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FRANK YOUNG

*Interviewed by: John Pielemeier
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INTERVIEW

Q: This is John Pielemeier, this will be the first interview with Frank Young on May 4. Frank is a career Foreign Service Officer with a very rich and interesting history and a thought leader for USAID [United States Agency for International Development], as well as the mission director, and has had many other posts and also many interventions and working relationships with the State Department, which I hope we will cover later on in the interview. So, Frank, we're on, I'm going to ask you a first question. Welcome, and tell us a little bit about your personal background.

YOUNG: Well, thank you, John, and good morning to you. My personal background is probably not one that anyone would associate with what I ended up doing in my life, which was a focus on international affairs and professional development work. I grew up in an Italian household, and I know the name Young doesn't reflect that. But I'll explain that in a minute. I was born into a family that lived on Federal Hill in Providence, Rhode Island. After I was born, and my father was no longer in the scene at that time, my mother's parents and I moved to North Providence. I learned from taking my grandmother's oral history some years later that my mother's family had an interesting association with the Providence mafia and was close to the family of the rising crime boss, Raymond Patriarca. So, anybody that knows anything about the New England mafia would know about the Patriarca family. My grandmother was a good friend of the family.

By the early '50s, for reasons never fully explained to me, conditions for us to live in Providence in that environment became difficult for us. So, we moved to California in 1953. The town we moved to, Modesto California, was a small community of barely 10,000 people. My grandfather went to work for E. & J. Gallo Winery, which is where I

ended up working during my college years welding floats in wine tanks. It was a rural agricultural community: peach farming, grapes, berries, and of course, alfalfa, pecans, and almonds were dominant crops in our area. Gallo Winery and the local canning industry served as the underpinnings of the area's economy. Modesto was a very isolated, insulated place. It had one library. It didn't get much in the way of outside entertainment; in fact, I don't think it had a professional stage at the time. If we wanted excitement, we traveled 90 miles to the northwest to San Francisco where we could experience the big city.

I grew up in that environment, but in high school I took on interests like debate and music. I achieved "Double Ruby" status of what was then known as the NFL, but not the NFL you're thinking of. This was the National Forensic League out of Ohio, and between my debate tournaments I was also a singer. I sang in a 16 voice acapella male singing group which performed some 60 "gigs" throughout the school year. And between those two activities and being the announcer for our high school football games on Friday nights, I was pretty much a bookworm, very studious. I guess it was from my world geography and world history classes as a high school sophomore that I developed my interest in events and affairs outside my little hometown. With my parents, my stepfather who ran a small business as a jeweler in Modesto, and my mother who also worked in a jewelry store, our family started out in what I would call the lower middle class. Before my mom married my stepdad, I was still living with my grandparents and for a time was on the then-equivalent of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, or what we call food stamps now. I guess one could say my upbringing was, I think, fairly modest. By the time I reached my senior year in high school, I knew that I wanted to leave town to go to college and I didn't want to return to Modesto. I also did not want to get a professional degree, and come back to town as a lawyer, an accountant or a doctor. I wanted something more out of life than to return home. And I think seeing George Lucas's *American Graffiti* kind of sealed it for me, because that movie actually is about Modesto, California, even down to the directions of the one-way streets, even though Lucas didn't film it there. Seeing Modesto portrayed on the silver screen kind of solidified my determination that I just couldn't stay there.

As you know, John, I've recently written a book about my experiences in South India in the late 1960s, and it describes, in detail at the beginning, my background growing up and why it drove me into a totally opposite direction than anybody ever thought I would go in. So when I applied to colleges, I applied to all the Ivy League schools plus Stanford and University of California at Santa Barbara; but I also applied to a small school, University of the Pacific, in Stockton, California, just 30 miles north of my home, because they had what they called a small liberal arts college, called Callison. That college required that you spend a full year in a non-Western culture as a sophomore as a requirement for a bachelor's degree. Callison's requirement was so unique because at that time overseas study was usually done in the junior year and was usually a semester abroad versus a full year. Well, Callison was the only college in the United States to require a full year of study as a sophomore, and as a degree requirement. It was considered a very, very experimental program. They'd set up their campus in Bangalore, India, which back in the '60s was a small town (by Indian standards), and relatively

isolated. I wasn't really sure what I was getting into when I enrolled at Callison and subsequently boarded Pan Am 1 in August 1969. But that year in India turned me around. And I think that decision to go to Pacific, and to go to Callison, turning down Stanford and Brown, much to the chagrin of my parents and their neighbors, coupled with that year in India, was probably the most important decision I've ever made in my life. It resulted, directly or indirectly, in all the other decisions I've ever made in my life, whether personal or professional. I can almost trace everything I have done or have become back to that decision to spend a sophomore year in India, which again, is the focus of the book I just mentioned that I had published in January—

Q: —right, mention the title of the book, please.

YOUNG: Yeah, the title of the book is *47 Aerogrammes: A Passage Through India, 1969 to 1970*. It's a play on words of the E.M. Forster title. It took me 11 years to write the book, and it took me five years to come up with the title. But oddly enough, it was a TDY [Temporary Duty Travel] assignment that stoked me to write the book. I don't think it ever would have been written had I not gone on TDY to India in 2011 to get ready for Hillary Clinton's last strategic dialogue with the Indians. It was landing in India that night in July of 2011 that just really brought memories flooding back and made me realize I had to write it. I thought I'd get it done in a year, and it took 11! So I'm definitely no Stephen King, who by the way is a neighbor of ours in Casey Key here, so—

Q: Oh, wow. KCP?

YOUNG: Casey Key, Casey Key. I'm sorry. Yeah. He lives on Casey Key, which is just south of Sarasota.

Q: Okay.

YOUNG: By the way, I mentioned that I grew up in an Italian household. My name is Young. Turns out, I did genealogy research, and my wife and I traced my original father's lineage. His name was Young and his lineage can be traced all the way back to Canada, and before that to Scotland. My wife teases me that I have more Canadian blood in me than she does!

Q: That's a good start, Frank. Please move ahead, you're doing a good job.

YOUNG: Well, after I came back from India, the overseas bug had really bit hard. The next year, I spent a summer in Taiwan in intensive language study, studying Mandarin Chinese. After I came back from that, I had enough credits that I was able to graduate a semester early. At the beginning of my senior year, I decided that I was going to go work for my congressman John McFall, who represented the then 14th District of California. I hopped a plane the day after New Year's 1972 and landed in DC. Thanks to a family friend I found a room in an elderly widow's home in Northwest Washington. The next morning, Monday January 3, I got on the 30 series bus on upper Wisconsin Avenue and rode all the way down to the newly built Rayburn Office Building. At that time, there was

no security, so I simply walked in. It was eight in the morning, and the office wasn't open yet. His office was room 2346 on the second floor of the Rayburn Building. I just sat down with my little briefcase and was sitting by the door when Congressman McFall's first staffer Lee Wilber showed up. With a look of surprise and suspicion he asked, "Who are you?" And I said, "I'm Frank Young, and I'm here to intern for the congressman." Well, nobody quite expected me, but still welcomed me with open arms. I don't think I'd advise any person to do that these days. The legislative assistant, Sam Mabry, immediately took under his wing. He recognized that I was pretty much a diamond in the rough, because except for my travel at age three from Rhode Island to Modesto, I rarely traveled outside of California. Of course, I'd already been to India and I'd already been to Taiwan, but I had never been to the East Coast. And Washington was such a dramatically different environment for me. The way people behaved, the way they talked, it took a lot of adjustment.

Sam Mabry, who was the congressman's legislative aide, was a great mentor and guided me through the ways of Washington as I committed a lot of faux pas and a lot of mistakes. The experience taught me one thing that I kept with me during my later life, even as a supervisor and mission director: that people should not be discouraged from making mistakes, and should not be penalized for mistakes that are made with good intention. Although sometimes you can, you know, you can blow it, you can lose your cool, you can say something that you shouldn't have said. Even then, it's important to be gracious when somebody makes those kinds of mistakes, because it can teach them so much more than simply letting it slide. And Sam was that kind of guy for me. My relationship with John McFall, the congressman, was also special. Although I was the "intern", he kind of adopted me as a second son. I was the guy who drove him to Dulles Airport every other weekend for his constituent trips back to California. We had a lot of deep conversations and, you know, he really felt like, not so much like a father figure, but like the uncle I never had. Anyway, I got very close to all the staff there, and while I was working in McFall's office, I applied to the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy for graduate school. I got my acceptance somewhat late, and when I showed up at Fletcher—

Q: —which is in Washington, DC —

YOUNG: —well, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy is part of Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. When I showed up, they were very clear. They said, "You know, your school was a bit odd. Callison College, we didn't know what to make of it. Its curriculum, its requirements." And they said the fact that Callison never issued formal grades was also an issue, because I was on a pass-fail system the entire four years of college. It turned out, though, that Callison kept shadow grades and I actually had a 4.0. But they said, "more than that, what got you over the hump and into Fletcher was the fact that you spent that year in India." So, when I go back and I say everything that's happened to me personally and professionally in my life can be traced to that year in India, Fletcher was the first most overt example. It turned out that the master's program I was enrolled in, international development studies, was a curriculum that was funded by USAID under what they called a Title IX Provision of the foreign assistance statute from the late '60s. That title no longer exists and USAID no longer, I think, funds degree

programs in international development studies, but they did at the time. I had a tremendous program in development economics, development politics, comparative politics, and statistics. I mean, it just covered the gamut. I continued to work for the congressman during my holiday breaks, and during the summers I would go back to DC and work for him and then return to Fletcher the next year.

Q: That's right, sorry.

YOUNG: At the end of the second year of Fletcher, I decided I was going to go on for my PhD, and I was going to do my research in Taiwan. It was going to be on a topic that focused on political development, because in the mid '70s, in Taiwan, we had already recognized Beijing—you know, Nixon had already been to Beijing—we recognized Beijing as the capital of China, and Taiwan was beginning to feel isolated and its society was becoming very tense. There was a question over the government's legitimacy at the time. So, I was focusing my research on the role that university students and university protests might play in influencing Taiwan's politics and potentially affect the legitimacy of the regime. I was awarded two fellowships that year one from Shell, and the other one from IT&T, International Telephone and Telegraph. I couldn't use them both, so I gave one to a friend and he ended up studying energy policy in Africa, which was great. His name is Charlie Ebinger. I went to Taiwan with my new wife and spent the year studying newspaper Chinese and doing my research. In fact, in a couple of weeks, I'm giving a talk on this experience to a local group here because one of the things that stands out for me during that time was how Taiwan had come from an island that was just — I wouldn't necessarily call it impoverished, but quite undeveloped — into one that was becoming one of the major Asian economies in the entire region. This was my second visit to Taiwan, and I was observing this island and its government, as authoritarian and autocratic as it was under Chiang Kai-Shek, moving at hyper speed into the modern world and remaking its economy in ways that I couldn't have imagined. Having lived a year in India, I couldn't even imagine India doing it this way.

Q: Becoming an Asian Tiger?

YOUNG: Yeah, becoming an Asian Tiger. I could not imagine how poverty could be addressed in a way like this, and it fixated my interest on what are the underlying causes of poverty, and what are the solutions? And not solution, singular, which I felt we in the US government at that time tended to think in terms of singular templates and solutions. What are the solutions that each country finds are appropriate for itself? And I guess my interest in poverty reduction and development, which I consider two different things, even though they do converge, derived from comparing my Taiwan and India experiences. It became a passion that I wanted to turn into a profession.

Q: So let me ask you one question. When you were in Taiwan, did you have any contact with the US Government Foreign Aid Program, which was a major factor in Taiwan's development?

YOUNG: It had ended by then. We stopped giving overt aid to Taiwan in the mid '60s. They had enough going for them that after we spent about \$14 billion in current dollars, over the time period of the 1950s to 1960s, that they no longer needed it. We still had a US military presence there, although it was being drawn down, it was declining. I believe we were their biggest trading partner along with Japan at the time, so we were maintaining a negative trade balance with them, which resulted in huge private capital flows into Taiwan. During my time there in 1974 to 1975, the only contact I had was with the embassy, who wanted to keep up with me on my research. They had political reasons for doing so.

It turned out that it was a great contact to have, because one of the things I didn't mention is in the summer of 1974 before I went to Taiwan, I had worked for the Central Intelligence Agency. They had an intern program where they were training and identifying potential graduate school graduates up for careers in the CIA. It had never really been my intention to do that, but the internship seemed interesting. While I was there, I did research for them that was related to mainland China, not Taiwan, although when I left, I left with some useful contacts both in Taiwan and at the embassy. My contact with the embassy in Taiwan was with someone, and I won't mention his name, who wasn't the station chief but one person below that. One day I received my W2 for my 1974 taxes at my Taipei address on Nanking East Road, and despite being still under a "cover" arrangement, the return address to my W2 said Central Intelligence Agency in Langley, Virginia. No sooner had I received that letter, that I started noticing people hanging around the front gate of my apartment. I knew they were members of the Taiwan Garrison Command, the secret police, because they would set up little shoeshine stations just across the laneway from my entrance gate. My suspicions were confirmed by the fact they never had a customer, and of course no shoeshine person ever sat at a shoeshine station with nicely shined shoes, a coat and a tie. So, these guys weren't being subtle, but I knew I was being followed everywhere, and my Chinese contacts told me I was going to have trouble getting my research out. When I went to the embassy to complain to the deputy station chief about the W2 I'd just gotten, I told him, "Look, I'm being followed by the Garrison Command, and I'm not going to be able to get my research out." And he said, "No problem. When you get your computer tapes, bring them here." And thanks to the then-US Embassy in Taiwan in 1975, my computer tapes were taken out in the diplomatic pouch, I presume, and they somehow ended up at the home of my thesis advisor, who sent me a letter asking, "what the heck is this?" I had to kind of finesse this a little bit, John, because we had a rule at Fletcher that we could not engage with the intelligence community during our research. I had to sort of finesse that requirement by describing the issues I was dealing with the secret police in Taiwan.

Anyway, I came back from that, and I was writing my dissertation while back at work for the congressman in 1975, and I decided I wanted to apply to AID. I figured now's the time, because I was going to get my doctorate and not too many people with doctorates were entering AID. The advanced degree, I thought, gave me a pretty good chance of getting in. I had taken the Foreign Service Exam for entry into the State Department three times already, failed the first two because I'm a terrible test taker, but succeeded in passing it on the third attempt in late 1975. State told me I would be set up for an oral

interview at some time in the future. Well, in the meanwhile, I applied to AID. They called me in for interviews, and I think I interviewed with a gentleman named Richard Berg. I was slated to be an education officer. He interviewed me, I think it was in June of '76 or Jul '76. After 30 minutes he got on the phone to HR and he said, "This guy's no education officer," which made my heart just sink to my feet, and then he said, "You got to hire this guy. He's a great program officer, he will make a terrific program officer, so you gotta hire him." I didn't get immediate word from USAID, so I went back working for the congressman. One day, the Congressman came to my desk and asked, "You want me to have Otto give him a call?" Now, anybody our age, John, knows who Otto is. That's Otto Passman, who was chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. He was from Louisiana, and he was also the chair of the subcommittee that dealt with the foreign assistance budget. I looked at Congressman McFall in horror, and I said, "Please do not do that. You will kill it for me, please." I don't know what happened, but a couple of weeks after that I got a call from AID, saying that I was being hired as an IDI or International Development Intern.

Now, maybe the Congressman himself did make that call. I don't know. I pray it wasn't to Otto Passman. But the call I got was from Sylvia Mathews' office in HR. Anybody who was an IDI [International Development Intern] back in the '70s remembers Sylvia Mathews, but the person she used to make the call was a lady with this southern, just absolutely Mint Julep dripping accent. Evelyn Hancock was her name. And so I'm going to try and imitate her accent, John. She calls me up, and she says, "Mr. Young," and I said, "Yes." "This is Evelyn Hancock." I said, "Yes, Ms. Hancock, how are you?" "Fine. Mr Young, you have been hired by the agency, and we are going to send you to Africa." I said, "Oh, wow. Where in Africa?" And there's this pause. And she says, "Yay-man." And I had to kind of think about it, and realized, oh, she means Yemen. And I said, "Ms. Hancock, Yemen, is not in Africa. It's close, but not there." And I hear her yelling back to Sylvia, "Sylvia, is Ya-man in Africa." Pause. She comes back to me and says, "You're right Mr. Young, but it's pretty close." So there I was, I was being hired, I was going to go to Yemen, pretty close to Africa. I onboarded October 12, 1976, along with a number of people who I still keep in touch with, including my good friend David Nelson, who I think was the oldest member of the class, having just come from working with CARE [Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere] in Bangladesh. I mentioned him because he later became my best man in the '80s when I remarried.

Anyway, I joined AID on October 12, 1976 and I'm in training for about two weeks when I got a call from the congressman's office. They said, "you still have your parking pass up here. You need to come up here tonight." And I said, "why?" They asked me "Has the FBI been in touch with you?" And I said, "No." "Well, we need you to come up here." Well, of course, you can imagine I had sweaty palms at that point. I was just two weeks or so into my training with AID, and here I was being called back up to the hill because the FBI was interested in talking to me. Well, I walked into the congressman's office at about 7:30pm on a late October evening. Everybody, the whole staff, is sitting in Congressman McFall's office. I'm the last one to arrive. I take a seat on the leather sofa across from his desk, and then I'm told, "tomorrow morning, the *Washington Post* is going to break a story that the Congressman has taken money from the rice dealer

Tongsun Park." Now Tongson Park, anybody living in Washington in the 1970s may remember this, was the focus of one of the first pay for play scandals in DC. Park, a rice merchant, was linked to the South Korean government and was trying to buy influence by using contracting arrangements that might favor the district of a congressman in exchange for votes supporting South Korea. He had also contributed to my congressman's 1976 congressional campaign. Unfortunately, nobody on the congressman's staff did the due diligence on who this guy was, and when they told me this I just looked at Mr. McFall and for the first time, instead of calling him Mr. McFall or calling him boss, I said, "Jack, I was your foreign policy guy. Why didn't you ask me?" And he just shook his head and said, "It just didn't occur to me." Well, long story short, the FBI never did contact me; Sam Mabry, the legislative aide, worked to keep me out of it. The Congressman ended up winning that election, but then was defeated in 1978. To be fair, I could not point to a vote he took that might have directly favored South Korea, per se. Foreign policy just wasn't his central interest and Park was probably just another campaign donor.

But I went back to my training after that, a little bit shaken. Then there was a second bit of news: I wasn't going to Yemen. They didn't want another IDI.

Q: IDI means?

YOUNG: International Development Intern. That's what we called the new entrants back in the '70s, International Development Interns, or IDIs. I was disappointed Yemen had been withdrawn. I didn't know where my assignment was going to be now. So, I was assigned to Washington, to Asia DP which was the development planning office of the old Asia Bureau, working under the Chief Program Officer for the Bureau, Bill Lefes, who was probably the first really great mentor I had in the agency. He's the one that taught me how to make smart mistakes and learn from them and not get penalized for them. And when I did make a mistake, Bill was always the Kevlar between me and whoever was the next up the chain, sort of defending or justifying the decision I had made, or the thing I had done. I mean, Bill was a real champion for me. But then he could turn around and wrap my knuckles pretty good so I wouldn't forget that he had also done me a bit of a favor.

It was while working for Bill, and then later for John McCarthy, who was head of the Planning Division in Asia DP, that I met Anne Aarnes. Anne and I had desks next to each other. One day, Anne was out and I received a call from the State Department recruitment, their HR people, saying I was being offered a job at the State Department as a political officer—I had passed my orals, by the way—and I would be brought at a level of the old system's Foreign Service eight. It was the lowest grade in the old foreign service ranking system. I kind of hesitated and I said, "Well, I've just been hired by AID, and I've been hired one grade and four steps higher than what you're offering." And the person on the other end said, "But wouldn't you rather be a real diplomat?" I didn't know how to react. I was so offended. Yeah, we (AID people) all carried red passports at the time. You might remember that John they were called official passports and they were red. The real diplomats had black passports, and that's kind of what I think she meant.

And AID was, at that time, considered a stepchild of the State Department, even though we were statutorily independent. We didn't really get a lot of respect, I think, from the department at the time, and they weren't cutting me any slack for being a newly minted PhD. So I declined. I said, "No," I think the woman was shocked. Anne Aarnes came back, and I described the call to her, and then we turned around and described it to John McCarthy, who proceeded to reach into his bottom drawer, pull out a bottle of Maalox and drink half of it. He thought he was losing one of his two people. Poor John had a terrible stir.

But anyway, from there, I ended up at the Philippine desk with Bob Nachtrtrieb. Some of you may remember Bobby. Bob was a great guy, and he was deputy to Lanny Elliot, who was actually the Philippine Desk Officer at the time. Within a month of working there, they had secured for me a slot as an assistant program officer in Manila to start in June of 1977. I can't believe my good fortune. I'm thinking I'm going to Yemen, in the middle of literally nowhere, and I end up in the Philippines, which has got two of the largest military bases in the world, Subic Bay and, and Clark Air Base. The post that had APO, a military supplied commissary, PX privileges, and the like. I'd gone from where I thought I was going to have to bring over two years of food by container ship, and worry about where the closest hospital would be in case my wife was going to give birth to a baby, to going to the Philippines, where you had everything at your fingertips. Well, that really started my career. Yet, I have to say that of the four posts that I have had, and I will be candid about this, the Philippines was probably my least favorite. I was offered several times later in my career to go back, and I just said no. I could not imagine going back to a place where I'd had such an unsatisfactory experience. There are a whole host of reasons why it happened. I spent four years there, and there were some things that happened to me there that were extremely positive professionally, and I'll go into that in a minute. I worked on two projects directly as the person doing the work, not through a contractor, but actually doing it hands on. That brought me immense satisfaction. But I also networked very widely with the theatre community in Manila, the Filipino version of semi-professional theatre that was emerging in Manila. I became quite involved with those people and had a marvelous experience and marvelous insight into Philippine culture through them. And of course—

Q: Were you acting, or were you playing a role?

YOUNG: Yeah, I was a member of the Manila Theatre Guild, which has given rise to people like Lea Salonga, who played the title role in the premiere of *Miss Saigon* in London and several others who have also made their way to Broadway. Harry Reasoner, the late ABC correspondent, was one of the founding members of the Manila Theatre Guild, although he obviously wasn't there at the time. I appeared in plays, I appeared in musicals, just absolutely had a wonderful time. It was exhausting, and it took away from some of my work. In retrospect, I think I made a mistake by not finding the right balance between my nighttime activities with the theater folks and you know, my work with AID. But it was an outlet I needed, because I was so frustrated by mission decision making, by the sort of autocratic nature, not just of mission decision making, but how the Philippine

Mission, with Washington's encouragement, decided what path Philippine development was going to follow.

We did incessant analyses of who the poorest of the poor were in the Philippines, and that's where we were going to target our aid. Over time, I think, we realized, much to our chagrin, that life didn't work that way and that we weren't smart enough to be able to have that kind of direct impact by working around the system in the Philippines rather than trying to work through it. And I found that out because I worked "hands on" as a technical adviser to the Philippine Ministry of Budget helping them redesign their budgetary allocation and disbursement mechanisms to disburse money to the barangays [small villages, towns, or neighborhoods] more quickly. What I learned from that experience was that we just simply couldn't tell them how to do it, because they would listen, and then would do it their way. We never quite understood what motivated them to withhold funds or create so much red tape. The second thing that I did while I was in the Philippines that brought me great satisfaction was becoming an acquaintance of a Jesuit priest who was working on a paper linking the Marcos family through networks, down to the governors and even down as far as the barangay captains throughout the Philippines. These networks helped the Marcoses create a system of patronage,---financial, political, or otherwise--- and in return for loyalty to keep themselves in power so that they could then continue to plunder the country's economy.

Q: A strange role for a Jesuit priest, was this an American Jesuit priest, or Filipino?

YOUNG: This was an American, actually. He was attached to one of the major Jesuit universities there, and he was doing this paper surreptitiously. I mean, this wasn't really an open thing. It wasn't clear to me who the audience for the paper was, I think eventually he was going to publish it. But what he was trying to do was expose corruption at the highest levels of the Philippine government and explain how that corruption actually happens. So, I got drawn into that, and I was using some of what I saw in the field with our AID project officers to sort of add to that research. I finally wrote my own version of something I called the "octopus paper" for the political section for the embassy. The AID mission consented to this; they thought this was great. I was doing something that facilitated links with the embassy. Ambassador Richard Murphy, who was ambassador at the time, was the first person to read the paper, along with our new director, Tony Schwartzwalder. Murphy showed it to John Maisto, who was, I think, the political counselor at the time. He would later become an Ambassador, and one of our most prominent diplomats throughout his career. John read my paper, and both he and Ambassador Murphy immediately classified it as confidential, which meant if I wanted to read my own paper, I had to go over there and read it in the secure room. But Murphy made it required reading for every new officer coming into the embassy, and I was grateful for that. You know, I don't know where that paper is to this day. It obviously is dated, the Marcoses are gone although the son has just been elected the country's president. Writing that paper allowed me to use my political science training, as well as merge it with trying to understand what influences development and what perpetuates poverty. One of the major conclusions I came to was that corruption is a major factor that you have to take into account when you're designing a development strategy for a

country. If you don't factor in what motivates corrupt behavior, what incentivizes it, and, frankly, how to tolerate it and leverage it to your advantage, then you are missing a major piece of your program strategy. I felt that in the Philippines we were missing the boat, because our aid strategies would never use the "C" word--corruption. It was the same with the World Bank. The C word was toxic to the World Bank for decades, until recently. At AID, we would not incorporate it into the CDSS which is what I think they called our strategy documents back then. We had to present our development strategy to the government and we wouldn't do so if it used the word corruption. I mean, that's just something we couldn't do. We had bases there. We were paying rent for the bases; for political reasons we didn't call it rent, but it was paid directly to the Philippine government for the use of these bases. We depended on the Philippine government for a lot of things, strategically, militarily, and in terms of political support in the region, so the last thing the AID mission was going to do was to say, "here's the diagnosis of your development challenges, and by the way, you're your own worst enemy." I mean, we were not going to do that with this government, even though we knew the Marcoses were plundering the country. My paper couldn't be referenced in the strategy because it would just draw too much heat.

