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JOHN WESTLEY

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INTERVIEW

Q: I'm Linda Lippner, and I am conducting the interview with John Westley, formerly of USAID (United States Agency for International Development). Today is February 9th, 2023, and this is our first interview recorded. We will also document if we go to a second recording the date and the person we are interviewing at that time.

All right, John. First we're going to talk about where you came from and you can go way back – I want you to go way back. Where were you born and where did you have your early years of upbringing?

WESTLEY: My father worked for a company called Cargill which is a big grain company based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. So I was born in Minnesota then he was of course moved around and pretty soon wound up in Chicago, where the Board of Trade is, the major grain-trading entity in the U.S., so he wound up in Chicago and that's where I started kindergarten and finished high school. So I grew up in Evanston, Illinois, and Elmhurst, Illinois. Went to a big public high school in Elmhurst.

Don't remember much before high school, but I was always quite taken by our Congregational church. I sang in the choir and was in a youth group called Pilgrim Fellowship.

In high school I was a little bit active in politics, I was class president my freshman year and student council president my senior year. I was on the tennis team, I played tuba in the concert band and marching band. I saw a lot of basketball games, and a lot of football games.

I'm not sure I developed any strong academic interests in high school. I especially liked English and history, I guess. I found Latin a bit of a struggle. The one B I got in high school was in Latin.

When that came to an end, I was able to get a National Merit scholarship, which I didn't use. I was going to go to a little midwestern college called DePauw in Indiana because it was a popular spot with my friends in Chicago, in my high school. I wound up going to Yale because colleagues of my father said, you ought to look at other places. So I did look at Princeton, Yale, and decided on Yale because I really liked the philosophy seminar they sent me to when I visited. So I wound up there.

Q: I think we can still find out a few more things about that earlier upbringing in the Chicago area. Did you have any brothers or sisters?

WESTLEY: I had two brothers, still do. Younger.

Q: Your father worked in the Chicago area for this grain association?

WESTLEY: Cargill, it's a big company.

Q: Okay. How about your mother? Did she work, or stay home?

WESTLEY: She had been a teacher. They were both from North Dakota, they fled North Dakota as soon as possible after graduating from the University of North Dakota and Iowa State. My mother majored in home ec, so she wound up teaching high school chemistry actually. Then after I was born in 1939, she never taught again and also had been in an auto accident as a teenager and lost part of her nose, and decided she would never drive again. So she didn't work and she didn't drive, which created some problems later on.

Q: Are you the oldest child, youngest, middle?

WESTLEY: Oldest.

Q: Oldest, okay. Sorry to hear that about your mother, that must have been tough for her in particular. When I think about home ec, my mother was also very involved in that in Arlington. She didn't go to college, but somehow that transferred over to chemistry that she was involved with? Huh.

WESTLEY: Chemistry. One other thing I should mention from high school. After my junior year I spent a summer in Germany, under the American Field Service. Although I hadn't studied any German and didn't learn any there, it did increase my interest in German and obviously my interest in international affairs.

Q: Are you saying that your high school gave you that opportunity?

WESTLEY: Yes. American Field Service is a national program and they choose Americans to go to a country for a summer, and choose students from that country to come to the U.S. for a school year. So my family had a Turkish student for a school year after I left for college, and that's – I met all kinds of people over the years that had that type of experience, other programs as well. My wife went on an Experiment for International Living, for example, to France, and became a French teacher.

Q: That can be a very significant thing to put you on a path to something that's more international, that does show a little uniqueness right there, your interest, your parents' encouragement. Did you have any mentors in high school, teachers that influenced you in one way or another?

WESTLEY: My social studies teacher I was very fond of and thought he did a wonderful job, he taught both world history and social studies, civics and so on.

Q: I thought it was unique that you played the tuba; I've never talked to anyone who's played the tuba. How did that happen?

WESTLEY: I guess in seventh grade they needed somebody so they persuaded me to do that. In seventh and junior high school I played that and my brother played the French horn, which is a much harder instrument; I picked the easy one. But it was convenient because the bass part is often the easiest, the most obvious part in music, along with soprano. Since I was a bass singer, it helped in that respect.

Q: Which also meant you needed to be able to read music.

WESTLEY: Right. I had taken piano so I could read music anyway but I gave that up much sooner than my father liked and turned to tuba.

Q: Any sports you were doing?

WESTLEY: I played tennis on the tennis team but otherwise was just goofing around, I wasn't tall enough for basketball and didn't like to take the hits in football, we didn't play soccer in those days.

Q: Not all schools had tennis, it's good you had that option. My feeling as an individual sport, you need a partner to play but instead of being on a team where you bash at each other you actually are learning strategy playing as an individual, like pickleball.

Back to college, that's quite a leap to go from a state school. I didn't catch where else you applied but to go to Yale, what year did you start?

WESTLEY. Uh, '57.

Q: Okay, '57.

WESTLEY: The place I had applied was DePauw, that's a small liberal arts college in southern Indiana.

Q: But you got encouragement to apply to Yale, not everybody does that. Did you have a family connection at all there in those years?

WESTLEY: A colleague of my father's had gone to Harvard and he was the one who was most adamant about it and harassed me frequently.

Q: He harassed you about going to Harvard or?

WESTLEY: A small midwestern liberal arts college. He thought that was a terrible idea.

Q: Really? Due to, it would contaminate you somehow, or what?

WESTLEY: He thought it was better to strike out a little bit.

Q: Interesting. When you went to Yale, did it change you or give you ideas, attitudes, that were a bit more out there, radical, than you would have thought you would have gotten?

WESTLEY: Interesting question. I'm not sure it did. I majored in philosophy. I was very much interested in history and English so I minored in those. I didn't really do much in international affairs, actually. In those days, we didn't think much about international affairs, I guess. There was the Cold War, in the 1950s we were kind of hunkering down. Never heard about developing countries in Asia, Africa, or Latin America.

Q: Maybe because they weren't developing yet! I know when I was in college there were African countries that don't exist any more. That was the early '60s, so I can imagine the '50s.

WESTLEY: Almost none had become independent yet. One country that was was Ethiopia, where I was later posted. But basically everything else except Liberia and Sierra Leone were still colonies in the '50s.

Q: Or South Africa.

WESTLEY: Yes, depending on how you look at it (laughs).

Q: True.

WESTLEY: I did for some reason have a strong interest in Africa. I think stimulated by the fact that African countries were becoming independent in '59 and so forth. So I did have a little interest in international affairs but I didn't pursue it. I didn't take development economics for example, I only took one year of economics.

Q: And you mentioned philosophy was your major. Was that, why philosophy?

WESTLEY: I often ask myself that same question. I just found it fascinating. I was in a program at Yale called directed studies for the first two years with a totally fixed curriculum, but it included two years of philosophy along with one year of economics and political science, one year of psychology and sociology, two years of history, and so on. We also had to take a language, a minor in language if you hadn't had it before, so I took German, having been introduced to that whole idea. Also my mother came from a German background. I thought it was time to learn a few words.

Q: Interesting. What about the rest of your life at Yale? A lot of famous people have gone there, influenced by going there. What are some other things that were going on in your life at Yale that you remember as being significant, people you met, influences, maybe a different kind of town, New Haven, anything you remember from those days that influenced you?

WESTLEY: New Haven was an interesting town. The university was quite involved in trying to improve town-gown relations, although we did have an anti-town riot while I was there. Threw snowballs at the police during some sort of parade, and a number of people were arrested.

I was in an a cappella singing group, still a big thing at Yale, I think there were nine when I was there and now there are seventeen.

Q: Seventeen different groups?

WESTLEY: At Yale now, yes. My own group was called the Duke's Men, I never made the Whiffenpoofs, if you were really good you made the Whiffenpoofs; I wasn't really good. My group now, of course, has the usual two tenor parts, a baritone part, and a bass part. Now the top tenor part is female. So for twelve or sixteen depending on the year, the top three or four people are women, singing altos, the top tenor part.

Q: Interesting. I have a friend around your age, he was part of a Russian singing group.

WESTLEY: At Yale?

Q: Yeah.

WESTLEY: I would have liked to join the Russian Chorus, I just couldn't quite fit it in. That was a very well known and popular group, had a wonderful director, drew a lot of people into it and even were able to have a trip to Russia one summer to sing.

Q: That's what this person did. They sang on a street corner in Moscow.

WESTLEY: Russians are known for really low basses, and I couldn't quite go that low most of the time.

Q: This gentleman is a bit older than you, he just passed away, he was eight-two, Jonathan Russin, and he also was part of AID. Do you know him?

WESTLEY: I knew him.

Q: R-U-S-S-I-N, he went to Yale, passed away on New Year's Eve. He was part, they performed at the Russian Orthodox Church. Last year I bought a CD (compact disk) of them and he has Russian background in his family from Pennsylvania, but that was his time going to Moscow.

WESTLEY: He was in my secret society, although a different year. .

Q: Well there you go, small world.

WESTLEY: So I would often see him, we would have occasional lunches at the Cosmos Club, we haven't done that for a while. We had friends who had been involved in Russia after the war, after the fall of the wall. He of course had done a lot of his legal practice in Russia, spoke some Russian (as did I) and these friends of his, a physician who'd been involved in public health and set up a group that did training of Russian doctors, drawing on resources in the U.S., U.S. medical schools and so on.

Q: Yeah, he passed away on New Year's Eve from a stroke. He lived in Georgetown, his wife Toni still lives there. He left USAID quite a few years ago to establish his legal practice in Vladivostok, Moscow, El Salvador. I met him in Moscow, he and his wife, and back here when we all moved back here more permanently, we did a lot of things. He had his funeral at the Russian Orthodox Church on Mass Avenue last month.

Back to you, the Yale choir, very interesting.

WESTLEY: I was in a singing group called the Duke's Men, just twelve of us. I couldn't also be in the Yale Glee Club which would have been fun, but scheduling was impossible. I was later in a Russian choir at the Army Language School in Monterrey, we were scheduled to go to the World's Fair in 1962 and then somehow that didn't work out. I still have our record, I play it occasionally.

Q: There you go. Just to say that back to Jonathan, I have his autobiography if you're interested.

WESTLEY: I did not know there was such a thing.

Q: Yeah, it's called <u>Architects in Law</u> or something, I'm not sure why he had that title, I haven't started reading it yet. It's available. He also wrote a memoir about his time in Tanzania early in his career.

You graduated from Yale and then what happened?

WESTLEY: I think partly as a result of having majored in philosophy, I was a lost soul at the time of graduation. Sputnik had gone up and we had all kinds of Woodrow Wilson Fellowships available. I was nominated for fellowships in history, philosophy, and English, but I really couldn't face studying at that point. I knew the draft would be coming up eventually so I talked about the possibility of enlisting in the service at some point. They said, "Oh you must join the Army Security Agency", the Army part of the NSA (National Security Agency) "because they will send you to a language school."

