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**CHRISTIAN HOLMES**

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## INTERVIEW

*Q: I'm Alex Shakow and it is Saturday morning, the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2019. I am delighted to be with Chris Holmes to start on the first segment of his oral history. Chris, thank you very much for doing this. This will be a great addition to the collection of oral histories*

*about AID (United States Agency for International Development) officers past and present. I know your career has spanned both public and private sectors; this interview will concentrate primarily on your work that led to your coming to AID and on your AID and related government career. We're going to start right off by asking you when you were born and what kind of background you had growing up and what influence over time this may have had in your ultimately joining AID.*

HOLMES: Thank you Alex. I was born February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1946 in Syracuse, New York. I spent most of my early years growing up in San Francisco, California.

*Q: Where did you go to school?*

HOLMES: For grammar school, I attended the Town School in San Francisco, and then for high school, the Webb School in Claremont, California. Both Town and Webb provided me with a strong academic foundation. Webb emphasized living a purposeful life to benefit the lives of others. One of our teachers, a gifted paleontologist, Dr. Raymond Alf, in teaching the span of geologic time, would stress that our lifespan is just a moment in time. Right up to graduation, he would persistently ask his students, "What will you do with your moment in time?"

*Q: Then you graduated and what happened?*

HOLMES: Well, I began to answer that question at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut.

*Q: How did you end up at Wesleyan on the other end of the country?*

HOLMES: I was impressed by Webb students who attended Wesleyan and by Wesleyan's emphasis on a liberal arts education and its encouragement of its students to study a wide range of subjects.

*Q: Was it a good fit?*

HOLMES: It was a good fit. I took a broad range of courses and ultimately concentrated on the two areas which over time became of most interest to me: science and government.

*Q: I should note that Wesleyan was ultimately the college of an AID Administrator, Doug Bennet, who became President many years after you were there. Were your four years at Wesleyan formative in developing some of these ideas that you had before or that linked you to the concern for science? How did Wesleyan play into those steps that were ultimately going to lead you to AID?*

HOLMES: On the science side, I was most interested in biology and geology. On the international relations side, I concentrated on courses dealing with China, Japan, South East Asia, Africa, and urban policy.

*Q: These were history or political science?*

HOLMES: Government. Wesleyan had a strong government department with inspiring professors, including Reginald Bartholomew, who was one of my professors and subsequently had a successful career at State, and Daniel Moynihan.

*Q: What was Moynihan doing there?*

HOLMES: The then President of Wesleyan, Victor Butterfield, had brought to Wesleyan a wide range of experts in government and the social sciences. At the same time, their permanent faculty also had many outstanding scholars including the Asia political systems scholar, David Titus. His courses on the Japanese and China political systems considerably deepened my interest in Asia.

*Q: These were people who spent a year there at Wesleyan or were part of -*

HOLMES: Some were there associated with the Center for Advanced Studies and others were tenured faculty.

*Q: Some of these people took a year out to be scholar-in-residence?*

HOLMES: Or longer than that. The historian, William Manchester, had been there for years. I was impressed by how many of the Wesleyan professors had either worked in journalism or in the government, or both. William Manchester had been a reporter at the Baltimore Sun. Richard Goodwin had served as staff on the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce. Les Gelb had been the executive assistant to Senator Javits. At Wesleyan, I began to think about a career spanning journalism and government.

*Q: I imagine if they were around campus they also gave talks and that kind of thing.*

HOLMES: Exactly.

*Q: But Moynihan himself was there at the time?*

HOLMES: He was.

*Q: Had he been ambassador to India, was he...*

HOLMES: It was before he went to India. He was at Wesleyan from 1967-68. Two of the most important government courses I took dealt with South East Asia politics and with urban politics. For the urban politics course, I wrote my main paper on San Francisco's water management system. Little did I know then how much of my interest in science would concentrate on the water sector.

*Q: A precursor of 40 years later.*

HOLMES: Yes, it all started to gel at Wesleyan.

*Q: And that thesis was for a science class?*

HOLMES: It was for an urban politics class. It got me thinking about water management for the first time. In retrospect, it's amazing to me how my Wesleyan government and science courses so strongly influenced my career. It was just six years later when I would come to AID, and subsequently become very involved in both the water sector and in Southeast Asia. When I returned to AID in 2010, I focused heavily on providing water to cities. My interests in biology and geology came together in my work at EPA dealing with ground water protection and remediation, as well as at AID working on earthquake preparedness and relief efforts and on providing water in urban and rural areas. What I didn't realize at Wesleyan is that I was laying a foundation for a career which concentrated, particularly at USAID and USEPA, heavily on environmental health.

*Q: You were at Wesleyan '64 to '68?*

HOLMES: Yes

*Q: And '68 of course was such a terrible year. That was the period when Vietnam was -*

HOLMES: Yes, 1968 was the deadliest year of the Vietnam War, including the Tet Offensive. It was a terrible year in so many ways. Martin Luther King was assassinated in April and Robert Kennedy was assassinated in June. The war in Vietnam continued throughout my Wesleyan years. I will never forget in 1967, getting a call from a hospital ship off the coast of Vietnam to learn that my brother, Michael, a 19-year-old Marine Lance Corporal, had been severely wounded in combat at Khe Sahn.

*Q: That must have been quite a blow. But in terms of protests against the war, was there much of that at Wesleyan?*

HOLMES: At Wesleyan, there was none of that at any large-scale. Wesleyan students had been involved both in protests against the war and in the civil rights movement. But there were no riots at Wesleyan. It was, though, becoming more rapidly involved in the Vietnam War and a wide range of social issues.

*Q: Interesting because you would have thought, given the nature of the college, very liberal -*

HOLMES: Exactly.

*Q: - history and all the rest, students didn't go from Middletown to New York or Boston?*

HOLMES: They did. However, Wesleyan did not experience during my time the kind of unrest that was occurring at UC Berkeley or Columbia.

*Q: Did you get engaged in social action issues or political activity when you were in college?*

HOLMES: I was involved in a range of campus and off-campus activities, some dealing with campus governance matters and others working with the Middletown community.

*Q: By the time you got around to graduating, did you know what you wanted to do?*

HOLMES: Not precisely. By the time I graduated from Wesleyan, I wanted to spend my moment in time helping protect the environment, save lives and reduce suffering. As to the how and where to do that, my interests had narrowed in on government, developing countries, humanitarian assistance, and environmental protection. I was also interested in journalism as a profession.

*Q: So you went back home from Wesleyan?*

HOLMES: First, I began my military service and I joined a US Army Reserve unit.

*Q: Where did you do this?*

HOLMES: My reserve unit was based in San Francisco's Presidio, which was the headquarters of the Sixth US Army.

*Q: I see you were decorated for heroism in the Army. What was that for?*

HOLMES: I was on duty at the Presidio, the military installation that borders the Golden Gate Bridge. My unit had assembled near the base of the Golden Gate Bridge. A young woman jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge. I swam out and brought her back to shore, but tragically, she had died. Subsequently, the Army awarded me the Soldiers Medal for Heroism.

*Q: That award was given to you in 1972?*

HOLMES: Yes.

*Q: This was not something you sat there thinking about too much, your natural instinct was to do that, that's terrific.*

*Q: : So when you returned to San Francisco , where did you work?*

HOLMES: I went to work for the San Francisco Examiner, the then evening newspaper in San Francisco, initially as a management trainee and then as a newspaper reporter.

*Q: There were at that point two newspapers in San Francisco, right?*

HOLMES: Yes, the other newspaper was the morning newspaper, the San Francisco

Chronicle. The Examiner and Chronicle jointly owned the San Francisco Printing Company, which printed both newspapers, as well as managed the sales, advertising, and circulation.

The Examiner hired me in a pilot program to be a management trainee and then a newspaper reporter. I initially worked for the printing company. I learned about production, sales, and circulation. I then moved on to become a general assignment reporter and then a night police reporter.

*Q: So a pretty broad array of functions.*

HOLMES: Very much so. The publisher, Charles Gould, was interested in training young journalists both in journalism and in the operations of a newspaper. I was the one-person pilot.

*Q: Sounds like Donald Graham at the Washington Post, he did exactly the same thing -*

HOLMES: In retrospect, it was something like that, but by no means as extensive. I learned from some extraordinary reporters. I learned how to observe, question, and write under the great pressure of a timeline. I found that the fundamental questions of journalism regarding the “how, when, where what and why” of reporting on a situation and the discipline of “reading the clips”, doing your research before you assess and write, to be an essential analytic framework throughout my career.

It was a time of significant political change across the country. The San Francisco Bay Area was in the middle of this change, including protests against the Vietnam War. There was also significant crime and violence in San Francisco. It was quite a shift from Wesleyan.

*Q: And you were published?*

HOLMES: Yes. Over time, I developed my own style as a journalist. Many of my stories would get a “byline”, and I started getting encouraging notes from the city editor, Gale Cook; so I felt I was on the right track. His notes meant a great deal to me, and I still have them to this day.

*Q: And this is still just a year out of graduating?*

HOLMES: Less than a year. I remained with the Examiner until July 1971. I wrote about major social problems and tremendous human suffering, and that heightened my interest in a career in public service, as well as my being more operational in addressing such problems. So while still working for the Examiner, I went back to Washington DC to explore opportunities.

*Q: You say ‘back’ to Washington, you came to Washington.*



HOLMES: Yes, I had discussions and interviews with a wide range of people, the most important being my Congressman, William Maillard. His district included the north western part of San Francisco and all of Marin County across the bay. He was a highly accomplished public servant. He served in the Navy during World War II and was also an Admiral in the US Navy Reserve. He had also been the Secretary to then Governor of California, Earl Warren, who subsequently became the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

The Congressman had served in the Congress for almost twenty years. He was the chairman of the California Republican congressional delegation, by today's standards was a liberal Republican. He worked very effectively and closely with Republicans and Democrats, and was by today's standards a liberal Republican. A significant portion of his district was Democratic. The Congressman served on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Subcommittee on Fish and Wildlife.

*Q: At this point he was the ranking minority on those committees?*

HOLMES: Yes.

*Q: Due to long-standing Democratic control of the House.*

HOLMES: Yes..

*Q: Had you had contact with him, did you go cold up to his office or did somebody introduce you?*

HOLMES: No, this was not a cold call.

*Q: So there was at least some link.*

HOLMES: Yes. I explained to him that I was interested in environmental protection, humanitarian assistance and international relations, especially developing countries. I also took him through my newspaper experience. I asked him if he might consider hiring me. After I left his office, I thought that was that. I didn't realize that he was thinking about hiring me.

Subsequently, he asked me to return to his office for a second interview and said, "Look, I have an opening here as a press assistant. You really ought to take this job because you can draw upon your journalist skills, your interests are on the environmental and foreign affairs side and I'm on the key committees dealing with these topics. Working on the Hill is a great entry point into public service and into the executive branch." I accepted the offer.

*Q: You were at this point 24 or so?*

HOLMES: It was 1971. I was 25.

He was very focused on legislation dealing with foreign affairs, the merchant marine and environmental protection. During the time I worked for him, he played a major role in the passage and enactment of critical environmental and foreign affairs legislation including the Golden Gate National Recreation Area Act of 1972 which converted the 36,000 acre military installation in San Francisco and Marin County into the Golden Gate National Recreation Area; the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act; the 1972 Coastal Zone Management Act; and the 1973 Foreign Assistance Act, also known as the “Basic Human Needs (BHN)” or the “New Directions “ Act. A great deal of his work dealt with the Vietnam War, and that included the War Powers Act of 1973 which for the first time set Congressional notification requirements for the President to follow in committing resources for warfare.

The New Directions act was, of course, a game changer with its focus on a basic human needs approach to development and targeted sectors, namely food and nutrition, population planning, health, education and human resources development. Subsequently, his Administrative Assistant, now called chief of staff, position became open. The Congressman was very much to the point. He walked up to my desk, said “You’re now the AA, you know what to do.” And he went back to work.

*Q: So you moved from being the press assistant to the AA?*

HOLMES: Yes. I learned a great deal from him and from the job itself. I admired his integrity and his commitment to do what he felt was right for the nation, even though his vote might weaken his political standing within his district. For example, in 1971, the United States Supreme Court upheld the use of busing to achieve racial desegregation in schools. Later in 1972, when the Congressman faced the toughest reelection race of his lifetime, he voted against restricting the use of busing to achieve school desegregation. Within the Republican Party, his vote was not popular to say the least, but he did what he thought was right. I admired his approach to studying the issue, listening to both sides, weighing the pros and cons, thinking through the consequences and then making a decision ultimately based on what he learned and concluded was the right thing to do.

The Congressman early on told me that he expected me to identify problems and solutions before he even thought about them. He would say, “that’s what I did in the Navy when I served as the exec to an Admiral, and that’s what you’re going to do.” So, within a political landscape, I learned how the system worked, how to anticipate problems, opportunities, and solutions, how to make things happen.

I also had opportunities to develop an understanding of the substance of his committee work related to foreign affairs and environmental protection, as well get to know other members of Congress who served on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Subcommittee on Fish and Wildlife, as well as their staff. I became particularly interested in USAID’s international disaster assistance work.

The Congressman worked very closely with the leadership from AID, State, DOD and NOAA. I found that the relationships I developed and the understanding of how different agencies and individuals worked with one another and with the Congress to be very relevant to my work at AID and subsequently at other US Government agencies.

*Q: Obviously he detected your skills. How long had you been there when that happened?*

HOLMES: About a year. Often after the Congress adjourned for the day, Members of the California congressional delegation, Republicans and Democrats --- this was like out of a Robert Penn Warren book – would pile into his office and talk about California politics and redistricting. I would be outside the office listening, learning and getting to know some of the Members. He had situated his office with the AA’s desk angled outside of his office so that we could easily communicate. I could see and hear much of the discussions. That way I had a good fix on what was going on, how I could be helpful.

*Q: Fascinating.*

HOLMES: It was. One of the members who was part of these late-night sessions was a real titan, Phil Burton, who was a very powerful Member.

*Q: He was a Democrat, right?*

HOLMES: He was. Mr. Burton represented the eastern portion of San Francisco where the US Navy shipyards were located along the bay. Mr. Mailliard spent a great deal of this time working with Mr. Burton on keeping the shipyards open. They also worked together to create the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

*Q: This is ‘74?*

HOLMES: Late 1973. Unfortunately, late-night discussions about redistricting did not work out well for the Congressman. Somewhat unexpectedly, the California state legislature redistricted Congressman Mailliard’s district. With the new congressional lines drawn, it would have been almost impossible for him to be reelected. Ultimately, he made the decision to retire from Congress. He was close to President Ford, who appointed him to be the US Ambassador to the Organization of American States.

After the Congressman announced his retirement, I’m sitting at my desk, and I get a call from the Clerk of the House. He says, “Congratulations, you will soon be the Administrator of the Sixth Congressional District.”

*Q: Wait, say that again?*

HOLMES: He says, “Congratulations, you will soon be the Administrator of the Sixth Congressional District.”

*Q: What does that mean?*

HOLMES: I asked the same question. He said, “You’re going to do everything you did as the Administrative Assistant, everything the Congressman did, but you don’t vote.” He was being slightly figurative about doing everything that the Congressman did, and I proceeded to operate just as I had done before this change.

*Q: Did Maillard leave Congress before his term was up?*

HOLMES: Yes.

*Q: Oh, he resigned midway - How much time was left before the election?*

HOLMES: He resigned in March.

*Q: And the next election wasn’t -*

HOLMES: They held a special election in June, 1974 and then a general election in November 1974.

*Q: I see. It was during this interim period that you would be holding the reins.*

HOLMES: Yes, I was supposed to hold the reins from March to June.

*Q: Who else would do it?!*

HOLMES: Exactly. So I began to do just what I always did. I managed the staff, helped resolve constituent problems, kept constituents informed on legislation, and just kept trying to resolve problems. It was a very different environment, of course. A congressional seat sitting vacant for three months prior to a special election is a very political matter.

*Q: And you were how old at this time?*

HOLMES: It was 1974, so I just turned 28.

*Q: So all this talk about this woman from the Bronx who’s the youngest member of Congress ever, she’s 29 – and you were running the show a couple of years younger than she was, right?*

HOLMES: That is nice of you to say, but, as we know, there is a vast difference; including my not being a Member of Congress. Shortly thereafter, the door to my office suddenly opens, and there stood Congressman Phil Burton. I had known him from his visits with Congressman Maillard during these late-night sessions. I liked and respected him—and he knew that.

*Q: You mean while sitting in the congressman’s office?*

HOLMES: No, a different one, far smaller. When a long serving Congressman with a very large office retires, another member just about immediately moves into the office. Phil noted that his brother, John, was going to win Congressman Mailliard's seat, and made it very clear that he expected me to do nothing that might adversely affect his campaign. He was, to say the least, pretty adamant on this point, and I just looked at him and said, "Phil, all I want to do is what the Clerk told me to do and just move on soon as possible."

*Q: This was the congressman or his brother?*

HOLMES: This was the congressman. I guess he thought I was going to run for the seat, or somehow get involved in the campaign.

*Q: But he didn't ask you that first.*

HOLMES: No, and this is an understatement, he just very clearly and colorfully put forth his concern. A few days later, I get a call from Matt Harvey, a former Administrative Assistant to Congressman Mailliard, who was then serving as the Assistant Administrator for Legislative Affairs at AID. He asked if I wanted to join USAID. So that led to a series of interviews.

*Q: Did you know anything about AID before this? Had you been exposed to AID in any way?*

HOLMES: Only on the Hill. I'd go to hearings, read the legislation, testimony and committee reports. On behalf of the Congressman, I would also meet with groups and individuals within and outside the government interested in foreign affairs. I knew many of the members of Congress on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. I had built up close friendships with some of the staff, particularly Marion Czarnecki, who was the chief of staff for the committee; Jack Brady, who succeeded Marion; Jack Sullivan, who became the AA for Asia at AID and Harry Cromer who became the Auditor General at AID. Jack and Harry subsequently joined AID while I was there. But I was not trained as a development economist and I hadn't had a Peace Corps kind of experience.

*Q: Most people who came into AID were not trained as development economists either. But you had been exposed to some of these hearings since Mailliard was on the foreign affairs committee.*

HOLMES: Yes, and I made a point of staying informed. I was interested in foreign assistance and followed the development of the "New Directions" legislation, as well as the environmental legislation in which Mr. Mailliard was involved. Before I joined AID, Marion Czarnecki, the House Foreign Affairs Committee Chief of Staff, counseled me to memorize (he was being figurative) the "New Directions" legislation and I took that to heart. That knowledge played out in many very important ways, including in the area of international disaster assistance.

*Q: Not only that but you had become the senior executive, you'd been in both seats.*

HOLMES: I had learned a great deal on the Hill and, in particular, from Congressman Mailliard, about how to staff an executive and run a complex office.

*Q: Which is something you learn on the Hill quickly.*

HOLMES: Yes, and how you communicate problems and solutions becomes critical. I once arranged for a Wesleyan graduate, Ambassador Robert Hunter, to speak to a group of Wesleyan undergraduates who were interested in a career in government. I recall Bob saying, "If you can't write, don't come to government."

*Q: Who was your interview at AID with?*

HOLMES: I first went to meet Phil Birnbaum and Eric Griffel.

