporate boards involving 10% of Canada’s employment force, came back into the multilateral system to run the world’s first UN conferences on habitats, and the environment, founded the UN Environment Program, was the largest landowner in Colorado, on and on. Later he became simultaneously senior advisor to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and president of the World Bank Jim Wolfensohn, helping bridge the UN and the Bank on a number of issues. The last time I looked he had 33 honorary degrees and was living in China to help them devise national environmental policies.))

In Khartoum, Maurice and I had a chance to interact with Umma party leaders and to meet the (in)famous al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, the wily Prime Minister. (Later I served with him on the Bertelsmann Global Council.) Then we got down to business with a group of

ministers and other experts from a number of African countries. In case after case we were given carefully researched reports on the damage being done to hard fought social services by arbitrary budget “guidance” pushed on countries by the IMF and World Bank. For most of us this was the smoking gun that we thought must exist.

The result was a conference declaration drafted by Richard Jolly and me, with Adebayo Adedeji and Sadig Rasheed of ECA, emphasizing the need for “Adjustment with a Human Face.” This new credo was taken on by Richard Jolly and Jim Grant’s UNICEF which proceeded to openly confront the Bank and IMF, an extremely rare public disagreement among multilateral agencies. Meetings were held between these organizations resulting in modifications to structural adjustment policies.

One learns a lot from side conversations. Adedeji talked a lot about the need to adhere to the Lagos Plan of Action which he had helped craft. One minister took me aside and said “Don’t tell anyone but I have no idea about this Lagos Plan of Action. Can you get me a copy?” And then another minister, knowing nothing about me, said to me, “Here in these meetings we are nice to the NGOs, but if I had my way we would kill them all.” Big sounding regional plans often are known by the necessary actors (who often have not been consulted on the details), and civil society is often tolerated only warily. These are not news items, but certainly factors to bear in mind.

#### 4. High Level Review of the UN Economic Commission for Africa

My next serious encounter with Africa was an invitation a few years later to join a “high level” review of the ECA, the first ever for that large organization. So in 1991 I showed up in Addis Ababa, a town I had been visiting for over two decades, but this was the first time I set foot in ECA’s premises.

I still cannot get over that first visit. As I came into ECA’s ground floor reception area, I saw packing crates leaning against very large copper reliefs that I recognized as original works by famous Nigerian artist Asiru Olatunde of the Oshogbo School. Asiru’s work was known in London and the National Gallery of Art in Washington. From my own pieces of his work I knew I was seeing probably his largest installation ever worth \$millions. As I got over my shock at seeing the art being damaged by crates, I went to the reception counter and found it covered with a very thick coat of dirt and dust. Scraping away the dirt on the two papers on the desk I found one paper was 10 years old and the other 12.

Next I went up to the executive floor to meet the relatively new Executive Secretary, Issa Diallo. There was a statue standing in his doorway so that you had to pass it coming and going, and it stopped me cold. It was about 4 feet high of a woman on her knees, naked from the waist up and in a pitiful pose of supplication. I told the poor man (who professed not to have noticed the statue before) that I couldn’t come into his office as long as the statue was there. When I came back a few hours later the statue was gone but the artwork inside the office was almost as insensitive, Africans drumming.

When the seven member team assembled it turned out that I was the non-African, but they turned to me to chair the exercise. I told them an African had to chair it, so they persuaded our most senior African colleague, an ambassador from Algeria who had been an assistant secretary general of the OAU, to chair and I was named as vice chair. But they were more clever than I as every day the Ambassador would take me aside and ask “Mr. Berg. Just for today would you please chair for me?” I wound up chairing the exercise and writing our report.

What we found was the single least effective multilateral organization most of us had ever seen. The place was dirty, disorganized, demoralized and purely marginal to Africa’s life. Every process we looked at was outmoded and dysfunctional. Where else in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century could you find a UN organization with rotary phones, where no computer was linked to any other computer, where staff assignments had little relationship to qualifications and where the head of the 400 person(!) administration staff (servicing another 600 persons) said that his most serious problem was people sleeping at their desks. (I asked him what he could do about this problem and he said “Nothing.”)