I thought that sounds like fun but I'm not quite ready for that, so at graduation I signed up for a program in France. I only had a semester of French in college but I wanted to know French so that if I didn't get drafted, I could go to one of the newly independent French-speaking African countries to teach English, but knowing enough French to be able to do that. Of course the Peace Corps had not really started yet since Kennedy only came in in early '61, but Yale had had a program working in Africa, sending students to Africa on a Peace Corps-like program, so I was aware of that kind of thing and thought that might be a possibility. So I went to France, took a couple of months of elementary French but didn't learn very much. The good part about it was I spent three weeks picking grapes in Burgundy, in Meursault, a famous white-wine growing region. I learned a little more French in the process because we had a twelve-person crew, all French except for my girlfriend. Then sure enough my draft notice came on November 1st and by December 1st, I was at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

Q: All right. That was basic training at Fort Dix?

WESTLEY: Basic training. Once I got the draft notice I went back to the ASA (Army Security Agency) people and said, "What language could I take?" They had a list of about forty languages. I said, "I'll take Russian."

So I was shipped off to Monterrey, California, and was there for a year learning Russian.

Q: Why did you choose Russian?

WESTLEY: I had been interested partly because of the Russian choir, and I had taken a course in Russian history. I thought that was very interesting and wanted to learn more about it. My mother had grown up in a community in North Dakota where a lot of the people were what they called Volga Germans, who were really Ukrainians. She would occasionally make something called "halupsee," a Ukrainian dish which we know as pigs in blankets with tomato sauce and sour cream. So I just thought Russia would be interesting to learn about.

Q: It would have been, with a little family background.

WESTLEY: We had no Russian ancestry. My ethnic background is Norwegian, Scottish, German and Swiss.

Q: With a college degree from a prestigious university, was this officer's training as well, or not?

WESTLEY: No, I was enlisted. I could have done officer's training but that would have required additional time in the service. So I got to the Army Language School in Monterey and found that almost all the other students in my group had just recently graduated from college and had also just gotten caught up in the draft. My best two friends there were from Harvard.

Q: Like attracts like I guess. I didn't know Monterrey had been around that long, it's been a language training school for decades I guess.

WESTLEY: I think after the war, there was the Presidio of Monterey which was there forever but I think after the war it became language training. The Army got very involved in language training during the war of course for German and Japanese. The method they used at the Army Language School was apparently the one developed at Yale during the war to teach Japanese, the so-called direct method.

Q: What does that mean, the direct method?

WESTLEY: You memorize dialogues. So every night we had to memorize a long dialogue, and the next day in class for six hours you would work on that dialogue and all its variations. That went on for a year. Although Russian is a fairly complicated language, especially in the noun system, we never learned any grammar as such at all. It was all from memorizing dialogues and sort of feeling what the correct grammatical move was. Which of course is how we learn English.

Q: True. You think it's a good approach?

WESTLEY: If you have a year and nothing else to do, it's only applicable in that kind of setting. You can't take it as a language in school because you don't have that kind of time. But it really works, I think it results in a better accent, a better basic understanding of what a language is all about, and if you want to pursue it which I did a little bit, you can get very far with it. It's a great way to start.

Q: Your instructors or teachers – who were they? Russian?

WESTLEY: All Russians or Ukrainians who had fled. Many had fled after the Russian Revolution and wound up in other places such as Manchuria. Harbin, China, had a huge Russian population and some of my instructors came from that group. A couple of them were World War II veterans. The director of the Russian choir was Cossack, a veteran who had fought in World War II and got out. A Ukrainian instructor I had was in a tank unit and got out somehow. This is only 1962, so '45 is not that long ago.

They were all Russian speakers even though some were Ukrainians.

Q: I have heard that, and I experienced in Moscow, Russian teachers, Russian natives, can be really tough. They work you hard. Did you find that to be the case?

WESTLEY: I guess not so much. They knew they had us there for three hours in the morning, three hours in the afternoon, every day, so they took it at a leisurely pace. The language teaching method only allows you to proceed so fast.

Q: At this time you are in the Regular Army, right? You're there for a year, then what happened?

WESTLEY: I got shipped off to Germany.

Q: This is before Vietnam.

WESTLEY: Well there were already Army Rangers in Monterrey being trained in Vietnamese to go train the Vietnamese. But the only thing that reminded us of the outside world there was that when the Chinese invaded India we were issued our M1 rifles suddenly.

Q: What were you supposed to do with those weapons? Defend Monterrey?

WESTLEY: Be reminded that we were in the Army I think. Hard to keep that in mind in Monterrey.

Q: Well, Monterrey's a nice place, nice place to live. So you're shipped off to Germany with some Russian and German language. Where in Germany were you shipped to?

WESTLEY: We started in Frankfurt. They trained us and sorted us out. We had to prove we could actually hear what was being said. I was there for probably two months, and lived in an old German Nazi barracks called Gutleut Kaserne, near the railroad station. I enjoyed being in Frankfurt. Went to the opera a lot. I saw Kennedy come through town. People were very nice.

Q: Did the Berlin Wall going up affect your time in Frankfurt at all?

WESTLEY: That had gone up in August '61, and that's why our draft call was moved up. I didn't expect to be drafted until well into the next spring. I was going to stay in France a little bit longer, and try to learn more French. I thought if I could get a job somewhere, I could get a deferment. But, when the wall went up in August, Kennedy had a huge draft call-up, mine came in November when I was in Paris. When I got to Germany we still had many U.S. troops deployed there. We were in the American Zone, I later got posted to the British Zone. There was also a French Zone further west.

Q: I know there was almost like a corridor, if you were going from Frankfurt to Berlin, if you could I don't know if you did, you couldn't stop on the way if you were heading into East Germany to go to Berlin.

WESTLEY: We were not allowed to do that. It was possible of course. The border town on the West German side was called Helmstedt, and you could take the train from there if you were a tourist to go to Berlin. We also had a big ASA contingent of course in Berlin. We would hear stories, those guys would even take the subway into East Berlin and get away with it.

Q: I wonder if they got away with it because they were American, did they have American uniforms on and they were like not going to be messed with?

WESTLEY: They weren't supposed to do that and they couldn't wear their uniforms if they did that.

Q: So you're saying they did that against orders in a way, and you could go into East Berlin and get away with it. My brother in law was there, he was a helicopter pilot so he was trying to get people out of East Germany into West Berlin, rescuing them in his military helicopter. A lot has changed in Germany.

But with some Russian language, what about military intelligence? Was that something you were involved in because of your language?

WESTLEY: I was hired by the ASA, the Army Security Agency, which is the Army part of the NSA, the National Security Agency, which does communications intelligence. There is a NSA branch for each of the services – Navy, Air Force, Marines. There were Navy, Air Force, and Marines people in my class, the rest of us were Army.

Q: Shifts you mean?

WESTLEY: The services all had people training to be the service arm of the NSA.

Q: All right.

WESTLEY: Fortunately I got assigned to Germany. I could have been shipped off to Alaska, one of the Aleutian Islands, out at the end. We had a post there. Fortunately I didn't do that.

Q: Is that because Alaska was near the Soviet Union?

WESTLEY: Yes. My time in Germany was great, I really enjoyed it. After Frankfurt I was posted to a place called Kassel, which is further north. That's where I was when Kennedy was assassinated. We knew the Russians weren't involved because the tank battalion across the border from us, about ten miles away, was totally silent, nothing going on.

Q: So we can assume.

WESTLEY: Later I was posted to a place called St Andreasberg in the Harz Mountains, next to the highest point in East Germany called Brocken, that's where a lot of German folktales come from.

Q: Folktales, you mean like Grimm's?

WESTLEY: Well the Brocken is where witches meet with the devil on "Walpurgisnacht," the night of St Walpurgis. Some of our Halloween customs come from that. St Andreasberg was a "Luftkurort," or a place to get fresh air. In winter you could go skiing. In St Andreasberg I fell in with a group of German kids – about my age – so by the end of my time there my German had gotten pretty good, since I studied German in college for two years. None of them had had enough English in school that they felt comfortable speaking, so we spoke only German. The big activity was what we called the battle of the "*gasthaus*" (inn). We were in the British zone of occupation there. So the issue was always whether we, the Brits, or the Germans could do best in downing beer. The Brits always came out way ahead of us and even ahead of the Germans.

Q: Drinking? German beer?

WESTLEY: German beer is awfully good. Sometimes if you were serious you had to have a couple of chasers, a shot of what they called these aqua vitae kinds of things, things like vodka. So you could kind of get carried away.

Q: I was in Stuttgart for two years; did you ever go south from Frankfurt?

WESTLEY: No. My unit, I was always posted places further east and north.

Q: Of course there were a lot of Americans at that time in Germany. By the time I was there after the turn of the century, 2010, the people, Americans had really been reduced. Heidelberg was just about, and a little bit of Frankfurt.

WESTLEY: The Army had a wonderful resort at Garmisch-Partenkirchen. I was going to go and ski one time then I got assigned to go on maneuvers, so I couldn't go skiing.

Q: Did you ever go to Austria?

WESTLEY: Not then. My brother came over one time and we traveled up to Norway to see our people. I had bought a VW station wagon in the meantime so we drove up, we got as far as Trondheim which is pretty far north. Never went south.

When my parents came over, we drove to France.

Q: You said to see your people in Norway; did you mention you had Norwegian background?

WESTLEY: My grandfather came from Norway at age twelve from the Stavanger area.

His family homesteaded in North Dakota. The town where my father grew up was basically all Norwegian. Somebody would get there and then everybody else would show up.

Q: That's the story of our immigration. You mentioned Minneapolis I think, a lot of Norwegians there as well I think. Same weather I guess.

WESTLEY: Dad would always talk about joining the Sons of Norway which is their club. His problem was he spoke no Norwegian because his father who immigrated at age twelve had to learn English and was later a doctor in World War I in France. He said, "Norwegians are thought of as the dumb people so I want you never to speak any word of Norwegian in my house," even though the grandparents spoke nothing but. They had never learned English.

Q: I learned that from a Norwegian friend in New York City that he was rather, he said something nasty about a woman at a restaurant, like a maitre d', and he explained to me that Swedish really looked down on Norwegians, and I think I learned it was one whole country at one point, and Norway broke off and they were still considered low life by the Swedes, and he was reacting to that, being Norwegian. But then of course they got all the money because of the offshore oil that Norway…

WESTLEY: Stavanger is the Houston of Norway.

Q: I see.

WESTLEY: When I was traveling across the country in my uniform, when I was being shipped off to Germany, I was on the train in North Dakota and an old guy raised his hand and said, "You know old doc Westley?" because he saw my nametag. I said "that's my grandpa Westley from Cooperstown."

He said, "Yeah, that's the one." And we had this long conversation, they said "My village was Swedish but occasionally we had to have Doc Westley come over because our doctor might be off delivering babies in the countryside or something." He finished by saying, "He was Norwegian, but he wasn't such a bad doctor." (Laughter)

Q: That's great.

With your German friends, you were really only one generation at that point from Germany during the war and maybe even post-war. Did you ever get into any discussions with your German friends, your contemporaries, about the war, the Nazi era, their parents, what went on for them or their parents during the war? Or did you avoid that?

WESTLEY: It was something to be avoided. When I was in Germany for my junior high school summer abroad, the father of my host family was a chemist and was at that time working for a chemical company called Schering. He had of course been in the war in Silesia (now Poland). He talked about being quite anti-Nazi. But of course he couldn't

have been too anti-Nazi and kept his job. He would just make fun of the way things were back then.

Q: He'd make fun?

