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LARRY GARBER

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INTERVIEW

Q: It is April 3rd, 2018 and this is Alex Shakow. I have the pleasure of interviewing for the first session of his oral history Larry Garber, who has a career not only at AID (U.S.

Agency for International Development; also USAID) but also several other places we will learn about.

Larry, welcome. I would first like to find out when you were born, where, and to what extent those childhood influences you think may have had an impact on your life after. Tell me a little bit about your childhood and growing up.

Childhood and Early Background

GARBER: I was born September 29th, 1955 in Brooklyn, New York. My parents were both first-generation Americans, born in the United States. Their parents had all emigrated to the United States between 1890 and 1927. My mother's mother was from Lithuania and her father from Ukraine, and they met here. My father's parents were from Ukraine (what we now call Ukraine, probably was called something else then). They grew up about six blocks from each other in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, but didn't know each other until their early 20s. They met at a beach party, married in November 1954, and I came soon thereafter.

Of importance is that they both grew up in traditional Jewish homes, and we had a traditional Jewish home growing up, too.

Q: By traditional, you mean Orthodox?

GARBER: Modern Orthodox. We observed the Sabbath, we kept the dietary restrictions, and went to private Jewish day schools, but otherwise were very much integrated into American society. It was a modern but traditional lifestyle. I was the first of three children; my sister was born two-and-a-half years later and my brother was born on the exact same date I was born, six years later, so we shared a birthday.

Q: What did your parents do in addition to raising these three kids?

GARBER: My father never finished college. Got married, became an insurance broker. He at first worked for somebody else, became a partner, and then took over when his partner retired. He took over the business when I was in my teens and grew the business considerably during the next two decades. The office was initially in New York city, but he relocated to Long Island in the early 1970s.

My mother went to night school for a couple of years before marrying and worked during the day, contributing her income to the family. When my younger brother started kindergarten, she went back to Brooklyn College and received her degree in 1970. I remember that very well because we went to her graduation and the campus was then an armed camp. It was after the Kent State killings. They had no classes for the last month but had the graduation. I remember as a very impressionable 15-year-old, "this is what college is like? Wow, can't wait to get there."

Q: Did your mother work after that?

GARBER: She taught for a year, which is what she wanted to do. Had a tough year of teaching, then joined my father's business keeping the books and various other tasks - when she retired, she was replaced by a "chief financial officer."

For 25 years, she worked with my father; when they retired, they began spending part of the year in Florida and part in Israel. They had an snowbird-like existence but a little farther afield. My father passed away in 2009; my mother is still alive and still goes back and forth, summers in Jerusalem and winter in Florida. [While this was being edited, my mother died in October 2018 and was buried next to my father in a cemetery in Israel.]

Q: You grew up in Brooklyn? When did you move to Long Island?

GARBER: We lived in Brownsville, Brooklyn for my first eight years. When I was going into fourth grade, we moved from Brooklyn to Far Rockaway, which we called Long Island but is still part of New York City. At the time, it was one of the few places where on the New York City subway you had to pay not one but two tokens to get to Manhattan. It had a unique character of being somewhat isolated from the rest of the city.

Our home was about five blocks from the beach and, as a kid, I would spend virtually every summer at the beach - riding my bicycle sans helmet every day to the beach. I would also ride there in the evening, where there were a series of arcades and on Wednesday nights we'd watch the fireworks. It was a very liberating experience, particularly when I compare it to my kids, who are totally dependent on my wife or me to drive them places. It was very different; we just did it on our own.

Q: Were you a member of a beach club?

GARBER: No, this was a public beach. We'd go and meet our friends at Beach 27th Street in Far Rockaway and probably spend four or five hours most summer afternoons there. This was when I was between 10 and 13 or 14. When I was older, I worked at a sleep-away camp. One of my passions from childhood was athletics - so by the time I was in junior high and high school I was playing basketball for our school. During the summers, I spent several hours a day finding places to play pick-up basketball.

Q: Did you go to public schools?

GARBER: I went to a Jewish day school. Very interesting mix of religious studies in the morning and secular studies in the afternoon, and athletics at night. Our day was 8:30 in the morning until 6:00 in the evening. When I was in high school, we'd have basketball practice from 6:00 to 9:00 at night. Family dinner was unheard of because I'd get home at 9:00. In truth, when I went to college and law school, it seemed like such an easy class schedule compared to what I'd grown up with.

Q: Do you still have friends you made during that period who continued as friends throughout your adult life?

GARBER: Surprisingly not. I had a lot of close friends at the time, through basketball and other engagements, and really have lost touch with most of them. Occasionally, I will hear from someone, "Oh wow, can't believe what so-and-so is doing," and have a little conversation about that. But even though it was a small and relatively insulated environment… probably part of my personality – I was the one who left. Went out west first, came to Washington, traveled a lot and did not maintain those high school friendships.

Q: Do you think most of the friends you had remained in the area?

GARBER: Many did. When my parents were still living in Nassau County (they moved there after I left the house), I'd visit them and that's when I'd see people I'd grown up with - many still lived in the greater New York City area. I came from a big family, I have maybe 30 cousins and I'd say 25 of them still live within a 30 mile radius of the city.

Q: Do you gather for family reunions?

GARBER: For weddings, bar mitzvahs, and occasionally funerals we gather. Because of geography, my sister (who lives in Israel) and I have been the black sheep; we're the ones who are less frequently present at these events than my brother who lives in New York and basically represents us. With 30 first cousins and many of their kids now married, it's a pretty busy schedule!

Q: I want to get to your sister later on as you get to the Middle East. Academically, was there an aspect of your education that was important to you? Teachers that were important to you and your future?

GARBER: I used to describe my high school as a classic "mediocre" high school. I was athletically oriented, but there were a couple of subjects that fascinated me. I was a very good Talmud student, which I think contributed to my interest in going to law school. Fascinated by politics, I read all kinds of novels about Washington from the time I was quite young.

I don't know if you recall the Allen Drury series, Advise and Consent, A Shade of Difference and several others. This year I found a book by somebody who did a Ph.D. thesis about the influence of Allen Drury on American political discourse. At that time, I didn't fully get the politics, but I was totally fascinated by the intrigue. I also read all of the Fletcher Knebel books like Seven Days in May, Night of Camp David and others.

Also I liked to read more generally. One teacher I remember as a real hard teacher, but we read some really interesting books with him when I was in 10th grade. This was 1971, so even in our insular world we were affected by events going on around us. We basically

revolted from the reading list he had initially come up with and ended up reading books like Soul on Ice by Eldridge Cleaver and Johnny Got His Gun by Dalton Trumbo. Most of my classmates would read the Cliffs Notes, but I loved reading the books from front to end. We read several books that year I remember as having an influence, not the details but the broader themes.

Q: Were you active in student politics? We know later in life you became very interested in elections. Were you interested in running for office and being elected yourself as a teen?

GARBER: I wasn't really but as has often been the case in my life, events took their own turn. Going into my senior year in high school, I was on the basketball team and that took up a lot of my time. But we had an intramural program for folks not on the basketball team and I decided I wanted to run it. It was the vice president for student organizations who had this responsibility, so I ran to be the vice president for student organizations. I had two friends who ran for president and treasurer, and we got elected as a slate. Then before my senior year began, the guy who was president decided he was going to leave the school because the school was insisting he cut his long hair, so he left and went to public school.

Q: This cutting the long hair – this is not religious, it's just because…

GARBER: Right, it was more social. Most of us had longer hair than kids today, but there were limits. They didn't want the boys having shoulder-length hair, ponytails, things like that. You could have what today would be called longish hair for a male. Anyway, he decided to leave and all of a sudden I became president of the student organization. At that time, I had no interest or time for it, and all of a sudden I was thrust into the role. It was an interesting year. I still wanted to do the intramurals because that was the only reason I ran for office, so I did that while assuming the other responsibilities of the student president. It didn't motivate me to see myself as a student activist; certainly, I didn't play any such role in college or graduate school.

Q: Okay. So you graduated from high school in…

GARBER: Nineteen-seventy-three. It wasn't a big thing; as I said my father hadn't graduated college and my mother had just graduated a few years earlier from Brooklyn College. I wanted to go to college and decided to attend Queens College, which was part of the local City University, which was still at that time free, no tuition. So I paid maybe $75 a semester for student fees and got my college education there.

Queens College was a commuter school so I lived at home. I studied political science. Part of my decision was it just seemed a much more economical plan to go there and to use whatever resources we had for graduate school afterwards. My father, literally for the prestige, wanted me to apply somewhere else but I said no, no, I'm good at Queens College. Queens College at the time was much harder to get into than many other schools. Indeed, it was a very good school.

I graduated in three years. One of those years, I studied abroad at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, 1974-75. I hadn't been able to go to Israel during high school like many of my friends because of playing basketball. So I was looking for the first opportunity to travel.

Q: Was that also free?

GARBER: Hebrew University had tuition, probably $1000 a year – still modest. Interestingly, even though the city of New York and the City University more specifically were under tremendous financial pressure, they covered my tuition at Hebrew University. I was told it was cheaper for them to have somebody study abroad than …

Q: Were you the only one?

GARBER: No. From City University alone, we had 50 students at the Hebrew University. They retained an advisor, who organized a couple of trips for the City University students to North and South Israel during the course of the year. For me, as a city boy who had never been on an airplane until I flew to Israel, the year was an unbelievable experience on so many levels.

Q: You hadn't even been anywhere in the United States?

GARBER: We had summer vacations where we would drive to Washington DC, Philadelphia, Montreal – but never in an airplane until the flight to Israel. I was like oh my god! What's an airplane like. I remember that first flight. It was a night flight and the whole time I'm looking out the window and there were the red lights flashing – I thought it was another airplane but it was the wing of the plane. I

Q: Was that an El Al flight?

GARBER: It probably was, that first one.

Q: Were you speaking Hebrew at that point?

GARBER: My Hebrew should have been much better after 12 years at a Jewish day school. It was middling. I was surprised when I got to Hebrew University. They had a Hebrew immersion program. I thought after 12 years of Jewish high school I'd be at the top level. They ranked the students on a one to six scale, and I was ranked four! I thought "who the hell is in five and six if I'm in four?" They were people who had actually learned Hebrew as a real second language, whereas we had learned it more in terms of the traditional Hebrew from the Bible and other texts.

Q: Were classes taught in English or Hebrew?

GARBER: There was a special program for overseas students – pretty large, probably 600 students, where the studies were in English. I decided to try taking a couple of classes in Hebrew to see how they were. The period was 1974-75 so it was a year after the Yom Kippur War, and Israeli society was still in a traumatic stage. Most of the students had served in the war. And in many cases, they had fairly lengthy reserve obligations during the year. So I'd diligently go to class and maybe a third of the students would be out. The readings were all in English and I could write exams in English, so it wasn't that big a stretch to listen to a lecture in Hebrew for a couple of hours. I always regret that I didn't speak more fluently. I've always been challenged by languages. I've started studying about six different languages and haven't made my way through any of them.

Q: How would you characterize the impact of that year on you in terms of its influence on what you ultimately have done with your life?

GARBER: Probably the most formative year of my early life, and perhaps of my full life. It immersed me in the politics of the Middle East, the issues confronting the region as a whole, including Israel. It got me out of my secluded New York City environment. I was living on my own for the first time as a young adult. Academically, it really opened my eyes both from a traditional religious perspective – I was being introduced to philosophies and practices that I had not learned growing up in a more traditional Orthodox context.

Q: Was the debate going on all the time between levels of orthodoxy?

GARBER: It was more being open up to different approaches to the tradition, how one can view the tradition from a philosophical perspective. Was it the type of literal transmission we had been brought up with, of a god giving the laws to Moses who handed it down generation to generation? Or is it a more historical evolution of a legal framework that had many different inputs, social and anthropological and the like. I found the discourse fascinating and eye opening. Definitely influenced my attitude on how to view religion in my personal life.

Q: Were your friends there from a variety of countries, or did you find yourself close to Israelis – Sabras – who had actually grown up in Israel?

GARBER: Because of the program, you had to make the effort to break out. They generally would pair the overseas students together. One of my childhood friends had gone to Israel the year before and was a first year law student when I was there. So he was taking courses in the regular program, and we were able to room together. Through him, I was able to meet his Israeli classmates and hang out with them. The dorms were very mixed. Our floor had seven pairs of Israeli Jewish students. two pairs of Israeli Arab students and us, the Americans. It was eclectic but the default was you hung out with the folks in your program, and the program was mostly American.

Q: Were you able to travel?

GARBER: Quite a bit throughout Israel during that year, both with official programs and on my own. The real breakthrough for me was following the program I decided to go to Europe for six weeks. Literally, the kid with a backpack, traveling alone, visiting eight different countries in six weeks with a Eurail pass, and sleeping on night trains to save money. It was very much a classic experience.

I had my Arthur Frommer Europe on $10 a Day and religiously would go wherever he told me to go for sightseeing. So I saw all the major sites in the cities I visited. Both in the sense of doing it on my own, literally not meeting anybody I knew for five weeks and being exposed to European culture in such a heavy way, was fascinating. That more than anything stimulated my interest in making international affairs my next entry point.

Q: You came back to Queens College. What was your major?

GARBER: Political science.

Q: And you had one more year, and even with this year abroad, you managed to squeeze four into three?

GARBER: Right. A couple of summers and extra classes. They counted all my Hebrew University as if I was at Queens, my credits and grades. I was able to finish in three years and decided to apply to graduate school, including the Columbia School of International Affairs. When I got in there, I thought it was a dream come true. I was working towards a master's in international affairs – again a very different environment from Queens College; smaller classes, in some ways more rigorous. I was required to take macro- and microeconomics at a fairly sophisticated level.

Q: Had you had any before?

GARBER: I had in college but this was very different, very quantitative, calculus-oriented.

Q: You did all right in those?

GARBER: I struggled through it. The microeconomics in particular I found very challenging. We had a teacher who was very quantitative-oriented and he assigned a main textbook, which was all formulas and calculations. Then he said as we were coming up to the midterms, "There is an alternative book if you're really having trouble with quant." It was a microeconomics textbook with narrative, so "I'm going to use this one!" I can't remember exactly how I did but I managed to survive.

Q: Were there professors that were significant in this period for you?

GARBER: I remember taking a class by Professor Marshall Shulman - he was an arms control expert who later joined the Carter administration; he was there the first year I was there. He was probably the most notable. I also took a course on political economy with Edward Morse, who also served stints in various administrations.

The professor who had the most influence for a lot of reasons was a professor at the law school. I took a class of his when I was in graduate school and I think he may have helped me get into the law school- his name was Louis Henkin. He was a constitutional law professor and an expert on international human rights and one of the leading scholars on the nexus between U.S. constitutional law and the law of foreign affairs. He was my model. He also happened to be someone who had also come from a very traditional Orthodox background. His father was a well-known rabbi. My great-grandfather was a very prominent rabbi and my grandmother used to tell me that Henkin's father and my great-grandfather were good friends.

Q: In Lithuania?

GARBER: No, in the United States. My grandfather came in 1924, lived until 1957.

Anyway, he was teaching exactly the courses I was fascinated by so I audited a class of his when I was in graduate school and then decided to apply to law school. I applied to only Columbia and NYU (New York University) because I didn't want to leave New York at that time, and was accepted at NYU and was waitlisted initially at Columbia. I was going to turn down NYU and finish my graduate degree when I got word a week before classes started that I had been accepted at Columbia. At that point, I decided it made sense to complete a joint degree.

Q: The law school was three years. When you say joint degree, did you finish the international affairs one?

GARBER: The way it was supposed to work at Columbia, they had a quote-unquote "joint degree program" between the law school and the international affairs school. Normally you would go two years to law school and one year to the international affairs school and then finish with a fourth year with a little of both. I'd already taken the 30 credits that I needed in international affairs during my first year; the next three years basically you could get credits from anywhere to get the master's degree, so I used my law school credits. It was a joint degree, but it wasn't really joint in the sense of being an integrated program.

Q: So you really focused on law school those following three years.

GARBER: Yes.

Q: Any particular focus?

GARBER: Traditional law school. I was fascinated by constitutional law. I had a professor focused on gender-based discrimination by the name of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who was quite influential. At the time, she was not the folk hero she has become today, but the class I took with her was very interesting and I enjoyed it very much. Took the regular courses – antitrust, securities, comparative law. Probably a little more on the human rights, comparative, international law side than other students, but otherwise much like other law students.

Q: Did you enjoy law school?

GARBER: Yes and no. I had read about law school in novels and some non-fiction work around that time, including a book by Scott Turow called One L, which was published during my first year in law school. I really was expecting a much more dynamic experience than I had. I found it interesting, but for the most part found the professors teaching from a standard script. You'd read 15 pages in the casebook and they'd have their shtick for presenting materials, but they really weren't using the type of Socratic method that I had anticipated.

My last year at law school, I signed up for a class, a joint class of the law and journalism schools. Normally, our classes were at Columbia's Morningside Heights campus, but this course was physically offered at the Ford Foundation, which was in mid-town. In addition to the 20 law students and 20 journalism students, the class hosted 20 practitioners or, as we referred to them, "real-life people." The teachers were Benno Schmidt, who later became dean at Yale Law School and President of the University, and the guy who was most proficient with the Socratic method, Fred Friendly, the CBS producer for Edward Murrow and who later transformed this course idea into a PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) television show where he'd recruit famous people to act out different roles and respond to his hypotheticals.

He was brilliant at organizing this class. I remember the first class; the issue was when would you not broadcast information you were provided because national security was at stake. The Cuban Missile Crisis case was the example he was working from. With the law students, as we sought to balance the interests, he was quickly able to get us to say that in certain cases, the right to broadcast information isn't absolute. The journalism students were much more stubborn and really stuck to the principle that if someone tells them something, then you have an obligation to reveal the information. This is now January 1980. April 1980 is when the Iran rescue attempt happened. Friendly comes into class and says, "Okay, now we're going to do that first class again. I want to know if you had gotten information that the Carter administration was sending helicopters to Desert One, and you knew if you released this information you were putting their lives in danger, would you do it?" Everyone said in this case they would probably withhold the information.

Q: As I recall, those programs used to have people in a circle and he would challenge them.

GARBER: That was the class.

Q: Was that the first class of this kind to test out this approach?

GARBER: I don't know if it was the first, but it was before he went on public television. Sixty people; 20 in the front row each time, the ones he would challenge. And he would not let you go. I thought if I was a teacher, that's what I would want to do. So for a number of years while I was teaching, I would use that model. I would write up a scenario and say "You're going to role play and I'm going to push you on these issues." It was fun. That's what I thought law school would be like but instead it was much more rote than I expected - I'd heard about at the Chicago or Yale schools where it was much more integrated with policy or economics. I didn't find that at Columbia; I found that disappointing.

Q: My wife went to Yale law school and talks about it in those terms.

GARBER: Yale and Chicago are the two I would have selected had I known.

Q: So when you went to law school, did you think you would end up practicing law as a traditional lawyer?

GARBER: I didn't really know. I went to law school because it seemed like the right thing to do at the time. In many ways, it was because for better or worse, people have this elevated view of lawyers and what they can do – which isn't always deserved. It served me well, being able to do lots of things and having the law degree as the academic back-up. I really wasn't sure at the time what I would do.

