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**BARBARA TURNER**

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## INTERVIEW

*Q: So, we are beginning a conversation with Barbara Turner, who had a long and distinguished career at USAID. Today is September 26, 2017.*

*And Barbara, I think before we start talking about your USAID career, let's talk a little bit about your own background; where you grew up and ultimately what led you to an international development career.*

### Early years

TURNER: Okay. I was born in Georgetown Hospital here in Washington, DC. I grew up in Virginia, mostly in Northern Virginia, went to high school there. I went to eight years of a Catholic school and then when I went to high school where I was very bored. I had already learned everything they were teaching us in high school and so, I got very frustrated and thought I didn't want to go to college, I wanted to do things -- the things I liked best in high school were accounting- bookkeeping and typing. I was a great typist which actually turned out to be a good life skill once computers came in. And so, I decided to go to work for the government and I knew somebody who worked at the State Department and they said they were always looking for administrative types. And I was going to take some night classes. GW (George Washington University) at that time had a very good night program aimed at government employees and they did it on the campus there and USAID happened to be in the State Department at that time, right next to the campus. So, that was why I selected USAID.

*Q: Because it was there.*

TURNER: Because it was there. And of course, the job I took was secretary working part-time and going to school part-time, which was easy, just a walk across the street and you're at class. And so, that was very fulfilling to me.

But of course, I also got hooked on the actual work and as I did I started working full time and got to travel organizing conferences and supporting the field. So, it took me quite a while to get my degree at night school.

*Q: What year are we talking about?*

### **Joining USAID while finishing a BA**

TURNER: I started worked in late 1966 at USAID and I didn't get my BA degree until about 1976. I had a few breaks during that time so I decided it would take me forever through night school because at that point I had to support myself. I found a correspondence program (sort of like online before computers) so we did things by mail. Upper Iowa University had a BA program in public administration and management which operated in the Washington, DC area. They had offices here so we went into their local offices to take tests and get study materials. It was targeted largely toward government and military people because the programs were political science and public administration. You had to do two summers on campus but you could do all other classes by mail. And so, I was finally able wrap up the BA degree.

*Q: What was the degree in?*

TURNER: It was a Bachelor's degree in public administration. At that time, I'd worked a little bit on health projects from the perspective of budget and project management, but from about 1970 on I was always in a health office, and I got very interested in the international health and population programs.

### **Near East Bureau**

*Q: When I first met you you were in the Near East Bureau but had you always in the Near East Bureau at that point?*

TURNER: I was. I came in to the Near East Bureau. I didn't change but the Near East Bureau changed a lot. I think when I arrived it was the Near East Bureau, then it became Near East South Asia, then at one point it became Asia Near East and then I think it separated again into the Near East with Asia as a separate Bureau. And so, it did move around in terms of workload. During the Vietnam War there was a separate Vietnam Bureau all focused on Vietnam. That is why South Asia was linked with the Near East. Leading up to the Egypt-Israel Camp David Accord Peace Settlement in the latter half of the 1970s, there was a big focus on programs in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt, and I spent a great deal of time on the Middle East issues.

*Q: The 1967 war and the 1973 conflict would both have been significant events.*

TURNER: Right. And the Camp David Accords made a big difference for the program in Egypt, for instance, which became the largest program in the agency by 1978 - just as I was becoming more engaged in Middle East health projects.

*Q: So, as you think back on growing up and moving toward AID, were any of your siblings interested in international careers?*

TURNER: I was the oldest of seven so I was the first one starting a career but basically they weren't, No one else went into international work – at least not at first. Later, they all liked travelling and several had jobs that engaged them internationally, but mostly not in developing countries.

*Q: So, you were seen as something of an anomaly.*

TURNER: I think many of my friends thought I was in the CIA. At the time- particularly in the mid and late '70s and early 80's, I did a fair amount of travel as I moved up in positions and the Near East Bureau worked in places like Egypt and Afghanistan. I went to Afghanistan in the '70s; it was a wonderful, peaceful place, they loved Americans. But most Americans had never even heard of the country, had no idea where it was so I was an anomaly in the sense. Interestingly, most of my family does a lot of international travel. My brother became the head of Siemens USA and travels all over the world, to China, etcetera. So, if you met us today you'd think we were a heavily international family but in fact early on not at all. I was the one to break the ice and go places.

*Q: That's fascinating. So, Near East, NESAs, ANEs, Near East again. We can talk a little bit about some of those changes but maybe you could talk a little bit about the transition from secretary to junior program officer and then onward and upward. What kind of training, if any, you were given.*

TURNER: Yes. Well, I do think AID was pretty good about training back then. I took a lot of AID specific courses work, and I was also taking college courses at night on my own time. But certainly, USAID trained me on program design, both Program Design I, and Program Design II for more sophisticated pieces. They had special courses about doing budgets. There was an evaluation course as well.. So, I felt that I was pretty well supported in that.

### **Early mentors**

There was also a process at AID where project design was done by a team effort with considerable input from social scientists, political scientists, technical people and managers, and I filled in some of the management questions because obviously all those brilliant ideas had to actually play out into a budget and a timetable. The team would work in the field with the Mission and bring back a plan. We would go into a room and the head of the bureau would chair the meeting. In Near East, the Assistant Administrator was Al White, who was one of the great heroes and a brilliant guy. The team might spend months and months working on a design of a project and he would ask you the most

critical questions about your analysis and assumptions. But he did it in a very professional way so it was a great learning process. Another Assistant Administrator was Bill Fuller, who had been in Asia for many years and then went on to head the Asia Foundation. He used to always ask...what's your evidence, and that's when I learned about evidence which today we talk about every day but back then people talked more about plans than about evidence for their proposals. It was much like defending a dissertation and you knew going in to the meeting that you had to do your homework. He was a tough boss, but he was so smart that working for him was a fabulous experience and shaped my way of thinking and working.