WESTLEY: Yeah.

Q: He'd like ridicule? Yeah, I heard some similar stories when I was in Stuttgart.

WESTLEY: But among these German friends of mine it was just never a topic. In one place further north where I was stationed temporarily, we would wind up with only older Germans in the gasthaus there. One of our guys could play piano pretty well, we would often get things going in a pretty rollicking way, and these guys would all sing songs about how we're going to march back shoulder to shoulder and retake eastern Germany. But they didn't talk about the war years, even though I'm sure they had been soldiers in the army.

Q: Their comments about eastern Germany would refer to the occupation of Communist Russia?

WESTLEY: Yep. After all that's who the Nazis were fighting against, so I guess it wasn't a problem.

Q: Up to this day.

WESTLEY: I don't think we discussed it very explicitly with them either. Even though our German was good enough to do that.

Q: Okay, American sensitivity to where you were living, I guess. So John, we've gone over your time in Germany and being in the military. What happened after that? You were in Germany for a year or more?

WESTLEY: About a year-and-a-half. I arrived in March '63 and left in August '64.

Q: So you're enlisted in the Army. What happened?

WESTLEY: By the time I left I had made E-5, sergeant. I had a hard time during those three years figuring out what I might do when I get out. I didn't plan on staying in, of course. I ultimately decided maybe it's time to go back to economics which I had really enjoyed, but really hadn't pursued much. So I wound up enrolling in a program at Columbia University in Russian studies and economics. They had a strong series of area studies programs. The Army let me out a little bit early to do that, so I arrived there in September '64.

Q: But not only economics but again Russian studies?

WESTLEY: Yes. I was still taking Russian language. I took Russian politics with Zbigniew Brzezinski. Mainly economics. I finally chose to do an MA (master of arts) dissertation and the topic I chose was Soviet foreign trade theory. I had been interested in international economics at Columbia and my two professors encouraged me to adopt a topic in international economics. So I chose to work on Soviet foreign trade theory.

Q: Did you start to think about a career path at that point or were you still pretty open to whatever might come your way?

WESTLEY: At that point I really had no idea. I was able to do this MA thesis using Russian-language sources. All they did to develop a Soviet foreign trade theory was to pirate ours.After World War II they had all the Eastern European countries they were trading with, they had to show how countries could gain from trade. Marx had not tried to do that. They knew about David Ricardo who had initially demonstrated that back in the early nineteenth century. So that worked.

Then when I finished, I could have gone on for a Ph.D., I wasn't really sure I wanted to do that. I was tired of studying. So I started looking for jobs. I had just gotten married to a woman who was based in New York, her family was on the East Side. We decided ultimately that maybe New York wasn't a great place to raise kids, let's think about Washington DC (District of Columbia). There were lots of jobs back in those days in DC, so I came down to the Treasury Department, their Office of the Assistant Secretary for International Affairs (OASIA), working as an international economist.

Q: Is this the wife or was it a different wife?

WESTLEY: That was my first wife.

Q: So you came to Washington. Yet you did end up, further education was definitely different, American University and twenty years later so we'll get to that. That would be incorporated into your career. Okay.

So you come to Washington. You start a family at that point?

WESTLEY: Yes.

Q: Where were you in Washington, where did you settle?

WESTLEY: Mount Pleasant in DC.

Q: Me, too. Interesting because you left New York because it's kind of a tough place to raise kids; Mount Pleasant I would say would be similar? Or maybe you didn't think so.

WESTLEY: That was a good question. The local elementary school of course I think had zero whites at that point, maybe a few. But we tried to get a little bit involved with the school and so on. In the end it turned out, I left Treasury after three years and went to

USAID and they sent me off. Our first daughter was four when we left; our second daughter had just been born, so they never had to encounter the DC school system.

Q: That never happened, you didn't come back to that at all then?

WESTLEY: Well, they didn't.

Q: We may have been neighbors, I lived on Pierce Mill Road.

WESTLEY: We lived on 19th and Lamont.

Q: You moved there in 19xx what?

WESTLEY: We arrived in DC in 1966, lived in Georgetown for a while but then the apartment we were in said by the way, we don't allow children here, so when our daughter was born we had to move out, we moved over to Wyoming and Connecticut, were there a little while, then in '68 we bought a house in Mount Pleasant, just after the Martin Luther King riots.

Q: My husband and I bought a house in '68, Pierce Mill Road which is a little dead-end street which goes down into the park, and we joined the fairly active social life of Mount Pleasant. Went to parties, it was racially integrated, my kids went to a daycare center, I think it was on Lamont, the artist who died recently, he was part of our social world.

WESTLEY: Ours too, Sam Gilliam.

Q: Yeah! You knew Sam Gilliam? So did I.

WESTLEY: My oldest daughter still stays in touch with her second-oldest daughter.

Q: We have a lot of connections. My daughter was greatly influenced by Sam. She went to Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and was advised by Sam and knew him when she was just a little toddler but when she graduated from RISD, he gave her advice based on his own life, that you did not need to be in New York City to make it as an artist. You could be somewhere else. Subsequently I learned about him and he came to Washington. I have to ask because my boyfriend at one point was living right next door to him and Dorothy Gilliam, my boyfriend bought one of his draped paintings. Did you ever buy anything from him?

WESTLEY: We saw them in his house all the time but never fell for it, probably should have. My wife's just mentioning Lou Stovall was in Cleveland Park, was a buddy of his. In fact Sam's daughters worked with him a lot on Stovall's printmaking.

Q: I saw the images in the videos from both Kreeger and at the Phillips, of Stovall. I never met him but had an artist friend who had an encounter with him, it wasn't a good encounter. But yeah, I didn't know him, I would go to the art exhibits but I'm not an artist

so I really didn't know much about that other than Sam and his social life. We probably were at the same parties. Small world. But you left Mount Pleasant.

WESTLEY: In '70.

Q: And that's when you started your career at AID, I'm guessing.

WESTLEY: At Treasury, the people in OASIA would serve as financial attachés at embassies overseas. So of course, they were thinking they should send me to Bonn, West Germany, given my background. My first wife had spent her junior year abroad in Hamburg and was fluent in German. But neither of us really wanted to go to Germany. Treasury goes to meetings for all kinds of things but I went to a lot of AID meetings. The AID people kept saying why don't you join us, we'll send you to Africa. I had an early interest in Africa, still did, and I wanted to pursue that.

So Ethiopia.

Q: That appealed to you, instead of Western Europe, you were going someplace I guess you had never been before.

WESTLEY: I certainly had never been to Africa. It's a question of what you're working for. At Treasury you're working to shore up the U.S. financial position. At that time we were trying to defend the dollar and not go off the gold standard and so on. Remember the old Bretton Woods system where we were on gold and there were fixed exchange rates and we sort of ran the whole system? My years at Treasury were the years we were trying to defend that system. I felt that AID was doing something useful in the world. What after all are we here for?

Q: So that was your first — wait, you left Treasury and went to AID to go to Ethiopia?

WESTLEY: Yes, I joined AID in mid-'69 in the Capital Development and Finance office of the Africa Bureau (AFR/CDF). A year later Ethiopia.
Q: How did that affect your family life?

WESTLEY: Our second daughter had just been born, in fact we couldn't get to Ethiopia until she was old enough to travel in a plane, which is six weeks. Then we had a third daughter born in Ethiopia. I think we found it fairly nice. In Ethiopia we had two "ayas" (servants) to do the cooking child care. It's a very different way of life of course from DC where you're constantly spending all your time running around dealing with kids and making things work. So for our family it turned out to be a big change.

Q: Was it like a compound with other Americans or expats?

WESTLEY: No in Ethiopia it was all individual houses located in various places. Initially we lived near the airport then later near the university. It was more downtown and more part of Addis Ababa.

Q: Maybe I missed it but what kind of training did you have before you went to Ethiopia?

WESTLEY: No language training. After we arrived in Washington and got settled, I continued to take courses at George Washington University. In particular I had taken a course in natural resources economics which involves using benefit-cost analysis. That turned out to be extremely helpful. In fact when I talked to people about going to AID they said that AID could use that. So in pursuing my economics courses, it helped. But I didn't get any training going to Ethiopia except for a very short two-week orientation course on Ethiopia and Africa at FSI (Foreign Service Institute).

Q: Because your Treasury Department experience was going to be applied.

WESTLEY: Well of course my economics training was applicable.

Q: I've heard different things from different people when they're stationed in Africa. Did you have freedom to travel around other countries? Or were you more or less restricted to stay where you lived in Ethiopia?

WESTLEY: In Ethiopia we made a trip to Egypt. Don't remember other trips, but there was an awful lot of travel within the country. I saw all the parts of Ethiopia, a fantastic and beautiful country. We had quite a large program there. Since it had not been colonized we had a program there in the 1950s already. Ethiopian Airlines, which is still Africa's best airline, was basically an AID project with TWA (Trans World Airlines). We had already in the '50s started building highways. It's a very mountainous country so highways were extremely important. A lot of my time in Ethiopia was spent on a project trying to rehabilitate old road maintenance equipment we'd provided in the '50s and '60s, most of which was now broken down. So we had a project just to repair all the old equipment we'd provided, road maintenance equipment, graders and road scrapers and stuff like that.

Q: That meant you had to travel around to see what development was being progressed and improved?

WESTLEY: Yes. One of my main projects was strengthening the runway at the airport to accommodate larger jets; the Boeing 747 was just being talked about at that time. I also had a project at the university building dormitories. Another project on malaria control, that was all over the country; we would still use DDT at that time which we couldn't for very long. Malaria control was effective in opening areas for farming which had been so malarial they couldn't really be farmed.

Q: I think I read, the friend who knew Sam Gilliam, he had something to do with World Health Organization, and what I recall is malaria was more or less wiped out in many of these developing countries –

WESTLEY: It was pretty well controlled by DDT and then the DDT substitutes after that. But malaria was not eradicated, it was only controlled. Even when I was doing that we were talking about getting a vaccine. It has taken until now to develop a malaria vaccine.

Q: That's good for world health for sure.

WESTLEY: What's important for malaria was making sure people were actually using their bed nets, and that they were treated. All of us as expats of course tended to do that, but a lot of people didn't really understand that or couldn't afford it. A lot of these programs involved providing basically free insecticide-treated bed nets to people.

Q: Cheap solution.

How did your wife at the time adjust to living in Ethiopia?

WESTLEY: She found it very difficult. She hadn't developed a career of any kind at that point. There were lots of things to do for me including travel around Ethiopia. But she had to be at home. Of course she had to do a lot of representational entertaining, so-called. But it was pretty difficult especially since the kids were kind of taken care of. The cooking wasn't that difficult, either.

Q: So you're saying your children had a nanny or someone in the house that could watch them.

WESTLEY: Yes.

Q: In the Foreign Service it's called being a trailing spouse.

WESLEY: Exactly. She wasn't very happy about that.

Q: It's hard. So how long were you there?

WESTLEY: Just two years.

Q: Two-year assignment?

WESTLEY: It was supposed to be longer. But John Withers, the person who had encouraged me to come to Ethiopia in the first place, transferred to Kenya the day I arrived in Ethiopia. He became director of the new office they were setting up in Kenya, the East Africa Regional Development Services Office, or EARCDO, to provide regional services to the eastern and southern side of Africa. So he would come to Ethiopia occasionally and say, "John, you've got to join me in Nairobi!" So I did. After two years in Ethiopia, we transferred to Nairobi.

