The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Program
Foreign Assistance Series

LLOYD FEINBERG

Interviewed by: Ann Van Dusen
Initial interview date: February 9, 2023

This oral history transcription was made possible through support provided by U.S. Agency for International Development, under terms of Fixed Amount Award No. 7200AA21FA00043. The opinions expressed herein are those of the interviewee and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

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Retirement from USAID 2011

INTERVIEW

Q: Today is February 9 and this is the first interview with Lloyd Feinberg. I'm going to start by saying, Hello, Lloyd. And thank you very much for doing this. I'd like to start at the beginning. If you could talk a little bit about your childhood, where you grew up, some of the things that happened before you got into the international development business, although, I have to say, looking at your resume, you were sort of predestined to go in this direction. You certainly started early enough. But let's start at the beginning and talk about your childhood.

Childhood, Family, Education, and Pre-International Development Work

FEINBERG: I was born in 1943 and grew up in Providence, Rhode Island. My father's parents came to the US when my grandfather was about six. They were originally from Lithuania, an area that's now considered part of Ukraine. My dad was born in New York, but his father moved the family gradually northeast to Connecticut and then RI. My father was a pediatrician. He had a brilliant mind and almost photographic memory. He graduated high school at fifteen, and then graduated from Tufts Medical School when he was 21. He probably did not charge half of his patients and the nights when he did not go out on at least one house call were rare.

My mother's parents both came over from Poland. My mother was born and grew up in Providence, RI. Her father died before I was born. She was the eldest of five children. She started at Pembroke College (now part of Brown) but transferred to the University of Chicago. She returned to and graduated from Pembroke after my grandmother took ill.

After college, she worked at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York for 5 or 6 years, and from the little that she told us, or that I remember, it sounded fabulous. She worked with a number of famous adventurers, explorers and anthropologists. She loved working at the AMNH and she really could have had a career. At some point during this time, she went to Europe by herself by ship. She truly did have an adventurous spirit. She was also really smart. She was definitely a woman before her times. But then, when she married my father she basically decided to give it all up. I love that in the 1960s, she got on a bus by herself and went to Washington to protest the war in Vietnam.

Q: Wow!

FEINBERG: As for my dad, when he retired, he was probably the longest practicing pediatrician in Providence. He became Chief of Pediatrics at the Rhode Island Hospital for quite a few years, and did pioneering work in pediatric cardiology. But the part about my father that probably most influenced me, was that in 1941, at age 40, he volunteered for the Navy, serving the next couple of years in the Pacific. The whole family was about to disown him because he had been in practice for twenty years and had two young kids when he signed up. They felt it was irresponsible for him to sign up, but he absolutely felt a duty. He really was one of the "greatest generation."

And then, later, when I was in college, I think it was 1963, he and a couple of other doctors from Rhode Island volunteered to go to Algeria, to man a hospital that the French abandoned when they left in 1962. When he was getting ready to go, I asked him about the mission, and he told me that he was working with CARE-MEDICO, Dr. Tom Dooley's organization. And when I said, "Who's Tom Dooley? I thought it was the name of a song sung by the Kingston Trio. The look of disappointment on my father's face that I did not know this influential doctor pushed me to read all of Dooley's books. In the process I learned about SE Asia, where Dooley did most of his work. This set me off. I wanted to go to Laos!

Q: Wow. Did you know your grandparents?

FEINBERG: I knew my grandfather on my father's side. He died when I was about thirteen. And I knew my mother's mother.

Q: In both of those cases, English was not their first language?

FEINBERG: Correct. They all spoke Yiddish most comfortably, as did both my mother and father. My brother, sister and I all assumed that they didn't want us to learn Yiddish so they could say things they didn't want us to understand, which was probably quite often.

Q: Well, you got pretty close. But your father sounds like a remarkable man and a remarkable influence in your life. Did you think about medical school?

FEINBERG: That's an embarrassing question. After I graduated from college; actually, I was living in Nepal at the time, I developed a close friendship with a British orthopedic surgeon who ran a missionary hospital. We had many conversations about medicine, and my father had always wanted at least one of his children to follow in his footsteps. So, I decided to give it a shot. I came back to the States and took a number of undergraduate pre-med courses before I accepted the fact that I was not cut out for medical school. My mother, by the way, felt that a doctor's family paid too high a price and was not in favor of my pursuing medicine.

Q: That's great. You said you had two siblings? Are they older, younger? Did they follow you into the international field?

FEINBERG: My brother Al is about 4 years older than me, and my sister Helen is 3 years older than him. Neither of them caught the travel bug like I did. They enjoyed relatively stable and very productive lives and have five kids and 9 grandchildren between them.

I should also add that my father had an identical twin, Saul, and his daughter, Irma is like a 4th sibling… in fact, genetically she is a half sibling. She inherited more of the "bug", and spent a number of years in Israel and is married to an Israeli. We are all very close.

Q: Right. You were the one who broke away?

FEINBERG: They say that I first tried to run away when I was about five years old. Just trying to get attention, I am sure.

Q: It took a while. As you think about your childhood, obviously there were important family influences, but were there particular teachers or particular events that predisposed you? We'll get to college and whether there were influences there but before you even went to college, was there any predisposition for international development?

FEINBERG: There was nothing in my school experience that comes to mind. But again, my parents both certainly had a great interest in foreign travel, and they offered us all exposure to other cultures. (In fact for their honeymoon, they took a freighter down to Central America… definitely not a luxury cruise).

Growing up, they took each of us separately on a foreign trip. When I was 13, I went with them to Europe. I loved it. In 1960, my father and my brother went to Russia. These trips all coincided with medical conferences. BTW, Al and my dad were in Moscow during the Gary Powers trial, the U-2 incident. Great time to be there! Truly.

Towards the end of that summer, my mother suggested that she and I join my dad and brother in Vienna, where the conference was being held. That was the summer of the 1960 Olympics in Rome…and both my brother and I were avid track and field fans. It turned out that Irving R. Levine, a well- known foreign correspondent based in Rome, was originally from Rhode Island and was an old boyfriend of one of my mother's sisters. Anyhow, my mother contacted him and asked if he could help my brother and me get into

the games if we made it to Rome. (I was going into my senior year of high school and my brother Al was going into his senior year at Tufts.) Mr. Levine was incredibly encouraging and helpful once we got there. In fact, my high school football coach in RI told me he heard a broadcast where he (Mr. Levine) offered some comments about the games that "two young friends of his passed on to him." Also, as it turns out, Al knew a couple of the competitors from Boston. They got us competitor badges, and we were able to stay in the Olympic Village for several nights. Still one of the most amazing experiences of my life!!!

Q: Did you meet foreign athletes? I assume you did.

FEINBERG: Yes, especially the Irish because Ron Delany was a famous mile runner. He was Irish, but he was going to school in the States.

Probably my biggest thrill was to actually meet Jesse Owens and Wilma Rudolph when we were in the stadium. Also we met Rafer Johnson who won the Decathlon, beating his close friend and team-mate, CK Yang in what many people considered one of the greatest competitions in Olympic history. (Johnson was with Robert Kennedy when Kennedy was assassinated.) Also, I sat next to CK the next day in the stadium. He was 100% spent.

Q: That there wasn't any chance, though, that you would go to Lithuania or Poland. Those countries were still firmly off bounds at that point, right?

FEINBERG: Yes, they were still certainly deep in the Soviet Union. Although, I know my mother's brother, (who got me interested in bicycling, which later became a big part of my life) went on a bike trip to Poland. And he visited the town where our family was from. He visited the cemetery there and described talking to the old caretaker, who said, "Yeah, I'm the last Jew here."

Q:. Well, the Jewish Quarter certainly in Warsaw was absolutely destroyed during the war. That's pretty cool of your parents to give you that kind of exposure. No teachers at high school made a huge impression on you. I guess you were, this is not pejorative, a jock. You did a lot of sports in high school?

FEINBERG: I played football and I was a pole vaulter. I was good but not a star. I always said the reason I wasn't a better pole vaulter was because I was afraid of heights.

Q: At some point I want to talk to you about kayaking, because I know that was a part of your exercise regime. But can you talk about college and how you chose where to go? And how did that influence you?

FEINBERG: Well, my father, my brother, and my brother's two kids all went to Tufts, and it was sort of expected that I was going to go to Tufts. But I really didn't want to go to school anywhere nearby. I wanted to get as far away from Rhode Island as I could. And not because of any bad experience, but, although it wasn't the sole factor, everybody knew my father, especially in the Jewish community. And I couldn't do anything without

getting found out. And the one rule my mother always insisted on was, “whatever you do, don't embarrass your father.”

Q: That's pretty difficult.

FEINBERG: I can probably come up with other reasons why I did what I did, but I would say that probably I just wanted to get out of what seemed like a pretty limiting fishbowl.

Q: So you went to Ohio. Yes? You could have gone further.

FEINBERG: It seemed that was about as far as they were going to let me go. I went to Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU). It was a small liberal arts school in Delaware, Ohio, a pretty small and not too exciting town in the geographic dead center of the state..

It was a good school. I made a number of lasting friendships, and broadened my horizons, or so I thought at the time. I started out planning to major in journalism, but it turned out that OWU didn’t offer it as a major. I ended up majoring in political science. Interestingly, Dottie Rayburn also went to OWU but we didn’t meet there. We also both went to the Philippines in the Peace Corps but did not overlap there either.

One professor that influenced me a good bit was somebody that I never took a course from, but he was an English Lit professor. And he used to hang out at a bar where we spent a good number of hours talking. He was a legendary character and a very good teacher. I did take a black studies program with the only African American professor on campus. In those days, there were very few African American students at the school. I think all the black students were from Africa. His course was an eye opener and I was definitely influenced by him.

Q: Of course, the Civil Rights movement was going strong. And the summer Freedom Ride trips. I don't know whether you got involved in any of that, or any of the protests surrounding it.

FEINBERG: I graduated in 1965 and did not go to any protests. When Kennedy was assassinated a friend of mine and I started out for Washington to attend the funeral. But the hitch-hiking was bad and we didn’t make it. When I returned from Peace Corps in 1968, I did go to quite a few protests.

Q: Was there a Greek scene at Ohio Wesleyan? Were you part of it? Did you try to avoid it? Or could you not?

FEINBERG: It was hard to avoid it. I tried in the beginning, but ended up following the pack. I joined, and eventually became president of Chi Phi fraternity. It was a very mixed experience. Aside from making a few lasting friendships, it was not a very rewarding experience for me.

Q: So, a political science major – was that both the U.S politics and international?

FEINBERG: Yeah. Mainly U.S politics and governance.

Q: I guess with your interest in journalism, that would have made sense. So… Vietnam was just getting started. I can't remember whether there was a draft in '65, but how did you deal with conscription? Or was it not something you actually had to deal with?

FEINBERG: I did not think I had to deal with it when I joined the Peace Corps. The draft really had nothing to do with my decision to volunteer. In fact it was my parents who suggested the Peace Corps.

Over the Christmas holiday in December 1964, my parents invited a former patient of my dad's over for dinner. He was part of the first Peace Corps group in Thailand and was personally greeted by President Kennedy when his group left, and he had a fabulous experience. Between this dinner and Tom Dooley's stories and descriptions of Laos, I was immediately turned on to the whole idea. My parents were 100% supportive.

Q: That's really amazing. And did you ask for the Philippines? Was that a surprise? Did you want to be in Asia? I mean, how did that come about? I guess you went straight into the Peace Corps from graduation.

FEINBERG: I did start Peace Corps training immediately after graduation. My first choice was Laos because of the Dooley books, but Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam didn't have Peace Corps at the time, and I wasn't aware of the IVS or any of the other alternatives. The Peace Corps offered me the Philippines and I accepted. The training was at Sacramento State in Sacramento, California.

As a slight digression, at this point I feel that I should say something about the summer of 1963, when I was in my sophomore year of college. That summer provided the key point when I realized I needed to seek a different, perhaps more adventurous approach to life than I had experienced up to that point.

My roommate from Freshman year, Len Harding, and I decided to drive to Los Angeles, California to meet Jim Souder, another friend who had taken that year off from OWU. Our plan was to get jobs, make some money, and find out what the big deal was about California. Len decided to go back to Ohio after we got to LA, but Jim and I headed north to try to get construction jobs at the Oroville Dam project. Before leaving LA, we were joined by Abner "Roy" Lynch, who had told us about the Oroville Dam project. The three of us set out for Oroville, in the northeastern Sierras. Unfortunately, when we arrived at the "Feather River" job site, we found that thousands of other men had the same idea, and no jobs were to be had. All part of the adventure, as it turned out.

We ended up in Davis, California, where we were told that the large Heinz tomato factory there would be hiring within the next week. Davis seemed like a nice town, and we decided to do "day labor" while we waited for jobs at Heinz. We picked apricots for a few days, and then Roy and I worked for a week on a local farm, repairing fencing and

doing other odd jobs. Jim found a full-time job as a welder for a company making grain silos. I then got lucky and was hired by a Northrup King Seed Farm about 30 miles from Davis. (Little did I realize at the time that working at a seed farm in 1963 would segue directly into my experience in the Philippines 3 or 4 years later, as well as my training at Sacramento State, which was 25 miles or so from Davis.)

Jim and I didn't know Roy at all when we started out, but we soon learned that he had recently been released from Angola State Penitentiary in Louisiana. The three of us developed a friendship as we traveled together for the next couple of weeks. Being a nice Jewish boy from Providence, I was initially intimidated, if not over-awed and shocked by the stories he shared with us. He was what I now believe to be a "Melungeon" and had spent a major portion of his life in orphanages, juvenile detention centers, jails and then a good number of years in Angola Penitentiary. (The last crime that he had committed was "armed robbery.") For me, it was a total education about a life totally foreign and somewhat frightening to me, but I came to like and "respect" him. He had earned his high school SLC in Angola, was surprisingly well-read, probably would have made a good lawyer in other circumstances and was adamant about my never-ever hurting someone or stealing unless it was absolutely necessary. He had a funny story about how he once robbed a gas station and the older fellow who was there started going pale and hyper-ventilating. Roy said he spent the next twenty minutes feeding him water, holding his head, assuring him he wouldn't hurt him, and then left without taking anything once the fellow was recovered. In any event, after a week or two in Davis, one morning, he said, "Lloyd, I got two favors to ask. Would you loan me twenty dollars? And would you give me your fishing knife?" And he said, "I gotta go back to where I know people, and I can't go there unarmed." That said, he had more integrity than many other "really good people I have known.