*Q: The job you were interviewing for -*

HOLMES: Was to work in PPC, the Bureau for Policy Program Coordination, in kind of a yet-to-be-defined role. I think the AID Administrator, Dan Parker, was thinking "I've got this person who's been an AA to a respected Republican congressman on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, knows how to staff an executive, knows the legislation, knows how to manage a large staff, has been a journalist with a major urban newspaper, how can I best use him?"

*Q: So somebody, Matt Harvey or somebody, had spoken to Dan Parker directly about you, but he wasn't inviting you down to be his assistant?*

HOLMES: No.

*Q: He just wanted you somewhere in the system and at that point as an employee of the Hill you could get transferred in, right?*

HOLMES: No, I was hired as an "administratively determined" (AD) position because I had not been on the Hill long enough to convert directly into the civil service.

*Q: Aah, so you interviewed with Phil Birnbaum who was the AA (assistant administrator) for policy coordination. Who else did you interview with?*

HOLMES: I talked with Eric Griffel. I very briefly met Dan Parker. I will never forget my first conversation with Eric. I presumed he wanted to talk about the New Directions legislation. I walked in with a copy in hand of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Report on the New Directions legislation. And there was Eric, handing me Gunnar Myrdahl's "Asian Drama", and launching into an in-depth discussion on development

economics. I think in retrospect this was his way of saying economic development is complicated, and I want to help you learn.

I found that to be the future tenor of others that I met within USAID over the years, namely that experts at AID possess impressive knowledge and technical skills and want to be helpful and share their knowledge. So, I'm now in the Bureau for Policy Program Coordination, doing special projects.

*Q: This is the middle of 1974?*

HOLMES: This is April of 1974.

*Q: I had not yet joined PPC myself at that time.*

HOLMES: The group of which I was part in PPC provided staff support to the Administrator's office.

*Q: Well, that's not surprising because the PPC was in those days meant to be essentially the support for – an unbiased, objective source between all these other bureaus. Spoken like a former head of PPC! And?*

HOLMES: A lot of it got into briefing books, I remember that.

*Q: Did you enjoy it?*

HOLMES: The substance was fascinating. I enjoyed thinking through what the Administrator needed, problems ahead, and solutions. I applied what I had learned in staffing Congressman Mailliard. Because so much of the work for the Administrator's office dealt with the Congress, I was able to apply that experience and knowledge, too. I started to provide more support to the Administrator's office, and work with Lloyd Jonnes, who was the Assistant to the Administrator.

Lloyd, like so many of the people I first worked with at AID, brought to bear decades of experience, which in his case went back to World War II and the Marshall Plan. Lloyd had been part of the Normandy landing and a combat infantryman in Europe before he began his career in development, which included serving in Vietnam as the economics counselor for the US Embassy.

The actual Office of the AID Administrator had a deep and respected history. In the office that Mr. Parker worked, so had Secretary of Defense George Marshall. In the Office in which the Assistant to the Administrator worked, so had General Marshal Carter, the Assistant to George Marshall.

When Lloyd decided to move on from that assignment, he recommended to Dan Parker that I succeed him.

*Q: He came down to be the deputy to Phil Birnbaum at that point, or had he been before that? Or was he just going to retire?*

HOLMES: I am not sure if he spent any time with PPC, but he soon retired, not in the conventional sense of the word. He went to Catholic University, got his PhD in Greek and Latin, and began a second career as a scholar studying ancient Greek and Latin inscriptions in Turkey.

Next thing I know, I am sitting in Lloyd's office as the Assistant to the Administrator. I had not realized until I began the job the extent to which Mr. Parker relied on his assistant to vet the materials coming to him and to communicate and explain his requests and opinions to many people in AID.

That led to my broadening very quickly my understanding of AID and to having contact with AID personnel at all levels. These included such seasoned professionals with far-reaching responsibilities as John Murphy, the Deputy Administrator and his two assistants, Jim Fowler and Bill Parks; Lloyd Jonnes; Robert Nooter, whose responsibility spanned both the Middle East and Asia; Phil Birnbaum, who was the Assistant Administrator at PPC and Alex Shakow (you) who was the Deputy Assistant Administrator in PPC; Arthur Gardiner who was the General Counsel; and Deputy Assistant Administrators such as Haven North who was the DAA in the Africa Bureau, Al White, the DAA in the Middle East Bureau, Garnett Zimmerly, the Asia Bureau DAA; Harriet Crowley, the DAA in the Population and Humanitarian Assistance Bureau; and Kathleen Bittermann, who directed Food for Peace; such Mission Directors as Tom Niblock, Lou Read, Donor Lion, Joe Wheeler, Ed Coy, and Office Directors such Herb Reese, and Tony Schwarzwaldner who later became a DAA and Mission Director to the Philippines.

I was surprised by how many AID officers had attended Wesleyan, such as Tony Schwarzwaldner, Herb Rees, Don McDonald and Haven North—and, of course, later Doug Bennet who became the AID Administrator. Wesleyan graduates tended to mentor other Wesleyan graduates. Herb mentored Tony when Tony was sent to Bangladesh in the midst of the 1973 famine. Tony mentored me when I became the deputy/acting director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. Years later, I mentored John Pasch, a Wesleyan graduate, who directed USAID's Water Office.

*Q: What was Dan Parker like as a person and what was your sense of him as an administrator? He came to this in a strange way himself and his background was totally distant from anything related to AID. He was also succeeding a person who had enormous stature in the academic community and public service, and here comes this man whose major claim to fame is he's associated with a company that makes fountain pens.*

HOLMES: I found him to be a very intelligent, decent, and well-intended man. As a professional, he saw himself as a former CEO of "not just a pen company" but of a global manufacturing company with a very broad supply chain sourcing materials and selling



products throughout the developing world. I also think his experience as a Marine Corps officer in World War II strongly shaped his perspective.

AID went through a major transition during his 1973-76 tenure. This included implementing the Middle East peace accords following the Israel Sinai disengagement; the fall of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; the passage and implementation of the “New Directions” Foreign Assistance Authorization legislation; the buildup of the USAID economic development program in the Middle East, particularly Egypt; civil war in Lebanon; severe drought in West and East Africa; what seemed like a continuing series of massive natural disasters throughout the developing world; and the resignation of President Nixon followed by the transition to the Ford Administration. On top of that there was ever increasing pressure from the Congress to reduce the agency’s operating expenses. AID’s workforce numbers had been declining since the 1960’s. It was more than wrenching for an organization and its people to face a significant decline in workforce in the 1970’s arising from the fall of Vietnam.

*Q: Had Mr. Parker traveled quite a lot in this role?*

HOLMES: He did. It was natural for him. As he explained to me, at the Parker Pen Company he made a point of staying close to the company’s manufacturing sites and supply chain. So it was natural for him to get into the field, and he also felt that AID expected him to do that.

He had his heart very much in the right place, he wanted to do the right thing. He understood that there were huge technological shifts occurring, particularly as it related to the use of high technology and its potential to improve economic development and, of particular interest to Mr. Parker, international disaster assistance.

*Q: So he understood that kind of thing.*

HOLMES: That’s where he was strong. He also understood that AID’s operational role in disaster assistance provided AID with a distinct place within the US Government. International disaster assistance also provided him with a direct reporting line to the President. He had discovered a provision in the Foreign Assistance Act that said “the President shall appoint a special coordinator for international disaster assistance” which evidently nobody knew existed.

*Q: Did you point that out to him, or he discovered it himself?*

HOLMES: I pointed it out, and I also explained to him that the Foreign Assistance Act had provided the disaster assistance programs special flexibility. A “notwithstanding” clause in the Foreign Assistance Act exempted disaster assistance from many of the Act’s restrictions so as to enable USAID to respond flexibly to disasters. He was frustrated by the lack of instant information on the status of disaster relief efforts. He became very intrigued with the use of technology to assess disasters. I think that disaster assistance

and its use of advanced communications and assessment technology is where he decided to make his mark.

Natural disasters seemed to be increasing in intensity and duration during Dan's tenure. These included major earthquakes in Indonesia, Italy, Turkey and Guatemala; drought and food shortages in both West and East Africa; an outbreak of Ebola in Zaire; and civil strife to which AID provided disaster relief to its victims, particularly Lebanon. This also included the long-term drought in Africa's Sahel region.

*Q: Did you find that he would in a sense be worn down? If he had a question he posed and somebody came back and gave him something a little different, that that would generally solve the problem?*

HOLMES: Yes, just as long as people stayed to what was at the core of request.

*Q: He didn't get so caught up on it that...*

HOLMES: No, he didn't get hung up on it. He was respectful of people, but I was definitely in the middle of his continuing requests for information and action. He seemed to be deeply interested in just about everything. He finally hired an executive secretary, Don Bliss, who had worked for Secretary of Health and Human Services, Elliot Richardson, as his Executive Secretary at HHS.

*Q: When you started there was no AID executive secretary?*

HOLMES: There was a staff handling correspondence, but nothing akin to the kind of Executive Secretariat function operating at State. This struck me as odd given the amount of information which AID had to process and how far-flung its operations were. When I started, there was one assistant to the AID Administrator. That was Lloyd and then me. That was also the tradition at AID. It was by no means top-heavy.

*Q: In those days it was you and -*

HOLMES: Within the Office of the Administrator, it was Dan Parker, myself, the Deputy Administrator, John Murphy, his two very able special assistants, Bill Parks and Jim Fowler, and a small team which coordinated movement of documents to and from the Administrator's office. A very able career public servant, Carole McGraw, also stepped in as executive secretary. Also, a White House Fellow, Major Marshall Carter, USMC, was an important member of the team. Marsh was the son of General Carter who served as the Assistant to General Marshall. Later, Vern Newton became Executive Secretary at the outset of the Carter administration. Doug Clark became the Executive Secretary to Administrator Bennet. Jerry Pagano became Executive Secretary at the beginning of the Reagan Administration.

*Q: You didn't have to type everything, did you?*

HOLMES: I fortunately had an assistant, Charlotte Norwood, who helped me with typing and other work. She was a superb professional and a wonderful person, and went on to be the assistant to OFDA Director Anne Martindell and to Frank Loy when he headed the German Marshall fund. I found out that in my position, I could quietly do a lot of good within the agency.

*Q: Absolutely, I can testify to that based on my sense of your being able to play that role, the intermediary. That was really valuable.*

HOLMES: It was definitely challenging serving as the bridge between the Administrator and such world-class development experts as you and Phil Birnbaum.

I also found myself helping AID employees who couldn't get the system to listen to them or meet their needs. I recall one couple, both foreign service officers with impressive credentials, who walked into my office saying, "We are both trained development experts, we both are qualified for two positions at the same post in Central America, and AID will not let us go there because we're married." I listened, walked down to Johnny Murphy's office, said, "This is the story, and it's unfair." He said, "yeah, it is." Next thing you knew, they got their joint foreign assignment posting. I found myself increasingly playing that role quietly, with no fanfare.

*Q: So you broke the barrier there when Johnny Murphy was the deputy.*

HOLMES: He was. He was one of those persons who could be tough when it was required but also very humane.

*Q: His cigars were more of a problem-*

HOLMES: He definitely enjoyed his cigars. He enjoyed life, too. Sometimes after lunch he would just drop by my office and we would kick things around. I treasured those conversations.

*Q: While we're at it, since you're mentioning Johnny Murphy, what's your impression of him? Talk a little bit about him, he's not such a well-known person now, but was very important in those days*

HOLMES: I thought the world of Johnny. The Administrator turned to him to run the Agency on a day-to-day basis, and that's just what Johnny did. He served during the early years of AID's formation and he knew a great deal about the Agency's programs, financial management and accounting practices. He and Mr. Parker made a good team in the sense that while Mr. Murphy was very focused on operations and details, Mr. Parker was conceptual and strategic. Johnny had a deep long-term relationship with key members of Congress, particularly Senator Humphrey who was very interested in food security. When it came to AID testifying on food security and particularly P.L. 480 food aid, Mr. Murphy was the person Senator Humphrey would talk to and nobody else. Mr.

Murphy would go up to the Hill with all the facts and figures. One of Johnny's gifts was to assume responsibility very quietly and effectively, never taking credit.

*Q: How did he and Dan Parker get along?*

HOLMES: I thought they got along very well. While Johnny had significant government experience at USAID's predecessor agency, and Dan did not have such equivalent experience, they both came from business and spoke a similar language. In that regard, I found Dan comfortable and confident in turning to Johnny to manage the agency day in day out. Dan relied heavily on John to coordinate and manage the major shifts AID experienced.

During that time during that time, from my perspective, four major shifts stood out: the implementation of the New Directions legislation; the fall of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; the buildup of the USAID economic development program in the Middle East, particularly Egypt, following the Israel Sinai disengagement; and the transition from President Nixon to President Ford.

*Q: What role did he play in those?*

HOLMES: He was a leader, made sure the trains stayed heading in the right direction and on the tracks. He and Dan, working closely with Bob Nooter, managed much of the very complex interactions between AID and State at that time.

*Q: The word closer, you mean they worked together more effectively as opposed to one being more subordinate than the other?*

HOLMES: Their relationship was more that of than that of a subordinate-superior relationship. In private they had some pretty candid and direct conversations

*Q: Did Johnny Murphy handle most of the relationships with State or did Parker?*

HOLMES: Dan handled the relationships with Secretary Kissinger, Deputy Secretary Ingersoll, and Larry Eagleburger, the Executive Assistant to Secretary Kissinger. Secretary Kissinger delegated much of his interaction with AID to Larry Eagleburger who years later became Secretary of State. Johnny handled a lot of the operational relationships with State but relied heavily on Bob Nooter during that time.

*Q: Bob at that point was?*

HOLMES: Bob was the Assistant Administrator for both the Middle East and Asia. From where I sat, Bob Nooter was really almost co-equal to Dan and Johnny in the eyes of the State Department.

Over time, Dan and Johnny created two separate bureaus responsible respectively for Asia and the Middle East. Bob, like Johnny, was understated and very effective. When it

came to particularly tough testimony on the Hill, particularly related to Vietnam, Dan and Johnny turned to Bob.

I remember a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Vietnam which was chaired by Senator Fulbright where Bob was the lead witness. Senator Fulbright just kept driving home aggressively and repeatedly the question “why are we in Vietnam”, knowing full well there was not a good answer to that question. Yet Bob managed to navigate such difficult situations very well.

*Q: Bob stayed with the Middle East as I recall?*

HOLMES: I think he stayed with the Middle East

*Q: What happened when President Nixon resigned*

HOLMES: Shortly after President Nixon resigned in August 1974, Secretary of State Kissinger invited Mr. Parker to attend a meeting along with State Department leadership regarding the transition from President Nixon to President Ford. Mr. Parker was traveling, and he asked me to attend in his place. So I got to the Benjamin Franklin room at the Department of State (where you were confirmed as the AA/PPC), and saw AID’s Donor Lion, a very seasoned career foreign service officer and Mission Director, who was also attending. Donor and I sat together, and I will always remember him saying, “this is history, listen carefully.” I did indeed listen carefully to Secretary Kissinger stressing the need for cooperation between State and the White House, noting that he was in a good position to follow that cooperation as he would remain on both sides of the street as NSC Director and Secretary of State. He managed to deliver his very direct message with firmness and a certain amount of humor, and everybody got the point.

*Q: You were right in the middle of all it.*

HOLMES: I was, particularly the various crisis management activities that involved the Administrator, including those related to the fall of Vietnam.

For example, shortly before Vietnam fell in April 1975, orphanages with close relationships to the United States were trying to move their children to the United States. The fall of Vietnam occurred so quickly (in retrospect, it had been occurring for a long time) that the orphanages could not get planes or permission to fly orphans out of Vietnam. Much of that responsibility fell upon both the Administrator and DOD, as AID had the funds and DOD had the logistical capacity. The Administration launched “operation baby lift” to transport orphans from Vietnam to the United States.

The situation became very chaotic and tragic. AID authorized DOD to fly an enormous cargo plane, a C-5A which has two levels, to Vietnam to transport orphans, medical staff, military personnel and orphanage administrators to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines. Shortly after takeoff there was an explosion on the plane and the pilots had to make an emergency landing at the Tan Son Nhut airfield which was near Saigon. When

the plane landed, the lower level of the plane, the cargo department, carrying attendants and orphans was completely destroyed and more than half of the approximate 300 people in the plane died in the crash.

The last few weeks in April 1975 were desperate times in so many ways. I remember one night in particular when I attended an inter-agency meeting in the Administrator's office to explore how might the US Government keep a presence in Vietnam following the fall of Saigon. The exercise was futile; those closing days were indeed filled with futility and tragedy.

Following the fall of Vietnam, AID and the State Department began to care for the refugees who were fleeing by sea and land from Vietnam. AID then became involved in staffing refugee camps in both Southeast Asia and the United States. I think it's fair to say in retrospect no one had a clue that refugee assistance to Vietnam refugees would extend into the 1990s.

*Q: Don McDonald was a key player in all of that, too.*

HOLMES: He was. AID played a critical role in managing the refugee resettlement camps overseas and, under the very able direction of Julia Taft, helped staff the camps within the United States. I think that was a historic moment for AID since I don't believe AID had done anything akin to this kind of resettlement since World War II.

*Q: Before we move on to OFDA, is there anything more you want to say about your view of AID as seen from the Administrator's Office?*

HOLMES: I had, and continue to have, a sense of amazement and admiration for AID's work.

*Q: For the people you mean, or for the job being done, or what?*

HOLMES: The people, their ability, their courage, the sacrifices made by AID public servants and their families, the scope, the countries they were in, and the character of the AID employees. I felt that I was in the presence of exceptional people, smart, competent and always well intended. In so many ways, Lloyd Jonnes was my model -- courageous, understated, knowledgeable, wise and effective.

*Q: And yet this was the time when, largely because of Vietnam, AID was subject to a lot of criticism and attack. Even before you came from the Hill the Senate had rejected the bill, you had the beginning of the New Directions legislation, these kinds of things. It was a time of considerable transition in AID. Did you feel that as well, the emphases and directions and priorities? Did you see those things happening?*

HOLMES: I saw four major shifts happening on the Hill that definitely carried over to AID after I arrived in March 1974.

The first was the passage of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1973, the “New Directions” legislation, which required AID to take a “basic human needs” approach to foreign assistance.

The second was the enormous public and congressional antipathy towards any involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War, even after US troops pulled out. In March 1974, just when I came to AID, the US Government pulled out the last of its combat troops. Yet, AID was still involved in Vietnam and many in the Congress saw AID’s involvement as a continuation of US involvement in the Vietnam War.

The third was the passage of the War Powers Act of 1973 which was authorized by the House foreign affairs committee and passed over President Nixon’s veto. The Act required the President to notify Congress after deploying armed forces. The Act also limited how long military forces can remain engaged without congressional approval. In April 1975, pursuant to the War Powers Act, the President made the first notification under the War Powers Act, which was to notify the Congress that the United States had committed forces to evacuate both refugees and US nationals from Vietnam. This decision related to the work of USAID as it was deeply involved in evacuating refugees and the USAID workforce.

The fourth shift was the beginning of the impeachment of President Nixon in 1973. Subsequently, President Nixon resigned in 1974, and he was succeeded by President Ford. Secretary of State Kissinger continued as Secretary of State, as did Mr. Parker continue as AID Administrator. That continuity of leadership at State and USAID helped buffer the significant change normally associated with Presidential transitions. While AID’s workforce and operations in Southeast Asia were profoundly affected as a result of the Vietnam War and the close of AID Missions in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, the change in Administration did not seem to cause a major shift in the implementation of such priorities as the “new directions” legislation.