Q: Much different place.

WESTLEY: With three children; our third daughter was born at our house in Addis.

Q: Oh you had an at-home birth?

WESTLEY: Of course. It was safer.

Q: Okay, safer because of the condition of the hospitals?

WESTLEY: A little bit yeah. There was a pair of sisters who were wives of Presbyterian missionaries. One was a physician and one a midwife. They had a Peugeot station wagon with all their equipment in it, so they would drive around and deliver babies, mostly in the countryside but also in Addis. They reserved a room at the Princess Tsehai Hospital just in case. They said if the birth is not complicated we're better off doing it at home. .

Q: I've heard that, even in Washington DC that was going on at the same time. If you had an oxygen tank, access to a hospital, and a good midwife, why not?

WESTLEY: Yep, it worked.

Q: I am thinking because we are getting into your AID career that we could stop now if you're okay about that. We can pick up in Kenya at our next recording; how do you feel about that?

WESTLEY: I think I'd like to go on a little bit.

Q: Okay that's fine. By the time you get to Nairobi, it's 1973?

WESTLEY: Right.

Q: Did you have a break coming back to DC or did you go straight there?

WESTLEY: We had home leave between assignments. I forget what we did.

Q: Where'd you go?

WESTLEY: I'm trying to think. We certainly went to Chicago.

Q: Had you sold your home in Mount Pleasant?

WESTLEY: No, we kept it. Rented it out of course. I think we basically went back to Chicago and stayed with my parents, who were still living there.

Q: So you didn't have to stay any time in Washington before you went, for training or orientation?

WESTLEY: I don't believe so.

Q: At that time, where were the headquarters of AID in Washington?

WESTLEY: Still in the State Department building, in the old days.

Q: Because that's changed.

WESTLEY: We didn't move until some time in the early '80s.

Q: Hasn't there been like a back and forth about, is AID going to be a part of State, or is it going to be separate? Seems like it keeps changing, who wants to do what.

WESTLEY: USAID was set up in 1961 to combine several different operations into one. There was a technical assistance operation providing the usual type of technical assistance in agriculture and health and so on, and there was a lending operation (the Development Loan Fund - DLF) in the '50s. Those were brought together under Kennedy in '61 into USAID. It was set up as a separate agency under the aegis of the State Department. So we reported to State and the AID offices overseas reported to their embassies. But they were not part of the embassy, nor was AID in Washington fully part of the State Department. It wasn't until the George W Bush years, that there were moves to fully incorporate AID into the State Department (just as the United States Information Agency -USIA) had been incorporated.

I don't think AID's status changed very much, but there is much more effort to control the programming resources within the State Department. Some of that I think still exists, and that went quite far at one point. The policy bureau that I worked in for a while in Washington I think was part of the State Department officially for a while.

Q: I think that's correct. AID had so many interesting projects that didn't really relate to State's interest in political change. In Kenya State was going to go for promotion of democracy and all of that, where AID seemed to be more about economic development and money.

WESTLEY: Talking about Kenya, I got to Kenya a second time in the 1990s and political change was very explicitly part of our agenda then. The USAID mission worked very closely with the embassy. In fact we in AID were the only ones who really had any leverage to get anything done. It was a very interesting period. There might be more to talk about later. The second assignment was different. As I mentioned, my to-be boss for Ethiopia went to Kenya to start this regional office and that's the one he brought me down there for. There was an economic analysis unit within that regional office and I was the head of that. We worked with all the countries from Ethiopia and Sudan down to Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland so all the way, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, et cetera. That involved a lot of traveling which was a problem.

Q: Was it a problem?

WESTLEY: I'll explain that later.

Q: Okay. So you're there for two years, and then it looks like you are brought back to DC.

WESTLEY: Three years it turned out. I did not have the kind of direct involvement in projects that I had in Ethiopia. It was more a matter of working with our AID missions, especially in doing program strategy statements.

Q: Explain?

WESTLEY: The acronym was CDSS, Country Development Strategy Statement. We worked with them to develop these documents which would make the case for their particular program within the overall Africa program. I would spend a lot of time in say Tanzania or Swaziland or Botswana doing that kind of work.

Q: Your funding was--

WESTLEY: We were just part of the AID bureaucracy. The funding was all going to our local offices. We were just providing a service within the bureaucracy.

Q: So when you say local offices, where the developments were going on?

WESTLEY: Yes. At one time we had offices outside the capital city and when we were there we still had an office near Mount Kilimanjaro as well as in Dar Es Salaam but there were very few of those offices left by the time I arrived. That office would have its own money, its own little program, probably working with NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) to do things in that particular area, in eastern Tanzania. Generally the projects were managed by the country offices, such as the USAID mission to Tanzania.

Q: You mentioned NGOs. Does that mean a lot of the money was going to outside contractors then?

WESTLEY: Yes, NGOs as contractors, that was a very substantial part of our budget in most countries. As were contractors, of course, to provide technical assistance and so on.

Q: Were those two different categories then? An NGO and a contractor, wouldn't that be the same thing?

WESTLEY: Yes, very much so. A typical NGO would be Care International, or Catholic Relief Services (CRS), doing school feeding programs and so on. That was a totally separate type of program. Whereas a contractor would usually be a private company or consulting firm. I'm thinking of the bilateral program in Kenya, where they had a program with the ministry of finance to modernize their budgeting and planning processes (in the '90s) using computers. Harvard's Development Advisory Service (DAS) had a contract to provide that support and training (some in Cambridge) to the Kenyans who were involved in that project. But in this regional office I was in in the

‘70s, we had no projects of our own. It was the Kenya USAID mission which had its projects and we might work with them on doing various things, maybe an evaluation – I did an evaluation in Malawi for example. But we had no project money of our own. We worked as contractors as it were for country offices in trying to improve their programs.

Q: Did the approval for funds for different projects, what area in Washington or the department did you have to go through to make sure you got that money?

WESTLEY: Our money was provided from the Bureau for Africa as part of their overall operating expenses, their staff budget. For the country offices we worked with, they all got their money from the Africa Bureau but of course it went through the policy office in AID and eventually came from Congress. So the funds had to go through all kinds of hoops in order to get there eventually.

Q: Okay. That’s what I was wondering, if that was more of a direct conduit to Congress versus by way of the State Department.

WESTLEY: I don’t remember having to do anything directly with Congress while I was in Nairobi in that regional office. Mostly the country missions would not either. But they would occasionally receive visits from congressional delegations (CODELs). They would have to show off their programs to often very skeptical congressmen and staffers. As a regional office, we were a service office and did not have to go through that.

Q: Did that make you grateful?

WESTLEY: Actually CODELs didn’t come to Africa often anyway. But yes, it was nice not having to deal with that.

Q: I don’t think that’s changed up to now.

WESTLEY: When I was back to the policy office an awful lot of our time was spent dealing with congressional inquiries, lobbying and so on. It was also part of other jobs I had in Washington, very much Congress-oriented.

Q: Up to this day, I have a recent AID retiree and her last assignment was dealing with Congress. She hated it. It drove her to retirement!

WESTLEY: We didn’t have many CODELs while in Africa. We had lots of them in Cairo and in India.

Q: But there you got your taste of Africa and then came back to DC, right?

WESTLEY: I traveled all over eastern and southern Africa as well as Kenya. Kenya is a fascinating country to travel in, as is Tanzania.

Q: I'm not trying to cut you off, anything else you want to talk about that time in Kenya?

WESTLEY: The boss I hoped to have in Ethiopia and did have in Kenya (Dr. John Withers) was an African-American, one of the relatively few in AID at that time. He was a marvelous person. I remember when I started working for him, I thought back to my time in Treasury because when I came to work at Treasury, my boss was also African-American, a guy named Emmett Rice, who was the father of Susan Rice. He had been with the Federal Reserve, a very bright guy, a wonderful person. I remember meeting his kids one time in his house, young Susan must have been one of them. I always was wondering, why can't we find more people like this? I don't know whether we had any African-Americans, we did have one African-American in our office in Ethiopia, I don't think we had any in Kenya, nor did the embassy.

Q: Any theories why that is, maybe even up to today?

WESTLEY: I think at State, it's always been difficult for them to transfer from being totally WASP (white Anglo-Saxon Protestant) to something more representative of the US.

Q: And male.

WESTLEY: Exactly. Females were pretty unusual in those days, too. Trying to remember if we had any professional female in the Kenya bilateral office, I don't think we had any in our regional office except secretaries. The secretaries were female.

Q: Administrative assistants I think we call them.

WESTLEY: No, we called them secretaries.

Q: Now you wouldn't. I know that AID now is mentoring new recruits to get more diversity, sexual and racial, a long way to go probably.

WESTLEY: I think women have done better than anybody else.

Q: Any theories why?

WESTLEY: They can easily meet not just the educational but the behavioral requirements. Acting white, that's a lot of it.

Q: Acting male?

WESTLEY: That's part of it.

Q: But first you have to be given the opportunity to get the job so you can have that behavior.

WESTLEY: Of course. When my wife was graduating from college, the main things you could do was teach, nurse or be a secretary.

Q: Or get married.

WESTLEY: Of course, no other options.

Q: As I recall, the Foreign Service, first you weren't allowed to be a Foreign Service officer and then when that was allowed through a lawsuit, I think if you got married you had to give up your job.

WESTLEY: You couldn't both be in the foreign service. That ended in the '70s I think.

Q: There's a woman I want to interview who was being interviewed to work for the Foreign Service during that period. I'm hoping I can convince her to do an interview because she was there and was being harassed up to here about trying to discourage her from continuing the process in the early '70s. A lot of harassment. To imagine being a female African-American or just a male African-American, must have been difficult. But efforts are being made now and there is mentoring going on. Will this work or not I don't know. Age-wise, now I know that State, maybe AID, is recruiting people not right out of college but maybe after ten or twenty years of a career in other areas before they come over.

WESTLEY: I think that's true.

Q: But again it's hard for those people to fit in because they're used to a different way of taking care of business.

WESTLEY: It is often hard to fit in with no matter what.

Q: Of course. Well, we are now at ten of four so I am going to stop things now.

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Q: My name is Linda Lippner, and I am interviewing John Westley, it's our second interview; the date is February 24th, 2023. We are going to start with John's experiences in Kenya and go from there. John, welcome.

What I've got here, I believe you left Ethiopia and went on to Kenya? You went to Kenya in 1990 and --

WESTLEY: First time in Kenya was '73.

Q: First time in Kenya, 1973.

WESTLEY: I was in Ethiopia ‘70-72.

Q: Got it, first time yes 1973 through or until 1975. Okay. And you went back to Kenya in the ‘90s, correct? So back to 1973. Tell us a little bit about how that happened. How did you end up going from Kenya to Ethiopia?

WESTLEY: Well the person who persuaded me to come to Ethiopia who was the Program Officer at USAID/Ethiopia, John Withers, an African-American.

Q: That is interesting in the ‘70s.