Q: Do you know what happened to him?

FEINBERG: When I was home from school for the next Christmas holiday, my mother woke me up and said I had a call from the Providence Police Department. A detective wanted to talk to me. I went down to the police station, and he asked if I knew Abner Roy Lynch? I said I did and asked if he was in trouble again? He said he was back in Angola, and he'd put me on a list for approval of people he'd like to correspond with. I told the detective that Roy had shared some very disturbing stories about Angola, and I wondered what he (the detective) knew about the place, because it sounded horrible. And he said, "Young man, whatever he told you is not anywhere close to the reality of the place. He told me that he had a master's degree in criminology and had spent two months at Angola. He said that "that prison is absolutely the worst penal institution in America and is an abomination. It should never be allowed to remain open!". I corresponded with "Roy" for about a year but lost contact when I left for the Philippines.

By the way, that exposure to a man considered by society to be a "really bad dude" is always with me, especially when I have come across so many "really good people" whom I immediately recognize as hypocrites or phonies.

Q: Took a while. So basically it was some new crime that got him back in there.

FEINBERG: Yes. It was an armed robbery. I hope that my fishing knife was not involved.

By the way, besides my "Adventures with Roy," my experience that summer at the Northrup King Seed Research Farm (NK) introduced me to the science and practice of plant cross pollination (of Sudan and Sorghum grasses). I was doing field work in the mornings and hands-on cross-pollinating in the afternoons. Little did I know at the time that this experience would segue into my Peace Corps work a few years later.

My initial assignment in Peace Corps/Philippines was as an elementary science teacher in the town of Calamba, Laguna Province. The teachers at the school were all good teachers, and I had absolutely zero to offer them. It was not an ideal assignment.

However, Calamba was located about 20 kilometers from Los Banos, home of The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI). In November 1966, IRRI announced the official launch of "IR-8," or what became known worldwide as "Miracle Rice." Interestingly, I visited IRRI shortly after I arrived in Calamba in late 1965. I was literally "blown away" by the place. It was a scientific oasis in the desert… modern (air conditioned!) buildings and carefully managed, row upon row of cross-pollinated rice varieties. I had never seen anything like it. Then I met the head of Extension and Communications, William Golden, who coincidentally had been at UC/Davis and had spent a lot of time at the Northrup King research farm where I had worked in 1963. I was very excited about this "small world" coincidence and by the concept of the "Green Revolution" that was just in its infancy.

I immediately approached Peace Corps staff in Manila, and told them that Bill Golden really wanted to engage Peace Corps volunteers in this area. He said that he could transform non-agricultural volunteers into effective extension agents in a three-week training course that he had developed.

Peace Corps initially said absolutely NO! IRRI was a big institution, funded by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and would be anathema to the image of PC.

In the next few months, I came across three other volunteers who wanted to get involved in rice production, and a few months later we had Peace Corps approval for a group of 9 or 10 volunteers to go through the IRRI short course. We were "20-day wonders" (as opposed to the 90-day "wonders" (pilots) of WWII.

Another "prior experience/coincidence" that greatly influenced me, is of a different nature. My favorite uncle, Miles Sydney, who many years later got me and my wife totally hooked on long-distance bicycling, had been stationed with the US Army at a base outside of Manila at the end of WWII. While there, he met a little urchin girl who hung around the base trading eggs for candy bars. Miles started giving food and other items that were unavailable outside the base to the girl to take home. To make a long story short, "Charlie" or "Charita" Reyes, brought him home to meet her family. Charlie's

father, H.B. Reyes, was a civic and industrial leader, founder of the Manila Electric Company, the Far-Eastern University, etc., etc. The Reyes family basically adopted Miles for the time he served there and maintained their relationship with Miles after the war. So, when I arrived with the rest of my Peace Corps group, I actually had a reception family waiting to greet me at the airport. I stayed connected to them throughout my time there and for many years afterwards, until the generation I knew passed away.

Q: Fascinating. Looking back, it looks like all of these things were planned and tied together, but some amazing serendipity. Did you continue as a science teacher, while you were doing whatever you were doing at IRRI?

FEINBERG: As it turned out, every school had its own rice fields with a tenant farmer. Proceeds from the sale of the rice would fund a substantial part of the budget for the school. “Don Pedro” had been cultivating my school’s paddy fields for many years and was considered to be a good farmer. After I finished my IRRI training, I made a deal with the school principal who allowed me, as a part of my “science teacher” role, to “manage” half of the school’s paddy. I said I would guarantee that I could produce more rice on my half than Don Pedro could on his half. I was also tasked to develop a curriculum for students and teachers, for growing “Miracle Rice.”

Q: Pretty risky.

FEINBERG: Not really. I knew I could grow more rice, because in terms of harvest, the “High Yield Miracle Rice" was known to produce up to six times as much rice per hectare as traditional varieties. Anyway, it was a big success. I ended up making bets (for many cases of San Miguel Beer) with Don Pedro and everyone in the village that I could double Don Pedro's yield. I won easily!

Q: You were a demonstration project.

FEINBERG: Yes, it became a demonstration project. And then the local government agricultural extension agents and I got together and put on workshops at my “Central School” as well as at some of the Barrio schools in the district. The workshops were targeted for students, many of whom would become farmers, as well as teachers, many of whom were land-owners or farmers as well. The workshops promoted modern rice production techniques and introduced the practices and economics of using fertilizer and pesticides. straight-row planting, etc. It was exciting, and I much preferred being out in the fields up to my knees in mud than in the classroom.

Unfortunately, the rice production project also taught me one of the biggest development lessons of my life. That first planting season, as I mentioned, was a huge success. I actually did grow six times as much rice as Don Pedro. The next planting season began very soon after the harvest, and this time we got all the Barrio schools to plant this miracle rice, and Don Pedro planted the full field with IR-8. I was definitely riding high. And of course the rest is totally predictable! A typhoon hit just before harvest, and destroyed probably about 80 % of the harvest. Such losses are not unexpected – one loss

in six seasons is a low average. But, one big downside of IR-8 was the need for upfront funding for fertilizer, insecticides, etc., which are unnecessary for most traditional varieties. And most of the local farmers did not have sufficient capital to cover such upfront costs.

Q: That is fascinating, then probably Peace Corps continued to do Ag extension after your initial foray, because it sounds very productive.

FEINBERG: Rice production became one of the biggest investments in Asia for both the Peace Corps and USAID. In fact, the next year, IRRI built a big training center outside of Los Banos where they trained Peace Corps volunteers and USAID agricultural officers who were sent throughout Southern and Southeast Asia. I have met many USAID Ag Officers who went through the Siniloan Training Center.

Q: So did you continue with IRRI?

No, I didn't. The failure of my second rice crop was a big disappointment for me. But again, as luck would have it, shortly after the typhoon, I was offered an opportunity to become involved with a new Filipino foundation, "Panamin," established to protect the rights of local, indigenous minorities. This is another case of total serendipity. I had already spent time with a Hill tribe (the "Mangyans") on the island of Mindoro during my first summer break as a volunteer, so, when I was offered the opportunity to work with Panamin, I jumped at it.

For my first assignment, I was part of a small team conducting an assessment of issues facing minority (hill tribe) groups in Mindanao. Bob Fox, the team leader, was an American anthropologist who had been head of the anthropology/archaeology section of the National Museum and was a long-term resident in the Philippines. He was hired by Panamin as their chief social scientist. In any event, after the assessment, I was asked to start and manage a resettlement program in the Visayan Islands for a small group of Negritos called "Ate", who were migratory and had no lands of their own.

Q: Another major shift! The Philippines certainly provided you with skills and an education you never expected. Did you think about staying on in the Philippines? Or was that not an option?

FEINBERG: Yes, actually, I did extend to do the work with Panamin. I applied for a full year's extension, but the Peace Corps director, who was a former Marine, detailed from the State Department, and was extremely sensitive to any issues regarding the Draft. He decided to grant me two month extensions until such time as I received a notice to report for the draft. The whole time I was in the Philippines, my draft board was pursuing me. Peace Corps/ Washington told me that mine was one of five boards in the country that did not recognize the Peace Corps as an alternative, or at least a deferrable activity. It is a long story, but after six months I felt I needed to be able to commit myself for at least a full year or go home, so I agreed to terminate after the third extension.

Q: But the draft board was presumably still after you.

FEINBERG: They were. And that's where I did a bit of a "bait and switch". I had to report for my physical in Rhode Island, which I did. While there, I asked to see my file. When I read it, I pointed out to the Board director that the Board had short-circuited the process. And he said, Well, son, we'll take it up at the next meeting. I said, I'm here and now, and I have left the Peace Corps. And he said, "Yeah, so it looks like you're gonna have to serve your country." At that moment, I told him that he was not going to "get me". In fact, public schools, particularly inner city public schools, were dying to get men into the classroom. And you won't believe it. I got a job teaching science in DC.

Q: Well, of course, you already had that experience but why DC? I mean, you obviously chose that.

FEINBERG: DC and Philadelphia were actively reaching out to former Peace Corps Volunteers. In fact, they had recruiters going around the world, trying to get volunteers interested, both men and women.

Q: Did your draft board acknowledge that as serving your country?

FEINBERG: Oh no. But, I was able to switch my draft board to DC, and they were happy.

Q: Got it. Your life as a teacher in the DC school system; what school or schools did you work at?

FEINBERG: Well, do you know where the Navy Yard is?

Q: I do. In Southeast?

FEINBERG: Yes, Southeast. The school was the other Van Ness. Not the Northwest Van Ness. It was in the heart of an enormous housing project. The neighborhood surrounding the school was a pretty rough area. I was there for almost a year and a half and resigned at the end of the school year when I turned twenty-six

Q: Did the experience sour you on teaching?

FEINBERG: No. I've got to say that I loved the teachers. I mean, these women were really strong. They were super. But the school system was just…

Q: Aggravating, I guess..

FEINBERG: Yes. Very. The bright side of it was that the DC school system was part of the federal government at that time, so that year and a half counted towards my retirement.

Q: What grade level were you teaching?

FEINBERG: Basically fourth, fifth, and sixth grade science in an elementary school. One of the benefits was that I didn't have my own classroom. I had a desk and a locker in the back of the auditorium, and the school's music teacher, Pat White, had her desk in front. We became good friends, and often went to hear music together to listen to her good friend and former college roommate sing. Her friend was Roberta Flack. We used to go to Mr. Smith's on Capitol Hill to hear Roberta. It was great.

Q:. That's fascinating. Well, obviously DC school teachers put up with a lot. And the bureaucracy is rarely helpful. I don't suppose you stayed in touch with any of the people that you worked with there.

FEINBERG: Funny, you should ask. Not really, except for Pat White, the music teacher. Just before I joined USAID, it would have been the end of 1983, I was working in Jakarta, Indonesia. I was driving home from dinner one night with my friends, when we heard an ad on the radio announcing that Pat White – straight from the United States – was performing that evening at the Borobudur hotel. Of course we went to the Borobudur where she was already playing a piano in the bar. I walked up behind her, and when she stopped, I whispered in her ear, "Can you play the most popular song at Van Ness Elementary School in 1968?"

Q: Almost lost it I imagined.

FEINBERG: It was great to surprise her. Musicians like Pat would have contracts to do gigs traveling around the world. It's a tough way to earn a living.

Q: It is a tough life. Wow! That's an amazing story. Moving right along, you turned twenty-six. You had a little more flexibility. What were you thinking of next? Was it graduate school? Or were you still itchy to travel?

FEINBERG: I really didn't know. That was the summer of 1968.

Q: That was a grim time to be anywhere, but certainly in Washington it was tough.

FEINBERG: Yes. I traveled out to California with a friend and then hiked up the west coast of Vancouver Island. It was a beautiful hike. Another long story, but we ended up building a raft out of old cedar trees that had been cut down or knocked down and washed up on the shore. And with a tube tent, we sailed back down the coast. It was by far the stupidest thing I've ever done. But we made it. That was certainly one of my favorite trips anywhere.

After that summer, I started coursework at Temple University in Philadelphia for a master's in anthropology, mainly because of my work with Panamin. It was a bit of a wasted effort because I was not cut out to be an academic. After a year at Temple, and doing a number of short term jobs in the Philly area, I met a woman who at the time was

getting ready to go to Kathmandu, Nepal, where she had lined up a job teaching at a local, Nepali school. I decided to follow her six months later, and arrived in Kathmandu in December, 1970. (We were married a few years later.)

Once again, I was in the right place at the right time. The day I arrived in Kathmandu, I was able to meet with the principal of the International School. The Board was meeting THAT night to hire their first science teacher. I had sent all my papers from the States before I left and was offered the job the following Monday. I taught there for the rest of that year, and the following year.

Q: That school served the expat community?

FEINBERG: Yes. It was all international. It was a small school that went up to the eighth grade. Carter Ide was the mission director and his wife, Helen, was the president of the board. It was a great school and a great community. I met a number of people, who I would work with at USAID years later, including Ken Bart, who was seconded to USAID from CDC; Carol Peasley, who was an IDI at the time; Bill Trayfors; Larry Heilman; Jeff Malick, who was Peace Corps staff; and Gary Shaye, who later on would have a legendary career as the Director of Save the Children in Nepal.

Q: Wonderful. People who talk about that time in Nepal say it was really special. Okay, so you still didn't want to work for AID, but you certainly had a lot of more contact.