As our study started, I just couldn’t stand how filthy the ECA building was. It was such a mark of disrespect and lack of caring by staff and management. Yes, the building was cleaned every evening, but the janitors only moved the dirt around. I was staying at the nearby Hilton Hotel, practically my second home in Africa. So I went to their relatively new general manager and asked him if I could do him a favor. He wanted to know what I wanted in exchange, and I said, I’ll tell you after I do you a favor and then you can decide. He asked what I could do and I told him. He said it would be very helpful to him for his top 30 staff to hear a lecture on total quality management. Larry Cooley, a top management guru (and president of Management Systems International) was in town so he and I gave that presentation and the Hilton general manager was very pleased. So he agreed to my favor which was that his maintenance people teach the ECA maintenance people how to clean their building. Within a couple of days ECA’s building gleamed. The instant UN grapevine conveyed this news to New York and pretty soon I was getting messages from New York congratulating me for “reforming” ECA! Only if floors and windows are reform was that true, but my reputation as a magical UN reformer was established.

ECA had historic roots of real accomplishment, particularly under Robert Gardiner of Ghana (executive secretary 1961-1975) who was acknowledged as The UN leader in Africa during his time in office. ECA had established the first UN unit working on gender issues. It also had a few long-suffering managers who tried to do good work against all odds.

But overall the place had gone sharply downhill. An example: since in the UN you got credit towards your next budget by producing publications (and other outputs) ECA produced plenty of pamphlets and other printed material, but they were mostly of extremely poor quality: unoriginal, pedantic and useless. Moreover, many of them seemed to have similar texts, but just different opening pages and titles. I found most of their publications were not really intended for use. A lot of them were simply piled in the

building's basement. The UN system counted publication, but not real distribution, let alone audience response and impact. The list of examples of mis-management and ineffectiveness was depressingly long.

Our report was polite but scathing. It was given to ECA's leadership and various New York offices, but I felt of more importance was an eight page confidential memo that I wrote on behalf of the titular chair and myself giving ECA's Executive Secretary political advice. I placed special emphasis on the damage inflicted by ECA's propagation of Afro-pessimism which took the form of constant harping on the problems Africa was facing without offering potential solutions.

The Executive Secretary, Issa Diallo, tried hard to understand our report but he was really out of his depth so it was not shocking that nothing much was done, except that his special assistant took it upon himself to mandate further building cleaning and redecoration, and that Issa was replaced within a year having served only two years of a five year appointment. Maybe our report helped to push him out the door. Certainly we offered to help implement it but he couldn't organize that effort.

Our hopes switched to the next executive secretary, Layashi Yaker, a high level diplomat and personality from Algeria who had served on the famous Brandt Commission (an exercise, by the way, that had been proposed by the Society for International Development's North South Roundtable.) I knew Yaker as an artful politician, but I hadn't known him as a manager. Alas there wasn't much to know.

Adedeji (1975-1991) who had followed the outstanding Robert Gardiner, had ignored his organization and worked with only a couple of his staff to produce intellectually interesting, but (in my view) distorted reports and proposals. Issa Diallo (1991-1992) was overwhelmed. But Layashi Yaker (1992-1995) brought the Commission to record lows. He browbeat his senior staff in six and seven hour weekly (!) meetings. His public speeches were never ending and punctuated by his finger pointing telling people what they had to do which so enraged the OAU the one time they asked the head of ECA to speak to one of their summits that their then chair (Mubarak) had Yaker escorted off the stage and he told the OAU to never invite that man again!

Needless to say Yaker also did not implement our recommendations, nor did he refer to them. Indeed after trying a couple of times to help him, I told him that there was nothing more I could do to help him, and he was flattered.

## 5. Senior Advisor to ECA

At long last, the UN Secretary General appointed a highly qualified Executive Secretary for ECA. K.Y. Amoako of Ghana had earned a distinguished PhD in economics at Berkeley, worked 20 years at the World Bank becoming the senior African below the political level, holding substantive and senior management responsibilities and making many substantive contributions to the Bank's work. The people he worked with at the Bank all told me he was beloved by his staff. I met him before he was interviewed by

Boutros Boutros-Ghali and was impressed. Here was someone of real substance with a long record of insightful management.

When he was appointed Executive Secretary for what turned out to be a ten year run at ECA, he quickly found and read the then five year old High Level study of ECA. He called me and asked if I would help him to implement it. This was the start of a ten-year assignment as senior advisor of ECA. Neither of us wanted this to be a full time position nor one based in Addis, so I continued to be based in Washington, making trips to Addis Ababa as needed. The needs were great in three periods: the starting years, the growth of public programs, and the last several years when K.Y. became a leading figure for Africa on the global stage.

