

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

KELLY KAMMERER

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Initial Interview Date: December 16, 2016
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This oral history transcription was made possible through support provided by U.S. Agency for International Development, under terms of Cooperative Agreement No. AID-OAA-F-16-00101. The opinions expressed herein are those of the interviewee and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

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INTERVIEW

Q: This is Alex Shakow and I am here with Kelly Kammerer on the 16th of December in Bethesda. We are very happy that Kelly has now agreed to do this. He may be doing it for the second time, but the first time recording disappeared and as Kelly is now visiting here from France we are very lucky to have him today.

So, Kelly, first of all, wonderful to see you again.

KAMMERER: Thank you, Alex. It is great to see you.

Q: We spent many, many years fighting battles together.

KAMMERER: We did.

Q: I hate to think of how many there were.

KAMMERER: It was when I was your lawyer at USAID.

Q: That's right. You kept us out of trouble, as far as I can tell. Today we're going to find out about Kelly's varied career in AID (United States Agency for International Development), but how about starting with when and where you were born and what your childhood was like and how that may or may not have had some influence on how you ended up ultimately in AID.

KAMMERER: I was born in New York City on November 29, 1941, a week before Pearl Harbor. My father, who was a doctor, was driving over the Queensboro Bridge to the

New York hospital, where I was born, to see my mother and me, when he heard the announcement that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. He was in the Army Reserves at the time so he knew immediately that he was going to be going away, and he did go to the South Pacific for four years in the Second World War.

Q: So, you grew up without your father being around at all?

KAMMERER: I was too young to realize what was going on, but I did. I have a vivid recollection of my father appearing at the end of the war in full uniform at the front door. I would have been four at the time. That would have been the first time I'd seen my father since I was an infant, as he left in 1942 and did not come back until 1945.

Q: Was he a doctor in the-?

KAMMERER: Yes – in the army. He ran field hospitals in New Guinea and the Philippines. My father was born in a small town in Indiana – Logansport. He had a brilliant career. He went to college at age 16, graduated in two years and went to medical school at 18. He later became president of the American Arthritis Society and was a professor at Cornell Medical School and a member of the staff at the Hospital of Special Surgery in New York. He had a private practice as well. He met my mother in New York City. She had immigrated from England as one of five children. Her mother's maiden name was Sarah Kelly. I'm named after her.

Q: So, it's the Irish roots but your father had a German background?

KAMMERER: My father had a German background. His grandfather came from southern Germany, around Stuttgart. But his mother had Irish roots. With my maternal grandmother's Irish background, I thought I might qualify for an Irish passport. But it turned out, even though her parents were both from Ireland, she was born in Liverpool, and thus was English.

Q: Too bad because an Irish passport would be very helpful.

KAMMERER: It would have been convenient since we now live in Europe. My grandmother was married to a man who served in the British Merchant Marine. He was the black sheep in the family, as I learned later in life. I never met him.

Q: And you've taken after him?

KAMMERER: I hope not. He preceded my grandmother to New York City in the early 1920s, where he got a job as a superintendent in a building on the West Side of Manhattan. My grandmother came several years later, in 1926, with the two oldest of the five children, my mother being one of the two. They all lived in the basement of this apartment building while my mother grew up and went to high school. She was a beautiful young woman and got married right out of high school; not to my father, to a

wealthy socialite 24 years her senior, who died a few years after they married. That's when she met my father.

Q: And when you say New York City, was it Manhattan?

KAMMERER: My parents married in 1939, right after the Triborough Bridge, connecting Manhattan to the Bronx and Queens, had been built. My father was practicing medicine in New York City, but the Triborough Bridge opened up all of northern Long Island to suburbia – which is where my parents settled. It was quite isolated at the time, woods and open spaces. They bought a plot of land in the town of Whitestone, close to the Whitestone Bridge and that's where I grew up. When I was a kid, Whitestone had dirt streets – at least the road to our house was dirt. We didn't have a sewer system; we had a septic tank

It wasn't until the early 1950s that that part of Queens began to evolve to what it is today.

Q: And was your mother working?

KAMMERER: No, my mother was a stay-at-home Mom. She did work during the war on one of the Rosie the Riveter-type jobs at Sperry Gyroscope company, but when we were growing up I had a brother and two sisters so that was enough for her to handle.

Q: Were you the oldest?

KAMMERER: I'm the second oldest; my brother is older.

Q: So, the four of you grew up in the Whitestone area during the period after the war?

KAMMERER: We did. It was a bucolic area to grow up at the time. We had a great childhood in that respect.

Q: Did you go to public school?

KAMMERER: Yes. I went to PS 30 the first three grades and then PS 79 until the eighth grade. My older brother had gone to prep school at Andover, so, when I was old enough for high school my mother felt I should also go away to high school, even though I wasn't particularly interested in leaving home and my friends. But it was a lifechanging event and I'm glad they did send me to prep school.

Q: Where did they send you?

KAMMERER: Friends Academy, in Locust Valley, Long Island. It wasn't very far away from where I grew up, only 25 miles, but you couldn't commute.

Q: It was a boarding school?

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: And it was a Friends, Quaker school?

KAMMERER: Yes, it was a Quaker school.

Q: So, why was it such a lifechanging event?

KAMMERER: I don't think any of my grade school friends in Queens graduated from high school, much less went to college. My best friend Andrew ended up in jail. I was transformed from being in a kind of juvenile gang in Whitestone, to Locust Valley, which was a pretty snooty place. I was a little "un-refined" in comparison to my new classmates, who used to call me "KK hood". I had to go to a class dances in a tuxedo. The juxtaposition between my life in Queens and Locust Valley was life altering.

Q: Did you also wear a tuxedo?

KAMMERER: Yes - I rented a white tuxedo for the spring dance and thought I looked pretty swell. Anyway, prep school oriented me in a different way. I think I might have tended to drift aimlessly perhaps, who knows, had I gone to the local public high school in Flushing. Although both of my sisters went to public high school in New York, the older one went to Flushing; the other went to Bronx High School of Science. They turned out just fine. But for me-

Q: I'm sure you would have too but-

KAMMERER: Perhaps, but I've always wondered about that and been grateful for the fact that my parents sent me away to school at age 13.

Q: Because you were living so close did you come back weekends or did you-?

KAMMERER: No, I only came home for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter.

Q: No? So, you really stayed at- and everybody else at the school were boarding as well?

KAMMERER: No. The boarding part of the school was small; there were predominantly day students. There were maybe 80 or less boys and girls boarding.

Q: You said it was high school; it was ninth through twelfth grades?

KAMMERER: It went all the way from kindergarten through high school.

Q: Oh, so it was-

KAMMERER: But the boarding part was only for high school.

Q: Yes, of course, yes. Okay. And so, are there people that you still keep in touch with who were part of that class of yours?

KAMMERER: Yes. I have kept in touch with my classmates. Some of my good friends are now deceased, but yes.

Q: Did any of them go in to the same path internationally that you did or into the law?

KAMMERER: At least one member of my class at Friends Academy, Tom Carter, went into the Peace Corps, as did I. After graduating from Dartmouth, Tom became a Peace Corps volunteer in India. He married an Indian woman, had kids, and stayed on in India, quite successfully working to develop agricultural cooperatives. He did that for 30 years and then came back to the U.S. and he now works at AID.

Q: Terrific!

KAMMERER: Very successfully, too. He's a contract employee of one sort or another, as most people are at AID these days. But at 75 he's still working on development issues.

Q: I have quite a lot of experience with Quaker schools as all our kids went to one and I went to Swarthmore so I know that the number of real Quakers around are few at these schools but there is a strong sense of Quaker values that pervade these schools. Were you also affected by the values of the Friends school? Was that something that was important at that time to you and to your classmates?

KAMMERER: There were very few Quaker students. I don't recall if there were any. But the Quaker values of the Society of Friends were an important part of our life. We went to Meeting twice a week, on Wednesdays and Sundays. We were encouraged to be involved in anti-war and anti-poverty programs, civil rights type of activities. And those values did stick with me, probably with everybody who was in that school, and I'm sure that that had something to do with my subsequent interest in working in anti-poverty programs and probably in international things as well, because the Quaker schools take a world view.

Q: So, you were going to high school away from home but still keeping in touch with your family. And in what year did you graduate?

KAMMERER: I graduated in 1959.

Q: And then what happened?

KAMMERER: My high school roommate, Bill Reid, came from Texas, where his grandfather owned an enormous ranch he had bought after being the chief geologist for what was then called Humble Oil, which ultimately became Exxon. His ranch is now a U.S. national park. Anyway, right after graduation, my roommate, Bill, and I worked there as ranch hands for the summer.

Q: Young men from New York City.

KAMMERER: Yes, I was 17. Anyway, we worked for a few months and made enough money to go to Mexico for a few weeks; drove all the way to Acapulco in 1959 and that sort of piqued my interest in-

Q: This was your first exposure outside the United States?

KAMMERER: Yes, it was.

Q: Unlike probably many high school graduates these days who have already traveled a lot.

KAMMERER: Absolutely.

Q: In those days it was not so common.

KAMMERER: No, not at all.

Q: So, it piqued your interest in international affairs or-?

KAMMERER: Yes, it did. I came back and I went to college at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, which is where my father had gone to college as well. After my first year I worked for the summer at the post office in Flushing, New York, and saved enough money so that after my second year at Notre Dame I was able to go Germany to work in a factory.

Q: During the summer?

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: Yes.

KAMMERER: I joined a program that sent college students to Germany to work. At the time, there was a labor shortage and jobs were easy to come by. I lived with a German family and stayed there for three months, worked for two and then traveled around in an old beat up VW.

Q: No connection with your father's family?

KAMMERER: No. Neither my mother nor my father, like many people who either came or their ancestors came from Europe, talked much about it. They never talked about Germany or Ireland. Late in my mother's life she said she'd read a book called, I think, "Angela's Ashes".

Q: I think you may be right.

KAMMERER: Anyway, she said it reminded her of her own life growing up, where she would have to go outside at night in the dark and cold to go to the toilet because they had an outhouse – which, small as she then was, she was afraid she'd fall into.

Q: My wife comes from an Irish background all I can tell you is that not all Irish are so reticent about talking- she was not born in Ireland; she's second generation but her grandparents were and they loved to talk about Ireland. So, it seems it varies. But I think Europeans from Germany and elsewhere have a lot of other reasons for not talking about it.

KAMMERER: I often regret the fact, and I think many people are like this, that you're so into yourself when you're growing up you don't think about asking your parents stories about their lives when they were growing up. And by the time I wanted to ask it was too late.

Q: That's why we're doing oral histories so that there's the possibility of-

KAMMERER: I don't feel like I've got one foot on the banana peel -

Q: No, it is important. There is a lot of interesting stuff that people dig away in their backgrounds. There are lots of ways that you can trace people now but having an oral history or having a memoir written by a family member is often very useful and interesting.

So, you say you came back from Germany and that was second year. Did you play football at Notre Dame?

KAMMERER: I played football in high school but I was much too small to play in college - I couldn't even try out as a water boy at Notre Dame.

Q: What did you major in and what was all-consuming at Notre Dame for you?