FEINBERG: The circle was in motion. Life in Kathmandu and the school was fabulous. I think I had eighteen kids in my sixth grade "home room," and I was teaching science again. Another science teacher, a beautiful African American woman who taught science to the lower grades, became my close friend. She had taught at international schools in Moscow, Athens, Rome, and a couple of other very appealing cities of the time. And wherever she went, she became the center of the local social/cultural scene. She would usually open up an art gallery to run on the side, which she did in Kathmandu. Her gallery was called "Max's Place" and was featured on all the tourist maps. About a year before I arrived, she became an ordained Buddhist nun, took the vows, shaved her head, wore the robes and devoted her life's mission to support her personal lama, Lama Yeshe and his mission to bring Buddhist education beyond Tibet and the East. She became known as "Sister Max" and supported a number of local projects, including a monastery and school near the Everest base camp. She started a number of businesses in addition to "Max's Place" and used all the profits to support the lamas. After she left Kathmandu, she started a project designing very high-end dresses that supported poor, abused women in India. It became a multimillion dollar business, and she became quite well known, and in fact had full page write ups in Time and Newsweek, She was a remarkable woman, and is now known as "Mother Max".

Q: Remarkable.

FEINBERG: Kathmandu in those days was a pretty remarkable place. Of course there was the mountaineering and trekking side. The "wholesale expeditions" of Everest

tourism had not yet started, but there were lots of serious climbers, both local and coming from abroad. And of course, there the "Hippies," who were there for the drugs (which were all legal and readily available), adventure, spiritual and religious quests, Himalayan arts, etc.

The "official" international aid community was huge. USAID was by far the largest but by no means the only big donor. Those were the days when AID missions had full complements of career and contract technical advisors in agricultural, health, family planning, etc.

Nepal, located between India and China, was an epicenter for international watching and listening. The city was full of intrigue and rumors. At one point, we lived around the corner from the Chinese embassy and apparently they did not like the fact that foreigners, especially Americans, were allowed to live so close. Rita and I loved riding past their compound on our bicycles, catching a glimpse of them gardening or exercising. But you never ever saw a Chinese "diplomat" walking in town unless they were part of a tightly knit group.

In addition to the beautiful views of the high Himalayas from my science room windows, the exciting social and cultural life of the city, and the amazing trekking and hiking, I was hired to do a job, and in many ways it was the best job I ever had. Besides teaching science, I was assigned to be "home room" teacher for the sixth grade, which at that time had 17 students with sixteen nationalities, including the children of the Israeli and Jordanian ambassadors; two girls who were best friends, one from Turkey and one from Greece; Indian and Pakistani boys; and the CIA station chief's son, who, years later, became my terrific (!) dentist in Washington. They were all fun, smart, interesting and fully engaged kids. And to have a playground like Nepal was very special. (Much different from my other teaching experiences.) Teaching elementary science in an environment like that was like being locked in a candy factory! The kids' curiosity was ever-present. The science room always had snakes, bugs, rotting meat to cultivate flies, chickens in the back, and daily descriptions of the latest bouts of dysentery, "Kathmandu Cough", and other strange but common infections. Of course, one of my favorite activities was to invite moms and dads in to give presentations on their areas of expertise or special interests.

Another interesting aspect of the "Kathmandu Experience" was that a number of children came from missionary backgrounds, and their parents were not always comfortable with the fact that their kids were exposed to hippies and an abundant counterculture. In fact one of the main streets downtown was called "Freak Street", for well-deserved and obvious reasons. Not surprisingly, PTA meetings often focused on issues the kids raised about culture, morals, use of language, sexuality, etc. This was the early 1970's and the arguments around early 1970's "wokeness" were stimulating in the Kathmandu environment.

I should shift gears at this point, and say that even though I loved Kathmandu and my job, I realized I was not cut out to be a teacher for the long run.

My friendship with a British Missionary Surgeon whose daughter was a student of mine led to my confronting one of my long term demons, that being my sense that I needed to find out if I had what it would take to become a doctor, like my father.

Q: You went back to the states to figure out what it would take to actually pursue medicine.

FEINBERG: Yes, at the close of the 1971 school year, I returned to the US intending to take undergrad courses that would eventually allow me to apply for medical school. I took classes at the University of Rhode Island and Brown. It only took three terms for me to realize that the dream was dead, and that I was definitely not cut out to be a doctor.

Q: I doubt that. While you were in Kathmandu. I see that you were a public health intern at the hospital, were you doing that at the same time you were teaching?

FEINBERG: After the failed attempt to give medicine a go, I applied and got into the School for International Training in Brattleboro, VT. Rita and I had gotten married and spent six months there while I worked on a degree in International Public Health. The program required me to complete a six-month internship, which I decided to do at a missionary hospital in Tansen in western Nepal. The hospital's director had been a good friend and mentor when I was teaching at the international school during my first tour in Nepal. Rita got a grant from the Population Council, which was setting up family planning programs. I did a number of studies at the hospital, analyzing the flows and efficiencies of their extremely busy out-patient service, as well as a couple of surveys in local villages in preparation for a public health outreach program that the hospital was starting. It was great. However, Rita's job meant that she had to work from Kathmandu, while I remained in Tansen. After six or seven months in Tansen, I was offered a position directing the next Peace Corps Training Program. However, it wasn't going to start for a few months. In the meantime, Rita went back to the States for meetings with the Population Council. So I was in Kathmandu, waiting for the training to begin. I'm not sure we want to continue along this line…

Q: It's all fascinating, I promise you.

FEINBERG: Well, while Rita was in the US, I was staying with a friend in Kathmandu who had a broad range of Nepalese friends. He came home one evening and said, "Lloyd, There is something I need you to do." And I said, "What's that Alan?" He went on to tell me that a friend/former student of his, said the Kathmandu Police Dept. needed a foreigner to pose as a buyer for a police sting operation. The next day, we went down to the police department and met the chief of detectives. The "sting" related to a "Nagmani," or snake stone, which was the subject of lots of mythology. Supposedly, it was like a pearl that glowed brightly in the dark. It was said that if you put it in the middle of a large dark room, you could read a book by its light. It was extremely rare and valuable… etc., etc. Well, after a couple of weeks of preliminary meetings, it was time for the big meeting with the "owner's representative." When I asked the detective how much I was supposedly willing to pay for it, he casually said "about six million dollars!"

Q: Out of your bank account?

FEINBERG: The police assured me that they would make the bust before things would ever get that far. Needless to say, I was getting cold feet. But they had all these plainclothesmen, street people and Tibetans, and they were all carrying guns. In any event, I finally met the guys who were representing the seller. I immediately realized that I was in big trouble because the "buyer's representative" was obviously an extremely sophisticated Indian, and way, way smarter than the chief of detectives! And of course, they did not have the Nagamani when I went to visit them, because they said, "Obviously, you're not carrying six million dollars on you." We began negotiating when, where and how we would do the exchange.

Q: Were you wired? Did they even do that then?

FEINBERG: The Kathmandu police certainly did not have much in the way of technology. They were supposedly following me and we had a system of hand signals to use as soon as I left the house, to confirm that the stone was on the premises… which of course it wasn't. If it had been, I was to pull my left ear or something like that. And if they didn't have this stone, I'd pull my right ear. Anyway, I went out, pulled my right ear, got into the car, and drove back to Kathmandu, where I immediately went to the detectives' "secret meeting place." The chief of detectives was instantly apologetic as he informed me that the unit that was "tailing me" lost me! Seriously!? I think there was one traffic light in all of Kathmandu at the time, and apparently they must have stopped for it!! In any event, I immediately knew that I was on the losing side of this little game!

Q: That was your life of crime.

FEINBERG: After that, I realized nothing good was going to come of this and I was likely to get myself killed. I knew I had to get out. I told the detective I had to leave Kathmandu for a couple of weeks and that he should find someone else. He was obviously not pleased, and that was the last involvement I had with them, and I thought that was the end of it. But a month or two later, Rita and I were asked to leave the country. While the government had begun a major effort to reduce the number of foreign "advisors" in- country at the time, I always wondered if my decision to abruptly end my undercover career was what did me in.

Q: Interesting.

FEINBERG: I really tried to find out if there was a connection, but Rita's project fell through at the same time, and we both agreed it was time to leave Nepal. I backed out of the Peace Corps training, which was still more than a month off.

Q: Did you finish at Brattleboro at that point? Or did you still have more work to do there?

FEINBERG: We did go back to finish up our theses and final reports for graduation.

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Q: This is later on February 9 with Lloyd Feinberg. Lloyd, we've been circling around USAID, but haven't gotten there yet. But you've seen it from afar in both the Philippines and Nepal. You've gotten your master's from Brattleboro. And take it from there. I know, you did a lot of traveling in the next decade.

FEINBERG: Right, most of it intentional, some not.

Q: You had just finished your masters. And I think the next step is probably planned but I'm not sure-- you didn't go float a boat around the world or anything?!

FEINBERG: After we left Nepal and came back to the States and I got the degree in Vermont, we decided that we should work in the US for a while. The only work I had done up to that point (besides summer and student jobs) had been overseas, so we naturally went to some of the international organizations to see if they had any home office openings. I remember going up to New York, for an interview with CARE. They didn't have anything in the home office at the time. But the man I met suggested I check with Foster Parents Plan, which was headquartered in Rhode Island.

Q: Circling around.

Pre-USAID International Development Work
Foster Parents Plan (Plan International USA), 1974 - 1979

FEINBERG: I was going to Rhode Island a few days later to see my parents, so I set up an appointment with George Ross, head of PLAN's International Programs Division. At the meeting I learned that PLAN was not looking for someone to work in their home office; rather they were seeking someone to open their first program in Africa – in Ethiopia. Other than Peace Corps, I had never worked for a formal organization. I described my Peace Corps and Nepal experience to George, who would become my mentor and good friend.

I came home from the interview, and Rita and my parents asked how the interview had gone. I told them it went well but that they were not looking for a Rhode Island based position, they were looking for someone to open PLAN's first African program in Ethiopia.

Q: And Rita's face fell.

FEINBERG: Well, actually, she was always up for an adventure, so she was thrilled. But, my mother was appalled because Ethiopia was often in the headlines due to the overthrow of Haille Selassie and the significant social unrest that was taking place there at the time.

Q: I wondered since she's the one who encouraged the Peace Corps, was she saying, alright enough already?

FEINBERG: She was always encouraging, but Ethiopia bothered her.

Q: The famine was happening then, wasn't it?

FEINBERG: Actually the famine had been in full swing from 1972 - 1975. It was certainly a key factor in the emperor's overthrow in September 1974. Within a week of our arrival, Haile Selassie was put under house arrest. He died a year later. He was assassinated in the hospital, although that was never officially confirmed.

My task was to set up an organization from the ground up, from soup to nuts, with literally no previous experience working for an organization, any organization. It was fascinating. a bit scary, a lot of fun, and the greatest learning experience of my life.

Q: Wow, it was learning by doing! You had to start from scratch because Plan just hadn't been there.

FEINBERG: They hadn't been there. While Save the Children (Sweden and UK) had long experience in Africa, this was PLAN's first field program in Africa. George Ross took a big chance with me and was an incredible source of wisdom and support from the start. He was a gift.

Q: Did he stay with Plan the whole time?

FEINBERG: He did; he was the deputy executive director. And then two years later, he became the International Executive Director, where he served for many years and oversaw an incredible global expansion of the organization, both in terms of donor countries as well as field operations. He was a real visionary. And Ethiopia was his special love, for better or for worse.

Q: I bet you had to hire staff. And you were competing with every other NGO for staff?

FEINBERG: Actually, not many NGOs were working in Ethiopia at that time. But George told me the first person I had to speak to was the local representative for Price Waterhouse. He was an old-time British expatriate, very much the traditional Colonial, who loved to talk with me and explain how the banking and business systems and everything else worked. And he introduced me to a lot of people. Then, at the end of the month, I got the bill. That was my first lesson in "billable hours."

Q: At that point, there was quite a bit of turmoil. Could you get out and about? What was the security situation like?

FEINBERG: It was just starting to get a little tricky. I arrived in November, and it took a couple of months to set up bank accounts, identify staff, buy equipment, establish accounts, and meet all the appropriate people in and out of government. John Martin, later to become a good friend at USAID, was the deputy Peace Corps Director. He helped identify my first three or four staff.

Q: Where did the money come from? Was it an AID grant?

FEINBERG: No. My whole first year's budget was a grant from Canadian SIDA. Interestingly, George Ross was very skeptical of PLAN taking any USG funds, for very good reasons in my humble opinion.

Q: Was it a sponsorship program?

FEINBERG: PLAN's business model was definitely a sponsorship one. My main objective that first year was to use the SIDA grant to develop the staff, systems, and a legal foundation to develop a large number of family and community "case histories" that could be supported by Foster Parents (donors). At the same time, I had to develop social assistance and development priorities for guiding our community-based activities. Public health, nutrition, water and sanitation, small-scale agricultural assistance, small roads and bridges, etc. formed the base of the program.

One of the first people I contacted was the Canadian Ambassador to Ethiopia. He invited us for dinner our first night there, and the first thing he asked when I got in the car was "So where in Canada are you from?" Realizing that there had been a gap in communication between PLAN/Canada and the Canadian Foreign Office, I think I said

something like the “southern part.” We had a good laugh over that, though I’m sure he would have preferred a Canadian PLAN Director.

I also made a point to connect with USAID, where I met John Withers, Gaylord Walker, and Ted Morse. At that point (1974/1975), USAID had a full mission. Jonathan Withers was the mission director. Ted was a project development officer, and Gaylord Walker was the head of the Ag Office. We had no funding from AID, but all of them were very kind and supportive, especially after things got a bit tough.

Q: So it was a sponsorship program and the money was used for community development purposes?

FEINBERG: It was really an interesting time to be there because organizations like Plan and SAVE were really just starting to deal with the whole global issue of NGO paternalism and especially sponsorships. And the idea of one donor sponsoring one child and a family, was definitely not going to fly in a country whose revolutionary government was being heavily influenced by China and Russia.

Q: Sure and Save got itself in real trouble in the 90s on that.

FEINBERG: Yes. They certainly did. Fortunately, the SIDA grant provided a cushion for my program and allowed me to get things set up before I had to worry about signing up kids and sponsorships.