*Q: OK, let’s move on to disaster assistance. You said Dan was particularly interested in this and that he therefore wanted you very involved in it. Was there already an office for disaster assistance?*

HOLMES: There was an Office of the Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator which became the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. Mr. Parker became particularly focused on strengthening the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance. He had great expectations for that office. He wanted it to be faster, more informed, provide more detailed information, be on the ground earlier, and apply sophisticated technology for communications, assessment and monitoring. With the fall of Vietnam and the related collapse of Laos and Cambodia, Dan had already begun to become deeply involved in disaster relief and refugee assistance. Mr. Parker was particularly interested in international disaster assistance, as well as the application of sophisticated communications and disaster assessment technology.

The response to the 1976 Guatemala earthquake was a turning point in disaster assistance assessment. The earthquake leveled about a quarter of the country's infrastructure, and more than 20,000 people died in the earthquake. Everybody wanted to know what was going on, what were we going to do, particularly the Administrator and the White House.

Dan sent me to Guatemala to help with the on the ground assessment and the development of recommendations for short and long-term assistance. We decided we needed far better information and imagery of the extent of the damage in the urban and remote rural mountainous areas. Before I left for Guatemala, I checked to see what kind of lessons learned were available related to past US government experience in providing disaster assistance areas in developing countries afflicted by earthquakes. It turned out that there was nothing available regarding any past experiences that might be directly or indirectly related, particularly as it concerned some of the tough decisions we had to make, such as the provision of US Army field hospitals, which were quickly dispatched to Guatemala in the early days of the disaster.

Dan set in motion a proposal that the US Government dispatch a U-2 aerial reconnaissance plane to take images on an unclassified basis of the destruction so as to facilitate both relief and subsequent economic development work. He briefed President Ford in both his capacity as Administrator and as the President's Special Coordinator for International Disaster on the disaster assistance response and proposed to the President the use of the U-2 for unclassified surveillance work. He got the go-ahead from the President. Later, he used the imagery in a briefing of President Ford on the status of the earthquake response effort .

As I mentioned, we had hired a White House fellow from 1975-76. This was Major Marshall Carter USMC. Marsh's duties included working on the application of satellite technology for disaster relief activities in Guatemala. He applied tremendous technical, operational and planning skills to help us meet Dan's expectations related to the application of high technology for relief and development.

All in all, this was a major step forward in the use of such technology for disaster assessment. The images were very informative, particularly on the destruction of houses and changes in landscape. It was the first time AID had used such technology for disaster assessment. One of the most important lessons learned was how challenging it is to apply such information for not only short-term relief but also long-term economic development. For example, some of the images showed how in very remote mountainous forested areas, earthquakes had caused landslides which in turn formed natural dams which backed up stream water into water catchments. This was important information to know, as it related not only to downstream water supply but also to the possibility of these dams collapsing due to another earthquake which would cause a sudden release of large amounts of water, potentially harming downstream communities. Several years later, the US Geologic Survey undertook an analysis of the imagery to determine the extent of the impact of the earthquake on the landscape. The analysis concluded that there were about 10,000 landslides caused by the earthquake. So while we had this great information, we did not have at that time the capacity to apply the information and undertake preventive



measures so as to mitigate the possibility of natural dam formation and subsequent collapse.

*Q: Where was OFDA in the bureaucracy?*

HOLMES: It was located in the Bureau for Population and Health. Harriet Crowley was the Assistant Administrator in charge of the Bureau; she was a very wise, talented and effective leader. Al Furman was the Deputy Assistant Administrator -- and later Tony Schwarzwald.

In December 1975, Harriet Crowley asked me to become the Deputy Director of what became the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, which also meant my becoming the Acting Director.

*Q: Dan was okay with that?*

HOLMES: He was ok with that, but he wasn't too happy about it. I don't think Harriet had discussed it with him beforehand. We had become close and he relied on me to provide a wide range of support. I had spent almost 2 years helping him manage crises and working closely with OFDA. So, he had a good sense of how I worked under pressure. He felt that since I knew what he expected of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, I would be in a good position to meet his expectations of OFDA.

*Q: Who took your place in the Administrator's office?*

HOLMES: A combination of Marsh Carter and Carole McGraw.

*Q: What about at OFDA? Had there been other people brought in to be director?*

HOLMES: During my four-year tenure as Deputy Director and Acting Director, OFDA had four different directors. The first was Georgiana Sheldon, who left OFDA shortly to become a FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) Commissioner. I became the Acting Director.

Given AID's close operational relationship with the Department of Defense in disaster assistance, Dan decided that the next OFDA director should have deep operational and policy experience working within or with DOD. He selected General Earl Anderson, who had been the Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps, as OFDA Director. He was very strategic with impressive operational skills. He asked me to continue as his deputy. He had fought in World War II, Korea and Vietnam; and rose to be the youngest four-star general in the history of the Marine Corps. He taught me a great deal about crisis and systems management, perceiving and connecting the pieces of the puzzle before acting. That training was not only very helpful to me at OFDA but also later in my career when I became the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Refugees. General Anderson left OFDA to take a senior position at the United Nations Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO), and I became the Acting Director.

During the Carter administration, the President appointed Anne Martindell to be the OFDA Director, and she asked me to continue as the Deputy Director of OFDA. She had been a New Jersey state Senator and was a natural in this area. She had all the right instincts. Anne Martindell became the US Ambassador to New Zealand, and as had been the case in the past, the Administrator designated me to be the Acting Director.

Following Anne Martindell, President Carter appointed a former head of the Georgia Department of Emergency Assistance, Joe Mitchell. I never really got to know Joe as I transferred to the State Department shortly after his arrival. He had an impressive background and struck me as being strongly committed to disaster assistance. I do recall him being very supportive of my fieldwork in Cambodia in the fall of 1979.

*Q: I presume you were doing most of the director's job anyway even when the others were there.*

HOLMES: While I was never the Director, General Anderson, Anne Martindell and Georgiana Sheldon definitely relied upon me to manage OFDA on their behalf. I spent a great deal of time serving as the Acting Director, and, in so doing, was able to provide some continuity on supporting critical OFDA initiatives which can require years of sustained support, such as building out its preparedness programs and supporting relief to regions such as the Sahel where drought and related relief operations can span years. Over those four years I built up trust with the Congressional staff which was essential to convincing the Congress to fund OFDA operations. I learned a great deal. The leadership experience at OFDA helped prepare me for my assignment at the State Department.

*Q: You were there when?*

HOLMES: I was there from December 1975 until December 1979.

*Q: There was no issue about you being held over from a Republican to a Democratic administration? Nobody was trying to push you out?*

HOLMES: When President Carter appointed Anne Martindell to be the OFDA Director, she asked David Morse to provide his assessment of me.

*Q: Why David Morse?*

HOLMES: They were friends, and she greatly respected him. I had not personally known David Morse. He was well-known in international economic development circles. He had been the first Director of the International Labor Organization and was the recipient of the Nobel Prize for his work at the ILO – an honor which he refused to accept unless the prize was given to the ILO as an institution, which the Nobel committee agreed to. We met. He took his measure of me and recommended to Anne that I serve as her deputy.

*Q: And you then remained quite close to David Morse, didn't you?*

HOLMES: We became life-long friends.

*Q: I didn't realize that was the source of your link. It was Anne Martindell who brought that-*

HOLMES: Brought David into my life.

*Q: I think it's quite remarkable that you were able to stay in that period. During my entire career before I became assistant administrator, I was still an AD because there were very few Republicans who wanted to come in during that shift in 1968 to the next administration. I started looking for a GS (general schedule position) but the demand was not there. But I could imagine that there were Democrats eager for your job, so it is a further tribute to you that you were kept on during that period.*

*How many people were in that office when you started?*

HOLMES: It was very small, probably 20 at most; it's grown to several hundred now.

*Q: More than that, I think.*

*Do you remember what your annual budget was at that stage?*

HOLMES: It was about \$20,000,000. It was heavily focused on immediate relief and a challenge was to continue to have a strong relief budget while also increasing the funding devoted to disaster preparedness. Strengthening the disaster preparedness function, particularly as related to reporting, capturing and applying past lessons learned and developing early warning systems, became a major focus for me.

*Q: What were the great crises you faced?*

HOLMES: In addition to the Guatemala earthquake, these included conflict in Lebanon; earthquake in Italy; war and drought in Ethiopia; war in Lebanon; war and famine in East Timor; drought in West Africa; drought in Haiti, and war, genocide and famine in Cambodia. I worked on the ground in all of these relief efforts.

While I was not involved in the in-country assessment of the outbreak of Ebola in Zaire in 1976, I became deeply involved in the assessment and response effort. This could have become a massive crisis. Fortunately, the outbreak was quickly contained but it was definitely a precursor of far worse things to come, namely the Liberia Ebola epidemic in 2014.

Regarding the outbreak of Ebola hemorrhagic fever in Zaire in 1976, OFDA turned to the Center for Disease Control to dispatch its epidemiologists and other experts to assess the situation. OFDA worked with DOD, CDC and NASA on arranging on a contingency basis for a NASA decontamination capsule, used for astronauts, to be flown on a DOD C-130 aircraft to Zaire for use if any of the CDC team might become infected with the disease of then unknown origin. It turned out Ebola was transmitted by reused needles at

a remote clinic. In the September-October 1976 period, there were several hundred cases and a very high death rate. Some 38 years later following the Zaire Ebola outbreak; there was a massive Ebola outbreak in Liberia in 2014. Coincidentally in January 2014 I was working in Liberia's Bong County assessing a water and sanitation project. This was just a month before the Ebola crisis broke out. Bong County became an Ebola hot zone.

*Q: Were the people staffing OFDA at that point long-term...?*

HOLMES: They were mostly long-term public servants who had done a great deal to help disaster victims throughout the developing world. They were also facing enormous expectations to undertake new approaches from the State Department, the Administrator, the White House, the Congress and other stakeholders. It was difficult for some of them to adjust to these expectations.

*Q: Were you able to light a fire under them?*

HOLMES: I never thought they needed a fire under them. What I did think was that our environment was changing rapidly on many fronts and my job was to help us all, me included, understand and adapt to that change. An important part of that change was preparing for and responding to the confluence of drought, warfare and disease. The paradigm for international disaster assistance and for the operations of OFDA was shifting very rapidly from a primary focus on response to an equally intense focus on not only response but also preparedness, assessment and reporting. While I was not the Director, Administrator Parker made it very clear to me that he expected me to drive that shift.

We faced a tough challenge. I was also getting a very clear message from the authorizing and appropriating committees that if AID expected the Congress to maintain disaster assistance funding levels—and even increase them—AID needed to be better prepared for disasters, and disaster relief responses had to be earlier, faster and more impactful. So, I knew I had to bring the team together to figure out how to help OFDA meet these expectations.

Shortly after I arrived at OFDA, an AID management team met with me to discuss the OFDA's performance and a possible reorganization. I outlined an approach which would not disrupt the office's operations but would increase its responsiveness. The management team accepted that.

We brought in new staff to complement the existing team's strengths. I concentrated on introducing systemic rather than one-off changes to strengthen operations and preparedness; and ultimately helped build an organization and programs to not only meet present needs but also serve as a strong platform for future expansion.

All of this required working closely with the Congress and demonstrating commitment and ability to meet congressional expectations, especially as it related to improving preparedness.

As drought worsened in sub-Saharan Africa, I met with Senator Edward Kennedy, who was the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugees, and his staff director, Jerry Tinker. Sen. Kennedy asked why AID could not do a better job in learning from the past and anticipating drought in Africa. He urged AID to develop an approach to anticipate drought and ensure that food aid arrived far earlier so as to better meet the needs of drought victims.

To do that, one of our key efforts was to initiate the development of an early warning drought projection system to improve delivery of food aid to drought victims. We also supported a lessons learned initiative to capture and apply lessons from past disaster assistance efforts.

Shortly after the meeting with Senator Kennedy, I subsequently met with the head of NOAA's Center for Climate and Environmental Assessment (CCEA) to better understand CCEA's capacity related to drought monitoring and explore how we might work together on developing a drought relief related early warning system that might one day improve the timing of the delivery of drought relief supplies. That led to OFDA and NOAA committing to develop a program to adapt CCEA's system, then used to monitor global wheat production, to monitor drought in the Sahel and the Caribbean. Thanks to the technical support provided by OFDA's Paul Krumpke, OFDA and CCEA subsequently developed a system which used the NOAA weather satellites to monitor cloud cover to estimate rainfall during critical crop growth phases.

Over the years, the system evolved into USAID's Famine Early Warning System Network. (FEWSNET). While the drought monitoring system continued, I understand that OFDA about 10 years later discontinued the development of the lessons learned system.

*Q: Were you able to bring in new people, other than as consultants?*

HOLMES: I started to, but it takes a long time. We hired some great new staff including Margaret McKelvey, who went on to lead the State Department Bureau for Refugee Program's (RP) Africa programs; Paul Krumpke who played a key role in applying NOAA technology to detect drought assessment; Ollie Davidson who became a leader disaster preparedness; Denise Decker who specialized in disaster preparedness; and Stan Guth who led the operations function for OFDA. We also had some superb long time OFDA staff, such as Fred Cole who was highly skilled in both preparedness and operations and Carol Siegel, who served as OFDA's chief administrative and budget officer.

*Q: What was the disaster effort in Lebanon?*

HOLMES: Fighting between Maronite and Palestinian forces broke out in 1975, which led to a civil war that lasted until about 1990. In June 1976, the US Ambassador to Lebanon, Frank Malloy and his Economic Counselor, Bob Waring, were kidnapped and murdered in Beirut. Just a few months previously, I had worked with Frank in Guatemala

during the earthquake relief effort there, when he was the US Ambassador to Guatemala. Later in 1976, I was in Beirut as OFDA's lead on an inter-agency team assessing the impact of the war on Beirut and developing reconstruction options. It was a very violent time. We were assessing the prospect of rebuilding an essential part of economy, the port, that had been damaged in the fighting.

*Q: So this was not a natural disaster, this was war.*

HOLMES: Yes. OFDA focused heavily on providing medical relief to the American University hospital in Beirut, headed by a very talented physician, Dr. Sam Asper. He led the hospital 1973-1979 during the conflict that killed 60,000 people. The hospital was literally in the middle of bullets flying across the campus.

Our relief teams would augment the work of AID in the field. I was impressed by, and grateful for, not just the work of OFDA in the field but also the long-term day in day out commitment of the AID Mission personnel stationed in the field and for the sacrifices they made in the midst of danger. While the work undertaken by OFDA disaster assessment experts was of course dangerous and important, they were not permanently assigned to disaster afflicted countries. The AID Mission team that stayed in country day in, day out were brave and very effective. They were the mainstay.

*Q: So you weren't sending out special teams from Washington?*

HOLMES: We would send out special teams, all the time.

*Q: In addition to the people in the field?*

HOLMES: The OFDA teams worked in country on short- and long-term assessments and relief operations .

*Q: It's the lessons-learned aspect of what you were talking about earlier, too.*

HOLMES: Yes, it's key both to apply lessons learned from past disasters and capture new lessons for future disaster relief efforts.

*Q: In addition to Beirut, what else happened?*

HOLMES: While working for the AID Administrator and then at OFDA, I continued to stay very much involved with the aftermath of the Vietnam War. There was enormous instability, suffering and loss of life following the fall of Vietnam. After Vietnam fell, refugees fled by land and sea from Vietnam.

There are estimates that as many as 400,000 Vietnamese Boat People died at sea. Refugees also fled from Cambodia and Laos. The Pathet Lao took control of Laos in 1975 and that led to Laotians fleeing to Thailand. AID was deeply involved in caring for Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian refugees both in resettlement camps throughout

South East Asia and in camps in the United States. The USG transported about 120,000 refugees from Vietnam primarily to Guam and the refugees were subsequently moved to four US military bases where they were housed and processed for resettlement: Fort Chaffee, Camp Pendleton, Fort Indiantown Gap and Eglin Air Force Base.

In 1975 the Khmer Rouge took over the Government of Cambodia, and with that began a regime of terror and the genocide of millions of Cambodians and the flight of those who could escape into Thailand. In 1979, the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia and drove Pol Pot and his soldiers to the Thai Border.

A critical relief challenge was providing assistance to Cambodians who fled into Thailand and those who were starving but remained on the Cambodian side of the border. In 1979, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) estimated that some 2.5 million Cambodians were facing starvation. I worked closely with the US Ambassador to Thailand, Mortimer Abramowitz, who did an extraordinary job in leading US Government efforts to care for the war and drought refugees fleeing into Thailand. This involved my working with Catholic Relief Service's Monsignor Robert Charlebois to assess the condition of refugees and their needs along the border. Ambassador Abramowitz approved the first border feeding program which AID funded. This was a significant breakthrough in helping reduce the suffering of Cambodians. The humanitarian assistance community was elated that the US Government approved the program, as they knew it would both help meet immediate needs and also lead to future more expanded efforts.

While not connected to the Vietnam War, USAID was also helping victims of war elsewhere in Southeast Asia, namely East Timor. Following withdrawal of Portugal from East Timor in 1975, there was civil war within East Timor and the subsequent invasion of East Timor by the Government of Indonesia.

In 1977, the US Government decided to provide disaster assistance and food aid to the Timorese, and I accompanied that year US Ambassador Ed Masters to East Timor to undertake an assessment, focused on the highlands and coastal areas of East Timor. As the colonial power, Portugal did very little to build infrastructure in East Timor. Thus, in order to reach remote populations we worked closely with humanitarian assistance organizations. OFDA awarded a grant to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to use amphibious landing craft (LSTs) to move relief supplies to remote coastal areas around the perimeter of the island in order to land relief supplies. In the assessment I undertook with CRS's Monsignor Charlebois, we saw the kind of starvation that was similar to that which we had seen in Ethiopia, but sometimes even more acute.

AID's Food for Peace Program played a major role in famine assistance throughout the developing world, including in East Timor, where AID provided fortified and blended foods, particularly corn soya blend commodities. The provision of these fortified foods had to be done very carefully as the foods needed to be diluted to avoid children entering into protein shock due to the sudden introduction of high-protein food into their system.

During this time, AID was not only active in providing disaster assistance to the victims of war in Southeast Asia, it was also engaged in providing relief to victims of both drought and warfare in East Africa. From 1977 to 1978, Ethiopia and Somalia waged the Ogaden War. Following the cessation of hostilities, I undertook an assessment of refugee needs in Ethiopia which focused on the victims of war, drought and disease. This included a major locust plague and the outbreak of ergot, a fungus which infects rye and other cereals, causing severe damage to the human vascular system. Ergotism had not been seen in this region. I sensed that this confluence of drought, warfare, pestilence and disease would become more pervasive throughout the developing world. This was the case when I returned to AID in 2010.

I would work with the Center for Disease Control, NGOs and local organizations helping undertake assessments of famine, and it was always heartbreaking to see such pain, suffering and death occurring from famine. Many of the children suffered from marasmus where the children were extremely emaciated. Others had kwashiorkor where their bodies became bloated and others had a combination of both marasmus, kwashiorkor and infectious disease. The combination of malnutrition and such diseases as acute respiratory and lung infection, malaria, measles and diarrhea, were, and still are, the major killer diseases affecting children.