After my second and third years, I worked for law firms first in New York and then in Washington. Not very exciting, but I did it. There wasn't as much opportunity in those days to do the type of public-interest internships or post-law-school work for public interest firms. So I fixated on clerking, which seemed both exciting and the way to postpone any decisions. After a long struggle of probably more rejections that I'd ever received in my life, I finally received an offer late in the game to clerk for the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, in California. So this was my move out of New York City, having very much gotten used to the New York lifestyle.

The other thing, when I started law school I decided that I'm just going to go to school because it will be challenging – even in graduate school, I'd had a part time job. For the first time in my life, I had 15 hours of classes and nothing else. I went to the gym once in a while, but nothing else school-wise to keep me busy. So for those three years, I loved living in New York City. I went to shows – I figured out how to get cheap tickets and would go to shows every week, so I was really enjoying that. Some complained about how intense law school was, but I never found it that time-consuming.

Q: When you say *late in the day you got the clerkship, you mean late in your final year?*

GARBER: May of my final year.

Q: You were clerking for the 9th circuit? What does that mean if you weren't clerking for a judge?

GARBER: Because it has such a large docket and so many cases, they created this fairly large staff attorney's office. Many federal courts at the time had motion clerks, and what the 9th Circuit did was expand the concept so we were not only motion clerks but were handling large numbers of generally simple cases, writing the bench memo and sometimes opinions.

For example, I was assigned to the division doing immigration cases, and we had thousands of appeals from what was then called the Board of Immigration Appeals to the 9th Circuit. It was a statutory direct appeal without having to proceed before a district court. Anyone who was subject to deportation would automatically file an appeal. So for 95% of the cases, we would write a memorandum recommending that the Court affirm the Board of Immigration Appeals decision. Our job was to read over the briefs in case there were issues that deserved attention. So we were as staff attorneys, in some ways, the court of last resort because the judges were not going to spend a lot of time on these cases. I'd say in a handful of cases, we actually viewed them as deserving either reversal or at least more serious attention from the court. I was doing the immigration side but others were doing the same thing in criminal appeals where the prisoner was acting as her or his own attorney.

Q: Did this exposure to immigration cases as you look back fit in to the kind of interest that you have?

GARBER: Absolutely. That was an area of interest; I purposely asked for the immigration. It tied in with constitutional issues and also international issues. Two, three other points to note about the clerkship. I ended up staying two years. The first year I was a clerk, the second year I became a division head.

Because we were working for the judges remotely, everything depended on how we wrote so there was a premium placed on writing, proofing, and editing. It probably was the best writing seminar I ever had. The first year I was subject to having my work heavily critiqued, but the second year I became division chief so was one of the critiquers. It really taught me a lot about writing. I don't think until then I had appreciated what it meant to write succinctly and clearly for a senior audience. I don't think I picked that up in law school; that certainly served me well afterwards.

The second was – they had a process where you would be assigned to a judge for six weeks, so I spent six weeks in Phoenix, Arizona clerking for a fairly, young recently-appointed judge, who much later became the chief judge for the circuit. Working with a judge even for a limited period was a rewarding experience.

The third was the court itself went through a radical transformation. Because the size of the docket had grown so extensively, they increased the number of judges from 13 to 26 which meant Carter appointed 13 judges. So the 9th Circuit became known as the most liberal court. I was there during that shift, 1980-82; all the Carter judges had just been sworn in so you were beginning to see the 9th Circuit develop this liberal jurisprudence, which 35 years later the Court is still known for.

The last thing is I got to work on several really interesting cases, two of which made it to the Supreme Court. One was an immigration case where the argument was whether or not the 4th Amendment rule regarding precluding the use of "the fruit of the poisonous tree" (i.e., if you get evidence from a defendant through some illegal means you can't introduce it in court), applies in immigration cases the same way that it applies in criminal cases. We in the 9th Circuit said it should but the Supreme Court overruled it in the next year by 5-4.

The other case was even more fascinating. It was an appeal where everyone viewed the case as a joke - a guy representing himself making all sorts of civil rights, antitrust and other seemingly frivolous arguments. But he had so many issues he was raising that we knew we had to go through them systematically. After an initial review, I decided he had a legitimate case; he was alleging that the Arizona bar association had unfairly limited competition (an antitrust violation) by grading the bar exam on a curve. They would set the curve so as to only admit a certain number of lawyers. I considered this to be an antitrust violation and that he had a legitimate case.

The 9th Circuit panel agreed and the bar association was horrified. So they appealed. At this point, every single bar association in the country submitted an amicus brief on the side of the Arizona Bar Association. It went to the Supreme Court (by this point I was living in Washington) and I went to hear the case, and again the Supreme Court overruled the 9th Circuit decision in a 5-4 ruling.

Q: Protecting the guild.

GARBER: Absolutely a classic case of protecting the guild. Because they had to deal with the realities of antitrust law, to protect the guild they had to rely on some pretty strange procedural machinations. Anyway, those were my experiences…

Q: As a lawyer and a clerk; that's wonderful. How did you get out of this realm into something utterly different?

GARBER: I came back to Washington to work at a big law firm, Steptoe & Johnson. Hated it from the day I got there. I'm 26 years old, I don't want to be doing this. By far, the easiest job I ever had. I worked nine to six. Occasionally there was weekend work, but I mostly managed to do what I had to do during the regular work day.

I told them I wanted to do some pro bono work, so I was assigned to work for a human rights group on immigration-related work. I was working on the issue of providing what we called at the time extended voluntary departure to Salvadorans who were in this country. This is during the height of the civil war in El Salvador, so giving them a way to stay here without being forced back, but also without recognizing them as asylees. It was a temporary status. We were as a law firm representing these various human rights groups, developing arguments they could use as advocates before Congress.

Then my sister, who had moved to Israel in 1979, announced she was going to marry in Israel, in August 1983. I said, "That's my sign to get out of here." So I told the law firm I was leaving.

I had a girlfriend from when I was in San Francisco who had taken off the year after she finished her clerkship and had been traveling in Europe; we had been in contact. So I said, "I'm going to do what she did; I'm going to take off a year and travel around the world with my backpack and hiking boots."

But first, I was going to the wedding in Israel. I told the law firm I was leaving and, before I got on the plane, I went to see Amy Young, who was the head of the human rights group that I'd been volunteering for. I said, "Amy I'm leaving the law firm and I wanted to tell you I really enjoyed working for you. When I come back, I'd love to see what type of opportunities there are in the international human rights field."

She said, "Well, we're applying for this AID grant to develop guidelines for election observing; do you have any interest in it?"

I said, "Sure", knowing nothing about the subject. So I brought over my resume to her and left. It was one of these unsolicited proposals. It was submitted at the end of the fiscal year before the September 30 deadline. It was reviewed by a team that included Marilyn Zak and Roma Knee and they decided to award the grant to this small human rights group. This is Reagan administration, which has been provided with a pot of money through a statute that included provisions precluding the provision of any assistance to gross abusers of human rights.

Q: The Christopher –

GARBER: Right, the Christopher Committee, Carter administration, et cetera. It's part of that statute; section E of that statute was "and there should be a fund created to support human rights projects." So here we are now in the Reagan administration, and they don't know what to with this money set aside for human rights. They were totally trashing all other aspects of human rights policy, but they had this money. So some folks said "Oh, yeah, election observing, that's good, we should have guidelines."

Marilyn and Roma facilitated the approval. I was an unknown. Steptoe & Johnson lawyer, Columbia pedigree, but otherwise no profile. The guy who had actually written the proposal was a University of Minnesota law professor heavily involved in Amnesty

International, and they didn't want him to be the lead for this program because he would have set off alarms in the administration. But me to be the lead was perfect.

So I aborted my journey around the globe –

Q: So you just went to Israel then came back?

International Human Rights Law Group

GARBER: I had about a month in between, came down with hepatitis in Spain and so had to delay my start for this program but ended up coming on board in November 1983. Basically, what they were getting money to pay me for was developing guidelines for international elections observing, but I ended up doing other work for this human rights organization.

Q: The name of this group?

GARBER: It was called the International Human Rights Law Group; it started in 1979, changed its name late in the 1980s and now is defunct, but while in existence served to bring Washington legal talent to the table to address human rights issues. The elections piece was not anything they had thought about, but once they got the grant, election observing became a hallmark of this human rights group - indeed, we were the only human rights group that did election monitoring.

Q: You were there for five years? During this period, was the elections program part of the mandate?

GARBER: Yes. We developed the guidelines, We started in November 1983 and by September had published the book. We had a two-day conference at Airlie House with several of the folks that had been involved in election observing. I'd gone to visit folks in Canada, London, Geneva on this subject to get their views, gone down to El Salvador as part of an observation effort.

The book was published in September, and at the time was the first and only handbook that addressed issues of election observing; it made two critical points that have continued to inform the discourse for the next 35 years. One was the importance of viewing elections as part of the international human rights system; the right of political participation is recognized in the seminal human rights documents like the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, but people didn't think of elections in human rights terms but more in political terms. We made the point that elections are related to human rights, and defined what it mean to have elections that are consistent with human rights. It set out very specific standards.
[https://eos.cartercenter.org/uploads/document_file/path/236/PNAAV556.pdf]

Second is that if you're going to be a serious election observer you have to not just look at what happens on election day but at the before and the after.

Q: The Carter Center had not been established at that time, so this is pre-Carter Center work in this field.

GARBER: Right. To give you the evolution of that – and I don't want to put this on myself but I can tell it through –

Q: Go ahead, put it on yourself!

GARBER: - through my own lens. I was working at this small human rights group, trying to sell this effort. We have this handbook, we're the only ones that have it, we sought to market ourselves as being available to be hired as consultants or to receive grants from foundations, but we were striking out. The only success we had was to receive a small grant for a small group to observe the first post-independence election in Zimbabwe, and that's a whole story unto itself. I actually anticipate going back to Zimbabwe for the 2018 election with NDI (National Democratic Institute) in the next few weeks. It'll be a full circle there. [The author spent May-August 2018 co-directing an election observer mission in Zimbabwe.]

So we were having trouble raising funds. NDI, the National Democratic Institute, was formed in 1983 after Reagan's speech to the British parliament about how democracies needed to support other democracies, and was set up under the umbrella of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) as one of four core institutes – Democratic, Republican, labor and business. Brian Atwood had taken over as head of NDI in mid-1985 and they organized a conference somewhere in Africa. I'd seen reference to it, so I called up NDI and scheduled an appointment with Brian, saying "I just wanted to share with you my handbook."

He says, "Very interesting but I've just taken over here and we've made a decision with my board that we're not going to get involved with elections. Too controversial, too sensitive."

I thought well, it was worth a shot. This is August 1985. Three months later, Ferdinand Marcos goes on TV to announce he's going to organize a snap election in the Philippines and that international observers are invited. The next thing I know, somehow Brian remembered the book I had given him and he had been approached by the State Department to potentially organize elections with their Republican counterparts, and I got hired as the consultant for the NDI component of the NDI-IRI (International Republican Institute) delegation.

Q: This was AID funding?

GARBER: This was the first time NDI and IRI ever got U.S. government funding for something like this, not from NED but from State/AID. So I was the consultant and started working with NDI. It was a little controversial. I was coming from this human rights background – and to give you a sense of the times, it was the Reagan

administration; human rights were a dirty word. I was the only one who knew anything about the subject on both the NDI and IRI side, and was willing to do the work. NDI was paying me –

Q: This is all focused on the Philippines?

GARBER: On the Philippines. I remember at one point I finished writing the final report (this is after the election which was in itself a watershed election for democracy promotion) and had written an acknowledgment section where I had NDI and IRI thanking me for writing the report. The Republican guy told Brian, "We can't do this" (i.e., reference Garber as the author) and Brian initially agreed to excise my name. I said, "What do you mean? I wrote the report." Brian replies says "They don't want your name in the report because it looks like someone from a lefty international human-rights law group was writing this."

I said, "Brian I can't believe you're going along with this" and I basically shamed him into going back to them and coming up with a formula acceptable to them and me that at least highlighted that I had been involved in writing the report; I think they put someone from their organization as a co-author when they hadn't really done anything.

That started my relationship (despite that little incident) with NDI. The next two years – I was still working at the Law Group, but NDI would hire the Law Group as consultant to access my services. Under this arrangement, I did work for NDI in the Philippines, Haiti, and Chile.

What the Philippines represented at one level was taking this notional idea of doing election observing in a systematic matter and upscaling it into a much more political, large-scale delegation. Whereas we had had four to 10 people in previous missions, for the Philippines we had 44 people. Where we had had some head of delegation, now we had John Hume, a leading figure in Northern Ireland politics, and Manuel Pastrana the former president of Colombia, and then for Chile we had the former Spanish Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez.

We had political impact, certainly in the Philippines - the fact that the international observers came out so strongly against the fraud committed by Marcos, ultimately caused Reagan to acknowledge that there had been fraud and to call Marcos and say, "Time is up; we'll provide you exile in Hawaii if you so desire." That really gave a tremendous boost to this idea that election observers could be more than shills for U.S. foreign policy, but could inform U.S. foreign policy in a constructive, pro-human-rights manner. That was significant in and of itself.

The next stage came with President Carter. In '82, the Carter Center was struggling to figure out what it was going to do. I don't know if you remember a guy by the name of Bob Pastor? Bob was – incredible energy, idea a minute type guy. So in 1987, he organized a conference at the Carter Center for what was the then nascent Carter-led Council of Former Freely Elected Heads of Government in Latin America. Bob invited

me to pitch an idea of an Inter-American Commission on Elections, modeled on the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. So I did that, per his script.

The first time the Carter Center observed an election where Carter acted as the head of an NDI delegation was in Panama in 1989. Once again, a joint NDI-IRI delegation. It was Carter and Ford who were the co-leaders of the delegation.

Q: Gerald Ford?

GARBER: Gerald Ford. The mismatch was Carter is intense, wants every detail. Ford flies in for a day and a half from golfing – Carter had convinced him to come. It was again a joint delegation and this time the Republicans were nervous – they wanted to get rid of Noriega and were nervous that Carter was too much in bed with Noriega because of the Panama Canal treaties.

I remember going to brief Carter before the election with Ken Wollack, then NDI' vice president. I said "how should I do this?" "Just brief him, don't worry. He's interested in the facts, just tell him the facts, don't be intimidated." So we went and briefed him.

As it turned out, we had organized a very informal but effective parallel vote tabulation, which a colleague and I put together with a small group of Panamanians. We had information showing the opposition had won. We briefed Carter about it and Carter then went to the election commission; they were producing all kinds of strange results. He reproached them on what they were trying to do, and he said, "If I don't see things changing, I'm going to denounce this process."

He went back later and again it seemed like they were mucking around with the results, so he decided to call a press conference in Panama, in the hotel – the whole delegation surrounded him and he denounced the election. There was no statement just him talking about how he had been betrayed by the Panamanians and this was unacceptable. Then the delegation left the next morning; I stayed to see what happened afterwards.

That really showed Carter that he can make a difference in the election field, and since then the Carter Center has observed 110 elections in 37 countries around the world. That became a big piece of it, but what they added (and again I give Bob Pastor a lot of credit for really drawing this out) was the role that the observers, particularly someone like Carter, could play in mediating among the actors. We weren't just observing the election but trying to convince the parties almost through a personal commitment to Carter that they would be willing to accept the results regardless of who won, and they were making that commitment before the election in a conversation with Carter. The mediation role became much more prominent, at least for him.

Q: What was crucial to that was what you mentioned earlier, that this was not just a day of the election activity. I remember when I did this in Indonesia that there had been people there for a year working with the Indonesians on procedures, processes, so on and so forth in order to build a proper base for the election itself.

GARBER: The historic evolution. The standards I think I got right, but what I never anticipated when I wrote the handbook back in 1984 was the resources and scope of these delegations. I envisioned four to 10 person election delegations, maybe a two to five person pre-election missions, and then a write-up of a report. That was the methodology I was driving.

Today these operations involve long-term observers in-country for several months; we're going to set up an operation in Zimbabwe that will be present there for three months before the election. The teams include long-term analysts who focus on distinct areas of the process whether it's the legal framework, gender inclusion, security issues. A relationship with a domestic monitoring group that often has expanded capabilities. Pre-election missions, short-term observers, post-election – most of the professional observer groups be it the Carter Center, NDI, the European Union, OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) all use a much more integrated methodology as a matter of course now.

Q: This all started with a small grant from AID; how much engagement did you have during this period with AID? What was their role in all this if anything? Where do you see AID during this period?

GARBER: That's an important question both because it's an oral history of USAID and because of the evolution of USAID and my own involvement with USAID. I always talk about this small grant from USAID as being critical (in addition to transforming my professional career) for making this important contribution to the evolution of election observing.

However, during the next several years from '86 to '90 while I'm doing this work at the Law Group and NDI, USAID may have been providing the money but literally I would not have known an USAID employee if I tripped over him or her.

Q: Did you have to renew the contract?

GARBER: We would get money. At the Law Group, we didn't take AID money for field work as a matter of principle. At NDI, they did take money from US government sources, but USAID was principally a pass-through. The ambassador, the political officers, someone would have to deal with AID but it was not us – I didn't know who or what AID was.

It wasn't until the 1990 period, when we started doing work in Africa in particular, that the AID connection became more apparent. It was a confluence of events; AID was beginning to get more involved in these kinds of democracy programs, and we were doing more work in areas where we needed AID support.

Even when the Law Group received the grant from AID in 1983, I did not comprehend what that meant; Marilyn Zak said she was an AID employee, but I just assumed that

meant she worked as an affiliate for the human rights bureau at State; I had no concept of what AID was at that time. I was someone who'd gone to graduate school, gone to law school and just did not appreciate AID – what it stood for, what role it played.

Q: Did you ever meet Peter McPherson doing that?

GARBER: I didn't meet Peter McPherson. Even when we'd go to countries, the USAID staff were irrelevant to us. W never met the mission director in the Philippines. In Chile, I don't remember meeting folks from USAID them. In Panama, I don't remember. I must have spent hours with John Maisto, who was Deputy Chief of Mission, but I don't remember interacting with folks at USAID.

Q: As you look back on this now with all you know about AID, was it that this subject was considered politics and AID didn't really do politics? That's obviously a problem of a different sort.

GARBER: It didn't do this type of politics. I think there always was politics in development and will make that case any time, any place. But in terms of this type of politics, we were getting into election observing and in some cases trying to influence the political evolution of a country like in Chile or the Philippines or Panama along a more democratic way. AID was just not part of the –

Q: It was considered partisan?

GARBER: It was considered too political for AID at the time. I think the breakthroughs for AID were a combination of the end of the Cold War and the whole insertion, first through the SEED Act (Support for East European Democracy) and then the Freedom Support Act for the former Soviet Union, of legislation that explicitly said USAID could do economic growth and democratic institution building. So AID had to respond to that.

The beginnings of the openings in Africa, particularly where AID was a dominant player, also played a role. When you went to Africa, there was almost a relative level of equal importance between the AID mission director and the ambassador. Because the mission director had the money and that was mostly what we were doing in those places. So when we started going to Africa, the interactions with USAID became more relevant.

Some of the initial efforts on democracy within USAID – Warren Weinstein, for example, who was then in the Africa Bureau, saw that this was going to be important and began building up USAID's capabilities in this regard. That is when we first saw AID as a player in the democracy program types of things, as opposed to what AID always did which was institution building, working with host country ministries.

Q: You shifted from this human rights organization to NDI yourself, right? Why don't you describe that, how this move took place? It seemed like a natural move.