K.Y. was a brilliant reformer. He knew he needed to almost recreate ECA as an institution; that we needed to create a substantive vision for ECA and its work that was both germane and that inspired present and future staff; that he required the backing of donors as this work would go well beyond what the almost blind budgeting process of the UN could provide; and that the leadership of Africa's government and civil society would need to be involved and supportive. These were the four challenges that had to be met in the first few years after K.Y. was installed in 1995.

The high level 1990 report gave us initial indications of the challenges for institutional reform. Uppermost in importance was to assess staff strengths and to realign them based upon qualifications and merit. To take this on, a team from Oxford University was engaged both externalizing this process and making it unassailable. Needless to say, there was a lot of misalignment found.

From 27 independent programs we decided to concentrate program staff into seven priority areas. The top program manager then headed a joint ECA-FAO agriculture office, but at this very time the continuing erratic leadership of FAO decided to break up that office and assigned this very good chap to a new Africa-regional office in Harare (of all places). This meant the only top line program manager in place was leaving ECA. It was time to recruit for all the top ten positions. K.Y. insisted that his executive team be gender balanced but the personnel people in New York told him that would be impossible because they didn't have women who were high enough in the organization to be recruited for most of those positions. Fine, he said, I'll go outside of the UN. You can't do that, they said. So K.Y. put his job on the line until they caved. With the help of a number of external colleagues and institutions, the result was a really fine team of executives. For example, two of the five women top executives (both from outside the system) were stellar. Another woman was promoted from within where she had been the star who didn't get the credits she deserved. In all, it was an outstanding team.

Reform momentum took off from there. Virtually every single administrative procedure, and every single program was reorganized for greater effectiveness. External teams helped in such matters revamping the entire computer and telecommunications structure and equipment of the Commission, with major help from the World Bank. It was clear

that publications needed much higher quality and speed, so modern printing facilities were installed along with a top flight production and editing staff.

Naturally there was resistance from those who had been on the payroll without working much, and those folks also had influence in the staff union, but all the signals were getting positive so the noise from the back bench was reduced. For example, it was clear that recruitment of non-nationals was inhibited in part by poor medical facilities in Addis Ababa. ECA then beefed up its medical clinic so that all employees and their families had access to reliable, efficient service. This was very popular with the staff. And a particular boost to morale (certainly mine!) was that decent food finally was produced at ECA for both staff and executives, eliminating what surely had been a running health hazard and allowing staff to stay on campus for their lunches.

When we had our staff and institutional reforms under way and had the outlines of our new program innovations and reforms, K.Y. scheduled two major briefings: first to the governments of Africa and next to our then few existing donors and to many potential donors. These were critically important presentations, but a crisis arose. ECA had a speechwriter on staff (a fine former journalist), but he got writer's block and had to be sent home. K.Y. asked me to write those presentations and together we polished them. The speech to the governments was in the new conference center and I am sure it was the first time many of them had heard and seen a really polished powerpoint presentation. They were wowed. The presentation to the donors purposely was as far away from a usual UN speech as could be imaged. There were jokes in it and there were teary moments. The donors were also wowed. And, alas, I was asked repeatedly in the years to come to draft K.Y.'s major speeches.

Through these and other discussions, we were able to define our program approach. In essence, we shifted from Afro-Pessimism to Realism mixed with Optimism.

And we could now institute major program innovations. Two are worth mentioning. We launched an annual report on Africa that was high quality, polished, very factual, and the flagship for a series of reports, indices and policy briefs fit for leaders. Our major reports became centerpieces of major conferences of ministers.

And we reformed the many meetings ECA hosted by slimming down the number of annual meetings, ending some and making others bi or tri-annual events, and making all our conferences far more substantive, for example by finding ways that outside experts could easily interact with governmental authorities, ending a practice in which delegations only spoke to each other.

Our newly created annual African Development Forums were big time gatherings of headliner expert panels, an audience mix of the official delegations (seated in the front rows of our large and up to that point largely unused new conference center), and filled to capacity with NGO, local civil society, lay experts, journalists, etc., etc. Sometimes we had street theatre in the conference hall to highlight the drama of issues like HIV/AIDS. And we included panels in which leaders of each major sector present (e.g.,

parliamentarians, NGOs, academics, youth, military) could interact with a panel of heads of state, a very rare public interaction with political leaders who too often felt they were above being accountable to civil society leaders. All this was a far cry from meetings in which only delegations spoke to each other on strictly mundane matters.

In another program innovation we started the “Big Table” which actually was a small table(!) in which frank discussions would be held between ten leading African finance ministers and ten leading heads of donor institutions.