KAMMERER: I ended up majoring in history. I started out majoring in geology because when I took the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Profile that they gave to all incoming freshmen to help guide you in your career planning the psychologist at the end of the process sat me down and said Kelly, we've looked at your test results and we think you should work outdoors. I didn't know what to make of that. I was kind of insulted because I was thinking, what do you mean, I should work construction?

Q: No intellectual capability at all, right?

KAMMERER: Yes. But anyway, I took that to heart and thought well, how about geology? That will get me outside and-

Q: At what point in your college career was this?

KAMMERER: This was the very beginning; this was freshman year, freshman orientation. So, I took geology for a year and I enjoyed it but then they told me I had to take physics as part of the geology curriculum and I knew that was a non-starter. So, I switched to liberal arts and graduated with a degree in history.

Q: Terrific, okay. So, and was there anything that happened at Notre Dame that again was particularly significant in terms of your later life as you look at it? I mean, either in terms of people who were important to you or directions that you were point in?

KAMMERER: Yes, there was. Like a lot of people coming from a small school, particularly a school with the kind of liberal orientation Quaker schools have, I was at sea when I got to Notre Dame, which was a big university. My classmates mostly were from much more conservative Catholic backgrounds, so it took me a while to adjust to life there. But eventually I fell in with a group of people who had formed an association to do work overseas with poor people.

Q: Who was the president?

KAMMERER: Father Hesburgh.

Q: Yes, Father Hesburgh. So, he sets the standard for all of this?

KAMMERER: Yes, he did.

Q: Including, ultimately, Peace Corps of course.

KAMMERER: Yes. I met Father Hesburgh early on in my tenure at Notre Dame because, having not gone to a Catholic high school or grade school, I was not fully aware of all of the procedures. My first-year history professor recommended that if we wanted to earn extra credit we could read a book called "Candide" by Voltaire. So, I went down to the library and looked up "Candide" in the card catalog, filled out the form and gave it to the woman behind the desk. She emphatically said, with a frown, "you can't read this, it's on the Index of prohibited books." I told her my professor just suggested that I read it for extra credit. She said there were only two ways I could read the book. I could either get a letter from the president of the university or from my professor authorizing me to read it. I was so full of myself at the time, and upset that this was happening - after all, how could somebody tell me what I could read - that I marched right over to Father Hesburgh's office and- I said I met him - I didn't actually meet him then because fortunately for me he was out of town. But I told his secretary what had happened and she said well just write a note to Father Hesburgh and leave it with me and I'll show it to him when he comes back. And sure enough, a week later I got a letter from Father Hesburgh, which I still have, authorizing me to read "Candide" by Voltaire-

Q: That's a wonderful story.

KAMMERER: He went on to say that he hoped that reading it wouldn't jeopardize my faith. Of course, I raced right down to the library with my letter to get the book, wondering what's going to be in it.

Q: What a disappointment.

KAMMERER: What a disappointment, you're right.

Q: I'll bet when Bernstein produced "Candide" you were rushing to see that to see if they were able to make more out of it. It is a lovely musical. But that's fascinating and I'm sure that Father Hesburgh of all people would have been the last person to keep you from reading something like that.

KAMMERER: Yes. He subsequently wrote a recommendation for me to the Peace Corps, four years later.

Q: Oh well, he was never opposed to the Peace Corps if there was ever any chance of it.

KAMMERER: No, in fact because Father Hesburgh was instrumental in starting Peace Corps programs in Chile and in Peru.

Q: He was very close to people Sargent Shriver and Harris Wofford because he was such a wonderful leader and a figure both within the Church community but in the civil rights movement -- he was chairman, I believe, of the Civil-

KAMMERER: Civil Rights Commission.

Q: -Rights Commission.

KAMMERER: For 25 years, I think, a long time.

Q: Yes. Well, that's a wonderful tribute to you, though, to have that connection, let alone to have that letter.

KAMMERER: Anyway, you asked me a question about whether anything had happened at Notre Dame that led to my subsequent career decisions, and there was. Because I found my way in terms of making friends and being with like-minded people when I joined a group that had formed an organization to work overseas to help poor people; it was called the Council on the International Lay Apostolate. It still exists at Notre Dame and it's become-

Q: Founded at Notre Dame?

KAMMERER: It was founded in 1961.

Q: But covers more than just Notre Dame?

KAMMERER: No, it was just at Notre Dame. A group of about 16 of us raised money to pay for us to travel during the summer after our third year, our junior year, to either Peru or Mexico. I went to Mexico with a group of eight fellow students and a priest who went with us, Father Bartell.

Q: What did you do there?

KAMMERER: We built two houses for poor families in the slum area of the town, families that had been identified by the local diocese and priest in the small town of Tacámbaro in the state of Michoacán. Each of us lived with a local Mexican family and worked during the day. The idea was that by our example of Christian living we would inspire people to, I don't know what, they were all, of course, devout Catholics. It was pretty presumptuous when I think about it.

Q: I mean, there was no overt effort to-

KAMMERER: No.

Q: Just your smile and-

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: -behavior and-

KAMMERER: Yes, that we would live a moral life and do something good for somebody else. It was a great experience, and it helped me learn some Spanish and living with the family was fun.

Q: And you did this between-?

KAMMERER: Between junior and senior year.

Q: Junior and senior year. And so that again was one more piece of pointing you in a direction that led to-?

KAMMERER: That was the summer of 1962, the Peace Corps had just started.

Q: Right.

KAMMERER: You were probably working there.

Q: Not yet. Well just, yes, the summer of '62, fall of '62 was when I started working at Peace Corps.

KAMMERER: And to me and to several of us in this group in Mexico it was like the Peace Corps had been created for us. This was something we were already doing and enjoying, and we were thinking about what we were going to do after we graduated from college.

Q: So, did you apply immediately before graduation?

KAMMERER: Yes. I applied when I came back that fall and was accepted well before graduation to a program in Colombia that was going to train in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Q: It seems to me, as I recall, that Notre Dame has always been, probably because of Father-

KAMMERER: Hesburgh.

Q: a major supplier of Peace Corps volunteers.

KAMMERER: Yes, it is.

Q: How many from your class went into Peace Corps, do you know?

KAMMERER: I'm not sure how many, but I knew three or four just from our little group that had gone to Peru and Mexico.

Q: That was probably a natural training ground.

KAMMERER: Yes, right.

Q: And so not just from Father Hesburgh's recommendation but the fact that you had already shown that you could do this-

KAMMERER: I'm sure that-

Q: -and living with a family I'm sure the Peace Corps was attracted by that.

KAMMERER: I imagine they were.

Q: So, Colombia, what was the program supposed to do?

KAMMERER: Colombia VIII was a Rural Community Development group. The first group of community development volunteers had gone to Colombia in 1961.

Q: That was at the beginning then. I think Colombia was one of the first-

KAMMERER: It was one of the biggest programs and one of the first programs.

Q: Yes.

KAMMERER: Community development was a relatively new concept at the time. Now you can get a college degree in the subject. The idea is simple, to try to organize members of a community to identify what their problems are, and figure out what they could do about them on their own.

Q: Was your training effective as far as you can recall?

KAMMERER: Well.

Q: I ask this because subsequently one of the things I did was become head of training, but not at that stage. That was very early years of Peace Corps training.

KAMMERER: Yes. We certainly took it very seriously. We applied ourselves. In training, we'd go out into local communities in northern New Mexico and try to organize groups. So, yes, the training was effective. It made us feel like we had a skill, that we had a purpose, that we had something that we could organize our lives around once we arrived where we were going. Whether we made much difference to the people in our community in Colombia is a different matter-

Q: Who organized training?

KAMMERER: It was the University of New Mexico. I'm not sure whether the school itself- I think the school provided all the language teachers but as far as the community development part of it I'm not sure where they came from.

Q: Oh, they probably sub-contracted to other people just as-

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: But the overall responsibility was the university?

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: And did many of your group get selected out? I mean, that's always one of the most traumatic parts of-

KAMMERER: That was a very traumatic. We were a large group; there might have been 75 men and 50 women. Maybe that's too many but it was a large group. And my recollection, I'm pretty sure this is not apocryphal, I think this really happened, at the end of the training program they brought us into a classroom and they gave each of us a folded piece of paper with our name on it. And then they told us to open the piece of paper and if it had a black circle on it, it meant you had to go see the psychologist or

psychiatrist - it meant you were out. I've thought back on that over the years, about what a cruel thing that was.

Q: Every person I've talked with who has been in those early Peace Corps training groups talks about these traumatic events where people are treated as you are describing and they always, almost always say they never knew why he was dropped and others were not.

KAMMERER: In some cases, it appeared clear to me, and others in the group, that they had de-selected some of the best trainees.

Q: Political?

KAMMERER: I don't think so, no, but they were trying to- I don't know what exactly they were trying to do, what type of person they were trying to get, but they were worried about people who might cause "issues".

Q: But they were maybe concerned about was that since this was at some point described as a revolutionary program that maybe they were worried that they were getting people who were too likely to cause a revolution. Latin America in those days-

KAMMERER: That's possible. One of the guys in our group, who everybody liked, was Sam Farr.

Q: Oh, Congressman Farr.

KAMMERER: The Congressman from California. He was de-selected from our group; nobody knew why. But he came back a year later and became a volunteer in Colombia and finished his two years.

Q: He was de-selected from another program or from your program?

KAMMERER: He was de-selected from our program.

Q: Interesting.

KAMMERER: And then came back a year later. He visited me at my site with his two younger twin sisters, and their parents. Tragically a few days later one of the two sisters was killed while riding a horse in Colombia near Sam's site. She fell off and broke her neck. A terrible story.

Q: It's interesting that he was de-selected and then- because he's now, of course, one of Peace Corps'-

KAMMERER: Biggest supporters.

Q: And a favorite. Of course, they are very proud of their members of Congress; there are not that many anymore.

KAMMERER: Yes. And he, in fact, is no longer in Congress. He just finished, I guess he's just finishing now.

Q: Yes, something like that. So, your Peace Corps experience; was that, you alluded to it when you said that you weren't sure how much you had contributed but-

KAMMERER: I have heard the same thing from so many former Volunteers – we're not sure exactly what we contributed, but all of us share a realization that it was a wonderful experience for us.

Q: In what ways?

KAMMERER: I'm sure it in large part was the reason I ended up working at AID. I didn't go on a direct path to AID, but I enjoyed the Peace Corps experience so much, of living in a foreign country and getting to know another culture and trying to do something that I thought might be of use or help other people, that it was very rewarding and important to me. So, it was life changing.

Q: Were you in an isolated part of Colombia and were you on your own or were you paired with somebody? What was the experience like?

KAMMERER: We were in the state of Colombia called Chocó, which is on the Pacific Ocean between Buenaventura in the south and Panama on the north. It's the most isolated and poorest part of Colombia, and is 98 percent black. Slaves had been brought there to mine gold originally. It was very isolated, although our post, El Carmen del Atrato, was a little higher, above the flood plain where most of Chocó is located, and the climate was better. Initially I had a partner, Gar Murtha, who is now a Federal District judge in Vermont. Gar and I were together only for a few months, and then he left to become the volunteer leader for Chocó and I stayed in El Carmen on my own for a year, when a second volunteer came and overlapped with me for a few months before he had to be medically evacuated. After that I finished my tour on my own.

Q: Was that tough, being on your own, or was that actually liberating?