Q: Some people I know who have worked in the Philippines had direct contact with Imelda Marcos, did you?

YOUNG: A couple of times, mainly parties at Malacanang Palace. Some of my contacts were just sort of indirect through Dennis Barrett, who was the deputy mission director at the time. Imelda loved Dennis because, as he told me, she knew he was one-sixth Cherokee Indian. She thought he was just wonderful. He was the only person that could really talk bluntly to her. There were times when larger groups of mission personnel were invited to the palace for parties, and I went on two occasions. What I remember from those affairs was that Imelda really worked the tables. I mean you could see at the time that she had missed her calling; she probably should have been the president. She worked the tables beautifully, manipulating people with a combination of flattery but making it very clear what she expected of you. She could meld the two into a single dynamic, where you felt grateful for doing her bidding. You really had to have a sort of Teflon on, like Dennis had, to sort of push back and say, "you know, Imelda, you're full of shit." Dennis could do that, and she would take it because she liked him so much. But she saw an opportunity for power by leveraging the hundreds of millions of dollars in rent money we were paying for the bases, and I think she cultivated the AID mission so that she could control how it was being spent. As it turned out, most of the money was allocated to her newly created Ministry of Human Settlements, which was building housing and building schools, and building all sorts of stuff all over the country. It was through that Ministry and her hand-picked staff I worked with that I had some sort of contact with her.

I remember attending one Malacanang party, shortly after Marcos was diagnosed with a serious illness. I remember when we first went into the palace that evening for an event that I think was in honor of a professional American basketball team that was visiting the country. They were throwing a dinner for the American basketball team, which had just played a game in the Philippines against the country's all-stars and had diplomatically let

the Filipinos win, if I recall. The Americans were dominating throughout the game, but they ratcheted back their game in the final quarter so the Filipinos could catch up. And they did that because, I think, they were told to do it, which I think was great. Nice diplomatic move. Anyway, that evening I entered this big library in Malacanang, and I could see a spiral staircase ahead of me. Coming down the staircase, holding the rail very tenderly, is Ferdinand Marcos. His wife is not there, she's already at the party. And Marcos comes down the staircase, enters the room, and he looks at all of us. He says, "See, everybody thinks I'm sick. I've never felt better in my life. I'm standing without help. I'm doing great." The guy looked terrible. He moved like a robot, and his face was just all blown up like a moon face. His eyes were like little slits. I didn't know what the heck was happening to him, and we later knew what was going on. He had lupus, was suffering from kidney failure, and he was taking high doses of prednisone steroids, which was causing this kind of reaction in him. Anyway, that night, we're at the dinner, Imelda's dancing with everybody in the mission. Absolutely everybody had to get up and dance with her. About one in the morning, I look over to her table, and Marcos is being led out through a curtain by two aides, one on each arm, almost dragging him out. She didn't go with him, she didn't show concern about him, she was too busy partying. I think it was about four am before this thing broke up. The next morning, around nine o'clock, we see news reports and there she is, you know, meeting with the basketball team. I don't know when this woman slept, but all I can say is she was a force of nature, and I would say she was probably to Marcos what Edith Wilson was to her sick husband, Woodrow Wilson after he had a stroke. I mean, I wouldn't say she was running the show, but she was certainly the power behind the throne.

Q: Very quick, another question, unless you have more on Marcos. I'm imagining that the program in the Philippines, the AID program, had a lot of local currency, is that correct?

YOUNG: Yeah.

Q: Was that more of an opportunity, perhaps for corruption, than you would have found with the dollar resources? Did you have any involvement with that program?

YOUNG: Not directly with the local currency, that was generated from food aid and that program wasn't part of my oversight responsibilities. What I was involved with, though, was the US military's Excess Property Program, which was a huge source of corruption. Of course, there was the dollar program we gave to the Ministry of Human Settlements. The Excess Property Program was awkward, because with two bases there, we had a lot of it. It didn't involve providing weapons to civilian authorities, which we had no authority to do. They wanted vehicles, they always wanted vehicles. Vehicles were the currency that if any project officer going to the field could bring the promise of a couple of vehicles with him, he or she was a god. I went out with a number of office directors and project officers, almost all of them had just come out of the CORDS Program [Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support] that USAID administered during the Vietnam war. They brought with them that mindset of trying to "flood the zone" with money, excess property, whatever it might be, in order to get the local authorities to do what they wanted them to do. I would go on these trips, and I would see these things

being handed out left and right. The Mission Director frequently went down to the island of Mindanao, and made promises of equipment left and right. It was amazing, the power that we had at the time to make those kinds of commitments. And yeah, it bought us goodwill, but it didn't buy us enduring commitment to the programs that we were funding. It just brought us goodwill, for the moment. And there's a difference. That's the first time I learned the difference between buying goodwill and buying commitment. That program was a real source of frustration because it sometimes ran afoul of our longer term objectives.

The dollar funded program, which went to the Ministry of Human Settlements, we foolishly made to look like a cash transfer. We let Ministry staff select the things that they were going to build, and then we would let them supervise the construction and let them audit it. We would send out project officers occasionally to make sure everything was going well. I often went on these monitoring trips and didn't make myself popular. A lot of what we were building with that money, or they were building with that money, was schools. Schools were very popular. They were building a lot of them around Angeles City where Clark Field was located, and a lot of them down in Mrs. Marcos's home province down in the Visayas. When I would go down there I would wear some really hard shoes, and I would go to the wall of a newly constructed school and I'd kick the sucker. I'd kick it as hard as I could. I could tell when the sand to cement mixture was too high by how many kicks it took me to kick a hole in the bottom row of the wall.

Q: Gosh.

YOUNG: I was kicking holes all over the place. In one trip I was on with a woman who worked in the ministry, later emigrated to the States after Marcos' overthrow and ended up marrying Tony Schwartzwald. We became close colleagues in the Philippines and later good friends here. She looked in horror as I was kicking holes in the wall. But to her credit, she told the contractor, "you're tearing all these down at your expense. And you're going to rebuild, at your expense, a proper wall that has enough cement sand mixture, so we know you're not diverting the cement to your private business. And we're going to come down here and kick that wall again." I think we got some decent schools out of that. It didn't make me popular with the mission. By the way, a postscript on this, when I went back to the Philippines, on TDY as the Philippine desk officer in, I think it was '85, after the fall of Marcos, I went to Angeles City, and I kicked some holes in walls there. I made people really angry. But I said, "Look, I've been kicking walls for a while, I know what's going on here." So yeah, those were the two programs that I was involved with that had a degree of corruption that was just so blatantly obvious, it just put me off, literally put me off the entire country. It disabused me of any faith I might have had that our program and our program's objectives would be achieved, because we didn't understand the country and what they really wanted. We were doing the development planning. I mean, the Filipinos said, "Okay, you Americans come up with a plan, because it's your money, and we'll do some editing on the side, but we'll consent to it." The message was, "we'll do it our way." They knew that we knew what their way was, but we would never document it. And as a result, we often didn't get the kinds of results that we were looking for. I would say, by the way, that the local currency program in India was actually far larger, and that

was the one that I was more involved with. And then in Bangladesh we also had hundreds of millions of dollars in local currency that I was also involved with.

Q: Anything else about the Philippines before we move on?

YOUNG: Oh, I adopted my daughter there. It was an amazing experience. Again, we encountered a lot of petty to semi-petty corruption with off the books payments required at almost every step in order to get her papers through to adopt her. My first wife and I actually had to go to court, take the stand, and be interrogated by a judge about our religious values, and about whether we were going to be fit parents (of course, payments attendant to our request had already been made to the judiciary). My daughter, Andrea, had been given up for adoption by her mother who worked for the Ministry of Human Settlements as a secretary. She was extremely sickly and had not been cared for well. It was ironic that we were being asked questions about whether or not we were going to be good parents. We literally walked on eggshells for two weeks because the mother under Philippine law could have reclaimed her at any time prior to the judicial hearing. She did not step forward, and so Andrea became our daughter, and today lives in Ellicott City with our grandson, married to her wife, Crystal, and is working for the Department of Defense. So, the Philippines had one amazing, positive dividend for me, at least. That was my daughter. She's probably the most important thing I took away from the country, other than realizing, "Here are ways not to do development."

Q: Shall we take a break?

YOUNG: Yes. If that's what you like, that's fine.

Q: Okay, we're gonna pause. Okay.

Okay, that was a wonderful discussion of your four years in the Philippines. What was your next assignment, Frank?

YOUNG: Well, the next assignment was a direct transfer in June of '81 to India. I was returning to the country that had inspired me to enter the development field. But, it came at a particularly difficult time. My marriage didn't really survive the Philippines that well, but we still decided to give India a shot together. So, I transferred, and became deputy program officer. John Wesley was the program officer at the time, and that's when I first encountered Priscilla Boughton, someone who I think is one of the titans in the pantheon of AID mission directors. She was the mission director at a time when it was very difficult for a woman to rise to the highest positions in USAID. But Priscilla was remarkable. She had a work ethic that I was just astounded by. She had a focus and a discipline, almost to the point that she almost didn't have a life. And that kind of concerned us, because often what I noticed in management styles, from the Philippines in particular, if a mission director didn't have a life outside the office, the rest of the mission didn't either. The mission director's style was a blueprint for how everybody else did things. If the mission director worked till seven or eight at night and was there at 6:30 or 7:00 in the morning, just about everybody else was too. If the mission director held stag

parties, strictly business, very rarely social, and spouses weren't invited, the rest of us kind of did that too. In my view, while Priscilla was a tremendous leader and had great relationships with the Indian government, with the staff her style was very driven. We had a morale management problem in India because she didn't really have the same kind of home life that a lot of the rest of us did. And I think that that might have been her blind side. But she wasn't unique in that, I encountered the same thing in the Philippines as well under Peter Cody. Peter's successor, Tony Schwartzwalder, was extremely sensitive to work-life balance, even before that became a thing in the lexicon. But on the professional side, as deputy program officer in the Philippines, I learned my first great lesson about how to let the government take the lead.

Q: In India or in the Philippines?

YOUNG: Yes, sorry. In India. In India, my first great lesson was how to let government take the lead. India had a much stronger tradition of local governance, I think, than the Philippines did. We were reentering the India program in the early '80s, after a rupture that had occurred because we took the wrong side in the India-Pakistan War in 1971, during which Bangladesh gained its independence. Of course, we took the Pakistani side, the Indians were offended, and even though we had a very large program there, including PL 480, which was generating billions and billions and billions of Indian rupees in local currency, our whole aid program was suspended. And it was thanks to our partners like CARE [Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere] and CRS [Catholic Relief Services], who had extensive presence in India, and our FSN [Foreign Service National] staff in India that we were able to hold onto the basic structure of our presence so that we could restart when relations improved. During those interregnum years, they kind of kept ongoing programs, at least on the books. We were treading water, even though we didn't have a formal, significant mission during those years. We started building up again in the early '80s, so when I took up my posting there in '84 we were in the midst of a major effort to design new activities. Designing new programs with the Indians was such a different dynamic compared to the Philippines. They actually brought to the table a lot of their own ideas.

Our problem was that we weren't used to listening very much. We believed more in our own technical expertise, which we thought trumped local conditions and local preferences. I think where I learned this most clearly was in the design of the Integrated Child Development Services Program ICDS, which, I think if you Google it, is still in existence today. Not in the form we designed of course. It's evolved over 45 or so years, but it became a model for similar maternal child health programs elsewhere in the world. It was the first example of a jointly designed program where what the Indians wanted was reflected in the design as much as our preferences were. It was really a joint effort. No one's preferences necessarily took precedence over the other. The Indians were hard negotiators. We would say, "No, you got to do the birthweight monitoring this way," and they would say, "No, you got to do it this way." Or we would say, "You've got to emphasize this certain component," and they'd say, "No, we don't believe that component belongs." What I learned with the Indians is that they have this process called "non-objection". What it means is you come to them with an idea. And they'll say no.

Okay. So, you go back, come to them with another idea. And they'll say no. And you do this maybe ten, twenty times, and it's no, no, no, no, no, no, no, until you've whittled it down to something they'll agree to. And then they say yes. The non-objection process is one of knocking down all the bad stuff until you get to the good solution. They actually call it the "non-objection process," referring to a formal government protocol. It frustrated the ever-living hell out of the American staff, but having lived in India already, in the late '60s, I'd already been exposed to this. I mean, it didn't bother me that much. And, yeah, it took time. And Washington was impatient because they had deadlines for submitting project papers. You know, you had to have the PRP (project review paper) or PP (project paper) in by a certain deadline to meet the Bureau's review schedule and then be able to develop a project agreement for signing to meet fiscal year deadlines. But you just couldn't rush the Indians along. Your timeline was not their timeline.

I remember saying to our Ag Chief, Bill Janssen, when he was about ready to pull out what little hair he had left, because the Indians in his counterpart ministry just kept saying no to everything. I said, "Bill, you don't get it. When they say no, they actually mean, 'Yes, we want you to come back with another idea.' No is kind of their yes, in a weird way." He just looked at me like I was speaking Arabic. I mean, he just couldn't make sense of it. I said, "No, think of it this way. If they say yes too soon, you have to be worried, because that means you haven't thought of all the things that could go wrong yet. If they say no 20 times and then say yes, that means you've done the work." That's kind of what I've learned through this, that working through the Indian bureaucracy, as turgid and as awful as it sometimes was, often got you to the right answer because it's the answer that they would go with. And that, in the end, pretty much had to be the right answer, until they themselves discovered that they had to change something.

The second thing I learned in India by giving host country authorities the initiative to design and implement was that when they did make a mistake, and we could see it, more often than not they would admit it. And they worked with us to try and fix it. Ironically, the local level was a little more difficult, because while there was more significant authority in the local panchayats [village councils], the programs were all designed from Delhi. I was never completely confident that projects had the kind of local design and local input that they should have, but I was still comfortable going along with the Indian process. And as I said, the ICDS program was a perfect example of how that worked. Programming local currency was a bit of a problem because we had to jointly program that with the Indians. I think conceptually, we always had a problem in believing that this really was their money, because its source was US provided grain that was sold locally for rupees. It was their currency. But because the currency generated was really part of a PL 480 loan we wanted to have a significant hand in deciding how it would be spent. We retained a substantial amount of currency for our own mission expenses, which was, you know, important given tight operating expense budgets. We owned so much of their currency that some worried it might destabilize the economy. We finally solved the problem by simply starting to write off the debt. It was after I had left, that we just wrote it all off, allowing the Indian treasury to take this substantial obligation off their books. When we did that, it removed a major irritant I think, between us and the Indian government.

Q: Treasuries are crucial, so you did that, right?

YOUNG: We did. We did, and I think the issue there was could you do it in such a way that it wouldn't have a massive inflationary impact on the Indian government? Because that money was sort of sterilized. It was off book. We had to do it in a way that didn't bring it on book and cause a big inflationary surge in their budget. So that was our argument with our Treasury in terms of writing it off. We said, "Otherwise, what's going to happen is, this stuff is still going to be around in 50 years, and it isn't going to be worth much of anything. And oh, by the way, it is causing an irritant in the relationship that we don't need, because we have other things that are more important to focus on." And I think that was probably the right move.

India was also special because that's where I met my wife, Pat. It was Dave Nelson who played matchmaker. As you may recall, I mentioned him as a colleague in our international development intern class of 1976. I'd just come back from R&R, and David said, "There's a really, really cute lady over at the Canadian High Commission I want to introduce you to." So, we went over there, and at the time I was overseeing, with Dave, this major project to develop the Indian oil seeds industry. The Indian diet relies heavily on edible oils but they were importing a lot of it. It was the initiative of one of the great entrepreneurs of India, Verghese Kurien, who literally started the milk industry in India back in the '60s, when, frankly, milk was not all that prevalent. He started the Anand Dairy Cooperative and was successful in creating a nationwide milk industry that included milk production, processing, and distribution. He wanted to do the same for oil seeds, so that India could become more self-sufficient in producing edible oils. The Canadians were running a similar program. They were importing canola oil into India and we were bringing in soybean oil. While we were in competition we really needed to coordinate. Under that guise, David took me over there for some sham meeting that actually had no purpose other than for me to meet her. And when the meeting ended and we had left, her boss turned to her and said, "What the heck was that all about?" And she says, "I don't know, but you said the Americans wanted to meet, so we have to meet with the Americans." Fast forward, Pat I became engaged and we ended up getting married in 1985. But the oil seeds program also had a role in our marriage, because Pat and I traveled down to the Anand Dairy Cooperative to meet Mr. Kurien and to talk about our joint effort to support him. He was pushing *Every Which Way But Loose* (movie reference) to get us married while we were in India, which we actually couldn't do because I wasn't divorced yet. But the AID staff had it all arranged; I was going to dress in costume with a turban, and come in on a white horse, and Pat was going to be decked out in a silk saree. And I said, "No, no, no, we can't, we can't do that. I have to get divorced first." I found the love of my life there which was really, really grand. Andrea was with me in India as well.

You know, it's funny, John, even at that time the embassy and USAID pretty much operated separately. We had our own agendas. Because I wasn't highly ranked enough, I didn't really go over to meetings there very much. But because we had substantially more resources to play with, and I don't think our ambassador was particularly strong at the

time, I wouldn't say that USAID dominated the embassy, but it competed with the embassy for dominance in our relationship with the Indians. Owen Sylke (the director after Priscilla) may remember it somewhat differently because he was the director during the latter part of my time there. Ironically, I think the fact that AID was a dominant force in our relationship with the Indians was also an irritant to them. They didn't like being seen as taking aid. Being the recipient of donor money was kind of a badge of shame that they wore, which is why I think they negotiated so hard to never let us forget that even though it was all grant money, it still was their right to decide on its use. And if we wanted to give them that money, then we were buying into our relationship with them and their ideas, not vice-versa. USAID at that time was still a very top-down, Washington-directed strategy machine, where strategies had to be fully vetted and approved in Washington, even though we were encouraged to do a great deal of local consultation, which we did. But all of the language had to be filtered through the USAID lexicon, using the buzzwords, the symbolic words that you had to use, you know, like, "private sector" or "public private partnership," and so on. I don't think we were using "poorest of the poor" anymore, or it was starting to be phased out. But we would get the buzzwords from PPC [Bureau of Policy and Program Coordination], and we somehow had to adopt the lexicon. But explaining that lexicon and why we had to say it that way to the Indians, who really wanted to own the document, as well as own what came out of the document, was a hard sell. That's when I realized the Indians were looking for more of a relationship between peers, rather than one between an aid giver and an aid receiver, which implies a superior-subordinate relationship. That was always the backdrop in all of our conversations and all of our relationships. The worst thing we could ever do in a country like India is say, "If you don't do this, we're not going to give you that." We were totally misreading the aid environment if we did that.

And that was kind of a second lesson of development that I learned. Local initiative is one thing. But, if it's encouraging local input, local initiative and local leadership on our terms, as we define it, which means, ultimately, whatever comes out of it is accountable to our standards, then we're making a big mistake. We've got to define it as true local leadership, and that we are their partners sitting at the table. The thing that we need to understand is if they come up with a really good idea, and we're willing to buy into that idea, and we can reach a compromise on how to describe it, then that's what we're funding. Of course, after all the discussion is done there is an option of not to do something. Believe me, I remember what we used to call "September 31st", when we would get so close to midnight trying to negotiate something with the Indians, when they wouldn't agree to a certain bit of language or a certain condition precedent. It would go right up to that last minute on the clock. Despite the cliffhangers the Indians usually, I wouldn't say gave in, but they usually went ahead and signed the document. But they insisted on things like side letters, to really state what it was we and they were really going to do.

Q: Frank, were there modalities of assistance that were easier for the Indians to work with?

YOUNG: Well, I can tell you, it was easier for them to work with grants than with loans. We were starting, I think, to discuss phasing out loans at the time. Yeah, I think grants were easier. When we had training programs, that was probably the easiest program that we had with them. We would work with them to define or identify specific areas where short term and degree training would occur, and then we would leave the selection process to them. That's something they really liked. And of course, we had this tremendous multi-decade history and experience of training Indians in the United States. That's why we had such great relationships in key parts of the Indian government because so many officials had trained in American universities, and they understood our language and our culture. That didn't stop them being difficult, because they also understood some of our vulnerabilities and how they could be a bit of a thorn in our side, and that's fine. But, yeah, there were certain programs like that that were easier. Although it was an extremely time-consuming and tedious negotiation, the Integrated Child Development Services program, or ICDS, the one I mentioned before, once we got it going it was relatively easy for them to implement, because we both had an agreement, we knew what we wanted, we knew what we were doing. Project design, of any sort, was the hardest thing to do with them.

Except for local currency programming, we didn't give India non-projectized assistance. They wanted it desperately. I think the Brits were doing it. But we wouldn't do it. NPA, or non-project assistance, was something I think we were limiting to Africa, but we certainly weren't doing it with the Indians, because our view was you had all this local currency, which, for obvious reasons, the Indians were reluctant to spend huge amounts of at any given time because of the inflationary impact it might have. But where the Philippines was the most difficult for me personally, India was the most difficult, maybe in a development professional sense, because I felt we accomplished about half of what we could have accomplished in terms of getting agreements signed or money moved. On the positive side, though, what we did accomplish actually worked. So I think our success rate of doing the right things offset the fact that maybe we underachieved in terms of the amount of money that we thought we could move. I think family planning and health were probably among the most successful programs. Irrigation assistance, assistance to agriculture in irrigation, was also highly successful, because we could bring expertise to the table that the Indians didn't have. And they constantly told us the most valuable programs we have with America, and the ones that will work the best, are the ones where you bring us the technical assistance we don't have. When we tried to bring in assistance, or technical help, where the Indians felt they had the skills in country, but we wouldn't use it, that's where we clashed. But when we brought in world class experts in irrigation or in forestry, that's where we had the closest, warmest, most collaborative relationships with the Indians, because that's what they wanted from us. They wanted our expertise more than they wanted our money. And that taught me a valuable lesson.

Q: Interesting. So Frank, you've been overseas for about seven years. Your next listing was back in Washington. Did you want that assignment? Did you want to go back?

YOUNG: I did. I could have stayed another year in India. In fact, I could have reupped for another tour in India, the way the tour structure worked out. But no, I felt I needed to

go back, I had to get some personal stuff sorted out. My next assignment was in PPC [Bureau of Policy and Program Coordination], working for John Hummon and Len Rogers. And I learned very fast that a staff office, and a policy office like PPC, is not going to win you a popularity contest, because I oversaw the development and security assistance budgets that USAID was managing Asia. My job was to second guess the Asia Bureau without really understanding why. It was just being an SOB half the time. That's an acronym I don't want to define me, but my job was basically being a jerk, and a nudge, and a pain in the rear end, without necessarily having a valid point at all. I got a little frustrated with that. John Hummon was a real character. And it turned out that the assistant administrator for PPC at the time was—get ready for it—John Bolton.

Q: Hey!

YOUNG: Yeah. The one thing all of us feared was having to go into John Bolton's office and face John Bolton. I did it once, but I was sitting behind John Hummon and Len Rogers and I let them take shots. It was by working in a bureau that people feared and really kind of despised because of its leadership, that I learned something about the agency's budget structure. Being in PPC taught me a lot about that and how the agency sets policy. Those were the positive takeaways. The rest of it not so much. When I was offered the Philippine desk officer position, which at the time was a two-chair position, with the Burma desk officer working for the Philippine desk officer, I took it. I thought, "being a desk officer, that's where the action is." By the way, to this day, I still believe that. I think any senior manager in USAID who hasn't been a desk officer hasn't really done the work in the trenches. So, I went to work for David Merrill, who was the director of East Asia. I arrived at an almost perfect time. I need to correct something, because it was shortly after I took that job in '85, I did that little TDY [Temporary Duty] over there, where I kicked walls of those schools in.

Q: David Merrill later became an ambassador?

YOUNG: He did! He became my ambassador in Bangladesh. That's for the next chapter. Anyhow, I arrived at the Philippine desk just as the Philippine Revolution occurred. The government just simply began to crumble. It was February of 1986 when that happened. What I remember is David calling me and saying, "Tanks are rolling down the streets of Manila. We've got to go up to the Ops Center [Operations Center]," because we were still in the State Department at the time. I went up to the Ops Center, which I guess was on the seventh floor of the State Department, and we were watching the CNN live feed that was showing tanks and troops on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, which is in Quezon City, moving down toward central Manila. CNN also had a camera on the embassy, and we saw helicopters flying in. The embassy had a landing pad that faced Manila Bay so choppers from Subic Bay and Clark field could land on the embassy grounds. We were watching all this happen in real time, and we're watching people gathering in downtown Manila. And what we're realizing is that the head of the military, Fidel Ramos, who we thought was a Marcos loyalist (and I think related to him), was carrying out a coup against Ferdinand Marcos. It had been known for quite a while that Marcos was sick. But

we didn't know that he was almost catatonic the day that this happened and had to be carried out of the palace.

The Embassy was also located astride the Pasig River, which went straight up to Malacanang Palace. When the embassy realized what was happening (their main source of information was also CNN), Malacanang was alerted, and they began to move people and material to boats that they could bring down the Pasig River, dock behind the embassy and be unloaded. Marcos was brought in, and as I recall he was pretty much incapacitated. He was being carried to the helicopter. Imelda was there. And they had a lot of luggage. They had a pile of luggage. We had an open phone line to the embassy; AT&T had established a clear, open phone line that they were able to keep open. I was there with State Department people, USAID people, and Fred Schieck, our mission director in the Philippines who was at the embassy helping to move the people and material to the helicopters. Fred got on the phone, and he was breathing pretty hard, and I said, "Fred, are you okay?" He said, "Yeah." And I said, "Well, what's going on?" He said, "Well, we're putting people and stuff into helicopters, and we're going to get them out of here." And I said, "Well why are you breathing so hard?" And he said, "Man, these suitcases are heavy." I said, "Why?" And his answer was "A U." Everybody was looking around and saying, "Hey, you? What's Hey you?" I go up to the blackboard, and I take a piece to chalk, and I write "Au," and I said, "Who around here has had chemistry?" It was gold! They were moving the gold. The helicopters took the Marcoses and their stuff out of there to Clark Field. As I understand it, some of the gold was left behind. And instead of taking the Marcoses to Ilocos Norte, his home province, the plane carrying Marcos and his wife headed north and then made a sudden right turn toward Guam, where it refueled, and then went on to Hawaii. It wasn't until they were out over the water that Imelda realized they weren't going where they were supposed to be going. They obviously didn't take it well; I don't think he (Marcos) was quite aware of what was going on at the time.