By the start of year three we had enough defined needs and resources that we could launch a major recruitment for mid-level staff. ECA’s last such recruitment, held a year before K.Y. came on board, had yielded zero applications from outside of ECA. This time there were 8,000 applications. Dozens and dozens of young and middle aged stars were hired replacing far less qualified staff. And these new staffers were not smothered in bureaucracy. In fact, K.Y. made a practice when very senior visitors came to have a good many middle rank staff join the meetings to brief the guests on their work and plans. Through such practices ECA became known not as a one man band (its reputation, e.g., in the Adedeji years), but as a moving, vibrant organization that was making its mark in Africa.

In short order, the level of participation in ECA events by respected African ministers grew markedly. Prior to K.Y. coming to ECA, the annual ministerial meetings of ministers of planning and finance were mid-level events in which the ECA staff wrote all the declarations, often to expand their mandates. No longer. We paid a lot of attention to those meetings. K.Y. not only carefully reviewed his remarks and was active in outlining and editing, but he agreed to rehearse his major speeches. Key resolutions were worked out in increasingly senior preparatory meetings. Ministers soon looked forward to their meetings where they could hear K.Y. and other globally respected authorities come to address them, be they the UN Secretary General, or the head of the World Trade Organization, or outstanding economists, and they could meet these people over cocktails and dinners. (If there was one good thing about being in Addis Ababa, it was that it was so remote, that once these leaders were there we could involve them in multiple activities.)

Another senior participant, whenever justified and possible, was Vivian Lowery Derryck, my spouse, USAID’s Assistant Administrator for Africa in 1998-2001. K.Y. could never be accused of naming me as his senior advisor because of Vivian because I had been with him in ECA three years before Vivian was confirmed, but it did not hurt my standing to have such a high level, and highly substantive spouse. Vivian was the rare senior USAID official who already knew scores of senior African officials before her appointment. They welcomed her presence warmly.

I felt proud of ECA’s work in many areas:

Governance: where ECA conducted 60,000 household surveys in 30 countries in order to arrive at a marvelously creative reading on how Africans perceived the functioning of

their governments, and how each country in the survey compared to a regional norm. This was one of the most compelling and creative uses of peer indexing I have seen.

HIV/AIDS: where ECA in an initiative early in K.Y. 's work, a leading African institution finally made the case for top level political attention and involvement. In one of our most successful African Development Forums our lead-off speaker was a 22 year old from South Africa who had left her country for the first time to tell us her moving story from the time she learned she had been infected by AIDS from a blood transfusion. When she was introduced you could see the ministers shrink away from her as if the longer they had no personal contact with persons with AIDS the longer they could ignore the problem. But by the end of the conference in which they heard from one head of state and other leaders apologizing for not moving before on the problem, and from others with AIDS, and from traditional and modern health practitioners, and from leaders of youth and women's organizations and from military officers by that time when on the last day we announced that our opening speaker's birthday was that day and that she was now 23, the whole audience stood up and sang her Happy Birthday.

Regional Trade: always a topic of high rhetoric, ECA gave the factual underpinnings for why regional trade made sense and was vital to Africa's growth.

Technology: K.Y. and our ECA colleagues led an important effort to advocate for more science education (STEM), more use of science in development, and for less faddism (such as the inflamed opposition to Genetically Modified agricultural Crops). ECA also pressed Europe (particularly) to reduce barriers holding up Africa's agricultural exports because of scientific standards that had no bearing on reality.

Role of Women in Development: No one could deny that ECA led by example as well as by intellect. ECA's work in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) was marvelously led by an experienced leader on ICT from Tunisia. Its work on gender analysis of budgets gave a factual undergirding to those fighting for more equity from African governments. And major ECA meetings featured women leaders. ECA's Center for Women in Development was led by a wonderfully effective leader from Burkina Faso. And K.Y. showed the value of having a senior male speak out on these matters.

It was a joy to help backstop such efforts.

As K.Y. and ECA became better known, invitations came to him to address ever more serious and high level international meetings. We collaborated on speech after speech, until finally the case could be made to shift that work more to ECA staff. In all I wrote about three dozen speeches for K.Y. and it was always a learning experience working with staff and with K.Y.

We often reflected on the implications of on-going international events on Africa and ECA's work. Africa was becoming more of a priority. The G-7/G-8 began to discuss Africa more seriously. Their Sherpas made it a habit to visit ECA as their first stop to get

briefed. And K.Y. would get invited to observe some of the G-8 meetings and interact with their leaders.