My biggest challenge was that the Government of Ethiopia wanted the program based in Lalibela , in the mountainous province of Wollo, in the north-central part of the country. It was the province most heavily affected by the famine of 1972-1974 and was incredibly poor. Also, it was considered a politically sensitive region, even though it was sparsely populated, very remote and difficult to reach by land for much of the year. Wollo bordered the province of Tigre, which was a traditional stronghold of the emperor and the Amhara population. Also, Lalibela was internationally known for its famous “underground rock churches” and had long been an important though hard-to-reach tourism site. There was a grass air strip about 10 miles away, and an Ethiopian Airlines DC-3 flew in three times a week. “The Seven Olives” hotel had a generator that ran for a couple of hours a night and a very decent kitchen. We arranged a contract that enabled us to stay and eat there, and the manager and his staff became good friends of ours and our staff. It was relatively comfortable, given the living conditions I had experienced in the Philippines and Nepal.

The local government provided office space, and the hotel had a two-way radio that provided once a day contact with Addis. It really was pretty remote.

Q: Yeah. How do you set up a banking system in that setting?

FEINBERG: As there was literally no commerce in Lalibela, we conducted most of our financial transactions in Addis. We carried cash in with us and kept it in a safe. Theft was never an issue.

Q: Whose stipulation was it that it be in Lalibela? Do you know?

FEINBERG: Yes, it was Ato Shimelis Adugna, the Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation. He was a wonderful human being, and I maintained a relationship with him for many years. When George Ross went out there to look at possible places for start-up, Ato Shimelis said, "I'll show you around, but you're going to have to work in Lalibela. Take it or leave it."

Q: Wow! Food, anything, I mean, did you have to bring it all in?

FEINBERG: No. I may have exaggerated a bit. The local people did have their own economy. There was a weekly market in Lalibela, and villagers from quite a distance came to trade, buy and sell vegetables, goat meat, etc., although they literally sold rice and teff (the main local grain crop used to bake Injera bread) by the grain, not the kilo! It was a very poor area and the market reflected that.

Q: Did you have visitors? Did AID come out to see what you were doing or the Ambassador from Canada?

FEINBERG: We did have a few visitors. However, the whole program did not last long. We were there for about four months and had actually made quite a bit of progress. We established operating procedures, conducted quite a few needs and basic health assessments in the town and in various outlying communities, and established relationships with various village and religious leaders. We started doing intake and registrations for prospective beneficiaries and began developing a strategy for the first year's program.

Interestingly, before we went to Lalibela, I had a series of conversations with the Office of the Abuna, (Archbishop of the Coptic Church, the dominant religion of Ethiopia, especially in the Amharic regions of Wollo and in neighboring Tigre). I was able to get a signed letter from the Abuna introducing the project to the local church hierarchy. Unfortunately, when I presented the letter to a few local church leaders, they displayed total contempt for the Abuna and his efforts to exert "central" influence in their communities. (Know your audience before you speak! A lesson I never took seriously enough.)

You asked about AID visitors. In fact Ted Morse visited our program and had quite the experience. That March (1975), I was in Addis for business. Rita was planning to fly to Addis on the Friday flight to join me for the weekend. However, after waiting at the Addis airport for a couple of hours, the flight didn't arrive, and I couldn't find out from Ethiopian Airlines what was going on. I knew the hotel manager had his 2:00 phone call with the hotel's owner in Addis, so I raced across town to the office, and we made contact

right at 2:00. The hotel manager was freaking out. He said the town had been attacked by a large band of insurgents who had attacked the incoming plane when it landed and destroyed it. One person had been killed (the security officer) and the one passenger and the EAL ground agent were able to drive back up to town. They estimated it was about five hundred soldiers, just a total ragtag army. The leader was the former governor, Dejazmach Berhane Meskel, who was a relative of Haile Selassie. He and his followers were totally opposed to the new revolutionary government that was taking over. By the way, Rita was very impressed by the Dejazmach. I think he had gone to Oxford and was extremely popular with the people we met, including our staff. He absolutely did not want anything to happen to Rita or our staff, nor of course and especially, Ted, who was an official diplomat. To a certain extent, Ted's presence brought a whole new dynamic into the equation. (A positive one, from our perspective.)

Q: Who was at the hotel at the time?

FEINBERG: The only guests were the very frightened young traveler who was on the plane, Ted, who had been planning to come back on the plane with Rita, and a Canadian veterinary team doing Rinderpest vaccination of cattle. They had two vehicles for the Rinderpest work. The hotel had one Jeep to bring people back and forth to the airstrip.

In any event, when I realized what was going on, I contacted Jonathan Withers, and he put me in touch with Peter Sebastian, the political officer at the embassy. They came down to the hotel owner's office, and we had another phone conversation with the folks in Lalibela to suss out what to do. In the meantime, I called Ato Shimelis to find out what the government could do. After two days, the US Embassy team in Addis decided that the folks in Lalibela should try to drive out – about a hundred seventy miles along dry riverbeds. I was asked to go with the embassy security officer on an overfly of Lalibela in the embassy plane. The town was obscured by smoke coming from fires set by the rebels, but after about half an hour, just as it was getting dark and we were going to have to turn around, we located the convoy of refugees traveling through the riverbed. The next day we met them in Dessie, the nearest town with an airstrip. It was a happy reunion.

Once we got re-established in Addis, the government informed us that we could not go back to Lalibela. However, they, especially Ato Shimelis, wanted us to stay in Ethiopia. We began looking at other potential areas that 1) would be safer, 2) where there was great need (not difficult to find), and 3) where no other foreign organizations were already working.

We settled on a town in the south, called Arba Minch, which was the exact opposite of Lalibela. It was lush jungle, with amazing wildlife, and was beautiful in a totally different way. I visited the area a few times and then asked George Ross to come out to help make the final selection decision. He approved the site. The government happily approved the plan and even provided an Ethiopian Airlines DC-3 to move the project's equipment from Lalibela to Arba Minch.

Q: You had to probably hire new staff because the people who had been with you in Lalibela weren't willing to move south?

FEINBERG: Actually, all the project staff stayed on. Given the times, it was a good job for them to have. They were all very young, smart, and idealistic. However, another one of my big lessons/mistakes was that I had not really paid close enough attention to their ethnicity. Project staff were Amhara, Oromo and Tigrayan. In the beginning, they seemed to get along fine. However, walking home after a staff party one night, I heard an incredible noise. Two of the staff were just pounding each other. I had to drag one of them off, but it wasn't easy. Finally, when we were able to talk about it, they explained that one of them was Oromo and the other Amhara. As long as there wasn't any alcohol, they could get along, but a little bit of alcohol could heighten tensions, and things could go south quickly.

Q: And the area in the south, what was that? Was that Oromo?

FEINBERG: Actually, it was mainly Omotic, but consisted of a number of different ethnic groups, including an interesting group called the Guji. They were probably the most primitive. The men still wore G strings and had spears. I should say here that when I went to Arba Minch the first time, I met two Irish Catholic priests. One, Father John Gannon, had been in Kenya and then Ethiopia for most of his career. He was a colorful, "I've seen it all" character and loved the "bush." The second was a young Irish priest, who loved cities and working with inner city youth. He wanted to be in a city and hated Arba Minch.

One day, as Father John was driving me around to show me the area, a couple of Gujis appeared on the side of the road. He said, "Those are Gujis. They are a local tribe and are actually quite nice. However, before a Guji man gets married, he is required to tack the testicles of another man above the door of his intended. "But," John continued, "Lloyd, you don't have to worry, they can have mine because I never needed them."

Q: You restarted the program, recruited families with sponsorships and set up new community activities?

FEINBERG: Yes, we did. The governor, a retired army general as well as being a smart and highly principled man, got very involved and put his staff on it. By this time, we had six or seven staff. Most were community workers, including one water sanitation guy. We also had two women working in administration.

Q: Were there any other NGOs working there? Or were you also on your own?

FEINBERG: Besides the Catholic priests, there was a Lutheran Norwegian hospital about an hour or so north of us.

Q: Interesting. Did the program continue after you left? I mean, it sounds like you shaped the whole thing. It'd be hard to keep it going unless you recruited very carefully.

FEINBERG: While we were in Addis after the Lalibela incident, Rita got pregnant with Josh. I mentioned this to George Ross on his visit, and after he returned to the States, he informed me that Rita was not going to have or raise a baby in rural Ethiopia. He "asked" if I would take over the PLAN program in Guayaquil, Ecuador. I agreed and stayed on until my replacement could be identified and mobilized. I returned to the States in September 1975, and after a short visit, we relocated to Guayaquil about a month before Josh was born in December.

My replacement in Ethiopia had been a Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone. He was a superstar. He did a great job… until he was arrested and thrown in jail because someone accused him of being CIA. He was held in Addis in a military jail for five weeks. The story made the front page of The New York Times, and it was a mess. Once he was released, Plan had to close down the Ethiopia program.

Years later in 2000, I returned to Lalibela. It had changed significantly. PLAN had a field office there with an Ethiopian Field Director. When I told him who I was, he knew exactly who I was and was thrilled to meet me. Apparently, the story of the early days had grown considerably.

Q: It's interesting that Plan went back to Lalibela. Rita left right away for Ecuador and you wrapped up and then followed her. There was no stint back in the States?

FEINBERG: No, I went straight from Ethiopia to Guayaquil with about a week in the US.

I was not unhappy staying behind in Arba Minch. It was a very interesting time to be there, with the revolution going through crazy fits and starts. I was fortunate to have no other serious security-related issues, and I fell in love with the incredible beauty and diversity of the area: amazing large and small animal wildlife and birds, beautiful mountains and jungle, and two large lakes that held the extraordinary "Nile Perch", the largest freshwater fish in the world. They were delicious and ran over 400 pounds and six feet in length. There were also fascinating villages and sub-cultures in the region (the Gujis notwithstanding), and surveying the area and identifying potential program sites was an important part of my job.

Q: You were in Ethiopia for under two years. Am I getting that right? So now you get to use your Spanish, right?

FEINBERG: Yes, and I quickly realized how bad my college Spanish was. The Guayaquil program was an older, mature, urban social services-based program, with over 200 staff and a very large health clinic.

It was hard to get any community programs going because most people lived in "suburbios," basically wooden shacks, connected by rickety planks, built out over water, with a relatively fluid and transient population. People might stay for a few months or

years, while others were semi-permanent. Also, people had an innate distrust of those who wanted to become community leaders. This had not been an issue in the rural communities where I had worked up until this point. Perhaps it was more of a cynical distrust of leaders becoming "politicians", who were seen by many, if not all urban dwellers as corrupt. Corruption had always been a factor wherever I had worked, but the experience in Ecuador was different. Whereas in Asia, there was always a sense of hypocrisy when it came to politics, in Ecuador, there was no attempt to hide it. It was simply accepted as the norm.

Q: Where was the money coming from for those programs?

FEINBERG: The program was 100% sponsorship (privately) supported. I forget how many thousands of foster children we had. Foster Parents would send $19 a month to sponsor his/her "foster child" and family. The biggest part of the program was the "letter exchange," An entire staff collected and translated them, going both ways. It was an enormous effort and expense, but unfortunately, it is what made it such a good "business model." Of course, issues of "neo-colonialism", equity and fairness were major weaknesses. However, starting in the late 70's, early 80's, the model gradually expanded to include community-based projects, and as increased levels of government funds started to go to NGOs, many of the sponsorship organizations were able to break away from the traditional paternalistic model.

But going back to Ethiopia with the new government, which was leaning very hard towards communism, just the name "Foster Parents Plan" was seen as being paternalistic and neo-colonial and caused me serious doubts and frustration from Day 1. It was also very counter-revolutionary as it was focused on one child over others. My staff came up with an Amharic name for the organization, "Yebetazeboch Makakwamia Dirigit", which meant something like "Assistance for Communities and Their Children." I also lobbied for and got approval from HQ to use the name "PLAN International" as the organization's name in English for the Ethiopian program. (Several years later, PLAN switched to that name for the entire organization.) I also made sure that all of our programs were community-based, including nutrition, food and water supply, crop production, small scale infrastructure, road repair, bridge construction, etc. I became totally opposed to any "one child" or individual family- focused activities..

Q: Right. It probably made it tricky communicating with your donors, but obviously you got there faster than some organizations. I think now all organizations that have a sponsorship program basically are very clear that this money is not going to this family. The families are illustrative of the need.

FEINBERG: It was amazing, for example people would send cash gifts, hundreds of dollars, but we could only spend it on their family.

In any event, when I went to Guayaquil, my marching instructions were to close down the Guayaquil program and restart a program in the rural areas up in the mountains, which is why George thought it was something that I would be interested in and could do.

Q: Nothing worse than closing down a program.

FEINBERG: You can say that again. And in just a couple of words, I didn't. It was a real learning experience for me.

The real reason for the close-down decision was financial. PLAN could not afford the costs of the program. PLAN had discussed the need to close down the Guayaquil programs and expand into other areas with the government before I moved to Guayaquil. I also discussed this regularly with the Ministry of Social Affairs in Quito. I probably spent half of my time exploring new areas of potential opportunity and intentionally kept the Ministry informed at every step. I finally came up with three options, and one specific area, which seemed to meet with their approval. It was a rural, poor, primarily indigenous area in the mountains, but it was close to a town that had all the basic infrastructure. Just as I was getting ready to rent a house and an office -- it must have been a day or so before I was going to leave – I had an urgent call from the American Consulate in Guayaquil. The Consul General said, "Lloyd, you gotta come down here. I've never seen anything like it. There's a huge demonstration taking place here, and it's "Pro American!! They are all saying "Plan de Padrinos, Don't go!!"

Q: Probably thank your local staff for that.