The revolution itself took a couple of days. The crowds seized Malacanang. It wasn't particularly violent or anything. I mean, people were in quite a joyful mood. This, despite the fact that the revolution was actually stoked by the assassination of Ninoy Aquino on the tarmac at the Manila International Airport a few days before the revolution started. It was on live television; the whole nation saw it. Ninoy comes down the stairs of the plane and he's met by military guards, and he's murdered right there, in full view of the cameras. Shot. Dead. Right on the tarmac. And that was probably the catalyst that caused the military and the civilian population to revolt and overthrow the Marcoses. It was his wife, I think it was Cory [Corazon Aquino], who then became president. Within days, we were dealing with an entirely new situation.

It was an intense time. We quickly realized that the US would have to stand up a program for reconstructing the Philippines in the post Marcos era. As crowds were cleaning out the palace and celebrating in the streets, David and I took a big piece of white paper, grabbed black magic markers, laid it down on a table in the Ops Center, and sketched out the structure of a program that would be proposed to Cory Aquino the next day. George Schultz came down to the Ops Center to see what we were doing. He looked at our doodles with boxes and arrows and dollar amounts on that big piece of paper we had

taped to the wall, and he said "that's it, write it up." I had the task of doing that. Of course, David was overseeing it. One benefit of working on the Philippine program during the change in regime is that I had my first direct contacts with Peter McPherson, the USAID Administrator. These started before the revolution. Peter would call me directly on the phone and say, "Would you come up and talk to me about the Philippines?" And Charlie Greenleaf, who was the AA [Assistant Administrator], and David, to their credit said, "by all means, go. Now, you don't need us with you. You go."

That was the next lesson in good management that I learned, which was, trust your staff. Don't worry if the boss is leapfrogging you to get to your desk officer. Empower that person, let that person go, let that person shine. It doesn't take away from your own stature. This is a real credit to Charlie and to David, although David had some management style issues that created tension between us. They let me go up there and have one on ones with Peter. And that's how I came to know Peter. That's a friendship that has lasted to this day.

But shortly after the Philippine Revolution, I had a new baby on the way and I was fried, just totally exhausted. And I needed a break of some sort. The good thing that came out of it was that I got promoted to an FS-1 one which under the new Foreign Service system is the highest career grade. Ron Venezia recruited me to become the chief of Asia-Near East PD office [Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Project Development Office]. I had done a lot of design work, but I wasn't a good project development officer, I was a program officer. There was a lot of, I don't want to say conflict, but rivalry between the two occupational cones. And for some of the PD officers that I was supervising in the division, this was a hard barrier to get through, to show them that I was credible. Also, I didn't know anything about the Middle East. So, this was a great way to get that kind of exposure.

My third great lesson in management came from Ron Venezia, who was somebody that, again, coached me through my mistakes. He actually took the heat sometimes when the heat should have come my way, which I thought was pretty cool. Because in his view, I (Ron) take the heat, what are they going to do? They can't find anybody else to do this job. So, I'll take the heat. But then he would, in his own really, really nice but direct Ron Venezia way, dress you down. He had a way of doing it that never left you feeling disempowered. But his favorite expression, when sometimes he would have me do something that he really didn't want to do, but it had to be done, he would give it to me, and he would say, "Remember SFDH." And John, this, this is an acronym I'm going to have to spell out. I said, "Ron, what's SFDH?" He said, "shit flows downhill." "Never forget that." He said, " it's not a nice thing to do, but it's what happens in a pinch." Okay, Ron.

Anyway, that was an interesting assignment. I was able to get to North Africa a couple of times, I got to Jordan a couple of times. I worked on the West Bank Gaza Program, the very beginnings of the West Bank Gaza Program with Ben Hawley, who, shortly after he and I worked on that program, he went into the Jesuit priesthood. He credits USAID with incentivizing him to do that. Ben and I became good friends. And we're still very good

friends. Ben is now in DC, actually, in retirement at Georgetown. When I reflect on doing that NEA-PD assignment, I realized that I learned a lot about project design that I didn't know before. I learned a lot about commodity import programs. The West Bank Gaza Program was just amazing. I got to Gaza, and saw horrors that, even then, I didn't think was possible for people to be living like that, day to day. I became very skeptical of our policy toward Israel and the Palestinians. And that wasn't a good thing, because in order to promote USAID's position in that program, I had to basically buy into US policy, and I was having a lot of trouble doing that.

But it so happened that at that time I was elected as the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA) Vice President for USAID. At the time, 1987 I believe, there was a scandal in AFSA where the president and State vice president both had to resign. And they didn't know what to do, so they made me AFSA President for about five or six months. I reminded Eric Ruben of that when he was down here in Sarasota in January of this year talking to the Foreign Service Retirees Association of Florida.

Q: Eric Ruben is presently the AFSA president.

YOUNG: Yes. And he said, "I don't think anybody knows that." And I said, "check your records." He said, "you know, we have reunions of past presidents, you'd be qualified." And I said, "check your past records. Just make sure that they actually acknowledged it." Being interim president of AFSA was interesting because I got a chance to meet George Shultz, in person, to talk to him about the up and out system, the system where after 25 boards up to FS-1, you had to be mandatorily retired from the Foreign Service, kind of like what is done in the military. And I really argued with him about whether we were leeching our most talented staff. Why would you spend 20-25 years training people, allowing them to accumulate overseas experience and field savvy, only to show them the door. And then they're going to work for the private sector. Why should the private sector get the benefit of what we've done by creating this core of experts? And he just wouldn't budge. He said, "No, this is the way it has to be. This is how you keep a healthy flow of fresh talent through the service." Fast forward to his last essay in the Foreign Service Journal, when he was 100 years old, and he admits he was wrong about that.

Q: Was he really 100 years old?

YOUNG: Yeah. Well, even back then he looked like he was 100. But he may have just been a day or two shy of his 100th birthday when he passed. But when he wrote his last Foreign Service Journal essay, he was either 100 or almost 100. And he made reference to that issue of the up and out system and admitted that he was wrong. You know, I just kind of filed that away as, "Okay. Interesting part of life." But it also taught me, maybe another lesson of good management, don't be afraid to bring the boss criticism or bad news. If you do that, you make the boss less effective than he or she could be.

Q: Did you serve as AFSA interim President simultaneously while remaining chief of the PD office?

YOUNG: Yes. And Ron Venezia was worried that I was getting stretched too thin. But he didn't discourage me from doing it. He said "it's something you need to do, you should do." But he said, "Please tell them to find their permanent replacement as soon as possible. Because he could see it was really, really straining me. So yeah, my term in office ended after maybe five or six months. There was a fresh election, I went back to being AFSA Vice President for AID, until Priscilla Boughton called me again out of the clear blue sky.

Oh, before I go into that. There's an incident I should talk about. I talked about why you shouldn't be afraid to bring the boss bad news. When I was covering the West Bank Gaza Program, I made several trips to Jordan. And the mission director there, for some reason, just didn't like me. It was Lou Reade. Somehow it was a personal thing. He had directed the staff to ignore me while I was on TDY, nobody should invite me to dinner and nobody should associate with me outside of the office, I just felt it was bad form on his part. His program officer, who sort of hitched his star to him, was even more rude and nasty, particularly in meetings. Once, when Ben and I were in their conference room, and presented a three-page draft concept paper that we were going to take to the Consul General Jerusalem for how to structure the West Bank Gaza Grant Program for that year, the program officer took his cigarette lighter out and set it on fire on top of the conference table. And the mission director, who looked on in horror, grabbed some other papers and damped it down, tapped it out. Through that smoky, burning haze, he said to the program officer, "that was uncalled for." But I'm thinking "that's all you can say?" And Ben and I were shocked. But with a few revisions, we nevertheless went over to Jerusalem, presented the paper. But I found that that director in Jordan taught me a variant of that lesson about not bringing the boss bad news. Yes, the boss might shoot the messenger, but that's the price for doing the right thing sometimes. As it turned out, Consul General Jerusalem did endorse what we were doing, Washington endorsed what we were doing, because we vetted the initial ideas in Washington before going out to the field. I think our mistake might have been that we knew the mission director there was resistant to having suggestions made by other people that he didn't trust or know, so we had kept him in the dark until the very end. And that was a mistake, we should never have done that. We should have been ready to take the slings and arrows earlier, just for the benefit of making sure that he didn't think he was being cut out of the action by Washington and by us.

Of course, that incident taught me another lesson about what the proper balance between Washington and the field should be. And I think once I finally became a mission director, I figured out what that balance was, and what I would be happy with. But I think even though mission directors had a tremendous amount of field authority at that time, and you had some very strong ones who stretched the boundaries of those authorities, like the Tom Niblocks and Lois Richards of the world who became mythical icons in the history of AID, those people could also stifle information coming up from the staff. As a staff person you felt like first you had to be in the director's coterie before you could actually provide them honest input and information. And it shouldn't have worked that way. You shouldn't be part of a clique in order to get your oar in the water, so to speak. That was another lesson I learned that I think served me well when I became a director.

So anyway, in late '87, Priscilla Boughton called me out of the blue from Bangladesh, and she said, "I want you to become the mission program officer." Now, John, when I was on my way back from Taiwan, in 1975, after finishing my doctoral research, I stopped in Bangladesh, in July of that year. And what I saw around me horrified me so much. Now, just having come from a country, Taiwan, that was following its own development path and doing so extremely successfully, I'd landed in Bangladesh, where the very opposite was true. To be fair, the country was about three years out from its rebellion against Pakistan. What I saw around me was so horrific. I simply couldn't make sense of it. I said to my then-wife, "I'm never coming back here. There's no way. Even if I go to work for AID, I'm never coming back here."

Well, fast forward, May 23, 1988, at 7:45am, I landed at Dhaka International Airport, the country's brand new airport, as the newly minted USAID/Bangladesh program officer. I drove down the wide highway from the airport to Gulshan encountering little traffic. I'm alone at that point as my wife and son are still in England. I get to my residence about 9:30, and I'm just sort of sitting there in the upstairs sitting room with a cup of tea shaking off some serious jet lag. Priscilla calls around 10:30 and says, "Why aren't you in?" That was Priscilla, as I knew her—well, you knew her. She was that way. She didn't mean it in a mean way. It was kind of like, well, you're here. So why aren't you in the office? And so I dragged my butt downtown to the USAID offices. That afternoon, I was kind of a mess. Fortunately, it was a Thursday. I'd deliberately planned my arrival that way so that I could use the Friday-Saturday weekend to recover. Bangladesh adhered to the Muslim workweek. And so I was able to do some of my own in-processing on Thursday, get my badge, and then spend the weekend sleeping it off and starting work on Sunday.

One of the hardest adjustments I've ever had to make was the Sunday to Thursday workweek. We worked Sunday to Thursday, and we were 10 and a half hours ahead of Washington. Our day off was Friday, which a lot of us really took as a day off. Priscilla didn't, but most of us did. But Washington was working, so they had no problem calling us on a Friday or even a Friday night or Saturday. There were times on Saturday, we had to work because the government opened on Saturday and a lot of us went into the office. I didn't appreciate until a few months had passed that Bangladesh was a 24/7 post. It was the most intense work environment I'd ever experienced to that point, including my stint as Philippine desk officer. You were on "duty" seven days a week, your weekend was not Washington's, and Washington's weekend was not yours, because you were working on Sunday and probably on Saturday, too. But if we worked hard, we played just as hard. Bangladesh felt like a community, unlike the Philippines, which is a very large post -- we had over 60 people, foreign service people, in the Philippines -- spread out over a lot of housing neighborhoods. In Manila, we were a very atomized group, we really didn't associate a lot with each other or have a lot of community parties that I recall. Bangladesh was totally different. You lived and worked in a hothouse environment. We all lived within a 10 to 12 square mile area called Gulshan. We saw each other every day, in the office, at dinners, at parties and receptions. It was the hardest partying post I'd ever seen, and I think most people felt that way. I mean, these people, both in the official and

NGO communities, knew how to party. We didn't have outside distractions. We didn't have movie theaters or live theater and there was no television. We barely had VCRs. And if we did, we had to get the tapes from the library of the American Club or the local VCR rental store. They all had streaks in them or were pirated videos made by someone who had sat in a London movie theater with a video camera recording the movie off the screen. So, our real recreation came from the stuff we did together, games, charades, dances, etc. We threw toga parties, and everyone dressed in Roman garb. We had mud wrestling parties. God, there was one fellow that dug a pit in his backyard and filled it with mud from the Buriganga River. And we all got in swimming suits and we mud wrestled. I mean, it was crazy, crazy stuff. But it was because we worked so hard that you needed that outlet. With Priscilla, I think that style was not her style. She was rarely in attendance at these things. And, you know, the rest of the Bangladesh story would take a little more time. Because I see where we are in the time clock I don't want to just start this part of it and then have to interrupt it because it covered the time Priscilla passed away.

Q: If you want we can go another half an hour.

YOUNG: Let's do that. Yeah, and I can wind that up. When I arrived in Bangladesh, USAID was downtown in an old, rat-infested building near the Purbani hotel, and the embassy was located right across the circle from us. I think we were on the fifth or sixth floor. I had arrived, as I said, on May 23. My family came a few weeks after that. Shortly after that, I think it was August, Bangladesh was hit with the worst floods that it had experienced in 1,000 years. It was called the great flood of 1988 because it submerged two-thirds of the country. It put the airport runways underwater. To get people in and out of the country, planes had to land on the taxiway which meant large jets like 747s or DC-10s couldn't land. A land bridge was set up using small commuter planes that either India or Bangladesh had that could ferry passengers from Calcutta to Dhaka and back. We were completely cut off from downtown, we couldn't get into the office. Of course computer technology was not as well developed as it is now. We had to work from home on the old Wang Computer setup which was slow using remote dial up. We tried to use telephones when they worked. The floodwaters also encroached into the diplomatic enclave. And so not only couldn't we get down to the office, there were times that we couldn't get anywhere to local markets or to the commissary to get food unless we had a boat.

And in the meanwhile, my son was still with me, and my wife had flown to Calcutta with the wife of my deputy to choose curtain material for the house because they didn't have enough curtain material in Bangladesh. She gets stranded in Calcutta after the flood hits because the airport is closed and the waters are moving up our road toward the house on Road 79 Gulshan. There was an occasion where I had to bicycle my way down through the water. Lord only knows what was in it, to move furniture and personal items in colleague's houses up to their top floors so that they wouldn't get soaked. In another case the head of the Asia Foundation and his family had to take refuge with us because our house was one of the few houses that was still above the flood line. The floodwater came right up the end of our driveway and stopped there. Their house had become so flooded

that their electricity had become grounded. The house's outer walls had become electrified such that their maid was electrocuted when she touched a wall. She didn't die but was badly injured. The Asia Foundation rep had to get his family out of there. They evacuated to our house, stayed with us for, I don't know, five or six weeks, until the floodwaters receded. As for shopping, the Embassy organized motorized boats to go to the American commissary, and to the market over what had been dry roads a few weeks before. This whole thing lasted about five or six weeks and was my first introduction to Bangladesh. It was obviously a major disaster.

And that's when I came to realize that my tenure in Bangladesh wasn't going to be just about doing the kind of development programs that we were doing in the Philippines and India, or the ones I was overseeing when I was head of the project development office in Asia Near East Bureau in Washington. This was a whole new type of development challenge. Bangladesh was a country with few resources, a burgeoning population, and so prone to natural disasters such that you could expect something like a catastrophic flood almost every year. And in fact, every year almost half the country back then went underwater because of the rains and flows from three great river systems which originate in India. Add to this the fact that Bangladesh's topography doesn't really drain the water from the Gangetic Plain very effectively. The drop off in elevation from Dhaka down to the Bay of Bengal, I think is only, don't hold me to this, but it's less than 100 feet. So, when you get a high tide in the Bay of Bengal, and you've got flood waters coming down from the north, the result is the meeting of two immovable forces. And wherever they meet, they go wherever the resistance isn't, and the country floods. But in the midst of this nature-induced chaos, I learned that the country had a rhythm. It planned itself around floods, it planned itself around disasters. And in many ways, its approach to development was, "how do we make ourselves resilient, to cope with these kinds of things?" And if you think I'm being hyperbolic here, think of it this way. When I was in Bangladesh, the country had about 110 million people in a state the size of Wisconsin, and it was still importing food. We were working hard on fertilizer reform, and increasing rice productivity through research, but our biggest investment in Bangladesh was in family planning and maternal child health. And that probably paid the biggest dividend, because what we didn't realize was that the Bangladeshis were perfectly capable, with our help, of coaxing more productivity out of the land. Where they really needed the help was making the cultural change, that they themselves were already starting to go through, to value smaller families.

And here's where the women of Bangladesh took the leadership. It wasn't the men who said, "my goodness, we can't support our families, we have to make them smaller." It was the women who did it. It was the women who would say, "I'm not having another baby. I want to work outside the home. I want to start my own flower business or, I want to start my own business of renting cell phones out to people." And, of course, Muhammad Yunus, the president and founder of the Grameen Bank, who funded a lot of these female-oriented small businesses, had a lot to do with beefing up and building up that confidence in women. And so, I think what you found was that in our family planning approach, we let women take the lead. The end result is today Bangladesh has a population of maybe 160 to 170 million, and they actually feed themselves and can

export rice. It's a remarkable story of success. Henry Kissinger definitely got it wrong. They were not a basket case. In fact, their basket was quite full. But they lacked capacity. They were far less educated than the Indians. They had a far less competent bureaucracy than the Indians. Anything below, oh, I forget how they rank their people, but anything below about the third level of government was useless. I mean, they really were. But boy, the ones that were in the senior positions, they were extremely smart and highly effective. And people in the villages, the village leadership, particularly women, were extraordinarily capable. They knew what they had to do, and they knew the challenges that they faced. They had difficulty saying, "this is what our country is all about in terms of the challenges we face." We had to listen and learn that from them, and let them help us shape our program. Now, that said, Bangladesh was an incredibly corrupt country.

Q: Let me just push on here a minute before you leave the floods. I happened to be director for South Asia [Bureau of South and Central Asia Affairs] at that time, and we were asked to deal with the G7 meeting. I think it was Madam Pompidou [Claude Pompidou] or Mitterand, I'm not sure who, was pushing for the donors for the G7 to make a very active role in making sure that no further flooding could ever occur in Bangladesh. And we, from the US government side, put together a small team of water engineers, a guy from Harvard and a guy from the Corps of Engineers who had worked on the Mississippi. And they prepared a report that, to his credit, was called, I believe, "Living with the Floods."

YOUNG: Yes!

Q: It basically argued that we should not try to cement the riverbanks, as we had done with dikes and all in the Mississippi, but we should allow the floods to continue, but help people live with it by raising places for people to live, houses with higher stilts, and then they would continue once the floods had receded, they would have the silt and the fertilizer on their fields and continue to live with those floods.

YOUNG: Precisely, you just said exactly what I would have said, John. And the Bangladeshis could have told us in more direct terms that "we have to live with the floods, because we need the fertilizer, the natural fertilizers which comes from the flooding, on the land. We know how to survive and make this economy work by working through and around the floods". I remember that report, because it also included a computer animation. There was a local fellow, Darrell Deppert, who became our resident expert on this. And what they did was they mapped the course of the Brahmaputra River dating back about one hundred years. And when they put it in animation, one could see how that river was literally doing the hula. It meandered back and forth over a wide area. The experts said, "It is not cost effective to keep this river from doing this, because this river is going to do it no matter what you do." The real value of that report, though, was that it taught us why people, goods and services moved north-south in Bangladesh rather than east-west. It's because the three big rivers that come down Bangladesh all flow north to south. The government rarely puts a bridge across those rivers. In fact, the first bridge they ever put across one of those rivers, the Buriganga, was done during my time there. And they're now putting a second bridge across. The World Bank was trying to bridge the

Yamuna, and one of the things that I think they discovered was, no matter where they put the footings on either end of the bridge, those things are going to go underwater eventually, because the river would move. So, doing bridges became a huge challenge and a very expensive one. And then if you tried to change the course of the river, you would change its velocity and the flood patterns themselves.

Now, you point out a very important thing from the '88 floods. And that was the building over a number of years of evacuation towers that were constructed on stilts in order to allow water to flow through them but had plinths that were raised where cattle could be placed, and people could be on the top floors and live there until the waters recede. That design was finally turned over to the World Bank, and they've been building them all over the country now. And they're also used during cyclones because they have been built to be cyclone resistant. When the cyclones bring a tidal surge onto land, the towers that are close to the coast are designed so that the surges just go straight through, minimizing loss of life. We learned that during the 1991 cyclone, which was so strong, it exceeded Cat-5 [Category 5] rating. The wind speed was approaching 200 miles an hour, and when that thing hit the country, it brought a wall of water six feet high about 12 miles inland, because again, the land is so low. It killed 138,000 people in the space of 45 minutes. It was Bangladesh's Hiroshima moment. And when I took an MI-8 helicopter several days after the cyclone down to Chittagong, where we were staging relief operations, I saw things that I never thought I would see. I had never appreciated the power and the force of these Bay of Bengal typhoons. That story of the '91 cyclone is a story of its own, but let's set that one aside for a moment and get back to that time period of the '88 floods.

At that time, right after the '88 floods, one thing I realized, and you mentioned the G7, was that every donor in the world that had an aid program -- including Portugal -- in Bangladesh. Everybody. So, when an IMF person came through, or a World Bank person came through, and you held one of these donor receptions to welcome them, it was amazing how big these things were. They were huge because everybody was there. This made donor coordination a challenge. I mean, the EU did its own coordination. We coordinated with the Canadians and the Germans, and with the World Bank. The World Bank tried to have a donor coordination entity, but it was unwieldy. The World Bank was often going off on its own, doing its own thing. The Bank was the largest overall donor, and the U.S. was the largest bilateral donor. This meant we often set the agenda on policy discussions with the Bangladesh government. Several other major donors, like the French and Japanese, had different agendas. The Japanese were very infrastructure-oriented, and the French were very trade-oriented, which meant that we often didn't have a lot in common with them. Doing coordination with them was difficult.

Despite our lack of cohesion as a donor community, we had a very, very tight-knit expat community in Dhaka. We mixed easily, got together socially, played a lot of tennis together, and we had a lot of parties together in our respective embassies. Ironically, within the American community there was still this AID-State divide. State people would get together and do their thing socially, and we'd, AID people, get together and do our thing socially. You didn't have a lot of crosswalk, except at, say, July 4 or Christmas. Frankly, I saw that at almost every post I served in or visited throughout my career. It got

a little better in Ghana, but it's one thing that I kind of regret, because if we didn't have a lot of collaboration professionally during the day, we didn't mix much socially at night.

So, with the donor community, you had every country represented. And every possible development problem you can imagine was being worked on in Bangladesh. Bangladesh was the laboratory for just about everything anybody wanted to try. Study after study, analysis after analysis examined every solution to Bangladesh's development problems. In fact, I was there so long, I saw studies being duplicated. On that subject, I was there for six years, five weeks, and 12 hours. In Bangladesh at that time, you kept track like this. And I saw the same study being done at least twice over in almost every sector we worked in. I worked my way through three ambassadors. I was there so long that people who had worked for some of the NGOs when I arrived were coming back for their second posting after they had left to go to another country. You know you've been in a place too long when you start seeing the same people come back, and you start seeing the third iteration of the same study. By then you've become the institutional memory. Sometimes that's great, and sometimes it's not.

After the floods of 1988 and a minor one in 1989, our program really took off. We had applied for a PL-480 Title III program that generated a great deal of local currency. But the problem with the programs themselves was, again, we owned them. I don't think the Bangladeshis really owned them. The Bangladeshis were great for saying yes, as opposed to the Indians who said no all the time and then yes at the end. The Bangladeshis seemed to always say yes too early. There were a couple of Bangladeshi officials that were tough and would not do that. And I remember one Title III negotiation that then-director Mary Kilgour and I were at which took eight hours. On the last possible day we could reach an agreement, we were sitting in the office of the Additional Secretary of Finance, Ayub Qadri. He was the senior guy on the Bangladeshi side negotiating food aid agreements. Shortly after our meeting started, the power went out. This was in, I think, the month of August. There was no emergency power or backup generator, and we sweltered in that office for eight hours. I think Qadri was waiting for us to simply give up because it got so damn hot. But during our breaks, Mary and I agreed we were going to wait him out. Except, of course, they were more acclimated to the heat than we were. I thought Mary was going to fry, but we finally, even before the power came on, we finally reached agreement about 6pm that night, and we were relieved to be able to get out of that building and get some water and go home. But we paid less attention to local currency use in this program than we did the dollar funded program. As a result, I think there was a lot of corruption, a lot of over-invoicing and skimping on specifications for things. Despite detailed use plans, our oversight was weak, and deadlines were never met; but we approved their expenditures anyway because of the need to grant loan forgiveness for the food aid (each dollar of local currency spent on an approved activity offset the dollar obligation of the food aid provided). At least we weren't the World Bank. It was a crime that the World Bank would reach an agreement with Bangladesh on something, and then they'd give them the first tranche of money even though the Bangladeshis hadn't done a thing. And by the time the last tranche of money was given, the Bangladeshis had only implemented half the project. And so, if the World Bank wanted to get the other half of the project done they had to give the Bangladesh Government a new loan, thereby

starting the whole process of funding under-performance all over again. We tried not to do that. Yet, our tendency to “own” the project designs meant we cared more about achieving results than they did. We brought them the concepts and the papers, and they generally accepted what we proposed because we were the “donor”. I felt that that was a real fundamental reason why there was so much corruption in the government. We saw this repeated by donor after donor. Perhaps they were getting too much free money from too many donors, each of us with our own monitoring requirements. Arguably, having to deal with all of us stretched their limited management capacity.

Q: Frank, you mentioned you wanted to complete the story about Priscilla?