KAMMERER: It would have been tough if I had gone there on my own to start with. But by the time I was on my own I had lived there long enough that I was getting by with the language and knew enough people that it seemed like I'd been there forever. So, it was not difficult at all and, as you say, was actually liberating.

Q: Were you with a family or were you on-?

KAMMERER: No, we rented a house.

Q: And were you speaking a local language or Spanish?

KAMMERER: Spanish.

Q: And that was good enough in that area?

KAMMERER: Yes. Nobody spoke English.

Q: But there was not a local language that they were speaking?

KAMMERER: There were Indian communities in the jungle who had their own language.

Q: But you weren't working with them?

KAMMERER: As one of my projects, I arranged for a shipment of clothing to be sent from Notre Dame Catholic Charities for the Indian villages. I'm not sure that was my best project, after I saw these Indians dressed in cast-off U.S. sweatshirts and pajamas.

Q: Notre Dame sweatshirts?

KAMMERER: Yes, probably. For the next two years, in the capital city Quibdó, I'd see Indians walking around town in their U.S. pajamas and whatnot.

Q: They were setting a design, a style. Successful.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: When you think back about what were you able to accomplish in terms of the world of development, are there illustrations of things that you would like to share?

KAMMERER: That's a harder question. There were some concrete things. For example, we built three rural schools.

Q: We this a case where the people that were working with you took the lead?

KAMMERER: Well, initially, Gar and I would get the community together. We would facilitate the meetings and offer help, through AID and the Colombian rural development agency, in obtaining construction materials. We could provide cement and the roofing for the schools, but the community needed to supply the labor. We also had a backyard vegetable project that worked well. In the town where we lived, El Carmen, there was a river that came through it that was eroding the cliff underneath some of the houses. We worked with the community to build a large retaining wall to help the people who lived in that neighborhood. I also taught English in the public school and volunteered at the regional tuberculosis hospital.

So, we were able to do things that resulted in immediate, tangible benefit to the people that lived in this town, but most people were bemused by what these two Americans were doing there. Many didn't have the foggiest idea why we would be doing this. It didn't compute.

Q: Even after you'd been there for a while?

KAMMERER: Even after we'd been there for two years. In their minds, we were rich Americans, university educated; what in the world were we doing in this tiny little town? So, I wondered after we left whether the concept of community development that we had tried to instill had stuck. The problem in Colombia, probably a lot of Latin America at the time, was that people had become reluctant to do things on their own because of the perception that either the government or the Church or the large land owners would be responsible for taking care of whatever the needs were. So, if you needed a school you'd petition the government in Bogota, or you'd ask the priest at the Church or the large land owner if he would do it. The idea that this is something we can do ourselves was a hard concept for people to grasp.

Q: Have you ever been back to this community?

KAMMERER: I've never been back, and for a while I was reluctant to go back because I was afraid that nothing would have changed. And then it became difficult to travel to Colombia. I did go back in the '80s once or twice with USAID to Bogota; but it was so hard to get to my town. You needed at least two full days to get there and back.

Q: This was not an area where the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army (Spanish: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) ultimately was-

KAMMERER: Yes, they were. In fact, one of the schools we built, I subsequently read a story about the area, and the FARC had come in and burned the school down. And before that there were no teachers because it was too dangerous for a teacher to be in a rural area. So, you can build a school but if the government can't provide a teacher it doesn't do much good.

Q: Right. The community has to-

KAMMERER: The community has to support it.

Q: Did that experience provide some learning for you that was relevant and useful as you began working for AID overseas?

KAMMERER: I'm sure it was helpful in understanding how difficult it is to effect change in a developing society.

Q: So, did you stay the full two years?

KAMMERER: I did. Yes.

Q: And then what did you do?

KAMMERER: Like most of my fellow volunteers I didn't have the foggiest idea what I was going to do. So, I picked the path of least resistance and applied to law school.

Q: This was '64?

KAMMERER: '65.

Q: '65.

KAMMERER: Yes. I'd also become friends with a young guy who was in the Foreign Service. He was the consul general in Medellín, which was the closest city to us where we'd go for R&R (rest and recreation). And over the two years I had gotten to know him - Bruce Fleischer was his name - and I thought the Foreign Service looked like a good idea. He had a nice job in Medellín, speaking Spanish and working with all kinds of people.

Q: This is the days before it became very dangerous.

KAMMERER: Oh yes, absolutely. So, I thought about that, but I decided to go to law school. I came back and I went to the University of Virginia Law School.

Q: Did you have a role model? Did you just choose law school because you had to decide to do something or was there someone that you knew who had been at Virginia or some lawyer that you knew? Your father was a doctor-

KAMMERER: Doctor, yes. I had an uncle who was a lawyer.

Q: -who probably would have wished that you would become a doctor, right?

KAMMERER: Well, I would have too except that I was terrible at science.

My brother did become a doctor, not that our father ever put any pressure on us to do anything one way or the other. He paid the bills and made sure we all went to college, at least the two boys did. The two girls did too eventually, but in more circuitous routes or circuitous ways.

I was going to mention something else about my father because I've often thought why I took the path that I did in my career. And I'm pretty convinced that for almost everyone, there are random actions that occur during the course of your life that influence which way you go. It's pretty hard to say that you have a pattern that you developed as a young person and then pursued it. A lot of what happened to me in my career was due to luck, I

think. In any event, my parents had both grown up during the Depression and were affected by it. They never talked politics at home, but I knew my parents supported Franklin Roosevelt and I knew my father was a member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the 1930s. He never went to Spain, but that was his orientation, a liberal political persuasion that affected me, wanting to please my father; I'm sure that I adopted some of his views.

Q: Did he talk about it?

KAMMERER: No.

Q: How did you find out that he was a member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade?

KAMMERER: I found out when I ultimately took the Foreign Service exam. After I had passed the written and oral exams and was waiting to be assigned to a class, I had to get a security clearance, which I did. And when I told my father I'd passed, he said, I'm really surprised you passed because I was a member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in New York before the war. He'd stopped talking about it after WW II because it was not a good thing for one's career, especially during the McCarthy era. Anybody who had been associated with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade was considered suspect. In fact, if you had actually fought in Spain you couldn't get into the US military.

Q: I hadn't realized that. In fact, there's a book that's just come out.

KAMMERER: There is, yes.

Q: I haven't seen it but it's an interesting period in American history, the people who did go.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: But if you were a member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and didn't go to Spain, what did you do?

KAMMERER: He went to meetings and maybe donated money, I suppose.

Q: So, what you're saying is that this liberal progressive, probably progressive is a-

KAMMERER: Progressive is a better word.

Q: -more appropriate word, was an influence on you in the sense that either directly or subliminally-

KAMMERER: I've always thought that. My brother, who is two and a half years older, ended up in the Green Berets during the Vietnam period. He never-

Q: By choice or-?

KAMMERER: Yes, sort of by choice. He was in medical school and had a military commitment, as everybody did in those days, and he wanted to practice tropical medicine. So, the Green Berets told him they'd send him to Africa, which they didn't but-

Q: Well, he got a chance to see the tropics but probably not the way he wanted to.

KAMMERER: But anyway, he's become a conservative Republican.

Q: Interesting. You had the same father-

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: But you went off in different directions. Are you close to this brother?

KAMMERER: Yes, we're close. But we can't spend too much time together because politics come into-

Q: At the most recent Thanksgiving you were at the same table.

KAMMERER: Yes, right.

Q: Actually, that's very interesting though. But I guess if you go into the Green Berets that would push you in a conservative direction.

KAMMERER: I think that's what happened. I don't think my brother had a pre-orientation that way although maybe he did. Maybe he would have become more conservative and I became more liberal and who knows why.

Q: But anyway, there you were going to law school and you chose the University of Virginia. Any particular reason why?

KAMMERER: It was the best school I could get in to.

Q: That's a very good school.

KAMMERER: Yes. It was there or Columbia. And the idea of going to school in New York City just after two years of living in rural Colombia was overwhelming.

Q: So you chose a halfway house in Charlottesville.

KAMMERER: Yes. And I'm glad I did because not only it is a good law school, but it also had a spirit of comradery among the students that you might not have in a more urban law school.

Q: And did anything significant to career happen in those three years that you were at UVA?

KAMMERER: I remember writing in my application that I wanted to go to law school to obtain a skill that would enable me to be of use to my community, whatever that community turned out to be. I didn't really have a vocation to practice law, but I wanted a skill to do something and that seemed like a reasonable thing to do. I was oriented towards legal services. After my first year of law school I went back to Colombia; I had a fellowship from the Pan American Union to study urban planning at the University of Colombia in Bogota.

Q: During the summer?

KAMMERER: Yes. I researched and wrote a paper on squatter settlements in Bogota, which was fascinating. And then after my second year I worked for Mobilization for Youth in New York City, on the lower East Side, which in 1967 was not as trendy as it is today. It was a legal services program mostly for housing issues. I enjoyed that quite a lot. So, I was looking for something like that after I graduated. And I was also still pursuing the idea of going into the Foreign Service, which was not uncommon for people in law school. I took the written FS exam during my second year of law school, and passed the oral exam during the summer, and was scheduled to go into the Foreign Service right after graduation. I was just telling Nancy this story the other night because I had a nightmare about it.

Q: Oh boy. These things come back to you.

KAMMERER: They do. This was 1967 when I took the exams and thought I was all set career-wise. I went back to my third year of law school and took the bar exam during the school year, as you could do in Virginia in those days. I thought I was all set. I didn't plan to practice law, but I was going into the Foreign Service as soon as I graduated. But in February of 1968 Lyndon Johnson won the New Hampshire primary but Eugene McCarthy came in such a close second that Johnson announced a week later that he was not going to run for a second term.

Q: Right.

KAMMERER: And a week after that he announced that in order to pay for the Vietnam War he was putting an immediate freeze on all federal hiring and cutting all federal budgets by 10 percent. And shortly after that I got a letter from the Foreign Service saying that due to these cutbacks there would be no new entry class for the foreseeable future. So, there I was in February thinking what am I going to do now because I had not really planned for anything else. The only thing I had done was to apply to a new program called the Reginald Heber Smith Fellowship Program which was run by the University of Pennsylvania Law School. It was part of Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty. They took 50 law graduates each year and assigned them around the United States to

work in established legal services programs doing appellate litigation on issues affecting poor people. Fortunately for me, I was accepted to do that sometime in the spring of 1968. So, after a brief stop in New York for the bar exam, I went to Philadelphia for training and then was assigned to Washington to work in Neighborhood Legal Services. I was in an office on 14th Street and Porter Road, N.W. just north of the U Street corridor, which then was a totally burned out neighborhood.

Q: Absolutely. '68, what a year that was.

KAMMERER: Yes. It was the fall of '68.

Q: This was before Martin Luther King was killed?

KAMMERER: He was killed in March. Robert Kennedy was killed in June 1968. I started working there in September.

Q: It was a terrible year all around.