*Q: Right. And you do learn a lot from mentors like that.*

TURNER: I felt like I had a lot of mentors all the way along, and I felt I was well-treated. Curt Farrar was another one in the Science & Technology Bureau. He really respected the youth and people who came in green. We felt free to question why are we doing it this way; some people would respond, well, we've always done it that way and Curt would always step in and say maybe we should look at it differently. So, there were some brilliant people at AID, certainly as brilliant as any professor that I ever had. So, I felt like that was how I learned. And the same on the technical side. Perhaps because USAID was better staffed in those days, b mentoring and learning was held in high regard.

### **USAID funded Masters in Health Sciences at Johns Hopkins University**

*Q: Well, I think at that time most of the technical input on a project design came from inside AID-*

TURNER: That's right. And because of that I got interested in health. I started in the Near East Bureau health office, worked on a lot in project design and management of health projects. As I got promoted I was expected to work in all sectors. And as I moved away from health I realized I really liked the health sector. I was really interested in it. And so, I did apply for and was awarded a leave of absence and a scholarship to do a Master's degree in public health.

*Q: What year was that?*

TURNER: In 1977. And in those days health and population were just coming up. Population was just becoming a major activity as was maternal and child health and there weren't enough employees within AID with international health experience. In the 1970s, there were very few international departments in schools of public health. I think that Berkley, Harvard, UNC and Hopkins had them and I don't think there were many other international health departments. And so, what AID decided to do was train some of its own people and they offered, for several years, the opportunity to go get a Master's degree. Most of them were studying population. I decided to do international health

management which of course included population and I didn't think I would get it because I was competing with a lot of people who already had a Master's degree. But I got good support from my USAID leadership. They had to say whether you were someone who could do the work. And you had to agree to stay with the agency for a certain period beyond that; I think it was five years. And that was no problem for me. I liked the work very much, so it was a plus. And you had to get into the university yourself, which was hard for me because I didn't go to a prestigious university. I was missing a few courses, had to take, I think, an extra course in economics and a few things like that but I managed to get into Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health and it was a great experience and got a Master's degree in Health Sciences.

*Q: So, it was sort of a circular route to your graduate program.*

TURNER: It was absolutely circular. Although, when I went to Johns Hopkins I was 30 years old. The average age, because we had to do a regression analysis, of the class was 30.

*Q: Really?*

TURNER: Yes. At that point public health degrees weren't that meant for non-clinicians. I don't think it was until the early '70s that Hopkins let in someone who wasn't a doctor or nurse to do a Master's degree in public health. And so, a number of people who had already been through maybe eight or nine years of a career wanted to get into public health and there were even some people in there obviously in their 40s and 50s in the class. So, it was interesting to learn from such a mix class grouping.

*Q: Was there a job waiting for you when you came back or did you have to bid?*

TURNER: I had to bid but pretty much the Near East/South Asia bureau had said if there's a vacancy we'll move you back into it. Of course, I didn't get an opportunity for any promotions during that study time. It was almost two years counting my course work and then an "internship" with quarterly reporting to professors. I had to come back to USAID in a little bit of a lower position and move up but it worked out for me. It was interesting. And one advantage in government, in the Civil Service, of course, the grade of your position dictates your income, unlike the Foreign Service..

*Q: I think what's interesting about your experience is that you were able to move ahead in the same bureau whereas many people talked about the '70s when there was a hiring freeze and a shortage of staff, - bureaus would compete with each other and people would move between bureaus for promotions..*

TURNER: Yes. . . Actually, in 1974-'75 there was a reduction in force at USAID and I was impacted by that both because I was one of the more junior employees; and part-time and I think was probably temporary as well. And so, I was demoted and moved to a new office that was just beginning and had no staff; it had a director but no staff, called the Office of Women in Development.

## **Early days of the Women in Development Office and the WAO**

*Q: Which was set up right after the Percy Amendment.*

TURNER: It was set up right after the Percy Amendment in 1974, but it was part of the human resources department and part of the office of equal opportunity. I reported to the head of EEO, which sort of put you out of the mainstream of programming. But they didn't know what to do with women in development in 1974.

*Q: Right. And this was before Arvonne Fraser came to direct the office?*

TURNER: Yes,- Nira Long as the first WID Director. And I think she was the EEO director as well. She was very bright and very good. I liked working for her but I don't think she really knew international development programming in depth. It was very difficult to get the attention of the technical specialists and program staff to focus on the impact on women in our development projects. It was probably the most difficult job that I had in that people just did not accept it. At that time and certainly all through the early '70s in the State Department in particular and partially in USAID was pretty much a male dominated society. I would frequently be the only woman in the room in meetings. People would ask you to get coffee for them. I'm not kidding. In a professional meeting if a copy had to be made of anything I always had to make the copy. And you really had to decide whether you were going to get ticked off or let it pass.

*Q: How did you handle it?*

TURNER: Well, I usually got the coffee and just did my job. I decided that the best way to handle it was to do great work and to beat them in smarts. And, I'm not very prim and proper. If someone says a curse word it doesn't bother me. I mean, I don't necessarily like it, I don't encourage it, but some women would get very offended at those things. I just decided if you're going to play ball with the men you're going to have to put up with some things.

The other thing that I did was a joined the Women's Action Organization, WAO, which was nascent in the '70s. USIA (United States Information Agency) had a very strong WAO, and led in a law suit, along with State and USAID to challenge such rules as that, until 1971, woman who was married could not join the Foreign Service. And if she were single and then got married, she had to resign even though most of USAID men were married, often several times, that was irrelevant. Those rules were accepted and considered appropriate at the time and it took a lawsuit to make that change. There were a couple of really brave, wonderful women like Marilyn Zak and others who made that path. Whenever I give a presentation at USAID or with young people I always talk about that because I just think people don't realize how recently those issues for women were occurring - and I sometimes say I'm not talking about 1871; I'm talking about 1971.