YOUNG: Yeah, let me do that. I was drafting the new CDSS [Country Development Strategy Statement] in 1990 and I noticed a behavior change in Priscilla. She'd just come back from a vacation in the Caribbean with her new husband, Stan, and she just wasn't the same person. She was raising questions about the drafts that I'd written that seemed to be coming out of left field and she became quite angry with me at certain points. And I thought, "This is very odd. This isn't her." I didn't know it but she was having health problems at the time. No one knew what it was, but she had to go back to Washington. Once she was back there, they diagnosed her condition as pancreatic cancer. Hearing that news we knew that she wasn't coming back. I went to Washington to defend the CDSS with Malcolm Purvis, who was the deputy, and I'll never forget the night I visited her in her hospital room after we completed the first day of reviews. Stan, her husband, was in the hotel room with her. And Priscilla, bless her heart, she was in a fetal position and had oxygen tubes in her nose. I asked Stan, "Can I talk to her?" And he said, "Yeah." He said, "Tell her how the day went." And I said, "She's in pain. I mean, she really wants to know how the day went?" With as much sincerity as he could muster, he said, "Yes, she does." And so I went into her room and I told her how the review went, the issues that were raised and how Malcolm and I dealt with them. She would mumble very softly, "Did you make the point about this? Did you raise the point about that?" And I'm looking at her lying there. Her eyes aren't even open. Yet she's able to talk and think about the program. After satisfying her that we covered all her concerns, she tried to smile and just went to sleep. I came out of that room shattered. Stan was standing in the hallway, and he had his face in his hands. And I said, "I am so sorry, Stan." And he looked at me and he said, "Thank you. You've done more for her than the doctors have." It was the coda to my friendship and experience with Priscilla. It was the kind of person she was. She was focused, driven, hard as nails. But she was compassionate, she knew she was dying. She was in pain, and yet she cared about what was going to happen in that country and with the program. It just really moved me.

I don't know if you remember but shortly after that a colleague of ours, Jim Manley, came down with cancer. I had come to know him when I was with the program in India. And that, for me, was a tremendous loss as well. Well, when I got back to Bangladesh, by the time I'd gotten back, Priscilla had passed away. It was devastating for the mission. I hadn't realized the hold she had had on people there. The AID staff gathered in the new embassy courtyard which was now in Baridhara, the old Embassy having moved out of downtown in 1988. We held a ceremony for her and Malcolm officiated. We had to bring

in Martha Reese, who was the agency psychologist at the time. You probably remember her. I can't believe I'm remembering all this stuff. She came to provide counseling, but people were really shattered. We knew we had to move on, but to what? We'd lost our leader. I guess we became less driven for a while. We were a very driven staff, I mean, God, we were intense. The job felt like it was 24/7. I mean, it was just work, work, work, and constantly focused on the "prize". But Priscilla's passing took some of the edge off that. Eventually, we brought TRG in to help us with team building.

Q: TRG is?

YOUNG: Oh, the Training Resources Group. They're still in business today. And in fact, I recently attended a Zoom call with them for the retirement of Connie Teixeira. Connie had been my secretary in Bangladesh, emigrated to the United States and ended up working for TRG for over 20 years. It was during TRG's first visit to Dhaka that I introduced her to TRG. During the Zoom call honoring her and her retirement recently, Steve Joyce, who'd come out to Bangladesh to do some of the team building, actually reminded me about that. It was perhaps the one positive that came out of their visit. Overall, the team building exercise didn't go well, especially for the deputy mission director. A lot of ill feeling about him came out at the retreat and it quite surprised the TRG team.

Despite the deputy's hope to become mission director, Mary Kilgour was brought in to take the job. I can say without reservation that she probably taught me more about how to be a mission director and run a front office than Tony did in the Philippines, or Dick Brown did in India, or Priscilla did in Bangladesh. Mary really knew how to run a front office, how to build a front office team, and how to connect that team with the rest of the mission staff. She probably taught me everything I needed to know. And she was the perfect teacher because she could close the door and dress me down and be my friend in the process. I've used my experience with her in my mentoring of deputy mission directors over the past few years. One valuable lesson she taught me was that when you build that front office relationship, you never want to cross the line where a friendship compromises your judgment. Mary never did. I credit her with my success. I was acting director in Bangladesh for about the last year that I was there (1993-1994), before Dick Brown came in, and I only overlapped with Dick for a couple of months. Later, when I became director in Ghana, I realized the value of what she taught me. It was during Mary's tenure in Bangladesh that we went through martial law, starting in October of 1990. Then we had the Gulf War in January of '91. When we had the evacuation of the mission, I was caught in Malaysia at the time, and she was able to get me back into the country. She told me "If this really goes south, and we all have to evacuate, Frank, you are the last one out the door. I'm giving you the key. You're the last one on the chopper."

Q: Wow.

YOUNG: Well, we never got to that point, John. But after the Gulf War, we faced an even greater challenge than the ones we had faced over the prior six months. It was the great

cyclone of 1991. That event followed the first Bangladeshi presidential elections since the country's independence in February 1991 which followed a soft coup by the military that overthrew President Ershad the prior December. In those elections Begum Zia [Khaleda Zia] was elected president. No sooner had her government taken over that the great cyclone of 1991 slammed into Chittagong and the country's southeastern coastline on April 30. All of those events together probably created the greatest kaleidoscope of stress and, ironically, productivity that I'd ever experienced in a mission. I think a lot of us came out of that whole series of events with some PTSD because of the things we saw and the pressure we were under. And I'll end with this: the penultimate act was when the day after the cyclone hit we were trying to organize response teams to travel to the disaster zones. We were already cut off from the rest of the world, by the way. Washington couldn't get in touch with us. I mean, except for limited cable traffic (flash messages), communications were down. Phone calls were impossible, and the Internet and the emails were largely not functioning. The country's main satellite receiving station had been destroyed. We couldn't mount an effective response. We'd never seen anything like this in our lives.

It was at this very time that the US military was bringing a flotilla of Navy ships and Navy corpsmen back from the Gulf War. Their route took them steaming past the Bay of Bengal on their way to San Diego. And our Ambassador at the time, Bill Milam, immediately said, "We gotta get the US military in here." The NGOs reacted very negatively to this. The AID mission, I included, and Mary, we all reacted very, very negatively. We didn't want the military on the ground, we thought it would be a bad move politically. The political section did not agree, obviously. Ambassador Milam made calls to State and the NSC and worked with the CINC/PACOM (Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command as it was known back then). They also put in a call to the Third US Marines Expeditionary Force in Okinawa which sent down a battalion to start the process of organizing communications and logistics and begin to set the stage for being able to ferry relief supplies in and out of Chittagong. The Marines even took over the air traffic control system in Chittagong. At the same time that this navy flotilla was passing just south of the Bay of Bengal, Ambassador Milam also made a call to the White House and said, "We want them." The naval group made a sharp left turn, came straight up the Bay of Bengal and docked the entire flotilla of ships, helicopter carriers, and supply ships just offshore. The battle group contained about 8000 naval personnel and special forces. They leapt into action, and in the next six weeks, they probably rescued a country. They certainly rescued President Khaleda Zia's fragile government and ultimately the country's democracy. The Marine General, Major General Hank Stackpole, didn't find the mission an easy lift. But he understood what was necessary. When he got some resistance from the Bangladeshis over logistics and implementation, he did what we couldn't do. He went to the Prime Minister and said, "This is your disaster, this is your response. But if you don't start giving the civilians some authority to handle it, and if you don't take this over and act decisively, and start issuing orders, not allowing just your military to do it, and getting the communication structure set up and all of that," he said, "we're leaving, you don't need us." And the Bangladeshis immediately did a 180 and did everything the Marines asked them to do. They even gave permission for the Navy and the Special Forces to come on shore.

The first task of the Special Forces and Navy corpsmen was to bring white sheets and bury people. They buried thousands of people. Their second task was to send Special Forces into areas that we, foreign NGOs and even Bangladeshi NGOs could not access, to do damage assessments. These troops were self-contained, self-supplied. They got back in there and gave us intelligence on conditions that we would never have gotten otherwise, allowing us to organize and target our assistance to the places where it was badly needed. Fast forward to six weeks later when they're getting ready to leave, and they make an offer to those of us who had been on the mission disaster response team, Myself, Jose Garzon, and Olivier Gardner. They flew us, the Director and a few others on a helicopter out to the USS Tarawa 50 or so miles in the bay southwest of Chittagong. This is where it gets a little hard to talk about, John. We landed on the Tarawa, and they met us with jackets, USS Tarawa jackets, and we went to the "mess" and had lunch with the men and women from this naval task force. As lunch concluded, one of them got up and said, "You know, we took to the sea six months ago with a mission to kill people and break things. And we didn't fire a shot in anger our whole time during the Gulf War. And yet, we used everything we had on these ships to save lives and help rebuild a country." They were in tears. We were in tears.

By then, the mission's name had become a household word in Dhaka. It was called "Operation Sea Angel." The AAR (After Action Report) carries that title, it's still known as that today. I helped write the AAR which is classified and held at National Defense University. When I was teaching there in the early 2000s, I asked to see it, but I was not permitted to because I didn't have a proper clearance. The irony! But as I said before, that cyclone event, at the end of so many other events before it, was so traumatic that even now, bringing it to memory brings tears to my eyes. Not just because of the horror of the experience, but of the heroism of our military, the NGOs, the Bangladeshi staff, our American AID staff, who -- at some risk to their lives -- traveled down there. George Laudato and I were in a Marine plane a week after the cyclone that almost got knocked out of the sky. We had to turn back to Dhaka. When we finally landed, the Marine pilot, who was drenched in sweat, came back to us from the cockpit and said, "Gentlemen, you dodged one this time." Another marine who was with us said, "If a Marine pilot ever says that to you, you know you were in real trouble." A couple of Americans working for NGOs who were caught in the cyclone in Chittagong, got cholera while they were, and barely survived. There was a lot that staff endured, in all segments of the response, whether American, Bangladeshi, military, civilian. I mean, there were thousands of heroes in that response whose story will probably never be written. But I think thanks to that, Bangladesh bounced back stronger than ever. Since then, it has experienced enormous cyclones and devastating floods, but the death toll has been far less because of what the country learned from the disasters of the 80s and 90s, and I think because of the interventions that we were able to make at the time.

Q: I think we're gonna have to cut it off pretty soon.

YOUNG: Okay, I just want to finish by saying, we were still an evacuated mission when the cyclone hit. We hadn't gotten everybody back from Washington. So, we were

operating on a very lean staff. So that's probably a good place to stop, because the next half of my Bangladesh tour – as I said, I stayed there six years -- was when I became deputy mission director and later acting director and started to learn how to build and manage a front office. And then it sort of rolls forward to going back to Washington, National War College, going to Ghana, and then sort of finishing up when I went back into the Foreign Service in 2010, to be acting AA for Asia. And that's when I started working with the State Department more closely than I'd ever done before.

Q: We'll come back for a second interview in a few days, I just want to add one thing if you don't mind. I also knew Mary Kilgour well and worked with her. And I just want to mention that Mary had all these skills and learnings she brought to you. Mary has written a book called Me May Mary. It's about her childhood where she grew up sleeping in cars with abusive parents and eventually became an orphan. And finally, she was able to move past that and become an extremely successful woman and career specialist for AID. And if you want to read another good book, Me May Mary should be on your list.

YOUNG: In fact we have it. We have one in our library. Both Pat and I have read it. Mary actually gave us a personal copy when we were living in Bethesda, Maryland. And I think that book shows why she is such a very compassionate person.

Q: Right. All right, we will end this interview here and we'll come back in a few days. Thank you.

Q: All right. Hello, this is John Pielemeier on May 9, this will be the second interview with Frank Young. We will be continuing our discussion about Frank's tour in Bangladesh. And Frank, we're on.

YOUNG: Alright, thanks, John. I think when we left this off, I had just described a very intense and very demanding period that the entire Bangladesh mission and I personally went through from about October of '90 through May of '91, starting with the institution of martial law in Bangladesh in late October of '90, the overthrow of President Ershad in December of '90, the Gulf War in January of '91, culminating in great cyclone of '91. There's an interesting anecdote about how the 1991 Gulf War affected me. When attacks on Baghdad began, my family and I were on leave in Malaysia. It was an awkward place to be as you might imagine. Because an authorized departure had already been ordered for Bangladesh, anyone outside the country wasn't allowed to return. Mary Kilgour had to really do some heroic things to get me back into the country. But the negotiations involving my family were very difficult. I was told that Pat and Alex would have to go back to the US while I returned to Dhaka. My wife, who was a diplomat with the Canadian High Commission at the time and outranked me (she was effectively the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Canadian High Commission), said that the US Embassy couldn't do that. She told the Americans that she was coming back to Dhaka with our

son, who had now been placed under the protection of the of the Canadian government rather than the American government, and that if anyone was going to the States, then it would be me. Mary interceded and made sure that all of us could come back.

But once I got back, it was, of course, a very difficult time. We operated partially out of our homes, occasionally going into the mission. The situation in Dhaka was unstable, but not really unsafe. Pat's dad was staying with us and he even went for walks in the morning without incident, though I was always worried. Eventually, we were all able to go back into the office, particularly when the war was resolved quickly and was winding down. But Ambassador William Milam was absolutely certain we were going to go to mandatory drawdown, which never happened partly because the voluntary drawdown got us to staff levels that the Embassy could justify. And it's a good thing that didn't happen, because shortly after the Gulf War, Bangladesh held its first democratic elections in its history after having been under a de facto military government since 1975 following the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his home. Ironically for a Muslim country, the two main candidates for president were women: Sheikh Hasina, who was the daughter of Mujibur Rahman, and Begum [Khaleda] Zia, who was the wife of a previous military ruler who himself had been removed by a military coup and executed. The election was carried off very successfully, a lot of us did election monitoring and funded election support activities even though we were still a depleted mission with a lot of people on evacuation. I think we were down to half strength, maybe a little less than half strength. The election was very successful; Begum Zia confounded all the pollsters and won. We saw it as a vindication for our support for democracy and governance programs in the country, and our support of the Electoral Commission. Which was running a free and fair election for the first time in two decades.

By late March, we started thinking about welcoming back our evacuated colleagues from what we called "Dhaka on the Potomac". They began dribbling back in during March and April. But at the end of April, on April the 29th, and I think I mentioned this in the prior interview, the strongest cyclone ever to hit Bangladesh in its history smashed into Chittagong and Cox's Bazar. I described the destruction in the prior interview, so I won't go into that. But our response created a division immediately between AID and the embassy. AID felt that we wanted to rely on local institutions and the local NGO network to address this disaster, which was a tried-and-true model from prior floods. And Ambassador Milam said no, he thought that what was going on was exceeding the capability of the government to handle, and even civil society to handle. There was no way that the country was going to be able to respond effectively to a disaster of just unimaginable proportions in terms of deaths, in terms of destruction. Lurking in the back of his mind was the newly-installed but very fragile government of Khaleda Zia. As I described earlier, we asked a flotilla of American ships coming back from the Gulf War

to turn left at the bottom end of the Bay of Bengal, and put about 8,000 boots on the ground to basically deliver lifesaving supplies, bury bodies and to get into areas that even our NGOs couldn't get into using special forces, in order to give us intelligence where we could target our assistance. To this day, that military operation of relief, called Operation Sea Angel, created the template that subsequent military interventions for natural disasters have followed. It was a six week long effort, and I think today Bangladeshis still remember what America did for Bangladesh at that time. They may not remember our rural electrification programs, our fertilizer reform programs, our ag research programs, our family planning and health programs. They may not remember any of those, but they remember that when their country, in the aftermath of a democratic election and a government that was just standing itself up, facing the biggest natural disaster in the country's history, that America was there, and we stood up our people to help them out. We left very light footprints on the ground and our military left within about six weeks. That came at the end of a very intense period of events. I think a lot of us were shell shocked by all the events that had happened over that six-month period.

It was then that I went through a reset in my attitude toward the Bangladesh program. We were in the midst of implementing our new CDSS, which was mainly what I would call a Reagan-Bush open markets, open societies themed program. It employed rhetoric that was distinctly pro private sector and anti-government. Perhaps it was the impact of the events of October 1990 to May 1991 that affected my perception, but I became even more and more convinced that the attitude of the of the Reagan-Bush people, which basically was the private sector can do no wrong and the public sector can do no right, was really the wrong way to go. We had depleted the public sector in Bangladesh, we were not providing as much direct support to them as other donors were, and we were worried for this new government. We were funneling more and more of our assistance directly to the private sector because we didn't trust the government. And I realized that after the communal violence, the cyclone and of course the floods of '88, that with the new democratic government being installed in Bangladesh we needed to do everything we could to support government institutions and institutional capacity. Bangladesh's capacity and civil service, even though its upper echelons were trained along the lines of the Pakistani civil service under the British rule, once you got about three tiers below the minister, it was pretty much useless. Administrative capacity was very thin. Perversely, it was this very weakness that explained why we also emphasized supporting the private sector and quasi-public institutions, rather than the government. Unless we wanted state failure to become a self-fulfilling prophecy, I realized we were going to have to flip that narrative. One of the first things we did was to work with the Bangladesh government to help them build up a standing capability to respond to natural disasters, because you could expect every two years something bad was going to happen. Whether it was a flood, cyclone, or an epidemic disease like measles, something was going to happen that

was going to be beyond the government's capability to handle alone. And so we worked with the Bangladeshi government to stand up a civilian based, civilian directed disaster response capability with policies and chain of command that would come into effect the minute a disaster was declared. And I think if you look at Bangladesh's recent history with the cyclones and floods they've had, they have relied less and less on calling in massive amounts of external aid, and used much less military help from the US, when they face some of these crises. Their institutions are now more capable and have greater capacity to deal with these disasters. So that was, for me, the first reset: try to invest more in the public sector.

Of course, there was a risk to this approach because the government was terribly corrupt. Well, frankly, society there was terribly corrupt. So, the second reset I went through was to drop my zero tolerance for corruption and waste. With foreign aid, when you're working in high-risk environments, you're just going to have to accept a certain amount of graft. But of course, the pressure from the hill and from Washington always was that we're going to accept none of it. We're not going to allow any corruption to creep into our programs. Well, I think we had blinders on, because it happened anyway. It's just that perhaps we never really admitted it to ourselves.

But it was during that time that I got close to the Grameen Bank, and to its founder, president, and chairman, Muhammad Yunus. Yunus ran an operation with Grameen Bank that was funded by a consortium of foreign donors, and his view was, "you give me the money, I'll carry out the program, but just don't ask me how I'm doing it. And no, I won't take AID's money with AID's requirements for reporting, because it's just too onerous and too expensive." And what was interesting was, a lot of donors, including the World Bank, and the European donors, the Canadians, they all bought into that narrative, and they provided the assistance without the kind of oversight and reporting that we would have required. Nevertheless, Yunus still wanted to work with us, because I think he realized the AID mission had a lot of technical capacity and that we were intellectual leaders in areas like health and agriculture, and even education. So, I started working with Yunus and his staff on some programs. He wanted to expand his model of micro-enterprise lending to poor village women, to getting involved in the oil seed sector, and then getting involved in irrigation. We were concerned he was extending himself too much. But in the process of working with him, even though we never funded any of this—and much to my regret, frankly, I think we probably should have funded at least one of his ideas and accepted his approach to reporting and oversight—he and I got unusually close. So much so that I took a Staffdel [Congressional Staff Delegation] out to a village where they could see a Grameen Bank project. Even though we weren't funding the Grameen Bank, Yunus was more than happy to accommodate the Staffdel. I took them out to a village just outside of Dhaka where women were running a poultry hatchery

using the heat from light bulbs in chicken coops to aid egg hatching. These women were raising chickens using a Grameen loan. And one of the Staffdel members asked Yunus, "What is the single most important thing that you have learned by providing this assistance to these women for this project?" And he looked at them, and he said, "the importance of rural electrification." He then pointed at me, and he said, "These guys, without rural electrification, without their support for rural electrification, this project wouldn't even be here. That's replicated among many of the projects that I'm involved with. We need that infrastructure. That's one of the greatest poverty interventions that USAID has ever done in Bangladesh." Well, I was totally floored.

Yunus' comment made me recall that a few years earlier, *60 Minutes* had come to Bangladesh to do a program on Grameen Bank. Morley Safer was doing the interview, and we were doing it in the backyard of Priscilla Boughton's house, our director at the time. Safer asked her a question, "How much of the money that we give to the rural electrification program actually goes into the pockets of the poorest people in the villages?" I lost my temper behind the camera, and I yelled out, "That's a stupid question!" And of course, they yelled "cut". I thought Malcolm Purvis, who was the deputy mission director at the time, was going to whack me in the back of the head. Priscilla looked at me with daggers. But to his credit, Morley Safer turned around and said, "Why is it a stupid question?" And I said, "You got a few minutes? Let me explain it to you." So, we went in and sat on Priscilla's couch, and I explained to him how we support the institution of the rural electric cooperatives, how they're managed and run locally by the people that are using the electricity, how the rates are set, what our money is actually used for to build capacity by funding equipment, pay for labor, and train local leaders how to run a cooperative. And after it was all done, his producer was sitting there taking notes, and he looked down and said, "We need to reframe this question." He did reframe it. He reframed it quite intelligently, although I can't remember exactly how it was stated. But I think it changed the tenor of the entire *60 Minutes* report when they aired the report on their program some months later. Although it's still castigating USAID for not directly supporting the Grameen Bank, it did at least give a favorable review of our rural electrification program.

Q: Frank, take a minute and explain a little bit. How long did rural electrification go on, decades, right?

YOUNG: It was decades. And there was an organization in the states—gosh, I'm having a sort of a brain gap here.

Q: NRECA [National Rural Electric Cooperative Association], I think.

YOUNG: NRECA. That's right, John, thanks. I had worked with NRECA on rural electrification in the Philippines. I knew their staff back in Washington, I was familiar with their model, and when I got to Bangladesh, it was natural for me to get involved with the program, even though I was the program officer and didn't have direct line responsibility for overseeing projects. I pushed for the maximum amount of funding that we could give it, recognizing what a tremendous impact that program was going to have. The model that it pursued in Bangladesh and the Philippines, I think, revolutionized and remade the rural landscape of both countries. I think that the impact of that model endures today, even after our assistance is gone.

Q: The cooperative model?

YOUNG: Yes, the cooperative model. Precisely. That model, which was built on something I think NRECA pioneered in America in the '30s, proved simply to be extremely adaptable to situations in rural areas, across cultures and across countries. Now, we also tried it in India, different kind of political setup there, but the Indians also were pursuing their own rural electrification efforts. Our involvement there, although not as substantial as Bangladesh and the Philippines, was also very important in helping the Indians as well. Again, that's not to say there wasn't a lot of corruption in that program. I would go to villages, and I would see houses hardwired to a wire off the transformer without going through a meter. So, people were just stealing power left and right because they could. The safeguards really weren't there. Sometimes the local community wasn't putting pressure on the people who were stealing the power to stop doing it, because a lot of them were their neighbors, and some of them were actually some powerful people politically in the community. Again, that was another lesson to me about the concept of zero tolerance of corruption and waste. I was probably going to have to drop that notion by the wayside if we were ever going to make any sensible risk-worthy investments in countries like Bangladesh or the Philippines.

I know that attitude puts me at odds with Washington, but it also taught me another lesson, which is: say yes to Washington and then be as passive-aggressive as you possibly can be and do your own thing anyway until Washington notices. And I think we were modestly successful at doing that. Anyway, fast forward, Mary Kilgour comes in as director in Bangladesh just before the October declaration of martial law. And during the evacuation during the Gulf War, January '91, Malcolm Purvis, who was the deputy mission director, was evacuated, so there was no deputy to support Mary. So, when I got back in January 1991, Mary made me acting deputy. By May, I was doing both jobs, program officer and deputy mission director, plus disaster relief officer, with tremendous help from Jose Garzon, who was just absolutely wonderful. I guess it got noticed in Washington because I was offered the deputy mission director job in Bangkok. It took

about five minutes after discussing it with my wife to decide, no, we weren't going to Bangkok. She had a great job with the Canadian High Commission, and I didn't like the family situation in Bangkok.

So, Mary recommended, and Washington approved my staying on in Bangladesh for a third two year tour as deputy mission director. And I did that. In fact, that was the year I also ended up getting promoted into the Senior Foreign Service. So, it was a great year from that point of view, although, I think it was Jesse Helms who held up all of the 1991 promotions into the Senior Foreign Service for about eight months. But you know, I think the rest of that time, that final two years from 1992-1994, we made a lot of enduring friendships, as you can imagine, particularly in the Bangladeshi community. And believe it or not, John, there's never been another post where I've had this experience. The friendships that we made in Bangladesh, Bangladeshis, Americans, and Europeans, we are all still in touch. We called it the Bangladesh mafia network -- not to cast aspersions on anybody with an Italian surname here -- but that network is still intact. We have reunions. In fact, every year there is a couple in North Carolina that holds a Bangladesh reunion. And people come from -- they don't come from overseas, but they come from all over the country sometimes, just to show up for three days of music and reminiscing. And I think that just shows the grip that the country, the program, the personal relationships we had, just stayed with us. Pat and I were there six years, and by the time I had left I was the longest serving American diplomat in history in Bangladesh at 6 years, 1 month, 6 days and 11 hours. No American had served longer than I had. Now, I think that record finally got broken, it might have either been by Julie Defler or Helen Gunther, but not by much. But I was there so long that Father Dick Tim, who was a well-known and respected Roman Catholic missionary there, and a prominent human rights crusader within Bangladesh, told me when he came to my farewell party—as did Muhammad Yunus, by the way—that if I had stayed one month longer, the Bangladeshi Government was going to grant me citizenship. To which I said, "I guess it's time to leave."

Anyhow, coming out of there, Bangladesh, as I say, was the midpoint of my career in AID, although I didn't know that at the time. The six years in Bangladesh caused a whole bunch of resets in me. I learned things and saw things that I think just changed me forever. And it was sort of like that college sophomore year in India, which stuck with me throughout my entire life. That tour in Bangladesh has also stuck with me throughout my entire life. Almost everything I've learned professionally about development, I can pretty much link back to my service in Bangladesh, including not just the importance of the private sector, but the importance of public private partnerships and the importance of letting local institutions and local leaders lead, like Muhammad Yunus.

Q: Frank, you mentioned private public partnerships, a topic that is of interest. Are there any successful programs there? You'd like to mention?