KAMMERER: Northwest Washington around upper 14th street was just totally burned out. I worked there for two years and enjoyed it. And during that time the new entry program in the Foreign Service was reinstated and they invited me to a class and I said great. And then the more I thought about it the more I realized I was enjoying practicing law and the less certain I was that what I had thought of as a romantic kind of career might actually be quite regimented. I'm a strong introvert and began to worry how I was going to fit into a big organization like the State Department. So, I wrote a letter saying that I couldn't join the class because I was involved in these cases and I couldn't get uninvolved in them, which wasn't literally true, but I just was uncertain. And they said fine, we'll invite you to the next class. And they did. And by the next class I still hadn't made up my mind so I wrote them a letter I regret sending because it was so phony. I sent it to the director of the Foreign Service Institute saying that I knew since I was in my mid-20s at the time, and single, that if I joined the Foreign Service there was a strong probability that I would be sent to Vietnam and I didn't want to do that, but rather than compromise their principles or my own I was withdrawing my candidacy. Very soon after that I got a call from the office of the director of the Foreign Service saying we want to talk to you about your letter. Can you please come down to see us? So, I went down, their office was in Roslyn at that time, and I talked to the head of the Foreign Service. He said I just want to reassure you that you're not going to go to Vietnam.

Q: How could he do that?

KAMMERER: Well, I don't know, but he definitely called my bluff.

Q: So, what did you do?

KAMMERER: I said thank you very much, and he said we'll be in touch and they eventually invited me to yet another class, a third one. By that time I finally had the

courage of my convictions to say I didn't want to go into the Foreign Service after all, but preferred to practice law.

Q: You can see how interested they were in getting you into the Foreign Service though and that's really very special treatment that they were giving to you.

KAMMERER: I don't think it had anything to do with me in particular, but I think that probably it didn't happen very often that people would turn them down. Maybe it did.

Q: Well, no. But I think it's also that they saw here's a guy who really would be just what we want, just what we need.

KAMMERER: The Peace Corps was still new and they were trying to recruit former volunteers into the Foreign Service, and I'd gotten a law degree and passed the bar.

Q: You were an ideal candidate for them. So, what did you do instead?

KAMMERER: I finished my two years with the Heber Smith Program in legal services and I went to work for the Peace Corps in their legal division.

Q: This was now '66?

KAMMERER: That was 1970.

Q: Oh, of course.

KAMMERER: I graduated in '68, so this was in 1970. I started working for the Peace Corps when Joe Blatchford was the Director.

Q: And who was the general counsel?

KAMMERER: Marc Leland. There's an interesting story about Marc and the role of luck in my career. He was a wealthy guy from San Francisco by way of Harvard Law School who was married to one of the Rothschilds. In the Reagan Administration -

Q: Ten years later.

KAMMERER: -10 years later, Marc, who after Peace Corps served an assistant secretary of the Treasury. When Reagan was first elected Marc was in the White House working on personnel issues. And the next desk to him was Peter McPherson.

Q: Who was also doing personnel for-

KAMMERER: Who was also doing personnel work for Reagan during the transition.

Q: -Reagan, yes.

KAMMERER: At that point, I was the deputy general counsel with an AD (Administratively Determined) non-career appointment at AID, which meant I served at the pleasure of the General Counsel and whoever was running the agency. So, Peter McPherson, who was going to AID as the Administrator, asked Marc Leland if he knew anybody there and he said the only person I know there is Kelly Kammerer, and he's a good guy (so Peter later told me). Anyway, Peter was nice to me and I stayed on.

Q: Anyway, so let's go back again to where you went to work for the Peace Corps and you were there for a couple of years.

KAMMERER: I was there for five years.

Q: Five years.

KAMMERER: That was the limit you could work for the Peace Corps-

Q: It's now-

KAMMERER: A lot of exemptions to it.

Q: A lot of exceptions to it. So, you adhered to that.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: And?

KAMMERER: And this also proves my point about your life direction being affected by events you have no control over. I knew my five-year period with the Peace Corps was coming up and I looked at a few law firms and whatnot and I was then focusing on the Legal Advisor's office of the State Department. I had an interview in the State Department and it went okay, I guess, I don't recall, but as I was leaving the building I bumped into Denis Neill, who was an AID assistant general counsel at the time. He was a close friend of my roommate in Washington, Joe Sahid, who had also been my roommate in law school. Both of them served as lawyers in the Coast Guard when they first came to Washington, and I had gotten to know Denis pretty well through that connection. So, I bump into Dennis in the hallway and he asks what I was doing there? I told him I'd just had an interview in the Legal Advisor's office. He said, "why don't you come work for AID?" I said well, maybe.

Q: Right.

KAMMERER: So, a few days later he organizes a lunch with Art Gardiner and Chuck Gladson, the general counsel and the deputy general counsel at the time. We had a nice lunch and they offer me a job on the spot, which never happens. There's a hiring process in the general counsel's office where you have to interview three different assistant

general counsels and then it goes up the line and blah, blah, blah. So, that's what happened. I got the job.

Q: That's wonderful. So, if you hadn't run into Denis no telling what would have happened.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: Before we leave the Peace Corps, five years at the Peace Corps, you were always in Washington, you were deputy general counsel?

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: And with any particular focus or just dealing across the board?

KAMMERER: I was responsible for North Africa and the Middle East.

Q: Building on your Latin American experience.

KAMMERER: Yes, right.

Q: And that period was, I mean were you getting tired of seeing the same kinds of problems again and again?

KAMMERER: I suppose so. It was nowhere near as complex as AID.

Q: _Basically it is all a focus on the volunteer.

KAMMERER: When I first started at the Peace Corps, a third of my work dealt with the selective service system, volunteers who were appealing their I-A classification in order to stay in the Peace Corps. We were assisting them.

Q: You were?

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: These were people who had not yet joined or who already were-?

KAMMERER: Both trainees and Volunteers.

Q: I see, wanted to keep them in for the ____.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: Okay.

KAMMERER: That work disappeared when they abolished the draft. Being a lawyer in a government agency is different than being a lawyer in court. Not the same skills.

Q: Judgment, judgment, judgment; that's what they teach you, how to think, at law school, right?

KAMMERER: Supposedly. Yes, that's what they teach you.

Q: And logical thinking, and all the rest.

KAMMERER: I had had a great time at the Peace Corps, but I knew the five years were up. I don't recall being bored with the type of work, the type of cases, the situations.

Q: And you went through how many Peace Corps directors?

KAMMERER: There was Blatchford and then-

Q: Was Loret Ruppe there?

KAMMERER: No, she was afterwards. A guy named Balzano was there – he arrived shortly after I arrived at the Peace Corps. That's when Nixon merged Peace Corps with VISTA.

Q: Yes.

KAMMERER: And it became Action.

Q: Yes.

KAMMERER: So, that took quite a bit of work to try and do the Reorganization Plan to get that done. I remember working closely with OMB (Office of Management and Budget) at the time. After Balzano there was Don Hess, nice guy. He wasn't there too long.

Q: Okay. So, then Denis Neill gets you into AID.

KAMMERER: Literally, yes.

Q: And that was what year? Let's get that straight.

KAMMERER: That was 1975, January of 1975.

Q: Oh, of course. Okay.

KAMMERER: When you were deputy in PPC (Bureau of Policy and Program Coordination).

Q: Yes, PPC.

KAMMERER: Under Phil Birnbaum.

Q: Exactly. Okay. So, what did you do when you first got there?

KAMMERER: I was assigned to Denis Neill's office. He was in charge of legislation and policy so PPC fell under that subdivision of the general counsel's office. And it wasn't long before Denis became the assistant administrator for legislation and moved out of the legal section and I became the head of it soon after he left.

Q: For legislation?

KAMMERER: For legislation and policy. And that's when I started working more closely with you because you were the Agency's principle witness in Congress, particularly before the authorizing committees, which at that time were much more important than the appropriation committees.

Q: Because there actually were authorizations in those days.

KAMMERER: Every year there was an authorization, yes, before the Budget Reform Act came into effect.

Q: And talk a little bit about what it was like to be the link to the Hill in those days. This whole relationship between AID and the Congress is such a, in some ways tortured, in other ways some of the most important initiatives that come about when you could have a joint venture. And how many years were you doing this before you move to other things?

KAMMERER: All told, between the general counsel's office and legislative affairs I was doing liaison work with the Hill from 1976 until 1989.

Q: Yes. So, you saw an enormous amount of change on the Hill, change in AID, changing legislation and all that sort of thing.

KAMMERER: When you and I were working on the authorization legislation in the late '70s, the Congress was almost like a fraternity, between us and the staff and the members. Both sides were collegial and experienced. The members were very knowledgeable about the Foreign Assistance Act, about foreign aid, about foreign policy, and you'd have substantive discussions about legislation.

Q: You're talking about informally?

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: That was certainly true of the hearings too, that you could go and have a real discussion with Congressman Buchanan and others but you're talking about the relationship between you and the staff members?

KAMMERER: You could talk to staff members from both parties at the same time. By the time I left you couldn't. In fact, by the time I left if you were seen in the office of somebody of a different party you'd be in trouble with the other side.

Q: Now, when did this change?

KAMMERER: It changed in the early '80s.

Q: Reagan?

KAMMERER: It wasn't because of Reagan. It was more because of Newt Gingrich and a few others.

Q: The Democrats controlled the House until when? They controlled it during the whole period, didn't they?

KAMMERER: No.

Q: When did Newt Gingrich come in? '84?

KAMMERER: Yes, I want to say '84, yes. I'm not positive but I think-

Q: Something in that-

KAMMERER: I remember there was Congressman from Pennsylvania named Bauman, who was a real bomb thrower. He started the period where there was so much animosity and you couldn't trust the other side and people were-

Q: And this was true at the staff level too? It was reflected downwards to the staff so that whereas you used to be able to talk to both-

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: -Republican and Democratic staffers, that ended?

KAMMERER: Definitely. Yes, that ended.

Q: About '84, '83?

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: And what did-

KAMMERER: I remember in the '70s when you were testifying before the Foreign Relations Committee, members of that committee like Javits and Humphrey, Sparkman were all-

Q: They were serious.

KAMMERER: -collegial and serious. The senators knew most provisions in the Foreign Assistance Act and could talk easily about them.

Q: Especially since they had authored some of them.

KAMMERER: Right.

Q: It was true in the House Foreign Affairs Committee too.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: And they more, even than the senators in my experience because they had-

KAMMERER: A particular focus.

Q: -time to focus on Solarz and-

KAMMERER: Speaking of Solarz, I remember one time you missed an afternoon session and I was stuck there, not as a witness, but as counsel for you, but the hearing started and Solarz asked me, "if we gave you \$10 million more for family planning could you effectively use it?" And I mumbled something and he said well, I know you didn't request it but could you put it to good use? I subsequently learned how to answer that question, but at the time I didn't and said well, yes, I guess so, sure. Later that afternoon I got a call from OMB saying the administration budget is put together very carefully and my job was to defend it.

Q: Well where were you, I mean in the '70s, the people you worked with most closely were the authorizing committees?

KAMMERER: Definitely.

Q: Where did the budget committees fit into the- I mean-

KAMMERER: Over time, the Budget Reform Act of 1974 radically changed the role of the authorizing committees. Before the Budget Committees were set up, it was up to the authorizing committees to set the funding parameters for the appropriations committees. Once the Budget committees were established they took over that function.

Q: -the appropriations committees?