*Q: Exactly.*

TURNER: Working a lot in the Middle East you would think you would face a lot of prejudice. When we opened the USAID program in Egypt I put in a lot of time in travelling; over about a three-year period I think I spent about 12 months in Egypt as a GS (General Services) employee. People would say isn't it difficult to work in the Middle East as a woman. And I said no, not at all. I had strong working relationships. Locally foreign women may be seen as a different category.

*Q: Right, a third sex.*

TURNER: Yes. But if I come in with a program, good ideas and respect for local needs, I'm respected, I'm treated well. The problem was the men in the US Embassy and in the USAID mission who were at the time having difficulty with women working in a difficult place like the Middle East. That was a much bigger issue for me.. Not that I would put myself in harm's way. There were certain countries you just had to be careful how you dressed and things like that, to be respectful of their ways...

*Q: So, you certainly did beat them with your smarts. But do you remember any policy changes? I know one of the things that WAO did was an analysis of how many women were in any senior position and it was indefensible, basically, when you see how few women got beyond the FS-3 or the GS-13. I know many people think that the work that WAO did just laying out the evidence made a huge difference.*

TURNER: I think it helped me in this sense. I do think at a point, especially when I was about a GS-13, and ready and able to move into other positions I do think some people considered me for positions because I was a woman and they didn't have any women in their operation. Because of the marriage issue there weren't that many women in the Foreign Service so the people coming back from overseas were largely men and as EEO policies became more prevalent, they looked for women that could also do what a Foreign Service officers could do. And there just weren't a whole lot of us. I don't mean to be overly negative; there were a number of men who helped me a great deal, gave me a lot of encouragement. John Alden was one in the health sector who was very supportive of women. He just gave me assignments that I was stunned that he would give me, and he trusted me to do them and he mentored me to do them. There were many, many male mentors along the way. But as a system one kind of felt alone.

A second thing that happened that in the 1980s WAO undertook a survey of sexual harassment. USAID was opposed to the survey, but I was working with Phyllis Dichter and Marilyn Zak, two very capable women, and there was just no stopping them. We put a survey together and sent it out to the WAO membership and asked that it get to all the women in USAID. Basically, just a simple survey as to whether they had ever been sexually harassed and by whom. By that I mean not a name but was it a co-worker, just someone on the street; there are several categories. And this was in the mid '80s, and the survey came back with something like about 70 percent of women saying yes, they had been harassed. And people at AID said this can't be true, it's just not possible. But I think that the WAO challenged them and after that USAID started to become more sensitive

about training on proper behavior of men and what women should do if this happens to them. And so, I think way before it became a big issue across the board in America I think we at WAO and USAID saw that as a concern, particularly when you're way out in Timbuktu in a small environment and you're sort of newbies and you're seen as challenging the promotion system. The Foreign Service is highly competitive and it's not just a matter of applying for a job with 10 other candidates, it's applying against hundreds of candidates for a promotion. And so, I think people saw some of these women as threatening the status quo – which it was.

*Q: I'm sure that's right. But as the agency became more eager to hire women this was something that they had to address..*

TURNER: They had to address, yes.

### **Starting the Egypt program**

*Q: Do you want to talk a little bit about starting up the Egypt program? I didn't realize you had spent so much time actually over there.*

TURNER: Yes. I think after Camp David, of course there was a huge budget for Egypt and for some other countries as well, Jordan, even the Tunisia budget went up. There were a number of countries in that area that got increased but Egypt had the Agency's largest budget since Vietnam, close to \$1 billion a year which even today is a lot of money. So, before I went to graduate school I started helping with Egypt start up -- recruiting staff for the field, putting together project designs and budgets. But when I returned from graduate school in '79 and they brought me back into the Near East Bureau into the health, population and nutrition division. And Egypt was my assignment although there were several of us at headquarters working on Egypt and at that point we had a big field team then of great health people. I'm pretty sure we had six Americans easily in the health and population division located in Cairo, and probably 10 or so FSNs (Foreign Service Nationals) in the health division.

One of the most rewarding things I did there was help formulate a focus for the health programs for Egypt. Globally, USAID had a focus on health systems but there was a lot of frustration with that because it's a long, long time before you see changes in the system and they are often hard to measure and report on. And so, we decided to shift the emphasis, with the help of the then S&T Bureau, to a few key high impact areas. When Peter McPherson became Administrator in the early 1980s, he focused on visible results to energize the health systems. Because immunizable diseases and dehydration were the major killers of children, we used the term the Twin Engines. Egypt was the perfect country for doing that because dehydration was the largest cause of death for children under five by far. And since we had a significant budget in the early 1980s, we were able to put together what became the world's largest ORT program and I think in retrospect one of the most successful. Many years later I was at a meeting at WHO and they had done an analysis which I wish I had saved which looked at declines in infant deaths over a decade and looked at main causes, and the drop in Egypt's infant and child mortality

over the time of that project was incredible. WHO gave a lot of credit to the US investment in oral rehydration program. Dehydration deaths have remained low over the years.

I also worked on designing a range of other projects on rural and urban health project and later to creating a community based medical school in Egypt which was the first one there. The way we worked then is it was a very intimate relationship between the headquarters team and the field team. The field team carried out the implementation, but they brought in most of us from headquarters to design the new projects and to do sort of the M&E on their progress. Only occasionally would we bring in outsider experts. I had many opportunities to spend lots of time in the field because when people went on home leave I would go out for the summer and replace them, live in their house, take care of their house and do the Mission work. And that was a great experience for us GS people who couldn't join the Foreign Service. And so, I learned how to work closely with local staff, communities and ministries of health on an everyday basis. The one minister who was there during most of the oral rehydration program even invited me to his daughter's birthday because I think I was probably the same age as her. And I remember the mission director said to me that he had gone to something one evening at the minister's house and the Minister asked where's Barbara and they said oh, she's back home in the US. He couldn't believe I didn't live in Cairo since he saw me a lot. It was quite common for all the bureaus to have a lot of support in the field from the GS staff; it wasn't unique to the Near East and South Asia.