YOUNG: Well, in Bangladesh, whether they still exist, I'm not sure. I think our fertilizer reform program was an interesting public private partnership, where we compelled the government to do things—and I hate using that word compelled, because, to me, that's a recipe for failure in the long term, especially when you try and compel a government to do something they're not prepared to do. But I think the Bangladeshi Government was at least halfway prepared to do this. We helped them create an entire private sector network for fertilizer distribution throughout the country. And that network federated into a larger organization that worked directly with the government on fertilizer, import and distribution. You know, that was our sort of crowning achievement in Bangladesh, which, unfortunately, under subsequent governments has become undermined. So that's kind of regrettable. If I were to point to one thing [as our greatest public private partnership in Bangladesh], that's probably it. But when we get into Ghana, John, there were other public private partnerships there that I think were even more important and more enduring. I'll address those when we get to that point.

Q: Okay, good.

YOUNG: Coming out of Bangladesh, I went back to Washington, to become head of Asia DP [USAID Bureau for Asia Office of Development and Planning].

Q: This is 1994?

YOUNG: Yes, 1994. Originally, the strategic planning and the operations were all going to be under me. The front office decided, while I was on the plane, that that wasn't going to happen. They were going to split the office into two, and the strategic planning side was going to go under Dirk Dikerman with, as I saw it, all the brains in the Bureau, and the operations would be in my lane. That choice didn't really play to my strengths, and I was kind of upset. I had also been asked to take the job and put off my application for the National War College for a year, which I ended up agreeing to. Well, what could have been a highly competitive relationship between Dirk and myself turned out to be one of the most important friendships I've ever developed within the agency. Dirk taught me a great deal about how to take people with different ideas, different perspectives and disagreements, and mold them into a consensus. Dirk and I found ourselves on the same page more often than not, and Dirk was the first person to admit if he was wrong about an idea and he could be persuaded. So, he and I, together, created a system for reviewing mission strategies and coming up with an Asia Bureau strategy of our own.

Meanwhile, within my office, it was the first time I had supervised a mostly African American staff. It was a bit awkward, because, you know, we change over the directorship of these Washington offices every couple of years, and of course the staff are there through many, many, many office directors. I had a hard time, I think, adjusting to and working with that staff. I think three things happened that changed the chemistry, though, and they were all crises. The first one was when the son of one of the staff was shot to death in a high school in northeast Washington. It was in the middle of the morning, the cause being, I think, a disagreement over a girlfriend. The student who was carrying the gun ran straight through the metal detector and shot my staff person's son several times in the back. We all went to the funeral. I think the fact that the entire brass of the Bureau, all the office directors, the front office, and others showing up to this funeral was an important signal, particularly to staff in my office that we all took note of and cared deeply about the personal challenges they faced outside the office.

The second thing was there was an outbreak of tuberculosis. I think it was in the family of one of my African American secretaries. We all had to line up in the hall and take regular TB tests. And we all did it. We all did it with a smile on our faces, and we queried about everybody's health every day. And I think that was another indication of what I would call caring for the staff.

But the third one, I think, was the most important. Not the most important really, but the one that I think had the greatest traction. You remember the big government shutdown under Clinton, over the Christmas holidays, in '95 into '96? I would have to go into the office every day, and basically all I did was spend the day reading books on the couch because legally I was not allowed to do any work. But I was there in case an emergency happened. Well, one day, a couple of my secretarial staff came in and told me flat out they couldn't meet their rent, because they weren't getting paid. And it really was a seminal moment. They had said the Lafayette Federal Credit Union was willing to lend them the money to cover their rent for the month of January, but they would need a cosigner on the loan. So, I cosigned the lines of credit. I didn't care about the risk. I mean, to me it was worth it. I had faith that they would not renege on the loans. And they didn't. They paid them off in full. Of course, everybody got their back pay and that was fine.

But I think after that, the relationship within the office really changed. And it taught me something that would stick with me during my tenure as director in Ghana, which is, no matter what challenges the program will present you—the projects, you know the whole bit about running a program itself—you have to have a strategy for staff care. You got to take care of them. Overseas, you really must go overboard to take care of your local employees. In Washington, to me, it's the same because if you care for and trust in your employees, they'll have your back. Because there are things they know that you probably

won't know, even if you're there two or three years in the office director job. And by having your back they can keep you out of a lot of trouble. It allows you to be able to delegate decisions down the line and trust that people will do the right thing, because they know you have their back as well.

Fast forward to, I guess it was October '95. I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, I went in, had surgery and they got rid of it. That was great. But it made me realize that I needed a change of pace, I needed to slow down a bit. Fortunately, my application to the National War College was approved, and I went there as part of the 50th anniversary class, 1996 to '97. It was my first exposure to military culture in any sort of depth. I mean, I'd been exposed to the military, and how they run a field operation during Operation Sea Angel in Bangladesh. But I never really understood military culture and what motivates military officers in carrying out their duties and missions. And, of course, I learned a lot about the differences between the services, Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines.

One of the lessons and takeaways from that year of study was how much the military respects the Foreign Service. At the National War College, admission as a student signals that you are likely to be put into a flag rank position, a general, admiral or Ambassador. More than half the military graduates of the National War College end up as generals or admirals, and the people that go in from State Department, AID, and a couple of other federal agencies, they're all slated for ambassadorships, mission directorships, and so forth. To realize how much respect the military had for the civilian side of our national security architecture was really an eye opener for me. And it helped me develop a deep trust in our military and our military institutions, and what motivates our military leadership. Huge, huge lesson, huge takeaway from that year.

In the meanwhile, I was lobbying for—not lobbying directly, but exploring how to secure a mission director job. Instead, I got a call in the spring of '97 asking me if I wanted to take over the Office of Management Policy in the M Bureau [USAID Bureau of Management]. It came at me out of left field, but accepting it was probably one of the smartest decisions I've ever made in my career. And I've said it to people I've been mentoring, and I've said it anybody else that would listen, that if you want to become a mission director and be effective, you've got to do a tour in M. I don't care where in M you do the tour, except maybe for HR, but you have to do a tour in M. Because it's important to understand how the support services actually work in the agency, procurement in particular. During my time as director of management policy, I touched the third rail of procurement reform. My first task was to develop a program to reform the procurement system to reduce the lead time from letting out an RFP [Request for Proposal] to actually awarding a contract from 36 months to 18 months. And we ended up compromising at 24, and even that was too darn long. Well, I realized that

procurement reform was like debating reform of Social Security on the Hill. Procurement reform was the third rail in the agency and procurement officers had a vested interest in keeping the processes, procedures, and rules in the AIDAR (AID's acquisition regulations) that they had. That was an incredibly difficult assignment to work on. We did get some of it done. It taught me a lot about how to negotiate almost irreconcilable differences across offices. Coming out of this assignment, I also realized that I was going to become a far more effective mission director down the line because I knew how financial management worked. I also knew how procurement worked now; I even got a better sense of the HR assignment system. That all proved to be tremendous assets when I ended up finally getting my assignment, which I finally got 1998 as Mission Director to Ghana.

Q: Frank, while you're talking about M Bureau, who was AID administrator at that time?

YOUNG: Oh, the assistant administrator was Terry Brown.

Q: Who was the administrator?

YOUNG: Oh, the administrator at the time was Brian Atwood. Do you remember—what was his name—the head of M? Larry?

Q: Byrne.

YOUNG: Byrne, Larry Byrne. We loved Brian; I loved Brian, but we all wondered, “What must he have been thinking to put Larry Byrne in that job?” I mean, Terry Brown was actually the Deputy Assistant Administrator, so I didn't have a lot to do with Larry. Larry was the one that directly recruited me into the job, which I found odd. And I think Larry left soon thereafter. I can't remember who came in after him. But yeah, it was Larry Byrne, and then Terry was Deputy Assistant Administrator, and the head of HR was Linda Lion. The three of them were very strong personalities, so you can imagine what it was like for an office director to deal with those three. Terry and Linda are now icons in the memory of us retired AID people. But they were all very strong personalities to deal with. And so, yeah, I think in Washington, if I look to a rewarding assignment in my first career stint with AID, which went to my first retirement in 2005, the most important was probably in M. We'll talk about the second career stint that started in 2010. I went into that job knowing absolutely zilch about M. And I came out with a graduate level education in M. And man, that was worth the price of admission, and then some. So anyway, I'm in the running for Director for Ghana. And I'm aware that the African Bureau was preferring minority candidates.

Q: And you had never served in Africa.

YOUNG: I had never served in the African Bureau, and that was the other barrier. Africa Bureau likes to stay with their own and promote from within, much like the Latin America Bureau was doing. I mean, it was very insular. There wasn't a mission opening up in Asia. I didn't want to go back to the Philippines. I absolutely did not want to go back there. And I didn't want to go to Thailand. I had just come out of India, and I think India, frankly, needed a director that was more senior, higher profile. I mean, Walter North—was it Walter North? No, no, it was. Oh, I can see his face, but I can't remember his name. Tall, thin fellow, Terry Myers was his deputy. Anyway, I can't remember who it is right offhand. These people had been real titans in the senior management group. I just didn't feel like I could hold a candle to them. Of course, I wasn't going to go back to Bangladesh, for sure. Indonesia wasn't open.

I can't really say this for certain, but it's my hunch that it was Dirk Dijkerman, my rival and then later, close, close friend who basically carried the water for me, and said to the Africa Bureau front office, "This guy is what Ghana needs right now." And, yeah, I think if it hadn't been for Dirk pushing my candidacy, I don't think I would have made it. I was grateful, but I was even more grateful for the fact that two thirds of the Ghana mission was turning over. Almost every office director was turning over. I had the opportunity to choose almost two thirds of the American staff, including all the office directors. One of them had come from my international development intern class in the mid '70s. And it just proved to be a dream team, John, because my deputy at the time, and acting director before I got there, was Tom Hobgood. I had served with Tom in the Philippines, he was an Aggie [Agricultural Officer], and Tom and I had had some real serious conversations on development theory. Tom had served in the Peace Corps in the Philippines and spoke Tagalog. So, frankly, he was probably on the right side of most of our debates. But I was so grateful to have Tom as a deputy because Tom was the kind of deputy that Mary Kilgour taught me how to be. He knew how to manage well internally while the director managed externally. He understood how to build a good, strong front office team, that even though a deputy and director might disagree on something, you both kept that disagreement in the front office so when you opened that door and walked out, you were a team. You were a team with one message, and you carried that message to the staff. You wanted to build the kind of team that the mission could trust that leadership knew what it was doing, and that the mission could handle anything the program, Washington, the country or other outside forces were throwing at you. The key was inspiring the confidence of your staff in the front office's capabilities. Mary taught me that, Priscilla taught me that. In fact, the two people who taught me the most about being a mission director were two women mission directors, who were a rare commodity in those days.

Tom had internalized those lessons too, and I'm not sure where he learned them, but I think it also came to him naturally.

When I arrived in Ghana, it was an awkward arrival. My wife and son stayed behind in England, visiting her relatives. I departed separately. On August 24th of 1998. Now anyone who remembers history knows what happened on that date. As I was flying overnight to Amsterdam on the 25th, Al Qaeda blew up our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. I landed in Amsterdam without knowing what had happened, and I had a short layover. I took a day room in the hotel there at the airport. I laid down and took a nap, woke up and turned on the TV. CNN was on. And I was watching the fire that was burning our embassy in Dar [Dar es Salaam, Tanzania], and I thought I was still dreaming or suffering severe jet lag, so I turned it off. I turned it on again a few minutes later, and it was the same picture. And I realized I wasn't dreaming; something had happened. It had been a terrorist attack on our embassies.

I immediately got dressed, checked out of the hotel and ran to the gate long before the flight to Accra was going to board. And even though there was nobody at the gate, I went off into a corner in the smoking section of the airport, because I didn't want Washington to find me. I wanted to get to post. I didn't care about anything else, I needed to get to post, and I didn't want to be called back. Well, they called the flight, I got on the plane, and as the plane took off. I went "whew, we're on our way". When I landed in Accra, the plane didn't pull up to the jetway—in fact, there weren't jetways that I recall at Kotoka airport at the time. As I got off the plane, I saw three black cars on the tarmac, one of which had revolving blue and red lights. I thought, "OK, wonder what this is all about." I get off the stairway and I'm approached by embassy security saying, "We're here to take you to your home." The chargé was there to meet me. The Ambassador, Ed Brynn, had just left post, and by the way, it was Ed Brynn who had the last say on whether I went to Ghana. He was teaching at the War College at the time (1998) which is where I went to meet him. The only question he asked me was, "do you play baseball?" I said, "Yes, but it's been a few years". He said, "What position do you play?" And I said, "First base or right field." He said, "Good. Good. I'm going to tell them I approve of you as our director to Ghana. We need a first baseman."

Q: I know Ed Brynn.

YOUNG: Yeah. Well, I mean, that gave me a signal about what Ed's passion was. My son, who also played little league, was excited about our going to Ghana. In the intervening months before we left for post, my son, who was 12, organized a donation of baseball equipment to a Ghanaian boys baseball team. The embassy had a local employee who was coaching the Ghanaian boys softball team, teaching them how to play the game.

Well, my son Alex organized a donation of bats, catcher's equipment, mitts, shirts, just about anything you can imagine, even batting helmets. And we shipped them over in our HHE (Household Effects) shipment. When it arrived in country we had a little ceremony and my son was there to present the equipment to the Ghana little league boys softball team. Anyway, that's an aside.

So, the chargé meets me at the stairs of the plane with the security officers saying, "we're taking you to your house. It's not safe." I get in the car, it's a Friday night, and I arrive at the house. I have no idea what to make of the security situation. Tom Hobgood, my deputy, called me just before I went to bed that evening, and said, "We have a meeting tomorrow morning, in the mission, it's a Saturday morning meeting," which is something we rarely did, but he said some group wanted to meet with me. And I said, "Okay." So, I went into the office on Saturday, and we had this meeting, which I can't remember what it was about because I was so jetlagged. Afterwards, Tom and I sat down, and he asked me, "What are your priorities?" And I said, "agriculture. I think Ghana needs to increase its food production. And that's going to be the way out of poverty for so many people in this country." And I also said, "the last thing I want to do is energy. I do not want to get involved in anything regarding energy." Energy was a big policy push in Washington at the time, in the late 90s. I said, "No, I don't want to do it."

John, never say, categorically, you're not going to do something. Because, you know, God's going to laugh at your plans, and Ghana laughed at my plans. The first courtesy call I had in Ghana was with the Minister of Energy, Fred Ohene-Kena. That wasn't part of my plan. We had a schedule of meetings already laid out. I was going to meet finance first, and then to the industry and health ministries and so forth. The Energy Minister insisted that he wanted to meet with me first. Okay. I show up for my first ever ministerial meeting, and he comes in and we start doing the niceties over coffee and biscuits, talking about each other's families and you know, the small talk stuff. That lasted for about five to ten minutes. And then he said, "I'm sorry, I'm going to be rude now. It is very unseemly for us to discuss business on our first courtesy call. But we need your help." And I said "What?" Because I was just thinking, "I'm not doing energy. I'm not doing energy." And he said, "We have a project. It's called the West Africa Gas Pipeline. What we want to do is cap the gas that's being flared in the Escravos Delta," the Niger river delta in Nigeria which is where the big oil fields were. "Gas is just being flared into the atmosphere, it's been happening for years. We want to cap that gas and pipe it all along the coast of West Africa and feed it into power stations in Benin, Togo, Ghana, and ideally Ivory Coast, if we can get them on board. And we need your help doing it." I was speechless. I mean, the first thing I could have said was I wasn't going to do energy. And yet, what I really said was, "Let me make some inquiries. Let me look into this. I know we don't have any program like this at all."

As it turned out, this became one of the most successful early public-private partnerships before the agency ever developed a serious model for doing them. The way it was structured, Chevron was going to be the lead foreign investor, AID was going to provide the technical assistance to help each of the three governments, Benin, Togo, and Ghana, create a gas regulatory system and negotiate a fair “take or pay” agreement with the Nigerian oil and gas authorities. And we were going to train people in how to create a regional structure for managing power generation through gas, as well as wheeling energy across grids, across borders, which eventually became known as the West Africa Power Pool. I had no idea what I was getting myself into. But there were people in the energy division of our technical bureau in Washington who just fell in love with it, for a whole range of reasons. But we got one gentleman, I can't remember his name right now, who just made this his personal project, and thank goodness he did, because he got us money from places in central budgets that I didn't think was possible to get. And Chevron, their representative in West Africa, Chris Miller, who I'm still good friends with, came into my office one day and said, "We won't do this project with these governments, Nigeria, Benin, Togo, and Ghana on our own." He hinted to me that Nigeria wanted to also generate power from gas and wanted to be part of the West Africa Gas Pipeline project itself, rather than just a seller of gas. He said, "But we won't get involved unless you are," because, "whatever we negotiate with these governments, they have no idea what they're negotiating. They have no knowledge of how to run a gas industry, and how to generate electric power from gas. They don't understand the engineering, they don't understand the financing. We need you. Any agreement we reached without the US government's involvement, we won't be able to trust it." And I'm thinking, this is interesting. Here is the person who's representing the company sitting across the negotiating table from me, saying, 'we need you, USAID, involved.' So we worked out a way to sort of keep each other at arm's length, while also sharing, behind the scenes, what we were learning from our own different perspectives about the governments that we were working with. And in our case, we were keeping Chevron well informed about the kind of technical assistance we were providing. Of course, we never breached the confidentiality of the Ghanaian government, who was taking the lead in this project. Ghana was taking the lead on behalf of all the countries that would take power from the gas pipeline, except for Nigeria. We would never violate their trust by leaking their negotiating position to Chevron, which suited Chevron fine, because they wanted a hard negotiation. They wanted something that was going to go to the wire, that was difficult to get agreement on, so that they knew that they would have something that would endure.

We held negotiations in Abuja, which I attended, and I attended negotiations in Benin. There was even in the negotiation in London when it looked like this thing was going to

fall apart, mainly over the fact that Ghana was not going to do the environmental assessments needed to determine whether the pipelines that were going to be built on shore were going to displace people, whether the project was going to cause environmental damage offshore, and so forth. And what was the interesting thing about that London negotiation was that I and my project officer Cleveland Thomas were told to sit outside the negotiating room, and that only the ECOWAS [Economic Community of West African States] representatives, the Ghanaian, Togolese, and Benin government representatives, and Chevron were allowed in the room, not us. So, Cleveland Thomas and I sat there outside the room for hours, until they opened the door and they asked us to come in. They briefed us on where they were. And at that point, I said, "If you don't do something about the environmental impact statement, and you have a solid scope of work for it, which we'll help you with, I'm withdrawing our support. This thing will not go anywhere without an environmental assessment, because it'll never pass congressional notification on the Hill. I know you have problems with that but that's our position. It's your call." I left. A couple of hours later, they invited Cleveland and me back in and said, "We've reached agreement. Environmental Impact Statement scopes of work, first drafts are going to be drafted by ECOWAS in Abuja, and AID will be asked to provide us technical assistance in the drafting of the scopes and in the contracting for the people that will do it."

Well, that taught me a great deal about negotiating in Africa—first of all, Chris Miller was right, you need to negotiate a hard agreement or you're not going to get a good outcome. And two, it taught me that you don't necessarily put your max position out there at the beginning of negotiations. It's also important that, particularly in Ghana, they understand that when you lay out a position that requires them to do something, you're sincere about it, and they believe you're going to follow through if they do. That's very important. I learned that lesson in Ghana over and over again when negotiating all sorts of agreements with the government. When they realize you are sincere in your position, and that you will carry through with what you say you will do, whether it's positive or negative, they respected you, and it was possible to reach an agreement. The pipeline project was a real lesson in negotiating and was the most successful thing I've ever been involved in. It became a deliverable for [Ghanaian] President Jerry Rawling's state visit to the White House in 1999. This was shortly after Clinton had been cleared of impeachment in the Senate following the Monica Lewinsky scandal. The West Africa Gas Pipeline became one of the major deliverables for that visit.

Of course, my then Ambassador Dee Robinson, was invited to the State Dinner at the White House. Dee was single, so they told her she could have a "plus one" at the State Dinner. She invited me. I was thrilled, of course. When Dee and I got on the plane to leave Accra, I gave her a book to read, Maya Angelou's *All God's Children Need*

Traveling Shoes, about her time in Ghana when she was a stringer for the New York Times. It's a remarkable book about cultural adaptation. I was glad I didn't read it until after I'd been in Ghana for a few months because it wouldn't have made any sense to me. Ambassador Robinson read it all in one night, went without sleep to read the whole thing. And when we landed in Zurich she said, "I've learned more about Ghana in this book than I've learned the past few months being there. This is tremendous."

The state dinner: it's an experience I'll never forget, because we were in the receiving line to shake hands with the president, and Mrs. Clinton, and the Rawlings. Brian Atwood, the USAID Administrator, sees me standing in line, standing in front of the actress Angela Bassett and behind Sargent Shriver and Eunice Shriver, I have to say Sargent Shriver was in bad shape at that point. I think he was, you know, in the midst of Alzheimer's and he was not doing well. But Brian comes up to me and says, "What the hell are you doing here?" And I said, "Well, this is Ambassador Robinson, our ambassador to Ghana, I'm her plus one." And he said, "Oh, my goodness, this is terrific! An AID director at a state dinner. Wow! Wait until I tell the people from the Department!" So, he runs off, and I'm scratching my head wondering if Brian was impressed or upset that he didn't know I was going to be there. And I look back at Angela Bassett, who, by the way, is incredibly short. I say, "You know, I know who you are, I just can't place it." And I mentioned a couple of movies. And she said, "Yes, I'm Angie Bassett." And I'm looking at her, and I put my hand kind of above my head like this and I said, "But I thought you were, you know, this tall." And Berry Gordy, of Motown fame, is standing behind her. He is doubled over laughing. And she starts to laugh, and she says, "It's all camera tricks." She said, "It's all in the angle of the camera, the lifts in the shoes." She said, "Yeah, I get that a lot. People think I'm taller than I really am."

Anyway, one thing I forgot to tell you. Just before we go into the receiving line, Ambassador Robinson and I are in the Yellow Room at the White House, waiting to be called upstairs for a private meeting with President Clinton and the Rawlings, and Al Gore and Tipper Gore come in. And they're sitting there with us. It was very clear Al Gore didn't want to be there. I mean, he absolutely wanted to be anywhere else. He knew he was going to run for president, and he felt that President Clinton had just done a lot to, you know, tank his candidacy. Gore disapproved, obviously, of what Clinton did with Monica Lewinsky, and his behavior in handling it. Tipper kept nudging him and saying, "Come on, Al, this is going to be a nice evening, let it go." Well, I started to talk Vice President Gore up a bit, and it turned out that he had been on the Hill when I was working as a congressional intern in the early '70s. And we started talking about the congressional delegation back then. We just talked about Hill stuff. Talk like, "Do you know what so and so was doing now?" and so on. We talked about Tony Coelho, we talked about Bernie Sisk. Tony was a titan among Hill staffers, and Bernie was a prominent California

congressman. Gore had good relationships with all of them. We struck up a really nice conversation. I think it kind of warmed him up.

Then we were called upstairs, and we went through a receiving line, and Gore kind of shook President Clinton's hand very icily. But then when he went over to Hillary, he said, "How are you doing, FLOTUS?" And he put his arms around her. I mean, if there were any more of an awkward moment, I couldn't imagine what it would be. Anyway, Dee Robinson and I were kind of fifth wheels, I guess, in that room during that little reception. So, I took the Ghanaian Ambassador to the US, Koby Koomson, who was up there with us over to a nearby window. The room we had the reception in is directly above the Oval Office, I was looking out the window, and I could see something that I had known from my time giving tours in Washington in the early '70s, which was something that most people didn't know. I asked Koomson to look out the window, and I said, "Can you see what I'm seeing out there, that monument?" He said, "Yeah, it's the Jefferson Memorial." I said, "Right. Can you see there is a straight line from the Jefferson Memorial? Right through the bushes? What do you see?" He said, "Well, it's a completely clear path. They cut the bushes away." I said, "Right. Franklin Roosevelt, when he was president, his desk was placed in a position that when he swiveled his chair around, he was able to look at the Jefferson Memorial dead on. He had the bushes and shrubbery cut away so that he had a direct line of sight to the statue of Thomas Jefferson."

And as I was describing this to Ambassador Koomson, I turned around, and President Clinton was looking at me. And all he did was smile and shake his head up and down, as if to say "yes". It was interesting, because when I went through the receiving line, and I shook President Clinton's hand—and I still have a picture on my wall here of that moment—he said, "How did you know that story?" And I said, "Well, I worked for Congressman so and so in the '70s, and, you know, I got to know the monuments and how they were laid out, and, of course, the Franklin Roosevelt story. And he said, "Wow, so many people don't know that." And at that point, I said, "Oh, by the way, my son really likes you, and the next time we're in town, he wants to take you to McDonald's for a Big Mac." If you watch the videotape of that receiving line, Clinton starts to laugh. It might have been the only time all evening he let out this sort of belly laugh. And he said, "Well, look, you tell Alex, I'd be happy to have a cheeseburger with him." I played that tape for my son when we got back to Ghana and he was the proudest kid in school, believe me.

Anyway, my table mates at the table that Dee and I sat at in the East Room for the dinner included Berry Gordy of Motown fame. That's when I found out that Barry Gordy and I had the same birthday. Berry Gordy was going to spend a couple of nights, as a birthday present from Bill Clinton, in the Lincoln Bedroom. We were also sitting a table away from Maya Angelou, and we were within spitting distance of Hank Aaron. It was a heck

of an evening. Tremendous thunderstorm that night, too. I mean, an amazing thunderstorm. I couldn't believe it. But after the dinner was over, I went over and shook hands with Maya Angelou. And, you know, I told her I'd read her book about her time in Ghana, and she said, "My God, that thing is still in print?" And I said, "Yeah, and it's an incredible book." And she said, "Oh, by the way, you're the first person at the dinner tonight that pronounced my name correctly." She said that nobody ever pronounced it correctly. And then on the way out, we shake hands with Carl Lewis. The last person I shook hands with was Hank Aaron, as did Ambassador Robinson. We both looked at each other and we said, "We aren't washing this hand." Anyway, yeah, all that happened because of the West Africa Gas Pipeline.