GARBER: It was and it wasn't. Part of it was professional opportunity; the Law Group always struggled for funds. It had a principle of not accepting money from the U.S. government because it would taint our perspective. At the time, particularly after the Philippines and Haiti, I saw that the election monitoring piece would probably be better placed in an NDI-type organization, with more access to resources. For personal and professional reasons, I moved over there. But also, the human rights work more generally was too negative for me. That basically, we were scolds, criticizing governments. I was attracted to the idea of being more pro-active, promoting –

Q: Constructive.

GARBER: - constructive-type efforts. There was a bit of an ideological orientation to my switch, that this was a way I could feel like I was contributing to a positive development as opposed to only critiquing negative developments. Thus, after a couple of years of working at the Law Group and consulting with NDI, I decided to leave the Law Group and work for NDI full time.

National Democratic Institute (NDI) – Senior Elections Associate

Q: This is 1988?

GARBER: Yes, right in time for the Chile plebiscite where I was working for NDI. I then became NDI's senior election person for five years.

Q: Was Brian still there?

GARBER: He was there from 1985 to 1993 when he left to go to AID.

Q: Which is also when you left; we'll get back to that in a moment. One of the issues that comes up on elections is whether we, the West, put too much emphasis on elections as being the great measure of progress in countries. It very often turns out that the elections are used by despotic regimes; we've seen a lot of that. How much has that been an issue in your own mind? How much of that was an issue you were worried about during the '80s when you were working on this and blazing a new path – that people were too wrapped up in the idea that elections were the be-all of democracy?

GARBER: The initial push for these guidelines was precisely a response to the idea that despots used elections to legitimize themselves and were often reinforced by international observers who would simply come in and validate a flawed process. That was the underlying basis for why we needed to develop a handbook on election observing, which would provide more formal standards for how to evaluate an election. Just having a good election day would not be satisfactory; we had a look at the underlying human rights situation, at whether parties were able to organize, whether there was freedom of expression, whether results were respected so that the person who was the declared winner was allowed to assume office – all those became part of election observing. We addressed that initial concern.

The secondary concern that came up though was that implicitly we were saying elections are the be-all for whether or not we should put our good housekeeping seal on a country. Even if they met the standards in the handbook for conducting a good election before, during, and after, there could still be serious human rights or inequality issues, or serious gender discrimination. The fear that elections were becoming too much the focus and there wasn't enough attention on some of these other issues I think existed then, and we were sensitive to the critique. And it exists today, this tension between 'elections are important' and 'they aren't the only thing that's critical to a democracy or a developing society.'

The third piece of the argument that's often made is that the West, for a variety of reasons, places too much emphasis on elections. Whether we use it as an exit strategy to get out of Afghanistan and Iraq and try to hold elections prematurely, or even in some other environments that are not post-conflict that we see this as a conflict-prevention mechanism when it doesn't necessarily serve that purpose.

I think there is sometimes a tendency to do that, but the counterpoint is if you go to most of these countries you'll find the pressure for elections comes from the local political leaders. They want to sort out who is going to run the country for the next several years and they know we're not going to accept a gun battle as the decisive force, so they pressure us to support their holding elections. It becomes difficult for us to resist that because why would you want to deprive people of having elections even if you don't think the country is ripe for the perfect election?

There is often this tension between 'let's do it well' as opposed to striving for the perfect election because it's important they begin on this track even if it's not going to be exactly the way we would conduct elections. Now that we're seeing all the challenges to elections in places like the United States it becomes even more important for us to put elections in perspective, that perfect elections are rarely achieved and that there is an ever-going process.

One anecdote from when we had the conference to develop the Guidelines. One of the guys I invited to the conference was a Canadian, I think the head of the immigration authority in Canada. He had been the chairman of the Commonwealth observer delegation in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe in 1980, which was the transformative election implementing the Lancaster House accords to move the country from white rule to majority rule. He came to this two-day conference with tense discussions about various issues, and we had a closing plenary. He gets up and says, "I just have to say that one issue we are not addressing sufficiently is the whole role of campaign financing. I could not in good conscience say that an election in this country (i.e., the United States) was free and fair" (this is 1983, way before *Citizens United*); "money just dominates the process here and in my mind that is not consistent with norms of free and fair elections." It always struck me – way back then that he was putting the issue squarely on the table. I think he was quite prescient.

Q: Too bad that his prescience did not lead to change. During this time you were at NDI directly, 1988 to '93, you were doing elections?

GARBER: My title was Senior Elections Associate, but it was a hell of a time to be doing elections. Just think of it – 1989 to 1992, you had the fall of the Berlin Wall so there were elections in each of the Warsaw Pact countries between April 1990 and June 1990.

Q: Was NDI involved?

GARBER: NDI was involved in all of them. We published a book called The New Democratic Frontier that I co-edited with an NDI colleague, which included a series of essays about each of the elections. [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNABP836.pdf] Among our observers, we had some notables and asked them to write chapters on various themes related to what they had observed and comparing it with other things they had observed. Madeleine Albright wrote a chapter; an Israeli political scientist; the head of the Chilean effort to bring back democracy; a couple of Portuguese judges and lawyers. So we published this book that reflected this transformation through electoral process that had occurred. The first stage obviously was the overthrowing of Communist rule and Soviet influence, and the elections were the second stage. Editing and publishing the book took a couple of years.

We were also beginning to see the openings in Africa so during this time we conducted an important election reform assessment mission in Senegal and a joint NDI-Carter Center program in Zambia for the 1991 election. It was a very integrated program and Carter played a critical role in convincing Kaunda to give up power after 27 years.

Ethiopia had its revolution during this time – Ethiopia is another good example of where this tension came in. After the Zambian elections, Carter flies back to the States through Addis, meets with his buddy Meles, who he knew from before, and Meles said "We're going to have elections and need some help."

So Carter gets on the phone and calls Brian Atwood and asks to send a couple of elections experts. I'd just spent four weeks in Zambia and Brian asked if I could go to Ethiopia. This was a couple of weeks before Thanksgiving. I said, "Sure I'll be happy to go after the holiday." He says, "Carter just wants you to go before the holiday, but you can come back before Thanksgiving."

So I and one of the Portuguese guys we'd been working with went to Ethiopia for five days and wrote up a report. We said they were looking to do this radically transformative structural change in their system of government; it's going to take a while and they are not really prepared for elections, so we would suggest slowing the process. That was our report. The Ethiopians decided they would have elections in June, seven months later.

We as NDI decided not to observe the elections because we didn't think they would be good elections. I think USAID or the U.S. government found another group, the Africa-America Institute (AAI), that was willing to observe. So they went with an expert team of

academics and the like who really knew Ethiopia but didn't know anything election observing. They then hired NDI to be their consultant, so we weren't going to observe the election but were going to advise AAI on their observing. That's what we did. The consulting process included my writing the report for them, which was very critical of the election process.

Q: So you were right in the first place.

GARBER: I think so. Very critical report of the election process. As Ken Wollack tells me, every time he'd go back to Ethiopia afterwards they'd say "You guys were involved in the 1992 report which was way too critical." So it had a longer-term effect. Again it shows the dynamics, as much as we think we're controlling these events, a lot of these events take place outside of our control and we have to decide what's our response. Do we ignore it? Do we observe it and be critical? Can we be constructive in some ways?

That's what was happening during those years. I was on the road an awful lot, enjoying it, and also living a life here in Washington.

Q: I didn't want to end this first set of discussions, but we haven't given you a chance to mention how you met your wife and how she coped with all this time you were abroad, with your children. Give us a short vignette of your family history.

GARBER: The easy answer to that is she wasn't there. We didn't meet until 1994. My parents and probably others suspected a cause-and-effect relationship between this type of travel and the lack of a normal (in their minds) family life. I was traveling a lot. I had various relationships, but – We would joke about this in the office; would Brian have asked someone who was married and had kids to go to Ethiopia like that? He just took it for granted.

Q: What was your conclusion?

GARBER: Absolutely, he took it for granted that someone like me could just jump on a plane without a second thought because I didn't have a family and kids.

Q: So it really was an important part of your ability to dig into these kinds of interesting programs – that you were an independent guy who had not yet sunk roots into a family here.

GARBER: I think so. In some ways it does connect up, because I think after doing this for five years fairly intensely, I was looking for a change. So again there was a professional-personal side of wanting to join the Clinton administration, wanting to see things from inside the government and wanting to have some influence there. But there was also a part of me that said I need to have a different game plan.

Q: So 1993, how old were you when you moved away from NDI?

GARBER: In 1993, I was 38. I had been doing election work for 10 years. Like I said, it was a great run. I had gotten to know the folks in the field of elections and democratization pretty well but was intrigued by the opportunity to work in the government.

Q: Did you approach Brian, or did Brian approach you? How did this transition take place?

GARBER: Interesting. Brian was first nominated to be the head of the transition team for international affairs. So he left NDI in November '92 and took on that job. In April he was nominated to be the under secretary of management at the State Department, a job he didn't necessarily want but was what he was offered. He took that, and had his confirmation hearings. Then there was an internal battle over who was going to be the AID administrator between Ruth Harkin on one side and Tim Wirth on the other side, and Brian emerged as the compromise choice.

Brian had been pretty clear when he left NDI that he loved NDI, and he wasn't looking necessarily to take folks with him. But as I say, I had reached in my own mind the sense that I needed to do something else after 10 years. So I approached John Shattuck, who had just become the Assistant Secretary for Democracy and Human Rights at the time. I had breakfast with him and told him I was interested in joining the administration and said here is my background.

USAID PPC Bureau – Senior Democracy Advisor

The word got back to Brian, and Brian said "If you're really going to leave NDI, you may as well come work here at AID." I was good friends with his then-special assistant, Jennifer Windsor, and so she helped create the job that I eventually took in September 1993 as senior advisor on democracy in the policy bureau. In her, my, and Brian's minds it was to help transform the agency's attitude towards democracy programming for the Clinton administration. To institutionalize things, integrate things, and create a real sense this belonged in a development agency.

Q: This was senior advisor to the assistant administrator for PPC [Bureau of Policy and Planning Coordination] or whatever it was called in those days?

GARBER: It was called PPC.

Q: And you were assistant administrator?

GARBER: Brian in his desire to show he was supportive of the Foreign Service appointed Terry Brown to be Assistant Administrator for the policy bureau. At the same time, he recruited eight of us as senior advisors for specific things; I was democracy, someone for development, someone for environment, someone for civil society. Three of us, who were doing democracy, health and environment, had links to specific substantive areas in what became the global bureau. The others were a mishmash of thematic issues.

Terry just didn't know how to manage it. Not his fault, it was a disaster in the making. So that didn't work. Then Brian brought in another guy, Colin Bradford. He was going to be the deputy, then he took Terry's place, and he also couldn't manage this for a variety of reasons. So the PPC piece of it didn't work until Brian finally moved Colin to the front office and brought in Kelly Kammerer as the acting head of PPC, then I took over for a while (we're getting ahead of ourselves), then ultimately elevated it to a Senate confirmed position and brought in Tom Fox.

Q: Okay – good place to stop.

Q: It is the 11th of April 2018 and this is Alex Shakow. I am talking again with Larry Garber about his career before and during AID. When we left off we were just about to talk about what Larry did when he joined PPC in AID in September of 1993. Larry, what was it you were doing when you joined?

GARBER: I joined as senior advisor for democracy and human rights. This was very much part of Brian Atwood's effort at the time to make democracy a full component of sustainable development.

Q: This was new to AID at the time?

GARBER: Historically, AID had been doing various types of programs that ultimately we could fit under the rubric of what we now call democracy and governance, but they had been one-offs and haphazard, not part of the broader international development strategy. Two developments before I got there that were precursors to this were the 1984 Kissinger Commission about Central America, which emphasized the importance of building up institutions, particularly judicial ones, as part of our effort there to re-establish democratic governance. And obviously, the end of the Cold War. At the end of the Cold War, AID was tasked with working with State on developing economic development and democracy programs in Eastern Europe and then in the former Soviet Union.

What Brian wanted to do, drawing from his experiences at NDI, was to integrate democracy as core to development. His initial approach was Strategies for Sustainable Development. His idea was we wanted to have only four core themes. The four core themes he identified were economic growth, health (which included population, health, and nutrition), environment, and democracy and governance. So these were the four pillars of sustainable development.

Q: Not quite the same as the four pillars of Peter McPherson in the 1980s.

GARBER: Right, a shift from them. Whereas democracy and governance had been a sub-field, as things evolved it was now going to be elevated as one of four. So I came in in September 1993 and the overview piece for the Strategy for Sustainable Development

was about done, although I had contributed even before I got in there. The next task was to develop what we called the technical annex for each of these four areas.

I was responsible for drafting the technical annex for the democracy sector, about a 20 page document describing what we were going to prioritize, what conditions we were going to use in determining entry into a country and what types of programs. And also the relationship between democracy as a concept and our overall development effort. So going back to some of the things you were probably familiar with in terms of conditionality issues, gross human rights abuses, how would that impact our development program?

Q: These were meant to apply to any country? Universal concerns?

GARBER: Right. Not just Eurasia, but Africa, Latin America, et cetera. So that was one piece and took up some time, and I think is still an interesting document historically to look at in how things evolved over the last 20 years in terms of institutionalizing democracy. When we did a revision of the strategy in 2013, we changed some of the verbiage we were using. The programming remains much the same, but we changed some of how we are defining our objectives.

Q: Do you want to say what the basic change was?

GARBER: In '93, it was focused on four sectors in democracy programming, focused on what we did. So we did elections and political processes, rule of law, what we call governance programs, which include everything from legislative programs to some institution-building for executive branch ministries (anti-corruption came under this governance rubric), and the fourth area was civil society. In 2013, we changed to more outcome-oriented things so we talked about accountable governance, protecting human rights, the integration of democracy principles across the entire sustainable development effort. So more outcome focused, whereas in '93 we were talking more about what we were doing.

Q: In either case did you have measures by which you would judge whether countries were living up to…?

GARBER: This was always the big issue – measures for country performance and measures for programmatic performance. One of the points I made over my career is that the upside of getting democracy into mainstream AID was tremendous financial and field resources, all of which I viewed as positive, and also the synergies with other sectors. The downside was you were bound by the AID bureaucratic rules and among the issues that we often found challenging in the democracy sector was measurement. So we can do evaluations of programs comparing them from one country to another, but it was much more difficult to track both programmatic and country performance on a year-to-year or quarterly basis.

I'll talk more about that when I talk about the work I did with the National Academy of Sciences when I left AID in the 2000s, but that's been the challenge all along. There's been a tension between do we want democracy programs to "opt out" and not be part of that AID bureaucracy or as Andrew Natsios called it the counter-bureaucracy, trying to imposed all kinds of measurement tools on our efforts? Or do we want to try and figure out how best to adapt democracy programs to this culture of often quantitative measurement?

Let me go in sequence but this became an important issue. After we developed this technical annex, the next thing (again, part of the reorganization at the time) that Brian had committed to was setting up global centers of excellence. Each sector would have its own center – there'd be a health center, etc. The others already existed, with all kinds of technical people and it was just moving them into this new box. With democracy, we were starting from scratch.

Initially, we had Peter Kimm serving as an interim head, but when we formally set up the center, Brian asked Jennifer Windsor and myself to lead the formation of the center. We started with three people – two were folks who were working on a project that had been in the E3 (Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment) called implementing policy change. It was a project being implemented by MSI (Management Services International), with Larry Cooley as the person running it on the MSI side and on the AID side there were two folks, Jeanne North and Pat Isman who were responsible for managing the program. Then there was also a political appointee who had come in but had no place to sit in until we came and said "Okay, you're part of the center." His name was Patrick Isman-Fn'Piere. Those were our first three recruits to the new center.

Q: Was the center for democracy a structure within PPC?

GARBER: No, it was in the global bureau. For this purpose I was dual-hatted, and we were dual-hatted to be the acting heads of the center to get it launched - I remained in PPC and Jennifer remained as Brian's special assistant..

Q: Were these other pieces also in the so-called global bureau?

GARBER: Some were pretty well established. For example, the Population, Health and Nutrition Center was an existing entity. Duff Gillespie was in charge of it, and he just moved from where he was to the new Center. Business as usual for him. Environment was more a conglomeration of several units that had existed previously within AID, and the same was true of the Economic Growth center.

Brian had been very focused on getting us down to four core areas that we would talk about and within a couple of years various pressures from interest groups led to our calling the Economic Growth Center the Economic Growth and Agriculture Center, and we had to add a fifth center, which was the Education Center. We were back in a sense to where we had been when we started, but those sectors, agriculture and education, clearly had support internally and externally.

Q: What you were doing was really carving out a substantially new area. Did you get pushback from the staff as you tried to…?

GARBER: The big decision Brian made (and this affected all sectors to some extent), was that the Global Centers would include the technical people in the regional bureaus, plus those in existing central bureaus. We didn't have any people in central bureaus, so the only people we were going to get from within the systems were technical officers from regional bureaus. There were one to three democracy officers in each regional bureau, and the question was how many of them would have to move physically to the democracy center.

Q: Pre-existing officers?

GARBER: These were people who had been hired mostly in the last five years who had been given this designation. So again, for Europe and the former Soviet Union they had brought in Jerry Hyman as a non-career person and brought in a couple of Foreign Service Officers to serve as program managers for democracy programs in Europe and the former Soviet Union.

More generally, back in 1990 an officer in PPC set up what he called and what has become established, the Tuesday Group. This was a really informal group of democracy officers and people working on democracy programs.

Q: This wasn't Silverstone?

GARBER: No, Michael Morfitt set this up. They met every Tuesday. The Africa bureau had hired a couple of academics who brought their perspective to the discussions. They had (what I was told) very heated debates about the nature of democracy, where it fit, what type of approaches we should use. So when I came in, I assumed responsibility for this Tuesday Group as the policy bureau vehicle to share with folks what was going on in the democracy sector.

Q: Did it work?

GARBER: It worked wonderfully. We kept it going – I think it's still going 25 years later. During those years, it worked particularly well; we brought in speakers, started off with 15 people then had 30 or 40. At one point, one of the folks decided the conversations were so useful that we should share them with the field, so there'd be a write-up circulated to the field every week. It was a way to jumpstart deliberations about what democracy meant for an agency like USAID amongst a disparate group of folks beyond just people managing programs.

Q: Is this a technique as far as you know that was adopted by other parts of AID? It sounds like the kind of situation that would produce a participatory buying-in on a difficult set of issues.

GARBER: For this issue, it served that purpose. Here it was unique because we really were defining the field for AID as we went along, whereas in other areas it was pretty well defined. I used this idea of informal policy networks when I became the DAA (deputy assistant administrator) of the policy bureau. I created a group of DAAs that would meet in a similar fashion to talk about broader policy issues. Again, we weren't making policy, but we were definitely teeing things up for policy discussions at a later date.

Q: So from this Tuesday Group what was it you actually did in these countries, how did you get this business underway, and did you do it directly or hire contractors and others to carry out the policy you had established?

GARBER: There were programs going on. I discovered coming to AID that there were more programs than I imagined conducted under this rubric. I'd come from a background of human rights and democracy promotion in a fairly narrow sense, and when I came to AID I realized – the scope of our democracy programs was more than the type of election work that NDI did and covered this whole gamut of stuff, some of which was going on in the field and just needed to be corralled under a strategic umbrella.