Tony Blair was particularly interested in Africa. He and his wife, Cherie, organized a series of Number Ten Downing Street Speeches to address key topics, almost all of which were on domestic policy. Africa was the exception, and K.Y. was asked to give the opening speech so launch their speaker series. The audience would be small (the biggest room at #10 only held about 150 people), but the quality would be high including key ministers, Bono and the like. We really worked hard on that speech: realistic, optimistic, many ideas for the way forward. We met with the Prime Minister ahead of time and he told us he was thinking about an organized look at Africa. The next year, 2004, he launched his Commission on Africa and K.Y. became a member of that Commission. Several of us at ECA worked hard to underpin KY's participation and the Commission's work. Myles Wickstead headed the Commission's Secretariat. We knew and liked him very much as he had been a highly successful UK ambassador to Ethiopia, so we had a running start in working with that Secretariat. Their report was very solid and a real stepping stone for more substantive relations with much of Africa. It formed the backbone of the Gleneagles G-8 conclusions.

There were some problems, too, of course. Three are worth mention:

One was lifestyle. All the other leaders on the level of K.Y. lived large. At one point it was tempting to imitate them. Soon on the short drives from ECA's buildings to K.Y.'s house there would be a motorcycle escort and flags on K.Y.'s car. There were other such instances, but fortunately good sense returned and K.Y. went back to a more reasonable lifestyle.

Second was that not every appointment worked out. Our chief economist in the first years of this century was a bit flashy and his work seemed impressive. One time he reported to the ministers of planning and finance that his report of a year ago had been cited in over 100 publications and in 22 national budgets. This sounded off note to me, citations of any work take a lot longer to be reflected in new publications and as far as I could recall, no national budget cited external reports in their presentations. So I asked my research assistant to check this out which (I confess) was the first time I learned about websites tracking academic citations. She found only one citation and it had no relevance to serious literature. I told the economist that my (Washington DC based) research assistant was new and probably had used a faulty procedure and asked him to give us a representative sample of ten citations. No answer. It turned out that a lot of this person's background was also bogus and that while he had held senior positions in his country there were stories of missing money and other problems that led to his being fired. The economist was put on leave WITH pay and soon a very polished newsletter appeared coming from an NGO we had not heard of purporting to be a watchdog on groups like ECA. It was filled with accusations against K.Y. Unfortunately, it was circulated to every ambassador in the UN and to every senior member of the New York UN Secretariat.

We waited for the UN to react, and it didn't. Finally, I couldn't stand seeing one of the best human beings I had ever worked with getting pummeled from an anonymous source, so I hired a detective. We thought the newsletter had been edited in California, so the detective I hired (who had been involved in a number of very high profile cases) was from California. Soon he reported back that the author of the newsletter was this now disgraced economist.

I sent the detective's report to the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), its investigations staff and asked them to act on it. Nothing. So I called the Secretary General's Chief of Staff, briefed him and said that it was disgraceful for any organization to allow such an effective executive to be pilloried with no cause. Word came back that the OIOS was busy with higher priority matters but apparently there was some motivation created as soon UN's personnel folks discovered that the economist had falsified his employment application, so he was fired for that. (OIOS was sharply reformed a few years later when it was found to be suffering from terminal nepotism.)

The third problem was much more serious. A key motivating force in politics is jealousy and the African Union (the successor to the Organization of African Union) had a bad case of it. Every ECA triumph was seen by it as an imposition on AU's right to get all the credit for everything regional. This got really serious within a year of Alpha Oumar Konaré became chairman of the AU. Konaré had been a somewhat democratic person when he was president of Mali, but somehow he and his colleagues quickly devised a protocol that he would only speak to heads of state, and that lesser persons like the head of a regional economic commission would henceforth be expected to meet with one of his commissioners which he compared to ministers of a government. So much for all my efforts to get the three heads of Africa's regional organizations (AU, ECA, African Development Bank) to meet on a regular basis.

This protocol nonsense set in motion a whole series of steps by AU to in their view try to recoup their standing as the leader of development in Africa. K.Y. was the clear target of this. Truthfully, he could have been more sensitive politically, but even if he were, it seems to me that Konaré could not be reached. The end result is that when K.Y.'s second five year term of office ended in 2005 he was not asked to renew, and the UN felt so cowed by the AU that it did not even give K.Y. the kind of acknowledgement and sendoff he so well deserved. He is now the head of an important research and consulting center he created in Ghana, producing amazingly high level work and is back in a high status role among the better African leaders.