Q: It's a great story. We've talked with Heather about taking a break right now?

YOUNG: Yeah. Yeah. And what we can do, we can pick up Ghana after that. We can pick up a couple of the seminal things that happened there that taught me a lot about management after the break. How long do you want to go?

Q: Well, it's up to you.

YOUNG: Why don't we take 10? Okay, okay.

Q: All right. We had a short break, Frank. So we've got a few things more to talk about with the Ghana mission. You mentioned you had a chance to bring in new staff there. Could you mention some of those people, please?

YOUNG: Oh, yes. I think one of the most important recruitments was Greg Wiitala and his wife, Laura Sloby. They were a tandem couple, program officer and health officer, respectively. So, I had a program officer and a director of the Health Office in one fell swoop, and they were both just absolutely outstanding. I brought in Ray Dunbar for my EXO [Executive Officer]. Ray had come through IDI training, international development intern training, with me in '76. Ray was closing out the mission in Cote d'Ivoire at the time, and they were getting rid of some of their excess property. I thought, "Well, Ray is going to be excess property pretty soon, too". I thought he was going to retire but I was able to persuade him to please join the Ghana mission as the EXO. That was an incredibly wise choice. Let's see, I'm trying to remember who else. Fenton Sands as the private sector office director was already there. Peter Kresge in the Education Office. Tremendous guy, wonderful education officer. Those are the ones that I recall right now. Oh, yeah, I took a chance on a relatively junior procurement officer, Aman Djahanbani and he turned out to be outstanding. But I had the opportunity to also recruit my contracting officer, Ray Edler. I think my controller was already there and was there for

just a short time and I was able to recruit a new one as well. The good news was I built my own team immediately; the bad news was they're all going to leave at the same time, which is difficult for my successor. But it was good to have Tom Hobgood as sort of a bridge.

What I'd like to do, though, is just roll the tape back a bit, because in addition to the meeting I had with the energy minister after I first arrived, there were a couple of other important events that occurred in the first few months that I think really sort of laid the foundation and created the atmosphere for the rest of my tour as director. The first was my welcome party that the chargé threw for me about a week after I arrived. It was on a Monday evening, as I recall, and it was going to start at 6:00 at the DCM's [Deputy Chief of Mission's] residence. So, knowing the rules of the game, I arrived there at 5:30, because I wanted to be there in the receiving line when people started arriving. As I walk in, the chargé is there, and she says, "I'm glad you came early. I hate to tell you, but somebody's already here." I look over to her patio, and I see this giant man, and he's—I don't know how to describe it. He's well over six foot, I mean, 6'2", 6'3", 6'4", just a giant of a guy. And he's a little stooped over and has these kind of sleepy but gentle eyes. He sees me, and I see him, and I walk over and shake hands. And he says, "Dr. Young, my name is John Kufuor, and I'm going to be the next president of Ghana."

All right, now put yourself in my shoes. What's your first reaction? Oh, my goodness, the first guy I meet, and he's a crazy. I mean, I fully expected local people were going to be hitting me up for their favorite project or would I fund this, or would I fund that? The chargé had alerted me, she said, "In Ghana, the mission director is often more important than the ambassador." She said, "You don't outrank her. But in terms of influence from the Ghanaian point of view, you do. And it's because our program here, it doesn't involve security, doesn't really involve key national foreign policy interests, or major foreign affairs interests in the United States. We don't have any vital interests in Ghana. Our AID program is pretty much the end all and be all of why we're here. You are the most visible piece of the American mission." I'm not sure I felt comfortable with that. Because when my new ambassador did arrive, I said to Dee Robinson, "Look I want to make it clear. I'm a member of your country team first, and the AID director, second." And I wanted to make sure she knew that, so that she knew I was loyal to her and I had her back. But anyway, so I'm looking at this guy, this giant Ghanaian, and he tells me this, and he gives me a wry smile, and we kind of talk and talk. Then, of course, I mingle with other people, and I'm watching him out of the corner of my eye to see who he is mingling with.

Well, fast forward to 2000, December of 2000. John Kufuor is elected president of Ghana, beating out Jerry Rawlings's vice president John Mills. It's sort of the first free and fair election and a peaceful regime change that Ghana had ever experienced. When I

went to the inauguration for Kufuor's inaugural speech, Nancy Powell—who was at that time Deputy Assistant Secretary for Africa—was sitting in the front row at Black Star Square with Dee Robinson, our ambassador, and myself. After Kufuor's speech, we were approached by Kufuor's security people, saying, "The President would like for the Americans to be the first delegation he meets." And so we get in the car, we go to the Osu castle where the president's ceremonial office is. We go in, and Nancy Powell introduces herself to President Kufuor. And Dee Robinson introduces herself to President Kufuor. And then I introduced myself. I said, "President Kufuor, my name is—" And he stops me right there. He says, "I know who you are. I told you I was going to be president of Ghana when we first met, and you didn't believe me." Laughter immediately filled the room! People were just howling with laughter. Dee Robinson, who had heard this story already, started to chuckle. Nancy Powell was in shock. Her face lit up like, "What?" And Kufuor himself began to laugh, he put his hand on my shoulder and he said, "It's okay. We're going to work together; we're going to do some really good things together." And actually, that started a great friendship. I would meet with the president about every four months, about three times a year, at his request. My ambassadors, to their credit—Nancy Powell was the ambassador after Dee Robinson—they had no problem with me doing it. And of course, I gave full reports of our meeting when I got back. He and I also shared a masseur, a Mr. Boateng. who gave great massages and reflexology, and would do it in the home. My wife and Kufuor's wife had chatty conversations from time to time. When I would attend receptions where the President was there, he would always come to me and say, "Watch my Chief of Staff, Jake (Obetsebi Lamptey), he drinks too much." Jake was fond of vodka because it looked like he was drinking water. I mean, it was really a neat relationship, such that when I had to leave Ghana early because of illness, and I sent him a letter regretting that I could not have an exit interview to say goodbye in person. He wrote me a beautiful personal letter thanking me for the work I had done, in and for Ghana.

Q: That's a great story.

YOUNG: Shortly after arriving, I held a mission retreat. I thought the first thing I've got to do is get everybody together to have a team building retreat. I ran into a buzzsaw doing that, because the Ghanaian staff, all they wanted to talk about was their pay packets. They wanted raises; they wanted more money. According to them, they hadn't had a decent raise since 1991, and I think they were right. They wanted me to do something about it. Well, I knew enough to know that the AID director can't do anything about raising the salary of local employees. You can put in for grade promotions here and there, but other than that, no. I basically ended up spending the next two years heavily lobbying the embassy for doing the kind of salary survey that would particularly get our senior FSN employees more money as well as boost the lower grades. We were finally successful in

doing that, but not before I had had some pretty ugly confrontations with my local staff. That taught me a lot about how to manage conflict within the local staff, and how important it was for me to understand the culture.

The third thing I did was to set up what we call a telephone tree. Now setting up a telephone tree in Ghana runs into an immediate challenge: telephones. And if you've got one, whether it works. This is in the era before we had widespread cell phones. I had a Motorola cell phone that looked like a brick with a long, extended antenna, but almost none of our FSN staff did. But we still developed the first ever US mission phone tree. We developed a system whereby we cascaded the contacting process down, and as we cascaded down, people reported back up that they were able or unable to contact someone. And if somebody couldn't contact the next person on the phone tree, the person living closest to them would actually get in a Tuk Tuk or get in a car and go to that person's house and tell them whether or not the mission would be open the next morning. We did the telephone tree in the wake of the Tanzania and Kenya embassy bombings, as well as in case there was any kind of civil unrest or natural disaster. We had a flag system where we would put out a flag on the gate. If it was green, people come in; if it was yellow, go home. We had 95 percent success in reaching people. The embassy didn't have anything comparable in the American Citizen Services section, so we shared our model with them, and they finally put one together.

The fourth thing that happened early on in my tenure, and I think it was late October, early November, right after the retreat, we had one of the most tragic things that I think any mission or mission director can face. And that's a suicide. And to protect identities, I'll just say that it wasn't direct hire personnel, but rather the child of a contractor. I got the call on Sunday morning from the DCM. I immediately went over to the contractor's house. And, again, it's one of those sights that you can't unsee and you never want to see again. It was something that affected the mission deeply, far more deeply than I had anticipated. Tom Hobgood was close friends with the family. He and I sat in the office together the next day, and we talked about how we can help the mission get over this? How do we deal with the grieving? How do we manage the shock factor? Tom was having trouble holding it together emotionally, and I said, "Look, we got to go in there (US employee staff meeting) projecting calm, projecting confidence, and projecting that we understand how people are feeling. We need to be flexible in giving people time off, to deal with their personal emotions." But I said, "Tom, we need to be strong." And so we go in there, and it isn't Tom that breaks down. It's me.

I don't know. It just overwhelmed me. After the meeting was over, I went back into the office, and I was beating myself up because I did exactly what I asked Tom not to do, and told him we can't do. And the staff, the American staff, came into the office. All of them.

And they said, "Well, now we know you're human." I said, "We're going to work on the memorial service, we're going to close the mission down for the morning so we can all go to the memorial service." You know, it was an event that was so tragic, and yet it was something that was another bit of glue, or connective tissue, that bound us together as a mission, both American and many of our FSNs. We just kind of came together around this point of crisis. It just gave us that kind of unspoken confidence, that we could meet any challenge, any tragedy, if we were called upon to do so. We tried to build a team at the retreat, but if anything built our team, it was this very, very tragic event. It sort of all made us human to each other, and I think that was really important.

I guess the next thing was 9/11. And, you know, everybody remembers where they were on that day. I certainly remember. I was eating lunch at my desk. Cleveland Thomas called me up, he was the fellow I was working with on the West Africa gas pipeline. And he said, "Go into the conference room and turn on channel eight." I said, "Why?" He said, "I can't tell you why. I don't even believe it myself." I went in there, turned on the TV, and I was watching the first World Trade Center tower burning. They were showing video replays of the plane hitting the tower. I was going back to that time in August of '98, when I couldn't believe what I was seeing when our embassies in Nairobi and Dar had been blown up. And here I'm looking at one of the Twin Towers in New York burning and starting to collapse on itself. I stuck my head out the door, and I said to Rita Buckner, my secretary, "I want all American staff up here right now. Immediately. Tell them to drop whatever you're doing and come up here. And if they're out for a meeting, tell them they have to come back now." Within about 20 minutes, I guess everybody was in the conference room. Rita joined us, I had to include Rita in everything. I couldn't keep anything from Rita. She was really my second set of hands, eyes, ears, whatever. And so we sat there, and we were just watching the reporting and the replay. Some of the staff were crying, some were just visibly shaking.

I walked out the door. We didn't have Nancy Powell on seat yet. We were in the interregnum between ambassadors. And I picked up the phone and dialed the chargé, Denise Mathieu. And I said, "We need to hold an EAC [Emergency Action Committee] right now, Denise." I hadn't gotten a call from the embassy yet. This thing had been going on for like 45 minutes, and I'd not gotten a call from the embassy. And so I said, "We need an EAC. Now." There was a silence. She said, "Uh Okay, I'll call you back." You know, at that point, I felt like I was marooned. I mean, the embassy was kind of AWOL at that point. Frankly, at that point, I didn't know what to do. My only thoughts were protecting my staff and US government property. I went back in the room, and within about 10 minutes, I got a call. One of the other secretaries poked their head in the door and said, "The RSO [Regional Security Officer] just called, you have to get down the

embassy immediately. They're holding an emergency EAC." I'm rolling my eyes, and I'm thinking, "finally."

I get in the car, race to the embassy. We hold the meeting in the Ambassador's conference room, not the SCIF, the "bubble". I guess it's because we couldn't fit everyone in the secure area. Basically, what we all realized at that point was that we're on our own. Communications from Washington were not very fluid at that point, we weren't getting much information. And there was a big argument in the EAC. What do we do? What's the first thing we do? I leaned over to Stephanie Sullivan, the political counselor and later Ambassador to Ghana, who was sitting next to me. She was the political counselor when I was there. I lean over to Stephanie and ask, "Didn't we ever game this out?" And she's saying, "Game what out? And I said, "If Washington can't communicate with us, certainly we've gamed out what to do." And it was kind of like, "no." That's when I realized that emergency action planning was nil in that embassy. Whereas in Bangladesh preparing for disaster scenarios was something we refreshed every three months, in Ghana it was practically nonexistent.

The big argument that ensued was: What do we do about the school? Because our kids were still at school, and the word was now starting to filter to the kids. The school was trying to call but couldn't get through to the embassy. The RSO was giving priority elsewhere, and a bunch of us were saying, "Our kids are at school." We start pounding the table, "We've got to get those kids home." Finally, the RSO and Admin people agreed that we were going to get the kids home as soon as possible. We also decided to send people home from the mission, both the embassy and AID, and the Consulate, which were in three separate buildings. We staggered departures so as not to have everybody leave at once, but over a period of maybe an hour to an hour and a half.

So I go back to the embassy, I call all mission staff (about 120) into the Lincoln Room, advise the FSNs what's going on and say, "We're closing the mission down. We will activate the phone tree tonight,"—thank goodness we had the phone tree—"and we'll let you know if we're going to be open tomorrow. We'll have the proper flag on the gate." The reaction from the Ghanaian staff, in addition to sorrow and sympathy, was "What's the risk to us?" And that was a question I hadn't expected. "What's the risk to us? We work for you. Are you going to protect us?" And I was caught flat footed. I really was because I could not offer our FSN staff protection. All I said was, "Well don't flash your badge, for sure. And stay home. Try not to go out. Try to be as invisible as you can until we get our arms around this thing." Of course, the second tower had fallen by then, so people were really kind of in shock and dismay. I figured out later that the reason our staff reacted this way was because they thought US facilities in Ghana might be a target. We also had a large Lebanese community in Ghana segments of which, according to our

intelligence people, had ties to al Qaeda. And, of course, our Ghanaian staff knew that. That was obviously very worrying to them.

We did activate the phone tree—well, first, we got the kids home from school with police escorts. Some of the kids were shaking, they were crying. They didn't know what to make of what had happened. Again, it was like one of those things you didn't see coming, but you had to kind of figure out what to do in real time. We also activated the phone tree that night and kept the mission closed the next day. The following day, we opened the mission, but of course under heavier security, and we were not going to meetings around town until we got a better handle on the security situation. One of the nice things that happened about a week after 9/11 was that the Ghanaian government sponsored a memorial service in a Methodist church downtown, and President Kufuor and the entire Ghanaian cabinet attended. At the end of the service, they all came by—senior embassy staff were in the front pews—and all of them shook our hands one by one. It was the most incredible outpouring of grace and sympathy that I'd ever experienced in an overseas assignment. To have the senior most members of the Ghanaian government, including the president and chief of the military staff, greet us and shake our hands and offer their sympathies individually one by one, it just was incredibly moving. That crisis taught me a lot about Ghanaian culture. When some of my Ghanaian friends had tragedies in their own lives, they had lost spouses, or maybe one of them had died, I always tried to go to the funeral and memorial service. It means a lot in that culture. Death is a very important event in Ghanaian culture, and it's important that lives be honored. That's something I learned from experiencing 9/11 in Ghana.

Anyway, there's always a need, in a post like that, to let off steam. And Ghana was where I tapped my theater roots again, but not in the way that I would have expected. The British have something they call a pantomime that's usually performed at Christmas time. Now it's not what we know as a pantomime, which is like Marcel Marceau, and you're doing body movements, but not speaking. No, British pantomime is a satire, usually based on a fairy tale or a fable. It involves a man dressing up as a woman and leading the show as what they call the dame of the show. For two years running, I was asked to play the dame and dress up in drag. Not too many people in DC knew this because we didn't take a lot of photographs, but I'd dress up in drag. The wife of Jay Knott, who was my deputy at that time, his wife Tine would do my makeup. I went out and bought wigs, bought extremely large—okay, this is now going to get PG-13—bought extremely large brassieres, which we then had to figure out how to stuff, because the Dame is a fairly buxom lady. And the thing about the pantomime is that while you have a script, you improvise a great deal during the performance. Consequently, no two performances are alike. As I remember it, they were sold out. The whole thing was actually organized and run by the UK High Commission's British Council. They already had a British theater

group and I got to know a lot of the Brits through doing the British Christmas pantomime.

What made our performances difficult was the weather. It's very hot in Ghana in December, people don't understand that. Ghana is hot all year round, but December is a nightmare.

And so I'm dressed up, wearing all this makeup, and the wig, and the dress, and the brassiere, which are stuffed with newspapers and paper towels and so forth. The problem was, as I went through the performance I was perspiring heavily. Everything I had on got wet, soaking wet. And I could feel my anatomy begin to shift. And of course, the audience can see this and no matter what you say, they're just roaring with laughter. It was one of the most fun things I did the entire time. Other than dressing up as Santa Claus every Christmas for the kids' parties, it was the most fun thing that I ever did. I developed a lot of friendships, even in the British and EU community doing these shows.

One of the things I was careful not to do was I did not invite or publicize this to Ghanaian government officials I was dealing with, because in their culture cross dressing is not exactly kosher. I think my credibility in the country would have just evaporated had I advertised the fact that this performance was taking place and the role I was going to play. That said, I was made up so heavily that you couldn't recognize me, and I spoke in a British accent, so most people said they couldn't recognize me, which was just perfectly okay. I do have photographs of this, which will forever remain buried. But anyway, theater was sort of a safety valve to cope with all of these other things that happened. It was one of the most fun things I ever did there.

My greatest regret is that I left Ghana too early. I came down with what we thought was pneumonia in February of 2002, was medevaced to London, and hospitalized for about a week. The medical officer in London had been my medical officer in Bangladesh, interestingly enough. He took over my care. But no one, even the Tropical Disease Institute in London could get a precise handle on what I had. They didn't know. They thought it was some kind of tropical illness, but they finally decided it was a type of viral pneumonia, and they were able to treat it. But for some reason, when I got back to Ghana, and resumed my duties for about three or four weeks, before going back to defend our CDSS, I just couldn't get my strength back. And I was still running fevers.

One night I was hosting a private sector dinner and Keith Brown, who was the DAA [Deputy Assistant Administrator] for Africa at that time, was there, as was Joe Goodwin, who was a former director in Ghana and was my chief of party for our economic policy project. They were both there along with people from the Ghanaian private sector. I

excused myself during dessert because I was feeling ill. I walked upstairs and collapsed on the stairs. Unconscious. When I came to, Keith and Joe were standing over me. My son was also up there. Pat was in the States because she was getting her citizenship at the time. Keith looked at me and leaned over and he said, "We're getting you out of here. We gotta get you out of here. I can't leave you here this sick." So, I went to the States. Interestingly enough, I sat in a business class seat on the way to Dulles next to Ambassador Mary Yates. And if it hadn't been for Mary, I don't think I would have gotten off the plane, because I was just dreadfully ill. She was doing everything she could to keep me upright, because she didn't want me to get quarantined when we got to Dulles. They rolled me off in a wheelchair.

It took about another nine months, but they finally diagnosed me with lupus, probably antibiotic stimulated lupus, because they were pumping me full of antibiotics to deal with the pneumonia and any other tropical illness they thought I had. It screwed up my immune system, and I ended up getting lupus. That was going to end my career. I was in the running for director in Uganda, and I wanted to go to Uganda as my next post. But instead, the commandant of the National War College came to me and said, "We've got a place for you to land. We want you to teach here." And I said, "I'm really sick." He said, "I don't care." We will carry you. But we need an Africa program at the National War College. We don't have it. We would like you to come to the war college to teach. So, I did.

Q: Did you know how he was aware of your story?

YOUNG: Yeah, actually what had happened was, I had hosted the group from the National War College who was making a visit throughout West Africa. They've got a spring module as part of their program where different groups of officers travel to different parts of the world to learn about US foreign policy interests. And the group that came to West Africa were traveling to Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal. At a reception I threw for the group at my house he approached me and asked, "Would you consider after this assignment coming to the War College?" This is just before I got sick. I said, "Well, I want another post." And he said, "Well, consider it. You know, think about it. We'd certainly love to have you." Well, I didn't know that there was stuff going on behind the scenes where the War College had name requested me. Fast forward to when I got sick, and I got back in touch with the War College and they said, "We still want you. We will give you a place to land while you're getting better, and you can add to the program by teaching African Studies."

So, I went to the War College in '02. I really was sick. There were times I couldn't even complete a class. I had to get an officer to fill in behind me. But with Johnny Carson's

help—Ambassador Carson was the Vice President of the National Defense University at that time—Johnny and I collaborated on putting together an Africa curriculum at the National War College. I followed Janet Ballantyne in that position, by the way. She also helped promote my candidacy there, even though, as I say, I still wanted to go to Uganda. But I put the Africa curriculum in place. I taught the module on congressional politics because I'd had Capitol Hill experience. I taught modules on South Asia, as well as on Africa. I was too sick to accompany the group on their 2003 overseas regional visit. The commandant looked at me one day and said, "You're not going anywhere. You look terrible." I said, "Okay, I don't want to be a liability."

But the next year, '04, just as we were getting ready for another West Africa school visit—by that time I had regained most of my health, I'd been diagnosed, I was on low dose chemo, and things were looking up—Keith Brown called me up and he said, "Frank, I'm retiring. We'd like to make you Senior DAA for Africa." And I said, "But Keith, I'm still teaching here." He said, "Double hat it." You know how Washington is John, he said, well, do both." And I said, "Sure, Keith." So, what the War College did was very good. I handed off my spring afternoon teaching load to somebody else. I would teach there in the morning and then work in the bureau in the afternoon and the early evening. So yeah, I did double hat it. And I led a group to West Africa as the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator as well as NWC professor. It was a riot. My position as DAA opened a lot of doors for the group, which was kind of nice.

Of course, when I got back, I resigned from the War College and then took over as Africa Bureau DAA full time. The problem with that job that Keith didn't tell me about was I had east and Southern Africa in my bailiwick. And that meant I was on a plane every six weeks. It got to the point where I was on a first name basis with the Lufthansa cabin staff. That's how frequent it was. I realized that couldn't go on much longer. When I went to Uganda on TDY, I flew up to Goma, the area where the Lord's Resistance Army was raiding villages up in the border area with Sudan. I went there to look at how our food aid was being used and whether there was enough of it. I was wearing a boot on my right ankle because I had ruptured my Achilles tendon and needed the boot to stabilize my foot. And so I was up there walking through the refugee camp, through the dust and the mud and so forth, talking to WFP [World Food Programme] people, talking to the villagers there, and visiting an orphanage where children who had been rescued from the Lord's Resistance Army were being psychologically rehabilitated. That was an amazing visit.

Well, the refugee camp decided that they wanted to meet me en masse. So, the mission director and I, along with the WFP rep, hosted a meeting under this giant tree in Goma, and all these people showed up. There was a translator, and I talked to them about the

food shortage, that we're going to work on increasing the food rations, and that we're going to provide additional support for security. When it was all over, we asked if there were any questions. And this one elderly woman raises her hand, and starts talking, and I look at the translator after about 45 seconds. He's saying nothing, and she's talking and talking. And I said, "Is there a question in there that I can answer?" He said, "No. They all feel sorry for you." I said, "What do you mean they feel sorry for me?" They said, "You came all this way and you've got a bad foot." Wow. I didn't know how to respond to that. Honest to goodness. Frankly, we got back to Kampala, I went back to my room, and I had a seizure. At that point, I realized that this was getting to be a little too much, so I put in my papers to retire.

On one of these trips, I met [Ethiopian] Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. I'd been to Ethiopia several times to OAU [Organization of African Unity] meetings, but it was the first time doing an in country visit of our programs in Ethiopia. And at the time, Prime Minister Meles was relocating large numbers of people from mountainous areas into the valley, because the farmlands in the upper areas of Ethiopia were not productive, and he felt that he needed to get people into areas where they needed to expand land and do more farming. We are against forced relocation, obviously, as an agency and as a government. Andrew Natsios asked me to investigate this and push back on the policy, but also to see if Prime Minister Meles would also adopt a family planning program.

We were willing to fund a major family planning program for Ethiopia through the Fragile States Fund that had been set up for countries like Liberia, Haiti, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan. And so after I did a tour of the highlands and lowlands, I had an exit meeting with Prime Minister Meles one evening in his office in the presidential palace. Ambassador Aurelia Brazeal was with me, as well as the mission director Bill Hammink. I went in, and we did the normal courtesies. Then I made the offer about the family planning program. He went off on me like a rocket. I got beat up so badly, I've never been beat up so badly by a foreign official. And by the head of state, no less. I thought poor Ambassador Brazeal and Bill wanted to hide behind their chairs because they couldn't believe how severely he was going off on us.

Q: What was the issue?

YOUNG: He said, "What do you mean fragile state? We're not a fragile state. We have control of our borders; we can hold elections. Those other countries can't claim that. What's wrong with you people? Calling us a fragile state." And I said, "Well, you know, the Brits have assigned for Ethiopia the same designation in their" -- and I mentioned some report that DFID [UK Department for International Development] had done. And

he said, "I don't give a damn about the Brits. You're the Americans, you're who matters." And I'm just in shock. I said, "Well, I will relay your concerns back to our administrator."

And then he changes the subject, he asks, "What did you find on your trip?" I didn't know he knew that I had been traveling around. I said, "Well, honorable Prime Minister, what I found was that the people who are being relocated to the south are suffering from diseases that they don't have in the north, up in the highlands. They're suffering from malaria, from dysentery, and your health staff don't have the medicines or the treatment to address that situation, because the population down there is largely immune from those illnesses." Again, he looked at me with piercing eyes, and then turned to his people and said, "Why do I have to hear this from the AID guy? Why do I have to hear this from him? Where are my people? Why aren't my people telling me this? This shouldn't be happening." And then he starts giving orders about redeploying health resources and so forth. And then he looks back at me and says, "Thank you."