KAMMERER: Up until then, the appropriations committees were almost an afterthought as far as USAID was concerned. They of course set the numbers, but within the strict limits set out for them by the authorizing committees. And only the authorizing committees could write substantive legislation – any legislation originating in an appropriations bill could be, and often was, removed from the bill on the House floor on Points of Order raised by authorizing committee members who jealously guarded their prerogatives. By the late 1970s, the Budget Reform Act had made the authorization committees almost irrelevant, and they've never recovered their former power. For example, there used to be annual FAA authorization bills passed by both committees, conferenced and signed into law. Since 1982, only one full authorization bill for foreign assistance has been enacted, and that was in 1986.

Q: More recently there have been some but not-

KAMMERER: Well bits and pieces but not-

Q: Bits and pieces, exactly, but the overall ones haven't been since '86, that's right.

So, what were the high points during that period of collaboration as far as you're concerned?

KAMMERER: I suppose the most important legislation we worked on together was the rewrite of Chapter I of the FAA, the so-called “New Directions” policy orientation for USAID, which, in addition to setting new policy directions created the five “functional accounts” for agriculture, health, family planning etc.

Q: Yes, absolutely.

KAMMERER: You worked on New Directions with Jack Sullivan on the HFAC committee staff.

Q: Yes.

KAMMERER: And Charlie Paolillio, who later became your deputy in PPC to help implement the New Directions.

Q: He did.

KAMMERER: That was an exciting time. We thought New Directions was the answer. It was going to change everything.

Q: In those days that was the answer, that's right.

One thing I always identify with you is the monumental effort to examine the Foreign Assistance Act, reviewing each provision to determine who the author was, whether that

person was still alive, all part of your effort to move towards a rewrite of the Foreign Assistance Act.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: When were you doing that? Late '70s?

KAMMERER: Yes – maybe 1977. That would have been when Dante Fascell was chairman of the committee. Key staffers Lou Gulick and George Ingram were talking with us about rewriting the entire Foreign Assistance Act. They said if you're serious about this, it has to happen next year, and if we're going to be taking up a bill to rewrite the Foreign Assistance Act we will need to have a complete legislative history of every provision of the FAA. The Committee will want to know whose ox is going to be gored if we propose changing or eliminating any provision. By that time the FAA had been around for over 15 years, and many of its provisions dated back to earlier legislation enacted after WW II. It was hundreds of pages long. I took on the job of compiling a complete, detailed legislative history of the FAA. I worked very hard at it for almost a year.

Q: Oh, it was- When I said monumental task I wasn't kidding. I mean, the Act itself is enormous.

KAMMERER: But I enjoyed it too because each provision was a specific problem that needed to be solved.

Q: Did you have much help on that?

KAMMERER: I had a few interns working with me but mostly I'd work weekends and nights on it. It's the reason, in a very direct but unanticipated way, I was promoted to be deputy general counsel. This is another of these serendipity things. I was quite junior in the General Counsel's office at the time, had only been there three years, and there were a number of senior lawyers around who were quite well thought of.

Then early one Sunday morning, it was around 9:00 am and I'd already been there for two hours working on this project, and Mark Ball, who was the general counsel at the time, showed up. He was on his way to church and had left something in his office. So, he left his wife down in the car and he came up to get it and there I was at 9:00 am on a Sunday working away. And that made such an impression on him – hardly anyone in GC worked weekends, much less Sunday mornings - that when Eldon Greenberg suddenly left soon after as deputy GC, because his wife died unexpectedly, Mark promoted over all these other people like Herb Morris, Judd Kessler and John Mullen, who'd been there, it seemed, forever.

Q: Yes.

KAMMERER: So. Another one of these -

Q: Serendipitous.

KAMMERER: Life is full of them if you examine it. Maybe you've succeeded more on merit but-

Q: No, no. this is not my oral history but I would say exactly the same thing. Being lucky, being in the right place at the right time -- but being there at 9:00 in the morning on a Sunday, I can't say I've ever done that.

KAMMERER: But I was single and I literally enjoyed working on this project – which had a tight and unforgiving deadline.

Q: And with what impact, with what result? I mean, it still stands as being relevant.

KAMMERER: I kept it up to date for a few years because each year there'd be a few new provisions that changed the FAA, so you'd have to amend it and send out the updates. We distributed the two volumes around the world to our lawyers and other people, but as far as using it to help rewrite the Foreign Assistance Act, that never happened. There was an election, Reagan came in, and the project didn't go anywhere. But the two-volume Legislative History is still around and still used by AID GC lawyers. We must have tried three or four times in my career at AID, most recently with Brian Atwood when I came back from Nepal in 1993, to rewrite of the Foreign Assistance Act. Getting controversial legislation passed is so hard. Kennedy was lucky to have gotten it done in 1961.

Q: There was an effort made more recently; I wonder whether they were using your book as the basis of it.

KAMMERER: Maybe. When Brian Atwood was confirmed as Administrator we once again drafted a totally new bill to replace the Foreign Assistance Act and I thought it would get traction because the Democrats controlled the House and the Senate.

Q: Right.

KAMMERER: We started to have hearings, and I'm sure we used the legislative history I'd written 15 years earlier during that process, but then the election of '94 intervened and the House switched from Democrat to Republican and that was the end of that.

Q: That was the end of it.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: But this more recent case the same thing happened. But that work is still presumably relevant for anybody who wants to know because the Act still remains in place.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: That is to say authorizations aren't so important anymore.

KAMMERER: The FAA is still important, but these days about the only authorization bill that gets enacted every year or so is the Defense Authorization Act. The Farm Bill is authorized every five years. It took John F. Kennedy and the Cold War to get the FAA enacted. Before Kennedy there'd just been bits and pieces of different laws that were pulled together and updated in the FAA of 1961.

Q: If you look back on your career in the legislative side of issues, is that one of the high points? Or what do you see as the kinds of things that were more significant in your role as chief advisor?

KAMMERER: It would have been even more of a high point if anything had come of it in terms for rewriting the FAA. It was a useful thing to do and I enjoyed it. Working with you; that was a high point.

Q: That's very kind but it was mutual. I think anybody who worked with you had that same experience. But in terms of things that-

KAMMERER: Most of what I was able to accomplish resulted from the relationships I developed over time with members and staff, particularly, after the demise of the power of the authorizing committees, with the members and staff of the foreign operations appropriations subcommittees. I'm probably the least likely person you can imagine as director of legislative affairs, but somehow, maybe because I started off in a legal capacity and I made contacts with people with whom I developed relationships of trust, I was able to work well with those committees when I became director of LEG. Trust is the most important attribute one needs when working with the Hill.

Q: Absolutely.

KAMMERER: You see lots of lobbyists who are smart, glib, but who really turn out to be a flash in the pan because they do something silly like grandstanding and busy Members and staff on the Hill conclude they can't trust you. If that happens one time your reputation is shot forever.

Q: I think that's exactly right.

Who were the people you're thinking of?

KAMMERER: Well, Members of the appropriations committees included Doc Long, Dave Obey, Matt McHugh, Pat Leahy, Daniel Inouye, Micky Edwards, Julian Dixon, and Bob Kasten, among others. Staffers included Jim Bond and Richard Collins on the Senate side and Terry Peel, and before him Ed Powers, and Bill Scheurch, on the House side. The members of the subcommittees and their personal staff in general. These were relatively small subcommittees, but enormously powerful. It was such a clique. There

were two Chairmen and four staffers on each of the two subcommittees who controlled all the legislation affecting foreign affairs for the 10 years I was there.

Q: And these are very different personalities, very different politics.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: But you were able to get along and be trusted by them and if you asked them today they would still think and say-

KAMMERER: Coincidentally, I played golf with Richard Collins two days ago. I'm still friends with most of them, yes.

Q: Yes.

KAMMERER: On the other hand, working with the Appropriations Subcommittees could be a difficult assignment because in some ways they were little despots.

Q: Well, the members are despots and the people that work for them-

KAMMERER: Are even worse.

Q: -are little despots.

KAMMERER: The old saying, power corrupts.

Q: But how did you manage to- trust- but when you're dealing with people like that you try to find ways to meet their needs and also-

KAMMERER: I remember one time Skip Boyce, a very talented guy who went on to be ambassador to Indonesia and Thailand, but at the time was working for Undersecretary Schneider on Function 150 budget issues, and he was asked by Undersecretary Schneider to be his liaison with the appropriation subcommittees. Skip came to see me because somebody in the State Department had said "we don't know how the hell they do it but Legislative Affairs in AID manages to get things done so go talk to Kammerer down there and see what it is they do". I remember telling Skip that there was really no big secret to it other than building trust, which I've already mentioned, but one thing I also told him I did was to make it a point to go up to the Hill and visit when I didn't have to be there. When I didn't want anything. Even though it's a pain in the neck to get in a cab and go up to the Hill and wander around. But you have to be there at times when you're not asking for anything, you don't need anything, for them to get used to you and think of you as somebody will be there when they need you. That's quite simple but-

Q: Well no, but it's not unique to relations with the Hill, either, in my experience. But that is crucial and you were there so long; presumably these people who come and go, even if they're good and even if they try to do this wouldn't have the same advantages-

KAMMERER: Yes, that's true.

Q: -you were able to take.

KAMMERER: I was there more than 10 years so that's a long time in that capacity.

Q: So, if you were trying to suggest lessons for the legislative team in AID today what are the three things you would suggest to them since you're not dealing with specific legislative issues but in terms of building this relationship?

KAMMERER: It's hard to say. It's not a science. You have to be trusted so your word-

Q: That's a basic, fundamental point.

KAMMERER: -your word is your bond. You have to be willing to give and take. And you have to be able to leave your ego at the door. When something gets done, give credit where it is due. And always know your facts and the issues. Never be afraid to say you don't know the answer to a question – it's much better to say: "I'll get back to you on that" than to try and wing it and maybe get it wrong. You also have to have the sense that you can share information. Not secrets, not giving away the store, but you have to be confident enough in yourself that you can tell the people that you're dealing with what's going on.

Q: By what's going on you mean the issues that are being debated inside the Agency?

KAMMERER: Why people are pushing, why the Administrator or the Administration wants to do what they want to do. It's hard to put into words but it's not a one-way street.

Q: One of the pieces of legislation that is commented upon favorably by people with experience in this area is the Africa legislation in the middle of the '80s.

KAMMERER: For the program?

Q: No, it was a special fund, the Africa Development Fund or something like that -- it was done with Matt McHugh and Gary Bombardier -- which did not have the restrictions of functional accounts. Essentially AID was told -- okay, here you have this money; we trust you to allocate it and use it effectively. You have five years; come back and tell us how it was spent.

KAMMERER: I remember that legislation, and it was important. Matt McHugh, who came close to being named USAID Administrator in 1993, and his personal staffer Gary Bombardier, were good examples of how appropriators took over the legislative process after the enactment of the Budget Reform Act. An anecdote relating to a similar piece of legislation we were working on at the about the same time gives some insight into how legislative liaison works. Peter McPherson didn't like the fact that funds appropriated for

one year would have to be returned to the Treasury if they weren't "obligated" within one fiscal year, or if they were obligated but were later "de-obligated" in a subsequent fiscal year. Because a project didn't pan out. Those funds had to be returned to the Treasury rather than be put to use elsewhere. So, we asked the appropriations subcommittees to add what we called "Deob-Reob" Authority to annual appropriations bills, to allow USAID to reuse funds appropriated in prior fiscal years. Not having that authority had a lot of negative side effects, one of which was that people were obligating money like crazy during the last month of the fiscal year, whether they needed to or not, because otherwise they'd lose it. So, the theory was if you obligated the money and you subsequently decided that the project that it was going to be spent for was a bad project, you could de-obligate it and use it for another project.