Interestingly in the Middle East in the 1980s especially, you really mixed politics and health and that was one of the first times that I had seen that in such dramatic ways. But in Egypt, Jordan, Yemen everything was political, of course, and the budget was political, but it was 100 percent an ESF (Economic Support Fund) budget, there was no Development Assistance funding, but USAID managed it entirely. put together the budget every year, we presented to Congress, we also presented to the State Department, they had to clear what we did, but not to minute level.

*Q: So, it was a good relationship with State.*

TURNER: Yes – an informational and hands-off relationship. Occasionally the ambassador would go out and cut a ribbon and I'm pretty sure the USAID mission director sat in his staff meeting routinely but there was not a lot of State Department interference in the implementation. We gave them reports on what we were finding. If there were problems or issues obviously we gave them that kind of report. I remember being in Asyut just before Sadat was killed and there was major fighting in Asyut after Sadat was killed. We were doing a commodity import program for a new teaching hospital in Asyut, a rural area in Egypt. We were putting in equipment from bed pans to operating facilities into the whole hospital. Commodity inputs were mostly handled by another office, but I would go down to talk to the health people, the medical director of the hospital, etcetera. And so, I do remember being in Egypt and the State Department wanted to talk to me about Asyut and learn more about who was who and things like that. I'd never talked to them before at all. They'd never asked what we were doing down

there that I knew of. But it wasn't contentious at all; they were really interested. The head of the medical school was a surgeon and well-known and well-liked, a very pro-American.

*Q: It was a time in general it was okay to be an American there.*

TURNER: It was. We got on the train and traveled all over. I probably didn't go places by myself but maybe a local Egyptian would go with me or Pam Johnson, who spoke Arabic; she was another GS employee from the USAID/W health office that came out a lot. It was safer to go on the train than to drive just because the roads were not good and drivers drove very fast and there were accidents. But we just wouldn't think anything of roaming all over the country and everyone welcomed us with open arms. I never saw any real resistance there to the USAID programs. We worked side by side.

*Q: Any evidence of religious fundamentalism?*

TURNER: At the universities, you would seldom see a woman with even a head scarf on; a few but never in full hajib. I remember a scene I saw in Tunisia which was a little more advanced because of so much French influence. There was what was probably a grandmother in a full headdress, probably a mother in a scarf and a daughter -- all of which were adults, not babies -- in a mini skirt.

*Q: This was "evolution"!*

TURNER: This is evolution, yes. It was common back then. So, it was a very different world. I was shocked many, many years later to go back to one of the universities and see almost everyone in a head scarf. It really did change a lot.

*Q: Absolutely.*

### **Programming challenges in Egypt**

*So, you were talking about politics and programming and I wonder about corruption or at least the skewing programs to favor particular neighborhoods or groups. Did you encounter it in Egypt and if so how did you deal with it?*

TURNER: They certainly had a different set of rules. I'm not sure it was corruption; but the auditors would identify anything not up to US standards as corruption. One of the things, for instance, we did a lot of construction. The ministry of health policy was they had about 10 companies they had pre-screened. Some of them may have had family relations in the ministry or at high levels. But they were pre-screened, so, the next project that came up the next one in line got and it was spread out very evenly and they thought this was very fair. And some new company could get in by making an application and the ministry would consider it. But these were people they felt they trusted and knew. That was their system. USAID could not handle that system. We had to have an open competition where everyone bid, and the lowest price had to count, and the Egyptians had

a very hard time with that and so they kept trying to manipulate it. In the end, I don't know whether we got around it or not.

On the plus side USAID had a much larger staff to manage its programs. So, working on a health project I had an engineer who probably spent half time with me, would go out to the sites, would check themselves. They would really watch the construction and I would watch the technical program design of whether the flow was going to be right for the patients and there was a door that closed for the women and there were things like that. They would look at something different. So, we had architects and engineers on the staff full-time there that we got to be friends with; we traveled together and we worked and they helped look at the bids and look at those things to make sure that what we paid for we got. Do we know where every penny went? I don't think we followed it the same. I think we did a lot more of what today would be called like performance based; you'd get this far- for the plans you'd get this much money for the first foundation, if it passes the test you get this much money.

We also had written agreements with the government of Egypt and with every government that we had and it was a Project Agreement (ProAg) and it would describe in two paragraphs the project and it would identify a rough estimated budget and it would identify it as subject to congressional approval in future years and parliamentary approval in future years and it would say that the government of Egypt would do A, B, C, D and USAID would do X, Y, Z. We would agree up front that the government of Egypt had to produce the land, they might have had to produce a certain portion of the funding for the building; there were a number of things that they might have had to put full-time engineers on it. There was a whole list of things that they would agree to do and that had real financial value and we put it in writing, particularly because if another minister came onboard they had to see that this is what had been approved and it was usually approved by both the minister of health, if it was a health project which I was usually working on, but also the ministry of finance. And so, it was a government of Egypt document not a one minister, he's gone document. And those, I think, helped us deal with corruption in that way. But we also had auditors. There was a group of auditors that lived there.

But I don't think that we passed a lot of cash. We did have a cash transfer program but it was definitely- results based – results first. It was not just building up the government. It got dicey after a number of years in Egypt because some of the results weren't there.

### **Congressional interest in the Egypt program**

*Q: Well, there's a flip side that I hope you can talk about because I suspect you had a great deal to do with Congress at the time, not only because you were immersed in the program, but you were based in Washington and it was a political program so there were lots of people on the Hill who were very interested. Can you talk a little bit about AID-congressional relations when it comes to Egypt?*

TURNER: Well, in Egypt, one, because it was a friendly place and a pleasant place and it wasn't that hard to get to, there was a CODEL every week. And the best CODELs were

the staff DELs; the staffers really- most of the staffers on our committees had been to the country, had met Egyptians and had seen things. That made it easier to work with. I think when people don't know the local situation and they look for utopia it makes it harder to explain. I remember once putting together something for the minister; we were presenting was a timetable for this ORT program. We had a detailed timetable, this is going to happen, this is going to happen, this is going to happen, and he sat back at one point and said you know, Barbara, we've been doing it the same way for 7,000 years, ...