The meeting ends, we're walking out, and he grabs me by the arm and says, "I'm really sorry. I hope you didn't mind my getting angry with you. I had to do it, to show my people that I'm strong." But he said, "I really respect you, your country, your agency, but please try to do something about that label." I said "Okay." So, we left the presidential office and went back to Ambassador Brazeal's house. I gave a little news conference before that, which was just basically platitudes. At the Ambassador's house I call Andrew on the phone, and I said, "You got to get Barbara Turner in there." She was the head of PPC [Bureau of Policy and Program Coordination] at the time. And I said, "I just had a meeting with the Prime Minister. First of all, Andrew, he wants the family planning assistance. However, we've got to drop him from the Fragile States Fund, we've got to find another way. He does not like being called a fragile state, he thinks it's an insult." And Andrew just said, "Oh my goodness, what have we done?" I can hear him and Barbara going back and forth: "We got to fix this. We got to fix this. Let's change the name of the whole account." And I don't know how it ended up after that, but all I know is that by the time I ended the call, they assured me that they would not refer to Ethiopia in those terms again. They ended up either removing them from the account or finding Ethiopia the funds in some other way.

That encounter with Prime Minister Meles was one of my most memorable meetings as DAA. It was followed shortly by another one. I got a call from the energy minister in Ghana in late 2004. He said, "We are inaugurating the T-junction pipeline to the power plant in Takoradi, Ghana, that will pipe gas through the West African Gas Pipeline to start generating electricity." Now, this is six years after I started the gas pipeline project in West Africa, and they're just now starting to pipe the gas onshore into Ghana to generate electricity. I knew the energy minister personally from my time there, and I said, "Look,

thank you so much for letting me know." He said, "The President would like you there." "Really?" "Yes" he says, "it's something that you pioneered; he wants you there." "Okay, I'll do my best, but this is pretty short notice." Well, long story short, I get travel orders in a few days and I get there. By coincidence, Mary Yates is the ambassador. The Ghanaians want the American delegation traveling to Takoradi for the ceremony to give a speech at the inauguration of the pipeline into Ghana. The Ambassador says to me, "Normally I would give the speech, but Frank, I think you should. This was your baby, and I think it would make a lot of sense for the senior AID person in Washington to do this." And I was stunned. I mean, I thought that was pretty gracious.

On a Tuesday morning in December 2004 we go to Takoradi. We actually fly there, in a C-9. And we're out in this open field, President Kufuor is there in a big piece of machinery, a backhoe, and he is digging the inaugural trench behind the controls of this piece of heavy machinery. After he digs the first scoop of dirt, we go to do the speeches, and anybody who's been to Ghana knows how a "launching" event goes. When it comes time for me to talk, I pass him. He looks at me, and he says, "You did come!" And I said, "Yeah! You asked me to, so I'm here." It sort of rekindled the old friendship, which was really nice. So, I get up there and I start my speech, speaking in Twi, the local language. There's this absolute hush over the crowd. I start the speech, and people start applauding. I'm not done yet. I get through the speech, it's over, and the World Bank guy comes to me and he says, "Nobody ever speaks to the chiefs and the local officials in their own language, particularly the tribal chiefs; it's amazing that you honored them in their own language." And I said, "When I was here in Ghana, that's how we opened all these speeches." He says, "I don't know, we don't do it that way anymore, at least the foreigners don't." I was surprised. Not just by that, but by the fact that that sort of thing had changed. It was a kind of a cultural thing we had learned—or I had learned—when I first got there, I learned it early on. I realized you had to do that to get the audience to pay attention to you, because you've honored them in their own language.

Anyway, President Kufuor comes up to me and says, "I want you to have lunch with me." We proceed to an outdoor patio to have lunch, and I asked him, "Are you going to run again?" And he said, "My wife doesn't want me to, definitely doesn't want me to, but I'm going to do it. There's unfinished business here." And I look off to my left, and I see the Justice Minister, Nana Akufo-Addo, kind of walking the halls looking like a lost soul. He wasn't even invited to lunch with us. And I said to President Kufuor, "What's Nana doing over there?" And he said, "Ah, he feels if he hangs around long enough, he'll become president of Ghana." Fast forward, today Nana Akufo-Addo is the president of Ghana.

Anyway, after that, I had all those trips to Ethiopia, including the one in which I talked about the encounter with Meles Zinawi, in the spring of 2005. I realized that I had to

retire; my health wouldn't hold up under that travel schedule. I filed papers, retired for the first time in '05, went to work for Abt Associates after that, which shouldn't be part of this interview. But then I rejoined the agency in January 2010 on a Foreign Service recall. And that's a story all by itself. They asked me to take over as Assistant Administrator for Asia on about 24 hours' notice, mainly because they had nobody else. They had no DAAs in the Asia Bureau. President Obama had not nominated—or just barely nominated—his candidate to be Assistant Administrator, but it was going to take months to get her through the process.

Q: Who was that?

YOUNG: Nisha Desai Biswal. She was the staff clerk of the House Appropriations Committee on the Democratic side. Very smart, very powerful, very influential woman. She was going to be nominated. She hadn't been nominated yet now that memory serves. She was in the vetting process. But they told me this is only going to take a few months. Well, it ended up being nine months, I was AA [Assistant Administrator] for nine months. And that is a story in and of itself. You know, literally on 24 hours' notice taking over the largest bureau in the agency.

During that period from January to September 2010, we had the revolution in Kyrgyzstan and our mission in Timor Leste burned down. I had to go out there (to Timor Leste) after the mission burned down, basically for a show of the flag. I was the first senior official from the United States to visit in 11 years, Jack Sullivan (former AA for Asia) had been the last person to visit East Timor. I was the first senior person, at the AA level, to visit there in 11 years. It was quite a visit and important programmatically (I met with the country's president); but it was more important to try and help mission staff to reconstitute themselves after this fire. I also went to Sri Lanka at a critical time. Sri Lanka had come out of its civil war, and I went to help put together the new strategy for rehabilitating the Sri Lankan economy and its governance. I also went to Cambodia along with one of the deputy assistant secretaries of state to negotiate and announce a Feed the Future agreement with that country. That visit was a last-minute change in my schedule because I landed in Bangkok during a period of serious civil disorder and the mission told me not to enter the country. I then diverted to Phnom Penh at the request of the deputy assistant secretary for East Asia to support State's negotiations with Cambodia and announce the Feed the Future agreement. It was a remarkable nine months. And that's when Raj Shah had just taken over. After Nisha took her seat as AA in September, I stayed on as her DAA for about a year, including a stint as Acting Director in India in 2011. After that I felt I needed to retire again! But Debbie Kennedy asked me to take over as director of the DLI office.

Q: DLI is what?

YOUNG: Development Leadership Initiative, where we brought in 1,100 or 1,200 new Foreign Service officers over about a four-year span. You were a key member of that team. John as a trainer and mentor. After that I went and taught development with Janet Ballantyne to State Department officers at the Foreign Service Institute. After my mother passed away, I finally retired-retired in 2014, or so I thought, only to be called back into service by the State Department to serve as a senior inspector in their Office of the Inspector General. I helped them set up an office to evaluate and do management assessments of how the State Department administers its own foreign aid programs.

Q: Because, as I recall, they didn't know how to manage and evaluate foreign aid programs, which we had been doing for decades.

YOUNG: Right, zero. They had a draft FAM [Foreign Assistance Manual] order on evaluation, but it had not been finalized. They have a chapter in the FAM on administration of foreign aid, which was basically the repeat of a speech by Secretary of State Clinton that had been put into a cable. It was just a speech. It didn't have anything in it in terms of guidelines, processes, protocols, or what have you. They also had a contracting system that was an absolute mess. They just needed somebody who knew how to do this, to basically work with them to set up the standards that they would use for the State Department to administer its own foreign aid funds. And to be truthful, if you go down to the staff level of State Department, where they are managing their own foreign assistance projects, such as INL [Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement], they'll be the first to tell you that they don't have the tools to do it right. At least that's what they told us when we did our first inspection of State INL and how they administer their foreign assistance funds. INL has one of the largest budgets in the State Department. Their staff just said, "We simply don't have the records, we don't know our pipelines, we don't know the finances. We're winging it here. You guys should take this over." When they said, "you guys," that meant "you AID guys should take it over." And I said, "No. You need to know how to do it right." Bill Brownfield was the Assistant Secretary for INL, and he was pissed off at the inspectors. We uncovered many things that needed correction and remedy; things that really showed high levels of vulnerability in their grant making process, their program oversight, and project management process. And they weren't doing evaluations at all. At one point when we were debriefing Brownfield, he pointed his finger at me and he said, "You got this AID ringer in here just to make us look bad." And the head of our team was Ambassador Bob Beecroft. He looked straight back at Brownfield, and he said, "He's not an AID guy. He's a member of the Office of the Inspector General's inspection team and will be treated as such." The rest of the team were shrinking in their seats. It was terrible. And I almost felt like

quitting right then. I thought, "I don't have to put up with this stuff." But Ambassador Beecroft pulled me aside and said, "I've never seen any assistant secretary or even any ambassador react like this to a report we've done, and yet everything we've said here is the truth." He said, "I've got your back, don't back down. Write it up the way you see it." And I did; as a team we did. And as it turned out, INL did everything we asked them to do. I think the program is stronger now, but the State Department's overall systems are still a mess. And if they had to abide by the same standards that AID abides by in terms of congressional oversight, they would never be given a penny to manage. Pretty, pretty awful. But that's a condensation of my service from 2010 to 2016. And maybe that's just a denouement and we need not go into that any further, I kind of leave that to you.

Q: Well, we can set up another session. I'd like to get some sort of summaries from you about things that you think overall were important for AID in terms of us learning from things that you've picked up over the whole career, rather than episode by episode. So will you have time to do that?

YOUNG: Yeah, yeah. Okay, sure. Kind of like high level or high order kind of messages or lessons learned?

YOUNG: Hi, John, I got your questions. I made a bunch of notes that I mapped to your questions. And then you threw me kind of a ringer yesterday about localization, but I think I can work that in.

Q: Okay. Good morning. This is John Pilemeier, this is the third interview that we're doing with Frank Young in the USAID Oral History Program. This session is going to be focusing on some broader summary kinds of issues. Frank's had a long, very illustrative career. We've talked about each of the posts. And this is a good time to try to summarize some broader findings that Frank has found from his career. So Frank, we have a list of topics. I'll turn to you and let you walk us through it.

YOUNG: All right. Thanks, John. Well, I'm going to be talking from the perspective of someone who had the mission director role in two countries, a deputy mission director role in one country, and having served at the DAA [Deputy Assistant Administrator] and AA [Assistant Administrator] level, in two different stints in the Foreign Service. The first question that you gave me was one revolving around foreign aid effectiveness, major successes, and failures. What factors limit our effectiveness in the field and in Washington, and how can the agency improve its effectiveness? I really had to roll this around in my mind and distill some top line take-aways after 35 years of being in the business. I guess for me, it all boils down to the fact that I'm a maximalist when it comes

to field delegation. I felt that in the early part of my career, we (the agency) did a much better job of field delegation. In fact, the delegations of authority to the mission director were very clear. It was a time when AID was an independent agency reporting to the president, which I think stopped during the latter part of the Atwood years, due in part to his conflict with Jesse Helms over whether AID should even be eliminated.

I think the change in field delegations started when the Secretary of State sort of became interposed between the AID administrator and the White House. That was when I think we began to see the field authorities starting to be eroded. It was partly an unwritten erosion where the State Department started having a great deal more say in the kinds of things we did and our strategic priorities. State Department influence increased substantially starting with the fall of the Soviet Union when our Eastern European programs and our Russia programs began to take off and accelerate. We had to really run that programming through the State Department bureau that was created specifically to oversee those programs, because the viewpoint was that those programs were mainly driven by political and security interests, not development interests. This erosion really got taken to the level of what I would call "AID diminution on steroids" after 9/11, when two things happened: the Gulf War and the start of Afghanistan. After we began our pullback in Iraq, the Afghan War accelerated along with the engagement and involvement with USAID there.

USAID, I think, became more and more a tool of US foreign policy. The doctrine was, in effect, to come behind the military intervention and to try to do what we started calling "nation building." Clearly the military wasn't up to nation building. After they killed people and broke things, we were supposed to restore the health of the country and build things. It wasn't necessarily a development driven agenda, but an agenda driven more by what we wanted to see the country look like that would serve our security interests. And oh, by the way, hopefully we get some serious development work done along the way. It was a period also, when the "Three Ds"—defense, diplomacy, and development—became a popular slogan created under the national security strategies during the George W. Bush years.

I was a significant proponent of the Three Ds myself; I actually gave talks to new Development Leadership Initiative classes that came into USAID during the decade of the 2010s. During the latter part of that decade, when the program started to bring new recruits into USAID, I was giving talks on how development had been elevated to peer level status with defense and diplomacy, and how the three worked in a conjoined fashion to achieve US foreign policy interests. I had just come out of teaching at the National War College, so I was an acolyte of this position. I was absolutely convinced. But, you know, I think in retrospect, I also started losing touch with what I felt was USAID's basic DNA,

which I think it had started to lose by that time, and I will get into why I believe that in a minute.

So, as I look back at my career, I'm a maximalist when it comes to field delegation. I think a lot of that has been undermined, where a lot of implementation, design, and strategy decisions have drifted more toward Washington, where decisions are made in the interagency that may not have had full input from the field level, if that input was even there. From what I saw sitting in IPCCs and IPCs and even a few deputies meetings at the NSC, it often wasn't taken into sufficient account. The Interagency Policy Coordinating Committee, or Interagency Policy Committee, is what those two acronyms stood for. So, in line with that perspective of where I think USAID could actually recover a lot of its effectiveness, I would start with the idea of field delegation, and drilling more authority and latitude in decision-making down to the field, particularly, the kinds of design and implementation decisions that Washington is increasingly usurping.

By the way, when we did the QDDR, the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, that Hillary Clinton started in 2009. I was part of a group that surveyed the field quite extensively. And if there was one common recommendation that came out of the chapter on development, and the work that the group I was involved with did, it was increasing field authorities. I think when we submitted that report to Secretary Clinton's office, she looked at what we'd written, and basically said, "We don't have to work on this anymore. You guys go off and start implementing this." And I think, at the time, Raj Shah would have gotten more engaged in implementing those recommendations, but he got hijacked by the Haiti earthquake disaster. And he was focused on Haiti for a long time. Then, under pressure from the State Department, he got very, very engaged in Afghanistan while he was also promoting some of his own initiatives, like Feed the Future, and putting a renewed emphasis on the issue of localization and working through local organizations. I think of the basic issues that arose out of the QDDR's focus on the imbalance between Washington intervention and field authorities, the issue of field initiative wasn't really being addressed effectively at that time.

So, if I step back, and I try and look at the things that were most successful in my career, and what contributed to the effectiveness of our programs, first and foremost, it was doing a better job of listening to the host country. And I don't mean just the government. I mean all segments, and groups, and major sectors in the country that were involved in the country's social, political, and economic development. I think the one lesson I learned—and I learned it particularly in the Philippines, oddly enough—is don't assume your counterparts haven't thought of something, because they usually have. And I think that's one of the problems that we have had, doing a better job of listening to the host country. We go into meetings or go into negotiations with people, and with organizations

and groups, assuming that what we're about to tell them, they haven't thought of. We need to do our homework better before we start engaging people, and basically not insult their intelligence by suggesting they hadn't considered something.

Second, let those country counterparts generate the ideas. See if we can be better at Socratic dialogues, so that we can coax out of the host countries what their ideas are. Of course, we must make clear the areas of priority of our government, because, frankly, we're a partner in this, we're not just a blank check. We have equities that we want to promote in return for putting our money into a country. But in the process of making clear the top line priorities of the US government, we should be transparent on the policy limitations and requirements of our assistance in areas such as environment, women, and the ability to engage with and work through local organizations. These are things that are not unique to us; a lot of the other bilateral donors feel the same way. We need to make clear where the channel markers are, the things that we will be allowed to do, whether driven by Washington based policy, as articulated through the NSC [National Security Council], or because of restrictions the Hill has put on us, like we can't invest in sugar production overseas, for example. We have to make those clear. When those are clearly laid out on the table, then we can engage in a dialogue where we try to help our local partners generate the ideas that reflect the priorities where they would like to have our assistance support and what we are able to support. Then we can work to find an area of convergence.

I think in the Philippines, and also in India, where we got a lot of pushbacks, we would come in with a strategic framework in our minds, and then try to adapt their priorities to our preconceived strategic framework. And I just don't think that worked. Very few programs were organic. I think particularly in Bangladesh, we pretty much dictated the programs and the pace at which the programs would be designed and implemented. Partly that was because the Bangladeshis did not have a lot of capability below about the second or third level of the bureaucracy. And so, we brought in tons of contractors, and sometimes worked through fairly strong local organizations to basically drive the agenda and drive the pace of that agenda. I think if we tried to do that today in Bangladesh it wouldn't work. At least, from what I saw when I went back there in 2010, when I was acting AA, the Bangladeshis are taking far more command of their development.

The Ghanaians are pretty much the same way. The Ghanaians didn't feel any reservations about pushing back on our ideas. If we were doing a program in Ghana they didn't agree with, sometimes they wouldn't tell us they weren't going to do what we asked them to do, or they just simply wouldn't do it. We would withhold our funding and occasionally they would say, "Fine, you should withhold your funding." That happened to me in our education program in Ghana, and the education minister made it very clear to me. He

said, "We've been having trouble implementing this program the way you've wanted it. We didn't achieve the targets you wanted. You should take your money back." And that was a signal to me that, hey, maybe we didn't think this through properly when we first designed the project.

Now having said all of this, what is the proper role of Washington? And here's where sometimes I was frustrated as a director. Instead of getting handed down dictates, "you shall spend this much on HIV/AIDS," or "you shall fund this NGO," or "you shall create a program in this sector," top line policy messages would have been far more helpful. You know, getting a sense of where Washington's priorities really were, whether it was in energy, whether it was environment, whether it was in agriculture, health, education, was what we needed. What were the top line policy themes that we needed to take on board and then communicate to the host government as we engaged in this process of listening to the host government? And oftentimes, we didn't get clear messages from headquarters, or if we did, they were confusing. They would get filtered from the administrator's office down to the AA, down to the office director, through the desk officer, and by the time it came to us, sometimes it didn't quite look the same as what the top line message really was. I often had to go back to Washington and walk the halls to kind of triangulate what everybody was saying among the bureaus before I could figure out what the top line policy messages really were. Washington was never very good at clearly communicating those things. What this meant was, frankly, the less I had Washington messing around in my business, the better I often felt. The fewer phone calls I got from Washington, the better. But then there were times when I really needed that direction, and often I didn't get it.

In talking about listening and taking a signal from the host country, I think I mentioned previously, the most successful projects I was involved in were ones the host countries generated: International Child Development Services in India, which is a program that still exists today with basically the same framework; the West African Gas Pipeline, which we worked on in Ghana; and rural electrification in the Philippines, which benefited from having a very, very strong leader, General [Pedro Gallarza Diaz] "Pete" Dumol. Dumol was a former military general who had this unique ability to motivate and organize. And we let him just do it. What was amazing was the sort of hand in glove relationship we had with him, and not only his work building a national rural electrification organization, but also the local co-ops whose structure that he basically stimulated. So, we were working in the Philippines with a very strong partner. Our contribution was what we called the NRECA model (National Rural Electrification Cooperative Administration) that was developed in the United States in the '30s. He loved that model, he adapted it, and we had a great partnership.

The Ghana HIV/AIDS campaign was another example, where we brought in Johns Hopkins University's communications experts. Johns Hopkins was trying out a lot of communications messages that it felt would be well adapted to Africa. And what was interesting, we had a woman working with Johns Hopkins who was a former producer of the TV show *Law and Order*, and she came with a completely different perspective. Her perspective was, "What kind of commercial message will the Ghanaians listen to?" And so, she invited the Ghanaians to sit down, some of their communications specialists, to do some market testing. And what they came up with was a slogan. And the slogan was, and keep in mind, this is an HIV/AIDS campaign, the slogan that they came up with was, "If it's not on, it's not in." It was brilliant, because all the Ghanaians were saying it—it became a slogan that people would say at parties, they even would sing it. They just thought it was marvelous.

The Ghanaians also came up with a very, very dark commercial, which I used to have on my computer, but it was from the Ghana HIV/AIDS Commission. The commercial opens with a shot of six candles lit up against a completely black background. Just candles. And playing in the background was the opening theme to the movie *The Godfather*. And as the music of the solo trumpet played in the commercial, each one of those candles was snuffed out until the entire screen was black. And the message was, basically, if we do not take this threat of HIV/AIDS seriously, this is our future. I took the slogan and that commercial back to Washington and played them at a mission directors conference for the African Bureau. I was feeling really good. I thought these are great successes of local messaging. The DAA [Deputy Assistant Administrator] said, "You must be out of your mind. We're paying for this?" Most of the other mission directors from Africa—this is what shocked me—they said, "This is just outrageous. It's gross." I'm going, "What the heck? What did we do wrong here?" The only person that really thought some of this was great was the director in South Africa. I can't remember his name now. But it just totally grossed out my DC colleagues. And I thought, "No, I'm not backing away from this." You know, we got some very good material out of this collaboration, and the Ghanaians resonated with it.

Which sort of brings me to the theme of localization that you sent me a question on yesterday, John. And as I reflect on localization and how successful—or maybe unsuccessful—we've had ebbs and flows over time, I remember one of the first things I did when I got to Bangladesh as a program officer, and then later became deputy mission director, and I did when I got to Ghana, was to assess the strength of the local NGO community. That was one of the first things I always did. And one of the things I looked for was whether there was sort of an apex organization that represented the NGOs that were working in various sectors in a country. Most of the time there wasn't. But in Bangladesh, there was an extremely strong apex organization. It was a federation of all of

the NGOs working in Bangladesh, irrespective of size. Of course, there were some very big ones, such as Grameen Bank and BRAC [the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee] which is probably the largest local based NGO in the world. And they would often carry the water in dialogue with the government on behalf of the NGO community. This apex organization actually negotiated with the government on rules and regulations for regulating the NGO community in Bangladesh. It almost became a political force because it took the government on sometimes in very strong ways. Our USAID mission, and our embassy, supported them in their work. So, in the posts that I served in, or had the opportunity to backstop, Bangladesh, I think, had the strongest NGO community of all. In fact, the NGO community overall was probably stronger than the government in certain sectors, at least during the time I was there. Ghana had the weakest NGO community. In fact, I tried to start a branch of Grameen Bank in Ghana.

I was in dialogue with Muhammad Yunus, the director of the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, in 1999, and at the time he was starting Grameen branches all over the world, including in the United States, in Chicago. And I asked him, "Would you take a look at the Ghana situation, and send somebody to Ghana?" Well, it took him three weeks, but he came back and said, "I don't have to send anybody to Ghana." He said, "You know, I've looked at it. I actually know some of the people who are working in the small business sector in Ghana, in the micro enterprise sector." He said, "Frank, the Ghanaians aren't ready. They can't do it." And I asked him "Why?" He said, "Social trust. The level of social trust that you need in a country, or even at the village level, to make this work. They haven't got it yet. When you think they have it, let me know." So that was a disappointment to me, and while we did work through some local NGOs in Ghana, the strongest NGOs in Ghana tended to be think tanks, rather than organizations that actually delivered services. We had CARE, we had CRS, we had Save the Children, we had Rotary working on the polio campaign, among others. These US organizations were working in Ghana through local entities. But if I asked them whether any of these local entities could take a direct grant without them, they said, No. They wouldn't be able to meet USAID's paperwork requirements, our accountability requirements or financial requirements. They may have had a dog in that hunt; they may not have wanted to admit that a local organization could do the job that the US NGO could do. But when we sent our financial management people from our comptroller's office out to look at some of these local NGOs, they came back saying, yeah, they could never satisfy our paperwork requirements.

Now, this was before Raj Shah rolled out his localization program where they lowered the standards for accountability for grants below a certain amount. But in fact, there was one NGO, a woman-led NGO in Ghana, that had achieved some degree of international prominence, and very, very high profile in Washington. The leader of this NGO—whose

name I'm sorry, I can't remember it—she had back channeled the mission and the embassy and gone straight to contacts that she had in the women and development office in Washington. Next thing I knew I got a directive, you have to give a grant to them. The message was clear: don't cross the t's and dot all the i's. You need to give them a direct grant. Well, we did. And when we sent our FM people to the organization after they'd had the grant for a year, we discovered that they were paying ghost employees, and the employees they did have, they weren't paying them regularly. And they couldn't account for the sub grants they were making to other organizations; we couldn't even follow the money down to an actual project in most cases. There were a few activities that were working, but in most cases, we couldn't follow those projects down to the village level. When I found out that they had ghost employees, that was it for me. I didn't have to look any further. I just went back to Washington and said, "We're not doing this anymore. We're canceling the grant." And yeah, we caught some flack, and the leader of that NGO, again, back channeled her protest to her contacts in Washington. But this time, Washington backed me, which I think was great. So, you need to assess local capacity to find local organizations that you can work through directly, but also you've got to do your due diligence, and determine whether or not you actually need to use all of the strict accountability requirements that we tend to put even on our US NGOs.

Here's another thing that one ought to look at when looking at the localization issue in a country: when you do find competent and capable NGOs, what relationship do those NGOs have to political parties and major political leaders, both in power and in the opposition? I have often found that very strong NGOs also line up politically with and get patronage from parties and individuals in power. That certainly was the case in Ghana, and somewhat the case in Bangladesh, I would say somewhat the case of India, although there was an organization in India called SEWA, the Self-Employed Women's Association, which was fairly independent and autonomous. The head of that organization was a woman named Serena Bhati. And while she worked to sustain a strong and friendly congenial relationship with the proper ministries in the Indian government, her existence wasn't dependent on whether the Indian government endorsed what she did. That was partly because she was getting foreign funding and not getting much local funding.

That's another issue: to what degree do local organizations rely on local funding versus foreign funding? Whenever we found a solid, strong, local entity, odds are the Europeans or the Nordics, or somebody else was already supporting them with grant funding. And the question we would often ask is, what's your source of local funding? Sometimes it was government, which made us do a wink wink/nod nod, but it also depended on the nature of the host government's grant to that organization. If the host government was supporting that organization's operational expenses, then obviously that organization was

going to be beholden to whatever were whims or dictates of the government ministry or the minister personally. But if it was for paying for specific projects, then the local organization could exercise a greater degree of autonomy and independence. Sometimes we found contradictory situations. For example, the Indian government really frowned on local organizations getting funding from private US NGOs that weren't approved by the Indian government first. If the government had to clear a foreign contribution before a local organization could receive it, that often created a tremendous barrier for the local organization to operate. And if the country didn't have a good tradition of philanthropy, which a lot of countries don't, then a local organization is going to have a much greater difficulty raising funds from local organizations and private citizens.