Despite these problems, my conclusion about ECA is clear and is based on a lot of evidence about the functioning of the UN family of organizations: I know of no other case of such comprehensive and effective institutional reform in the multilateral system. ECA under K.Y. should be a case study on reform. It was a unique time for the UN in Africa and a privilege to be associated with a great person and an amazing case of organizational change.

Alas, when K.Y. left ECA his replacement was from the old playbook of ineffective leaders. Abdoulie Janneh accurately described himself at his first meeting with ECA senior staff when he said “I am not a substantive person” by which he meant that he was a political person: good for AU relations, bad for ECA work. He stayed a little better than one term until 2011. When Janneh began his work I wrote to him and said I had worked with his past four predecessors and cared so much about ECA that I would gladly take on any assignment he desired from me for free. As a political person he decided he would have nothing to do with anybody who had worked with K.Y. and so that was that.

Currently (2014) ECA is now back to having a good executive team.

In addition to the above work regarding Africa I organized a particularly well received major meeting on Africa for the Bretton Woods Committee, and have participated in various study groups and meetings on Africa.

Was all this work worth it or a waste of time? At times it could certainly be disappointing, but over time, I am convinced that work such we did at the ODC/Council on Foreign Relations, and at ECA particularly, gave courage to a lot of worthy African leaders and it gave good ideas a chance to be heard.

The other day I attended a panel and was warmly greeted by the lead panelist, Benno Ndulu. Benno is a lovely person and a low keyed but highly effective economist and manager. He graciously contributed a paper to our Committee on African Development Strategies in the mid-1980s, then we was a regular collaborator with ECA when he ran the excellent network of African economists, the African Economic Research Council (where we teamed to foster the use of African economists by their national governments), and for the past several years he has been the governor of the Central Bank of Tanzania.

One third of African countries are making extraordinary progress now, yielding for at least ten years a rate of growth that should be the envy of countries around the world and particularly in Africa. People like Benno are making it happen. Tanzania now has one of the fastest growth rates in the world.

Another third of Africa’s countries are making average progress. Not stagnating, but not growing fast enough to make a major difference in the fate of their people over a generation’s time.

The final third of Africa is fighting to survive. It includes fragile states with internal strife and countries where economies are sliding in per capita terms.

Africa is paying a price for neglecting some problems for too long, particularly population growth and governance issues. But compared to the time only 20 years ago when one could hardly count more than two countries as breaking away with high growth (Botswana and the not quite African country of Mauritius), Africa is in such better shape now, and the momentum is leaning towards the high growth countries. I am a medium

term complete optimist, but unless Africa can quickly lower its population growth rate, I am a longer term pessimist.

Overall, it has been a privilege for a person of my background to have been able to participate so frequently in helping Africans move their continent forward.

#### E. Personal Life and Dreams

The late 1980s were a time of great changes in my personal life. After both of us worked some years to repair a marriage of diverging interests, Ellen and I divorced in 1987. Belinda, our daughter, moved to Seattle after her graduation from Oberlin College. Many years later Ellen moved to Seattle, too, and found a good life there.

Belinda continues as a truly wonderful person, thoughtful, kind, giving, a perfect person to help children (she works with very young children who are disturbed or living in highly stressful situations). She has continued to grow in depth and adventure. And she has a marvelous partner in Kat, a very professional teacher, and a lively spirit.

In June, 1989 I married Vivian. Vivian Lowery Derryck is a highly intelligent, thoughtful, articulate and dynamic person. She has two children now like Belinda in their 40s: Amanda (a doctor specializing in pediatric HIV/AIDS and on faculty at George Washington University's School of Public Health) who is a terrific person, who has a terrific husband, Guillaume and two dynamo children, Olivia and Alexander, both at Sidwell Friends School). David is a social entrepreneur consulting on business start-ups that have social value. He is married to Erica whose political, journalism and now corporate career has been solid. She is with Target. And they also have two super smart and very lovely kids, Oscar and Nadia. They live in Oakland.

At the end of 1989 my Dad died after a nine year difficult course with Parkinson's Disease. He was cared for by my Mom whose love for him was an inspiration to many and a life-extender for him. When he died she was 80. Now she is 104 as I write this, and for nearly a quarter of a century she has remade her life and interests giving much to many and becoming a revered figure among her family, friends and congregation.