*Q: You're one guy, all over the place. How were you able to cope with all these things going on at the same time? They didn't nicely fall into place, this is finished and a couple of weeks at home, a lot of this is overlapping. Did you have people you could rely on to take charge, or you went out every time at the beginning of these things?*

HOLMES: Fortunately, I had a lot of great people to work with and rely upon. I did indeed spend a good deal of time in the field assessing disasters and helping with in country coordination. I was part of a broad system of committed experts. We had a good team not only at OFDA but also in the AID missions, which were also actively involved in disaster response and assessment. I felt very confident in, and fortunate to work with, such OFDA leaders as Fred Cole and Stan Guth who were leaders in preparedness and operations.

In addition to the OFDA team, as I mentioned earlier, we worked closely with such agencies and departments as CDC, State, DOD and other USAID offices and Missions, as well as experts from various nongovernmental and international organizations, such as Catholic Relief Services, Church World Services, CARE, Lutheran World Relief, International Rescue Committee, World Vision and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

*Q: That's probably a good place to stop until we pick it up again. This beginning work on the Office of Disaster Relief I think is of particular interest, especially since that's grown to be virtually half of the AID program; this is the beginning of it in a serious way.*

HOLMES: The only thing I'd add, is that when I arrived at OFDA in 1975, my ambition was to help strengthen the ability of OFDA to save lives and reduce suffering through its



preparedness and relief programs. It was very gratifying that in 1978, OFDA's Anne Martindell accepted on behalf of OFDA the highest award any AID office can receive for its performance.

*Q: Who recognized it?*

HOLMES: The Agency had an awards committee, and the nomination went through the very detailed process that culminated in the USAID Administrator approving its recommendations.

*Q: Didn't you also receive the Fleming Award about that time?*

HOLMES: Yes, I did. AID nominated me to receive the Fleming Award which was given annually to US Government leaders. It was a great honor to receive it.

*Q: It's still a big deal! What year was that?*

HOLMES: 1978.

*Q: For your leadership of the office.*

HOLMES: Yes, for my leadership of OFDA, helping lead relief efforts, undertaking disaster assessments and initiating the development of the OFDA-NOAA drought protection system.

*Q: The Fleming Award is very prestigious across the government. Who else won that year and where did they end up?*

HOLMES: Bob Gates who was at the NSC became Secretary of Defense. Bob Hormats was at State and became the Under Secretary for Energy and the Environment. Candace Smart was at NIH and discovered the opiate receptor, the cellular binding site for endorphins in the brain.

*Q: That was wonderful, you earned that by this experience. Not many AID people have won that.*

HOLMES: Tony Schwarzwaldler won that in 1973 for his work on the Bangladesh war and famine relief effort.

*Q: That's terrific.*

*This is Alex Shakow again and we are resuming with Chris Holmes' oral history. It is Saturday morning, January 26, 2019. Chris is taking his jacket off, so you know this is a serious effort.*

*So Chris, I feel very neglectful that the last time we spent a lot of time talking about important parts of your career, but there's one very important that we failed to mention. That is how you met your wife, Noel, and when that marriage took place. This was in the middle of all other sorts of activities. That was my reason for neglecting it, but I don't mean to diminish the importance of that.*

HOLMES: I am blessed to have a wonderful marriage and family.

*Q: When did you get married?*

HOLMES: We got married in September 1975.

*Q: So at no point was there conflict of interest, you could testify, and she could be working for Charlie Wilson?*

HOLMES: She worked as Associate Staff of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and was assigned to support Congressman Wilson, who was on the subcommittee. And yes, I could testify before the subcommittee.

*Q: This is a wonderful Washington love story, here we are 45 years later.*

HOLMES: A long time later!

*Q: So a long time very happily married to this wonderful woman. At any point where you want to bring in additional factors about your children or anything like that, let me know.*

*So, the end of our discussion last week you noted that you finished up at the disaster relief office (not that the disasters were finished) and you then were asked to join the State Department's refugees work. Please explain a little more about how that happened, and what your job was, and what it was like moving from AID to State, and just generally what your job was during those next - what - three years?*

HOLMES: I had already been working closely with State Department's refugee office not only on Cambodian refugees fleeing into Thailand but also on a wide range of other refugee matters throughout the developing world.

*Q: The responsibility here was the State Department's and AID through its disaster relief office, or how did that sort itself out?*

HOLMES: There had been an understanding that if the crisis was contained within a country, AID would handle it; if refugees crossed a border, State would handle it. In the case of Cambodia, as in so many countries, there's no clearly defined border, and people are moving all over the place.

*Q: So when did you move to the State Department*

HOLMES: I moved to the State Department in December 1979. I was initially the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Refugee Programs responsible for crisis management. Subsequently I became the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Refugee Programs. When I joined State, my work broadened from refugee relief to the resettlement of refugees in developed and developing countries, particularly resettlement into the United States and Southeast Asia.

*Q: Including the Vietnamese refugees who had settled in the United States in various communities?*

HOLMES: Yes. This included not only the Vietnamese, as well as the Cambodian and Laotian refugees who settled in the United States following the fall of Vietnam but also some 125,000 Cubans and Haitians who suddenly began arriving United States in the spring of 1980.

*Q: Who from State was involved in the refugee programs.*

HOLMES: In 1979, the State Department initiated a review and reorganization of the Bureau for Refugee Programs. Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher had assigned a number of very senior and experienced foreign service officers to help reorganize and strengthen the department's refugee function. These included Ambassador Chas Freeman and Ambassador Frank Wisner.

Deputy Secretary Christopher asked Victor Palmieri and Frank Loy to join the State Department to lead the global refugee assistance effort. Both had significant prior government experience and also legal and crisis management experience in the private sector.

Victor, per the Refugee Act of 1980, became the first United States Coordinator for Refugee Affairs. He also held Ambassador rank. The responsibilities of the coordinator were far-reaching. Per the Refugee Act, the Coordinator was responsible to the President for the development of overall United States refugee admission and resettlement policy, and the coordination of all United States domestic and international refugee admission and resettlement programs.

Frank Loy became the Director of the Bureau for Refugee Programs, also with Ambassador rank. He was responsible for both directing the far-reaching programs of the Bureau for Refugee Programs and the international negotiations related to refugees. Subsequently, in the Clinton administration, Frank became the Undersecretary for Global Affairs.

1980 was a time of great challenge and change related to refugee assistance. The challenges faced by the Refugee Bureau and their colleagues across the State Department included the continuing resettlement of the Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians into the United States and other nations which had begun in 1975 following the fall of the governments of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos; the implementation of the Refugee Act of

1980; the resettlement of large numbers of Cubans and Haitians who suddenly entered the United States; the response to the domestic crisis in the United States arising from the arrival of the Cubans and Haitians; the launch of the UN supported “orderly departure program” (ODP) established to enable Vietnamese to leave Vietnam safely; the provision of humanitarian assistance to more than a million Cambodians who fled both genocide and famine to the Thailand border; the support of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Committee of the Red Cross and NGOs to provide relief to Afghan refugees fleeing into Pakistan as result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. All in all, the world was facing a massive refugee crisis. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians fled the conflict in their countries. This ultimately led to approximately 300,000 refugees from these countries coming to the United States between 1975 and 1979.

Following the fall of Vietnam in 1975, tens of thousands of Vietnamese, known as “boat people,” fled by boat from to reach neighboring countries. Their passage was enormously dangerous; refugees faced their boats being capsized; starvation and disease at sea; being attacked, murdered and raped by pirates; and turned back to sea when they reached safe shores. One of my first assignments at the Bureau for refugee programs to develop ways to protect the boat people from Thai pirates.

In 1979, countries receiving the boat people were increasingly reluctant to accept them . In June 1979, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees convened a global conference to develop an approach for the Vietnamese to leave their homeland in an orderly manner so as to be resettled abroad. As I mentioned, this was known as the “orderly departure” program . As a result of the conference, the Vietnamese agreed to the orderly departure program; western governments agreed to accelerate resettlement into their countries, and the neighboring countries in Southeast Asia agreed to continue to provide asylum and care for the refugees reaching their countries.

Despite the 1979 agreement, in 1980, the Government of Vietnam and the western countries were still negotiating over the list of Vietnamese leaving Vietnam under the orderly departure program, and throughout 1980 these negotiations continued. Ultimately the orderly departure program took hold and from 1980 to 1997 about 650,000 Vietnamese were resettled abroad and about 450,000 in the United States. Although the ODP program provided safe transit to many Vietnamese, the Vietnamese continued to flee by sea . The UNHCR estimated that 250,000 refugees had died at sea by 1986.

Warfare in Southeast Asia by no means ended with United States leaving Vietnam in 1975. In 1979, Vietnam invaded Cambodia and overthrew the Khmer Rouge government controlling Cambodia. In 1979 and 1980, hundreds of thousands of Cambodians fled to the Thailand border because of the fighting between the Vietnamese and the Khmer Rouge, the savagery and genocide which the Khmer Rouge inflicted on the Cambodian people and wide spread famine. Humanitarian organizations launched the "land bridge", one of the largest humanitarian aid efforts ever undertaken. The support which USAID funded in 1979 Catholic Relief Services to support border feeding programs complemented the massive “land bridge.”

The Southeast Asian refugee crisis was only one part of the entire global refugee dynamic. The invasion of Iran by Iraq in 1980 drove an estimated 1 million Iranians from

their homes. There were large-scale flows of refugees in Africa, particularly in East Africa where, as a result of conflict and drought in Ethiopia, refugees fled to Sudan, Djibouti and Somalia. Pakistan was also experiencing a major refugee crisis as a result of the December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. Approximately 1.5 million Afghans fled into Pakistan shortly after the invasion. Additionally, following the fall of the Shah of Iran, large numbers of Iranians within the United States were seeking citizenship.

Faced with a global refugee crisis and enormous demands by refugees for admission into the United States, the Congress and the Carter administration sought to improve overall US refugee policy, the refugee admission process and the process of resettlement of refugees into United States. To that end in 1979, the Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980 which was enacted into law in March 1980. This law set in motion major changes to United States refugee policy including having United States Government for the first time adopt the UN definition of what constituted a refugee, namely a person with a “well-founded fear of persecution”.

To address these challenges, we were very fortunate to have the leadership which Ambassador Palmieri and Ambassador Loy brought to bear, as well as the leadership provided by others in the State Department, particularly, Assistant Secretary for Asia, Richard Holbrooke; the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Asia, Ambassador John Negroponte, and the US Ambassador to Thailand, Ambassador, Mort Abramowitz who played a key role addressing both the implementation of the ODP program and the Cambodia refugee and humanitarian assistance crisis.

We were also fortunate to have had the experienced and accomplished team in the State Department’s Bureau for Refugee Programs, including Margaret Carpenter who was in charge of policy, legislative affairs and communications; Shep Loman, the Deputy Assistant Secretary responsible for SE Asia; Jim Purcell, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for finance and administration; Richard Smyser, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for international organizations; and Karl Beck, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Africa.

*Q: Did you work with those people?*

HOLMES: I worked with all of them. With some, I developed long-lasting friendships.

*Q: Who brought you into State?*

HOLMES: Ambassador Abramowitz, with whom I worked closely on Cambodian refugee matters, recommended to Ambassador Palmieri and Ambassador Loy that they consider me for their team. Ambassador Palmieri and Ambassador Loy wanted me to apply my OFDA experience to refugee assistance related crisis management. I began to do that by supporting Frank Loy on the Bureau for Refugee Program’s response to the refugee crisis in Pakistan caused by the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union and the subsequent flight of Afghans into Pakistan. Ambassador Loy and I

undertook an on the ground assessment of the refugee situation along the Pakistan Afghanistan border. It was grim.

*Q: You were still this young whippersnapper?*

HOLMES: I was 33. It was quite a jump.

*Q: At this stage do you have any comments about these people that would be interesting for history?*

HOLMES: Everyone that I encountered wanted to protect lives, care for the refugees and see that they were safely resettled. On the Hill, there was far more bipartisan support for refugee assistance and resettlement than we see in the United States today .

A great many of the State Department leaders and staff were also strongly influenced by their own professional history related to Vietnam. This was 1980, which was only five years since Vietnam had fallen. Many of the Department of State leaders involved in the refugee assistance had served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War, such as Richard Holbrooke. They felt a continuing and intense obligation to protect, care for and help resettle Vietnamese, as well as Cambodians and Laotians. In addition, they had a unique understanding of the dynamics of the political situation in Southeast Asia and other countries related to the care and resettlement of refugees.

Many members of Congress became very involved in the refugee programs.

*Q: Who were they?*

HOLMES: A key member of the House was Congressman Hamilton Fish.

*Q: From the state of New York.*

HOLMES: Yes, Congressman Fish was a key sponsor of what became the Refugee Act of 1980 which was passed by the Congress in 1979 and signed into law in March, 1980. The Congress wanted to establish a more regular system for immigration and resettlement. The Act set some significant changes in the management of refugee assistance. In addition to creating the United States Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, the Act also created an Office of Refugee Resettlement within the Department of Health and Human Services, responsible for implementing domestic resettlement and assistance to refugees. The Act defined a refugee as a person unable to return to their country because of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution.

The Act faced its first challenge when in April 1980, just after a month after its enactment, thousands of Cubans stormed the Peruvian embassy in Havana seeking asylum. Castro opened up the port of Mariel and claimed he would let anyone who wanted to leave Cuba to do so. He also called for the deportation of criminals from

Cuba. By the end of May, almost 100,00 Cubans had arrived in the United States in what became known as the Mariel Boatlift.

This was followed by Haitians also launching an equivalent boatlift to the United States. Between April and October, some 134,000 Cubans and Haitians arrived in the United States through these boatlifts.

The US Government did not automatically grant the Cubans and Haitians refugee or asylum status but admitted them under an emergency designation as “Cuban- Haitian entrants “. However , groups representing Cuban and Haitian “entrants” demanded that, in effect, all 134,000 people be given asylum or refugee status and be treated, per the Refugee Act of 1980, as fleeing into the United States because of a “well-founded fear of persecution.” The Refugee Act was just enacted, and the US Government was not prepared to make refugee or asylum determinations at such a large scale. It also faced significant challenges in caring for the settling such a large number of men, women and children who arrived in the United States in such a relatively short period of time. The arrival of the Cubans and Haitians and the overall resettlement effort quickly evolved into a major domestic crisis.

*Q: What were the AID people being asked to do?*

HOLMES: AID did not have a role in the domestic response to the Cuban and Haitian entrants. Rather, AID personnel concentrated on the resettlement and care for Vietnamese refugees who arrived at different locations throughout Southeast Asia.

*Q: There was a camp for Cubans?*

HOLMES: The US Government did not create new camps but rather housed the Cubans and Haitians in military facilities. These included Fort McCoy, Wisconsin; Fort Chafee, Arkansas; Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania; Eglin Air Force Base, Florida; and the Krome Army facility in Florida. The Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services along with NGOs engaged in the resettlement of Cubans and Haitians, managed the resettlement camps.

*Q: What did you have to do in all this?*

HOLMES: So as the crisis worsened, Ambassador Palmieri needed a new director of an interagency task force, the Cuban Haitian task force, which was charged with coordinating the effort to assist and resettle the entrants. He asked me to shift from my refugee work on such matters Pakistan and Ethiopia refugee assistance to become the director of the Task Force.

The task force consisted of a wide range of agencies who were actively involved in managing different aspects of the care of, processing and resettlement of the Cubans and Haitians, as well as the meeting needs of communities and state which were also engaged in the response effort. These agencies included the Department of State, the Coast Guard,

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Defense, Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Health and Human Services Department, GSA, and the National Park Service. While Ambassador Palmieri coordinated overall US refugee affairs, per the recently enacted Refugee Act of 1980, the White House's Gene Eidenberg, Secretary to the Cabinet and Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs, also provided guidance on the domestic relief and resettlement effort.

FEMA played a key role in the effort, and I had the opportunity to work directly with its Director, John Macy. John had his hands full as he was also dealing at that time with the US disaster response to the eruption of the Mt Saint Helens volcano in Oregon. The Carter Administration had just established FEMA in 1979, so it was facing a combination of a massive refugee or "entrant" influx and a natural disaster. Both crises were a first: Mt. Saint Helens was the first volcano eruption in the United States history to cause such a major natural disaster. NOAA called it the deadliest and most economically destructive volcanic event in the history of the United States. The refugee crisis was the first such crisis involving such a sudden arrival of large numbers of refugees seeking asylum.

My work focused on coordinating the varied assistance and resettlement efforts, which involved tracking the progress of resettlement, communicating status of the effort to a wide range of government and nongovernment entities, and helping link together the different efforts related to the resettlement effort.

A significant piece of my work was communicating the status of the resettlement efforts, as well as meeting with local, state, and federal officials and legislators. There were so many crises and problems occurring simultaneously that a critical part of my work was to help break up the bottlenecks related to the care and resettlement of the refugees. We were especially focused on the care of children.

*Q: So you were making decisions on the run?*

HOLMES: It seemed like that at times. The US Government had not experienced a refugee or "entrant" crisis like this before. The general public, which tended to welcome the Vietnamese refugees, were less welcoming of the Cubans and Haitians.

Additionally, the US Government agencies were not prepared for this kind of crisis and did not have clear systems, roles and responsibilities in place to meet the health, security, housing and relocation needs quickly and effectively of such a large population which so quickly arrived in the United States.

I had a strong sense that this refugee crisis was just the beginning of other similar crises arising from sudden refugee flows from across the Caribbean and Central America. So I assigned a person to report on and track progress of the resettlement so that in the future we would have documentation to learn from this crisis management effort.

*Q: Very impressive of you.*



HOLMES: My instinct was that there would be future similar problems but at a much larger scale, and thus it was important to record how this crisis was evolving and how we approached it. As it turned out, the United States did indeed face a systemic long-lasting crisis related to men, women and children fleeing to the United States from Latin America.

*Q: It sounds like something that might be quite relevant today, I mean you think about some of these issues. Do you see similarities every time?*

HOLMES: I do see similarities, the most notably being in meeting the needs of people seeking safety, fleeing persecution. The similarities relate not just to humanitarian assistance, but also to policy considerations, legal authorities and processes concerned with asylum, refugee status and resettlement. This applies not just to the United States but countries across the world.

I also see the common operational challenges of applying past lessons learned; taking a systems-based approach to crisis management; projecting future problems and solutions; and undertaking effective inter agency and intra agency coordination.

*Q: I interrupted you when you were about to say what you did about the children.*

HOLMES: One of the great tragedies of the Cuban-Haitian crisis was that children, referred to as unaccompanied minors, would become separated from their families in the boatlift to Florida. US Government, state and community agencies and NGOs involved in resettlement in the task force were all focused on caring for the children. It became a major priority to ensure that the children were safe and reunited with relatives, as well as supported in other ways. In the fall of 1980, the Congress passed a special law to provide special assistance Cuban and Haitian refugee children "Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980" to provide special impact aid to such educational agencies for the education of Cuban and Haitian refugee children

*Q: In that pretty searing experience that you had there during those days – how long did you stay in that job?*

HOLMES: I stayed with the Task Force from around May to November and with the Bureau for Refugee Programs until the early spring of 1981.