This was unusual, but I'll tell it anyway. Early on in my tenure at USAID, I received a memo from the front office saying "please take a look at this document"; it was an unsolicited proposal by the founders of Transparency International. I looked at it and said, "Hey this sounds like a really interesting idea. Let's figure out a way to give them some money." We gave them like an initial grant, not very large but probably one of the first grants they got so they appreciated it as worth more than the dollar amount.

Q: It's always hard to do in any organization like AID, so how did you determine whether something was not effective and if you're really capturing learning? How did you do that in a way that got the message out to people?

GARBER: This was somewhat in play when I came to AID. I discovered the Agency has something called CDIE (Center for Development Information and Evaluation), which I had never heard of or appreciated, but which happened to be in the policy bureau.

CDIE had just completed a six-country study of rule-of-law programs. I remember one of our first Tuesday Group meetings that I chaired was a briefing by the authors of the study on these rule-of-law programs. I found it fascinating. They had very specific recommendations on how we should sequence different interventions in the rule-of-law sector. I became a publicist for their efforts. We sought to transform the findings of the study into policy direction. In retrospect, it was probably a bit of a naïve and simplistic approach. The evaluation at the time was not as rigorous as some of the later evaluations, and the transformation into policy was simplistic, but it was important at the time.

Q: Because there was nothing else.

GARBER: There was nothing else and it showed we were prepared to make choices as opposed to it being totally ad hoc. This is giving some parameters in terms of how to operate. One of the things I was most proud is that we ended up doing five or six similar evaluations of civil society programs, elections programs, legislative strengthening programs again using this model.

Q: Using outsiders, academics.

GARBER: A combination of CDIE –

Q: You should explain CDIE for people.

GARBER: CDIE was part of PPC, it was one of the four offices in PPC at the time but it had its own stature as the Center for Development Information and Evaluation.

Q: Who was heading it?

GARBER: John Erickson. John was very serious about making these evaluations not only as rigorous as they could be, but also as policy-oriented as they could be. He led the way for several of these. By the time I left PPC in 1999, we had done six or seven of these evaluations in the democracy sector which I was quite proud of.

Q: They did get out to the practitioners in a demonstrable way?

GARBER: In this case, the synergy between the PPC policy evaluation function and the center for excellence was quite strong. There'd be a natural hand-off from the policy shop to the DG (democracy and governance) sector then responsible for supervising DG officers in the field and providing them with materials and hosting conferences. This is where a lot of these evaluations would be shared.

Q: In retrospect, do you have one or two examples of what was done in the field that you thought were particularly effective and lasting? You see a lot of things happening in Eastern Europe today that maybe are not so much what you'd want. Where are the cases you look to say these years I spent working on this in the '90s were well spent?

GARBER: It's a great question and one I ask myself all the time. I fear part of my failure is I focused too much on the bureaucratization of getting this into the bloodstream of the agency, creating these evaluations, making sure the center was up and running, and devoted less time on understanding what types of programs were being generated as a result of these efforts. Even though I would go to the field on TDYs (temporary duty) and report on what was happening, it wasn't until I got to the field on a permanent basis that I could really make an assessment of how much impact our policy guidance was having and whether it mattered whether we chose a program from column A, B, or C?

In many respects, it didn't matter. Each of these things were often needed. There was no keystone answer to the question, if you got this thing right then everything else would fall into place.

Q: Did countries, governments, welcome AID messing about in these areas?

GARBER: A bit of schizophrenia on the part of governments. It varied in part on who the government was and how they saw the specific intervention. So if the government was a transition government, which had just come in after overthrowing or removing an authoritarian leader, then they were welcoming and often quite encouraging. But if we were working in an authoritarian context, it was much more contentious and I think that's still the case today.

One example I remember is Egypt. I went on a TDY there. Egypt at the time, post-Camp David, was receiving $800,000,000 and was in a bilateral agreement with the U.S. government. When I went to Egypt, the ambassador asked: is there anyway we can keep money from that bilateral agreement and run it through non-governmental organizations (NGO) as opposed to just running it through the government?

Q: What was the answer to that?

GARBER: The answer is we theoretically could, but it was a political issue. At the time we did provide funds to the NGOs directly, but it became much more dicey as time went on. Later, in the midst of the Arab Spring, this became a major bone of contention between the Egyptian government because they said "you are violating the bilateral agreement." We said the bilateral agreement only says what we put through the government, we put through in coordination with the government, it doesn't say everything has to be through the government. It became quite an issue.

I think the broader point is a fair one. There were people like me in the agency who were telling mission directors "You must do these democracy programs; our view of sustainable development is it has to be integrated and include this type of component if it's going to be sustainable." Mission directors and sometimes ambassadors resisted, saying this is going to upset our counterparts and make it harder to do programs in other areas which we think are equally important. That debate I think continues today.

Q: How engaged was Brian Atwood during his tenure as administrator in these programs?

GARBER: He had three big ideas in this regard when he came in. One was to elevate democracy to a core part of sustainable development, which he did through the initial strategy document and putting myself and others in senior positions. The second was creating the democracy center, so you had staff, both civil servants and foreign service officers, who were affiliated to this backstop at AID. So now there was a democracy backstop and training associated with democracy and the like.

The third was the creation of the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), which again was part of Brian's original vision but has morphed tremendously over the last 25 years. When Brian set it up, it really was designed to provide rapid response support to political transitions, which the AID bureaucracy would be too slow to respond effectively in a case where an authoritarian government had been overthrown. He saw it at the time as mostly democracy type programming. He recruited Rick Barton, who built up the office bureaucratically and conceptually, and it began to move away from the original vision, but in an appropriate fashion. Today it has become an institution in and of itself at AID. Not exactly what I think Brian would have expected, but in some ways providing the types of responses that he really wanted to provoke in the entire agency but which now people see as emerging mostly from OTI.

Q: He found a way to separate it from the normal requirements?

GARBER: I didn't appreciate all these nuances and I don't know how he got the idea, but he put OTI in what was then called the Bureau of Humanitarian Response as a sister-office to OFDA (Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance). The idea was that just like OFDA would operate with "notwithstanding" language and could operate quickly, OTI would too be able to operate in this fashion.

Initially, the synergy and placement proved brilliant. Again, coming at it 25 years later, OTI has developed its own approach and works in different types of countries than OFDA and has different types of programming, but does have a very set bureaucratic orientation on how to implement programs that is different from other parts of the agency.

I use this example from when I was in West Bank/Gaza as the Mission Director. I resisted having OTI come into the country because I said it becomes a crutch. If our team wants to do something we should do it, and we can do the same thing OTI does. But people weren't used to operating that way.

Q: Now you can read Rick Barton's book…

GARBER: Coming out, that's right. I think he's going to talk about the early days of OTI, getting it started as how it's evolved into the broader stabilization agenda that it now has. I'm also looking forward to reading the book.

Q: You were in this role for six years or so? This was a tumultuous time for AID too in terms of budget and personnel issues. I don't know whether you want to comment on what it was like working in that environment? Your job was a focused one.

<u>USAID PPC Bureau – Deputy Assistant Administrator</u>

GARBER: But my job changed. For the first two years I was the senior advisor for democracy; for about six months I was also the acting co-director of the democracy center. But as a result of upheavals internally in PPC and my own sense of personal

growth, I moved from being focused on democracy to being a DAA for the Policy bureau.

Q: When was that?

GARBER: I don't remember the exact date, but probably around 1995. Terry Brown was the initial head of the bureau and left after about a year and was replaced by Colin Bradford. Colin and I became close, Colin relied heavily on me so I became a de facto senior deputy. Janet Ballantyne had come in to replace John Erickson as the head of CDIE, and then she was elevated to be the Foreign Service senior deputy in the Policy bureau.

She and Colin didn't hit it off 100 per cent and in typical Janet Ballantyne fashion she was often quite blunt with Colin in telling him what he needed to do. She and I worked well together, so I would often – I wouldn't say mediate, but hear her concerns and try to get Colin to at least listen to her. I remember at one point Janet wrote this five-page detailed memo manager-to-manager to Colin laying out her concerns and her constructive recommendations, which she then shared with me.

Q: Were these on substance?

GARBER: No, it was focused completely on how he was managing the bureau. Things like "you're traveling all the time." She showed it to me, and I was like "Oh my god you gave this to him? Are you kidding?" I then walked over to Colin and asked how are we going to address some of the legitimate concerns Janet is raising?

When Janet left to become Mission Director in Russia, I became the senior deputy in the PPC bureau. At that point, my realm was everything, not democracy-specific. I was running the bureau; I became responsible for the folks we had overseas, five representatives who reported to PPC in Geneva, Paris, Rome, Brussels and Tokyo – so I was responsible for supervising them. I was responsible for supervising the office directors and to some extent getting the trains to run on time, as well as taking the lead on some of the inter-agency work we were doing. It was a challenge, it was a new thing for me as someone who came from a very narrow perspective. Seeing everything, I enjoyed the challenge.

But you're right, we did go through some tough times during this period. Probably the most brutal thing I ever had to do was during the RIF, the reduction in force that took place in '95. We had two people in PPC who were being RIF-ed…

Q: Because they had been too long in grade?

GARBER: Too long in grade, but it was a policy decision by the then-head of the M (management) bureau, which Brian endorsed as the way we needed to meet our budget was by cutting a certain amount of the top folks. So it was a formal reduction in force,

very bureaucratically done, all kinds of secret meetings so that people wouldn't know (though everyone seemed to know).

I was assigned to tell a female foreign service officer who had worked at AID for 19 years. She worked at the time in CDIE and I remember having to go to her office. She was great; she guided me through the difficult time of me telling her she was on the RIF list and would be terminated, let go.

I was involved in the planning meetings for how we were going to do this.

Q: Time consuming?

GARBER: Time consuming and emotionally draining. I said at the time that I had not joined AID as a political appointee to inform Foreign Service officers who I really liked that they were out of a job. That was painful.

One of the figures who played an outsized role in AID during this time was a guy named Larry Byrne, who was the head of the management bureau. He had been brought in by Brian as a political appointee because he had a reputation for transforming agencies – taking them from poor to high performers.

Q: Which agencies had he done that with?

GARBER: I think HUD (Housing and Urban Development), and perhaps a couple of others. Again, I wondered how much of this was his own spin and how much was real. He worked hard, was definitely very smart, was definitely a bull in the china shop and was well connected. His wife ran for Congress, he had some connections in the party (I think his wife was elected to Congress).

I was now in a more senior management position in PPC. I remember a debate between the regional bureau and BHR, the humanitarian response bureau, on how to allocate Title III food funds, where to provide them.

Q: PL-480 type of funds?

GARBER: Right. Our team in PPC had worked with folks in M to come up with a compromise, splitting the baby type thing and giving it to three countries. Brian was out of town and all of a sudden one of the PPC guys comes to me and says "Larry Byrne has made a decision on this."

"What do you mean, he's made a decision? We were preparing a joint memo that was going to recommend two different options for Brian to decide, how could he make a decision?"

I wrote this really angry memo to Larry Byrne –

Q: So out of character.

GARBER: It was out of character. I said this was outrageous, you may have the legal authority but we were working collegially, this is no way to treat your peers. I don't think he saw me as a peer, but I was the acting head of PPC as Colin must have been out of town. All of a sudden, I get a call from Brian in San Francisco or somewhere - his special assistant had shown Brian the memo and now he has to calm Larry down because Larry was really upset. I said, "What about me? You should be calming me down!"

We didn't go at each other in meetings, but it created an unpleasantness. Again, Larry made a couple of mistakes that I think became associated with Brian. He introduced this New Management System, which was a $70,000,000 infrastructure investment but didn't work the way it was supposed to; I think it was just premature, the agency and the technology was not ready for this type of inter-operative system. Today, I think it would be looked at as quaint. Larry and Brian got tainted with the mistakes that they made with introducing this system, and this was viewed as the reason for the RIF and as a terrible disaster.

Q: Did Brian ever recognize how much upheaval Larry Byrne was causing? Based on my understanding of what you talked about here, Larry – Brian couldn't do anything about it?

GARBER: Certainly various folks raised the matter– including some other assistant administrators and folks viewed as close personally including myself, Jennifer Windsor, Jill Buckley who was head of LPA (Legislative and Public Affairs). We talked about it and he would respond "I know what I'm doing, I know Larry can be hard to get along with but he's doing some important things for the agency."

I don't know at what point Brian stopped believing that; I know he believed it for quite some time. Like I said, Larry was an incredibly hard worker, he was there long hours and put in a lot of time and had bold, creative ideas. So it's not like he was just goofing off at his job and pissing everyone off. Often, when you talked to him you'd go "Wow, that is impressive, if we could to that it would be great." But it was his style, from my perspective, that was more the problem than the substance and Brian never reined in the style. That ended up being a serious problem until finally after the '96 election Brian asked him to leave.

Q: Was the RIF separate from the decision to take any Foreign Service officer who had been in grade X number of years and get rid of them? Were they two separate –

GARBER: I think it was the same. There were rules that if you were in grade a certain amount of time and don't get promoted then you are up and out – that goes on at all times. But that was different than the RIF which said we're going to reduce our force with people who are at the borderline, particularly at high grades. The RIF was aimed at higher grades –

Q: For budgetary reasons.

GARBER: Budgetary reasons. It was a lot of the FS-01s (Foreign Service) who had been in grade five or six years who were…

Q: Because they had been promoted rapidly because they were talented.

GARBER: Right. We lost significant talent as a result.

Q: Which is still playing out.

GARBER: Yes, it played out over time. Now it's 23 years later, so many of those people would have been gone.

Q: Finally! This is '96, '97.

GARBER: One other thing was I had done a lot of traveling at NDI and still enjoyed doing TDYs. I want to mention one or two. The first TDY I did was to wherever Marilyn Zack was, Jamaica or the Dominican Republic. She said you have to visit our program and see what we're doing.

The interesting anecdote here was I had this trip planned, then I get this notice for jury duty. So I go to court and say, "I can't serve because I have a trip coming up, and I work for the federal government" (thinking that's going to impress this judge). The judge says, "Where are you going?" So I told him (can't remember whether it's Jamaica or the Dominican Republic). He says to the lawyer, "Well, what do you think? Maybe we ought to move the entire trial to accommodate Mr. Garber's TDY." He let me off.

Another TDY that played an important part in my life was when I went to Malawi a year after joining USAID. I had gone to Malawi the first time in 1991. Just to show how democracy programs were done in those days, I was in South Africa as part of an NDI visit and someone from NDI called and said the Africa bureau at AID wants someone to do an assessment of the democracy situation in Malawi. I said when? They said can you go later this week for three days. I said sure - we have a few days in-between programs in South Africa.

Q: As with everything else, you were ready to go.

GARBER: Ready to go on a moment's notice. I had this naive view that I was enough of a democracy expert that I could go anywhere and conduct a needs assessment. So I went – I didn't have a clue where Malawi was or anything about the politics of the country. So I go to the airport in Johannesburg and buy a tourist book on Malawi, so I can read on the plane and learn a little bit about Malawi before I land.

I get on the plane and the first thing I read is about the requirements for entry into Malawi. The book says Malawi is a very peculiar country; the government does not allow

women to wear slacks and it often turns away men who have long hair. I'm like, "What is long hair?" The entire plane ride I couldn't read the book, I was nervous about whether I could turn my hair up a little bit more so it doesn't look so long. Fortunately, I had no problems at Immigration.

Carol Peasley was the mission director at the time. We had dinner and she said "Here's the schedule our folks have arranged; you're on your own." Fly up to Blantyre (the capital was in Lilongwe) and here are the appointments. I remember it was a rainy day. This is pre-cell phone so if you're late for a meeting there is no way to get in touch with people. So I'm running from meeting to meeting, finding taxis and whatever to do this two-day assessment of the political situation in Malawi to report back to the AID mission and NDI on what should be done. I don't have a clue what conclusions I reached, but Carol and I are still friends so I guess I didn't screw it up completely.

The next time, the new mission director was a woman by the name of Cynthia Rozell. I met her at the mission directors' conference and Carol had told her she should get me to come out and help devise her democracy program. So we arranged for me to go out in I think November 1994. I went.

Q: And cut your hair?

GARBER: Cut my hair. I was working for the government so I'd cut my hair. It was a very good TDY. Cynthia is a serious biker. I saw her every morning, she'd go out for a long bike ride and I said, "I really need to get into biking again." She said, "I'm coming back to Washington in March. There's a century ride (100 miles or kilometers), you should get in shape so you can do the century ride with me."

So I go back to Washington and we're doing this chit-chat over email, and she asked "Have you started getting ready for the bike ride." I replied "I was hoping you'd find me a trainer." So she sent me the name of a guy who owned a shop in Georgetown with whom she had gone biking when she lived in DC. I sent back a note saying "I'd hoped you'd find somebody of the opposite gender to serve as my trainer." Cynthia described at my wedding how it then hit her that she had this really good friend at USAID with whom she had gone biking with all the time when she was in Washington, who worked in the Africa bureau, and who was a vegetarian like I was, Jewish like I was – wow, why hadn't she thought of this beforehand?

So the next week, I get an email from this woman in the Africa bureau, Gayle Schwartz, saying "Cynthia has instructed me to meet with you to talk about how you can get in shape for this bike ride." So we went out over Christmas week to Haines' Point for a bike ride. We went around the loop once and I said, "How many miles was that – 10 or 20?" She said, "Three." Oh my god, I've got a long way to go.

A couple of years later, we married and have been married since '97.

Q: You were already an old man.

GARBER: I was 42 years old; my son was born 18 months later so had my first child at 43. So yes, an old man but I always give Cynthia the credit for being the matchmaker.

Q: A wonderful important role in anybody's life.

GARBER: Right. That's why I figured I had to tell you, I said last time there's a story to go with my family that has an AID connection; that was the connection.

Q: Even dates back to Carol Peasley taking you to Malawi in the first place.

GARBER: Absolutely. Carol has remained a very good friend; she was at the wedding.

Q: Do you and Gayle go back to Malawi?

GARBER: She had been in Malawi earlier that year also at Cynthia's behest for an extended TDY doing some political economy analysis, but we've never gone back to Malawi together. We've gone to South Africa and other places, but not Malawi.

Q: That is the most important part. One last question – is Gayle still working at AID?

GARBER: Gayle worked at AID from '92 to 2000, when we went overseas. She then left AID when we were in Tel Aviv for a couple of years, did some freelance consulting, then joined the mission (another story we can talk about later). Then she worked for RTI (Research Triangle International) when we came back from the region and rejoined AID in 2011 in the Middle East bureau; the last five years she's spent working on Syria related issues. She's still deeply involved.

The other point before we get post-'96 – I spent much of 1996 involved as a detailee to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) working on implementing the Dayton Accords. I was still at AID and still did my work at AID, but I made six trips to Bosnia between January and October 1996.

Q: When was the Dayton Accord?

GARBER: November 1995. I was the advisor to the chief of mission, a guy named Robert Frowick. I was the advisor, but I was not resident. I would come for three or four days. A fascinating experience.

Q: What did you do?

GARBER: The OSCE under the Dayton Accords was responsible for implementing the accords in the fullest sense, and Frowick was tasked with organizing elections within nine months. He had other responsibilities, too, but this became his principal responsibility. The elections were designed to give the military an excuse to exit Bosnia, but also were to establish the institutions mandated by the Dayton Accords constitution. So the

elections were going to be run by an election commission, which was comprised of four internationals and three Bosnians, and chaired by Frowick.

Q: Where was the mission, by the way?