When Vivian and I married we not only started a new marriage, we started a new life outside of Washington, DC. We moved to New York City where she was the new president of the African-American Institute (AAI). a group that did fine policy work on Africa, and ran extensive programs providing graduate education for literally thousands of Africans. They had 21 offices in Africa. For two years we lived on East 69<sup>th</sup> Street in a fine brownstone. The pace of life in New York was certainly more hectic, even nervous, but what we quickly noticed was how better connected people in our fields of common interest are in Washington. In downtown Washington we were used to seeing people we know when we walked downtown. But in New York when we held a book party for one of my books shortly after we arrived, many of the people who came thanked us for inviting them saying they spoke on the phone with a number of others at the party, but

rarely saw them because if you were at the UN you didn't get to Columbia University (or vice versa).

We also were not used to a more locked up world because of the risk of theft. One afternoon I put up a big Christmas wreath above our 69<sup>th</sup> Street front door, then we left to walk four blocks away where a reception for the hero of the age, Nelson Mandela, was being held in a friend's house. When we returned to our home, the wreath had been stolen!

In 1991 my work with UNICEF had ended and I felt I was neglecting IDC, so we decided I should return to Washington. We bought a house near American University and Vivian graciously commuted to New York until her work with AAI ended in 1996. She then returned to Washington where she became a Senior Vice President at the Academy for Educational Development, then a \$600million NGO.

In late 1997 Brian Atwood, then Administrator of USAID asked Vivian to agree to be nominated as Assistant Administrator for Africa at USAID. If I ever had the thought that political appointments at the assistant secretary level took place in a fairly routine manner, I was quickly disabused. We had to swing into campaign mode. Calls had to be made constantly to the Clinton White House to move the paper work along. Vernon Jordan and Dorothy Height (the very long time president of the National Council of Negro Women) were more active than anyone. Dorothy made daily calls! Finally the paperwork was done and the internal processes were done so the nomination made its way to the Hill. Jesse Helms was then chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and he had a distaste for AID. When Vivian was allowed a confirmation hearing by him she had to wait while six potential ambassadors were heard (even though she outranked all of them) and until Helms deigned to hear from her in a quite perfunctory way but she was approved by Helm's committee and confirmed by the Senate in 1998 in a process that looks positively like lightspeed today. Another surprise for us was that there was no money to finance even a cup of water at a swearing in ceremony. We put on a major ceremony on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of the State Department with good food and drinks for over 200 people and a deep hole in our pocket!

The resignation of every single Clinton appointee was accepted by George W. Bush's administration so Vivian left the government on January 21, 2001 and returned to the Academy for Educational Development until 2009 when she left for Harvard, returning to Washington in 2010.

Vivian started a habit in the 1990s and continues that our home is a welcome place for foreign visitors. Over the years we have hosted the heads of state of a fair number of countries, and others making interesting contributions to our world. So often and particularly with high level visitors, those coming for a visit get to see formal places like hotels and government offices, but do not receive the experience of being with people in a regular home. If you are overseas you receive an entertainment allowance, but in Washington this all has to be out of your pocket. Still it is worthwhile.

I have described the various civil society commitments I have been working on in the last many years. One new task has been as a very modest philanthropist. I had helped pull together the affairs of a cousin of mine and at his request I was assigned the task of being his executor and the person to distribute his resources to charities of my choice. Being a philanthropist has been far more difficult than I would have predicted. In one case a civil society CEO was distressed that I had become their largest donor, displacing his status!! And in a few other cases, the organizations aided found they could not deliver on their promises on how to use the money but they used the money anyway! It has not been a total waste of time and money. Some of the grants have been able to leverage situations nicely.

I have yet to carry out a wish to have the nuclear disarmament folks and the peacebuilding folks work together to share lessons and to see possibilities for synergies. I'm hopeful I can bring this off. Money is not the problem, it is getting the right folks to agree to meet.

Today we continue in Washington, a lifestyle of policy-centered discussion the likes of which we think is unique in the world, so we will stay in our home, just 12 minutes from downtown Washington or some other home in that radius. And we spend increasing time in our homes just outside of Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, and on St. John Island, U.S. Virgin Islands.

I like to feel that at age 73 ½ I have a great many productive years ahead of me, and the odds are fairly good that I will continue my work with nonprofits, keep up on policy issues and exercise the long tradition of changing views with new evidence in hand until I don't.

But this seems a good time to take a reading on a number of issues that have concerned me and to dream a bit about what I hope will be the future for the field of development and for my country.