So, when I would get to a country, one of the first things I did was assess the strength of the local NGO community, try to assess its relationship with government, the strength of the philanthropic tradition, or lack thereof, how dependent local organizations were on foreign funding versus host government funding or local private funding, their relationship to political parties, and their ability to meet USAID reporting requirements. And once I jumped through all those hoops, I often decided there wasn't much to support there. But, then there were times when a gut check was required to see if a risk was worth it. I would argue that in many countries where political institutions are not as developed as they are in middle income or upper-middle income countries, and where NGOs might have to enter alliances with prominent political personalities or parties, that those shouldn't be deal killers. We need to really focus on whether an organization can carry out an effective program when we make our decision of who and how we're going to support, and be prepared to struggle with those organization's operational challenges along the way.

Q: Quick question, I don't mean to interrupt. Did you have any involvement with institutional partnerships, American universities partnering with local organizations, for example?

YOUNG: Oh, boy. No, not really. I'm trying to think. In India, that would be the most obvious place. There were such relationships, but those collaborations tended to be driven by the sector. In other words, we would have an agricultural university out of Colorado, or out of Kansas or Nebraska, cooperating with a comparable university in India that was running major ag research programs, or doing major field trials for new crop varieties and so forth; or if there was a university, say in Madhya Pradesh, doing forestry but my memory here is a little cloudy. I think it was the University of Madhya Pradesh that was doing forestry, and we cooperated with a university in the United States that had a lot of forestry expertise. Often what AID would do within the context of a project in India is that we would link the two universities together with a grant. We would give the US

university a cooperative agreement, and then the US university would manage that relationship with the Indian university. They would carry out jointly funded research projects, jointly funded field trials, and that sort of thing. My recollection is we did that in India a fair bit, we didn't really do that in Bangladesh very much, because Dhaka University was not very strong and was closed half the time because of student demonstrations. So, it was often very, very difficult to get that kind of relationship going. In Ghana, I just don't recall anything that we did in Ghana. So, I would say it was mainly happening in India.

Q: In many countries that I have been aware of, a good deal of that was participant training, where you were getting their masters and doctorates and cover behind them with American technical assistance.

YOUNG: And, you know, we did that so successfully in India and in the Philippines and less so in Bangladesh for many years. And you might recall, John, as we moved out of the '80s and into the '90s, participant training just fell out of favor in the Agency. I mean, if you were to design a standalone training project today—and I did design one in India—it would need to have more focus. One of the first things we did to participant training programs was the elimination of degree programs. To send somebody overseas for a year or two for a master's degree fell out of favor in favor of short-term participant training, you know, six weeks to six months, but certainly no more than six months. The key was making sure those people came back and stayed. And for the most part, they did. And you're right, that returned trainee might then be the “tip of the spear” for a joint research project that we would fund. I think by eliminating participant training as a general activity, we forgot the lessons we learned from those projects in the '50s and '60s, because when I was there in India in the '80s, my counterparts were still graduates of those degree programs in the States. And the fact that they had been in those programs gave us a basis for a common dialogue. They understood our culture, and they could relate to us a lot better. But general participant training, I don't know, I just think over time, it fell out of favor. And it's regrettable that it did.

Setting the localization part aside, another part of your question on foreign aid effectiveness, I'd like to address a couple of other dimensions that I think can make us more successful and make us a more effective foreign aid agency. I'm going to change that term; I'm not going to use the phrase "foreign aid agency" anymore. I prefer “development cooperation agency”, because I think when we use the term foreign aid, we're talking about a relationship between unequals. And I think the Japanese have it right. I think the Europeans have it right. They call what they do "development cooperation." And I think that really implies more of a dialogue and relationship between peers.

In Bangladesh, and in Ghana, I became convinced that every line officer, any officer that's managing an activity, should spend an equivalent of not less than six days a month in the field. Get the heck away from that inbox, stop generating so much paper, generate some knowledge, and get out to the field. Unfortunately, whenever we had OE [Operational Expenses] cuts, and particularly when we had these damn continuing resolutions, field travel was often the first casualty. And if we were able to squeeze any field travel out, we usually sent our local employees out, not the Americans. And here's where the inequality of how we treated our local staff really upset me. I really got upset by our practice in Ghana. When I got to Ghana, I discovered that when we sent our Foreign Service National employees to the field, they got a lower per diem than the Americans did, and they ended up staying in different hotels, or in different guest houses than we did. That was wrong. And we changed that. We had to rewrite a mission order, we had to dip more deeply into OE, but that practice was just so outrageously wrong, that we just had to stop doing it. But anyway, making sure that Americans spent a minimum of six days in the field every month I think was critical.

Second, we need to continue to make evaluation a key part of project management and integrate it into project implementation. I think we still think of evaluation as a separate activity that we undertake when we call a timeout, like a timeout in football. It's kind of like stopping the implementation process while we evaluate what we've been doing. I think we have to build evaluation into both management and our implementation of how we do projects, not just consider it a separate component.

Impact evaluations, I know, there's a big interest in that. Traditionally, we wanted to do impact evaluations at the end of a project. And I think we've learned—and I hope we continue to learn—that impact evaluations have less and less relevance, the closer they are to the end of a program, because the true impact usually occurs many years after we've stopped our funding, and the impact is usually not something we deliberately designed into the program, because over time, what we leave behind gets adapted to local conditions. I think we need to focus project design more on the why rather than the how, and I think when F [Office of Foreign Assistance] was created in State, and they started focusing us more on output level and process metrics, the issue of why we're doing something as opposed to how we're doing it took a backseat. I think design has to be about the impact, not what we want to see happen, but what the recipient wants to see happen. We should be fine with the fact that the impact of our assistance may not be totally realized within the lifetime of our assistance.

And here's what I think has probably received too little attention in our programming. I think we've lost sight of the fact that poverty alleviation, specifically increasing people's

meaningful participation in their own economy, is our core purpose. That's why we exist, and I think we've forgotten this. State, which manages about 40% of the 150 account, the foreign assistance account, can't do that. Poverty alleviation is not in their DNA, it's not even in their FAM regulations. When I was doing inspector general work for State and looking at the programs that the Population, Refugees and Migration Bureau was doing, or what the INL Bureau (International Narcotics and Law Enforcement), the "drugs and thugs" people, or even what the individual regional bureaus were doing, it was clear that development wasn't what they were about. It wasn't in their field of vision. It's in our field of vision and should be more so because that's our core skill set. But it's something that I think we've lost sight of. We are the US government entity that has the comparative advantage to do poverty alleviation programs.

I think USAID is becoming increasingly focused on relief, humanitarian assistance, and disaster response. I think State has pretty much told us that's really our lane. And as a result, I think we're becoming more of the US Agency for International Relief, which is a terrible acronym, USAIR, that also refers to an airline that's now defunct. Or you could say we're becoming more of the US Agency for International Disasters, with the D standing for "disaster" rather than "development." You know, if the Three Ds are going to be the major instruments of US foreign policy, and development is going to be seen as a tool of promoting US security interests, then we've got to make it about development. But the development has to be linked to addressing what I think is the most critical issue we have in global development today, and we have had for the last 10 years, and that's the increasing gap between the people commanding the top one or two percent of national incomes—or even global incomes—as opposed to the bottom 50-60 percent of people who command maybe 10 to 20 percent of national income. I mean, we've helped raise more people above the poverty level over the last 30 years than at any time in world history. But most of the people who have been raised just over that poverty level -- and I think a lot of the development experts that look at this would agree—they're sitting on a very brittle foundation. And I think what the war in Ukraine, the increasing food prices, and global inflation is teaching us, is that they can drop back into poverty very, very quickly.

But more important than that, when people get to that point, of being just above the poverty line—and Muhammad Yunus and I had a dialogue about this some years ago—how do you take people to the next step, to take them to middle income, to take them to middle class. And even Yunus himself said, "I don't have a model for doing that. I don't know how to do that. I can get people to the point where they can feed their families and educate their kids. But above that, I don't know how you get people to that next level, to a level where the foundation below them is so solid, that they can weather a crisis, an economic crisis, and they don't fall back."

I think USAID has lost track of the fact that that should be our focus, and that development and poverty need to be brought back center stage into what we do. In line with that, I think USAID at the headquarters level is prone to confusing means and ends. I think we have tended to put more of an emphasis on novel ways to deliver assistance, create partnerships, or develop novel and innovative programs that become ends in and of themselves without asking the question, “Why are we doing this? What's the point of what we're doing?”, other than developing some wonderful, imaginative, innovative model? The novel delivery mechanism is a means to something, but the means to what? And I think we don't ask that question of ourselves enough.

Q: Do you have an example of that, Frank?

YOUNG: Yeah, Raj Shah's Innovation Lab, which got completely absorbed into the sixth floor. And I think Maura O'Neil, who was a special assistant of his back in 2010 or 2011, kickstarted that initiative. To me, that was an example where we were focusing more on trying to create imaginative novel mechanisms, rather than trying to figure out why.

Then there were Hillary Clinton's cookstoves, which we were dragged into. Her cookstoves initiative, to me, was a great example, where we were trying to develop smokeless cookstoves that would not ruin people's health if they were used inside a dwelling. But the problem was it was often too hot to use them inside a dwelling.

I was somewhat guilty of this. When we were doing the West Africa Gas Pipeline, I was so enamored with the structure we were building, and the negotiating process we were engaged in, I had lost sight of the fact that the people that were going to use the power in Ghana didn't want the pipeline. They thought that by piping gas from Nigeria into power plants in Ghana, while good for the environment, was going to create more expensive energy for them. From their point of view, hydroelectric power, which was provided by the Akosombo Dam, was energy that was given by God and was absolutely free, which of course it wasn't. But I totally forgot to ask, “why are we doing this in the first place?” It's to make cheaper, more reliable energy, better quality energy available to the people that need it. I had to make the case that hydroelectric power, while important, was not the cheapest solution in the long run. So, I had to kind of reorient my thinking in the same way.

The final thing I'd say, John, in terms of USAID effectiveness, is that the agency needs to learn to write, and write in clear, concise English. I don't know if the current RFPs [Requests for Proposal] are any different now, but when I was in the agency RFPs were horrible. They were written badly. They were written by people that didn't know what

they wanted, hoping that the contractor would tell them what they should have. And because we couldn't write a decent request for proposals, the contractors would basically write the program for us. They promised the earth, and then when the contract was awarded, they'd come in, and they'd say, "Okay, this is how the program's really going to work." And part of it was because we were never clear about what we were trying to achieve. We would write in code, the more ambiguous the better. We need to figure out how to say things with fewer words, with fewer adverbs, and fewer adjectives. I always felt, when I was acting AA, if you couldn't give me a memo no longer than a page and a half, then you didn't really know what it was you were really trying to tell me. And I think for the Secretary of State it was one page. That's a heck of a challenge. And I think if USAID is going to give training to anyone these days, particularly its new employees, give them writing classes, train them how to write. I can tell you from my experience, having taught even at the graduate level in the last several years, today's undergraduate and graduate students in particular, just simply aren't learning how to write well. If AID is going to be effective, officers really have to learn how to write. Okay, so that's the AID effectiveness topic, John, and I'm ready to move on to the management and reflecting on my bosses, which kind of gets humorous.

Q: Did you manage differently as a mission director than as a deputy director? In conflict resolution, what worked well for you, and for your bosses? What diplomatic skills did you learn and find useful during your career, and what training courses helped you be a better manager?

YOUNG: Well, first of all, yes, I managed very differently depending on whether I was a deputy mission director or a mission director, and I managed very differently depending on whether it was a senior AID position in Washington or an AID position overseas. Sure, they're graded the same at the same level, but they are really, really different positions that require very, very different management styles. As the deputy mission director, I focused on internal operations, but kept enough external context to be a credible substitute when the mission director was absent. The hardest thing I ever had to learn was to wear both the director and deputy hats for an extended period of time, unless I temporarily tagged someone to be the acting deputy. And as a director—particularly in the field, not so much in Washington, where you can always pass the buck around to somebody else, even if you're AA—as a mission director in the field, I realized the buck stopped with me. The victories that our mission achieved, our program achieved, belonged to the mission, but the failures were mine. And I had to project an aura of confidence sometimes, even if I wasn't confident of what I was doing.

I think as a mission director, even as a deputy, it's difficult to be vulnerable. And it's difficult to find someone on your staff to confide in, because there's always the aspect of

a superior-subordinate relationship to deal with. I did have one person in Ghana that I could do that with, with whom I could let my guard down and really talk to him as a peer. It was my education officer, Peter Kreske. He was a magnificent human being. He was a great sounding board even though he was my education officer. And we were able to keep those conversations separate from our professional relationship, which I think was important. But when you become a director, you realize how hard it is to be both a boss and a peer. There are just very, very few people to talk to, except your own deputy in the office, if you have a deputy.

The second thing is, I think anyone who's going to be a mission director, or aspire to a senior job in Washington, should have experience as a desk officer. They should have served as a desk officer as a prerequisite to any senior position, particularly a mission director in the field.

In terms of my relationship with bosses, I had some really nasty ones, but more often I had great ones. With a boss, if I was having a problem, it just involved talking out where we were missing each other's communications. And I found it was better if I initiated the conversation, rather than waiting for him or her to do it. Now, sometimes that worked, sometimes it didn't. And particularly if you were crossing swords with somebody at the start of a posting, the next four years could be miserable. So, I found that if I didn't let things fester, and I took the initiative, that was best.

As a boss, from the boss's point of view, it was important for me to know at once that people that work for you aren't going to flow bad information or complaints up the chain, unless you've let it be known that you welcome that. They won't unless the front office, either the deputy or a mission director, is a safe space where they can bring bad news. It has to be. It's something, ironically, that I learned from Priscilla Boughton, frankly, because she was not very good at it. You never brought Priscilla bad news, at least in the field. I don't know about Washington, but in the field, you never did. That taught me that an important management skill to learn was how to make people feel safe when bringing you bad news.

As you know, John, a mission is a hothouse environment, where conflict is magnified, because everybody is in the same building, the same country, the same American club and so forth. Problems just get magnified logarithmically, and so it's really important, I think, if you're in the front office, to create that safe space, where people can come in and give you the information that they would normally be afraid to give. It's hard for a boss to admit he or she is wrong without losing credibility, but when a subordinate admits to an error, that person may feel even more vulnerable. Every situation is a delicate one and has to be managed to the situation, but it's important to invest time in that boss-subordinate

relationship, really invest time in that at the front end so people will feel confident, even when talking about the difficult stuff.

As for diplomatic skills, what I learned in the field was that eye contact is so important. What's more important than moving your mouth is eye contact, and admitting the other person has a good point early on. And never confuse your maximum position with your final decision on an issue. When you go to a meeting, particularly outside the mission, study up on the people you're dealing with, so you can talk about things other than business and make your counterpart feel like a person versus an object. One of the things I learned particularly in India, but also in Ghana, is the importance of sincerity and veracity. If people think they can trust what you're saying, they feel you're sincere and that you're really being truthful with them even when they know that you can't tell them everything, then they'll trust you. That trust is important, particularly when you get into tough issues. Finally, saying thank you, and saying it a lot. You can never say thank you enough, I don't care if it's to the people you work for or the people that are working for you. "Thank you" are the two most important words I think you can say all day.

Training. When I was in the agency training was in short supply. I think it wasn't until the DLI program, the Development Leadership Initiative Program, that training really started getting the proper focus. Training during my career was really on the job. Everything you learned had to be on the job, and you had to hope that you had good bosses, who would allow you to make mistakes, help walk you through them and help you learn from them. That said, I think the Development Studies Program, which no longer exists, was probably the best training I ever had. Followed by my first project design course, back in the late '70s, where we learned about log frames and all of that, I know we don't really use log frames anymore. But the logic that was embedded in the log frame, the process of strategic thinking that was embedded in doing log frames was one of the most important bits of training I ever had. Mission director training, at least to the extent I got it, was useless. Whatever training I got was the mentoring I got from Mary Kilgour. And deputy mission director training didn't exist, you learned it on the job. I took a couple of supervisory training courses, but they were useless. In fact, I think the training I received in the Office of the Inspector General at the State Department was probably one of the best trainings I ever had, because it was the best writing course I ever took. In fact, I credit the writing course I took through the Office of the Inspector General at State with helping me finish writing my book. It's a very sparse approach to writing, but it's an approach to writing where you learn how to express yourself clearly. And I think, again, USAID could benefit from giving every new employee a course on how to write.

Q: When working with State and other agencies, including the NSC, what worked well for you in both Washington and overseas missions, what didn't work?

YOUNG: Well, John, one thing I learned about the interagency in Washington is that it's not a singular entity. It's a lot of cliques that get together in a room, sometimes in the White House, sometimes elsewhere, where everybody is pushing their positions, their pet rocks, whatever they might be, with somebody from the national security advisor's office basically trying to herd the cats. And when they couldn't herd the cats, then the NSA (National Security Adviser) or his or her delegate, would then basically work around the US government agency that was being recalcitrant. In my experience, particularly where I was involved in National Security Council (NSC) meetings when Kyrgyzstan was going through its revolution, or we were having issues involving Sri Lanka or Indonesia, the State Department and the NSC were having a tremendous rivalry. State felt the NSC was getting too operational, trying to dictate projects, or operate projects, and engage in dialogues overseas that the State Department felt was rightfully its job. And so, what the NSC did, what the NSC advisor would often do, is hold meetings without their State colleagues being there, which I found offensive. I called them on it, and I said, "I feel really uncomfortable doing this. I'm the acting Assistant Administrator for USAID, and the fact that my counterpart at State, the assistant secretary, isn't here, whatever we decide here has got as much traction as the carpet on the floor until you cross the threshold and walk out of this room. We've got to find a way to get people together."

So, the interagency process doesn't really operate in a very fluid way, and I think I found that informal meetings and phone conversations before those interagency meetings were probably more important than the meetings themselves. Sharing documents freely at my own initiative I felt was a good practice, particularly with my NSC counterparts, as well as with State. I often told my desk officers: "When you become a desk officer, the first phone call I want you to make is to your counterpart over at State, and I want you to develop a relationship with that person, because that relationship is going to be important." To interagency policy committees, I would often bring my senior technical people or the desk officers as backbenchers, and I found that was a very useful tactic. And going to every meeting that was called in Washington, in the interagency, was essential. Don't miss one. Even if you have to send your office director when you should be going but can't because you've got a conflict, make sure somebody's there, and don't miss any of those meetings. Prior to an NSC meeting, I would coordinate with staff on talking points and make sure they knew that I was going, and what the agenda was so that they could have input. Basically, at interagency meetings I wanted to make sure I was carrying water for the Bureau, so I could be clear about the agency's position, arguing forcefully when necessary, but being prepared to accept the outcome and figuring out how to relay that outcome to the staff in the bureau.

At the field level, the interagency process was even less fluid than it was in Washington. We didn't often meet as an interagency group at the field level except for the country team meetings. And the country team was more of a show and tell exercise than what I would call an exchange or discussion. So generally, what I tried to do was, try to forge relationships between my office, the ambassador's office, and the DCM's office, or, say, between my private sector office and my economist, if I had one, with the econ counselor, and try to make sure that those channels were open, and that those channels were constantly being used. But I rarely found that at the field level they had an interagency process comparable to what we had in Washington, and maybe that was because at the field level AID missions are so operational, and we're not policy entities, per se. It could have been better, but it wasn't.

Q: How well did you achieve a work life balance?

YOUNG: Lousy, John, lousy. Look, when I was deputy, I saw too many marriages hit the rocks. And a lot of it was work life balance. I don't know what the separation/divorce rate was in the Foreign Service, but at high stress posts, and I think all of mine were high stress, but in the Philippines and Bangladesh in particular, family dissension was palpable. And so, I think I failed at that. And that's probably why my first marriage fell apart in the Philippines. I learned something from that. And it turned out my second wife was a Foreign Service Officer herself for her government. And that sort of taught me a lot about work life balance, but at a different level. But I remember my stint as the Philippine desk officer during the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos, the hours and stress of that job took a horrible toll on my family. I had just gotten married, and there was one day where my wife called me to tell me that her pregnancy test was positive, we were going to have a baby. And my boss saw I was on the telephone. He poked his head in and he said, "Get off that phone right now we've got to go to a meeting." I picked up a chair and threw it at him. That was my way of letting off steam. To his credit, he never held it against me and became a very good friend, even after the two of us left the agency. He even became my third ambassador in Bangladesh, so you can probably guess who this person was.

In Bangladesh, Priscilla caused a revolt among mission spouses because she would hold meetings on Saturdays. You know, we had a Friday-Saturday weekend. Part of the problem was, when we had a day off on Friday, Washington was working. Saturday when Washington was out of the office, Priscilla would call meetings. And on Sundays, of course, we started our workweek. So, it was like working seven days a week. And then she would have dinners and receptions at night, maybe two to three a week, and they were all stag. And so, we would leave our families at home after putting in a 10–11-hour day, and we would go to these stag dinners or stag receptions. Finally, the spouses marched to the ambassador's office and said, "We're going to leave the country, because

we might as well not be here. We're invisible." And it's interesting, the Ambassador had to meet with Priscilla and say, "You've got to stop doing this. You got to stop working your staff so hard, and you got to stop the stag events. There's got to be more family-oriented activities, and you need to help make that happen."

That taught me something, so that when I went to Ghana, and I was holding dinners and receptions, I almost always involved spouses, unless it was strictly a business dinner where I was holding a small dinner for a visiting DAA (Deputy Assistant Administrator), or somebody from the Office of Management and Budget, and it was a sit down dinner for maybe 10 or 12 people, and obviously, the spouses would be totally bored. But if it was a larger event, like a reception to welcome the head of some technical office or a visiting World Bank official, spouses were invited. I just felt that was important.

Also, I was very conscious of the hours that I worked, particularly when I was acting director in Bangladesh, and I was director in Ghana. One of the best things I did before getting to Ghana was set a four-and-a-half-day work week. It was still 40 hours, but we worked nine hours a day for the first four days, and then we went eight to noon on Fridays, and everybody got Friday afternoon off. And that also became the embassy standard. Well, I would often stay afterwards on Fridays, because I had stuff to catch up on. But one day I went down to see who was still in the building, and most of the American staff was still in the building. The FSNs had left. The American staff was still there. I started chasing people out of the building. And finally, it was Peter Kresge who said, "Frank, if you want people to leave the building, you have to leave the building." So, I said, "Okay." I hired a tennis instructor, who would just yank me out of the building at about 12:30, and we'd spend a couple of hours playing tennis in the afternoon. And over time, people started leaving at the proper time. Now occasionally somebody would stay, I get that. But I was very conscious that if I stay till six or seven at night, there's going to be a core of people that are going to stay there. If I left on time, they left. You know, I just felt like the work should drive your schedule. What you feel you need to accomplish should drive your schedule, not the fact that the director was staying into the evening. I think that's a disease that also affects Washington. But it's something that I just became very conscious of, and I tried to rewrite that unwritten rule as part of my management style.

In terms of our new officers, this will be my last point. I know it's hard, and John, I think you're still doing some of the training for the new officers. I don't know what they call them anymore, they don't call the DLIs. They've changed the name.

Q: They call them C3s.

YOUNG: C3s, okay. You know, they're being brought in, and they're being trained better, mentored better. I know this new generation of officers wants clarity in terms of what's expected of them, and they want clarity in terms of what they're doing wrong, how they can improve what they do and improve their work. And that sort of wasn't our style when I came into the agency, you know, 40-45 years ago. To some degree, even the new officers these days are going to have to suck it up. Not everything is going to go according to plan. Sometimes you're going to have to feel your way through your own mistakes.

But this “sucking it up” is particularly important at a post where you need to draw a line with supervisors about how important family time is to you. One thing I discovered in Thailand, when I was acting director there in 2012, is that the spousal community was supremely unhappy. Partly because they couldn't work, they couldn't get work permits, but also because they lived in a cloistered community outside of Bangkok, where they just felt detached from the city and detached from where their spouses worked. They just felt like they'd been placed out there in some sort of hermetically sealed environment. And they just weren't happy. People worked 12-hour days, when you counted commutes. They would leave the house at 6:30 in the morning, maybe get home by 7:00 or 7:30 at night—even longer than 12 hours. And they weren't connecting with their families very well. It's important, I think, that supervisors and employees pay attention to communicating how important family life is at the post, not just what we accomplish professionally.

Now, as employees communicate this to a supervisor because supervisors often won't know employees' family situations, it needs to be done tactfully. One needs to show that one can do an outstanding job without having to live at the office. And I think supervisors have got to be conscious of the fact they don't want their employees living at the office. If they see more of their employees than their families do, then “Houston, we've got a problem”. And somehow that has to be rectified. But I would never advocate that a supervisor or director start meddling in employees' family life. This is why the employee needs to figure out how to communicate those issues and those priorities, so that there's some sort of—not agreement so much, but some sort of meeting of the minds on what that balance needs to be, so that, as a director, or even a deputy, who often deals with the internal stuff, doesn't have to deal with a spouse suddenly buying an air ticket and leaving, which is something I saw too many times, particularly in Bangladesh. That's just something that should never happen. As a director, I think it's important to have events that families can attend, and they don't have to be work events. Let people see you take a vacation, let people see you play tennis. If people see you having a life as a director, or a deputy, they will have a life.

Final comment, John, the personal evaluation system is a disaster. It's horrible. I don't know why Washington thinks having people write their own evaluation reports and having supervisors have very little to do with that, is a good idea. Because I don't know how you set an objective standard for promotion. And if anything is going to make this new generation of officers unhappy, it's going to be the idiosyncratic personal evaluation system. None of the people I've mentored have had much of a good thing to say about it. I talked to someone who was on the panels a couple of years back, and he thought it had promise. But, you know, he said, "These things are put in front of us, and it's hard to know what to make of them." So, you know I hate to say that USAID's got to revise its personal evaluation system, which is something they seem to do every four to five years. Every time you change the system, it means you remove the foundation for judging somebody's long term performance, which is horrible. But I think what they've got now is a mess. But maybe I'm out of date.

Q: Frank, it's been great.

End of interview