FEINBERG: I am sure you are right. Within a few hours, I received a call requesting me to attend a meeting with the Minister of Social Affairs in Quito the next morning. As I said, I had met him a number of times and felt we had a good relationship. However, he read me the riot act. He was angry, and he had a photographer and journalist from the press, and just wrung me out. He said the ministry had never given me permission to leave Guayaquil and that I had been going behind his back. Afterwards, I called a colleague who was then the director of CARE in Quito. I explained to him what had happened, and he laughed. He said, "Lloyd, you will run into this guy again he will hug you like you're his best friend." He said, " That was a political move. He had to make a show and he could withstand the political embarrassment, so you took the heat."

Q: Photographers?

FEINBERG: Oh yes. The stories in the paper the next day were pretty bad. The lack of government support for people living in the coastal regions (ie. Guayaquil) was a big issue, so the government's plan to pull resources once again out of Guayaquil and redirect them to the mountain region, where Quito and much of the country's wealth was located, garnered significant opposition.

By the way, I did meet the Minister at the Fourth of July celebration at the US ambassador's residence; he immediately came over to me and gave me a hug, and all was well, just as my CARE friend had predicted.

Q: Right. But so you never left Guayaquil?

FEINBERG: No. FPP remained there for another year or so and gradually opened projects in new areas, before starting any reductions in Guayaquil… which by the way, had been my intention all along. However, after about a year, our marriage was not going well, and Guayaquil was a tough place to live. Rita and I agreed that this time, we had to go back to the states and either work on our marriage or separate. I sent a long letter, basically of resignation, to George, informing him that I was willing to finish my second year but would not stay on beyond that. I immediately received a telegram telling me to call him soonest, which I did. He said, "I was pretty sure you were not going to fall in love with Guayaquil. So I'm reassigning you again. This time to Bali."

Q: Was he aware of your personal troubles because he sounds a little tone deaf. Every time you say we got to work on the marriage, he comes up with a new plan?

FEINBERG: Actually I was not forthcoming about the relationship. In fact, I think we probably put on a pretty good show for him. But he was perceptive. Anyway, when I told Rita about Bali, she said, "We're not passing up Bali."

Q: We'll make this work.

FEINBERG: Right. So we went to Bali, and we were there for about two and a half years, 1976-79. Everything about Bali was amazing, and the program itself was well-established and exciting.

Q: What was the nature of the program?

FEINBERG: The program still had a strong child focus, but it included nutrition and community health and a good bit of small infrastructure (roads, bridges, irrigation, etc.) construction. We started a women's cooperative credit union and supported small business development.

When I arrived, there was an open file about a proposal from a big poultry producer in Australia that wanted to provide 2,500 day-old chickens for a poultry production project in Bali. It sounded great. One of my senior staff people had been trained in veterinary animal husbandry, and he and I worked on this together. We organized communities into groups that would own the chickens, and with assistance from the government agricultural extension agents, we provided training and materials for cages. We also paid to have a quarantine set up at the airport so we could fly them in and keep them in quarantine for five days.

The day before the chicks were due to be shipped, I got a telegram from the head of Foster Parents Plan/Australia saying 2,500 day-old "cockerels" would arrive the next day. I looked at it and asked my colleague, "Hey, is a cockerel what I think it is?" The poultry producer was planning to send us 2,500 roosters and had never told us. It's actually illegal to import cockerels for layers since there's absolutely no economic benefit. I had to inform the FPP country director in Australia that he had to cancel the shipment, or else all

of the cockerels would be killed on arrival, with what would undoubtedly be extremely bad press.

Q: You had to then go back to all the communities and say, This isn't gonna happen?

FEINBERG: Yes, not my finest moment! Realizing what was at stake, I got on the next flight to Jakarta and went to the Canadian embassy. I had met the ambassador a few times, and he was very supportive of our program, given that FPP/Canada was a big source of donations. And told him I needed 2,500 day-old local "pullets" (hens) as soon as possible.

Q: ASAP!

FEINBERG: Indeed. The Canadians were great. Canadian CIDA had a relatively short and easy application form for small project requests like this, and they funded that whole aspect of the project. It saved us.

It was a "project that never stopped teaching." Besides the technical problems, and attendant logistical difficulties, I would never do another project like that. The idea of having "small group-owned, shared-responsibility business models" does not work. The only successful groups were ones where one strong person took over full responsibility and ran it like a small business. All the others failed for one reason or another.

Q: It didn't work in the Soviet Union either.

FEINBERG: Exactly. I think we initially had a total of a hundred families that were going to participate, with each group of 10 families receiving 25 layers. Only 10-12 families stayed with it for at least another 12 - 18 months..

Q: Obviously, you got around—knowing who to call in embassies. You had some contact with AID, I imagine? And it was a much bigger NGO community overall, was it not?

FEINBERG: In Indonesia, yes.

Q: Were you traveling a lot at that time?

FEINBERG: I traveled around Bali quite a bit as our program continued to expand. In fact, usually I spent four nights in Denpasar and two or three nights in the field. Also, as the Indonesian government was quite involved. I also traveled to Jakarta every couple of months to meet with Indonesian government officials and to Yogyakarta and later South Sulawesi in my role as Country Representative for the other FPP programs in Indonesia. It was about this time that FPP shifted its name to "PLAN International."

Q: So you were there for two and a half years with Plan? Was the program growing during the time you were there?

FEINBERG: Yes, it was growing a lot, mainly because PLAN started a big push in the Netherlands. Given the colonial relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia, the program experienced a major surge of interest and support from the Dutch. I was tasked with identifying and doing the initial survey work for a new program area, which turned out to be Ujung Pandang (now Makassar) the capital of South Sulawesi (the former Celebes.)

Q: Sure. It's sort of colonial angst.

FEINBERG: Exactly. When there's a rapid surge of interested sponsors, the field programs must shift into high gear, signing up new communities and families.

Q: Right. And so you're getting new funds, you're probably having to hire new staff. And all of the reporting that goes with that, although I imagine Plan wasn't quite as onerous as subsequent organizations you worked for.

FEINBERG: When I was with them, PLAN was pretty good, bureaucratically. However, a few years after I left, they really grew in all respects, with the resulting increase in bureaucracy. The whole nature of the organization changed once they began accepting USAID and government funds.

At one point, some USAID/Jakarta friends convinced me to apply for some new USAID funding specifically designated for NGOs, and I got a grant from them. Somehow, PLAN HQ was not aware of what I had done. George and the PLAN CFO came out and almost fired me on the spot. It was the only time I can remember him ever getting angry with me. He said he was sure that USAID's intentions were good, but he explained that it would require the project to invest in more staff and meet all kinds of new accounting and other requirements. And then once all this was in place, USAID would pull the money, leaving the project high and dry. He was very smart, very prescient.

Q: That's exactly. Yes.

FEINBERG: And that's what happened. I mean, NGOs today are entirely different from what they were in the early days. In many ways, it's a shame, but I think NGOs are doing much more credible work because of it. There is a balance point, but I don't really know where it is.

Q: Because NGOs certainly could do things that the government couldn't or wouldn't. And they were often the crucible for testing new ideas. That's not what a contractor would want. Did you know when you were developing the proposal that it would be something PLAN was dead set against?

FEINBERG: No, when I went for the money, I really didn't think about it as there had been no stipulation against taking government money. George did forgive me, and I never took any more USAID money after that, although my successors certainly did.

Q: Right. When did you leave Indonesia? And didn't you come back to Indonesia under other auspices? How did that transition happen?

FEINBERG: We left Indonesia in 1979. I was supposed to stay for four years, but we left after just short of three. I should say that my daughter Ali was born while we were in Bali, and along with Josh, added a very bright light to our time there, but it was definitely time for us to return to the States.

In any event, one of my predecessors, who was then a senior guy in the head office, was dying to come out, and the program did not suffer. But once settled in the DC area, we found ourselves with two young kids, and no job prospects. Those were the worst days. I was bartending at night (at a horrible Disco Bar called the "Purple Plum") and interviewing for jobs during the day. I was looking for something in DC, but then, out of the blue, I got a call from a guy I had met when I was working in Bali. He worked for a consulting firm called RMI, based in Jakarta and asked if RMI could include my resume in a bid they were submitting for a World Bank project. I jumped at it.

Q: Anything, right?

World Bank Contractor for "Transmigration Project" in Indonesia, 1979 – 1983

FEINBERG: Yes! RMI won the contract. I had also applied and been accepted for a job at USAID. However, there was talk of an upcoming "freeze," which meant that as "last-in," I would have also been "first-out," so I opted to pursue the World Bank opportunity. The freeze did indeed happen, so I made the right call. Although Rita and the kids stayed in DC, I was able to come home twice a year, which, given the circumstances, was OK.

Q: So what was the bank project? Was something you'd ever done before?

FEINBERG: Of course not! The project – "Transmigration" – was a social and development nightmare! It was designed to move people from Java, which was overpopulated, to the underdeveloped outer islands of Sumatra, Sulawesi, etc. At the time, it was one of the biggest Bank funded projects in the world.

Q: But something that the government wanted?

FEINBERG: In fact, it was widely understood that the Indonesian Government wanted to "Javanize" the outer islands and establish strategic, infrastructural and logistical links in areas that were close to Malaysia. For whatever reasons, McNamara and the Bank just fell in love with the idea. So, I ended up being the manager for the Bank's "Transmigration Two" project.

Q: Were populations forced to move or incentivised?

FEINBERG: Incentivised. Families received a little over five acres of land, and the program built houses, schools, health facilities, and infrastructure. It also provided financial and material support for cash crops. It was a huge (spanning seven Indonesian line ministries and 54 directorates general), very controversial program, but the Bank and the government really pushed it. I stayed with RMI and the project for 3 ½ years.

Q: Did you have qualms about it?

FEINBERG: We all did. And we had to argue constantly with the government. Actually, at the end of our contract, we considered our role in the program a success because the project had two parts. One was the overall management and administration of the multi-agency Transmigration program. My project, Transmigration Two, focused on preparing infrastructure and moving people to the province of Jambi, in Sumatra. However, as a result of some deep studies of earlier Transmigration settlement communities, we made the case to stop further expansion of the project and shift the focus to rehabilitating communities that had been established under previous iterations of the project. The Indonesian Government restructured the program according to our recommendations.

Q: People after they got there, did they want to return to their homes?

FEINBERG: Some people stayed and made a go of it. Others who tried to stay weren't able to make a significant living and returned to their home provinces. Others returned to their homes, and probably signed up again to go to another place. And others just went back and forth.

My in-depth involvement in Transmigration served me well when I was later the Sri Lanka Project Development Officer in the Asia Near East (ANE) Bureau at USAID and visited and engaged on the big "Mahaweli" Ag Development and Resettlement Program.

Q: Wow. But it sounds like the sort of thing that was very popular with governments in Asia at that time, just put the people where you want them. As if people don't have any free will, or ties to the land or whatever.

FEINBERG: Yeah. And as if there were no people already living in these areas.

Q: Well, that too.

FEINBERG: And that was probably our biggest argument – that indigenous people were already living there.

Q: Right. I didn't know about the Mahaweli project. You certainly learned about the World Bank. And living with moral ambiguity on a project. How did it happen that you decided to succumb to AID's siren call?

FEINBERG: Actually, I had re-submitted my application to USAID and received an acceptance letter before I finished up the Transmigration job.

Q: With your revised salary.

AID/Washington, Asia Bureau, Project Development Officer, 1983 – 1985

FEINBERG: Yes! The difference in salary between PLAN and the contracting work on the World Bank project definitely moved me up on the starting salary scale for USAID.

And I had become good friends with Walter North, David Calder, Becky Cohen, Louis Kuhn, Bob Dakan, and a few other USAID/Jakarta old hands who advocated for me. I doubt that I would have been hired without their help, especially David Calder who was Chief Medical Officer of the USAID Mission at the time. About a week after I got my acceptance letter from AID, I got a second letter saying that my application had been turned down for "unspecified" medical reasons. David looked at my medical record and sent a cable informing State-Med to disregard the results of any tests performed at the Pertamina Hospital. (As it turned out, I had "flunked" a respiratory test, as I did have a history of bronchial pneumonia and asthma.) David told them he wouldn't allow his dog to go to the Pertamina hospital. As a result, I was able to redo the physical when I got back to the States, and I passed.

Q: And they said you were fine. Was this for the Foreign Service?

FEINBERG: Yes.

Q: That's great. So this wasn't coming in as an IDI?

FEINBERG: No, I was considered a "mid-career entry." And when I got back to the States, I started work with USAID almost immediately.

Q: Wow! And you started out in the Asia Bureau or did you have to get overseas pretty fast?

FEINBERG: I started out in Asia PD. By the way, they gave me virtually no training whatsoever. I had no idea what I was doing.

Q: You'd been in that situation before where you basically had to make it up as you go.

FEINBERG: That's true. Fortunately, I worked closely with Vikka Moldrem, the desk officer for Bangladesh, and she really helped me.

Q: She's great. How long did you have in Washington before you went overseas?

FEINBERG: The two and a half year deadline came. I decided I couldn't go overseas and leave the kids again, so I knew I would need to leave USAID. However, one day I ran

into Jerry Jordan, who had been my HR person in the Asia Bureau. She asked how I was, and when she heard that I was planning to leave USAID, she essentially waved her magic wand, called HR and the next thing I knew I was transferring to a GS position. At the same time, Ken Bart, who I had worked with in Kathmandu, suggested that I meet Anne Tinker, who was looking for someone to manage PRITECH. One thing led to another, timing was right all the way around, and that's how I got to Global Health.

AID/Washington, Global Health Office (Bureau), 1986 – 2011

Q: Jerry was a dynamo.

FEINBERG: Oh, she really was.

Q: You wanted her in your court that is for sure. That's interesting. And Ken Bart; Nepal raises its head again, it was through that conversation! Did Robert Clay run that project before you took over? Or did he come after you?

FEINBERG: I think Alan Randlov was managing REACH and PRITECH at the time. But Robert was certainly involved. Perhaps he was managing the Health Communication project, HealthComm. This was before he replaced Anne Tinker as Division Chief.

Q: Pritech was ORS. REACH was the immunizations?

FEINBERG: In the beginning, both projects were under one contract. But, as they got bigger, they were separated. MSH had PRITECH, while John Snow had REACH. Interesting dynamics there, for sure… as the principals of each company originally worked together as close friends. Nothing is forever, I guess.