*Q: The pharaohs knew something.*

TURNER: And you want us to change it in the next seven weeks? I think you need to revisit your timetable. And he was right, of course. There was a medium in between 7,000 and seven weeks but I think because more people had that exposure that was helpful. We did a lot of Hill visits and a lot of the more junior staff, I mean, it wasn't all just the mission director that went to the Hill.

*Q: Okay, so in part because there were lots of people who were interested in the Egypt program you had regular communication with the Hill.*

TURNER: Absolutely. Routine. Yes. I mean, sometimes people would even know that you went on a field trip and ask you to come up after you came back from the field trip or ask someone to come up and I think that was a common thing. Also, certainly the mission director was in town. But when the director of the mission's health office was in town, he would go up to the Hill. It wasn't just the mission director that went up and talked about things.

*Q: Over the course of the time that you worked on the Egypt program it obviously became more political and there were times when Congress wanted to reduce funding or the programs weren't moving at the speed that we wanted. Were there any attempts to totally restructure? I know there had been discussions about possibly setting up endowments or something that allowed more hands-off management.*

TURNER: Yes. Even in my head it's hard to remember what year what came. I do think once the program grew, AID believed you had to have staff to support the program - not only a good staff there in Egypt but in Washington to back them up, support them, and fill in. And so, clearly there was a point at which we asked whether we could continue to do these types of projects; that was discussed a lot. And there were some cash transfer type programs put together which were based on policy reforms and those were okay but it was often hard to measure the policy reforms and too much criticism of those types of programs to make them the whole program. So, yes, they looked at a lot of different programs options. I recall putting together an endowment program to support community-based medical schools. Egypt had 11 or 12 medical schools but they were all very didactic; no hands-on at all, very little focus on the community. Egyptian doctors wanted to be specialists, they didn't want to go to the rural areas or the field when they graduated. Public health was not in there at all and some of the Egyptians wanted to start community-based medical schools but we thought well, we can't get into the bottomless

pit of a medical school. Could we do this through an endowment or something. We didn't get good response on the Hill to that because they said every medical school in the United States of American wants an endowment and to give one to an Egyptian one will have them all knocking down our doors, which was a fair argument. So, we did look at a lot of different things like that but none of them seemed to really pan out. It was just such an enormous amount of money that the baskets were going to be too big to avoid political concern if projects got a lot more support even though they got audit problems. The auditors were kind of brutal and at one point in those days I said to an auditor that this is yellow journalism.

*Q: A gotcha mentality.*

TURNER: It is a gotcha mentality and a lot of it was petty stuff. I mean, they used to always get us for the license plates. This is a \$30 million program; license plates are sort of not that relevant to the real corruption issues. And I recall at one point someone said to me they thought there was some money exchanging hands in one of our programs so I did call in the auditors. They went right to the people who had alerted me and the auditors exposed the whistleblowers and everyone shut up and they found nothing. I didn't think they were all that effective, to be honest with you. I think they got better over the years to be fair to them but they would write outraged comments in the headline in the report. I remember one that I worked on that complained that every year the program has added up to \$20 million a year, as if it was an outrage. The original design was \$20 million, and it was incrementally funded but the headline made it sound like it was a cost overrun every year. That wasn't it at all. And so, there were some unfair things.

And everyone looked for different ways to do programs because the program was under attack all the time. Many years later a group of us put together a report that said -- the Egyptians always wanted to be like Israel because Israel got a check. There were about four of us working with the Assistant Administrator and we were sworn to secrecy; we put together a piece of paper that suggested that we turn the Egypt program into cash but for real reforms, serious reforms, an NGO law that authorized them to organize, etcetera. I can't remember all of them but there were maybe five really big things that would make a difference. And we would transfer the cash incrementally so if they do the first one they get half of the cash or a third of the cash, etcetera. State Department went ballistic. It went nowhere; it went nowhere.

*Q: Why?*

TURNER: The equivalency with Israel, I think, was what bothered the State Department. And we felt, working in Egypt, you could see things happening under the Mubarak regime that just weren't right, even little things I worked on. Oral rehydration at that time was mainly in a liter-sized packet that UNICEF had designed and distributed everywhere but in Egypt people didn't have liter-sized containers. They had the equivalent of an eight-ounce container, a glass really. And so, if you poured too much into a glass it could be deadly for an infant. And so we designed a smaller ORS packet for Egypt and we put it in Arabic, of course, and it had an Arabic woman and baby on the front with the veil

and the UNICEF packets didn't have that. So, we recommended it to the Egyptian government, and it was very successful and they could produce it and distribute it, and we said there's a need for this all over the Middle East and in every Arabic speaking country in the world, even in Indonesia. Why don't we privatize it and have it really move out? The Egyptians would not privatize it. They really had a chance to do that and they would not do that.

*Q: Yes, they were so slow.*

TURNER: So, slow with that. And even the mission director, everyone, we put a little business plan together; it really could have easily happened in a non-controversial area they could have been real leaders. They wouldn't do it.

Other problems you could see. Early on, some of the Egyptian universities because there were some good universities, got into computer programming and they could have become the center of computer programming for the Middle East, for Arabic-speaking countries: they were one of the few places doing Arabic programming. Instead, the government limited internet access. It's very sad to see, for those of us who worked there, to see there was a lot of potential but either the leadership banned it or the Israeli-Middle East relationships were just too sensitive for the US to press the policy dialogue any harder. I'm not saying people didn't do policy dialogue, it was discussed for sure, and I know at least on ORT when I was close to the mission director, the ambassador, people took it up. But they just didn't use any other leverage to make those kinds of things happened, which could have opened up a lot more. It is one of the complexities of foreign assistance –when you are on the ground you see a lot more of the challenges and unintended consequences. It is not black and white.