Q: Not lose it.

KAMMERER: Not lose it. A simple thing but potentially worth billions of dollars.

Q: Contrary to all -

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: -the best Treasury policy.

KAMMERER: Anyway, we managed to get this authority into the appropriations bill on the House side, working with Ed Powers, as kind of a technicality, really, that the members weren't involved in – and neither was OMB. So, we had it in the House bill and needed to get it through conference - the Senate wasn't onboard yet. Jim Bond, the majority staffer for Chairman Kasten, was the key player. Conference went on almost all through the night – a common tactic back then to get Members tired enough that they'd agree to resolve differences just to get some sleep. I went to bed at 4:00 in the morning and at 7:00 am was back in Peter McPherson's office letting him know that although we had deob-reob in the House bill, we still had to get Jim Bond to accept it for the Senate when the conference reconvened later that morning. He said okay, I'll call him. So, he calls his home and the phone's ringing and I realize that Jim's wife would answer the phone, so I quickly whisper to Peter, "his wife's name is Mary Claire". And, of course, Mary Claire picks up the phone, and Peter, who's never met Mary Claire, says "Hi Mary Claire" and is very charming about calling so early. I knew that when Jim got off the phone Mary Claire would say to him "that Peter McPherson's really a nice guy – you should help him out". And of course we got the deob-reob authority and it's been in annual appropriations bills ever since – saving USAID and taxpayers a lot of money.

Q: That's wonderful.

KAMMERER: But it's that kind of, I don't know, you've just got to-

Q: You can't script it.

KAMMERER: No, you can't script it. I learned the importance of that level of detail from Denis Neill, who was a master at spending almost 24 hours a day, seven days a week on the Hill when he was AA/LEG.

Q: Right.

KAMMERER: He was good at what he did.

Q: I wonder whether the Hill has changed so much whether some of these same rules would still apply. You know, there are so many more staffers-

KAMMERER: And everybody's so suspicious.

Q: Everybody is -- although it is my impression that, for example, the legislation on the Paul Simon water legislation that Chris Holmes is involved in, that took more or less five years of doing what you described of just going-

KAMMERER: Yes, normally it takes a long time from the inception of an idea till legislative enactment. Five years is not long in that respect, although, in exceptionally rare cases, ideas can become legislation almost spontaneously. I remember being impressed when Doug Bereuter came to Congress from Nebraska and was assigned to the HFAC. He was talking one day during a committee markup and mentioned that he'd like to do something to involve US farmers in foreign aid. During a recess, I went up and introduced myself and mentioned that there was already an obscure provision in the FAA authorizing something called the farmer-to-farmer program. It was designed to send US farmers to developing countries where they could share their expertise -- sort of like a short-term Peace Corps. But it had never been funded or implemented. When the session reconvened, he offered an amendment to authorize something like \$5 million to fund the farmer-to-farmer program and it was accepted and later implemented. But that doesn't happen often.

Q: -and working-

KAMMERER: These days almost nothing gets done in Congress, period. You don't get any legislation on anything. You have continuing resolutions year after year after year. Maybe around the margins you can get this or that passed, but there are very few major legislative initiatives anymore.

Q: Well, if you listen to the current Administration as they go out they talk about these three or four key things they've managed to get through for which there have been authorizations - Feed the Future, Power Africa and Chris Holmes will tell you about the Water act.

KAMMERER: The water _____.

Q: But that's basically it and it's not that they are earth shaking but they do provide at least kind of a base. But I'm sure you're right.

KAMMERER: It's a lot harder now. When you started working with USAID in the 1970s, we had authorizations every year and new legislation every year.

Q: And it was important what was said. Talk a little bit about the role of legislative intent and its influence on the Agency. What was indicated in these committee reports and how much we considered them to be, virtually to have the weight of law even if they weren't.

KAMMERER: Absolutely right. I can vividly remember committee staff members making sure we understood that it's not so important what's written in the legislation, it's what's in the committee report that counts.

Q: Which they had authored.

KAMMERER: Which they wrote, yes. The Agency spent a lot of time, and we in the legal or legislative offices spent a lot of time, reminding people that there was this language in the committee report that they were going to come back to us later on during the year and ask what had been done.

Q: Were you engaged as the legislative counsels in working with committee staff on that language?

KAMMERER: Oh, yes. Not that we always saw everything they were writing, but yes. They would consult us on what they were proposing, what they were saying because they needed to know if it was something that could be done.

Q: I guess you haven't kept closely enough in touch with AID to know what happened after you left this- When did you leave AID altogether?

KAMMERER: I left the legislative office in 1989.

Q: Right. But then-

KAMMERER: I went to Nepal as Mission Director in 1989 and remained there until 1993 when I came back to Washington as Counselor to the Agency. I then left Washington in 1999 to be the USAID person at the DAC in Paris and then left finally AID in 2003, when I retired.

Q: But during the '90s since you left the legislative side in '89 but during that next 10 years or so- who took your place? When did Bob Lester get involved?

KAMMERER: Bob Lester was in the legal division of USAID almost the entire time I was dealing with legislation, thank goodness. He never was in the LEG Bureau (Bureau

for Legislative Affairs), but he became so powerful and so important as the long-term legislative counsel that in many ways his contacts were more important to the Agency than LEG's, particularly with the appropriations people because they knew and trusted him so much.

Q: And he still has the, apparently there's still some stuff that gets sent to him.

KAMMERER: I am sure he does. I remember around 1978 when Bob came back from Africa, where he had been an assistant regional legal advisor – I think originally in the International Development Intern (IDI) program. I was the deputy GC then, and had something to do with who was assigned where within the office. Chuck Costello had replaced me in the legislative office of GC and Bob went to work for Chuck. About six months after Bob had come back from Kenya he came to see me and Norman Holmes, the GC at the time, to let us know that he wasn't happy and wanted to go back overseas. I didn't know Bob well then, but I said something like, stick it out for a while. Stick it out for two years; it's too soon for you to be back overseas. He wanted to get out of the legislative office entirely and go either overseas or to one of the regional bureaus in Washington, which is where most people thought the action was. But he agreed to stay in the legislative office of GC, and that was all she wrote because after a year he was comfortable doing it and he later became indispensable to the Agency and the Hill, and remained in that role for the next two decades.

Q: Right.

KAMMERER: He was the indispensable person for over 20 years.

Q: Interestingly enough, one of the oral histories that's being done by that Ann Van Dusen of Bob Lester.

KAMMERER: No, she didn't mention it.

Q: It was just within the last month that she's been doing that as we started these oral histories again.

So, you moved to be general counsel but you still kept the portfolio of the legislative side of things at least to some extent?

KAMMERER: Well, I was in the legislative office, a sub-division of the General Counsel's office, and then became the deputy GC, and for a while around 1980 was the acting GC before John Bolton came on. And then Peter McPherson asked me to be the head of the Bureau for Legislative Affairs in late 1982, replacing Michelle Laxalt, which I did.

Q: Rather than the general counsel's office.

KAMMERER: Yes. Peter was great at moving titles around. As a career civil servant, there was no way I was going to be nominated in the Reagan Administration to be an Assistant Administrator, so I became an “Assistant to the Administrator” for LEG, rather than Assistant Administrator for LEG, thus avoiding the need for Senate confirmation.

Q: A term that is still used.

KAMMERER: Still used, yes.

Q: The head of PPL is an assistant to the administrator. So, when did you have to go?

KAMMERER: That was '82.

Q: Oh. So, it was early in the Reagan Administration.

KAMMERER: Yes. I remember when Peter asked me to take over LEG I had to go over to be interviewed by the head of White House legislation – Ken Duberstein. He later became WH Chief of Staff and after that the head of a Republican lobbying firm. Anyway, he was the head of White House legislative liaison, and I had to go over and get his approval because it was very unusual to put a career person in charge of an agency's legislative program.

Q: Right.

KAMMERER: We had a nice chat but as soon as he found out that I had no interest in becoming a political appointee he basically lost interest in me. At the same time, he cleared me to take the job and only told me to keep the WH informed about what we were doing. There were several very partisan appointees in LEG at the time, so I assume he was comfortable knowing I wouldn't do anything inconsistent with their agenda.

Q: So, you stayed in that position?

KAMMERER: So, I stayed there from '82 until Peter left. He went to Treasury as Deputy and then Alan Woods came in. Alan had been at USTR (United States Trade Representative) doing legislation for them. He was a sharp cookie and knew his stuff. I worked for him for a year or so but he wanted to bring his own person in, which I completely understood.

Q: Who was it?

KAMMERER: Ray Ranlett. He spent three years as AA/LEG after he was confirmed.

Q: And what did you do?

KAMMERER: Well, Alan basically asked me to tell him what I wanted to do and he'd arrange it. I told him I wanted to go to Nepal. So, he got me appointed as mission director in Katmandu in 1989.

Q: What led you to thinking about Nepal?

KAMMERER: I had thought about going overseas many times; everybody in AID did. Maybe you thought about being a mission director somewhere after being AA. But in my case, nothing had ever materialized. Peter once proposed sending me to Jamaica and I came within days of going before deciding to stay in LEG, and another time he said he'd send me to Costa Rica, because I groused to him about not wanting to do legislation anymore. But in 1989, with Alan Woods as the new Administrator, the rubber hit the road in terms of having to make a decision. He was going to bring his own person in so I had to decide. Converting to the Foreign Service made sense. I had always wanted to see for myself whether aid really worked -

Q: It took you how many years in AID to-?

KAMMERER: I mean, I was selling the AID program on the Hill and I was getting the operating expenses budget through every year, but did it really work? I believed it did, but I lacked first-hand experience on what actually happens out there that made a difference to people?

Q: In these kinds of jobs it is really- you do wonder about those things.

KAMMERER: Yes. We had all kinds of indicators and measurements of progress to show what USAID was accomplishing, but you don't personally see it on the ground yourself.

Q: I hate to ask you what your conclusion was. So, why Nepal? I mean, was it just what opened up or-?

KAMMERER: It was where I wanted to go and the Mission Director position was available. I didn't want to go to a "political" program like Egypt or someplace where we were putting money in for political purposes. And that counselor back at Notre Dame my freshman year was right; I liked being outdoors. So, the idea of being in the mountains in a small development assistance program that was manageable, it had a \$25 million a year budget, something like that, and nobody cared much about it, was very appealing. No political interest whatsoever, other than Senator Hatfield, who had put some money in an appropriations bill for some trees from Oregon. After I told Alan that I wanted to go to Nepal it turned out the Bureau had another candidate, a very nice guy who I liked a lot, but Alan just said don't worry, I'll take care of him. And he went to Sri Lanka and did very well there. And I went to Nepal for four years. And then when Clinton won the election in 1992, Dick McCall, who you and I had both worked with when he was with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was then working in Clinton's office of White House Personnel – leading the Transition team for USAID (with Margaret Carpenter –

who I also knew). Dick contacted me and said I should come back to help the new team. The plan was for Matt McHugh to be named Administrator and Dick was helping him. But there was another candidate for the job, the wife of a Democratic Senator from Iowa.

Q: Who was that?

KAMMERER: Tom Harkin.

Q: A Democrat from Iowa?