GARBER: In Sarajevo. The three Bosnians were from each of the three communities, Bosniac, Serbian, Croatian. Folks at State had heard about my background at NDI and since I was inside the government, they said why don't you go help Frowick? So I went to a conference in Stockholm in January, right after Dayton, which was to launch the international effort. That's where I met Frowick. He said "I'm going to go from Stockholm to Sarajevo; can you come with me?"

I said, "Sure, how are we going?"

He said, "The Swiss have offered us a plane." So for the first time in my life I got to fly in one of these executive jets, a six person jet airplane.

Q: Spoiled you for the rest of your life.

GARBER: So I spent a week there in January. This is right after the war. It's January and it's cold and the city was still in pretty poor shape. I set out an agenda and timeline for Frowick, a budget. Partly because I was still trying to do my day job at AID and partly because I didn't want to go there full-time, I would go for a week and come back. Ultimately, Frowick built a team that ran the elections and I would come in as an expert advisor.

The Dayton Accords required that the OSCE certify that conditions were right for the elections before they could take place. The condition were supposed to include: have refugees and displaced people returned to their homes? Had the ethnic cleansing that had taken place over the horrific years of the conflict been reversed? Those were supposed to be part of the conditions for holding the elections – and they weren't met, yet everyone wanted the elections to take place.

It became a very contentious political effort on whether to hold the elections or not. It was the first time I'd seen the NSC (National Security Council) micromanaging a process; the deputy head of the National Security Council was chairing meetings on a regular basis. When I would come back from my trips, I would report in effect to the NSC working group, completely outside of the AID structure.

Ultimately, there was an issue that came up about Radovan Karadzic, the head of the Serb Republic, that had broken away from Bosnia and was a war criminal.

Q: He had not been captured?

GARBER: Not only had he not been captured, he was the head of the party that was going to compete in the elections. Frowick said, "I'm decertifying this party if Karadzic

remains as the head." A bit of gamesmanship and the party de facto removed him as the head, although he was still living in the Serb Republic and was traveling around.

It was very exciting, energizing and enlightening in terms of some of the post-conflict situations we've seen since in Afghanistan and Iraq. Lots of lessons, lots of experiences that weighed heavily on me during this period. It was pretty intense.

Q: Elections did take place on schedule?

GARBER: The first elections took place on schedule in September 1996. Again, by the time they took place we all knew what the outcome was going to be - entrench the three dominant nationalist parties representing the three ethnic groups. So the vision of elections creating moderating influences was totally lost. There were people who said, "Why are you going through these elections, give what the outcome is going to be?" Again, it had been so baked into our foreign policy and planning for how we were going to get out of Bosnia that we went forward. They were certified.

I remember one big issue – after the elections took place, the US was going to determine whether or not sanctions were going to be lifted on Bosnia. I advocated – unsuccessfully – with Madeleine Albright and others that we not certify the elections. Frowick had gone forward with the national elections but postponed the municipal elections for six months. I said let's wait until the local elections before we issue the certification and lift the sanctions.

To be fair, all the other countries wanted to lift the sanctions; we would have been isolated, but I said we should definitely not say these were good elections, there were lots of problems with them. Basically, Bosnia for the past 22 years has been peaceful so in that sense Holbrooke achieved his goal, but it definitely hasn't reconciled.

Q: Did you ever write up the lessons you learned in that, that would be useful in the future?

GARBER: Every time I'd come back from a trip, I'd write up a long memo with some lessons. After the process, I did a couple of presentations on Bosnia, talking specifically about those lessons. I don't think I ever published anything for this one, but a year later I co-edited a book with one of the folks at CDIE on post-conflict elections in which Bosnia was one of the case studies. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACA900.pdf

Q: So people who want to go back and find out can find this CDIE stuff.

GARBER: The guy who edited the book was a real entrepreneur, a guy named Krishna Kumar. He got commercial publishers to publish several books he edited; Lynne Reiner was the publisher of this book on post-conflict elections, which included nine or 10 case studies. He did a good job.

Q: You're still in PPC while all this is going on. Is there anything in the remainder of that period to highlight before you moved on to become the director of the West Bank/Gaza mission?

GARBER: I can't remember when but Brian decided he wanted to replace Colin so he moved Colin up to the front office to be the chief economist and put Kelly Kammerer in the role of the acting head of PPC. This is around late 1995, '96. Then the elections took place and again major changes.

Around April '97, he appointed Kelly to be the head of the Near East Bureau – Kelly was doing a really good job in PPC and morale had improved considerably. He had his own style, which was unique, but it really worked and people really appreciated his efforts. All of a sudden, Brian says he needs Kelly to move to the Asia/Near East bureau to be the acting head of that Bureau because someone had left. He informs me that "you're going to take over until Tom Fox arrives." This was how he told me that he was going to nominate Tom Fox as the new AA (assistant administrator) because he had decided to make it now a Senate-confirmed position.

Q: It had not been?

GARBER: It had not been for quite a while. A lot of people had recommended that it be made Senate-confirmed and for bureaucratic reasons it was not due to restrictions on the number of AAs. Then Brian negotiated with the Hill (he traded something or got an extra slot) and said "I'm going to make the head of PPC an assistant administrator subject to Senate confirmation." Which was a great elevation. He decided to nominate Tom Fox, also a great pick. I knew Tom from his work on the ACVFA (Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid). He said in the interim, "Until Tom is confirmed, you're going to run PPC."

It ended up being nine and a half months that I was the acting assistant administrator for PPC. I don't think I did anything that was memorable in transforming the agency or PPC in my time, but I do think I was an effective caretaker and continued the efforts Kelly had made to restore morale.

Q: On behalf of former administrators of PPC, I thank you for promoting the idea of a Senate confirmed position.

GARBER: I remember you were and I think Bolton was…

Q: And so was Rich Bissell.

GARBER: Rich was. It was after that – it may have been with the reorganization Brian did because he needed a new assistant administrator for the global bureau, and there were a limited number. I don't know exactly when this came about, but he decided this would be akin to State policy planning which also is not a Senate-confirmed…

Q: Totally different concept.

GARBER: Right but I'm just saying that was I think the parallelism.

Q: It reverted at some point again to what it is now, assistant…

GARBER: That we pick up when I come back on the other side. That was the result of the PPC being disbanded during the Bush administration completely, and everything going over to F (Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources). When we recreated it in 2009, I made the argument that let's just do it as a non-Senate-confirmed because we could do it much quicker and get it up and running.

Q: The last couple of years in PPC you worked with Tom Fox?

GARBER: I worked closely with Tom Fox. There is one piece I did want to mention – I got to travel a couple of times with Brian on his trips. One of those was significant – we were going first to Hong Kong (I think it was September 1997) for the meeting of the World Bank/IMF (International Monetary Fund) –

Q: This was the transition of Hong Kong to China or right after.

GARBER: The meetings for whatever reason were held in Hong Kong –

Q: The first big occasion for Hong Kong as a part of China after the transfer from the British.

GARBER: I don't remember, I remember being there – loved being in Hong Kong, I thought it was a fascinating city. Then we went to India. India's important. It was interesting. I got to break off from Brian and go to Lucknow to meet some of our partners..

The most consequential part of the India trip for me was sitting in the car or bus talking to the acting mission director Terry Myers. We'd known each other because he'd been the head of the Russia office when I first came into AID and spent a lot of time talking about democracy in Russia.

So Terry and I are chatting and Terry asked "what are you going to do after PPC?"

I said "I don't know, I feel like it's really important to get out to the field so I will look for some job where I can work in the field."
Terry says, "Why don't you go be a mission director?"

I said, "Terry, I'm a political appointee, how can I be a mission director?"

Terry said "In the old days in India for example they used to have non-career officers."

Q: John Lewis.

GARBER: John Lewis was a guy he mentioned. And he said, "There have been a couple of others – in Indonesia, Bill Fuller, and others who were non-career officers."

I said, "Really? Is that possible?" (Laughter)

Q: How naïve you were.

GARBER: I was totally naïve. It put the idea in my head and I went back to talk to Kelly, who is now in charge of the Asia bureau, because Kelly had also been a non-Foreign Service officer who'd been a mission director in Nepal. I said, "Kelly, Terry mentioned this – is this doable?"

He said, "yeah, it's doable – we just have to work the system."

I said, "Is there anything in your bureau?"

"The only thing coming up this cycle is West Bank/Gaza."

Q: So he had Asia meaning everything?

GARBER: Asia/Near East. Everything from Tunisia on to Indonesia, that was the bureau at this time. He said, "Would you be interested."

I said I'd love to do it, not having a clue really of what would be involved.

Q: Back to your roots.

GARBER: Back to my roots in some ways. Being fascinated by it.

Q: Was your sister there?

GARBER: She'd been living in Israel for 20 years. But wow, – I thought he'd say some place like Nepal! But in some ways, West Bank/Gaza was really appropriate, given the nature of the program.

He said, "Let me talk to Ann Van Dusen" (who was then his senior deputy) "and see what she thinks, then we'll have to run it by Brian."

Q: This was '98?

GARBER: Tom came in in January '98. Tom said "I'd appreciate it if you'd stay at least a year-and-a-half. You've been running this bureau, you know all the details. I'm coming in fresh; it would really be helpful. If you then want to go out to the field, I would be supportive."

So I had support from Tom and Kelly, and Ann Van Dusen who I'd worked with also when we were setting up the democracy center and she was the acting head of the Global bureau. Then they had to convince Brian. Obviously appointing a non-career officer is going to tick off the career folks and I understood that. He gave me a call (probably like June '98) and said, "Okay, I'm going to do it." It would be for the next year.

He got the predictable pushback from AFSA (American Foreign Service Association). At that point, two folks – Foreign Service folks who I was close with, Dirk Dijkerman who was the other DAA in PPC, and Jim Vermilion, who was also in PPC, went to Frank Miller, then the head of AFSA, and they said, "Hey, Larry's put in his time, done all this work with Foreign Service folks, we really respect him; you should not make a big deal out of this." So, I think he made a pro forma protest, but didn't put out the pickets and stuff like that.

So I was named to be the mission director for West Bank/Gaza in June '98, and it was a year before I went out. Tom and I had a great working relationship. I learned a tremendous amount from him on style and the way to get things done, and I think he really elevated PPC tremendously during his three years there. There were interesting issues we were dealing with in those days relating to – The millennium development goals were being devised during this time.

Q: Which Colin had been much involved in.

GARBER: Right. Colin had taken that with him, but now it was being institutionalized. He was really a force. And Jim Michael was really the force at the DAC (Development Assistance Committee).

There had been a lot of pushback on some of the measurement for results, not only in the democracy sector but agency-wide. We organized (and I was heavily involved with) the mission directors' conference for November 1998. At least in my mind, this was one of the most successful mission directors' conferences I'd been at. It was a three-day event - we probably had 20 breakout sessions where mission directors got to talk about specific issues, wrote up a detailed report, and it became Tom's guide for the next couple of years. A lot had to do with streamlining stuff, internal processes.

The conference was right after the decision about how AID was going to be formally structured. We'd had this brutal debate in the mid-'90s about whether AID would be folded under State like USIA (United States Information Agency) and ACDA (Arms Control and Disarmament Agency)…

Q: This was under Jesse Helms' pressure…

GARBER: Jesse Helms and Secretary Christopher. Brian had successfully resisted it, had gotten the support of Vice President Gore and First Lady Hillary Clinton, so President Clinton decided he would just move USIA and ACDA into State and leave USAID

independent. Then a couple of years later Helms is still pushing and they came up with this formula which Brian resisted but ultimately accepted that AID would be formally designated as a statutory agency subject to the foreign policy guidance of the Secretary of State. Clearly, the administrator would be subordinate to the Secretary of State and the delegation of authorities would be from the Secretary of State to the AID administrator. In practice, nothing changed but it set the stage for what happened during the Bush administration when the delegations of authority went to a deputy secretary of State.

Q: I was talking with Peter McPherson several days ago and he was talking about the arrangement he made with either Haig or Shultz. He stressed that he would certainly report to the secretary, they still retained in those days to OMB (Office of Management and Budget), negotiated their own budget and so on. At the time that this agreement in '98 was worked out, did AID still have a direct line to OMB?

GARBER: Yes. But it was now through a delegation of authority as opposed to through either tradition or statutory relationship – so it could be pulled any time and ultimately was pulled. Helms got his revenge in that Brian was nominated to be ambassador to Brazil and Helms put a hold on it and ultimately refused to lift the hold so Brian after six months withdrew.

Q: Did Brian stay on as AID administrator to the end?

GARBER: No. When he was nominated, he started taking classes in Portuguese thinking he was going to be confirmed. He left in June '99 and Clinton nominated a guy named Brady Anderson who was not the then-star baseball player for the Baltimore Orioles but a guy from Arkansas who Clinton had known. Probably nothing is remembered of his tenure for a good reason. Though he did come out to West Bank/Gaza. He was a caretaker.

Q: He stayed until the election?

GARBER: Right.

Q: So those were eventful years. You were moving from a narrow though important specialty to then dealing with global issues. Did you have a lot of dealings with the Hill?

GARBER: Some but not a lot. I know other people in these positions have had a lot of dealings but for whatever reason – we had LPA handle a lot of stuff – we were not handling the budget at that time, it was in the M bureau so we didn't have to deal with those issues. I had some dealings but it was not a big part of my job.

Q: Kelly was the acting, he of course had that background.

GARBER: But basically, we left it to the LPA shop. Ours were much more focused, it was basically policy, the whole strategic planning process, and running what kind of reports missions need to provide, CDIE, then we had this Development Partners Office

which ran donor coordination stuff. Those were our offices, we tweaked them but that's how we ran them.

USAID West Bank/Gaza – Mission Director

Q: During this last year you were really assigned to be in West Bank/Gaza but staying on a Tom's request. Then in July '99? Now you have a family.

GARBER: I had one child. In April 1999, I got permission to study Arabic for a couple of months which I thought would be helpful. After a few weeks studying Arabic, they told me that after studying for two months I would go from (in their ratings) 0/0 to 0+/0+. I said "wow."

Q: The Hebrew didn't help?

GARBER: It helped a little but Hebrew's a simpler form of Arabic. Arabic is a lot more complicated and it was a challenge for me.

Q: You were much older.

GARBER: I was 43, 44. I did it diligently for two months. The other story I always tell is that when I arrived in West Bank/Gaza it took me six weeks to meet a Palestinian who did not speak adequate English; most of the Palestinians we were dealing with were quite fluent in English, and we were living in Herzliya, which is an Israeli high-tech town where everyone spoke English, and we were working in a USAID mission in Tel Aviv where the requirement for anyone in the mission was they spoke fluent English. So it wasn't necessary. At various points, we had a tutor come in and teach us Arabic, but it never took.

Q: There had been previous mission directors in that spot; you were not the first.

GARBER: Until 1994, when the Oslo Accords went into effect, we had a representative in Jerusalem who was responsible for the West Bank, and one at the embassy in Tel Aviv who was responsible for Gaza. They were completely autonomous and running their programs separately. After the Oslo Accords, we set up a "mission"; Chris Crowley became the mission director. He consolidated the two offices in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

There's an interesting political story about this time, which almost got Brian in a lot of trouble. In '94-'95, they were deciding where to put the mission. When it was an office, it was one or two people working out of the consulate. Chris started looking for an office in Jerusalem, and the backlash was immediate. Warren Christopher the Secretary of State calls Brian and says, "What are you guys doing? You can't rent property in Jerusalem for the Palestinians." Brian says, "I don't know what you're talking about; I'll look into this."

As result, Congress passed a law (at the time; it changed 15 years later) that said no U.S. government entity can rent or purchase property in Jerusalem for the purpose of serving the Palestinian programs. Given that Congress at that point had said the U.S. should move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (which the executive kept waiving), they weren't going to allow the entity that represented the U.S. government to the Palestinians be housed in Jerusalem. So, we had four people, trailers on the consulate compound in Jerusalem, and Chris set up the office in Tel Aviv. By the time I got there, the office had grown to 70 staff.

Q: Mostly Israelis? Palestinians?

GARBER: An interesting mix. We had the U.S. Foreign Service officers and PSCs (personal services contractors). Then we had Israelis, mostly Palestinian-Israelis meaning Arab-speaking citizens of Israel. They did most of the work in the Tel Aviv office. We also had Jerusalemites who carried an Israeli identity card but were not citizens of Israel; they could travel freely to the office in Tel Aviv without any hassle. Then we had our program people, FSNs (Foreign Service nationals) who lived in Ramallah and Gaza, and they required permits particularly when the situation turned problematic. That was just one of many anomalies about this post.

Q: What was the nature of your job during the five years you were there? What were you trying to accomplish? What were the big issues and difficulties?

GARBER: First it's worth my reflecting on the initial deployment – I was excited about going. However, we didn't go as a family; I went June 30th , and Gayle was finishing up work and so we decided she would stay till September, and I would come back in September and pick her and our infant son up to return together. I had the first two months on my own. I remember flying over there thinking "Oh my god, what have I gotten myself into?" I had come to PPC as a democracy officer and now had a broader base experience as a development professional – but I'd never served at a mission.

Q: But Marilyn Zak introduced you to one in Jamaica.

GARBER: I'd been on TDYs all over, but I'd never served for an extended period in a mission, I wasn't a career Foreign Service officer. I'd spent a year in Israel as a student, but I wasn't an expert on the Middle East at that time. Most of my work had been in Africa and Latin America and Eastern Europe, so except for one paper in 1989 on Palestinian elections I really hadn't done anything substantive related to the Middle East.

And there was the issue of my ethnicity, and would that be a factor? So I get to post, normal introductions. First day, the deputy mission director who had stayed on for a couple of weeks introduces me to the ambassador. I go to meet the ambassador –

Q: Who was?

GARBER: Ed Walker. I sit down in his office and he says to me, “I have to ask you this question. Is it true that you have close relatives who are settlers?”

I say, “What are you talking about?” I then said, “My sister has lived here for 20 years, but she lives in Jerusalem and is as far away as you can imagine politically from being a settler. She’s working on programs right now that are joint Israeli-Palestinian programs in the health sector for a non-governmental organization. She certainly is not a settler; where is this information coming from?”

He said, “We’ve just heard rumors and wanted to be sure right up front.”

So you can imagine how I felt. Right after this meeting, I’m going to my inaugural meeting with the mission, having met none of them other than three or four people . I’m like, “Oh my god if this rumor is out there what are they all thinking about me? Am I a settler representative?”

So I’d say for about six months there was considerable suspicion about who I was and what I represented. Slowly, I began winning people over; we had a really good team, some who had been there for a couple of years and some who had recently joined.

Someone had told me before I went out there that one of the ways that mission directors are judged is by how many of their staff become mission directors years later. Aaron Williams was held up for being great at making sure his staff in South Africa had gone on to senior positions in the agency. Ten years later, I can say I had a wonderful team, but it wasn’t I that promoted them, but they helped me to succeed – from my contracts officer and my controller, my deputy and others, they were great people who became good friends and I could rely on them. And, the FSNs also became really close friends.

That was challenge number one. Challenge number two was figuring out how was I going to operationalize in Tel Aviv all those things I learned in Washington. A big part of my success was due to the relationship I had with my deputy, Bill Hammink, who became one of AID’s all-stars after this stint, but at the time had been a relatively anonymous DG (democracy and governance) officer in the Africa bureau and had just served as a DG officer in Russia. I’d selected him as my deputy and it turned out to be a fantastic choice. We used to drive into the office every day together and I always felt if you could arrange to drive in with your deputy, that’s the best thing you can do because you have a half-hour of just the two of you talking about what’s going on in the Mission. That was an important piece of it; we started reshaping the mission to address some of the concerns.