*Q: And this was early Mubarak days?*

TURNER: But it just got worse over time.

### **Changes in project management with budget cuts**

*Q: Please. I know you had a long engagement on Egypt and I'm trying to remember if during the time that you worked on Egypt was ever any retrenchment, any budget cuts or serious fallout?*

TURNER: There certainly were staff budget cuts. And there were some projects that were turned into cash transfers. Also, some of the big programs that the host government did, such as the Alexandria water treatment plant, were reduced and the rest of the Middle East got cut back a lot. Each country had an earmark that people in AID probably would have been happy to cut back. That's when we cut back the Tunisia program, for instance. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, we had at one point a large and substantial and fabulous relationship with the government of Tunisia and in fact the president's wife was very pro-women and it was one of the first countries that asked to have us look at

gender in every project. Morocco had a big program. Yemen had a very big program. Jordan had a big program. Jordan didn't get cut back as much but they all got cut back.

*Q: So, you had to learn, for Egypt, how to manage large amounts of money with fewer and fewer staff.*

TURNER: Absolutely.

*Q: And that's probably the time that you started using outside contractors.*

TURNER: Absolutely, yes. Roughly by the mid-1980s, even the project design got done by contractors. USAID cut Washington staff back, especially in technical areas, and there wasn't any reserve to support the field. Many of us became experts in writing a scope of work and monitoring a contract because contractors were going to do what they think they need to do unless you collaborate and direct them. And so, you really learn very quickly that consultants are only as good as you make them and you need to stay on top of them. But not everybody learned that and there were a lot of wasted time and money. Not by fraud but just by non-communications or maybe we miscalculated how long it would take to get something resolved so we force the contractors to shortchange work. We all became contract managers. But financially as well. Earlier we had teams that included technical, program officers who managed budgets (not accounting but planning). Now often only one or two technical staff has to also manage the budget every step of the way to make sure there was enough money left at the end, that they didn't come back and say we can't finish because there's no money left. That was a big concern and in fact, I remember having to go to contract trainings, which I didn't really want to do. It was at that point I had my Master's degree in health, I had been in the health field, I loved it, I wanted to go to a course at Harvard on monitoring indicators or something, but I didn't want to go to the contractor course. But at that point we all had to go through training for contract management. I think that remains a serious problem today.

*Q: The shift was from being a technical officer to being a technical manager. I would say part of it was because of reduced direct hire staff and part of it was, especially the growing budget in health especially. Do you agree with that or were there other things going on?*

TURNER: Yes, that was it. When I first started in the Near East, but every bureau was like this, you had something called a PD office, Project Development, and you had a technical office and we usually sat right next to each other, right across the hall and we would both go out on projects. So, the technical office would focus on mostly the technical structure and the PD officer would focus on the budget, the timetable, when do you have to order the vehicles to be there in time for the project to start, etcetera, and so we always went out as a team that way. Because of staff shortages that basically stopped and some of the program development people moved into infrastructure projects or even environment where we didn't have technical staff or things like that and picked up a little bit more of the technical work and the technical people picked up the management work. And so, after that you'd have to go out by yourself. And it was really accelerated in the

1990s with further staff cuts and larger programs like Eastern Europe and the former Soviet programs being added to the Agency but with no new staff added.

*Q: You had fewer project designers?*

TURNER: We had people like Ted Lustig and Sy Taubenblatt who were masterminds at structuring project management and PERT charts and logical thinking of how to deliver a program, which most of us would never learn in public health school and working with them was really a great, great learning experience. But they abolished those positions. Many of those people had started out as loan officers in the days USAID had a large loan portfolio so they knew how to manage finances and project development and those positions did not continue. In fact, that's probably why I decided to leave USAID in 1989.

### **Joining the Rockefeller Foundation**

*Q: Just got tired of it?*

TURNER: By 1990, I thought I was doing too much management and I felt I wasn't enjoying the public health work enough. And my husband was going to school at NYU and commuting back down to DC and I said you know, I'm going to go up to New York with him. So, I applied for a job and I got a job at the Rockefeller Foundation, which had a large domestic and international health program in their health division. Again, fortunate for me, when I went to resign, and I had warned people about it but when I found a job the person who was the head of my bureau then said look, why don't you just take a leave of absence; we'd like you to come back to AID at some point. You may not like it up there or whatever and you can go on just a leave without pay for long-term. It's truly a leave of absence, they don't pay your 401k or even your health benefits, you must pay yourself, etc., because there's no salary to deduct from.

*Q: Is was open ended-?*

TURNER: It had a two-year limitation. So, I got to the Rockefeller Foundation, very prestigious. I had a lovely office on like the 26<sup>th</sup> floor overlooking the Empire State Building and when you took a trip you always went business class and a town car would pick you up at your place and take you to the airport and bring you back. And you had an expense account.

*Q: Yes. You felt like an adult.*

TURNER: Really. At one point, I was called in by the vice president that I reported to and said you know Barbara, you're not using your expense account. He said we don't have too many government people that have worked here, you're probably only the second one in recent years but we had the same problem with the other person. We expect you to use your expense account. We expect you to be taking people out and schmoozing, having dinner, building relationships so that we establish an understanding-

because when we give people money we don't monitor in the same auditing way that the government does; We do it by a relationship. So, I said yes, sir, I think I can learn that lesson.