KAMMERER: Yes. She eventually became head of OPIC (Overseas Private Investment Corporation) and McHugh went to the World Bank as Counselor. Anyway, the fight between Matt McHugh and Senator Harkin's wife became so intense that neither one got the USAID job. I had come back from Nepal at Dick McCall's urging in the middle of this controversy - I think Denis Neill also was involved in working on this with Dick. According to them, McHugh was supposed to get the job and they would push for him to make me his deputy - a proposal I took with a large grain of salt. Then Brian Atwood, who had already been confirmed as Undersecretary of State for Management, got the USAID job and Dick McCall came with him as his Chief of Staff. Brian wanted to rewrite the Foreign Assistance Act, and Dick knew me from previous efforts to do that, so I remained in DC and started working on the rewrite while on leave from my job as mission director in Nepal. I worked with Bob Lester putting together a new Foreign Assistance Act. During that process, Brian asked me to be the Counselor to the Agency. In another, you know, of these serendipity things, one day I went up with Brian before he named me counselor to see Senator Leahy about the new legislation. It turns out that my old Peace Corps partner, Gar Murtha, who is now a federal district court judge in Vermont, having been nominated by Patrick Leahy, was a good friend of Gar's. Gar's oldest daughter is my goddaughter.

Q: Gar's oldest daughter?

KAMMERER: Yes, and Gar's youngest son is Patrick Leahy's godson. So, I didn't say anything about this to Brian and after Brian makes his spiel about what he wants to do, and as we're going out the door, Patrick puts his arm around me and says well Kelly, how's Elizabeth? Brian is obviously impressed, that Patrick, Chairman of the Appropriations Committee at the time, knows me personally. On the spot, Brian he tells Leahy he's naming me USAID Counselor, which hadn't been publicly announced, and Patrick says to let him know when it was official and he'd put it in the Federal Register - which he did.

Q: Oh yes. I mean, he's been there forever.

KAMMERER: Yes, he has been.

Q: He probably has more tenure there than almost anybody now.

KAMMERER: He does.

Q: Now that Reid is gone. But yes, so the moral of the story is you just have to choose your friends in the right way and get them in the right place. But it is true that the world is very small and I think that for people these days it's not as easy for those kinds of things to happen, these relationships somehow don't- because people scatter more-

KAMMERER: I think Washington was a smaller town in the '70s.

Q: Yes. And remember the people, the members used to stay around and on weekends, they didn't go home, it wasn't as easy to go home.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: But to have those kinds of links made a big difference.

So, during the Nepal period did you discover that AID worked?

KAMMERER: Yes, on balance it does a very good job.

Q: Well that's a raving endorsement.

KAMMERER: Well, not everything works, but on balance yes, we have made an essential contribution around the world. I don't think we should be apologetic for the fact that what we do often is also in our own interest. Perhaps in some respects we may have gone too far in thinking aid is a measurable science where we can always show empirical results, as Congress and the US taxpayer justifiably want to know.

In terms of showing results, when I got to Nepal I discovered that one of my predecessors had decided that USAID should not be identified as the sponsor of any particular project, with the not unreasonable, at least to him, idea that everything should be credited to the government of Nepal. I remember getting to Nepal and asking, what can we show for having worked here over the last 40 years? What can you see that's tangible? And it turned out it's quite a lot; there was an awful lot. But nobody had ever really compiled a list. We built the airport and we built the ministry of health and we built this and that and the other thing. We made a map of Katmandu that put on it all of the things that AID had financed over the four decades that we'd been there and it was quite impressive. It was a good thing to have. I'd give that to visitors and say here, look at this, these are some of the things USAID has done over the past 40 years.

Q: Do you still have that?

KAMMERER: I'm sure it's in the mission.

Q: Because now we are trying to get an independent, an objective history of USAID written and to raise money for it and part of it is to find stuff that's available and-

KAMMERER: It's also in the book we wrote while I was there called "Four Decades of Development," since reissued as "Fifty Years of Development in Nepal." We hired a couple of spouses and local hires to edit the material and it has a lot of pictures and diagrams and maps and stuff and so you can look and see. That effort came from my experience on the Hill where you really need to be able to show people what the heck they're getting for their money. So, that was a good project. I suppose people when they first go to Nepal on assignment still read it.

Q: Well, let's hope. I mean, there are so few people left in AID who know what went on before.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: That's one of the reasons we're trying to do something like this. Which reminds me of one thing I wanted to ask you about; one of the things that Doug Bennett did when he became administrator was to introduce these impact evaluations where you take people from various parts of operation-

KAMMERER: Yes. That was very good idea.

Q: -and pull it together. And I remember vividly one of the things he said was that -- and he wanted these to be very objective and to tell the truth about it and so on and so forth -- and he said and I want these to be publicly available and to go up the Hill. People said well, this is going to show weaknesses. He said the Hill does not object to the idea that you make mistakes; it's that if you don't learn from these mistakes. But I just wonder, since you were dealing with the Hill during that period, I mean do you remember- and does that assessment match your own, that if you are honest and can show you're learning from your mistakes that the Hill would appreciate that?

KAMMERER: That is very true. At least it was if we pointed out something that hadn't gone as we intended. If they found out about it first, and thought we were covering it up, there would be hell to pay.

Q: And he of course had been head of legislative affairs for State.

KAMMERER: Yes, during the Panama Canal debate under Carter. He was a good administrator too.

Q: We have been talking for almost two hours-

KAMMERER: It's enough.

Q: -but we haven't, I mean we could stop now or we could try to just barrel through the last few-

KAMMERER: Okay, let's barrel through.

Q: If you're up to it.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: Nepal. I mean, is there anything out of that? I mean, that was your first experience as an AID officer in charge of a mission. You've talked generally about this impact. Were there any outstanding things that remain in your mind about that Nepal experience?

KAMMERER: One of the first things that struck me was that Nepal was a favorite country for donors. Every conceivable donor in the world was in Katmandu. We would go to the ministry of finance to see the minister and they had developed a system where they had the waiting room on one side of his office and an exit room on the other so that the donors wouldn't be bumping into each other. Nigel Roberts, the World Bank representative, and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) representative, did a good job coordinating the donor community, but I often wished I was in charge of all of these donors so that we could combine all of our resources and make sure that we were focusing on the most effective thing. Nepal is an extreme example of that but I suppose donor coordination needs to be more effective everywhere because every donor has their own ax to grind and their own special areas of focus.

Q: Isn't that why you went to the DAC? Did you have any particular role in trying to build that aid coordination or strengthen that aid coordination in Nepal?

KAMMERER: I was one mission director among many. We'd meet monthly and try to coordinate, but it's a hard thing to do. Nigel Roberts, the World Bank rep, was very effective in that coordination role, but the Nepalese by this time had 40 years of foreign aid experience and had become quite sophisticated and clever knowing how to play donors off against each other, encouraging one donor to fund this and the other donor to fund that.

Q: Yes.

KAMMERER: Even with those kinds of frustrations, I certainly enjoyed being mission director. I liked the people I worked with. They were uniformly dedicated, skilled and interested in what they were doing. On the other hand, at that time AID was going through a period when it was obsessed with developing indicators to measure results. You need them, obviously, but it seemed to me we were becoming so process oriented, were so caught up with measuring things, we'd sometimes lose sight of the ultimate objective – or set the bar too low. The same thing that happens with personnel evaluations happens with project evaluations. People devise the end that's supposed to be reached in terms what they know they can achieve rather than what may be more difficult, but more important, and perhaps risky, goals to achieve.

When I had your old job for about a year and a half as the assistant to the administrator for PPC, after Brian removed the incumbent because nothing was coming out of PPC, I developed a better understanding of how to manage for results with realistic and important goals. I had three deputies in PPC, all strong characters, and we agreed, after meeting with all PPC staff, that we would undertake four big, discrete projects that we'd achieve within six months. We scheduled a staff meeting with the Administrator and his entire senior staff and told them very publicly these are the four concrete things – in addition to the regular PPC workload - we're going to get done in the next six months, and this is the timetable we are going to use to accomplish each one. And if we don't get them done you're all going to know who to hold accountable. And we did get them done. It was an eye opener for me because if you're a manager and you set clear, measurable goals, with staff buy-in, and openly commit to achieving them with no "ands" "ifs" or "buts", you can accomplish wonders.

Q: And this was while you were in PPC?

KAMMERER: Under Brian Atwood, yes. The same problem exists in setting clear measurable objectives in personnel evaluations. Everybody knew the system and wrote work requirements they knew they were going to accomplish because they were process things rather than concrete objectives. Maybe they'd already been accomplished at the time they were written.

Q: But back to Nepal, the focus of the program was what, agriculture for the most part?

KAMMERER: Family planning, agriculture, rural development, yes.

Q: Who were the key people that you had leading that that you can think of as being-?

KAMMERER: David Ott was the health and family planning advisor, he replaced Dr. David Calder who was there when I arrived, and had done an excellent job. Mike Calavan was responsible for policy and NGOs, along with Timm Harris. Jim Gingrich was in charge of agriculture with Alex Dickie and Sher Plunkett. Molly Gingrich was also in charge of health for a while, working with Ursula Nadolny. Stacy Rhodes was the deputy when I got there, a really great, competent guy.

Q: Another one whose oral history is being done.

KAMMERER: Really? He's a terrific guy. We're close to his youngest daughter, who I knew when she was five years old in Nepal. When we were in Paris she stayed with us when she was in college at UVA and we've stayed in close touch with her since.

Q: Were you able to choose the people who were to be your key players in Nepal?

KAMMERER: When I got there they were all in place, of course, and Stacy was the deputy, and if he could have stayed the whole time that would have been great, but he left within six months, I think. I did get to replace the health side and the agriculture side

after I had learned enough to know that I had to coordinate and network with other regional bureaus to find out who was good and who was available. If you relied on the system to provide the people it could be a mixed bag. I learned this the hard way because I didn't recruit my deputy after Stacy left; I was called by personnel and asked if I would take a woman who was in Africa Bureau at the time. I knew her slightly because she had been Doug Bennett's special assistant.

Q: Right.

KAMMERER: And I liked her. Smart person. But it turned out she was not the best manager of people. I learned if you take somebody recommended by the personnel division without doing your own due diligence, your homework, you could suffer the consequences. A fundamental lesson in management.

Q: That's an important lesson.

KAMMERER: Yes.

Q: And you didn't, I mean you'd had rural development experience, you had experience in the bureaucracy; did you find that not having had field experience with AID was a problem or an advantage or neither in going to be a mission director?

KAMMERER: It's something I understand better now, but at the time I think I underestimated the resistance I would encounter from the career foreign service when I was parachuted in as someone converted to the FS from the civil service at a senior level. I didn't anticipate that, and I should have. At the same time, I don't think it was a particular disadvantage not having had field experience, no more so than being a Peace Corps volunteer and coming from Queens and trying to teach Colombian farmers-

Q: But you had three months of training and you-

KAMMERER: That's right.

Q: -in New Mexico. AID probably didn't give you that.