WESTLEY: But the day I actually arrived in Ethiopia, he had just left for Kenya because he had been made the first director of a new regional office in Kenya. AID has regional offices in Kenya for eastern and southern Africa, and in Ivory Coast for western Africa. So during his first trip to Ethiopia he said, “John, you should really join me in Ethiopia.” I did join him down there. EARCDO (later REDSO/East) was covering the countries from Ethiopia down to the countries in southern Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland. So it involved a lot of travel which is interesting, getting to know more about all the countries on that side of Africa. Spent most of my time in Tanzania, Rwanda, Zambia, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland. We couldn't go to Zimbabwe at that time. It was still Southern Rhodesia, which was off-limits. I was chief of this economic analysis division. We tried to help our offices in our country programs prepare better documentation for their overall programs. Each country had to prepare a Country Development Strategy Statement (CDSS). We worked on a lot of those. And if something came up, we would help in developing projects and so on, although that was mainly the job of the loan officers in our office. It was a fascinating job and Kenya of course a very interesting country to be in.

Q: Were these new programs for AID, or were you reviewing AID programs in these other places that were already in place?

WESTLEY: Basically we were a service organization working with country programs which were already established. We had had more programs initially and we cut back on the numbers. In Rwanda for example we had a program then phased it out. But while I was at EARCDO the State Department decided that it was important for us to have a program in Rwanda again. So we had to go and try to decide what we should start up again. Fascinating country of course. So it was that kind of thing, working with existing programs.

Q: Were you traveling on your own or with a team?

WESTLEY: Some of each. One of the more interesting trips was taking a team I think to Botswana. To get to Botswana we had to go through South Africa, and since one of our team members was African-American, going through South Africa got a bit tricky. This is the early ‘70s after all.

Q: Did you have any problems or just concerned about it and didn't have any problems?

WESTLEY: It worked out, we just had to make sure we knew what to do. The embassy was very helpful, so it all worked out fine.

Q: My former sister-in-law was Brazilian, her father was ambassador to South Africa and she was out on the street somewhere and she was arrested.

WESTLEY: Because?

Q: Dark skin, wasn't where she was supposed to be. That would have been in the '60s. So, always issues.

Okay so anything else you can tell us about that first time in Kenya, other experiences or contacts you had, reflections?

WESTLEY: The main thing that happened in Kenya is my first wife and I split up. When I was still at the Treasury Department I had toyed with the idea of joining the World Bank but I thought the World Bank covers things by having people travel from Washington, whereas USAID has people based in the countries, and the families stay together. So I went with AID. In Kenya of course the problem was I was traveling all the time, my first wife was very upset about not having a career. Then she finally found something she really enjoyed doing, and she really didn't like the idea of being dragged around every few years to a new country and having to reestablish herself and put the kids in new schools, et cetera. So that ended that phase.

Q: Did she come back to the U.S. with the children?

WESTLEY: She stayed in Kenya. We had three daughters, they all grew up in Kenya. They had the good fortune of going to an English-system school, so they all took O levels and A levels and found themselves extremely well prepared when they got to the States to go to college. They found college in the U.S. to be a tremendous culture shock, but since they were so well prepared academically they survived it.

Q: So they did go to university in the U.S.?

WESTLEY: Yes. Only one of the three has continued to live overseas, although one was involved in international family planning work and another got her Ph.D. in oceanography and now works for NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) in Silver Springs.

Q: It sounds like you kept close contact as a family, even if the marriage didn't last.

WESTLEY: Yes.

Q: That must have been hard but I know you're not the only one who's had to deal with that kind of consequence of having your international job.

WESTLEY: Not unusual, I think.

Q: I agree.

WESTLEY: On my return from Kenya to AID/Washington in 1975 I had a job PPC (Bureau for Program and Policy Coordination) which I enjoyed very much. I also started on my Ph.D. work which I had always wanted to do and never quite thought I'd be able to do it. Working at AID but that allowed me to do it. I went to AU (American University) taking evening courses and continuing to work full time.

Q: Was that when you were in Kenya, doing a Ph.D.?

WESTLEY: Once I returned to Washington.

Q: Because I didn't think in those days they had remote education. That's changed for the better these days.

All right, there you were in Kenya but you had to leave eventually. It looks like you came back to Washington? And that was in the sector analysis division in PPC? Tell us a little bit about that assignment, it looked like it was for two years.

WESTLEY: Yes. We worked on sector analysis. I worked for a wonderful economist (John Erickson). My field was agriculture. That got very interesting because shortly after I arrived there a new head of PPC named John Mellor, who was a well-known agricultural economist from Cornell. He had made his name for his work on agriculture in India. He had just written a book at that time on economic development in India, so he was a very interesting person to work for. It was a very interesting assignment. The problem was that a lot of it involved dealing with the Hill, with Congress, which is always fairly frustrating.

Q: I've heard that from other people. Can you give us some insights, why is that so frustrating?

WESTLEY: There were staff people in the House of Representatives who tended to be fairly sympathetic and understood what AID was trying to do. But they had to work with their congresspeople who were facing constituencies which seemed to have very little interest in foreign aid and always thought there were better things to do with the money. So it was a constant challenge, making the case for what we were trying to do. By 1975 of course we were finally getting out of Vietnam. A lot of the rationale for the AID program had been Vietnam-related - you had to provide aid to support what we were trying to do in terms of national security. With Vietnam gone, it meant we needed a new rationale for AID to make the case in Congress. So we were going through that phase at that time, trying to reposition ourselves and make a case that congresspeople could sell to

their constituents, for continuing to provide foreign aid. There was something called the New Directions. There had been a book published called Development Reconsidered, which made a strong case for paying more attention to things like popular participation and equity and so on. We were very much in the process of trying to decide what all that meant for us as we tried to make our case for continued support from the Hill.

Q: When you were advocating for financing, for money, would you be specifically talking about money for your particular areas such as Africa, or was this a general appeal for money from Congress that you were involved in?

WESTLEY: This was general since PPC had to deal with all the regions. It meant that we were trying to take much more interest in the distributional impact on what we were doing, so much more emphasis on things like land reform, where funding was actually going and so on and so forth, much less interest in big infrastructure projects and less interest in agricultural research, which we had to deal with. It was a very interesting time of transition for AID in general, and our particular office got very involved in trying to make this all work. We reviewed projects for example to see whether they were trying to incorporate some of these kinds of principles. Pretty interesting.

Q: In your offices in AID, were you dealing with potential contractors, people who wanted to get involved in these programs and needed the funding as well, or were you mostly directly within AID?

WESTLEY: We had very little to do with contractors because that kind of work is done by the country missions, or by the regional bureaus. We did have a little involvement. I got involved in funding a project with a consulting firm to prepare people better to do field analysis of what actually was happening in agricultural projects and so on. We also got involved in the issue of supporting something called the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI).

Q: Talk about that a little bit, that's strange.

WESTLEY: James Grant, who had been our mission director in Sri Lanka and later became the head of UNICEF, was for a while with the Overseas Development Council (ODC) in Washington. He felt that a better gauge of a country's performance might be found using something other than GNP (gross national product). So he came up with the Physical Quality of Life Index, which emphasized health, education, things like that which Sri Lanka had done very well at. If you looked at Sri Lanka from that perspective, it was a very successful country even though its rate of growth was relatively low and its per capita GNP was not that high at that time. So one of the things we did was fund more work for ODC to develop that whole concept and popularize it and try to make a case that this would be a good complementary measure of development.

Q: Sounds like a great idea.

WESTLEY: It was quite well received and the UN took it up and made it part of their approach in about 1990, when they adopted the Human Development Index (HDI). But otherwise we didn't get involved, did policy work trying to fend off Jesse Helms in Congress, who was a problem at that time.

Q: Were you happy to leave Washington then? How did you feel about it?

WESTLEY: Then I went on to two years doing something else, that was being an economics instructor in something called the Development Studies Program (DSP). The program was developed to re-indoctrinate our staff on the so-called New Directions, a new approach to development. This was a program that we would have people in for maybe six weeks and have a program of some academic work, and also a field program, we'd go some place and try to use these techniques we'd been using to analyze a program in the rural United States, see how that worked. It was a fascinating program. I was still in the process of doing my Ph.D. coursework so it worked out nicely for me, having to teach economics in this program and also of course to keep studying it. The best way to learn economics is to teach it, as it turns out.

Q: I wish some of my teachers had had that attitude. There's always something new to learn, even for the professor or teacher. So you were getting out into the U.S. to do some of your research and information gathering; that sounds rather unique for AID.

WESTLEY: I remember one to West Virginia and one to Louisiana.

Q: There of course you had to explain AID to local people who might not have known anything about it.

WESTLEY: We did some of that, it was pretty interesting, that aspect of it, dealing with communities.

Q: Sounds like a program that should be going on even today.

WESTLEY: It was also interesting because of course our students were not only American but FSNs, our Foreign Service Nationals, so they were from Latin America, Africa, and Asia. It gave them a new perspective on looking at the United States.

Q: So AID would fund them to come to the United States to participate in this? Interesting.

WESTLEY: Our FSNs in country missions played a huge and very important role.

Q: I've heard that FSNs have been around forever; I don't know if that's actually true but from very early on, the U.S. policy was to hire local people to work in various departments and at the embassies and consulates, which I don't know if other countries do that.

WESTLEY: We couldn't operate without that. It was absolutely crucial. And to the extent that we pushed it further than that, I think it was a good idea. One of the better things AID did and the embassies also, was have all these people work with us and adopt U.S. approaches and values and management approaches and so on, and then many went out back into their local economies and pursued things. That was a side benefit of the program which I don't think anyone has paid much attention to, but probably is fairly significant.

Q: It sounds like it would be. So, two years there. Did you get your Ph.D. then?

WESTLEY: I finished my course work and was in the process of developing a thesis topic. Initially I was slated to go to Mali in West Africa which from my point of view would be a lot of fun because I had just met a woman I was getting pretty close to. She was a French teacher, and I had made various efforts to learn French over the years without much success. I thought actually being posted to a place like Mali would be very helpful. I'd traveled there a couple of times and enjoyed being in a place like Bamako in Mali. I developed a thesis topic working on irrigation projects, looking at the impact of irrigation projects there. However, the same man, John Withers, who had brought me to Ethiopia and then convinced me to transfer to Kenya, had just been named the mission director to India. He said, "John, you ought to think about India." So sure enough my assignment eventually was to India, not to Mali.

Q: It sounds like he was taking you along, he must have valued your association since it sounds like he was having you go where he went.

WESTLEY: One of my luckiest breaks was knowing him.

Q: Except you didn't get to Mali!

WESTLEY: No I didn't get to Mali, but that made it much easier to develop a thesis topic. The Green Revolution had been very successful in India and there was a debate at that time about whether the Green Revolution was better for the big farmers or the small farmers. In fact my boss in PPC, John Mellor, argued basically that you have to concentrate on the big farmers, because they're the ones who really can manage the Green Revolution technologies. I had read something saying actually it might be the small farmers who were the ones able to take advantage of it. So I tried to develop that as a topic, and once I got to India of course I worked on it further. Fortunately the AID mission in New Delhi had a very good library and a lot of interesting material on what the U.S. and AID had done to support the Green Revolution. I did some field work. I had an FSN colleague from the state of Haryana which is north of Delhi. Haryana was one of the states along with Punjab which had made the earliest best use of the Green Revolution so I was able to visit farms there and get an idea. I tried to learn enough Hindi that I could actually speak to people, although I didn't learn it quite as well as I should have.