So, it was a wonderful, wonderful job but I wasn't really that happy. Everyone was a PhD there, and there were no managers. They would give me an assignment and say okay, we have a board meeting in three months. You have to prepare this analysis, give a recommendation to us and then to the board. And I'd be finished in three or four days, maybe three weeks at most for the polishing and I'd say what am I going to do for the rest-? It was much deeper analysis and research. All the meetings were very much into the latest cutting-edge technologies for family planning; they developed a number of the contraceptives. For instance, the implant was developed partially through people at Rockefeller working in labs and with major labs. Turns out I really missed the management and implementation side of things. I missed the sense of accomplishment looking at activity on the ground. Because really when you gave people money they had to do it and report back to you, there was much more investment in discussions up front and less engagement in the actual implementation. You didn't oversee and micromanage what they did. Of course, most of the people you gave money to have demonstrated their expertise. And I also found that my reputation was important so that if you gave people money, if you decided to support a grant and it went south, you had to defend yourself to the Board as to how that happened and why and why you made that decision, etcetera. So, it wasn't about so much the audit as it was about your own judgment and personal reputation. It was very interesting. But I found that I really missed the integration of the management and the technical.

I also discovered that I was not a researcher. My husband is more of an academic, so he can be quiet in a room for hours on end he can read a whole book in one day and not be remotely bored with that part of it. I'm not that kind of a person. I need the interaction and I need to talk to people and I need to bounce things off people. So, just being in a quiet, lovely office with the door closed, I wasn't happy.

*Q: And that was a surprise to you?*

TURNER: It was definitely not what I expected. I was surprised how much I missed the USAID work. My husband said- once or twice I came home and it was clear I was not loving it and I didn't know why. And he said you need to see a psychiatrist because you're making more money, we had a lovely little, little but lovely apartment right in midtown Manhattan, walked to work, great office, great benefits. I mean, it doesn't get any better than this, you know. We liked New York. I stayed for 2 years. I did eventually find better roles for me at RF. They were putting together a children's vaccine initiative which I think resulted eventually in GAVI (The Global Alliance for Vaccines Initiative). And we were partners with UNICEF, Jim Grant and Jim Sherry there and the World Health Organization in putting this together and it was a team and I became the team manager. So, you had all these high thinking people that you had to pull together, but I had to help them get it into what could we do with this. And so that turned out to be a lot of fun and built on my strengths. But at the end of the two years my husband and I just

decided to come back to DC. At that point, I had applied for jobs at AID, and I applied for one with Ann Van Dusen in the health office and she accepted it and I was excited about going back to the health office and thought that that's what I was going to do and reinvigorate my health management career. And that was in December of 1991.

### **Return to USAID and a brief stint in the S&T Office of Health**

*Q: I think I do remember having to persuade you that this was a real job., I thought I was so lucky to get you to come back.*

TURNER: Oh, thank you. I thought I was lucky to work with you and to work in the central bureau because I thought I would have more focus on health at that point but also interacting, I thought I would be good at interacting with the bureaus since I'd had so much field work. And I think that there's kind of a myth about Civil Service people, that they don't really have a field orientation. And that particularly becomes a problem in the central bureaus because they don't have as much opportunity to travel as the people in the regional bureaus do. Budgets are divided differently, there's a vested interest in the field wanting their bureau to come out to support them because then we'd come back and review the budget and help it get approved within the Bureau. I really wanted to spend some time in different regions like Africa where I hadn't spent much time. So, that was attractive to me. I think that the central bureaus also had really a great team at that point and we had anthropologists, we had technical people who'd become a much more diverse operation than researchers.

*Q: I think slowly there was a drift of technical people to the central offices and it was not just a drift; I think there were a series of leadership decisions that that's the direction the agency was supposed to go, and I think Peter McPherson felt that way and certainly Brian Atwood later.*

TURNER: Right, later.

*Q: Regional bureaus didn't particularly care for that but it did make for a strong cohort in the central office..*

TURNER: Through several reorganizations, they change the names of the central technical functions – TAB, R&D, S&T - a lot of times but they had become more pragmatic also. In the mid-1980s to 1990s, we had a centrally driven child survival strategy, which was a very focused and implementation-oriented strategy and had very clear results to measure against and lessons learned, to share of high value to people in the field. And I think that strategy turned around the view of the role central technical bureaus could play. Because earlier it had been focused much more on research. Some of that research like international agricultural centers was Nobel Prize type work but it seemed long term and remote to the people struggling in the field for immediate results. You couldn't see the everyday impact on it in your country in Africa. That is a real issue

for international development and foreign assistance – there is both a short term and a long term set of needs.

I think in what Administrator Peter McPherson did in the 1980s is tried to balance that short and long term to highlight more of those high visibility activities especially in health and population. Those programs offered measurable results and were emphasized as the superstars.

Population had always focused on measurable results. The Population agenda had to struggle from its early days to get itself seen as a part of the USAID development agenda and so they had to be very results oriented. They started from the beginning having a key set of program indicators. You could go anywhere in the world and people knew what contraceptive prevalence meant statistically even if they'd never spent a day in a public health school. And so, they established a set of indicators and things that people understood and the health team, I think, adapted a similar kind of tactic as well. The Child Survival annual reports to Congress were very professional and probably one of the first times we were able really to show understandable results in near real time, as near in those days as we could get to real time kind of information. So, it brought a lot of positive Agency, Congressional, NGO and public attention to the health programs.