The broader context was the Oslo Accords had been signed in ‘93/’94/’95, then there was a second wind, which resulted from this tough negotiation that Clinton had led at Wye River. The practical impact of Wye River was that it led to a $400,000,000 supplement for the AID budget. The AID budget had been consistently $75,000,000, which in those days was considered a lot of money, and now we suddenly have a $400,000,000 supplement to spend over three years.

So huge new resources and a lot of State Department interest in how we were going to spend this money. There really was a need from the outset for collaboration between myself and the people running the Near East bureau at State, Toni Verstandig and Jake Walles.

Q: They were in Washington?

GARBER: In Washington. I would deal directly with them, have to brief them and keep them informed. I also had to keep the ambassador and consul-general informed on a regular basis. It was a unique relationship for an AID mission in that I had two direct bosses in-country, the ambassador and the consul-general. I reported formally to an assistant administrator in the Near East bureau, but a lot of my policy-level contacts was to keep Toni and Jake informed.

Q: Was it keeping them informed, or did they play an active role?

GARBER: Initially they played a hyper-active micromanaging role in defining what the $400,000,000 supplemental was going to be spent on. They did not know me and they had very precise ideas of what they wanted to see done.

Q: Did they have a lot of experience in this area?

GARBER: Toni had come from the Hill, Jake had been involved on these issues for 10 or 15 years. They knew the Palestinians and the Israelis. I remember soon after being announced, I was invited to a meeting that Toni chaired at the State Department with the Israelis who were in town. She just told them what we needed. It was a very impressive performance and I appreciated the role she was going to play, but it was also about telling the Israelis how Toni expected the $400,000,000 to be used. If I remember correctly, I think they had prescribed the six or seven things we were going to do with the $400,000,000.

Q: Is that what you did?

GARBER: It was what we were planning to do. When I got there, yes we were planning a $70,000,000 road from Jenin to Nablus, we were planning an industrial estate along the border between the West Bank and Israel, we were planning this presidential scholarship program, $20,000,000 for that. A big water infrastructure program –

Q: These were all things the Israelis needed to agree to as well as the Palestinian Authority or whoever was in charge in those days?

GARBER: Right, the Palestinian Authority was our counterpart. One of my early meetings was with the minister of planning and international cooperation in Palestine, Nabil Shaath. I said, “Here’s what we’re planning, but we want to make sure you’re comfortable with these things, and here’s how we’re going to do them.” Again there was

a certain understanding that this was how the U.S. government operates and there was excitement about these programs – they were going to be a huge boon for Palestine. But they then also had to be cleared through what was called the Coordinator of Government Affairs in the Territories (COGAT), led by an Israeli major-general. They had to approve these projects also.

These were the good days. The period I got there in June '99 through October 2000 were what I call the best of times in the Tale of Two Cities context. Peace, no terrorism, economy booming, major assistance resources available, major infrastructure projects planned - we are nearing the end of the transition period and are going to begin talking about an independent Palestinian state.

I remember Bill and I driving around Jerusalem and Bill saying, "We ought to start thinking about property for our mission in the Palestinian territories." There were no restrictions on traveling to the West Bank at all – we could use our private cars, go anywhere we wanted on the West Bank. In Gaza, I remember going to dinner at one of our contractors' house in Gaza where the guy who was our project manager self-drove into Gaza and drove us home. You just had to call security. When I tell people about what it was like they just can't believe. "My god, you were able to do all those things?"

Q: Then what happened?

GARBER: Then the intifada broke out. Again, we didn't see it coming. October 2000. Ariel Sharon went to the Temple Mount to make a political point. The Palestinians started protesting. I guess the bigger context was that in July, Clinton had tried to close a deal at Camp David, and that had failed. They couldn't get a deal.

Q: In the end –

GARBER: Arafat refused. You can ask different people, but the deal wasn't closed. A lot of bitterness on the Palestinian part. So Sharon went up there and these flare-ups began. We thought it would be two or three days like it had been in the past and we'd go back to normal. It kept escalating and escalating. I remember the week before this incident, we had had a ceremony in the West Bank for a $45,000,000 waste-water treatment plant and we had opened a new community center in Jericho – we were rolling. All of a sudden, this happened. It took me several months to begin writing back to Washington that this is not just a blip, it was something much more serious.

The intifada started in October. In January, the bureau called me back to Washington and said "You have to present a plan. What are you going to do? You have all this money and you can't keep doing the things you have been doing. What are you eliminating?"

So we worked hard to put together a plan, which I presented in February 2001, making the case for keeping certain things.

Q: What kinds of things did you think you could accomplish under these circumstances?

GARBER: We re-defined the program as moving from a post-conflict development program into a transition program, which had elements of humanitarian assistance and development to the extent that we could implement such projects. For example, we had a civil society program, which we had awarded at the end of the fiscal year, September 2000. It was a major program that was really going to change the way we were doing civil society programs. It was very much political, falling under the DG office. All of a sudden these organizations that we wanted to support needed to do more service delivery as opposed to advocacy-type work. The contract, however, had been for advocacy programs.

I remember sitting down with the contracts officer and said to him, "I don't want to cancel this given that it took so long to procure and award, and I think it has potential - how do we do this?" He said it has to be advocacy of some sort but if we put service delivery together with advocacy we can do it. So it became advocacy-plus and the service delivery began to be dominant.

Health programs expanded and away from capacity-building and more into service delivery. We were able to take a number of our existing programs and shift them. Other programs we put on hold or we put the money on hold because we still wanted to do them but realized it would take a change in the political situation, like the desalinization plant, the Gaza water carrier –

Q: Big investments.

GARBER: - we just parked the money for a couple of years. State and AID agreed.

Q: Were you able to do those things?

GARBER: Looking back, the big success of the program was that we were able to do enough of those things to make the efforts warranted. It was often a surreal situation where on the one hand you have the reports of terrorist incidents, buses and pizza parlors blowing up, et cetera. Then I would report back on all that we had accomplished on the ground. We were able to do a lot of stuff. I guess it's a reality in lots of places, but because in Israel/Palestine the media focus was so elevated, people just didn't believe we were getting anything done because all they would see is the blood in the streets.

Q: Were other donors there? Was the World Bank there? Were you working with them?

GARBER: There was a very strong donor community. We were a little bit the outsiders for a couple of reasons. One is our offices were in Tel Aviv whereas the other donors were based in Jerusalem or Ramallah, including the World Bank. And second our program was much more sensitive to political considerations from Washington and Israel.

That said, the donors valued us for those reasons – we could deliver on a number of the political areas. There was something set up after Oslo called the ad hoc liaison committee

(AHLC), which was headed by the Norwegians but included all the major donors and provided a forum for political-assistance level discussions. And there was the consultative group (CG) process, which the World Bank headed.

Every six months we'd have a CG and a AHLC; those were capital-level meetings. On the ground, we had monthly meetings with Palestinian and (in the good days) Israeli involvement. There was also something called the Task Force on Project Implementation, which involved the World Bank, EU (European Union), U.S. and the UN (United Nations). This was designed to engage the Israelis on how, in difficult times, we could continue to implement the projects. The Embassy also had a regular project implementation meeting with the Israelis. They'd have a list of things they wanted the Israelis to do and I'd often go to those meetings.

I made really close friends with a number of my donor counterparts and we'd have fairly regular meetings. At one point, right when the Iraq War started, we were trying to reinvigorate our efforts with the Israelis. I hosted two dinners with all the key donors and the Israelis.

At the time, the head of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) who was part of our group was a guy named Salam Fayyad. Salam was Palestinian but an IMF employee, and he became a close friend. Then Arafat offered for him to become the minister of finance and he debated whether he should take it or not and ultimately decided to do so, left the IMF and got much more involved in Palestinian efforts. From our perspective that was the best thing that ever happened to the Palestinians.

Q: We have been going two hours and aren't close to being finished-

GARBER: Am I talking too much?

Q: No, because this is fascinating stuff. But we need to do more, so let's call this one to a halt.

Q: It's Alex Shakow again kicking off with Larry Garber for episode three in the life story of Larry Garber. This is now April 18th. Where we left off was in your role as director of the West Bank/Gaza mission and all the ups and downs associated with that, so why don't you pick it up there?

GARBER: One point that I reflect on a lot as a non-career appointee and really appreciating the lives of the Foreign Service officers who work their whole careers overseas and what this meant for them. I was both impressed with and at times envious of their ability to move from place to place and to adapt to new circumstances. But there were times when my wife and I both felt that some folks needed a reality check; they really need to go back to Washington for a year.

Q: Did you find that many of the people had been abroad for a long time?

GARBER: Most of them.

Q: Without tours in Washington?

GARBER: Again, the general attitude was to see how long they could stay away from Washington.

To show my naiveté upon arrival, the week I moved into my USAID-supplied house was in July; my wife wasn't there. It was very hot and the power went out. So I went to buy a fan and figured I'd wait till Monday to tell the EXO (executive office) that my power wasn't working. The next day, I met one of the Foreign Service officers and told him, "Oh yeah, the power went out in my house.."

He said, "Did you call GSO?" (general services office)

I said, "Who's GSO?"

He said, "Just call them, they'll come right away and fix it."

I said, "That's all I have to do?"

There was that a learning curve for me. But at times, I felt the expectations of some of the Foreign Service officers were somewhat unrealistic

Q: These are realities of living and services that could be provided rather than political…

GARBER: Right, assumptions about what type of house you were entitled to, benefits, cost of living allowances and other amenities that were quite nice for folks. Free schooling for kids. And it wasn't that I didn't appreciate that they were making sacrifices, it was the sense of entitlement and entitlement on top of entitlement that sometimes made me wonder. Particularly since they were working with local staff who are living on the local economy and not getting all these privileges. I thought that was something that needed to be placed in perspective.

One of the interesting episodes in my time there was my wife I got pregnant and we were expecting a baby. We were perfectly happy to have the baby born in Israel. My wife had a great…

Q: This is your first child?

GARBER: Second. First child was nine months old when we got there. We had worked with an ob-gyn and we were very happy with her. She was due late September 2001.

To put this in context, September 2001 was 9/11 and our Assistant Administrator for the Near East was on her first visit to the region. On September 11, about 4:00 p.m. we were

at the American Colony Hotel in Jerusalem having a wrap-up session with mission, embassy and consulate staff when the economic counselor for the embassy leans over and says, "I've got to go back to Tel Aviv; something apparently just happened at the World Trade Center."

I said okay and we carried on. Half an hour later, I receive a call from my wife saying "You're not going to believe what's happening on television" and she starts describing it to me.

I said, "Okay, let me finish up and I'll call you back in a few minutes."

Five minutes later she calls me back to tell me the latest – "They're evacuating Washington!"

Q: Meanwhile this meeting is going on.

GARBER: I'm chairing this meeting. So finally, we broke up the meeting and walked around Jerusalem showing Laurie, the Assistant Administrator, and Kim Finan (who was traveling with her) around the Old City, which was very quiet. It was the middle of the Intifada, so the shops were closed.

We had a reception scheduled for that evening and I said let's go ahead with it because people are going to want to be together and have someone to talk to. We went through with the reception, which was quite moving. I think everyone who came appreciated the opportunity to see other folks and get briefings on what they had heard and learned. This is now 6:00 or 7:00, 11:00 or 12:00 on the east coast if you're tracking, so news is still coming in about what's going on.

To finish off the Laurie story. She was leaving the next day to go to Jordan, so she goes to Jordan with Kim. I later learned there had been an instruction issued by the then-acting deputy administrator Janet Ballantyne that all USAID senior folks traveling on TDY should come back immediately to Washington. She apparently ignored the instruction.

Q: Of course, they couldn't have come back to Washington anyway.

GARBER: Right. I don't know what it was but she ignored the instruction and as a result – at least that was one piece, maybe there were other pieces, as to why she was dismissed shortly thereafter.

Meanwhile, I went home to my nine-month pregnant wife. We're preparing for the birth, and the Jewish New Year is coming up. My sister lived in Jerusalem, so we planned on spending the second night of the holiday with my her and her family.

Here comes the interesting part. At this point in time, given the Intifada, US officials were not supposed to travel to Jerusalem on anything but official business. Again, most people were ignoring this rule, as it seemed silly since we had official Americans living

in Jerusalem. Moreover, we came to Jerusalem for business all the time. Clearly, if you were caught in the wrong place at the wrong time it could be serious – but you could be caught in the wrong place at the wrong time anywhere. So we went to my sister's for dinner and the next morning Gayle wakes up in labor. We're supposed to have the delivery down the hill in Tel Aviv, so we call her doctor and she says, "Just go to the hospital before you come down to make sure everything is okay."

So we go to the hospital, check in; I drag my sister along for the day to help me out. The hospital says, "Sorry, we're not going to release her because she had high blood pressure."

Now we're stuck in Jerusalem in the hospital. We have to find another doctor because her doctor wasn't licensed or accredited there. Long labor, takes about 15 hours, ultimately results in a c-section, which means she has to stay in the hospital for five days. Which means not only am I there for one day illegally, but now for five days.

I was nervous at to how the ambassador, who had imposed this rule, would react. But it turned out, he decided don't ask, don't tell. Nothing untoward happened. He joyously participated in the baby-naming ceremony.

The issue of security during the Intifada was a serious issue.

Q: Did you lose any people?

GARBER: We didn't lose people until the last year I was there. I sat on the EAC (emergency action committee), the group that came up with embassy policy to recommend to the ambassador. I sat on the one in Tel Aviv, which was responsible for Israel where we lived and for Gaza; the one in Jerusalem was responsible for Jerusalem and the West Bank.

One quick aside about my son: he was born in Jerusalem, and I never realized this until about two years ago when I was teaching a class at the National Defense University and a Supreme Court case was coming out that we were discussing. It was a case involving passports for American citizens born in Jerusalem. I discovered that people born in Jerusalem don't have a country listed on their passport. The case involved someone who wanted to have "Israel" listed on the passport. The Supreme Court decided the President can make this decision, even if Congress instructs otherwise. The case was an important separation of powers constitutional case, but I looked in my son's passport and sure enough it said "Jerusalem" not "Israel."

Q: At least it's a U.S. passport.

GARBER: On the security side, I was always advocating we should have a more proactive policy on our security posture. We didn't feel it was dangerous to go to the West Bank or Gaza; clearly, we could get caught up in something but we weren't going to be targets. We adopted a rule where anyone traveling in the West Bank or Gaza had to

have a security detail, so you had to have in your car an RSO, a regional security officer, and then you had to have three or four security contractors.

Q: So any time you went …

GARBER: Into the West Bank or Gaza.

Q: But this was only during the Intifada?

GARBER: But it was three and a half years of the Intifada, so the majority of my time in West Bank/Gaza. Initially, we were low on the totem pole to go into West Bank/Gaza so we wouldn't always get the requisite security package…

Q: And you couldn't go without it.

GARBER: And you couldn't go without it on official business. It became an issue. So we ultimately paid for – we started the trend I think of AID using program funds to hire security officers for the purpose of accompanying our teams. It was a bit politically uncomfortable for the Palestinians we were dealing with to come in with these heavy armored cars.

Q: These guards were Israelis or?

GARBER: U.S. contractors working for companies like DynCorp, Blackwater. This is still pre-Iraq War.

Q: That's not unique to this part of the world. When I went to Guatemala in the 1970s to visit with Fred Schiek who was the mission director, riding in the front seat next to the driver was a guy with a shotgun, because there was a lot of security there too.

GARBER: He was Guatemalan?

Q: No, American.

GARBER: That's what I'm saying. We had the RSO but now we added things – a trail car with four…

Q: Paid for by AID program funds.

GARBER: Paid for by AID program funds. I was traveling with folks from the consulate to see a guy who was the head of the statistics bureau at the time. The protocol was our security guy had to up to his office before we could go up and check it out. Or we had to meet in a neutral site.

This guy said, "I'm not going to let you up to my office and I'm going to refuse to meet in a neutral site." He was being stubborn and basically saying if you're coming we'll provide security and you shouldn't be so sensitive. So we didn't have that meeting.

Q: You didn't meet at all?

GARBER: We were under orders.

Q: Did that happen often?

GARBER: He was the only one I remember who refused to accommodate. There were others who were clearly uncomfortable with our security guy going through their premises before we would be allowed out of the car. It did create those types of situations. Other Palestinians were more casual about the protocol: "we put up with so much, this is the least of our problems."

Like I said, I was always a strong advocate that things were safe and we're good. In October 2003, tragedy hit us. I happened to be in the States at this point. I got a call from our deputy desk officer saying there's been a bombing of our cars in Gaza. They were going to interview potential Fulbright scholars to come to the States. It was a three- car convoy and a roadside bomb went off under one of the cars, killing three of the security contractors and severely injuring a fourth. The other two cars were not hit. It was only by coincidence that the car that was hit happened to have the security contractors; they weren't even riding in the normal…

Q: At that point you didn't lose any of your regular staff?

GARBER: But it sort of highlighted… if it had been a U.S. direct-hire staff certainly for us it would have been much more emotionally draining and it would have been also much more consequential. It made me feel like we weren't appreciating people's lives because they're just security contractors

Q: Did it constrain the activities of the mission?

GARBER: Yes and no. Since then – October 2003 – I don't think there have been any American officials who have gone into Gaza. Maybe one or two went in on special circumstances, but no U.S. government direct-hire official has gone into Gaza.

Q: I didn't realize that.

GARBER: Even before then, our ability to go to Gaza as government officials was somewhat restricted, so what we did was rely very heavily on our few Palestinian local hires who lived in Gaza. They lived there and would come to the office in Tel Aviv once a week, but otherwise they were in Gaza doing project monitoring, and our NGOs stayed there and kept implementing projects. It just highlighted how challenging monitoring programs is when you have these types of security circumstances.

I think we created some of the precedents for the type of monitoring that now exists in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, where it has more formal names – tier one, tier two, tier three levels of monitoring in these difficult security environments. In this case, we were at the front end. I'm sure there are other places like Lebanon and Central America where similar efforts had been made. Certainly, 21st century we were on the cutting edge of these efforts.

Q: Were there any projects there you think could carry out their purposes during this period despite all this? Were these just humanitarian or were there some development programs?

GARBER: As I said, we tried to keep a mix of humanitarian and development. Some of the development programs had much more of a humanitarian kick, but we did try to keep some of the development programs, particularly what we called community services programs, which were small infrastructure programs. They had a livelihood and jobs component, which was arguably a workfare type effort, but they also were building community infrastructure that contributed in a more development sense, whether it was a community center or some type of small water project. These were the types of things we continued to do even after the Intifada broke out. We also were still working with various ministries, some of which were based in Gaza. So even though we weren't able to visit the ministries, our contractors doing the health program would have regular contact with them.

Q: These contractors had American staff?

GARBER: The bulk were Palestinian, but often the chiefs of party were American. We had this distinction between contractors and grantees; contractors we could instruct not to be in a certain place. Grantees theoretically we were not allowed to instruct them, so many of the grantees stayed in Gaza and operated out of Gaza for much of this period under difficult circumstances. I think in a couple of cases we did shut-down contractor projects in Gaza, but mostly we didn't. Mostly, the goal was to keep the projects going, albeit to make them more humanitarian oriented.