Q: What do you mean?

WESTLEY: A lot of the language in agriculture is technical, and I found I could learn conversational Hindi but didn't make as much progress in mastering the technical vocabulary. I did learn enough that I was able to get language pay; AID or the State Department would provide incentive pay if you learned the local language.

Q: That's right, here in Arlington you'd go to language school.

WESTLEY: I never had the benefit of going to FSI except I spent two weeks there to learn Bangla before I went to Bangladesh. So I had to learn iHindi in India, which is fine since they were all Hindi speakers where we were; that worked fine. It turned out to be a very good topic and my committee back at American U. was very happy with it, and I eventually got it published as a book, *Agriculture and Equitable Growth.*

Q: Did you prove your point about small farming versus large farming?

WESTLEY: As far as I'm concerned I did. (laughter) Very good documentation on it. The U.S. had supported agricultural universities in India starting in the '50s; Ohio State for example was the university working with the University of Punjab which is where the Green Revolution was centered initially. One of the best things AID did was participant training. We would send people from the ministry of agriculture or agricultural institutions in India to the U.S. for MAs, Ph.D.s, short-term training and so on. Then they would come back to their agricultural university and do the kind of work that we do in the U.S. That is very different from the British system which of course the Indians had been exposed to initially. That U.S. system is more practical, emphasizes extension work, working with farmers, carrying on research throughout the university's region of influence and so on. So it had a huge influence on the way people thought. One of the first things I was struck by when I got to India was the impact this training had had. I went to a reception at our director's place and there were several people from the agricultural side of the Indian institutions we were working with. One of them took me aside and said, "You know the most important thing about going to Ohio State was not the technical information" (although as an agricultural scientist that was very important for him) "the important thing for us was thinking about management, and how to deal with institutions and organizations, how to work with farmers." That was a tremendous benefit of the programs we were pursuing, which is very different from what the British had left behind in India.

Q: So insights from those taking advantage of these opportunities of training, learning in the States. Did you have any contact or interaction with any of the leftover British aid organizations that might be similar to AID? Were they all gone or what was going on there?

WESTLEY: The Brits were very active there. Their aid program was very substantial and we worked a great deal with them. There was a tremendous emphasis always on donor coordination. Congress is especially concerned about that and we always had to make a

case for what we were doing with respect to that. S0 we worked very closely in India with the World Bank and with the Ford Foundation. The Ford Foundation was still very active. Rockefeller had been very active in the Green Revolution but they were phasing down, becoming more active in family planning. There was an organization called the Population Council in New York, a Rockefeller organization, and they were very active in India at that time. We worked with all the bilateral donors, the British especially but also the Germans, the Japanese, the Dutch, the Scandinavians. So it was a constant effort.

Q: Any Russian involvement?

WESTLEY: No, not that I recall. I don't recall ever speaking any Russian in India. At that time I probably still spoke some Russian.

Q: You would have been aware. Did you get up to Pakistan at all?

WESTLEY: It was almost impossible to go to Pakistan from India at that time. The relations were so poor. I didn't have any way of getting to Pakistan until we moved to Bangladesh. Although in India, where so many Indians had come from Pakistan. The Hindus who left Pakistan would almost invariably say, "Delhi's is alright but the real place to live is Lahore" (in Pakistan).

Q: Yeah, that was their home.

WESTLEY: Yes, many FSN colleagues had come from Pakistan.

Q: There's been a lot in the news recently about the split, I'm learning a lot about that, the huge population movements.

WESTLEY: Yes, partition in 1947 was really a disaster.

Q: There you were and you were there for a two-year assignment I believe?

WESTLEY: It turned out to be five years.

Q: Yes '79 through '84.

WESTLEY: Normally AID would want you to stay for a second two-year tour, it was unusual to go beyond that. So generally people would be in a place for four years then move on and go elsewhere. I was very interested in staying on, probably because I was making progress in getting my Ph.D. thesis typed. So I lobbied for a fifth year and was able to get it.

Q: Looking at your resume, I don't see any four-year assignments until India.

WESTLEY: Well, Ethiopia was two, Kenya was three, India was five. I got to Kenya early '73, left two-thirds through '75 so I was there for about three years.

Q: Anything else you would like to say about your time in India, can be personal, your reflections, about your job, anything you'd like to talk about? Or nothing.

WESTLEY: It was a fascinating five years. We really felt we were able to get close to a lot of Indians that we met. We traveled a great deal. My wife and I got married in India.

Q: Is this Joan?

WESTLEY: Joan, yes. She was able to get a job teaching French in the American Embassy School (AES) there, so she was pleased with that. We had one daughter together, she was born there. We really enjoyed our time in India. She organized a team of women to write a travel book for Americans in India. They wanted to encourage people to go out and visit, recommend where to go with kids, where to go at certain times of year, et cetera. They actually got it published as a book and the embassy has kept that on. In fact it's still going on and gets updated and revised. It's called *Glimpses of India.*

Q: Great idea. I certainly took advantage of that when I was in Russia, they also had a program for getting you out there. Also I went to Jordan and an AID person showed me some of the projects they were working on. No. Excuse me, it was in Egypt that I met with an AID person, showing me projects. That would have been in the eighties.

WESTLEY: Embassies do a fairly good job of orienting their people in the country, one of the things they do pretty well.

Q: They do, but an observation from you, compared to mine I felt in Russia a lot of the embassy consulate people did not go out and explore the country. Did you find that at all, or were your American coworkers interested, eager, did they get out and about to explore?

WESTLEY: It was partly a question of AID versus embassy. AID people would get out anyway just because they were involved in projects and so on. Generally they had more of an interest in learning about the culture and dealing with things, whereas the embassy people would have relatively short tours and they were often in somewhat technical areas. So by the nature of their assignments they didn't have as much interest in getting out and seeing things.

Q: Yeah. Maybe then it's more of a widespread attitude. I've only been on one assignment and it was Russia, and yeah you didn't see Foreign Service people getting out. I often thought it was just they were waiting for the next assignment, they'd get there and they were already planning where they were going next, so their mind wasn't there, it was on the next assignment. But with AID people you stayed for four years many times.

WESTLEY: It was very much a standard. People would come in assuming they'd be there for four years, they'd figure let's make the best of it. Posts like India, you had a

good American school so it wasn't too hard on the families, and there were things often that spouses could do though that was always a challenge.

Q: Was the school an Anglo-American school? I know they have them in many places. Or a totally American school?

WESTLEY: It was called the American Embassy School (AES), so strictly American. I don't think they even offered IB (international baccalaureate). I think they had AP (advanced placement) but no IB at that time.

Q: I don't know what those acronyms mean but it had something to do with future education?

WESTLEY: In U.S. high schools there have always been advanced placement courses. If you do well, you often get college credit for it and skip some courses. And then starting in the '90s I guess it was, there's a program called international baccalaureate (IB) which was more akin to some of the European programs in their high school systems (such as the French "lycee." IB has been adopted very widely by American schools both overseas and in the U.S. It's more consistent with European programs.

Q: Is it like advanced placement and then you can?

WESTLEY: It's more akin to British O levels and A levels, the same type of thing, yes.

Q: Is it an advantage for applying to American universities and colleges?

WESTLEY: Yes. And it helps if you're planning to do a semester or year abroad in Europe.

Q: If you have that in your educational background?

WESTLEY: I think at AU probably half the students do that, so.

Q: Okay. So do you want to move on to your next assignment?

WESTLEY: Sure.

Q: That would be, back to the U.S. and I have here, you are at the Office of Development Planning, Bureau for Asia. Tell me a little bit about that, was that AID or outside of AID.

WESTLEY: That's the so-called program office of the regional bureau, the Asia Bureau. The acronym is ASIA/DP. At that time we had a separate Asia Bureau and Near East Bureau; later they got combined. So it's the office that does planning, budgeting, evaluation for the overall Asia programs for the various countries in Asia.

Q: Still within AID.

WESTLEY: Yes.

Q: Funded at one billion dollars annually. Someone was agreeing that AID was being, Congress must have said that was okay, that's a lot of money.

WESTLEY: Well we were in a lot of countries in Asia. In South Asia India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal and East and Southeast Asia you have the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, big countries. South Korea probably almost phased out by then but that had been a major program earlier as had been Taiwan. Those are the two model programs for AID, South Korea and Taiwan. These New Directions I mentioned were based on our experience in South Korea and Taiwan. By the time I got to the Asia bureau job, those had probably phased out but there were very big programs in other East Asian and South Asia countries. Adding up to a billion is fairly easy.

Q: I don't think I heard you mention Vietnam or was that part of funding as well by then?

WESTLEY: No not yet.

Q: You come back. This is '84, '85?

WESTLEY: Right.

Q: How did your wife and daughter transition back to the U.S.?

WESTLEY: In India we had an aya, a childcare person from Tibet, so we brought her with us. She was with us here in Washington, seemed to enjoy it quite a bit. My wife Joan was able to continue with French teaching. Here she taught at Georgetown and American University. It turned out to be fairly easy for her to find French-teaching jobs. I was only there a year. The Mission Director in Bangladesh had to be replaced and the person they decided to send out there backed out. So they desperately looked around and decided I was the right person. Partly because Rocky Staples, the Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Asia Bureau. had been with the Ford Foundation in India and had been a friend of ours. When we got married in India he had shown us how to get married there using the Delhi administration. I had talked to him occasionally in India about my work on the Green Revolution. So when the Bangladesh job came up, he said "John knows something about South Asian agriculture, you ought to send him out."

I was very uninterested in doing that, I fought it as long as I could, but eventually they said "When you join AID, you agree you will go wherever we want to send you."

Q: Yeah, of course. But you didn't mind, or maybe you did, how did you feel about going?

WESTLEY: My wife had a son who could not accompany us, since there was no American high school in Dhaka. Eventually they said "you've got to take this position,"

so I did. Joan stayed here for six months teaching in Washington while I went to Bangladesh.

Q: You got to do it. So you go to Bangladesh. I'm reading here, your annual budget $175 million. I'm guessing you felt that wasn't enough money?

WESTLEY: (laughs) Bangladesh was a fascinating country to work in. My wife found it difficult because poverty there was much worse than in India, more visible and she found that difficult to deal with. And the fact that women couldn't easily go shopping, since Bangladesh is a Muslim country. On the other hand there was a pretty tight international community there and she was able to get a job teaching, and our daughter was in kindergarten. I found the Bangladesh government really good to work with. Bangladesh of course was still thought of as the basket case of Asia. They had only become independent in '73, and it is '85 when we get there. People were still pretty skeptical about how well Bangladesh could do. On the other hand I saw a lot of interesting indications that they might be able to do pretty well. They had done extremely well for example in family planning, they were already doing great work there. They were doing extremely well in agriculture. They had adopted the Green Revolution technologies for rice and also for maize, or corn. In many parts of Bangladesh you got more nutrients per acre with corn than you did with say other crops, so they were making good progress on that. They were very good in agricultural research, which we were supporting aggressively. They were slowly reforming some of their government-owned structures such as fertilizer distribution and central banking and so on, making it more responsive to the market. By the time I left I was giving speeches about how I saw very bright prospects for Bangladesh.