KAMMERER: There really wasn't a training course for new mission directors. That probably would have been a good idea – like they do for new Ambassadors. I realized very soon after arriving in Nepal that Mission Directors have to decide what they are good at and focus on where they can add value. For example, Julia Bloch was the ambassador. I knew Julia from Washington when she had been an AA and I liked working with her. Interacting with her, and freeing up Mission staff who didn't particularly like working with the Embassy, was a constructive role for me to play, one that added value. Maintaining good relations with the Bureau, fighting for our budget and making sure headquarters knew what we were doing, was also something I could do that would add value to the Mission.

Q: Sure.

KAMMERER: Obviously, my role was to deal with the Embassy and Washington, to make sure that we got our budget and kept good relations with the people at the top. So, once I sorted out that I wasn't supposed to be micro-managing the agriculture program or the health program, but I had good people that were doing that, and supported them, things worked smoothly.

Q: That's a good manager.

KAMMERER: Yes, that's what you should do, yes, right.

Q: Okay. So, then you were brought back thanks to Denis or-

KAMMERER: Dick McCall.

Q: Dick McCall, sorry. And you worked on the legislation and that didn't go anywhere for reasons you mentioned.

KAMMERER: Congress changed again.

Q: And then Brian asked you to take over PPC for-?

KAMMERER: Yes. First, he made me Counselor to the Agency, which is a position that you may recall was invented by Peter McPherson because he wanted to put Jay Morris in as deputy administrator to replace a career deputy. Anyway. Peter created the counselor position as the senior-most foreign service job in Washington. Someone who would, among other things, represent the interests of the foreign service. Frank Kimball was the first Counsellor, then Ray Love. In those days, you remember, we used to have project papers. And each project paper had to be approved by the administrator. So, in the beginning, poor Frank would have to go through these documents and say okay, Peter, you can sign this. One of the things we managed to do at some point along the way with Peter was to delegate to the field responsibility for approving projects up to \$10 million or \$15 million, which made a remarkable difference - and it was such an obvious thing to do, but it had been centralized ever since the beginning of AID. So, even little projects had to be approved by the Bureaus and the Administrator.

Q: How'd he manage to get that through? Peter was convinced that this was the logical thing to do?

KAMMERER: Yes. Peter was convinced it was the way to go. He showed great leadership in getting it done as it was resisted strongly by the regional bureaus. They didn't want to do it because so much of the regional bureaus work revolved around approving project papers. You remember, you could walk around the State Department any day of the week and there would be these meetings that would go on forever with 20 or more people in the room debating project papers - how many trucks can you have and

how many waivers can you have for this or that. But once you delegated all of that to the field everybody realized, after the regional bureaus initially thought their world was going to end, that we should have done it much earlier.

Q: Their power was-

KAMMERER: Because in fact it made the Bureaus even more powerful because they were supervising the field missions, rather than passing it all on to the Administrator.

Q: Yes.

KAMMERER: Anyway. I was the counselor with, initially, responsibility for the rewrite of the Foreign Assistance Act. That was expected to take years. But that role evaporated when Republicans took over Congress in 1994. After that I did whatever came along that Brian needed help on. And then he asked me to stay on as counselor but to supervise PPC for a year and a half and then-

Q: So, you did both jobs?

KAMMERER: I did both jobs. But the counselor job really had no defined role, just the “senior foreign service person in Washington”.

Q: It's become a really very important position in AID though.

KAMMERER: It was always an important position. Top people have filled that position. A number of people have held that job since I had it. I was the counselor for six years.

Q: Oh.

KAMMERER: Yes. At one point, after the PPC assignment, and after Clinton's re-election, Brian said he wanted to nominate me and Terry Brown to be assistant administrators; me for Asia and the Near East and Terry for administration. But he told us he could only get one career person at a time through White House personnel, and that his first priority was the management job. So, he asked me to go to ANE as acting assistant administrator and that he would nominate me once Terry had been confirmed. In the meantime, he asked me to take Ann Van Dusen from the Global Bureau to be my deputy. And so, I went to ANE and I was there for close to two years.

Q: What's the E for?

KAMMERER: Asia Near East. ANE.

Q: Oh, ANE, I see.

KAMMERER: So, it covered everything from Morocco to the Philippines. It was a good job. Somewhere in that process, a year or so into it, a guy who knew the Democratic

governor of the state of Washington, a former Rhodes scholar by the name of Bob Randolph, was asked by White House personnel to take the job. I had gotten a lot of letters of support from the Hill and whatnot, but it was not to be. In fact, I didn't much want to be an assistant administrator, that wasn't my life's goal. So, it didn't devastate me when that happened. At that point Jim Michel was leaving the DAC (Development Assistance Committee), and Brian decided that he would support, for the first time, a non-U.S. chair to replace him.

Q: The French.

KAMMERER: The French; that's where the French guy came from. And Brian asked me if I would I be interested in going there as the deputy, the vice chair, which turned out was a good thing for me to do. So, I said I was happy to do that.

Q: That's the one that's had the most influence on your post-AID life, right? Is that when you decided-

KAMMERER: In more ways than one. It was the clincher in convincing former USAID lawyer and TDA deputy director Nancy Frame to marry me, and then, when my four years in Paris were up, we decided to retire to a small farm in the south of France, where we are still living 15 years later.

Q: Isn't that great. That's a wonderful story.

KAMMERER: Yes. We spent four years in Paris pretty much on a honeymoon.

Q: Well the question is whether there, in those experiences in Washington, the counselor job, the AA PPC, beyond the story of what you- I mean the AAA, whatever that thing was, and the lesson you learned about management of getting the targets and things done, anything in that period is useful for history to know about accomplishments or what lessons you learned from that experience that complemented what you already knew?

KAMMERER: Well, as I said, I thought I did make strides in trying to be a better manager of people. But working in a big organization for anybody is hard; there are just so many competing interests and ambitions. All you can do is work as hard as you can and try not to pay attention to the slings and arrows of competing ambitions and things tend to work out in the end. You have to be organized and work hard and try not to stab other people in the back or have that happen to you – metaphorically of course.

Q: You're expressing a vote for decency and reasonableness and a balanced approach to things, all of which we identify with you, so you were living through that. What about the DAC period, I mean this was again a totally different kind of environment.

KAMMERER: Yes, the DAC was very interesting. I enjoyed it. The United States was responsible for creating the DAC after World War II and took the leadership role for

decades afterwards, so we have a very proprietary interest in it. In a sense, it's almost like Quaker meeting; everything has to be decided by consensus.

Q: But you were well prepared for that.

KAMMERER: I was well prepared.

Q: All the way back now; we're going full circle right back to your high school.

KAMMERER: I was startled when I arrived in Paris and went to the first DAC meeting to discover that other than the representative from Canada and the representative from Australia we were the only three who had an aid background. All of the other representatives on the DAC were junior diplomats who had responsibility for two or three or more subcommittees at the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development). Their role was mainly to send cables back and forth to headquarters on what we were doing. So, it was not the kind of place that I thought it was going to be from the point of view of having serious policy discussions that could then be implemented. Depending on the DAC chair and the DAC secretariat, a very competent group, the role of the DAC representatives could be pretty limited. You really relied on the DAC secretariat and the chair for setting the agenda. Part of my role was to keep an eye on the DAC secretariat, which was just another, albeit very competent, bureaucracy, always wanting to issue rules and regulations for the donors. USAID already had enough of those.

Q: So, what were you able to do about that during your four years there?

KAMMERER: Like any international organization, as the US representative you were always looking for ways to advance our agenda or block initiatives we didn't agree with.

Q: Was there a change in the membership during the time you were there in the sense of more people-

KAMMERER: No.

Q: No. Still weren't people-

KAMMERER: Well, I think Greece and Portugal joined the DAC while I was there, but in terms DAC representatives not having aid experience, that will probably never change because most of the members can't afford it. They can't dedicate a single person to go to the DAC.

Q: So, did you spend your time-

KAMMERER: I spent a lot of my time working on procurement issues, specifically allowing aid dollars to be used to procure things from the aid-recipient country or other countries where the goods or services might be better or cheaper. That debate had been

going on for 25 years and we finally got the DAC members, including the U.S., to agree to open up procurement to all countries. I think the Trump Administration is trying to undo that – going back to tying aid to the US.

Q: Well that was a good-

KAMMERER: That was something.

Q: That was substantial.

KAMMERER: Other than participating in regular DAC meetings, a big part of the DAC representative's job is to coordinate the participation of USAID experts in DAC subcommittee meetings on particular subjects, and to prepare for the regularly scheduled twice a year meeting of the heads of all donor agencies. That's an opportunity for the AID administrator to sit down with his counterparts and debate policy issues, which is the real purpose of the DAC.

Q: And the Tidewater meetings?

KAMMERER: Yes, the Tidewater meetings.

Q: Were they just for the administrator-

KAMMERER: Just for the heads.

Q: -and for the heads or ministers or whatever. But you weren't briefing people for them?

KAMMERER: I think that was done directly by PPC.

Q: Alright, so when you wrap this up how many years, starting with- you started in AID in 19-

KAMMERER: '75.

Q: -'75-

KAMMERER: And retired in 2003.

Q: -and had two years as a Peace Corps volunteer and five years as Peace Corps staff and then you retired in 2000 what?

KAMMERER: 2003.

Q: So, that's 28 years?

KAMMERER: When you added in unused sick leave and other bits and pieces, including the two years as a PCV, it was 37 years.

Q: How do you feel about that?

KAMMERER: I feel wonderful about it. You know, I tell Nancy, I've told other people, there was only one day in my career at AID when I got up in the morning and I didn't want to go to work. Not many people can say that. I really enjoyed-

Q: That's extraordinary. What was that one day?

KAMMERER: There was a guy who worked for Brian Atwood who was head of management-

Q: Oh yes, yes.

KAMMERER: Anyway, he instituted a RIF (Reduction in Force) and it was one of those things where- and it was very personal and I just didn't want to go to work the next day.

Q: Did you go in that day anyway?

KAMMERER: Oh yes. I never took a sick day in my entire career, and even had about a year's worth of unused annual leave when I retired.

Q: No, that RIF cost AID a lot of its most-

KAMMERER: Talented people.

Q: -talented people, exactly. But overall your feeling is this was a wonderful career?

KAMMERER: It was great. It was one thing after another that I wanted to do that I had no idea when I was 17 that I'd be able to do. And one led to the other. Stuff I did in college led to the Peace Corps, the Peace Corps to law school and eventually to USAID. Nothing led to the olive farm, but I can relate that back to the counselor in college who said you need to work outdoors.

Q: Outdoors. You're finally getting the chance to do that.

KAMMERER: And she was right.

Q: And there's no physics exam.

KAMMERER: No physics.

Q: Well, Kelly, thank you very, very much for doing this. Thank you for the career in AID, thank you for all the help you gave me during my time at AID, thank you for all the many, many things you did.

KAMMERER: Let me end by remembering that when I had been at AID for maybe two years, and I spent the second year, at least part of it, on the Hill with you, and unbeknownst to me you wrote me up for a superior honor award which was the second highest award you could get in AID. I'd only been there two years. And you did it on your own – I wasn't even in your Bureau. That shows what kind of manager and person you are. I always appreciated that gesture and tried to learn from it.

Q: Did they give it to you?

KAMMERER: Yes, they did.

Q: That was the least of what you deserved.

KAMMERER: What is important is that you believed someone had helped you do your job, and that you were going to do something for them in return. And that shows what kind of person you are, Alex.

Q: I think this is the time to end it. Kelly, thank you very, very much.

End of interview