*Q: The reason it was only then, was it for political reasons that the people changed and your own role changed?*

HOLMES: By November, the arrival of Cuban Haitian entrants dropped significantly from a high of about 86,000 Cubans arriving in May to about 3,000 entrants arriving in September. Large numbers of people had been resettled out of the camps and the Department of Health and Human services, which had overall responsibility for

resettlement, assumed responsibility for the Task Force. Also in the fall, President Carter ceased an agreement with Cuba on the acceptance of Cubans into the United States.

*Q: Interesting. So the next move was to the trade and development program? How did that happen? This is a new administration; you had been working in a Democratic administration. You had all this shifting around; you were an apolitical person it seems by this time. How did that shift take place?*

HOLMES: Up to then, I had spent about six straight years on crisis management. I became more interested in the longer-term solutions to development challenges. At that time, the Reagan Administration was building up its team at USAID. President Reagan had appointed Peter McPherson to be the AID Administrator, and also nominated Elise DuPont to be the Assistant Administrator for the newly created AID Bureau for Private Enterprise. Peter was committed to engaging both the US private sector in economic development and in strengthening the private sector in developing countries.

Elise asked me to provide her with some insights on USAID, and that led to her asking me to become a Deputy Assistant Administrator to help build what became the Bureau for Private Enterprise. I asked her if I could also direct what was then a very small program, the Trade and Development Program (TDP) which years later was renamed the Trade and Development Agency. I was interested in TDP because it had unique authorities to operate in both developing countries that were receiving foreign assistance as well as those that were not, the so-called “non-aid countries.” This included in China. I was somewhat up to speed on the program, as when at I served State, I spent some time educating Assistant Secretary Richard Holbrooke on the TDP program, as he was interested in announcing a TDP initiative in China during an anticipated visit of Secretary of State Muskie to China.

TDP then was actually a separate entity within the then International Development Cooperation Agency (IDCA) which consisted of USAID, OPIC and TDP, with the head of IDCA also being the head of USAID. Thus, Peter McPherson, as the head of IDCA and AID, had the authority both to bring me on as a Deputy Assistant Administrator in AID and as the Director of the Trade and Development Program in IDCA. Peter agreed to my serving in both positions and also brought me back into AID as a Senior Foreign Service officer under a special provision which provided for five-year appointments and subsequent assignment to the field.

*Q: So you were also her deputy at that point?*

HOLMES: I was her deputy. She had both great drive and vision for the agency’s role in private sector engagement and in creating the Bureau for Private Enterprise. She had tremendous ambitions for the Bureau for Private Enterprise to leverage USAID funds to promote investment and generate employment in developing countries. Elise was very interested in having AID adopt some of the practices and instruments similar to those utilized by the International Finance Corporation.

I set as a very high priority helping her find a superb career foreign service officer with private sector related experience to serve as the principal deputy in the Bureau. I asked around and everyone said that Ed Harrell, who was the AID Mission Director in Jordan was perfect for that job – – and they were right. We organized the Bureau so that Ed would serve as the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator responsible for all matters related to developing investment vehicles, and I would concentrate on the housing investment loan guarantee program and the small business office. I also focused on building and leading the Trade and Development Program and concurrently took on the additional assignment of serving as the Executive Director of the President Reagan’s Task Force on International Private Enterprise.

*Q: The World Bank window for the private sector?*

HOLMES: That was the idea. She was also interested in past practices at AID that would be relevant to her present assignment. There wasn’t a great deal of information related to USAID’s past practices and lessons learned on financing investment in developing countries.

In fact the major investment tool AID had at that time was the Housing Investment Guarantee program run by Peter Kimm which allowed AID to guarantee loans made by developing country financial institutions. The program was very targeted on the housing sector but had the authority to fund loan guarantees in other sectors. In examining past practice, AID had done a good deal of work setting up intermediate credit institutions and providing grants to set up revolving funds which would support small businesses in developing countries. And, while it did have authority to take equity in projects, it didn’t appear that AID had any successful experience with that.

So Ed came in and his job was to try to figure out how to engage US private enterprise in development and also support private enterprises in developing countries. We needed to determine if AID had the legal authorities to take equity in developing country projects. To do that, Elise turned to a very creative USAID lawyer in the office of General Counsel, John Mullen.

*Q: The housing guarantee authority.*

HOLMES: Yes. which became part of the Bureau for Private Enterprise

*Q: Let me be clear about TDP. This is using the authority for reimbursable; the recipient would pay AID to provide technical assistance – is that right?*

HOLMES: That’s where it evolved from. The origins of TDP actually go back to the oil shocks of 1973-1974. In October 1973, after President Nixon asked the Congress to provide emergency funds to Israel for the Yom Kippur war, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) instituted an oil embargo on the United States. The embargo ceased US oil imports from participating OPEC nations. These cuts significantly increased the price of oil and caused a huge domestic energy crisis in the

United States with lines at gas stations. The cuts also increased the price of oil and the wealth of the OPEC countries.

So, AID in 1974 was looking for ways in which to get the Saudis and other oil-rich nations to pay AID to help the oil rich countries develop. AID had on its statute an authority then known as Section 607 which allowed U.S. Government agencies to accept payment from another government for providing services. TDP managed that program. TDP entrepreneurially assigned staff in such places as Qatar to look for opportunities for other governments to pay US Government agencies for providing development services. There were some very interesting permutations arising from all that. This included the Nigerian government paying the US Government to coordinate the education of a large numbers of Nigerians in educational institutions throughout the United States. TDP managed that program, too.

While all this was going on, the US consulting engineering industry was pushing USAID hard to move away from supporting US Government agencies to provide services to developing countries. Rather, the private sector wanted AID to pay the US private sector to provide development related services to these countries. The consulting engineering firms maintained that our foreign competitors, principally the Japanese, French and Italians, were offering grants to developing countries to pay for feasibility studies being carried out by Japanese, French and Italian companies on major projects in China. These projects included such activities as planning the design and construction of airports, power plants, dams, and manufacturing facilities. In so doing, the firms would develop studies on the projects which would preposition them for follow on business paid by the host country or international development banks related to designing, building and equipping the project.

*Q: To subsidize their export credit -*

HOLMES: Yes. AID agreed to use the Section 661 authority in the Foreign Assistance Act to support US firms to undertake training and planning related to the development of large-scale projects which would become export markets for US firms. TDP would carry out the program. Its predecessor was known as the Office of Reimbursable Development Programs. In so doing, the stage was set for TDP and its successor agency, the US Trade and Development Agency (TDA) to eventually play an important role in offsetting our foreign competitors' use of their foreign assistance funds, blended with their export credit funds, to promote exports to developing countries.

During the Carter administration, the Office of Reimbursable Programs was renamed the Trade and Development Program. It was very ably led by David Raymond. When I became the TDP Director, we had this very small program with about \$2 million in budget, some successes and a very good idea related to linking planning grants, development and US exports.

I saw our challenge as how to scale the TDP program quickly and make it strategically relevant to US Government foreign policy and commercial objectives. When I arrived at

TDP, we had some excellent staff; this included John Hardy who was the General Counsel and became the Deputy Director, Sharon Horton Freeman who was the assistant director for programs and management and ultimately led managed the TDP Asia effort and managed its Hong Kong office and Dan Stein who soon after my arrival joined TDP and played a critical role in developing and managing the TDP program in China.

Since TDP was the only organization with authority to use foreign assistance funds in China, we decided that given China's strategic and commercial importance, we should heavily focus on funding the planning of large-scale projects in China. TDP grants would support US firms to conduct feasibility studies on projects in China. This would preposition US firms to provide goods and services needed to design, construct and equip these projects.

There were some concerns that this China focus was not going to work because the Reagan team might be resistant to supporting trade and investment in China. My sense was that the Reagan team would be very trade oriented and supportive when it came to trade and investment in China. I was correct on that.

The Reagan team concerned with trade and investment in foreign assistance was very experienced. The Secretary of Commerce, Malcom Baldrige, had led a major global manufacturing company. The chairman of the Export Import Bank, William Draper, had led a Silicon Valley venture capital firm. The new OPIC president, Craig Nalen, had led a global chemicals company. The new USAID Administrator, Peter McPherson clearly understood the importance of trade, investment and foreign assistance linkages. Overtime, I developed a strong working relationship with all of these executives.

The US Embassy in China wanted to demonstrate to the Chinese that we were doing something very specific related to technology transfer and economic development. Providing TDP grants to the Chinese to pay US firms for the planning of their major development projects in such a way to pre-position US companies to provide goods and services to these projects was specific and appealing. So, we pushed ahead and had to figure out how to leverage a small budget to build out the TDP program.

Beyond focusing on China, there were other ways in which we sought strategic relevance while fostering trade and economic development. Geographically, we concentrated very heavily on SE Asia. Functionally, we launched an initiative to use TDP funds to help US firms plan the development of strategic minerals and metals located in developing countries. We utilized a former USGS geologist to help us develop the program, supporting feasibility studies and analyses on such activities as accessing cobalt in Morocco and titanium sands in Senegal.

*Q: The policy of the U.S. government was to encourage Chinese economic development?*

HOLMES: As related to the work of TDP, the policy was to encourage Chinese economic development linked to US exports to build development projects.

*Q: Exports from the United States to China.*

HOLMES: Yes, to China.

*Q: That is amazing, in that period, nobody said “What the hell do you think you’re doing?” Nobody, did Peter McPherson know about this?*

HOLMES: We never got that kind of response to our work. The Reagan administration in its early years placed a very high priority on trade. In 1982, President Reagan signed into law the Export Company Trading Act which was designed in great part to help US firms compete against Japanese export trading companies which were receiving assistance from their government. The general perception of the Congress and the Administration was that TDP was an important tool in helping offset such competition from Japan and other countries. We also made it very clear that we were not initiating an official US government bilateral foreign assistance program in China. Rather, we were initiating essentially a commercial program, administered in China by the US Department of Commerce Foreign Commercial Service FCS, which would utilize foreign assistance funds on a very targeted basis to promote US exports to China to also facilitate development in China. Peter McPherson was very supportive of our work. Peter had a solid understanding of the importance of USAID having positive U.S. domestic impact – – and TDP provided just that by demonstrating that it was generating jobs in the United States through the export of goods and services to the projects on which TDP was financing feasibility studies. The Congress was also supportive, and over the next six years increased the TDP annual budget from about \$2mm in 1981 to about \$25 million in 1987.

I do recall one memorable moment when I testified before Senator Helms, at which time he learned for the first time that TDP was deeply involved in China. He was momentarily taken aback but never tried to stop the program. I found that all the Congressional Committees I testified before regarding TDP’s authorization and appropriations were quite supportive of TDP because they saw it as a way in which, through its focus on generating US exports, foreign assistance helped generate jobs in the United States. And for those members who wanted to support foreign assistance and had constituencies opposed to foreign assistance, TDP was the kind of foreign assistance program that they could support.

*Q: Did they have people in the embassy?*

HOLMES: Yes, really good people. TDP had a field office in Hong Kong and relied on the Foreign Commercial Service teams in the Embassies.

*Q: They were charged with promoting U.S. exports to China.*

HOLMES: Absolutely. The FCS needed a form of financial support from the US Government so that they could offset offers made by our foreign competitors through their trade and foreign assistance programs. Before TDP, the FCS would meet with

Chinese ministries who would say, “The Germans came in here and they’re going to bring us all to Frankfurt to see their newest technology, and they’re going to help us plan major development projects throughout China which will use German technology, what are you going to do?” The US Government had nothing to offer that was equivalent until the TDP program came along.

*Q: They had no authority, no money. But you came to them -*

HOLMES: Yes. I met with FCS and explained that we were trying to build this program in China and in other countries and asked if they would help us with the development and implementation of the program. The FCS was very happy to do that as TDP provided them with an entirely new vehicle to help generate U.S. business in China and other countries.

*Q: When you say small amount, what are you talking about?*

HOLMES: It was about \$2mm. So as to leverage those funds, we used the US China National Council for US China Trade to help us evaluate the projects which Chinese Ministries suggested we fund. This included analyzing prospects to determine the development impact of the project being planned by TDP and whether the feasibility study could lead to significant follow business for US firms.

We also relied on the support provided by Mel Searles, the US Foreign Commercial Service lead in China, and Clark (Sandy) Randt , a lawyer supporting the FCS joint venture investment protocols. Sandy became the US Ambassador to China from 2001 to 2008.

*Q: Which group was that?*

HOLMES: This was the US Department of Commerce Foreign Commercial Service. The key was to create the right approach with the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) which would enable us to identify projects would have both positive development impact in China and also result in significant exports of equipment and services from the United States. The FCS team was quite knowledgeable and had built up strong relationships with Chinese ministries.

It’s important to remember that when we began in the Reagan Administration the TDP program in China, China was still in the very early stages of engaging the Western world in commerce, particularly the United States.

In meeting after meeting Chinese officials would explain to me how they endured the Cultural Revolution, how important trust was in surviving their hardships. It was only five years earlier in 1976 when Cultural Revolution’s massive internal persecution of millions of Chinese ended. In establishing the TDP program in China, I recognized how important it was important to build up trust and also find the right institution within the PRC with whom we could work to build out a TDP program across China.

*Q: When you say really quickly, how fast did it happen*

HOLMES: In the summer of 1983, the Secretary of Commerce, Malcolm Baldrige, asked me to join his delegation traveling to China for the first meeting of the US China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT). During that trip, we set up a process in 1983 which really accelerated the growth of the TDP program in China. To build a foundation of trust, in the summer of 1983, I met with my counterpart at MOFERT, Mr. Cao Jai Rui, and suggested that we set up a process to identify on a regular basis prospective projects on which TDP might fund feasibility studies. We agreed to a process wherein MOFERT would request other PRC Ministries to submit to MOFERT requests for feasibility study support on specific projects. We would then meet at least twice a year with MOFERT and PRC Ministry representatives to review the projects. Following that, we would select potential projects to fund and conduct analyses called definitional missions, on these projects. If the projects had a strong chance of being funded and generating US exports to the projects, we would then move to the next step beyond the definitional mission and fund the feasibility study.

With the process and relationships in place, along with China becoming increasingly welcome to US trade and investment, the TDP program started to grow in China. We meticulously documented every time a US firm got a follow-on contract to do business in China and shared that information with the Congress. The growth of the TDP program happened so quickly. Very few people projected that the Chinese were going to develop as fast as they did. As China developed, their need for other countries to help them design, build and equip major projects increased. China had access to more money than we initially anticipated, and they quickly deployed it to build out and equip many of the facilities on which TDP provided planning and training grants.

When I began at TDP, we had one project in China which was a feasibility study on hydropower facility. I think it's fair to say that no one could have envisioned at that time that within seven years we would have funded the planning of almost 100 projects in 13 provinces in China and help generate at least \$100 million in US exports to those projects. These included studies and training related to the development of a master plan for Shanghai's transportation system; an information system for the largest steel plant in China; a sewage system for Shanghai; a pharmaceutical manufacturing plant in Zhongyuan; a graphic electrodes production plant in Kaifeng; a toxic waste treatment facility in Shengyang; a coal mine in Huangling and a coal gasification plant in Yuxian.

The China program was approximately 25% of TDP's overall program, and we had some similar successes in other countries early on, particularly in Thailand where TDP funded a number of feasibility studies on strengthening the operations of Electric Generating Authority of Thailand.

*Q: These were exports of U.S. goods? Were these U.S. firms brought in to build and construct things?*



HOLMES: These were the export of US goods and services. U.S. firms such as Jacobs, Fluor and Bechtel received TDP grants on a competitive basis to conduct the planning studies. In some cases TDP would offer to write the equipment specifications needed for a specific project and bring to the United States officials from PRC Ministries who would be involved in the specific procurement of the equipment.

*Q: Of course, '81 was also the year China joined the World Bank. They were just opening up and turning to the World Bank for a lot of advice. This was the case where you were providing them small amounts of money, but it was significant enough for them that they saw the advantages of doing it. Amazing, remarkable.*

HOLMES: I've gone back and looked at the evaluations and it's incredible the amount of US exports to China that resulted from these feasibility studies.

*Q: Was this followed? During this entire Reagan administration, were people noting this?*

HOLMES: Yes, people were noting this and were very supportive of the program. The US Embassy in China saw TDP as a tool to help foster trade and development and further develop relationships between the Embassy and a wide range of PRC ministries. The growth TDP in China would not have occurred without the support of the US Embassy. We were very fortunate to have had during TDP's critical growth, 1981 – 1984, the support of Ambassador Chas Freeman who was served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires in the American embassy at Beijing. He had also been Director for Chinese Affairs at the U.S. Department of State from 1979-1981, as well as the principal American interpreter during the late President Nixon's path-breaking visit to China in 1972.

After a few years, I got to know leaders within many Chinese Ministries, and the Chinese invited me to visit their major steel manufacturing facilities located at what they referred to as the "three furnaces" which were Chengdu, Wuhan and Shanghai. As I recall, I was the first American that they had invited to undertake such a mission.

*Q: Congress supported this?*

HOLMES: Yes. we stayed very close to the Congress during this period. We made a point of always informing members of Congress whenever we awarded the feasibility study to a company located in their district. We also shared with them information regarding prospective sales of goods and services from their districts should the feasibility studies lead to US firms in their districts becoming involved in the engineering, procurement and construction related to the projects on which the studies were conducted.

There were some stresses, too. As the Congress kept increasing the appropriations, I think there were some concerns within AID that the program could become so large that it would represent a drain on USAID resources.

Additionally there were concerns that the Congress would, as happened with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, spin TDP out of USAID and create a separate agency. Ultimately that happened. Congressman Don Bonker, who was the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Trade, supported making TDP a separate component agency within the International Development Cooperation Agency. This was codified in the 1988 the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act which renamed TDP as the US Trade and Development Agency. In 1992, President Bush signed the Job Exports Act which expanded TDA's mission, charter and authorities.

*Q: Your Hill relationships sound like they were very strong.*

HOLMES: They were very strong. I had built up good relationships with the members and staff of the House and Senate authorizing and appropriating committees. These included Senator Daniel Inouye, Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and the lead Republican on that subcommittee, Senator Robert Kasten; Congressman Dante Fascell who was the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee; Congressman Dave Obey, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Foreign Operations. Congressman Don Bonker was the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Trade. Congressman Charlie Wilson who was on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations was also a strong supporter.

*Q: One of the lessons in all this is that it pays to pay attention to political support with these innovative programs.*

HOLMES: Absolutely and keep the Congress informed.

*Q: Is it still a separate agency?*

HOLMES: Yes, it was during the Reagan Administration and still is in its present form, the US Trade and Development Agency. TDP was technically, just like OPIC and AID, an independent US Government agency located within the International Development Cooperation Agency. The idea for the International Development Cooperation Agency (IDCA) originated with Senator Hubert Humphrey, who wanted one agency to link and coordinate the foreign assistance related activities of all US government agencies. Senator Humphrey died in 1978, but in recognition of Sen. Humphrey, President Carter in 1979 by use of Executive Order established the IDCA. The IDCA had a separate director and a very small staff. The Reagan administration did not staff the IDCA, so it very quickly disappeared as a functioning entity. But during the Reagan Administration, technically the IDCA continued to exist as a virtual entity with OPIC, TDP and AID showing up on organizational charts as part of IDCA, with Peter McPherson as the head of IDCA and USAID. In 1998, the Congress abolished the IDCA.