Another thing which happened is that while we were there they had gotten into the garment industry. Working under U.S. quotas for garments.

Q: You're talking about clothing?

WESTLEY: Yes. Garments. We had a very active American Club there where people played tennis and stuff. People who came to town would be allowed to go in there so we had lots of people from places like Bloomingdale's who were there to work with Bangladeshi firms to produce things to their specifications. By the time I left that was already pretty active and it was clear that Bangladesh could become a fairly major center for garment production for Europe and the U.S. In fact, that's one of the reasons that Bangladesh is doing better now in some respects than either India or Pakistan. The "basket case" from 1973.

Q: Plus they have weather problems there too, don't they, flooding and different kinds of issues with weather?

WESTLEY: The first thing that happened when I arrived was a huge typhoon in the Indian Ocean. The river would bring down so much silt that islands would build up in the bay. As soon as an island built up at all, people would go out and settle it, since land was

so scarce. It was only three or four feet above sea level and some of them had already had typhoon shelters and so on. But this was really a bad typhoon. It wiped out several of these islands, and the people and the animals just disappeared. One of the first things I did was take a light plane over the bay to see what had happened and what we thought we could do to try to help out. Weather is a huge problem for Bangladesh.

Q: It seems like that's what we hear about now. Weather problems.

WESTLEY: They're serious about dealing with it, so I think they've probably done a better job than many other countries in figuring out ways to mitigate the problems. It's been a pretty impressive developing country. They have difficult politics but somehow the economics has worked.

Q: Interesting. The people of Bangladesh, are they from somewhere else or are they in general always been in Bangladesh or have they immigrated from other places?

WESTLEY: Good question. Bangladesh is Bangladesh because it's the Muslim part of the Indian subcontinent on the east. On the west of course is Pakistan. There were still Hindus living in Bangladesh when we were there, but as in the case of Pakistan, most Hindus decided to go to India. As far as I know there hadn't been much recent in-migration for hundreds of years, so that was a pretty stable population. But fairly high population growth and so a very dense population.

Q: John, would you like to move on to your job back in Washington, 1987 to 1990 as the associate assistant administrator for the development planning for Africa.

WESTLEY: Right, the same job as I had for Asia, but for Africa.

Q: Tell us a little about your projects and what you were doing.

WESTLEY: I was always interested in Africa so it was nice to come back and spend more time there. This was the office for planning, budgeting, evaluation for all the Africa programs (AFR/DP). Africa of course has a lot more country programs than Asia did at that time. Some interesting issues to deal with. I had a very good colleague in the office, Emmy Simmons, who was head of our evaluation section. She and I developed something called the Development Fund for Africa, trying to get more flexibility from Congress to do various things in Africa including making what we call program grants where you provide a big chunk of money in exchange for a commitment to various policy changes. This is of course very much the way the World Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund) work, and is something we in AID had been trying for quite a while. We had actually done something like that in Ethiopia when I was there. In Africa we made some headway in trying to be more flexible. We also had some issues in deciding which countries deserved to get what kinds of support. Some of our countries were getting large levels of support for various political reasons, such as Zaire or Liberia. We tried to develop a programming approach which would take into account the criteria we were trying to emphasize. That of course was always interesting because the State Department

had some very different views on those issues than we did in AID. We had some interesting discussions.

Q: You mentioned political issues, was that pressure from State or Congress?

WESTLEY: Some of the pressure congressional, yes. It was often State seeing things in a certain way. It was an interesting time, Africa is where the real development challenge is. Even at that time it was pretty clear that's where we were going to be for a long time to come. I enjoyed those three years, it was nice to be back in Washington.

Q: Did you enjoy the sparring a bit or was it a drag?

WESTLEY: Oh it was kind of fun.

Q: I knew you were going to say that!

WESTLEY: In DC our daughter was able to go to the local elementary school which was very good, Horace Mann. Joan was still teaching French at Georgetown and AU.

Q: I don't remember where Horace Mann is, my kid had moved on to the Field School but where were you living in Washington?

WESTLEY: Near AU. Wesley Heights. .

Q: Where do you live now, in Virginia?

WESTLEY: No, same place.

Q: In the district, okay.

WESTLEY: This time we hadn't brought anyone with us to take care of our daughter but she was getting older so it wasn't quite an issue. We did have a room in the basement of our house so we would have AU students live there, and babysit as part of the rent. So we survived.

Q: And now I know you just had to go down the street to go to the Kreeger Museum. Is Horace Mann a high school?

WESTLEY: It's an elementary school.

Q: Where did she go to college?

WESTLEY: When we left Washington she was in fourth grade. We went back to Kenya.

Q: So not all three of you have a personal connection to Washington DC. It's a place to go in between your overseas assignments basically.

WESTLEY: No, I mean it's the one place we felt at home and had some roots. Our daughter went to elementary school for those three years but then she never went to school in the U.S. again until going to Bowdoin College. Now she lives in Portland, Maine. She was just here with us for a few days with her kids. She likes to be in Washington but has no strong interest in returning here.

Q: What else can you tell us about that job at AID?

WESTLEY: Any Washington job in AID we often spend a lot of time dealing with the Hill. That is never much fun. Even though there are staffers there very committed to doing what they can, the politics of foreign aid are always a challenge because it's hard to make the case to the American people that foreign aid is a good thing to do.

Q: Do you think the State Department has the same challenges and issues or do you think it's AID that has those challenges with Congress?

WESTLEY: I think it's the same problem. Foreign affairs – look at the reaction now, "why is Biden in Ukraine he should be in Ohio with that train crash," right? So it's that. There's always been such a strong isolationist streak in the U.S. so making the case for anything involving resources going out of the country, whether it's staffing or actual money, is not easy. Even the most internationalist congressman or senator don't find it easy either, because they have to be elected. People have very exaggerated ideas about what the amount of foreign aid going out is. It's a tiny part of the budget. And as we deal with the Republican Congress which is now in power, we're going to see how much of the cuts have to come from USAID, from foreign assistance.

Q: Yeah. Do you think it makes any difference if the area the congressman is elected from has a large population from one of those foreign countries? I know living in Chicago, a lot of Polish people.

WESTLEY: Lots of Ukrainians, too.

Q: So I've often wondered if that would make a difference with congressional support of overseas programs, if their constituents had a strong identity with a developing country..

WESTLEY: Oh yes. We would often have CODELs (congressional delegations) coming, especially in India and Egypt.I remember that a certain congressman had a lot of South Asians (Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and Indians) in his district, and so he was really keen on those issues.

Q: A little bit more of an influence.

WESTLEY: It's about Polish, Czech or Lithuanian or other Eastern European pressure groups in places such as Chicago. They're pretty well organized. So if they are big enough they can make a real difference, particularly for a congressman.

Q: Detroit is another place. Working with refugees, a lot of Iraqi refugees ended up in the Detroit area, so much so that I think the Detroit mayor said don't send any more.

WESTLEY: That's also been an awful lot of other Arab, whether Muslim or Christian, population is in the Detroit area.

Q: That's what I didn't know until I had to work with assigning refugees and where they could go, they always had their preferences and we put them where we wanted to put them, but Detroit pushed back. Portland, Maine, has pushed back a little bit. Senegalese, various refugee groups in the Portland area, there have been issues.

WESTLEY: Especially with Somalis.

Q: Right, it wasn't Senegalese it was Somalis. So you're aware of that. If you move up there maybe you can get involved.

WESTLEY: On to Kenya.

Q: This is the later Kenya, 1990 to '94. What got you there?

WESTLEY: I've always been extremely lucky in getting assigned to various places.

Q: Did someone ask for you?

WESTLEY: I forget how it worked out but it worked out somehow. It was fascinating to be back. There was an interesting ambassador there named Smith Hempstone who had been a *Chicago Daily News* correspondent in East Africa before. He was then the editor of *The Washington Times* and got George H.W. Bush to choose him as the ambassador to Kenya. He was determined to push multiparty democracy in Kenya so a lot of our work in Kenya had to do with that.

Q: Multiparty, explain that.

WESTLEY: There had been one-party in Kenya, Kenyatta and Moi. There was growing interest in the '80s and '90s in helping countries move in more democratic directions. One of the ways to do that is to have competition among parties. The dominant ethnic group, the Kikuyu in Kenya, had been out of power because Moi was not Kikuyu and they were anxious to get more power. They were lobbying for multiparty democracy and our ambassador thought that was a good idea, so a lot of our work was using our bilateral and multilateral assistance, World Bank and African Development Bank, to nudge Kenya in the direction of allowing multiparty democracy. The Kenyans would say they were interested but when it came to actually making it work, it turned out to be extremely difficult. A lot of our time in the four years I was there had to do with that.

Q: How did you feel about that? It almost sounds political more than AID-ish?

WESTLEY: It is. It got us involved in working in areas, governance and democracy, which really hadn't been part of AID's portfolio. We'd always been concerned in health, education, agriculture, enterprise development, and so on. So it was a little bit disorienting in a way. On the other hand we certainly got a lot of support from Kenyans we would talk to for that kind of thing. They were generally pretty enthusiastic about it.

Q: Did you know that was going to be the mission before you went or did it?

WESTLEY: It was already pretty well known in the Africa bureau as a bureau we had been working on as well. The person I succeeded in Kenya as director was a political scientist who got even more heavily involved than I would have gotten in those issues. I knew him pretty well, so he prepared me for all of that. It was really especially the first two years. The election which took place in 1992 was a multiparty election. Moi was able to win by splitting the vote among the Kikuyu among two candidates. He won with a plurality, probably forty percent, but it worked. Kenya since then has been successful in holding multiparty elections.

Q: I've heard that as well although there have been other issues in Kenya, some terrorist activities and all of that. Did anything like that happen while you were there, any terrorist?

WESTLEY: The issue was Somalia. Ambassador Hempstone had done quite a bit of travel in Somalia and was pretty adamant about how we should deal with it. While he was there, the first two years I was there, that was a bit of an issue. There was no Somali terrorist activity in Kenya while we were there - that came later.

Q: Okay, so you and your family felt physically safe enough anyway?

WESTLEY: Yes, I was very glad when I was able to sell my four-wheel drive vehicle Pajero and not worry about being carjacked. (laugh) I had a driver of course and one day driving to the office the car ahead of us was carjacked. Two guys jumped out of a cab, put a pistol to the head of the driver of the carjacked car. He got out of the car and the carjackers drove off with his car. My driver of course reported this and got out of there as quickly as possible.

Q: Be careful in the District because I know Arlington and the District, carjacking, don't sit in your car checking your email especially at night even if your car is locked because if someone is waving a knife or a gun at you through a locked door window, what are you going to do? Say 'No'; you're gonna let them have the car. That was happening there.

Well you and your family were used to being out and about in these various countries.

WESTLEY: Also Kenya was another place where we had a very good FSN staff. The government was a bit difficult to work with, but a lot of people in government were trying to do good things and we were making some real progress in some areas where we

were working. That was especially true in family planning and health, in agriculture and agricultural research. From that point of view it was a rewarding place to be.

Q: Did you travel about the country?