When I began my work on international development almost 50 years ago, there was no reason to believe that in the space of two generations the entire prospect for developing countries would be so dramatically changed. Now Goldman Sachs sees sufficient progress in developing countries that they are projecting to 2030 and 2050 an historic re-ranking of the world's economies in which many developing countries will surpass major European countries and which the top three countries in terms of GDP will be China, the U.S. and India. More to the point of development, already half of the world's population is in the middle class or above, and the relative number of the poorest has shrunk markedly. We have reached and surpassed a global tipping point in development.

All this is extremely good news for those in the field of development. We have been on the winning side. But this is not good news for those in the business of foreign aid because a number of countries, most particularly the United States, have been slow to adjust to the good news. First, there is a perhaps natural reluctance to see one's role as being diminished and even over. If you give foreign aid and countries need less of it

because they are now more capable and the private sector is willing to invest in projects that in the past only aid agencies would support, what do you do? So no wonder when I speak in Washington meetings about how we are entering a new post-aid era in a lot of countries (as I recently did when I quoted the current Minister of Finance of India as saying aid now is a “nuisance”) this makes the aid community most uncomfortable.

Relatedly, the U.S. has been slow to craft new sets of relations with developing countries. We know pretty much how to relate to other OECD countries and we know how to relate to the poorest country where our aid programs play continuing important roles. But we haven't crafted relationships for a lot of the countries in between, and they are saying they feel neglected.

If the old model was helping them develop, the new model is to discover mutual interests. The old model inevitably treated countries as one would a child: loved, but dependent. The new model treats countries as adults. But Peru is not France, and Ghana is not England. So we have to find artful ways of relating to these in between countries. Here are some options:

- Define a mutual interest, e.g., increasing the quality of governance. Exchange best practices. Help leaders in the country's quality oversight institutions to attend international meetings on managing for quality (pay for this with budget support to the conference or the developing country head of evaluation). Help the local university set up courses on this topic. Exchange speakers. Be active in helping at the international level to set rules of investment where the investor is expected to report on quality and impact.
- Help an export industry of interest to us. Use the Peace Corps at the producer level, but charge the country 50% of our cost. Enable our academics to work with their academics to study best ways to foster the industry. Figure out how to add socially responsible features to foreign private investments and see if a subsidy for that feature is needed.
- Foster civil society learning. Work out ways for U.S. organized civil society to interact with the country's organized civil society. The two can work out training and capacity building steps, perhaps enhancing the legal undergirding of the field. Bring some of the country's civil society leaders to the U.S. to speak on their lessons learned at home. Beef up local university capacity to train for leadership in civil society.
- Encourage the philanthropy sector. Help civil society and others establish and grow private philanthropy in the country. Help the local universities learn how to establish endowment funds and alumni fund-raising. Bring leaders of private philanthropy from the two nations together for lesson sharing. Bring top speakers (Bill Gates, etc) to meet with the country's richest people to encourage them. Have their top philanthropists speak in the U.S. on how to foster bridging activities.

Does this mean that the U.S. should stop striving to have leadership in its aid programs. No. There is still a lot of poverty left, but it is increasingly inside middle and emerging middle income countries. Globally there is still room for considerable leadership.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the field of climate change and sustainable development. The negative climate prospects are so wickedly bad that while I am a medium term optimist for global development, I am a long term pessimist for the world. We're by no means at the End of Days, but the comfort and beauty of the world looks likely to be severely diminished in the years ahead unless there is bilateral and multilateral leadership on a scale that we haven't seen since World War II.

How are we faring in terms of leadership? Well, we have had two stunningly anti-intellectual governments in the U.S. in a generation (Reagan and Bush II) which has given national leadership the same course of erratic ups and downs in terms of quality that I saw in terms of UN top appointments. The issue facing us as national electorates and citizens concerned about global governance is whether consistently smart and capable public officials can be smoothly rotated in and out of power. This cannot be accomplished by individuals, but more and more of humanity is gaining education and places in society where they can see their stakes in good leadership, so one can be a bit more optimistic that organized movements and campaigns can cross borders and pressure leadership for the kind of performance that we wish were the natural instinct of all leaders.

It is the pace of change that remains a cause of worry. Yes, economies are growing quickly and more of them are growing well, too. But issues of climate and of the quality of governance are gaining much more slowly than is needed for a sustainably better world.

It is frightening to think about how much there is to do, but it is also satisfying to think about how much has been done, and it is thrilling to think that so many more capable people exist to help better the future of humankind.

*End of interview*