*Q: I forgot about that!*

*You were also involved with a private sector task force?*

HOLMES: Yes, in 1983 while I'm working both as the Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Private Enterprise and as the TDP director, I gave a speech dealing with the work of TDP and that of USAID fostering both trade, economic development and international private enterprise. One of the individuals in the audience was Dwayne Andreas, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Archer Daniels Midland, a global agribusiness company. Mr. Andreas had been recently appointed by President Reagan to be the co-chairman of the President's Task Force on International Private Enterprise. The other co-chairman was Parker Montgomery who was the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of The Cooper Company, a global healthcare company. The objective of the task force was to submit recommendations to President Reagan on how foreign assistance programs could support international private enterprise. The Task Force was comprised of about 20 active or former CEOs.

Subsequently, Mr. Andreas and Mr. Parker asked me to be the Executive Director of the Presidential Task Force. So, with Peter McPherson's and Elise DuPont's approval, I became the Executive Director of the Task Force while continuing my responsibilities as the Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Private enterprise and as the TDP Director.

I had never directed a Presidential Task Force before, and as I soon found out, it was going to be very difficult for me to do all three jobs, unless I was able to bring on board some great staff which I was able to do. So I asked USAID's Marshall Brown for any suggestions and he recommended Richard (Dick) Seifman who was based in Cairo. AID reassigned Dick to the task force staff and he played an absolutely essential role in helping to both guide the task force and produce the final report.

*Q: What did the task force examine?*

HOLMES: First off, one of the members, Jack Bierwirth, who was the CEO of Grumman Aircraft, a major aviation company, asked for historical information on USAID's experience with using foreign assistance funds to support international private enterprise, and related lessons learned. He felt it would be enormously difficult to make recommendations without an historic baseline, and he was right.

We soon discovered that such information did not exist. I was amazed that apparently no one had put together a comprehensive analysis and lessons learned related to all the different activities that AID had undertaken to use private-sector tools to facilitate development and to build private enterprises in developing countries.

So, as we had done when we built the Bureau for Private Enterprise, we launched an effort to locate studies that might relate to the topic, as well as talk to individuals who had worked for USAID in the past and might recall what AID had done in this area. Again, we found little information and lessons learned regarding private enterprise development support, other than that which we had previously located dealing with AID's use of loan

guarantees , the development of intermediate credit institutions and the establishment of revolving funds within such institutions to support intermediate credit.

For private enterprise engagement and development, the Task Force reviewed the use of mixed credits, as well as the blending of official development assistance, official export import assistance, and commercial sources of financing. It also concentrated considerably on the creation of an entity within the White House which would coordinate all US government international trade, finance and investment activities. The Task Force was also interested in utilizing various US government agricultural export programs to promote trade and economic development. This included a fairly comprehensive review of links between PL 480 food assistance, local currencies generated by the sale of PL 480 commodities, and trade.

*Q: What did the task force recommend ?*

HOLMES: In 1985, the task force submitted its recommendations to the President; the Task Force recommended the establishment of an Economic Security Council in the Executive Office of the President to formulate and coordinate domestic and international economic policies. In addition to his recommendation related to an Economic Security Council, the Task Force recommended establishment of a multilateral investment guarantee program administered by the World Bank; expanding the scope and financing of the Trade and Development Program; packaging of US foreign assistance provided by such key agencies as AID, OPIC and TDP; and devoting a much larger share of US foreign assistance for food assistance.

In varying degrees, many of the task force recommendations can come to pass during the Reagan administration. While it hard to say whether there was a direct causal link between the task force recommendations and related actions undertaken by the Administration and other institutions, I think it's fair to say there was a linkage. Shortly after the task force submitted its report in 1985, the President established an Economic Policy Council which was very similar to the Task Force's proposed Economic Security Council.

Later, in 1988, related to the task force's recommendations to strengthen the Trade and Development Program, the Congress passed legislation which transformed the Trade and Development Program into an independent US Government agency, the US Trade and Development agency. The Reagan administration also created a \$300 million mixed credits fund which I believe was influenced by the task force, too. Just before the end of the Reagan administration, an international convention established the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency as a member of the World Bank group

*Q: So the personalities and the personal satisfactions were terrific. That's again, there you were, still a young guy.*

HOLMES: By 1987, I had concluded my fifth year as a senior foreign service officer. During those five years, I was promoted to Minister Counselor, and the came time for me

to decide whether to take position in the field. During that five-year period, Peter McPherson raised the possibility of my becoming an AID Mission Director and as my fifth year wrapped up, I was under consideration to be a Mission Director. This was a really tough, crossroads decision, but ultimately I made the decision to take a job in the private sector.

*Q: Stop there for a minute. I take it this was not a difficult decision for you to leave the government at that stage. You were ready for that. You had been dealing – an unusual position for an AID office to spend as much time working with the private sector across boundaries. You were not the person spending most of his time dealing with the AID bureaucracy in the normal sense or with development issues. This was an unusual and perhaps unique situation that you had found yourself in. So leaving was not a wrenching decision?*

HOLMES: No, it wasn't. Realistically, I knew one day I would return to public service, but I wanted to apply my government experience in business.

*Q: It was a natural thing to do in many respects. Okay, so you move to California. Where did you go?*

HOLMES: I went to work for The Cooper Companies, a global health manufacturing company as its VP for Government Relations. The timing was not great, as shortly after I arrived, the company got caught up in a hostile takeover. In a little more than a year later I returned to Washington. I learned a great deal during that year with the Cooper Company not just about the health sector but also about crisis management and government relations. The experience also helped me refine my interests.

*Q: In what way?*

HOLMES: I had been working for about 20 years by that time. I saw myself at a crossroads related to working in either the public or private sector.

Reflecting on my career, I was deeply interested in the public health and environmental impact of my work. Throughout much of my career I had dealt with different aspects of public health and environmental protection. On the Hill, with disaster assistance, natural resources management and coastal waters protection. At the State Department, with public health related to refugee assistance. At OFDA, with public health related to disaster assistance and with climate change. At TDP, with the environmental impact of projects.

I decided I want to concentrate on environmental protection and public health. I was particularly interested in working for the US Environment Protection Agency. I felt my experience and skills would be useful there.

*Q: Did you initiate the contact with EPA?*

HOLMES: I had worked with several people who knew the EPA Administrator, Bill Reilly, and they recommended to the EPA Administrator that he consider me for a position with EPA.

I had an interview with Bill Reilly. I didn't know this until later when Bill told me that, given my international background, he was considering me for the top international job at EPA. So, he was somewhat surprised when I explained that I wanted to work in the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER). I felt that I could quickly add value with my experience in disaster assistance, leading complex government organizations and in working with the Congress. OSWER was responsible for responding to environmental disasters such as oil spills and releases of chemicals from industrial facilities. It also managed the "Superfund" program which was responsible for overseeing the cleanup of hazardous wastes and for developing the regulations to ensure that hazardous and nonhazardous were safely managed. When I arrived at EPA, there were estimates of a universe of potential 400,000 plus hazardous waste sites, with some 30,000 sites identified as possible Superfund sites—meaning that these sites would require extensive cleanup. Estimates on cleanup costs ran as high as \$30 billion. In terms of budget, the Office was by far the largest entity in EPA. Its scope was also very broad as it was also responsible for overseeing the compliance of all US Government agencies with environmental statutes. This extended to providing compliance oversight of the multibillion-dollar environmental remediation of the Department of Energy nuclear weapons production facilities. The Office also worked very closely with the Congress. In the 1980's, the Congress passed four laws to strengthen the management of hazardous wastes and the remediation of toxic waste dumps, many of which had been abandoned.

The USG's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) had identified known human carcinogens at hazardous waste sites, including arsenic; benzene; cadmium; chromium; and vinyl chloride.

Bill brought me into EPA as the Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator for Solid Waste and Emergency Response. Within about a month of my being on board, I was part of the team that was dispatched to Alaska to assess the damage arising from the massive Exxon Valdez oil spill. I found that my disaster assessment experience at AID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance was very helpful in that assessment effort.

*Q: Your boss was?*

HOLMES: The Assistant Administrator for the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response who reported to the Administrator.

*Q: I see, and the responsibilities for the Superfund.*

HOLMES: Related to Superfund, I initially co-lead with EPA's Allyn Davis, Bill Muszynski and EPA wide task force charged with improving the implementation of the law which governed EPA's overall hazardous waste management activities. This is the

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, known as RCRA. The task force consisted of seven subcommittees of EPA professionals from EPA's 10 regional offices and headquarters. The Task Force put together an action plan known as the RCRA Implementation Study (RIS) to reduce risks to human health and the environment caused by hazardous wastes. The plan addressed setting clear priorities, balancing prevention and cleanup efforts, emphasizing waste minimization, supporting compliance and enforcement activities, speeding up the authorization of states to implement the hazardous waste management program, attracting, retaining and developing staff, developing more and better environmental data, and accelerating scientific technological development. This was my first highly sensitive interaction with EPA, and I was very impressed by the work and impact the task force. So was the rest of the Agency which awarded the entire task force it Gold Medal for performance.

To this day, EPA still refers to that study. This was very complicated work and I was very fortunate to have the support of EPA's Ken Patterson, a highly regarded expert in RCRA enforcement, Nancy Browne and Mary Jean Osborne to help develop the report. After I finished the work on RCRA, Hank Habicht, the EPA Deputy Administrator, asked me to serve as the EPA Deputy Assistant Administrator for Federal Facilities Enforcement. Regarding the federal facilities enforcement work, the US Government essentially enforces against itself, meaning that all US Government agencies are expected to comply, just as do private sector entities, with environmental laws and regulations.

My role was to lead the effort related to assessing the environmental performance of all US government agencies, overseeing the compliance and related enforcement efforts, and helping develop new approaches to remediate contaminated sites. I was primarily focused on overseeing the environmental remediation of the Department of Energy nuclear weapons production facilities and the Department of Defense military bases. There were estimates at that time it would cost at least \$5 billion to eventually remediate the past pollution at the DOE facilities. These facilities were located across the country near or in such cities as Cincinnati, Ohio; Hanford, Washington; Denver, Colorado; and Oak Ridge, Tennessee. The big challenges included the remediation of contaminated soils and ground water, as well as attenuating the spread of contaminated ground water from moving past the geographic boundaries of the facilities. The knowledge I gained on the dynamics of ground water proved to be very helpful when years later, I returned to USAID and worked on its water programs.

*Q: Was that job looking across the whole of government?*

HOLMES: It was. It also involved looking at an entire spectrum of environmental statutes and regulations. There were different laws for different environmental requirements and sectors—including air, water, toxic chemicals, hazardous waste, solid waste, and environmental remediation. My work involved setting priorities based upon where environmental and health risks were highest. That in turn led to my conducting on site assessments of the extent of contamination and, primarily, the remediation of the nuclear weapons production facilities at the Fernald facility in Cincinnati; the Hanford

facility in Eastern Washington; and the Rocky Flats facility outside of Denver. I also worked closely with DOD on the remediation of their military facilities.

We did a great deal to further protect the environment and public health at the US federal facilities. In order to improve remediation at both the Department of Defense military bases and the DOE nuclear weapons production facilities, we concentrated on building up trust and clarifying USEPA, DOD and DOE roles, responsibilities, and authorities. This work was essential to the development and passage of the Federal Facilities Compliance Act of 1992 which strengthened the protection of human health and the environment at the USG federal facilities. I worked with a very effective team of public servants, including Gordon Davidson and Chris Grundler who at different times led the Office of Federal Facilities Enforcement.

*Q: This is fascinating, it is another example of how you move into a job where the skills you need are things you developed before, but the knowledge and technical areas are totally different from what you'd been doing. Fascinating part of your willingness to keep moving into these new areas. So you stayed at EPA for four years?*

HOLMES: I did.

After we set in place critical agreements, the necessary remediation plans and began cleaning up at the facilities we had targeted, the Administrator and his Deputy, Hank Habicht, asked me to serve simultaneously as the Acting Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resource Management and as the acting Chief Financial Officer.

The Congress passed in 1990 the Chief Financial Officers Act. The Act required US Government Agencies, including EPA, to nominate for Senate confirmation a CFO responsible for all of EPA's financial management activities. One of those activities was procurement. In 1993, the Council on Excellence in Government identified the EPA CFO job as one of the "45 Toughest Financial Management Jobs in Washington, DC." Given the breadth of EPA's financial management related activities and the expectations of the Congress for the CFOs, it was indeed a tough job.

After I served in both positions for a while, Bill Reilly recommended to the White House that I be nominated for Senate confirmation as EPA's first CFO pursuant to the Chief Financial Officers Act and also as Assistant Administrator Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resource Management. This was number three position at EPA. Subsequently, President Bush sent my name forward to the Senate. We expected that this would require one confirmation vote for the combined CFO and Assistant Administrator position, but the Senate decided to treat the CFO and Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resource Management (OARM) positions as being separate and requiring the approval of separate Senate committees, namely the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee for the CFO position and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee for the OARM position, as well as separate floor votes. I was confirmed twice, once as the CFO and once as the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Administration and Resources Management. I was the only person at EPA to hold two



Senate confirmed positions at the same time. During the confirmation process, I met Senator Moynihan who was the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He made a wry comment about the long path from nomination to confirmation. Fortunately, that path was relatively swift.

The Office of Administration and Resources (OARM) was central to the successful functioning of the Agency. Its scope included EPA's financial management, budget, human resources, information systems, contracting, grants, environmental audit of EPA's laboratories and oversight of the administration and resource management related to EPA's headquarters, its ten regional offices, its \$6 billion budget and 18,000-person workforce. I was fortunate to work with a great team of seasoned career EPA public servants. These included Ed Hanley, Sallyanne Harper, Kelly Sinclair who served as Deputy Assistant Administrators; and Kathy Hutson and Craig Hooks who worked with me as special assistants. Later in their careers, Craig became the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Administration and Resources Management. Kathy led the Office of Environment, Safety and Health Office at the National Security Agency

The "tough" aspect of the position most often dealt with Congressional oversight of EPA which was aggressive, deep and rigorous. At that time, Congressman John Dingell, who was the chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Oversight committee, was critical of EPA's procurement practices and had initiated a review of EPA's procurement activities over a 20-year period.

He had held similar hearings as it related the procurement practices of other institutions, particularly Stanford University and Rockefeller University. I studied the history of the Congressional review and hearings, and realized there was not going to be any "win" here in the traditional sense of "I'm right and you're wrong." Rather, I concluded that we had to develop, working closely with the Congress, an approach to demonstrate that while we were indeed being responsible in our procurement programs, there was room for improvement, and that we were taking a set of specific actions. I met frequently with congressional staff and testified before the Congress on the steps we were taking to strengthen procurement. This approach enabled EPA to continue with its work in such a way that we strengthened its current programs while not being penalized or losing the support of the Congress. Testifying on environmental protection before the House Energy and Commerce Oversight Committee was a far different and more contentious experience than testifying before Senate and House authorizing and appropriating committees on foreign assistance.

Two of the most important and gratifying experiences associated with this position dealt with human resources management and with environmental justice. We wanted to increase the promotion and hiring of women and minorities. Working with the OARM team, we set up a system which successfully helped increase the promotion of women and minorities into ever-increasing positions of responsibility within the agency. The other experience dealt with environmental justice (EJ). I attended a presentation delivered at EPA on environmental justice given by the Reverend Benjamin Chavez who at that time was Executive Director and CEO of the United Church of Christ Commission

for Racial Justice. Learning about Ben Chavez's life and the work of the environmental justice movement was transformative. I subsequently supported the efforts of the team at EPA committed to building an environmental justice program at EPA. Fortunately, both Bill Reilly and Hank Habicht were also committed to launching an EJ program at EPA, and in 1992, EPA created its Office of Environmental Justice. That led to EPA in 1993 establishing a National Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (NEJAC) to provide independent advice and analysis from stakeholders on EJ issues. I later served on that committee.

*Q: I didn't realize that. That was about when?*

HOLMES: It was 1991-92.

*Q: And you felt you had managed to get some of these things done. Or not?*

HOLMES: I felt we managed to get a great deal done in the 1989-1992-time frame, thanks in great part to the leadership and support provided by Bill Reilly and Hank Habicht, as well as by Nancy Firestone, EPA's Associate Deputy Administrator. We developed innovative responses to the remediation of hazardous wastes and the prevention of the release of hazardous wastes, in particular, at the Department of Energy nuclear weapons production facilities and the Department of Defense military bases. The compliance agreements entered into with the federal facilities had positive long-term impact, especially those dealing with the containment and remediation of hazardous wastes and "mixed" hazardous and radioactive wastes at the DOE nuclear weapons production facilities.

The development and implementation of the "RCRA Implementation Study" strengthened EPA's strategic approach to hazardous waste management, as did the enactment of Federal Facilities Compliance Act in cleaning up the nuclear weapons production plants.

Our work to strengthen EPA's procurement processes and management increased the confidence of the Congress in EPA's ability to effectively manage its resources to implement critical legislation, such as the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. We definitely made an impact in the area of environmental justice as we provided strong support to the program at its very early stage at EPA.

Finally, as I stated earlier, I believe we made some significant improvements in EPA's human resources management, particularly as it related to the promotion of women and minorities.

This work was only part of a very large effort led by Bill and Hank by EPA to protect human health and the environment. The wide range of significant accomplishments at EPA in the 1989-1992 time frame included the 1990 amendments which expanded the scope and impact of the Clean Air Act which among other matters required EPA to develop and implement regulations to reduce the emissions of the oxides of nitrogen and

sulfur emitted from coal fired power plants so as to control acid rain. Other achievements included EPA ensuring that the environment was considered during the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, the remediation of Superfund hazardous waste sites, the larger role of EPA in working with Mexico to address problems along the Mexican border both in environmentally and socially responsible ways, and working with the regulated community on going beyond mandated emissions standards. Additionally during this period, President George W. H. Bush signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and committed the United States to be a world leader on environmental protection in connection with the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

In the water sector the Great Lakes Critical Programs Act of 1990 required EPA to establish water quality criteria for the Great Lakes addressing toxic pollutants with maximum levels that were safe for humans, wildlife, and aquatic life.

*Q: We're going to close soon, but you finished your four years, essentially the entire Bush administration there.*

HOLMES: Yes, I remained at EPA throughout the Bush administration. Following the close of the Bush Administration, because I was the CFO, the Clinton administration asked me to stay on through the spring to help bridge the transition.

*Q: In this current administration there are a few people who aren't confirmed in anything, and you were confirmed twice!. – All these management problems did not destroy your interest in the environment, as you said this is one of the things you had always been interested in. So, you began looking around, and what did you find?*

HOLMES: I did my best to continue to work on environment and health matters. After leaving EPA, I was hired by one of the largest manufacturing and energy companies in the United States, Tenneco Inc., to be its Executive Director for Environment, Health and Safety. I also worked Tenneco Energy as its Vice President for Environment, Health and Safety. I remained in Houston for about 12 years, and, in addition to working for Tenneco, I worked subsequently for Enron. Inc on environmental and energy matters and then for Rice University where I served as the Founding Executive Director for its Shell Center for Sustainability, as well as serving as the Executive Director of Rice's Environmental and Energy Systems Institute. I eventually moved back to Washington and worked for the World Wildlife Fund. I consulted on my own before I returned to USAID.

In 2009, the White House asked if I would consider returning to USAID as the senior advisor for energy and environment, and I accepted the offer.