WESTLEY: Of course. My wife organized a team of four women to write a travel book on Kenya. It was published as *Kenya's Best Hotels and Lodges*. They went to 250 different places. Then it got bought by a travel guide company, Fielding's Guides. It became their Kenya guide. We did a fair amount of traveling. Kenya is very well organized for tourism, so it was an easy country to travel in.

There was an American school there, it was called the International School of Kenya (ISK).

Q: That's where your daughter was?

WESTLEY: Yes. My kids from my first marriage had gone to a British-system school called Hillcrest. Very few of the children of the international community went there. They generally went to the ISK which was on the American system.

Q: I know they're spread around the world.

WESTLEY: For posts where we were, there was always a good American school.

Q: Fortunate.

WESTLEY: Even better in Egypt where we went next.

Q: After Kenya you're to Egypt; how did that happen?

WESTLEY: They needed somebody, they were looking especially for people with economic policy experience, that was sort of my field so somehow I got the nod.

Q: Did you go directly from Kenya or did you come back to the Washington area?

WESTLEY: We had home leave but yes, basically went directly to Egypt.

Q: Tell us a little about your time in Egypt.

WESTLEY: It's a huge program. At the time of the Camp David Agreements in 1979 it was agreed that Egypt would get $2 billion a year and Israel $3 billion. Of the 2 billion, $800 million was for aid and $1.2 billion for military assistance (to transition the Egyptian military from Soviet to American equipment and practice). The AID program was still $800 million a year when I got there, although it later got cut back. It was all grant funds by that time not loans. For the loan funds we had provided to Egypt earlier, we were providing loan forgiveness. It was an interesting program. I was a little reluctant

to go there first because I thought it was a political program, and that we weren't necessarily going to achieve much development. But I was talked out of that and had a very interesting time for those four years. My wife had converted from French to English teaching in Kenya. In Egypt there's an American University in Cairo which had a very nice freshman writing program. She was able to teach there and enjoyed that very much. We both enjoyed the Egyptians we got to know. Also the Egyptian elite, some of them still spoke French so that was interesting. It was a fascinating country.

Q: Let's see, so you were there for four years. When I went to visit there an AID person showed me a well digging project somewhere in Cairo, and also an archaeological dig program that AID was involved in. That surprised me, it was in Cairo and I questioned an AID woman about that, AID helping with archaeological digs.

WESTLEY: The rationale of course being employment generation. Egypt is heavily dependent on tourism, their museums have generally been in pretty poor shape. So we devoted effort to improving the exhibition approach at the big museums and also working in the areas up-country, Luxor and so forth, to improve things there.

Q: You made it all make sense to me now! The connection would be employment and developing parts of the economy.

WESTLEY: Scuba diving was a really big thing in the Red Sea and one of the big tourist draws was scuba-diving courses. If you come up or go down too fast while diving you could get something called the bends. To deal with that AID financed a hyperbaric chamber. We also funded an Egyptian doctor to staff it. One time my wife got too much weight, went down too fast, got that problem; it punctured her inner ear. That doctor happened to be down there while we were there and he was able to deal with it. We had to stay there for a week for the inner ear to heal up before we went back to Cairo. The hyperbaric chamber is something you'd think has nothing to do with AID, but it was there for tourism development and employment.

Q: And you were able to take advantage. Fascinating the different kinds of projects AID was involved in that puzzled me when I was there, now that makes sense. Where did you live in Cairo?

WESTLEY: An area called Maadi, where the American school was (Cairo American College). A wonderful secondary school. Our daughter got through her junior year there, had great Egyptian friends and got involved doing volunteer work.

Q: Was that an area on the edge of Cairo with a lot of expats?

WESTLEY: Yes, south of downtown Cairo, about a forty-five minute drive into town.

Q: I house sat, or cat- and dog-sitting a Foreign Service couple who were on home leave so I went to Cairo and took care of their animals who were shipped directly from

Moscow, and they showed up and I went into an island. Some place, an island in the Nile where I think—

WESTLEY: Zamalek Island.

Q: Where there are embassies and. I went to a hotel there.

WESTLEY: I enjoyed my Egypt assignment not only because we were involved in tourism but because I thought we were making more of an impact than I expected. We had a huge staff, about 100 Americans and 300 Egyptian staff, some wonderful FSN staff. A much more interesting assignment than I expected.

Q: Great. That ended your AID career and then you went on to the United Nations, is that correct?

WESTLEY: Right.

Q: I see here that you were at the United Nations as a vice president at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). That sounds like a perfect segue from AID, tell us a little about that. Were you in DC or New York?

WESTLEY: I was in Rome. IFAD was set up in the ‘70s during the food crisis related to the increase in oil prices in ‘73. The increased prices of fuel and fertilizer was creating problems for agriculture in developing countries. So Henry Kissinger persuaded the king of Saudi Arabia, the Shah of Iran, the president of Venezuela and other OPEC countries, that they ought to put up some money to help developing countries whose agriculture was suffering badly. So he said the West will put up half the money, if OPEC puts up half. So they agreed. IFAD officially came into existence in 1978 with the understanding that the IFAD president would always be from an OPEC country and the vice president would be from the West, particularly from the U.S. So I was put on the list of five people and interviewed in Rome. I was the one of the five selected partly I think because the longest-serving American vice president had also come from being the mission director in Cairo.He had a tremendous influence on deciding what kind of institution IFAD would be. That goes back to what I mentioned before, those New Directions in AID and the effort to change our orientation back in the ‘70s. Don Brown went to IFAD in about 1980 and was there until a few years before I got there. He was the person who shaped what IFAD came to be: a lending institution for agriculture and rural development with a strong emphasis on equitable growth. Because of his influence, there had been a tremendous emphasis on the aspects of equitable growth that I mentioned - employment generation, land reform, and reaching small farmers. IFAD as an institution was a product of the policies of AID in the ‘70s.

Q: Why was it in Rome?

WESTLEY: After the war various countries were designated as the places where various UN institutions would be. Rome became the place where the Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO) was based. In 1960 the World Food Programme (WFP) was created under the influence especially of George McGovern and Hubert Humphrey. They had been instrumental in creating PL-480, the U.S. food aid program. They wanted a UN food aid program and that was what the World Food Programme is; it got created in 1960. Because FAO is in Rome, WFP is in Rome. Then in the 1970s when IFAD was created, FAO had convened the meetings that created IFAD. So IFAD was placed in Rome.

Q: So off you went again, to a pretty nice Weste*rn European location. What was that like?*

WESTLEY: I kept telling my wife Joan, who spent her junior year in France, that we'd eventually find some way to get to Europe. There were AID jobs in Europe, especially in Paris with the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAS), but I was never able to get one of those. Finally getting a job in Rome was pretty good.

Q: Great consolation prize. Did you live near the embassy? Where were your offices in Rome?

WESTLEY: The offices were in an area called EUR, an area Mussolini tried to develop as a new population center in Rome. Quite a ways out. We lived downtown in the Centro Storico (historic center) of Rome, partly because our daughter was going to a school right next to FAO and that was much more convenient. Our daughter did her senior year there. It was a forty-five minute drive to the office from there but I had a driver and that gave me an opportunity to read the paper every morning. He'd bring the *International Herald Tribune* which later became the *International New York Times,*

Q: You were there for four years on that job, then you chose to stay, you retired from that job and went on to be a teacher.

WESTLEY: When I retired in 2002, Joan said let's not leave quite now, so we wound up staying another five years till 2007 before we moved back to Washington. She had gotten a job teaching English composition at John Cabot University, which is an American-style liberal arts college offering a degree in the U.S. system. So she was able to teach there. When I retired, during my time at IFAD the U.S. contribution had gotten so low that the Europeans who were contributing much more felt that they deserved the IFAD presidency. Also, OPEC was no longer contributing much either, so the Europeans got the presidency. A Swede became president of IFAD, and then the vice presidency went to OPEC. When I retired, they got someone from Nigeria to be vice president. So no longer would the State Department be proposing someone for that position.

In any case, when I retired Joan said "Maybe John Cabot would need somebody in economics." So I gave a practice class and John Cabot hired me as an adjunct associate professor of economics. I taught international economics which had been my original field, development economics which I did at the Ph.D. level, and macroeconomics. That

went for fifteen years until 2018 (although after 2007 when we moved back to DC we only returned to Rome during January to May to teach the spring semester).

Q: I note this adjustment to your CV, first you had 2003 to present but you changed that to 2018 and that's when you actually retired and left Rome.

WESTLEY: In 2007 we moved back to the States but we continued teaching the spring semester only. That ended in 2018. Fortunately we stopped then because had we continued we would have had to teach during the pandemic.

Q: I can see you are totally justified in retiring, you had a couple of attempts at it and found other things to do. Now you're on a mission to find a final place to settle.

WESTLEY: As I look back on my transition from AID to the UN, I see that USAID had had a tremendous amount to do with the kind of organization that IFAD came to be. We were doing the same thing as the World Bank, lending for agricultural and rural development. The African Development Bank and Asian Development Bank were doing that as well. But IFAD had more emphasis on the equitable growth aspects, reaching the small farmer, trying to do something on land reform and so on. While I was there they started to work on a rural poverty report. We knew the World Bank was going to do a World Poverty Report in 2000 and we decided to do one specifically on rural poverty. There was already a lot of work being done on trying to find out where the poor were and it turned out 75 percent of the poor according to World Bank criteria were in rural areas. We wanted to make sure people were paying attention to rural development and rural poverty so we started working on the IFAD *Rural Poverty Report* under my supervision. I got my old boss at AID, John Miller, to help with that a bit. Our main analyst was a well-known British development economist named Michael Lipton. I had relied very much on his work in doing my own thesis research on India's Green Revolution. Professor Lipton was still active, involved in the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Sussex, in Brighton. So he became our lead analyst. I had a Bangladeshi colleague at IFAD who I met in Bangladesh who was the lead strategist for IFAD. The two of us led the effort to do this report and we were able to get it published by Oxford University Press in 2001, just after the World Bank came out with their overall *World Poverty Report.* We were able to travel to the World Bank and make the case there. We traveled to UN headquarters in New York and had lunch with Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the UN at that time. I have a picture of me telling him about the importance of rural poverty. We also talked about what it was like going from Ghana to Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. A little colder than Accra, Ghana.

So that's a case where the influence of USAID on the nature of the organization had quite an impact.

Q: I'd say so. Your professional career had quite an impact, you pulled people together you had been with, been influenced by, you influenced them around your different assignments. Well integrated career.

WESTLEY: Another aspect of being very lucky.

Q: Yes but taking advantage of that luck and fortune to do a pretty good job. That's amazing.

WESTLEY: I often think of how important it was that AID was very good at propagating our values in various ways, whether it's through training of FSN staff or through the programs developing countries which not only supported economic growth but also promoted the institutional values of rule of law, democracy and respect for all members of society. I think that's been a huge American accomplishment starting with Truman's Point Four and continuing with Kennedy's putting various programs together under USAID in 1961. The accomplishments have been wide-ranging and have made millions of lives better. A pretty impressive story even though most Americans don't want to hear about it or at least haven't heard about it.

Q: ADST wanted to hear about it, they have a special project to try to get as many AID interviews in our database.

End of interview