Q: I don't remember but Anne was still there. She would leave for the bank in the next couple of years after you came, I think.

FEINBERG: I'm trying to remember because Robert then took over as division chief. That was before I asked you if I could work with Allen on the Vulnerable Children and Orphans and Prosthetics programs.

Q: Right. That was sort of an intensive introduction to child survival, I imagine. You had those ORS, ICORT meetings.

FEINBERG: Oh, my God.

Q: Which were three ring circuses. And obviously something Peter McPherson was very keen on. There was a lot of visibility at that time.

FEINBERG: Yes, and to add another small world coincidence to the journey, Nyle Brady was the head of the Science and Technology Bureau (S&T) at the time. He had also been the Director General of IRRI in the Philippines, though after my time there. We did not

really have much time together to talk about IRRI, though I got to know him a little when we were responsible for "producing" the big ICORT conference.

Q: How could you forget about ICORT? Talk a little bit about your impressions moving from a regional Bureau to a Central Bureau. Was it a big move for you or not so much?

FEINBERG: It was a huge change for me. I liked being in the ANE Bureau because of my infatuation with Asia. But the project development work was really not my cup of tea. I think my job description required me to find no less than five or ten problems with any document that I was reviewing. And the job essentially was to come up with the lowest common denominator that met all the concerns of the Program Office, the technical offices, the special interests folks and, of course the Desk Officers who had to look out for all those pesky political issues… along with LEG and LPA. It was a fascinating process, but again, not something I was really cut out for. Sitting in meetings with all the different actors, trying to come up with documents that covered all the bases and had all the necessary T's crossed and I's dotted. For me, it was paper pushing. I never really did understand where everyone was coming from.

I felt much more comfortable in the central Science and Technology Bureau where I was responsible for supporting and managing contractors and grantees and looking at specific issues from the field perspective. The main job was to make sure things happened at the field level, taking into consideration all perspectives, especially technical integrity as well as "all things political." While I was the "manager" of PRITECH, more truthfully, John Alden, the project's Chief of Party, was teaching me what it takes to be an effective project manager.

Q: Yeah. Wonderful guy.

FEINBERG: I would say, "John, you're looking out for the agency more than anybody else. Just tell me how I can be supportive." Between him, Bob Simpson, Rob Northrup and others, I had a terrific learning experience. Amazing project staff!

Q: First class.

FEINBERG: Completely. I had to deal with Michael Merson, the Diarrheal Disease Control person at WHO. Mike was brilliant and very effective leading the DDC and then HIV/AIDS programs at WHO. He was really good, but he could be a real pain in the neck! (As I am sure he would agree.)

Q: Okay. So how long were you doing child survival work before you got recruited to help Allen (Randlov)?

FEINBERG: I think I came over to the Health Office from ANE/PD probably in early 1986, and I started working with Allen in 1991.

Q: Okay, you had a good long stint on the child health services portfolio?

FEINBERG: Yes. I think John Alden had left in 1990, and Glenn Patterson took over. Also a top notch professional.

Q: I'm just curious, during this period, budgets were doubling almost every year. How did that feel from your perspective? Did it feel like we needed a little break? Or were you ready to see these programs continue to grow? The funding really ramped up in that five year period that you were managing PRITECH. What I'm thinking about, was that PRITECH was sort of the Trojan horse for what became known as the "Age of Buy-ins." You had that central project, and then the field missions were basically moving as much money as they could through Health Office mechanisms such as your project. And if it wasn't overwhelming, it was really quite dramatic.

FEINBERG: Buy-ins were a double edged sword. Of course. MSH (the company that held the PRITECH contract) loved them because they were a source of considerable additional funding against their authorized LOP ceiling. To be perfectly honest, the ability of groups like PRITECH to use their "technical support" line item for doing assessments, evaluations, etc. provided MSH with a heavy "foot in the door" at USAID Missions planning new or expanded health interventions. Many of these buy-in assignments were for project design activities and/or other pre-project activities. I can understand why the use of these mechanisms became so controversial.

Q: Right. I saw less of that. But I certainly knew that the Regional Bureau health officers were not particularly happy with the way the central program was growing and the way the central program was having direct negotiations with field missions, and they felt cut out. I don't know whether you ever felt that at all, especially coming from a Regional Bureau?

FEINBERG: I think it really came down to who was sitting in the Regional Bureau's Health Office. Another real issue for the Missions and for us was the "Think Globally, Act Locally" quandary. As USAID moved in the direction of larger and fewer management units (grants and contracts), regional and global goals and objectives grew in importance. And of course, the need for agencies like USAID to be able to "tell their stories" depended on their ability to demonstrate meaningful, "global and regional" results. The importance of views from 5,000 feet didn't matter nearly as much as the 30,000-foot perspective. My Peace Corps and NGO background made it difficult for me to argue for 30,000-foot data as opposed to community or at least national level impact indicators.

Generally, I found that USAID Missions seemed to be pretty happy with the way buy-ins worked. Again, the fact that Bob and John and most of the management and technical leadership of PRITECH were former senior USAID field people was extremely useful.

Q: Right. And did you get pulled into sorting that out? When there was a conflict between a mission and project management?

FEINBERG: Oh yes. In one of the more memorable meetings of my career, David Oot, who was head of the Health Office in Nairobi, and I spent five hours driving around the game park outside Nairobi on a Sunday morning trying to sort out a very sticky set of management issues affecting PRITECH in Kenya. We did come to a good understanding, and it was well worth the effort. I forget who picked up the breakfast tab.

We did have territorial disputes with some regional bureaus, and certainly there was often some tug of war going on. But there were different sorts of issues with each bureau. The elephant in the room for many discussions with the Africa Bureau had to do with the CCCD program managed by CDC. I have to admit that my relatively short prior experience within USAID at that time put me at a political disadvantage when it came to a number of these inter-agency "battles." I especially appreciated the presence of John Alden and Bob Simpson on PRITECH at these times.

Q: Lucky you. The program that you're probably most associated with is the Orphans and Vulnerable Children -- from how to deal with this Congressional directive, and then going to the Hill and negotiating what would and would not fly with Leahy. You and Allen Randlov really shaped how it grew. And I'd love to have you talk about it from when you joined, what you understood the assignment to be and then how it evolved.

FEINBERG: I think about the time I realized that I wanted to work with Allen on these issues. It was after our trip to Ethiopia that I came to you to discuss it. You expressed real surprise that I would give up PRITECH.

Q: Probably my reaction was relief because it was harder and harder for Allen to manage I think.

FEINBERG: Yeah. He will always be one of my greatest heroes. (I visited him a couple of times after he retired. He passed away a number of years ago. He meant a lot to me.) Let's see, how did we get involved? In addition to his managing REACH, he was managing both what was to become the Leahy War Victims Fund and the Orphans program. (At that time it was still focused on orphans.) Terry Peel had earmarked the orphans' funds, and Tim Rieser promoted the War Victims Fund.

In any event, in 1991, Allen received a request from Bill Pearson, the AIDREP in Addis, who wanted assistance in designing small interventions for war victims and orphans. Allen knew that I had lived and worked in Ethiopia and was more than willing to go there, and he asked me to go. I said yes, but urged him to come with me. So he and Havana, his service dog, and I flew out to Ethiopia, along with Tim Staats, a Prosthetist/Orthotist consultant who joined us in Addis.)

As it happened, the trip took place during Gulf War One. We flew first to Frankfurt, and our connecting flight to Addis had a refueling stop in Jeddah. Allen, Havana and I were flying business class, and since the plane was practically empty, the stewardess invited us all to move up to first class. There we were, the three of us sitting in first class! Even Havana had his own First Class seat!

For the next week or ten days we were in Addis, and I had my first exposure to prosthetics and physical rehabilitation. We also had a deep immersion into the issues surrounding orphans and unaccompanied children in conflict zones. It was an eye-opening experience for me. I told Allen that I could really get excited about both of these issues. He suggested that he manage the prosthetics, and I take over the orphans, which is what we suggested to you when we returned. Thus began a rich collaboration. Allen had done much of the groundwork in terms of identifying and establishing relationships with some of the centers of excellence.

Q: I think you two really shaped it. I know, Senator Leahy and Tim Rieser had this general idea that we do so much damage around the world, isn't there something we can do that's good and positive. And I think this came from Leahy's feeling about Vietnam, but I don't think that they had a very clear idea other than that. When we did our reports, we explained this is the way we're doing it. And I don't know if they ever said, ehh not so much that's not what we had in mind. I can't think of any time that something was proposed that they shut down. And of course, we were becoming more aware of street children, some of whom were orphans, some were just on their own. And this program was really one of the main ways that the agency could respond to that problem as well.

FEINBERG: Tim and the senator really were supportive. However, on the orphans side, Terry Peel just wanted us to support children in orphanages. Luckily, the trip to Ethiopia provided me with some much-needed perspective on the priorities and some basic "guiding principles" that had to be taken under consideration when dealing with vulnerable children affected by armed conflict. The first rule was to avoid assuming that unaccompanied children were orphans. As a general rule, most of these children have living parents or other family members with whom they should be reunified. And the corollary to that was that institutionalization should be the option of last resort.

With respect to the War Victims funding, the initial congressional intent was to provide assistance for civilian victims of landmines, connected with Senator Leahy's early efforts to ban the use of those weapons. However, when Allen began looking into possible approaches, most of the serious folks familiar with the issues of landmine victims/survivors warned him to focus first on "treatment" as opposed to "prevention;" and secondly, not to focus solely on landmine victims but to target efforts on interventions that would provide the most meaningful assistance to the greatest number of potential beneficiaries. So, very early on, we made the decision to focus USAID's efforts on expanding availability and improving the quality of the most appropriate devices and services for any civilians affected by limb loss in war-affected countries. In this way, those injured by landmines, as well as bullets, bombs or other causes, could all benefit from improved prosthetic care, devices and services.

Allen developed a great cadre of technical experts, all of whom had experience and interests in improving prosthetic and rehabilitation services in the developing world, to help design a program to best utilize the funds that were to be made available. His early identification and association with ISPO, the International Society of Prosthetics and

Orthotics, was extremely important. The relationship with ISPO, and especially with Mel Stills, who was ISPO's president at the time, gave the Fund and our projects professional guidance, legitimacy and real credibility.

Q: Was there anything you wanted to do in those programs that you weren't able to do?

FEINBERG: In a perfect world, we would probably have provided less funding to a few organizations that received substantial sums because they had strong support from certain members of congress. But with regards to our grants under the War Victims and Vulnerable Children's funds, I don't think we proposed anything that, after discussion, did not have the approval of the Senator, Tim or Terry.
However, the one thing that I wanted to change but couldn't had to do with the "Victims of Torture" fund. We absorbed this program in the mid to late 90's. It was an earmark championed by Senator Paul Wellstone. I wanted to replace the term "torture" with "trauma" and rename it the "Victims of Trauma" program. Given that many of the perpetrators of violence and torture are governments, the title significantly limited our ability to do rational programming. Most of the groups we funded under this program were fantastic, but we could have done so much more had we been able to change the fund's name. However the political opposition to doing this was just too great until the year before I retired. There was a huge need for mental health assistance which was unmet. I can remember conversations with visiting ministers of health who complained that especially in post-conflict as well as conflict-affected countries, the mental health and emotional issues that affected everyone and were huge barriers to reconstruction and development. When I finally retired from USAID, Tim was able to broaden the language on the torture thing, so it did cover aid for those affected by trauma.

Q: Right, it was such a high profile program. I know you went to the Hill; you probably were also briefing the administrator and other parts of the government fairly regularly, no?

FEINBERG: Not all that regularly. In fact, in the beginning, the highest profile aspect of the program was Vietnam. When Allen and I got Merit awards for work on the War Victims Fund, Brian Atwood shook our hands and said, "Don't forget, we hate earmarks."

Very early on in my tenure with the War Victims Fund, I was able to return to Ethiopia with Tim Reiser. It was a great trip. We were able to spend time in the countryside and meet with very poor families and some of the local groups we were proposing to support. That trip really established our relationship.

Q: And he knew he could trust you and you were on the same wavelength.

FEINBERG: That made a big difference.

Q: And you never had any staff. Is that correct?

FEINBERG: I always felt that whatever successes we achieved with these programs were due to the fact that we were able to keep the same small core team together for 20 years. Allen and I were the only direct hires working on the program, but we were able to establish and continue to use a series of 8-A and SBA set-aside contracts to hire Cathy Savino, Sandy Jenkins and Rob Horvath, all of whom remained with the program for the full 20 years. And the contracts also gave us the flexibility to hire or otherwise access a small cadre of technical experts who provided expertise and continuity. Over the years, the programs could not have maintained their technical integrity without the long-term and close involvement of people like Danuta Locket, John Williamson, Mel Stills, Mark Connelly (in his pre-UNICEF days), Lynn Schaberg, Lynne Cripe, and in the early days, Ashton Douglass.

Q: Do you have any idea whether the programs are continuing?

FEINBERG: I believe they are, but in very different forms, and under a variety of different management mechanisms.

Q: Tim has retired and Leahy has retired, a lot of the push may be evaporating or maybe sometimes the programs have been picked up by regional bureaus. Who knows?

FEINBERG: Yes. That's an immutable law of organization and government. I just hope the programs and projects that provided good results have been able to continue, and the not-so-good ones have been given appropriate endings.

Q: So, you're having a great time, you're certainly making a difference. What persuaded you to retire?

FEINBERG: I actually made the decision a couple of years before I actually left. I was always pretty field-oriented, but I felt that I became pretty good at the bureaucratics. However, increasingly I found myself chafing at the bureaucratic requirements that impacted every aspect of the work.

Q: You get the bureaucracy fighting itself.

FEINBERG: Another one of those apparently immutable laws.

Q: After a while, you just get tired of fighting, too, I think. When you retired, you didn't have an idea what was next? Just okay. Let's see where this goes. If I recall from our conversation at the beginning, you stayed in Washington for a bit before moving to Rhode Island. Is that correct?