Q: AID had at that time I presume rules and regulations about evaluation and assessment. This sounds like an area where it would be extremely hard to meet normal AID bureaucratic requirements. Did you do that? Did you have inspector-generals saying how could you possibly do this?

GARBER: We always had the inspector-general looking over our shoulder for lots of reasons in West Bank/Gaza. It was a political program and if not the inspector general then the GAO (General Accounting Office) and others. We tried to develop mechanisms for monitoring the programs that relied on local staff and remote interactions with the contractors and others. When we could, particularly when we were dealing with ministries, we'd sometimes get permits to travel to Ramallah and so we'd arrange

meetings with the ministers there. I think on the corruption/accountability side we were able to do a very good job. We would have liked to see for ourselves…

Q: But you couldn't do that. But it didn't turn out to be impossible and you were able to continue at least to some extent to do what you wanted to do out there. This was a five-year period you were there, the last three years you say under the Intifada. Any last thoughts about that before we move to your next move?

GARBER: Just to emphasize how political this program was and how political it became, particularly after the Intifada broke out. The premise of the program before the Intifada was that it was designed to forward the U.S. agenda of bringing the Palestinians and Israelis to a peaceful settlement. After the Intifada broke out, it became less likely that peace was imminent. So the people in Washington raised questions and imposed various requirements on the program. We were one of the first programs that had to vet every contractor, grantee, or persons working for them, and in some cases had to vet who the beneficiaries were to make sure they were not in any way affiliated with terrorist organizations.

One of the things that took about a year of my time was something called an anti-terrorism certification, which had been adopted by the procurement office a year earlier. They sent out a notice saying all contractors and grantees are going to have to sign this certification. The Palestinians were outraged; they didn't feel like they should have to sign this certificate basically saying they were not terrorists. It was akin – you may remember this from your time, to the drug certification policy where grantees had to sign saying they had a policy regarding a drug-free workplace. You had to submit the certification. You had to sign this. This technically wasn't just a Palestinian issue, but applied to all AID contracts and grants. You probably remember Peter Bell?

Q: Yes.

GARBER: Peter was the head of CARE (Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere) at the time. CARE had a big program in Palestine so he came to visit and we were having dinner one night. He had just heard an earful from the CARE grantees about this certification, why they weren't signing and how it was making things difficult. He was telling me, "We have to change this Larry, I'm going to go back and raise a ruckus about it."

I said, "Peter, I don't understand one thing. You just came from Georgia, what are you doing in Georgia about this policy?"

He said, "I don't know. I can't imagine anyone would ever sign this."

His guy sitting next to him says, "Peter – everyone signs this. They don't even pay attention. It's one more piece of paper that AID makes them sign. It's only here that it has become a political issue." I came back to Washington and convinced the USAID GC and procurement to modify the wording slightly. Jim Kunder was very supportive of our

efforts; he was the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the ANE bureau at the time and worked with me. But only a quarter of the NGOs in Palestine at the time were willing to work with us as a result of this certification.

These were the types of challenges we faced - even when you're trying to do good things you run into problems. There were issues about banking rules and taxes. Congress was very sensitive about the value-added tax and whether any money was going to the Palestinian Authority because we were prohibited from giving any money to the Palestinian Authority.

Q: When you took this on and think about what it was like at the end of it, did you find this had not only been challenging in the ways that you describe, but were you glad that you had made a decision to go out and do this job? Or did you feel this was not at all what you had signed up for?

GARBER: It wasn't what I signed up for, but it was absolutely an incomparable experience. Originally I was assigned for two years; after the first year and a half (the good times) the bureau wanted to avoid my getting caught in the post-election process so put in to extend for another two years before the election results were out. So I got another two year assignment, so I served into the Bush period. Then I got another one-year extension. If I weren't capped by five years as a non-career officer, the bureau would have extended me for a couple more years.

I reveled in it. I felt like I was doing meaningful work. I enjoyed the interactions I had with Palestinian and Israeli counterparts and with my donor counterparts. It was very difficult for us to leave at so many levels. My kids had grown up there; my older son was now six and my younger son three, and only knew the life we had had in Herzliya, where we lived. Our older son had gone to a local kindergarten. Looking back, no regrets at all. We didn't accomplish substantively what we wanted, to be part of the transformation of this conflict…

Q: But that wasn't your fault.

GARBER: Right. So personally, it was incredibly gratifying.

Q: So, July 2004 you make a change. How did that come about and what is the New Israel Fund of which you became the CEO (chief executive officer)?

GARBER: As I said, I had been pushing for another year, but was told that five years was all that was allowed for non-career, non-Foreign Service officers. In fairness, five years probably was appropriate.

New Israel Fund – Chief Executive Officer

Q: Given what you were saying about being too used to living overseas.

GARBER: Right. Probably in January, I remember it was a Friday afternoon and the phone rang in the office when my wife and I were about to leave. I answered the phone and it was a woman head-hunter from some company that was looking to fill a position for the New Israel Fund. She asked if she could talk to me; I told her "I'm on my way home now, can we talk on Monday?"

I knew the organization from its early days. It was founded in 1979 as a progressive foundation to provide funds to nongovernmental organizations in Israel that were working in specific areas: civil rights, social justice, religious pluralism. The idea was to raise funds in the United States and to allocate them through an informed process in Israel. It started as a small organization, but by 2004 it was probably about a $25,000,000 a year organization giving out $7,000,000 or $8,000,000 in grants, implementing $6,000,000 or $7,000,000 in programs, and supporting a staff in the United States that did mostly fundraising but also some educational outreach.

Q: Where was it headquartered?

GARBER: Here in Washington, which was a source of controversy. Several people on the board felt it should be in New York where the money is. It was appealing to me to stay involved in the Middle East. I'd been working for five years closely on Palestinian issues and, at that time, we didn't do any work inside Israel proper. I felt this would be a great opportunity to do some work in Israel, keep me going to the region two or three times a year, and allow me to stay in touch with matters.
And they were doing work I supported. The agenda for the organization was very consistent with my values, both as a progressive American and as someone with a long-standing connection to Israel. I thought that this was a great opportunity. I spent five years as CEO of the organization.

What I didn't appreciate at the time (I got to appreciate it) was how much of the work expectation was board management – we had a very active board and spent lots of time engaging with them. There were committees and we had two, in-person, multi-day board meetings a year, plus a one-day meeting over the telephone. Just preparing for the board meeting was a job in and of itself.

Q: So this prepared you for PPC?

GARBER: Right. Fundraising was a big part of it. It helped me appreciate what a non-profit is about, that it's not simply doing good things, which is the part everyone enjoys, but it is also about making the case for your organization, and having in mind that someone else is going to come right after you and make a case for their organization and they probably have equally valid cause that they are promoting.

I was at NIF for five years. I didn't always enjoy it. I enjoyed the camaraderie and relationships but going out and viewing your job as ultimately judged by how much money you raised. I felt five years was an appropriate time to engage in that.

Q: Conveniently it coincided more or less with an administration that you probably would not…

GARBER: People ask me why didn't you go back to AID when you left West Bank/Gaza? Well, nobody invited me to go back to AID, I was a political appointee. Normally I would have been out on January 20th, 2001; now it was July 2004. I probably could have fooled some people and told them I was a career person, but I had no interest. This was post-Iraq War and yeah, I was perfectly happy to leave AID at that time.

Q: How did you get back to AID?

GARBER: Before discussing that, while I was working at the New Israel Fund, I was invited to serve on an expert panel of the National Academy of the Sciences (NAS) to review USAID programming in the democracy/governance sector and to examine how we were evaluating programs in that sector.

Q: Was this an NAS initiated program?

GARBER: Contract with AID. AID paid.

Q: Was this Rich Bissell?

GARBER: Rich was involved. He kicked it off, but one of his people ran it from the NAS side. It was a six-person expert team, which is relatively small as I discovered for NAS; normal are 15 or 20. It was headed by Jack Goldstone, a professor at GMU (George Mason University), writes a lot about demography, a very good guy. As I like to describe it, it was five PhDs and me.

Q: I have no doubt you can hold your own with five PhDs. They aren't anything compared to people working in Gaza.

GARBER: That was why I was there. The people at AID wanted at least one person who had some practical experience but also was conversant with the history of DG programs and the evolution within the agency. I remember the first meeting we had of the panel. I said "I'm just trying to understand what are we trying to do here?" Some back and forth, and I said "Where do you think the work of Tom Carothers (a scholar at Carnegie Endowment, who has written half-a-dozen books on democracy programming and USAID and countless monographs) fit into our work?" I can never forget Jack's response, which was "Larry, Tom is just a lawyer." (Laughter) With the total disdain of an academic with a Ph.D.

The panel met on and off for about 18 months. We commissioned a number of papers, had a couple of sessions at Stanford. We ultimately produced about a 250-page NAS publication. In many ways, it set the agenda for PPL (Bureau of Policy Planning and Learning) and the evaluating and monitoring efforts that we sought to promote.

One thing of interest. We had one issue where I just couldn't agree with the other panelists. They wanted to enshrine this idea that democracy sector program evaluations should be moving much more quickly and rapidly to RCTs, random controlled trials, for all evaluations. I said, "That's not practical in the democracy sector for a variety of reasons." It was the only issue in the end where we could not agree - me and the five others. They really wanted to have this gold standard and argued USAID should be moving in this direction. So I said (putting on my lawyer hat), "Well, I guess I'm going to have to write a dissent." Jack and the NAS didn't like the idea of a dissent, so we agreed instead of a dissent (and in some ways I thought this was better), incorporating my opinion directly in the Executive Summary of the 250-page tome - on page eight where it goes through the recommendations it says, "One of our members who has considerable field experience…"

Q: "… said this was irrational and couldn't possibly work."

GARBER: Right, those words. I was proud – and it was by name, "one of our members, Larry Garber, blah blah blah". If you look it up online you'll see there is a caveat to the recommendation. But that kept me in the AID loop even though I was doing work that otherwise really wasn't part of the AID process. It had gotten me engaged with folks on these issues and reminded me both on the democracy/governance side and on the PPC side that I might be interested in going back. [https://www.nap.edu/read/12164/chapter/1]

Q: So, how did it happen?

GARBER: What happened was one of my former Foreign Service staff said "The agency is really struggling; we don't have an administrator." I was going to leave NIF (New Israel Foundation) in June 2009. They asked me to stay another three months, so this is September 2009. She said "You ought to go talk to Alonzo" who was the acting administrator at the time.

So I sent Alonzo a note saying I'd love to talk to with you. I go talk to him and in the room with him is our good friend Jim Michel, who was the Acting Counselor. Alonzo and Jim (this is November 2009) say – because this far into the administration we had no idea when the new administrator was going to be named – "We've got to start thinking about some of the things we've talked about, including reestablishing a policy bureau at AID. Would you be interested in helping out?"

USAID – Return -- Expert Consultant to Deputy Assistant Administrator

"Sure! Why not?" I was brought on as an expert consultant. I'd never heard of that title, but you get paid on a daily rate basis. I think you're limited to a certain amount of time and you have to renew it constantly, so it wasn't ideal but it was perfect for my situation at the time.

Before I could get deep into planning the new policy bureau, I had a two-month diversion into the world of the QDDR, the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review,

which was Hillary Clinton's baby for how she was going to transform diplomacy and development. It made me appreciate (which I still do) this dilemma we have in the development world about how we view the relationship with the State Department and with diplomacy.

In my mind, Clinton supported development as much as any Secretary of State we've had. She really believed development was critical for transforming the globe and serving U.S. interests. But she wanted it to be integrated with diplomacy. Obviously there was some resistance on the AID side both from a philosophical perspective and even more from a bureaucratic perspective. So getting to see that up close and personal (I was co-in-charge of one of the five initial working groups) was really interesting. For about two months I was heavily involved in the QDDR process.

Q: Frustrating?

GARBER: Coming back to AID at this point, I found it intellectually exciting but ultimately frustrating. They came up with a whole slew of recommendations but most of the big recommendations got so watered down that they really didn't mean anything. It reflected again the unwillingness of either State or AID to make big changes in their relations; certain changes on the margins but the big changes were not adopted. The process continued for another year. The report was issued, lots of recommendations that they tracked but in my sense not a particularly productive exercise.

Q: That sounds like what I've heard from Jim and others.

GARBER: That was November. Then January, finally a USAID administrator was named. I met Raj Shah and he initially appointed a couple of people to head up the formation of the new policy bureau: the exec-sec Steve Pierce and the acting head of DCHA (Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance) Susan Reichle. They had full-time jobs. I knew both of them. They tasked me to head the six-person team that was responsible for re-creating PPL (Policy, Planning and Learning).

Q: At that point, there really was no policy bureau, period?

GARBER: During the transition from Clinton to Bush, PPC had continued until 2006 when Randall Tobias became Administrator. Tobias had been the head of PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) Relief). He'd cut his chops on setting up PEPFAR, which was quite revolutionary and which was originally resisted by USAID folks as "It's getting State into our business."

I remember I was still at AID when he first started in 2003 and he came to speak to a mission directors' conference; it didn't affect our West Bank Gaza program, but others were bemoaning the fact that the Bush Administration was organizing PEPFAR with a heavy State-control. But he thought it was a really successful way to do business, and he wanted to replicate it when he was nominated three years later as the head of USAID. What he did was convince Condoleezza Rice that he should be dual-hatted as Deputy

Secretary of State and USAID Administrator, and he would make some order out of the chaos. (One of the things Rice was concerned about was that she could not get a straight answer on how much money the U.S. government spends on democracy-building program, because it was a mishmash of AID, State, and various Congressional funds), Thus, Tobias became the one to set up the F bureau (Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources) in 2006.

Part of that process involved eviscerating PPC; "we don't need a policy bureau in AID, we have one at State and we'll track the budget stuff through F, so we don't need a budget office at AID either." So most of the AID staff who were in PPC were reassigned to F and physically moved over to the State Department. There was a remnant of a policy shop that was called something like the office of the chief operating officer. They had about a dozen pseudo-policy types who reported to the AID chief operating officer and to the extent that policy was done for the front office, it was done by this group, which Alonzo had headed before he became the acting administrator.

So there was no policy bureau. Yet every one of the reports prepared before the 2008 election recommended that the policy and budget functions should come back to AID. That was our mandate, how to implement this.

I can't say we were particularly original. Clearly, I came from having been at PPC so I knew the functions PPC had served and said, at a minimum, we want those. Then we added a couple of new things that reflected changes in the way we thought about development. We added an office of science and technology, which was initially placed in the policy bureau and stayed for a couple of years. We incubated it and ultimately it became an independent office and then part of the global development lab, which is now morphing into part of a new global bureau.

We also put emphasis on learning, which is how learning became part of the bureau name; it wasn't just doing evaluations like CDIE had done, but the real emphasis needed to be how you take evaluations or research and transform it into actionable learning. We wanted to highlight that in the bureau name. We also wanted to bring a budget function back in the policy bureau, so we recommended that there be two DAAs, one responsible for the policy side and one for budget/resource side of the shop. Just to show how decisions are sometimes made in bureaucracies, when we initially presented the memo to Raj…

Q: You had to go through Susan?

GARBER: Susan and Steve were our executive sponsors, but it was the six of us who were driving the process and I was leading the team.

Q: You went to Raj.

GARBER: Raj said "great let's get going on this." However, he was trying to recruit Mike Casella to be the head of the budget operation and Mike said "I won't do it if I don't have independent reporting to the Administrator."

Q: He was on the Hill?

GARBER: Mike had been at MCC (Millennium Challenge Corporation) at that point; he had been at OMB, he was the AID examiner in the '90s when I was in PPC. He said "I'm not going to do it if I don't have a direct line to the administrator." Raj really wanted him. In many ways, he was a great hire so I can't say I would have made a different decision if he'd given me that choice. Raj said, "Fine – we'll just have a separate office of budget, resource and management (BRM) and PPL will have everything else."

That's how PPL and BRM came into being. It wasn't the original recommendation. Now that Mark Green (USAID Administrator beginning in 2017) has proposed this new structure to join policy and budget, I said to one of the folks who was on the committee with me, "Mark is finally adopting what we proposed in 2010!" We had to go through this eight-year process to get back to the original proposal.

We had also proposed taking some of the functions out of the M (Management) bureau that were related to performance monitoring – but again, my goal was to get the new policy shop up and running as quickly as possible. I felt the agency really needed PPL to be functional immediately. Thus, the memo we prepared suggested that for some of the shifts "we should wait 90 or 120 days and see where we are and whether we want to absorb some of these other functions from M." The things we were proposing were things we could do quickly.

The second thing I said is we don't need a Senate-confirmed assistant administrator. We can go back to the assistant to the administrator. It's worked at State with S/P and should really be a senior level advisor to the administrator. I also (again influenced to some extent by S/P and my own sense of bureaucratic organization) said it should be limited in staffing. If you look at the original personnel proposal we made, it was a very modest bureau – about 50 people, offices of six or seven, and the idea that we were going to recruit the best and the brightest. So more in that sense the S/P model than the original PPC.

Q: At the time you proposed this assistant to the administrator position, you were still talking about having the budget function under that person? Or had you lost that battle already?

GARBER: I can't remember the sequence.

Q: What I'm getting at, if you had the budget function did the S/P model make sense, as contrasted with an assistant administrator position?

GARBER: My feeling is that the authority of PPC/PPL comes from the relationship with the administrator and not from the designation as an assistant administrator. If she or he is close to the administrator, they will have power. If the administrator treats all her or his AAs alike, regardless of the title, the PPL head will be viewed as second tier because the others have real programs to supervise and have to go to the White House on sensitive high-profile political issues, whereas the PPL guy is going to the White House for budget discussions.

This is how I felt. In a couple of cases, the issue of who should represent the agency in certain NSC-led efforts was raised. It was a battle sometimes between the regional bureau, the technical bureau, and PPL. My argument was PPL should be the convener.

Today, I'm just not sure; after being through this a second time, I probably would put more importance on the Senate confirmation for the head of PPL, but at the time I really felt it was more important to get the Bureau up and running and if we had to wait for confirmation…

Q: It probably made sense in those terms.

GARBER: Also – at the time, this was going to be the only assistant to the administrator. There would be whatever number of AAs and one assistant to the administrator, who clearly was the administrator's right-hand policy adviser. Raj blew that up right away. The proliferation of bureaus under Raj was incredible. We had a new PPL, new BRM, new bureaus for Food Security, and for Afghanistan/Pakistan. And all these people had the same title; they were all assistants to the administrator. So instead of one person, now you had six with the same title. So it watered it down.

Q: My own sense is you're right; this function is best performed by someone close to the administrator that the administrator trusts to be a neutral party acting on his behalf in the midst of all these competing interests. But I think it's much easier to do that if you also have the status – as originally written – as the third-ranking position in the agency in the old days.

GARBER: It was very much taken into account. We looked back to PPC and the glory days when you were the head of the Bureau. I knew the arguments on both sides and I'd seen the benefits with Tom Fox when he came in and became the Senate-confirmed AA. I just thought getting it up and running was more important.

Q: When it was up and running, you were in charge?

GARBER: I was in charge for three months as the acting head of PPL. The highlight of that period was recruiting for the slots we had designated. I remember we had a retreat to set things up. We had a few other political folks who came in, powerhouses themselves. One star was a woman named Ruth Levine, who had come from CGD (Center for Global Development) and was a real monitoring and evaluating expert - she set the stage for evaluation policy. We recruited the head of the office of science and technology, Alex

Degan, who also came with considerable reputation and vision, and really moved quickly on the S&T (science and technology) front.