*Q: Was AID a different place than when you had left?*

HOLMES: There were some strong similarities and some very strong dissimilarities.

The global context for development had changed dramatically. This included the increase in global population; climate change; the loss of biodiversity; the depletion of critical natural resources including forests, soil and water; increases in urbanization; the spread of highly communicable disease, particularly HIV-AIDS; widespread prevalence of global terrorism; and increasing numbers of displaced persons and refugees. USAID field assignments had become particularly dangerous. Serving in critical countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Haiti and Sudan had become central to advancement in the foreign service.

AID was similar to the agency that I left in 1987 in that it continued to have a strong culture committed to bettering the lives of millions throughout the developing world. It continued to have a great range of technical personnel both in headquarters and in the AID Missions' foreign service national staff. Its staff and families continued to make great sacrifices in the course of their work, and live and work in very dangerous areas.

I also found Aid's commitment to developing science and technological breakthroughs to meet development needs to be consistent with AID's history going back to the 1950s. I could see this clearly in its work related to drought resistant seeds; the application of the internet and telecommunications to meet development needs; the treatment of HIV AIDS and malaria; and its work on zoonotic disease.

It was also similar in its involvement in long-lasting wars. When I joined AID in 1974, the US Government had been involved in the Vietnam conflict since 1961. When I returned to AID in 2010, the United States have been involved in conflict in Iraq since 2004 and in Afghanistan since 2001. That said, I was very surprised when I returned by the lack of interest in the Vietnam experience and its bearing on both the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

AID faced similar challenges in determining how best to engage the private sector in development. AID was still struggling with such fundamental questions as how it can take equity in development projects and how can it most effectively leverage its funds to increase foreign investment in a developing country.

There were a great many changes in human resources which I found to be positive. I found AID had significantly increased the numbers of women and minorities in senior management and technical positions throughout the agency. It had made significant strides in its support and engagement of the LGBTQ community in its work

As to differences, AID was no longer located within the Department of State building. Both symbolically and operationally, this negatively affected the working relationship with State. Operationally, with the creation of State's "F" Bureau, AID had lost control over its budget and policy responsibilities.

State had assumed significant portions of what had been USAID's development portfolio, particularly as it related to agriculture and health. Culturally, I found that the State Department regarded AID as being less of a partner. I found that to be the case both in

headquarters and in the field. I was surprised to see how the State Department had transferred traditional USAID responsibilities in the health and agricultural sectors to State.

Technically, I found that in many sectors, AID continued to demonstrate extraordinary excellence but there were certain gaps that I found to be puzzling, particularly as it related to the few numbers of full-time engineers when the agency was managing construction of a wide range of projects

I also found that while the agency continued to be involved in a wide range of sectors, it was far more focused on health and humanitarian assistance. This reflected AID's ever-increasing involvement in responses to wars and natural disasters as well such severe diseases as HIV-AIDS and malaria.

I found the Internet to be a fundamental change. The internet most certainly increases the speed of communications. On the other hand, I found that communications by email are often more reflexive than analytic, and I think that in many ways there's a significant price to pay for that.

*Q: That's interesting in terms of the differences. What were you charged with doing, what did you do, how did you do it?*

HOLMES: I returned to AID as a senior advisor responsible for advising on energy and the environment.

*Q: Did you have any impression that somebody had spoken to Raj Shah about your background, or did he just happen to?*

HOLMES: I had not known Raj Shah when I rejoined AID. I joined before he was nominated. Actually the White House and State asked me to return to AID as a senior advisor responsible for energy and the environment.

I first met Dr. Shah in Pakistan after he had been confirmed as the AID Administrator. Coincidentally, Richard Holbrooke was also there as he was President Obama's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. As I mentioned earlier, I had worked with Richard at State on South East Asia refugee matters, and he described very positively my past work at State and TDP to Dr. Shah. While I was in Pakistan, a senior State Department official suggested that I consider becoming the AID Mission Director to Pakistan, and I had discussions with the Embassy on that, which I reported back to Dr Shah's team.

The last time I had been in Pakistan was on refugee work in 1980, just after Pakistani rioters attempted to burn down the US Embassy. A few months prior to my arrival in 2010 in Peshawar, terrorists attacked the US consulate. Throughout the developing world, AID was operating in very dangerous conditions, not just in Pakistan but also in Iraq, Afghanistan and Haiti, among other countries.

When I returned to Washington, Dr. Shah asked me to meet with him , and I expected we would be talking about the possibility of my serving in Pakistan. But he asked me to take the lead on developing and implementing AID’s first global water strategy which focused on water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and that water resources management (WRM) . Given that WASH is a cornerstone of public health and water effects just about every aspect of its programming, I was surprised to learn that AID didn’t have such a strategy. He definitely understood the linkages between water and the success of AID’s activities. As a physician and a former Gates Foundation executive, he also had a keen understanding of the impact of inadequate water and sanitation on global health. Without Dr. Shah’s support and insight, I doubt we would have produced a water strategy with such positive impact.

This was a hugely complex assignment, as it affected just about every USAID mission. USAID was committing significant levels of funding to water supply and sanitation, water resources management and water productivity programs averaging approximately \$450 million a year.

The global water supply and sanitation situation was then and is now horrific. Between 2.5 billion to 3 billion people lacked access to improved sanitation. Almost 1 billion people lacked safe drinking water. Nearly two million people – the vast majority of whom are children under five – died from diarrhea each year. The great majority of diarrhea cases are attributed to unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene, and most of that is preventable by families and communities having access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene. One of the most devastating impacts of diarrhea is that children under the age of two that have multiple and severe cases of diarrhea run the very high risk of becoming cognitively and physically stunted for life. I studied the causes and treatments of stunting and explored with numerous experts how stunting might be reversed, and it seems to be irreversible.

*Q: You were not in charge of the water office?*

HOLMES: Not initially. I reported to Eric Postel who was the Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade. I ultimately became the Deputy Assistant Administrator responsible for the Water Office.

So, to start with, I had to figure out how to team with a wide range of people. I felt very confident I could make this work, particularly as I soon discovered how many people were willing to work with me, share their thoughts and time.

I realized I needed a title that would describe my work and at least convey implied authority. So I created the title of “Global Water Coordinator”, and fortunately my colleagues in the E3 Bureau supported that. When the Congress passed the Water for the World Act 2014 which codified much of the water strategy, they also established in the statute the position of Global Water Coordinator with statutory responsibility for

providing direction and guidance to all of AID's water programs. I also became the statutorily designated Global Water Coordinator.

As we were finalizing the water strategy, Eric Postel also asked me in 2013 to take on the additional assignment of serving as the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator responsible for not only the Water office but also the offices responsible for climate change, biodiversity and land tenure and resource management.

This was an historic time for addressing climate change. In 2015, some 196 parties came together in the Paris agreement to commit to change their development and emission trajectories with the aim of limiting global warming to 1.5 to 2°C above preindustrial levels. The climate change team focused on helping countries set their "nationally determined contributions (NDCs) which were at the heart of the Paris agreement to achieve these global warming goals. Relatedly, the office was also very active in helping developing countries put together low emissions development strategies (LEDS).

The climate change team also developed and implemented important climate change adaptation programs, such as launching in 2014 a flood forecasting initiative in Bangladesh to use satellite technology to expand the warning time for major floods. The system was developed by SERVIR, a joint development initiative of NASA and USAID that helps developing countries use information provided by Earth observing satellites to address environmental issues, including natural disasters.

The Biodiversity Office and The Land Tenure and Resource Management Offices were also very much involved in climate change. In 2014, AID released its biodiversity policy which strongly supported the integration of climate change adaptation programs and biodiversity protection. The Resource Management team introduced both traditional and advanced approaches to helping farmers grow crops in drought-stricken areas.

These offices were led by very effective and highly committed public servants. Allen Eisendrath led the Climate Office. Cynthia Gill led the Biodiversity Office. Chris Kosnick and subsequently Heath Cosgrove directed the Office of Land Tenure and Resource Management. John Pasch and subsequently Chris Kosnick led the Water Office.

*Q: Sounds all-encompassing.*

HOLMES: It was indeed. At the same time, I was also serving as the senior executive at USAID responsible for sponsoring some of our largest public-private partnerships in the water sector. This included a 10-year, \$50mm cost-share partnership with Coca-Cola, providing water supply, sanitation, and hygiene in about 10 countries. It also included a \$30 million partnership with Gap Inc.

*Q: The Gap, the clothing store?*

HOLMES: Yes. That set a model for the future. Gap Inc. wanted to introduce water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in India to communities along its supply chain, particularly cotton farming, textile mills, and the cut and sew plants. We developed this roughly \$30,000,000 “Women and Water Development” cost sharing partnership to meet that objective. The AID Administrator, Gayle Smith, approved this partnership which established a new approach, namely a public-private partnership supporting an extensive focus on meeting the WASH needs of women along a major US corporation’s supply chain.

*Q: How much was AID putting in?*

HOLMES: AID put in about \$15mm, Gap Inc. about \$15mm.

*Q: In how many countries?*

HOLMES: the initial Gap Inc. partnership was just in India

*Q: Did these form the core of what AID was doing on the water side in these years, or were these just interesting additions to the basic program?*

HOLMES: We only had a few public-private partnerships of this scope supporting WASH. The majority of the wash program to focus on such activities as providing water supply sanitation and hygiene o rural and urban communities.

*Q: Have these three programs you described been evaluated? Is there an assessment that these are working? That these are effective?*

HOLMES: we have evaluated partnership with Coca-Cola and found it to be effective in protecting and improving the sustainability of watersheds, increasing access to water supply and sanitation services for the world’s poor, and enhancing productive uses of water.

The partnership with Gap was too early for an evaluation. AID evaluated the Global Water for Food Grand Challenge and found that it did support a number of creative solutions to meeting water and food needs, such as improving the use of saline water and soil to produce food. More broadly, there have been a series of WASH evaluations over the years, and AID found that, particularly in rural areas, it is difficult to sustain WASH projects over the long term because of inadequate equipment maintenance, governance, and a sustainable supply of water.

*Q: Did you report to Raj Shah?*

HOLMES: No. I worked closely with Dr. Shah on water matters, but I did not report directly to him.

*Q: Which bureau?*



HOLMES: I worked within what was initially called the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade. This Bureau was renamed the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and the Environment, or the “E3” Bureau. It was the central technical assistance bureau in the agency. The water office was located in the Bureau, as well as many other offices whose work in one way or another linked to the water sector.

*Q: The global program, that kind of thing? Who was the assistant administrator?*

HOLMES: When I first joined, Michael Yates was the Acting Assistant Administrator. He had been the Afghanistan mission director. He was very helpful. The White House soon nominated Eric Postel to be the full-time Assistant Administrator and he too was enormously supportive of our effort to develop the water strategy. We could have not put together the strategy and all the related actions such as creating a new office of water and hiring technical staff to implement the strategy and increasing its budget without Eric and subsequently Charles North who was the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau. Coincidentally, Charles, Eric and I had all gone to Wesleyan, but years apart.

*Q: Did you know each other before?*

HOLMES: No, but I had known Charles’ father.

*Q: Haven North?*

HOLMES: Yes. Haven had been the Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Africa Bureau when I served at OFDA. I also worked with John Pasch, a Wesleyan graduate, who became the first head of the Water Office. He was a leading water expert and was perfect for the job and subsequently the chief engineer of the agency. He played a key role in the water sector at AID. This included not only leading the Water Office but also in developing the water strategy and its implementation plan.

*Q: This is all serendipitous and completely without design, right?*

HOLMES: Absolutely zero design!

*Q: John was a career AID officer?*

HOLMES: Yes. Charles was a long-time Senior Foreign Service officer; he had this wonderful gift (as did his father) of being able to calmly manage a lot of complexity. Charles, prior to coming to work for Eric Postel, had been the chief operating officer in the Afghanistan/Pakistan task force. He’d been the mission director in Moscow. So he was very tested.

*Q: How long into your stay at AID did that happen?*

HOLMES: We finalized the Global Water Coordinator position in 2011.

*Q: How did you put together the water strategy?*

One of the Administrator's major initiatives was to put in place global and country specific strategies. We didn't have highly defined processes for putting together the strategies, but we did receive guidance from AID's Bureau for Policy, Program and Learning.

We worked with a wide range of experienced, knowledgeable professionals. This included working with representatives from the PPL Bureau including Susan Reichle, Chris Milligan, and Leonardo Martinez-Diaz, who for a while co-lead with me the development of the strategy, and Steve Feldstein with whom I worked following Leo joining the Treasury Department. We also relied heavily on the input and staff of many of the technical offices, including the water team in the Bureau for Economic Growth and Trade and the WASH team in the Bureau for Global Health. This also involved continuous consultation with external stakeholders, particularly those from the NGO community, Members of Congress and congressional staff. In addition we coordinated with the Department of State in the development of the strategy and received helpful advice and guidance from Kerri-Ann Jones, the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau for Oceans, Environment and Science (OES), and Aaron Salzberg, special coordinator of water and chief of the Water Division within OES. We were fortunate to have some first-rate USAID experts in the water sector to work with; these included from the Global Health Bureau, John Borrazzo and Merri Weinger and from the AID Office of Water, Jeff Goldberg, Chris Kosnik and Jim Frankiewicz—and as I previously mentioned, John Pasch.

Within the NGO and WASH advocacy community, WASH Advocates, Millennium Water Alliance and InterAction were particularly helpful in providing the perspective of NGOs engaged on the ground in developing and implementing WASH programs.

Ultimately, we decided to have the water strategy track with the requirements related to AID contained in the Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act 2005. The Act called for the President, acting through the Secretary of State, working with the AID Administrator, to develop a US Government wide water strategy to provide access to safe water and sanitation in developing countries.

The Bush and Obama administrations had worked on implementing components of the statute, as well as providing comprehensive, detailed reports to the Congress annually on the status of safe water supply, sanitation and hygiene programs authorized by the Water for the Poor Act 2005. In 2017, the Administration submitted to the Congress a global water strategy initially required in the 2005 Act and subsequently in its successor Act, the Water for the World 2014 Act. .

The Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act 2005 called for a water strategy to set specific and measurable goals, benchmarks, and timetables needed to provide access to safe water and sanitation. In addition, the Act required the President to designate high priority

countries in which the need for increased access to safe water and sanitation is greatest and where the assistance can be expected to make the greatest difference in promoting good health, economic development, poverty reduction, women's empowerment, conflict prevention, and environmental sustainability

We designed the AID water strategy to address all the portions of the Congressionally mandated global water strategy contained in the 2005 Act that pertained to USAID and could be implemented by AID. We didn't come immediately to the realization that the best method to develop AID's water strategy was to build on the 2005 Water for the Poor Act's requirement for a strategy and its definition of the components of a water strategy. We tried different avenues. But, eventually it became clear that by proceeding with this approach, we could reach far more people in need of water sanitation and hygiene while also tightly meeting congressional intent. In so doing, we demonstrated to the Congress, Administration and stakeholder community that the strategy was responsive to, and aligned with, their priorities.

By making this direct linkage between the strategy and the Water for the Poor Act 2005, and then quickly developing the administrative capacity and programs to implement the strategy, we increased the impact of AID's WASH programs and congressional confidence in the AID water program.

We felt that this approach would also further the strategic approach to water and development put forward by the Secretary of State in 2010 which emphasized five 'streams of action' to address water issues focused on such matters as building capacity to deal with water issues at the local, national, and regional levels.

Within the broad framework of the requirements of the Water for the Poor Act 2005, we set as a goal for the strategy to save lives and advance development through improvements in water supply, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs, and through sound management and use of water for food security. The key part of the goal was the focus on first and foremost on saving lives.

A major challenge in putting together the strategy was to set specific numbers of people to be reached; the criteria for selecting priority countries; the designation of priority countries; and the timeline for accomplishing all of this.

To do this, the 2013- 2018 strategy set as a target providing a minimum of 10 million persons with sustainable access to improved water supply and 6 million persons with sustainable access to improve sanitation. In addition we agreed to reaching 2 million people with improved water for irrigation.

Regarding priority countries the strategy identified as the highest priority countries Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, South Sudan, Nigeria and Indonesia. We also identified approximately 20 other countries that would be recipients of WASH funding.

The prioritization of WASH recipient countries was based on such criteria and indicators as the number of people and the percent of the population without access to improved sources of safe water and sanitation, and the mortality rate and number of deaths of children under five years due to diarrhea.

We also put forth a water strategy implementation plan which provided the details as to how we were going to implement these agreed-upon objectives and processes. We estimated that over five years it would cost approximately \$2 billion to implement this five-year strategy. As it turned out, over the five-year life time of the strategy, the US Government did commit approximately \$2 billion to WASH and water resources management.

In terms of administrative capacity, we enhanced the roles and responsibilities of the existing water team, while increasing its number of staff and budget. The team became the Office of Water.

All of this came together in 2013 when AID Administrator Dr. Shah launched AID's first global water strategy for the period 2013-2018 in a ceremony held in the Senate's Kennedy Caucus room. At the ceremony, Members of Congress on a bipartisan basis offered strong support for the strategy. These included the key sponsors of the 2005 Paul Simon Water for the World Act, including Senator Richard Durbin, Senator Johnny Isakson, Congressman Earl Blumenauer and Congressman Richard Poe. The Congress saw the water strategy as playing a critical role in the implementation of the Paul Simon Water for the World Act 2005 and its proposed successor legislation, the Paul Simon Water for the World Act .

The ripple effect of the strategy was far reaching. In the first two years of the strategy's implementation, USAID exceeded expectations with more than 6.8 million people receiving improved access to drinking water supply; more than 4.3 million people receiving improved access to sanitation facilities; and more than 3.2 million people benefiting from improved agricultural water management.

The strategy also significantly influenced the content of the proposed Water for the World Act. The Congress, strongly encouraged by the NGO and water stakeholder community, sought to pass the Water for the World act as a successor to the 2005 Paul Simon Water for the Poor act.

The stakeholder community wanted the Water for the World Act to provide more specific direction and requirements related to developing and managing WASH programs. The Congress was unable to pass a version of the Water for the World Act in 2011. In order to help secure passage of a future Water for the World Act, the sponsors of the Water for World Act wanted to strengthen the Act to provide more specific direction and, in so doing, secure needed congressional support in both the House and Senate .

So, the Congress drew upon the 2013-2018 AID water strategy to provide that substance and incorporated key provisions of the 2013-2018 AID strategy into the Water for the

World Act which was passed and enacted in 2014. The 2014 Act included the water strategy's provisions related to the criteria for selecting priority countries and designating specific priority countries. The Act also formally authorized the President to designate a USAID Global Water Coordinator to oversee and provide direction to USAID global water programs. I subsequently became AID's first Global Water Coordinator pursuant to the Act. Later, Eric Postel also designated me to serve as Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water.

It was remarkable to see the core components of an AID strategy become law and then to see how by the end of 2016 the AID water strategy and the 2014 Water for the World Act really began to take hold.

This included partnering with the Gates Foundation and the India Ministry of Urban Development to help end open defecation in more than 4000 cities in India; partnering with the Millennium Water Alliance in Kenya to increase access to water and sanitation for people, as well as water for livestock and rangeland-management to strengthen ecosystems; undertaking research on past work in Cambodia to better understand the possible combined benefits of improved water, sanitation, hygiene and nutrition on reducing childhood stunting; supporting water resources integration development work in Tanzania to improve health, water resources management, agriculture, and the environment; Constructing thousands of water catchments to help Indonesians adapt to climate change by replenishing aquifers and help communities protect themselves from water shortages; and helping young girls stay in school India by providing the necessary access to clean water, sanitation and privacy for menstrual hygiene management.