FEINBERG: Yes. I retired January 1, 2011. (1/1/11) We stayed in our home in Great Falls, VA for the better part of the next two years. I did a few consultancies in Vietnam, Burma and Afghanistan. These were out of special interest, as opposed to going into consulting as a regular job.

Although I never planned to move back to Rhode Island, we bought our house in RI in the fall of 2012. I hate to say it, but the traffic around Washington really got to me after I retired. I also went through a period where my back, knees, hips and general mobility started bothering me. However, after I had both knees and a hip replaced, my outlook improved considerably.

After buying the RI house, we sold our Great Falls home and rented an apartment in Bethesda near Betsy's office for about 18 months. We traveled back and forth between the apartment and RI until she retired in 2014, when we moved full time to Rhode Island. We both have been incredibly pleased with our decision. Besides the natural beauty of the southern RI coast, the people we've met and the community we've come to love, for me it has been a wonderful closing of many circles which I would never have appreciated if I hadn't returned.

Q: You're a bionic man.

FEINBERG: The surgeries and exercising made a big difference. I am feeling pretty good now. Actually, shortly after I moved here, I started working at a local shipyard, working with a father and son team of wooden boat craftsmen. George and Dominic Zachorne are legendary in the area and in the community of traditional wooden boats. Their workshop was like a museum; and they are both amazing fountains of experience, skill and wisdom.

And it was great. It was unpaid, the sort of the apprenticeship I wish I had done when I was in High School. I worked there every day for half a day for a couple of years.

Q: Working with your hands is, I think, awfully therapeutic.

Absolutely. Physically and mentally.

Q: You learned a lot about boat building?

FEINBERG: I did. I had to ease off after a few years because my back started acting up. Then, tragically, in 2019, a terrible fire destroyed their workshop. It was heartbreaking. The fire was caused – of all things – by pigeon poop, which corroded an electrical switch box. I still spend time with them and the fabulous cast of characters who are always coming in and out, but it is not the same.

Q: Right. Well, it sounds like you also attend lectures at Brown and are staying pretty busy. Are you doing any travel at all? Your kids are out on the West Coast?

FEINBERG: Yes. My son Josh and my daughter Ali both live in the eastern Sierras, not far from the eastern entrance to Yosemite. They are both married and Josh has a two-year old son… appropriately named "Wylder". Ali has a horse, and has started riding competitively again. They and their spouses are avid skiers, mountaineers, bikers and hikers. Betsy and I try to get out there as often as we can, which is not often enough. It's really a bit of an adventure to get out there. It takes a couple flights and then about six

hours of driving. But it's wonderful country, and they are all passionate about their lives there. Both Ali and Josh also served in the Peace Corps, Ali in Senegal and Josh in Gabon.

Betsy's son Michael and his wife live in DC and have a daughter, Florence, who is also two, with another on the way. We get to see them more frequently.

Travel-wise, we have also established a close friendship with a family on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland and have visited there 7 or 8 times. Their daughter worked for Betsy (when she was a Senior VP at DAI) as Chief of Party for a major USAID-funded project in eastern Afghanistan. She was killed in a failed Seal Team 6 rescue attempt in 2010, after she was kidnapped by the Taliban.

Q: I think I remember the story.

It was terrible. But as soon as Linda was kidnapped, Betsy got on a plane for Afghanistan and visited her parents on the way. Immediately after her death, Linda's parents, John and Lorna Norgrove, set up a foundation to support women and girls in Afghanistan in her honor. They have become like family to us, and we have visited them almost every year, and they have visited us a couple of times. In fact, I celebrated my eightieth birthday there this past May. They are really quite remarkable; the foundation is still operating and consists of the two of them and a couple of women in Kabul who manage things in-country.

Q: They can get money in?

FEINBERG: They use various informal "systems" to move money in. Many other organizations operate in a similar fashion. It works, even though there's no banking system.

After Linda was killed, Betsy and I went to London for a DAI function, and John and Lorna came to London, to receive a gift from DAI for the foundation. Because Linda was a British national, working on a USG-funded program, and was killed by US friendly fire, the story hit the newspapers big time in the UK. President Obama pledged USAID financial support to the foundation. I offered to go with John and Lorna to Kabul to try to help decide what direction they might like to pursue and to facilitate their meeting with USAID. Ken Yamashita was the mission director at the time. I sent him a message saying that I was planning to come out. He said, "Well, how are you coming? Who's paying for it?" I said, "I am," and he said, "Let USAID pay for it. We've got funds and a contract for technical support." Ken was 100 percent behind supporting the foundation. As in every activity I worked with him on, he was terrific. As it turned out, John and Lorna pretty much followed their own instincts and hearts and did not really need my input, beyond helping with introductions since I had also been out to Afghanistan a number of times programming our funds.

Q: You sort of raced through the whole time in the office of Health and with the Victims Funds and vulnerable children's funds. And there was so much going on there. I certainly want to pick up the first post-war program activities in Vietnam. Could you talk a little bit about that? I'm not sure when we opened an embassy or Consulate. But I know, for a long time, there wasn't much support on the ground.

FEINBERG: I think we started in our last session to talk about the trip that Allen and I made to Ethiopia together. And that was during Gulf War One. It was on that trip that I really got hooked on the subject of working with vulnerable kids, and especially with victims of war and the issue of amputees. Shortly after the Ethiopia trip, I came to you and said, I'd like to work part time with Allen on this. You agreed, and that was the beginning … in 1991. That was also the time when the US and Vietnam were about to move forward on the first, slow steps aimed at normalization of relations.

At that time the U.S government didn't have any formal relationship with Vietnam. There was no embassy, no consulate. I think diplomatic exchanges were made via the Swedish embassy. I was told that when we left Vietnam in 1975, Congress put in place every possible lock and block to any US government involvement in Vietnam. Private NGOs could use non-USG money, as long as they could get permission from the GRVN to travel and work in Vietnam.

In 1987, President Reagan asked former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Brig. General John Vessey and a small team to assess the level of cooperation of the GSRVN with the identification of remains and tracing of MIAs and former POWs. The "Vessey Mission," as it came to be known, held a series of meetings in Hanoi between 1987 and 1991 with the purpose of developing a mutual "roadmap to normalization" of relationships between the US and Vietnam.

Essentially, the USG wanted freer access and more cooperation from the GSRVN to conduct their MIA searches. And they wanted to open their own office in Hanoi. I don't think any official American had actually been outside of Hanoi since the end of the war. And the only official Americans who had been allowed in Hanoi were part of the Vessey mission. However, there were NGOs who had been working there for some time.

For their part, the Vietnamese wanted assistance for their landmine victims, particularly amputees. Their entire prosthetics and rehabilitation system had been decimated after the war.

Fred Downs, who lost an arm to a "Bouncing Betty" during the war, was head of prosthetics services for the VA and had been a member of the Vesey mission. I am not sure just how the trip originated, but in 1991, after Allen's and my first trip together to Ethiopia, Fred and I made two trips to Vietnam to assess and design a program of technical assistance to re-constitute the rehabilitation and prosthetics services system and provide support for vulnerable and disabled children.

Bill Oldham accompanied us on our second trip. He was a doctor, had been with AID during the war, and for a very long period of time, headed up the large USAID health program there. He was effectively the Co-Minister of Health, given the level of US funding for the government in those days. He was also a renowned, wonderful doctor and human being.

Q: Wasn't there a congressman Peterson, who then became our first Ambassador there? It seems to me there was some support from the Hill, encouragement to get on with it, not just Leahy on this particular project, but more generally.

FEINBERG: Right. Pete Peterson became the first US ambassador, post-war, in 1997. He had been a pilot during the war and spent 6 years as a POW after being shot down. He was a congressman from Florida and an active and effective advocate for normalization in Congress, which had been critical. A number of vets groups were very opposed to normalization, though many more were in favor.

For example, at the time, Mike Benge was in the AG office in USAID/Washington and was very opposed. He also had been a POW (I think the only USAID POW) for a long period of time. A good friend of mine here was at the time working in Vietnam with Mike. They were together the night before the Viet Cong took Mike prisoner. I spoke with Mike a few times in Washington after our trip, and while he was opposed to our going back in, he was a compelling character. I have nothing but respect for him and what he went through. They say he could be a real curmudgeon, tough as nails, and that he gave back as good as he got from the North Vietnamese. (By the way, I have been to a few Vietnamese restaurants in DC where his picture is on the walls. He is highly beloved by many of the Vietnamese in the States.)

Q: Right. So there was some resistance inside the agency as well.

FEINBERG: Perhaps a few, but most USAID officers who had served in Vietnam love the country, like Dale Gibb, George Laudato and many others. They were very excited that we were going back. I felt really privileged and honored that I was able to be the first one.

Q: Right. So did you start by meeting with people in the ministry? You didn't have an AID mission setting up all your meetings for you. You were really having to do it all yourselves?

FEINBERG: That is a very interesting question. Leading up to our visits, there were lots of pieces that I was not aware of, though the State Department's Office of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia was the main player. Our host in Hanoi for those visits was the Office for American Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Le Van Bang was the Director of that office. He was extremely professional and very likable. By the way, the Vietnamese really wanted normalization… much more so than Washington… Le Van Bang later became the Vietnamese Ambassador to Washington. His assistant, Le Khac Nhu, was our

constant companion and guide for our travels, and while he had long telephone reports to Le Van Bang every evening, he was a very good traveling companion.

In Hanoi, we stayed in a hotel that was owned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), so we assumed that everything we said was recorded. The whole trip was fascinating. We traveled from Hanoi to Saigon overland, stopping many times along the way to have coffee or tea with the head of each village, town and province. Everyone we met with was extremely cordial, and the war was definitely in the past for them. In fact, when the Vietnamese talked about "the war," they were usually referring to their long and many conflicts with China.

Q: Did they have proposals for you? Or was this sort of a fact finding mission? You didn't get down to what kind of program you might support?

FEINBERG: Both parties had agreed during the Vessey mission to focus the initial USG funding on support for rehabilitation and prostheses for war victims, which included an estimated 250,000 amputees. We spent about two weeks visiting all the rehabilitation centers between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) and then as far as Can Tho, in the Mekong Delta.

I should also add that there were a few US NGOs, as well as the ICRC, operating in Vietnam at that time. In fact, all of the proposed assistance to be provided by USAID was to be programmed through grants with US-based NGOs. World Vision was probably the largest of these, and we did end up working through them and a few others, such as the Seattle-based Prosthetics Outreach Foundation (POF), the East-West Foundation, the World Rehabilitation Fund, Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH), and Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAF).

Q. I know you also visited Laos on at least one of these trips . . .

Yes, let me mention an interesting episode in Laos that might illustrate how our assistance helped support a "soft diplomacy" goal in Vientiane.

One of our first grants to Laos was a grant to World Vision (WV), who had been operating with their own funds in Laos and was a likely recipient for War Victims Funds. WV had constructed an orthopedic wing for a government hospital in Vientiane. Charles Salmon was the Chargé in the US Embassy at the time and was extremely pleased, although somewhat anxious, about an opening ceremony for the new wing that the hospital administrator had planned to coincide with Fred Downs' and my visit. However, Charley was concerned because US and Lao government relations were still terrible. He said one problem was that the Minister of Health hated the US government. He did not think the Minister would show up, which would be a slap in the face for the US. In any event, much to everyone's surprise, the minister came. And when Fred told him that he was a senior official at our VA, the Minister said, "Oh, our veterans are the biggest pain in my neck. They want this, they want that. They are impossible to deal with." Anyhow they started a conversation, and the Minister fell in love with Fred. A big banquet/dinner

followed the opening ceremony, and the Minister decided to stay for it. (By the way, Laotians love to drink.) Waitresses continuously went around the room refilling every glass to the top. (And this was good scotch… NOT "Mekong Whiskey".) There were toasts every five minutes, and the dinner went on quite late.

In any event, Fred and I left the next day for Vietnam, and I'll tell you, we were both in severe pain. But I suppose that is the cost of diplomacy, because Charley Salmon said that it was the biggest diplomatic breakthrough they had had to date.

Q: When you got back to the States, did everybody and his dog want to know, what was it like, and what are we going to do? Or was there not that much interest when you got back?

FEINBERG: Yes. There was quite a bit of interest. And certainly USAID staff who had been in Vietnam during the war were very interested. And we had already developed relations with some of the prosthetic players, so, of course, they were interested. Quite a few American NGOs were also quite interested in working in Vietnam, and so were very interested in what we had to say.

Interestingly enough, when Fred and I were at a restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City, there was a small group of Australian businessmen sitting near us. One of them came over and asked if we were the guys from the US government, and if we were the tip of the spear of the US coming back. He told us they really didn't think it was a good idea, and the US should wait a while longer. Of course, the Aussies had a hold on the Vietnamese market at that time, and definitely did not want our competition. We all had a good laugh at that.

Q: Interesting. Before we go on to the next thing, describe what Vietnam was like? Did it feel very productive and busy and entrepreneurial? You were sort of the Marco Polo here.

FEINBERG: In the South, and especially in Ho Chi Minh City, it was highly commercial. There was a lot of traffic on the roads, especially compared with Hanoi and Danang. However, compared to other Asian cities in '91, they were certainly far behind. But it was a modern city, with hotels and a few restaurants. But Ho Chi Minh City did not have the charm of Hanoi. Hanoi, from my frame of reference, was more like a provincial Philippine town in the 1960s. For example, there was just a dirt road leading from the airport to Hanoi, though that certainly improved rapidly over the next year or so. And Highway 1, the famed "Street Without Joy" along the coast heading south, was in a terrible state of disrepair.

Q: Obviously, a lot changed over the next decade, as it began to open up,

FEINBERG: Yes. The Vietnamese are an amazing, industrious people.

Q: Did we help them set up some new prosthetic factories or was our program more focused on training or on diagnostics? What did we actually do?

FEINBERG: Actually all three. The purpose of the visit really was to identify former rehabilitation centers that were interested in getting back to manufacturing and fitting prosthetics. This included our providing funding through NGOs for equipment and materials, and for training and operating support.