Q: Did you recruit those people, or did Raj?

GARBER: Raj recruited them – Ruth was recruited to head the office of evaluation. I met her a couple of times and then I went to Raj and said, "How about we make her a Deputy Assistant Administrator?" I just wanted someone else up there and she was by far the most capable, so she came in as the DAA.

Q: Deputy assistant to the assistant! (Laughter)

GARBER: There you're laughing! Calling it deputy assistant administrator was fine; it was only the assistant to the administrator that has to use the funny language.

Q: Okay. So you were happy?

GARBER: I was disappointed. I would like to have been designated as the Assistant to the Administrator. I felt I had been there before, helped set it up. Raj wanted someone who he felt comfortable with and for whatever reason he didn't feel comfortable with me at the time. So he decided to move Susan Reichle, who had been in DCHA, to head up PPL; she's a very close personal friend. She said, "Don't worry, we'll make this work."

USAID Africa Bureau – Deputy Assistant Administrator

In retrospect, I came in through this informal process and never went through the presidential personnel office. I never really negotiated what I was going to do. I never really put in for specific positions. Soon, the then chief of staff at the agency said, "Why don't you take over as the agency point person on Sudan and go to the Africa bureau." The Africa bureau at the time didn't have an assistant administrator. "Go work with Sharon Cromer." So I did that for 10 months. The Sudan stuff was fascinating.

Q: Did you work with Princeton Lyman?

GARBER: With Princeton, Johnnie Carson. We had meetings twice a week at the NSC, going on from October to January, and dealing with fairly micro- issues. The meetings were chaired by Dennis McDonough, who was Obama's deputy national security advisor at the time. Wow, twice a week going to the NSC for these micro meetings, it reminded me of the Bosnia experience. I was the election expert – there was no one else. When Dennis wanted to know about elections, he'd say "Larry what do you think about this?" I was working with Princeton and others there.

Q: Was that – I know people who've been associated with that have a sense of great frustration with the way it's turned out. Quick lessons on that process, knowing what you know now was there anything that could have been done?

GARBER: I don't think so. I was part of the euphoria of wow, we really accomplished something. It felt good to have a success. I went back to South Sudan maybe a year later to help the mission director work on strategic planning and we were still in a bullish orientation. Then to have it blow up like it did – yeah. It's again reminiscent of the Palestinian situation where we had such an exciting four or five years after Oslo, then to have it blow up; its 15 years later, and it been downhill compared to where they were in 1999.

In South Sudan, it's been downhill compared to where they were in 2013. I don't have any good lessons. The only lesson I have is that we need to appreciate that we don't control everything politically, as much as we'd like to. We need to be politically smart, understand things. But even if you have the smartest people, if the local folks on the ground want to engage in conflict there's really little you can do.

Q: Then there were no big signs of that at the time, the president and vice president being at each other's throats?

GARBER: The first time I went to South Sudan was in July 2010 for my orientation visit. I remember there was a woman who'd been working on South Sudan for 10 years and I asked her what book should I read. She told me the book everyone reads is called Emma's War. It's about a young, somewhat naïve British woman who goes to Sudan, falls in love with Riek Machar and lives with him as his wife. Ultimately, she is killed in a car accident – I think legitimately an accident in '91. She is blamed for contributing to the war that broke out then between the different ethnic groups.

Well, Riek Machar is still around. Reading that book probably should have given me the idea that these divisions were more in their blood than a lot of the happy talk that we had with all the folks that were there. But you want to believe that you can resolve these conflicts. We had facilitated negotiations with Sudan to allow this referendum to take place. Everyone knew the result would be independence and now they were going to build their own independent state. But the ethnic cleavages were so deep they couldn't overcome them, and it's now four years later and very little has changed.

Q: It seems to get worse.

GARBER: Right. So Princeton wrote a piece a couple of years ago with someone over at NDU (National Defense University) about how we need to think about trusteeship for South Sudan. That's like going back 60 years. Yet, I don't think that's such an outrageous idea; how else are you going to stop the bloodletting where it just seems to be pervasive. Every time you have a lull, it lasts only a few months.

Q: That was not too happy in the long term, but interesting at the time. You were right there in the situation room and all these other things. Then you were deputy assistant administrator at the same time, in the Africa bureau?

GARBER: Part of the assignment was to go out of PPL to be the DAA in the Africa bureau responsible for Sudan, southern Africa, and the program office. I was in the Africa bureau for 10 months. From that perch, I was managing the Sudan portfolio.

Q: When did you get involved in worrying about local solutions and issues of that kind?

GARBER: I came back to PPL and was looking for new things to do, and that's how I took on local solutions. But before that I should mention one other really exciting thing – and probably what really got me in trouble because I enjoyed the Africa bureau and probably would have stayed there.

Right before I'd gone to the Africa bureau, the NSC had decided to convene a working group on political reform in the Middle East. This is August 2010, so in some ways quite prescient. It was being led by four different directorates at the NSC. It included Defense, State, AID, CIA, a few others.

The first question is who is going to be the point person for AID? Will it be PPL, i.e. me? Is it going to be the head of the democracy, human rights, and governance bureau? Or is it going to be the Middle East bureau? So we ended up in traditional AID fashion having a triumvirate; the three DAAs from DCHA, Middle East bureau, and myself representing AID.

We at AID, because we had some money, hosted a roundtable for this process. Lo and behold, January 2011 the so-called Arab Spring erupts. We've been working on this issue with an expectation that we were – well, five or six years away from some type of eruption – and all of a sudden it's here.

Within AID, I was thinking back to the days of the post-Cold War, that this would be like what happened in the post-Soviet Union and we needed to be prepared. So we had a three-pronged process where we had the Middle East bureau responsible for the countries in the Middle East and to deal with those issues. We had a second group responsible for new missions and how we were going to deal with the management issues. Then we created a Middle East strategic planning group within AID and I convinced the relevant people that I should head this. Here I am, DAA in the Africa bureau now heading up this Middle East Strategic Planning group. I was fired up by this; this was really going to be exciting. I really did believe this would be a historic transformation.

On the plus side, I managed for a three or four month period a working group, which met regularly. We had a retreat in Morocco and brought all the mission directors in the region together. And, we produced this plan to transform how we should operate programmatically and conceptually in the Middle East. A 15-page plan, I was very proud of the document; I didn't write it, one of the team members wrote it. We also produced nine technical papers, sector specific like how we should deal with rule of law or elections or economic reform. It was a very productive, serious effort within AID. We were doing this on our own with some top-level cover. The president had made a speech about political reform in the Middle East in May 2011.

Then I ran into bureaucratic headwinds.

Q: In AID or the State Department?

GARBER: In AID. I ended up – this was probably the low point of my narrative. What happened was I gave the finished product to the acting AA, George Laudato. But there had already been an AA nominated to serve who was then at the State Department.

Q: AA for?

GARBER: Middle East. George didn't want to do anything that could possibly cross her up. I had been keeping her informed of what we were doing - her name was Mara Rudman. I said, "We need to move forward, Mara. We don't know when you're going to be confirmed and we can't wait all this time for you." She said, "You're going to give me a fait accompli; I'm not going to be able to do what I want."

George slow-walked it the action memo for the administrator that had to go through him. I ultimately took it up to the deputy administrator with the other two DAAs who were working on this with me. He said, "We'll see. If she's not confirmed in a couple of weeks, then I agree we need to move on."

Well, she was confirmed. She was pissed at me that I had pursued this despite her asking me not to. At the same time, because I was spending a lot of time on the Middle East stuff, the woman who was in charge of the Africa bureau felt I couldn't have two wives at the same time. I did all the work; I don't think I shirked on the responsibility for either task.

But there was one meeting in particular where I went to New York as part of a State/AID delegation to talk about Libya. She said, "Why are you going to New York?"

"Well, it's part of my Middle East responsibilities."

"Yeah, but you're in the Africa bureau."

That one…

Q: Did you tell her Libya was in Africa?

GARBER: But it was more of a personality clash.

Q: What was the name of this woman again?

GARBER: In the Middle East, it was Mara Rudman. In the Africa bureau, Sharon Cromer.

USAID PPL Bureau – Deputy Assistant Administrator

All of a sudden, I was basically asked to go back to PPL. The Administrator and Deputy Administrator thought I was doing a good job in the Africa bureau and they should be supportive of me, but they didn't want to break any crockery and so I was the easy one to tell, "Go back to PPL."

So that's how I got involved in local solutions. It was sort of a default. Raj had come in with USAID Forward and one of the big pieces was local solutions. It was basically implementation and procurement reform. It was this idea that we needed to do procurement reform by providing more direct contracts and grants to local-based organizations.

Q: This is the 30% that got him into trouble?

GARBER: Right.

Q: Do you want to describe what that was?

GARBER: A the time, probably 85% of USAID assistance went through either contractors or grantees. Most of them are U.S.-based contractors or grantees because they're the ones that know the system and can compete for these solicitations and meet USAID standards. The premise of a lot of the development doctrine has been "how do we localize some of our assistance, work more with host-country groups, give host-country ownership and support capacity building?"

Raj comes in; those ideas are in his mind. And he says the way we're going to do this is by putting an arbitrary figure – it didn't have any real analytic base – 30% of our funds in a five-year period are now going to go through local entities.

We didn't even know what the baseline was. More fundamentally, I raised with him my experience at West Bank/Gaza: when I got there, we had six direct grantees in the democracy sector whom we gave $100,000 each to implement programs. These organizations were based in Jerusalem and Ramallah, they were big, respected, prestigious organizations and they really appreciated the relationship with USAID. But we'd been providing them grants for many years. The new mission civil society officer sought to redesign the program, and what she wanted to do was to provide resources to much smaller NGOs that were based outside of the capital. The only way we could do that was through a contract, which would provide grants to local NGOs throughout the country. We went from six direct grants which counted in Raj's 30% to 200 grants (some were $10,000, some $50,000, some $350,000) to local organizations that counted zero in the 30% because all the money was going through a U.S.-based contractor.

Q: They were the middle man for you in implementing these smaller grants.

GARBER: Right. It was called grants under contract. The contractor would administer and do all the financial due diligence. We could never have done it; we didn't have the wherewithal.

Q: It was very labor intensive.

GARBER: So I said to him, this is the dilemma you're presenting. Ultimately, he moderated and to his credit he appreciated his approach was problematic. So the 30% went from a hard goal to an aspirational goal, then it went from implementing procurement reform to local solutions. Instead of being seen as a procurement device, now it was going to have a conceptual framework.

There was a guy in the policy shop, Tjip Walker, who became the real brains behind the local solutions effort. I became his supervisor but also helped deal with the public dissemination of this effort. You saw me in that role. I thought it was one of the most (because he was involved) intellectually sophisticated pieces that we had done. It's not an academic piece, but a practical piece to help get us on track conceptually in terms of why we are doing this and what it means to do this.
https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACY430.pdf

Q: Did you get a lot of pushback inside the agency?

GARBER: When we were doing the conceptual side, not so much. We pushed for this, we wanted to operationalize the local systems paper and that's when local solutions came about. That was going to take all these different pieces that had emerged on how do we do this, and begin developing policy guidance for missions.

That's when we got some pushback because what does it mean - for example, how does this relate to the public financial management risk assessment framework? Before we could give money to any government – this was another way to implement local solutions – you had to do this risk assessment. What should be covered in this risk assessment? We went back, believe it or not, to a debate over democracy conditionality. Should the public management risk assessment only include the financial management side of things, or should we also look at democratic governance?

Q: You didn't have to look at MCC criteria did you?

GARBER: We tried to avoid that. It became a lengthy debate with a couple of us pushing "We need rigor on the democratic governance side." Should these be done in parallel, or as one assessment? I wasn't there when you were dealing with the human rights conditionality issues, but it hearkened back to what I imagine were some of those debates. Here it was much more abstract though we did have a couple of countries, Ethiopia being most prominent, where it came up. They wanted to go ahead with running money through the Ethiopian government financial system, and we raised concerns that Ethiopia is delinquent on its democracy and governance status. We tried to develop some

creative approaches to deal with this dilemma - "if you can try to remediate some of these issues, then we can provide government-to-government support."

It went from Raj's IPR (implementing procurement reform) to local systems concept to then local solutions as an umbrella and then lots of things potentially falling under that.

Q: What's your impression of where that subject is now in AID?

GARBER: It has survived, there still is a local solutions track. But I don't know how it's doing. The rhetoric is still there.

Q: Country ownership is still high on everybody's rhetorical…

GARBER: But the question is, is it just rhetorical? And what does it mean? Whose country ownership? Strictly the government? Is it the concept of broader country ownership? I don't think there is an easy answer to that. Even how to create a metric for deciding whether you're adhering to a local…

Q: It goes back to your dissent in the original NAS.

GARBER: You have to know what you can measure.

Q: Was that the last major element of your work in PPL and AID?

GARBER: One other thing that I did go back to at AID was we did a series of what we called rapid assessment reviews of large election programs – one in Kenya, one in Afghanistan – that I was part of. Again, I was hoping this would be something we could institutionalize, halfway between an after-action review and a longer more sophisticated evaluation, where you send three or four people who are familiar with the program to the country to look over the whole umbrella of election activities. There are 10 different things that went into the work that was done in preparation for the elections, and to conduct the assessment while memories are still fresh.

So we did two, Afghanistan and Kenya. I thought they were good reports. We got them out relatively quickly for AID, they're on-line. I think there have been a couple of others done by folks following some of the same methodology. Those were probably the last of my legacies at AID before I was detailed over to teach at NDU.
[https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PAOOKSN3.pdf and
https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACY079.pdf]

National Defense University – Visiting Instructor from USAID

Q: Now, during this entire time you are still a non-career employee. But you were detailed over to the National Defense University as a –

GARBER: Non-career.

Q: That didn't depend on the administration?

GARBER: It actually did, and that held things up for a couple of weeks to get approval. AID had done it and then they said because Larry's an AD (Administratively Determined, i.e., political appointee) it has to go through the White House. The White House understandably asked why are we sending one of our limited political slots to teach at NDU? We had to make a case – can't say it was the strongest, but I think there was enough support within AID that they convinced PPO to approve it.

Q: Was there a lot of competition?

GARBER: What happened is the slot opened up mid-term. Someone who had been teaching at NDU went back to AID; he got a new position and had to leave. So I was coming in to replace him. It was only going to be a half-year so that was easy. But to get it approved for the next year and a half, you had to go through a process.

Q: What did you teach?

GARBER: One of the core courses was on national security policy and strategy, which was the most fascinating course you can imagine. It covered everything from grand strategy to international relations to foreign policy of the United States to global issues, transnational issues.

Q: Had you ever taught before?

GARBER: I taught a few years in law school at American University as an adjunct; a couple of courses on human rights law when I was doing that, and then more recently at their human rights academy on the right of political participation. So I had been in front of a class and also had done some training.

Q: And you enjoyed that?

GARBER: I enjoyed that, but this was intimidating. The NDU students are lieutenant-colonels and above and GS (general service) 14 and 15 civilian counterparts. So they were all 40 years old. They were there one year and received a master's degree. Small classes, 15 or 16 students. I loved it but the first few classes I was …

Q: Did you keep ahead of them on the reading?

GARBER: The good thing about that was because there were 20 sections of the same course, there is a joint prep of the curriculum so you don't have to do it yourself. You don't have to identify the readings. They would circulate PowerPoints so you could adjust them.

The first year, I was totally dependent on what others did. By the last semester, I was teaching two sessions back to back and I innovated. I felt confident, I could get in front of the class and challenge the students. For me personally, it was a great experience.

I also taught the first year I was there two classes with Terry Myers – one a seminar on Africa, the second on fragile states.

Q: Were you able to use that time to reflect and think about your AID experience and what you had learned? Or was this a separate kind of activity?

GARBER: It was a separate type of activity. There were some areas, some courses where my AID background came more to the fore. I had gone over there determined to do what you said – to use the time to reflect on my experience, write a couple of articles. Between preparing for classes and trying to enjoy being on a university campus, I didn't get much writing done. I did a couple of book reviews published in Prism. But I would have liked to do more, longer pieces.

Q: What about the degree to which the students, these colonels and lieutenant-colonels and others, reflected an understanding of development and AID issues? Were you surprised by how much then knew? Or by how little they knew?

GARBER: It varied, but overall I was disappointed by how much they didn't know. I would have thought after 15 years of war fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq that this notion of development would be much more prominent…. Those who had been directly involved knew it, but as a general matter people were not familiar with it.

I also learned that we at AID are very much committed to the three Ds – defense, diplomacy, and development. We talk about it like everyone knows what it is, and even though we're the least of the three Ds, at least we're one of the three Ds. I get to NDU and they have an acronym called DIME, which stands for diplomacy, information, military, and economics. Development is a sub-category under economics.

Q: Not under the others?

GARBER: No. In some ways, it's fair because economics includes trade, monetary policy, which are excluded when we think of the three Ds in our terminology. But just how different the mindset is amazed me. We really thought the AID administrator needs to be on the National Security Council because development is one of the three Ds and how can you have a national security policy without one of the three Ds present? Here I'm listening to these guys and they're saying, "Yeah, the secretary of the Treasury needs to be there because he really does have a role to play."

Q: Interesting because the current AID administrator Mark Green told us just a week or so ago that some of the greatest support he has received as the new AID administrator has been from the Defense Department.

GARBER: Absolutely.

Q: You've had publicly 200 generals calling for more attention to development as a way to avoid sending troops into battle, so interesting that at the lieutenant-colonel level they may not feel so strongly about that.

GARBER: We used to give out an article by Bob Gates from when he was secretary of Defense in Foreign Affairs, where he also called for increases in development budget. At that level of the Pentagon, the argument has been made and we have succeeded. But I don't know that it filters down to colonels.

More important, we need to think as committed developmentalists what it means when you think about national security and where development really fits. I think it is a critical prevention tool. I think it does serve to alleviate some potential conflicts. But when you think of it as compared to our intelligence community and how massive that is, or even what we do in the economic realm that does affect international affairs and national security. We sometimes need to be a bit more modest about who we are and what we represent. I know we're supposed to be building up AID, but at times I feel like we shouldn't make that the be-all and end-all related to our status on the National Security Council.

Q: I think that's a good place to bring this whole interview to an end. If you're going to be back from Africa in October in time of the annual general meeting, the panel to be led by Jim Michael will be one that tries to bring together State, Defense, and AID people and how they can work together in this case in West Africa. So there will be a chance to think about that.

GARBER: Don't get me wrong – I believe that they need to work together and that they are working together. There has been tremendous progress particularly in areas where defense and development are working hand-in-glove and the combatant commands are right on top of this. I'm all for that. I just think sometimes we ignore some of the other pieces of the national security apparatus by our constant referring to the three Ds. Just take intelligence – where does intelligence fit in our three D construct? We think we do our own intelligence, we have our political economy assessments and things like that and we're spending a lot of resources; if you go to the National Security Council the first person who speaks is "What is the intelligence telling us about this stuff?" We tried and we've done a better job lately, but we don't really understand where intelligence fits in our approach to things, and I don't think we appreciate at all levels broader economic issues that we generate. Some of our economists clearly understand this but in a broader sense – how does our trade policy affect health issues?

Q: This is probably an opportunity for you in the future to focus on getting those things done. I thank you very much Larry, this has been terrific. I have learned an enormous amount about you and about a variety of very important subjects. Thank you for doing this!

End of interview