The strategy and the related Water for the World Act 2014 helped open the door and serve as a model for future stand-alone legislation addressing critical foreign assistance priorities. Notably, the 2014 Water for the World Act was the first piece of "stand alone" foreign assistance related legislation passed by the Congress in the Obama administration. In 2016, the Congress passed the Global Food Security Act of 2016. As was the case with the Paul Simon Water for the World Act of 2014, the Global Food Security act of 2016 required the President to create a coordinator and implement a strategy to promote global food security, resilience, and nutrition. In 2017, the Congress passed the Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development (READ) Act. The law aimed to provide access to education for some 263 million children and adolescents who are currently not in school, or who do not have access to education because of conflict or political instability. As was the case with the Water for the World Act and the Food Security Act, the READ act also required AID to have a coordinator and strategy. The Water for the World Act of 2014 required that the President submit to the Congress a single government-wide Global Water Strategy to increase access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene in high priority countries; improve the management of water resources and watersheds in these countries; and prevent conflicts over water resources in the countries. The 2014 Act required AID to submit a plan to implement its relevant portions of the strategy.

In 2017, the Trump Administration submitted to the Congress its Global Water Strategy along with the AID plan. The AID plan tracked with and built upon the AID 2013-2018 water strategy.

*Q: Did you know about this act?*

HOLMES: I learned about the 2005 Water for the Poor Act after I came to AID.

*Q: The global water coordinator! And this was in 2014 by this time?*

HOLMES: It was. And the water “story” kept evolving.

*Q: Was your Wesleyan colleague still the head of the office?*

HOLMES: John Pasch was head of the Water Office when we launched the strategy. Chris Kosnik and subsequently Jeff Goldberg succeeded him.

*Q: As you mentioned a few moments ago, the global Water for the World Act was the first AID authorization passed in many years.; You were talking about working closely with Hill staff; could you talk a little more about that? This is something that goes back a long way in AID, where there were very close relationships between AID staff and people on the Hill. But it’s my impression that in more recent years, there has been a reluctance to work very closely and to discourage AID staff from working closely with Hill staff. Would you talk a little bit about that relationship and how you did it, what you learned from it and what lessons you think it has for AID?*

HOLMES: When I returned, I found there was a tendency at AID to have a far more structured relationship with the Hill. I can understand that is important not to have the agency flooding the Hill with staff and possibly offering conflicting messages. On the other hand, it’s also important to develop the one-on-one relationships with Hill staff and Members which can make or break key authorizing and appropriating decisions.

In the development of the strategy, I made a point of systematically keeping the relevant Congressional office, appropriating and authorizing committees’ staff consistently informed of our progress. The AID office of legislative affairs was very helpful in structuring those meetings.

I was able to develop some important relationships which proved to be very helpful in the negotiations related to the final version of the Water for the World Act 2014. In working with Congress, I have learned that it all comes down to conveying to the members of Congress and their staff that you understand what they’ve asked for in the statutes, committee reports and in communications with AID; that you are doing your best to apply their guidance and respond to their requests; that you are indeed making progress on meeting their expectations; and most importantly that you respect them.

*Q: Talking to members? Staff?*

HOLMES: Both.

*Q: Any particular staff who were especially helpful to you*

HOLMES: I thought that Chris Homan who is Senator Durbin's lead staff member on all matters related to USAID was very informed and very supportive of AID. I found his insight and guidance, as well his getting out to the field to assess and provide constructive feedback on our work to be invaluable. Joan Condon who is the career staffer on the House Foreign Affairs Committee was very effective in reaching consensus during the discussions on the Water for the World Act. Trey Hicks who is now the director of Food for Peace under the Trump Administration did a great job in developing the Water for the World Act. His colleague, Jennifer Healey, was also quite knowledgeable. Michael Herold was the key staffer to Congressman Earl Blumenauer on the Water for the World Act, and he was a mainstay on the House side in the passage of the bill.

*Q: This was bipartisan, right?*

HOLMES: Completely. There was a very large number of Republican and Democratic members of Congress engaged in the passage of the Water for the World Act. Senator Corker, a Republican, and Senator Durbin, a Democrat, led the effort on the Senate side. Congressman Blumenauer, a liberal Democrat, and Congressman Poe, a conservative Republican, led the effort on the House side. In addition to being bipartisan, the faith-based organizations and organizations concerned with women and girls having safe access to water and sanitation in developing countries played a very important role in the passage of the Water for the World Act.

*Q: I was there on the Hill at that occasion, and Congressman Poe talked vividly about having been in an African country and seen women carrying water being harassed. This coming from a man who was not really a friend of foreign aid. But you brought him around on the subject.*

HOLMES: Yes, Congressman Poe from Texas, a conservative Republican member of Congress who stated at the 2013 strategy launch in the Senate's Kennedy caucus room, I'm here for one reason, bad things happen to women and girls in search of water; therefore I support the strategy.

It didn't look like the Water for the World Act 2014 was going to pass. Towards the close of the congressional session in December 2014, the Senate was trying to fast track bills, including the Water for the World Act 2014, under the unanimous consent process. Senator Coburn, who was retiring that year, was objecting to the process. It appeared he was not going to lift his objection, but he eventually did so, and the bill passed. A wide range of NGOs and other stakeholders played an important role in that statute being passed.

*Q: They leaned on him?*

HOLMES: People definitely communicated with him. That became the first stand-alone piece of foreign assistance legislation to pass since PEPFAR, President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

*Q: Which would have been in the early 2000s I guess.*

HOLMES: Yes, in 2003.

*Q: That was quite an accomplishment. You've mentioned State a couple of times. Was State helpful in this process or not?*

HOLMES: State was helpful, and also played a very significant role in the Water for World Act 2014. They played the lead role in coordinating the development of the global water strategy required by the 2014 Water for the World Act. This strategy was submitted to the Congress in 2017.

*Q: In terms of what AID actually did, you mentioned these three partnerships, but what actually changed in AID as a result of this act being passed?*

HOLMES: While AID was very supportive of the water strategy, strategies can come and go. The Water for the World Act made much of the USAID water strategy permanent because it codified into the statute key provisions of the AID water strategy and our approach to implementing it.

While AID had created a Global Water Coordinator prior the passage of the Act to lead the development and implementation of the strategy, the Coordinator did not have specific authorities. The law provided very clear and strong authorities, specifically mandating that the Global Water Coordinator oversee all AID water programs.

Additionally while the AID strategy set forth criteria for selecting priority WASH countries, the Act made that criteria permanent by including in the Act the country selection criteria used by AID.

Likewise, while AID identified priority countries to receive water supply, sanitation and hygiene, the law mandated that the US government specify the priority countries every five years.

While the strategy ran from 2013 – 2018 , there was no assurance that future administrations would support such five-year strategies developed and implemented by AID for water. The Water for the World Act 2014 provided that assurance, as it required a 2017-2022 five-year global strategy wherein AID would have to also develop a five-year plan. Thus the AID commitment to five-year water plans continued, mandated by law.

*Q: Had countries been named in the legislation?*



HOLMES: Neither the 2005 Water for the Poor Act nor the 2014 Water for the World Act named priority countries.

The AID 2013-2018 Global Water Strategy did name priority countries.

Both acts called for a global water strategy which would specify priority countries. The Water for the World Act 2014 required that every five years beginning 2017 that the president, acting through the Secretary of State, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and the heads of other Federal departments and agencies, to submit a single government-wide Global Water Strategy to the Congress. The Act required the President designate countries as high priority countries to be the primary recipients of United States Government water assistance .

In 2017, the President submitted, pursuant to the requirements of the Water for the World Act 2014, a list of priority countries to receive water supply, sanitation and hygiene related support. That list built upon the list in the AID 2013 water strategy.

*Q: Could you tick off a few of them*

HOLMES: Kenya, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Jordan, Uganda. We had a combination of countries that were desperately in need of water supply and sanitation and have little funding and countries that were better off financially but faced severe water shortages.,

*Q: Such as?*

HOLMES: Jordan. Jordan's economy is stronger than Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia, and faces severe water shortages. The Jordan mission traditionally annually commits significant funds to supporting water in Jordan. This includes having funded in Amman a wastewater treatment plant that treats wastewater to a high standard so that it can be used for agricultural production.

*Q: Was the presence of vast numbers of refugees part of that calculation.*

HOLMES: It was a factor.

*Q: Was Egypt on the list?*

HOLMES: Yes.

HOLMES: Two billion dollars have been spent on water and sanitation projects over the decades .

*Q: That was in the '80s, right?*

HOLMES: No they started Egypt in the '50s. They built out water programs all up and down the Nile.

*Q: Peter McPherson has a great story about the political decision to fund a major sewage project in Cairo. That would have been in the '80s. But your selection of countries was scientifically based!*

HOLMES: Scientifically based in that we were using data related to access water and sanitation that was developed and utilized by a combination of WHO (World Health Organization) data, UNICEF (United Nation Children's Fund) data, UNDP (United Nations Development Program).

The data helped us identify priority countries and develop a variety of innovative water supply sanitation and hygiene programs. This included coupling WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) with such other development interventions as treatment for HIV(human immunodeficiency virus)/AIDS. On the education side, WASH plays an important role in keeping young women in school, as , for example in Somalia , young women will leave schools that do not have adequate privacy, sanitation, menstrual hygiene, and clean water.

Although the science may not be conclusive here, it appears WASH coupled with nutrition programs helps prevent cognitive and physical stunting in children. To that point, one of the largest WASH programs AID has now is in Kenya , the Kenya Integrated WASH Program, which couples nutrition interventions with WASH interventions.

*Q: Are these projects being designed by AID staff or by contractors?*

HOLMES: The concept and scope of work are designed by AID staff. The work on the actual implementation, particularly a project with considerable infrastructure , is put out for bid and implemented by a wide range of businesses and nonprofit entities.

The nature of USAID involvement in the oversight and implementation of the project depends on the type of award. If the award is a grant, the scope of work is less specific as to what must be implemented. If the award is a contract, the scope of work can be extremely specific as to implementation, and that can lead to more hands-on involvement by USAID.

*Q: You mentioned earlier that you had seven big, overarching, indefinite -*

HOLMES: One was an indefinite quantity contract, also known as an IDIQ-

*Q: Okay so they are the instrument once the project has been approved.*

HOLMES: The contracting office will often require relatively brief competition between contractors who are on the prequalified list

*Q: But the missions were given the authority to make those decisions? Or did they have to come back to Washington?*

HOLMES: The missions are given the authority in most cases to making the selections, but there are some awards made centrally.

*Q: Now you personally as I recall were doing a lot of traveling. What were you doing on those travels, particularly since you were talking about countries that are not nearly as safe as they had been when you were last working for AID?*

HOLMES: In my last tour at AID , 2010 – 2017, I spent a fair amount of time in the field so as to better understand the development and implementation of WASH and water resource management (WRM) programs . So I visited WASH and WRM projects in Indonesia, Liberia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kenya, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, and Haiti. In some areas it was not possible because of security or other factors to get out in the field, such as Yemen and Egypt, so I would meet with government officials and stakeholders.

During these trips, I would look for promising and potential breakthrough solutions. When I was in Liberia in January 2014 shortly before the Ebola outbreak in March, I visited a USAID project being implemented by the US NGO, Global Communities, which had eliminated open defecation in some 200 communities. Later in the midst of the Ebola crisis, we learned that Ebola had not broken out in any of these communities, even though many of them were in the middle of the Ebola hot zone. Being in the field helped me further explore sanitation as a possible preventative measure to the spread of Ebola.

An Important aspect of my work was to make the case to US Government policymakers, members of Congress and congressional staff for the support of USAID WASH and water resources management programs. Conveying my firsthand understanding of such programs as the following was fundamental to securing support. These included: in both Kenya and India, the improvement in school attendance and scores which resulted from students having access to safe water, sanitation, menstrual management and hygiene at the schools; in Liberia, in addition to the improvements in sanitation; the rehabilitation of water systems in Monrovia and Robertsport; in southern Ethiopia, the installation in a remote region of a water pumping and piping system critical to sustain livestock and human livelihoods; in northern Ethiopia, the transformation of an entire eco system, previously devastated by deforestation, flash floods and ground water depletion, into highly productive farmlands; in northern Kenya, the application of sensors and solar powered water pumps to provide sustainable supplies of water in arid and semiarid regions; in Ghana, the piloting of latrines simple to install, affordable and easy to clean; in Indonesia, a climate change adaptation program which replenished the previously depleted groundwater table in the hillsides above the city of Surabaya in which USAID supported water supply sanitation and hygiene program; in Indonesia, the utilization of innovative types of finance which would enable utilities in cities such as Surabaya to provide water to communities without water systems; in Palestine, the development of a

combined water storage, water pipeline, and digital water tracking system in which conserved scarce water resources; in Jordan, the conversion of wastewater into water suitable for agricultural purposes; in Lebanon, strengthening water utilities and water infrastructure; in Haiti, the construction of flood control systems in to divert water into agricultural irrigation projects; in Pakistan, the development of community-based approaches to reduce water losses in the pipes and improve the delivery of water; and in Bangladesh, the development of watershed management programs. .

*Q: Your mentioning the World Food Program raises another question for me. AID is not alone in working on water; was there a conscious effort to try to collaborate with other donors and international institutions What kind of partnerships were there with other donors?*

HOLMES: There was a deliberative effort to partner with other donors. A very innovative partnership was the Securing Water for Food Grand Challenge. The partners were AID, the Swedish International Development Agency and the Netherlands Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The grand challenge identified and funded innovative approaches to meeting water needs for food production. We also launched a significant partnership with the Gates Foundation, “WASH for Life”, which supported the development of water treatment technologies.

*Q: I gather there is reluctance to accept the technical reviews that some other agencies carry out as the basis for an AID-supported project. Is that correct?*

HOLMES: As you know , AID is a very technical agency and emphasizes using data and evidence on which to base its decisions. It's not unwilling to utilize the work of other agencies. The Center for Disease Control provides technical input to AID projects

*Q: At the field level?*

HOLMES: Yes.

*Q: The hope is there will be continued close collaboration. What about the engagement of NGOs, either local or international, in these programs? The way you talk about integration suggests there are areas where the benefits of working with NGOs would be strong.*

HOLMES: The NGOs play a key role in the implementation of water programs. These include such NGOs as World Vision, CARE, Millennium Water Alliance and Catholic Relief Services.

*Q: Well, thank you Chris for this fascinating education about the water program. Now, you left the job of global water coordinator – and AID - at the end of the Obama administration.*

HOLMES: I did. I now work with the Boston Consulting Group as a Senior Advisor and global water security expert. I concentrate on international economic development and environmental protection.

*Q: When you look back on your career and this second venture at AID and all this attention particularly to water, did you leave this time with a sense of having accomplished quite a lot and having enjoyed your time there? Was there a sense of accomplishment, or frustration, or both? How did you feel about those last six or seven years?*

HOLMES: I left AID with a great sense of accomplishment over the span of my career. Within the context of the 28 years I spent as a public servant, the last seven years were especially meaningful. Being part of the overall AID team was rewarding in its own right. One way or another, everything connects, and at AID, I was part of an effort which bettered in so many ways human life and the environment. It was a particularly purposeful and consequential experience to work my AID colleagues to help strengthen and expand the provision of a resource so critical to human survival and dignity as water supply, sanitation and hygiene. It was gratifying to share with others what I had learned over the years so as to support their work and careers.

I also felt fortunate not only to work on water matters but also climate change, biodiversity and forestry and land tenure/resource management whose activities also linked to water sector. Those programs made significant advances in protecting biodiversity and forestry, mitigating and adapting to climate change, improving the management of natural resources and protecting the land tenure rights of people throughout the developing world.

When I returned to AID in 2010, our objective was to help protect the environment , save lives and reduce suffering. Working with my colleagues within and outside of AID, we did just that. We created and implemented a successful and lasting global water strategy to strengthen the provision of safe water, sanitation, and hygiene, as well as water resources management. This helped increase the access of millions of people to water, sanitation and hygiene, thereby reducing suffering and saving lives.

By having the AID water strategy implement the requirements of the 2005 Paul Simon Water for the Poor act, the strategy served as a bridge to the successor legislation to the 2005 Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act which was the 2014 Water for the World Act.

The critical components of the strategy are now codified in law. To implement the strategy, we built a new organization, hired committed, first class experts, and with strong congressional support, increased the budget. With the creation of the Global Water Coordinator position, AID now has a point of leadership with statutory responsibilities and accountability related to meeting global WASH and water resource management needs.

While we accomplished much in the water sector, the global challenge is immense. It is enormously frustrating and disappointing that the world cannot mobilize itself to provide universally something so basic and fundamental to human life and dignity as safe water, sanitation and hygiene. When I left AID, 2.5 to 3 billion people lacked basic handwashing facilities.

As it relates to WASH within AID and globally, there are particular areas where we must do far more, including: ensuring long term sustainable supplies of water to support water supply, sanitation and hygiene programs; strengthening water resources management through large scale watershed management; increasing the productive use of water for agriculture through enhanced irrigation; increasing access to WASH at health care facilities; better understanding and expanding the role of WASH in preventing the spread of viral disease such as Ebola and bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics; applying WASH to reduce childhood cognitive and physical stunting; developing WASH projects which can qualify for large-scale financing; ensuring that women are directly involved in the planning and management of water supply, sanitation and hygiene activities, and that hygiene is designed to reach women and girls.

Climate change presents both a great threat and opportunity for WASH and water resource management programs. In addition to reducing and eliminating greenhouse gases, the sustainable provision of water, sanitation, and hygiene and the related management of water resources are one of the most important actions mankind can take to strengthen the resilience and adaptation of humans and landscapes to climate change. Droughts, heat waves, floods and salt contaminated water reduce the sustainable supply of safe water. The destruction of watersheds cripples nature's ability to provide a sustainable supply of groundwater and surface water. Without sustainable supplies of safe water, human resilience to climate change weakens. This will require AID to develop and implement climate change adaptation programs to help people and landscapes withstand and adapt to future climatic and water related shocks.

To adapt one has to understand one's environment. AID will need to help countries improve their sustainability by supporting the application of digital technology to develop a far better understanding of the ecosystems from which water originates and in which water is utilized. Such information will be essential for the successful integration of WASH and water resource management so to further ensure the sustainable provision of water and sanitation.

My perspective of AID has evolved. I think of AID as a complex adaptive system operating within a far more complex global adaptive system. Viewed through this lens, the existential challenge, the fundamental organizing and operating question, becomes how quickly and effectively can AID, its partners and beneficiaries adapt to a wide range of social, political and economic challenges brought upon, most notably, by climate change, an ever-increasing global population, and the large scale sudden impact of infectious disease. Our planet has but a moment in time to do so.

All in all, I feel fortunate and grateful to have spent part of my moment in time at AID, as well as at the other US Government entities in which I have served.

*Q – That ends a fascinating and educational oral history for Chris Holmes. Your career in AID was spread over nearly 45 years but broken up into several pieces and interspersed with service in other government agencies and in the private sector – that makes your career particularly interesting and unusual. Thank you again for taking the time to go through all this for us.*

*End of interview*