In Vietnam, as in many developing countries, prosthetics and rehabilitation services were the responsibility of Ministries of Social Welfare, while medical and surgical services were the responsibility of Ministries of Health. And so it was in Vietnam. The two areas where we started working, prosthetics and support for orphans and vulnerable children, were both under the same Director General in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

Without getting too far into the weeds, I should say at this point that we started supporting similar programs in Laos and Cambodia at around the same time.

In all of these programs, we supported the strengthening of local capabilities to manufacture, fit and support appropriate prostheses for people needing limbs. That included providing funding for technical training, equipment, and component material, as well as providing support for expanding employment and social and political opportunity for people with disabilities. The term “appropriate” was the key word for all of our programs and interventions under the War Victims Fund. For the twenty years that I was involved with the program, we never stopped having spirited, interesting and expanding discussions (if not arguments) about what constituted “appropriate services” and what should be the limits and definition of “support”. Given the increasing obstacles, as well as opportunities that technology was creating for people with disabilities during that period, it was a wonderful sector to be involved with.

I should also mention here that one of the great bonuses of my work in this sector was the opportunity to work closely with some very remarkable people. A number of them were associated with Vietnam. Bobby Muller, who headed VVAF (Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation), became a widely known advocate and provider of support for war victims in Cambodia and Vietnam. He had been a close friend and ally of former Senator Bob Kerry and Ron Kovic, author of “Born on the 4th of July,” which was made into a movie by Oliver Stone. Bobby was also a close friend to a number of famous musicians, including Bruce Springsteen, Sheryl Crow and Emmylou Harris.
He also was arguably the key figure initially involved in mobilizing public support for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, which in 1997, earned the Nobel Peace Prize.

Ca Van Tran, who founded and has led Vietnam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH), also became a long-standing partner in Vietnam. Ca was an amazing person. and was able to gain the respect and support for USAID assistance in Vietnam within the governments of both the US and Vietnam.

Q: I'd like to move on to your work with the Rwandan children after the genocide if we can go there, because I had no idea that you did anything there. Can you talk a little bit about that?

FEINBERG: Rwanda had a horrible genocidal conflict between the Hutus and the Tutsis in 1994.

I should say that before the Bosnia-Serbia-Croatia war in 1993, and then the Rwandan conflict in 1994, I had not been directly involved with any emergency relief activities. However, largely as a result of these conflicts, the issue of "Orphans and Vulnerable Children" (OVCs) became a major point of focus for the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (known as DCOF) for the next twenty years.

Also, around that time, our portfolio expanded from the War Victims Fund and DCOF to incorporate additional "earmarked" funds for Wheelchairs, Victims of Torture, and then a dedicated program and funding for social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities, including increased attention to issues affecting people with disabilities within USAID. We came up with the somewhat innocuous title of SPANS to cover our expanded portfolio… "Special Programs to Address the Needs of Survivors."

But getting back to Rwanda, after the genocidal atrocities began in Rwanda in 1994, I attended an emergency meeting in the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) Operations Center to discuss what the agency might do. It was my first experience with OFDA and when I introduced myself and the DCOF funds that were available for vulnerable children, I was amazed at the enthusiastic welcome I received from the attendees, as previously, there had not been any dedicated funds for war affected children. It was my first real introduction to a whole community that included OFDA, several offices within the State Department, and representatives from the NGO emergency sector, especially Sheppie Abromowitz, who was a very active advocate for child refugees.

Shortly after that meeting, I made contact with folks at UNICEF/New York and UNHCR in Geneva about their plans for Rwanda. I found out that a small but extraordinary group of professionals had been working in this area, essentially since the 1970's and the rampages of the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot. In what seemed to be record time, we met and set up a small assessment team to go to Nairobi. The core group of this team continued to be associated with our programs in a number of different contexts and crises for the next 20 years. It included Marie de la Soudier, Peter McDermott from UNICEF, Neil Boothby, then at UNHCR, Everett Ressler, and most importantly from our standpoint, John Williamson, who became the full-time Senior Advisor for DCOF.

As an aside, John had been a member of the initial assessment team that USAID sent to Uganda to look into the issue of children being orphaned by AIDS. The President of Uganda's wife, Janet Museveni, had requested technical advice from the USG regarding how best to address the needs of children orphaned by AIDS. The team was led by John Alden, and John Williamson was the senior technical expert. Their report became the blueprint for the country's national strategy. John started working directly for DCOF in 1996 and continued working for the program until he retired in December 2022.

Going back to Rwanda, the team put together a scope of work and conducted as many interviews as possible in Nairobi to find out what was going on in and around Rwanda

and where the refugees were going. We then split into two or three teams, with different groups going to Tanzania, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Everett Ressler (who I knew from our days in Ethiopia in the early 1970's, and who had become a highly respected researcher and author on unaccompanied children) and I went to southern Uganda and received permission to go into Rwanda to meet with Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) leaders, who were headquartered just across the border.

Q: This was the Rwanda diaspora from the Civil War.

FEINBERG: Yes, the Hutus started the war, attacking the Tutsis and overthrowing the government. An estimated 800,000 civilians were hacked or burned to death in a horrific orchestrated massacre. In response, the Tutsi RPF, led by Paul Kagame, swept through the countryside and drove out tens of thousands of Hutus who were escaping mainly into the Congo, especially the area around Goma, and into Tanzania.

After completing our assessments of refugee centers, we all reconvened in Nairobi and wrote a report with recommendations regarding how best to protect, care for, and if possible, through the process of Documentation, Tracing and Reunification, reunify children who had been separated from their families.

From the experience of past conflicts and disasters, there are fairly well-accepted steps that need to be followed, referred to as "DTR." The first one is Documentation – collecting names and information about children who are without their parents or other adults, and likewise, finding parents who are looking for their children. There were tens and thousands of these situations in Rwanda. The second step is Tracing – taking pictures of unaccompanied children and distributing them in all refugee camps. The final step is Reunification, which also included aiding children who had been traumatized, and in some cases, children who had been fighters. UNICEF and the NGOs set up childcare centers within the refugee camps, and we wanted to make sure that they were providing appropriate care and protection. This was my first experience in refugee camps, and I think I went to all of them. Definitely an eye-opening experience.

Q:. Can we move to child soldiers because that's a huge chapter in USAID's history.

FEINBERG: Between 1991 and 2002, Sierra Leone experienced a terrible civil conflict and 10,000 - 14,000 children between the ages of 8 - 14 years of age became armed combatants, both for the rebel forces of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) led by Foday Sankoh (who was backed by Charles Taylor from across the border in Liberia) as well as by the government forces. The children were treated harshly and basically were "weaponized"... through coercion by older children as well as the use of voodoo, alcohol, cocaine mixed with gunpowder(!), and other drugs. Girls were taken as prostitutes. The boys committed atrocities, including the amputation of hands, legs, arms, etc., and murder. Over 70,000 people died and two and a half million people were displaced. The children were useful because of their unquestioning obedience and enormous cruelty. Many civilian victims complained that they were attacked by children from their own villages.

Over the course of ten years, funds from both the WVF and DCOF were used to support prostheses, rehabilitation, medical treatment and support for amputees, and support for the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of former child soldiers.

Q: You first got involved because of the prostheses that were needed, but then the rehabilitation of the children and getting them accepted in their communities if possible and the females who were raped I guess often had children themselves. And the communities didn't want them. You worked on both of those issues?

Yes. We supported a number of NGOs as well as UNICEF who had some outstanding people with experience dealing with children and adolescents involved in conflict, especially in dealing with child soldiers and young girls, many of whom had children as a result of voluntary or involuntary liaisons with their captors. The main objective, of course, was to reintegrate these young people back into their families and communities, although in many instances, either the children themselves or the communities did not want this reintegration. It was hard to define and measure success in this area, but there was sufficient evidence of positive results to warrant continued support for the programs.

Neil Boothby, one of our main technical advisors, did some of the seminal work with child soldiers in Mozambique. It was a relatively small sample but showed success in helping kids who had done terrible things to become productive, responsible parents, and community leaders.

Q: You also got involved with the landmine issues, specifically with landmine survivors, and worked closely with the State Department. Is that right?

FEINBERG: Yes, it was an interesting experience to be involved with a number of humanitarian issues at the moment when they really caught the public's attention. But the landmine issue was fairly unique, exciting and, to a certain extent, frustrating.

As I mentioned earlier, we had funded Bobby Muller's organization, VVAF, in Cambodia and Vietnam beginning in 1991. Bobby was an incredible advocate on the landmine issue, and arguably began the campaign, along with Senator Leahy, to ban their use, sale and manufacture. Many people felt that the 1997 Nobel prize should have gone to them rather than to Jody Williams and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), but as they say, "them's politics".

Bobby Muller had hired Jody Williams initially to work through VVAF on the campaign. Both she and Bobby might be described as having "strong" personalities, and they had a parting of ways, with Jody forming the ICBL and going on to win the prize.

In 1994, I traveled to Angola to assess the needs and potential for developing programs under both the DCOF and the WVF. After a number of visits, we were able to award grants in both areas, including one with VVAF, to start a Prosthetics and Orthotics (P&O) center in the town of Luena in the province of Moxico in eastern Angola.

In 1996, I met Ambassador Donald Steinberg and discussed our programs with him. He became extremely interested in VVAF, and even more so in the whole issue of landmines and landmine survivors. After Angola, he was appointed the President's Special Representative for Humanitarian Demining and headed up the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the Bureau of Political/Military Affairs. I had previously worked closely with his predecessor, Ambassador Karl Inderfurth, and was a member of the US delegation to the 1997 Ottawa Treaty convention to ban anti-personnel landmines. I was also fortunate to be able to work with Ambassador Steinberg on a project with Warner Brothers Studios to produce a "landmine warning" cartoon, starring Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck for a PSA in the Khmer language for distribution and use in Cambodia. But getting back to Angola, Besides the P&O project in Luena, we also funded a psychosocial project that was implemented by Save the Children UK. The project used something of a "group therapy" approach to help teachers cope with childrens' issues of trauma, but also their own issues. I sat in on a number of sessions and talked with participants and was very impressed with their results. What impressed me most was a conversation I had with the Minister of Education who recognized the impact the war was having on her staff and, as a result, initiated similar activities to address the issue within her ministry. This became a recurring theme for me when talking with senior ministry of health officials in a number of different war-affected countries… ie, the impact of post traumatic stress on the ability of professional staff to operate effectively. Mental health was a huge, unaddressed need in all of these countries.

Q: *There are many other items that we could talk about. But you did mention that you got involved with the vulnerable children in Afghanistan. And I am wondering if you could talk a little bit about the context for that. Was that after our invasion, I assume?*

FEINBERG: Yes. Elizabeth Kvitashvili, who was manning the fort in Kabul in the early days, so to speak, had tried to convince me to go out much earlier, but I did go there in 2002. When I arrived, there was no embassy. The USAID office (just a few folks) was basically in one room in the old consular building, which housed the whole, non-military USG presence. There was no American ambassador, and I don't think there was even a chargé.

But within a couple of years, USAID had established the huge "CAFE" (Compound Across From the Embassy) built from containers strung together, which was a nightmare to work in.

Q: I know, but the first time you went out, it was sort of like going to Vietnam, you were more or less on your own?

FEINBERG: I knew Elizabeth from my early days of project development. I think most of the AID money went through IOM, and much of what we did at that point went through subgrants under the IOM agreement. IOM had some really good people at the time, and they had legitimacy. I found one program I thought would be an excellent partner – ICRC's Prosthetics and Orthotics Workshop, which was run by an amazing

Italian physio-therapist, Alberto Cairo. However, he referred me to a couple of other small NGOs that were doing great work and needed funding. He was right.

One of the big problems working in crisis situations like Afghanistan is the fact that there is so much money floating around, and small programs like ours, within a bureaucracy like USAID, have a hard time getting funds to small organizations. As we all know, a $25,000 dollar grant can be just as hard to manage as a $25 million grant. Which is why we have developed new mechanisms such as the large cooperative agreements that provide a whole new level of management between USAID and our smaller partners.

Q: Did Alberto Cairo only work in Afghanistan, or did he work in other places as well?

FEINBERG: He originally worked for an NGO in Sudan, but joined the ICRC and started the Kabul program in 1990. He was just a lovely human being who understood the Afghans and was totally effective. During the worst of times with the Taliban, and then when the US came, he was untouched. He was nominated for a Nobel Prize in 2010 and won the International Red Cross's highest award. He was also awarded the Afghan citizenship in 2019.

Q: Well, you have to feel really good about the role that you've played, I'd say, It's really remarkable. And I'm so glad we're taking this time to talk about some of the details because you didn't really have staff. There aren't other people at AID who really know how this whole thing developed. I guess maybe, Gary Newton, did you recruit him to take on some of your roles, or did he take over when you left?

FEINBERG: Actually, I think it was Ken Yamashita, who recruited him. They wanted me to include the AIDS orphans portfolio within our SPANS program, but I knew it was going to be very big and all consuming and that we shouldn't try to take it on. But we needed somebody who was a proven manager and passionate about the issue. Gary was the guy, and he did a fabulous job.

Q: I was thinking when you were talking, you certainly were able to do a lot in part because you had Leahy's and Rieser's confidence, and you had money that nobody else could touch. And you could use it to leverage. But I'm going to ask, what about sustainability? What happens now that Rieser and Leahy are no longer there? Had they passed the baton to anyone?

FEINBERG: You know it has been 12 years since I retired, and I have to admit that I have lost track of what has been going on within USAID. I do know that the Agency has created new offices, positions and special priorities which have combined some, and separated other programs that we supported under the SPANS portfolio. But I also understand that some of the more effective and important field programs that we supported under the War Victims Fund and DCOF are still going strong, and that is what is most important. And given the importance of strong congressional support for non-traditional AID activities which deliver effective humanitarian assistance, I hope

there will be more Tim Riesers and Patrick Leahys coming into the Senate to pick up that baton.

End of interview