### **Building programs in the former Soviet Union**

*Q: Well, I know you lasted about two months. We were sad to see you go but the next phase was a really important one in your career and certainly for the agency.*

TURNER: Yes. Well, in December 1991, I was very happy working in the S&T Bureau and I was connecting with the Africa Bureau and getting ready for some trips and things. At the same time, the Soviet Union was collapsing around us at that time. It actually had started collapsing in the fall of '91 and in Eastern Europe even a little before that with Poland breaking away. And it wasn't clear at all, particularly in the New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union, what our role would be. But all of the sudden one day, my boss, Ann Van Dusen, the head of the S&T Bureau Health Office then, got a call from the head of the S&T bureau saying we're going to be putting together a program in the Soviet countries, in Russia and the other new independent state, and we need a task force together. I'm pretty sure they wanted Ann to do this because she- I believe that very few people with USAID who spoke Russian. Ann recommended me for what was supposed to be a short 3-month assignment to pull together a task force, not even a bureau but a task force to help USAID put together a response to what was happening in the former Soviet Union new independent states. And there was going to be a director of the task force, Malcolm Butler, but he still overseas and would be for many months and so I was to take the lead in an acting basis. It was pretty exciting from the first day. I'm pretty sure people don't remember it but literally- I think I still have a "Time" magazine that had people in Russia standing in line, in food lines with no food on store shelves and USAID had actually already started in, I think, late '91 a food aid program to Central Asia but they sent food out to the Russian Urals as well because the Soviet system had so collapsed that they couldn't even get food in the winter-

*Q: Potatoes were rotting in the field.*

TURNER: Right, rotting in the fields and at the train stations as the distribution system broke down economically. And of course, because of the communist economic system the farmers didn't own the potatoes. They produced them and took them to the train stations, but that was it. The farmers got their food and a small stipend and their health care and their housing all taken care of but were not a part of the business and distribution side and they weren't their potatoes. So, when they delivered them to the train station they just piled up there and if the Soviet trains didn't come to take them they just rotted with people nearly starving in other part of the Soviet Union. It was a stark and a little bit of an interesting example of some of the advantages of capitalism, that farmers in a country like the U.S. probably would have got in their cars and their trucks and put the potatoes in and delivered them themselves and gotten them to the clients and collected the money. In the other countries, even Ukraine but certainly Central Asia many people, even government officials had never been out of their country except to Moscow. They had never gone out to the West at all. Lots of Russians technocrats had gone to the West to conferences, some even for education. There had been a lot of people from other countries brought in for training in Russian universities but for the most part in Kazakhstan and places like that little outside contact. Early on in response to the humanitarian crisis, we put a USAID person on every one of the planes that went out to deliver food and one person said, when they came back from Kazakhstan, that the Kazakhs came up to them and said that they'd never met an American and they never thought they would on friendly terms. So, it was pretty heady stuff with that going on.

*Q: So, was there a mission there when you started, or did you literally have to start from scratch?*

TURNER: When I started there was a DART (disaster assistance) team there; Fred Cuny and Dayton Maxwell, two of USAID's best disaster assistance specialists, had a team of people already in Moscow. They had gone out because of the emergency-

*Q: this was a rapid response team?.*

TURNER: It was a rapid response team and it was temporary. It was not considered an AID mission. They basically did the food aid. So, the first thing I was asked to do in 1992 was to go to Moscow and get Embassy approval for a long-term USAID mission. Congress had appropriated an emergency budget for programs in Russia and the NIS and USAID and State were at that time also working on a longer-term Freedom Support Act to support the transition with economic development assistance. We would need staff in the field to do this. There was also the need for USAID to figure out how to configure its HQ bureaus to accommodate this new program. The Task Force was essentially independent and reporting to the S&T AA, Rich Bissel. The Task Force had to work with both the Europe and Asia Bureau which housed the program in central Europe as well as the OFDA disaster teams working in the NIS – with the usual differences in how to do things. In earlier assignments, I had worked with both so I had some sense of how to

bring them together and I got good support from the AAs and especially from Dr. Bissel when there were disputes. I had one large room assigned with the Europe people and we put together a plan for a USAID mission – about 8 to 10 people initially. The DART team saw great need and they liked working with the host countries so they were also pushing for a larger presence located initially in Moscow. On the other hand, the State Department didn't want a disaster team there; they wanted to move away from disaster as did the Russians and try to regularize and they did not want a permanent USAID Mission set up. USAID does not have authority to just send staff to a new post, only the Ambassador can approve that through what is called the NSDD-38 process – National Security Decision Directive -- which is how you get official positions approved in the field. And in those days, like today, there is a tit for tat with Russia that we could only have so many US diplomats in country at any time because they could only have so many Russian diplomats in the US, and it would require us to raise the number of diplomats here; or fire some people in the embassy or move them out, which was not a very popular topic within the State Department. So, it was very tough set of negotiations.

I must say, AID was also in transition. There was an Administrator there who new and not well plugged in – Ronald Roskens. And there was an election in '92 so he was a short term. We got very little attention from the Administrator on the program; it was quite shocking. We got a lot of attention from the S&T, OFDA and Europe Bureaus to help put together a program but not from the Administrator's office. This was an issue because clearly the soviet countries were a high priority for the State Department and White House and they needed our USAID input. But things were moving very fast and funding was available so in some sense it was good not to have too much internal bureaucracy.

To start, I had to deal with the DART team because they wanted to stay. The relationship with the Russian technocrats was great – the Russians and people in the NIS countries embraced us with open arms. And you would walk down the street and people- if they would hear you talking, they would hear English and come up and talk to you. And the reformers working in government were incredible. I mean, they were just working so hard and wanting your ideas and wanting to understand what a stock market was and how we did so many things in our democracy and economy. It was just heady and invigorating. And so, we said to the DART team, we're going to have to turn this into a USAID mission. And I had to go and negotiate in the US Embassy for new position. The Embassy staff pushed back hard -- they did not want a USAID presence in the Embassy.

*Q: The embassy didn't want an AID mission?*

TURNER: -Exactly. Frankly, in my opinion I think we still had all mostly Cold Warriors there. Many people in the embassy told me they had never left the embassy during their tour. They read the newspapers, met with Russian officials, attended conferences, etc. Of course, they went home every day but they lived in a compound and they really did not go and meet with the Russian population. They were very worried that the Russians were going to follow me and tap our phones and know everything I was saying. I said good, because we want them to know what USAID is doing – we want to do press releases about the food aid and the plans for a longer-term development relationships. And people

in Washington were writing the Freedom Support Act so that there would be a budget, Congressional interest, and a lot of consultations; it wasn't a secret. But the embassy folks said well, if you come here you can't sit in the embassy; you have to sit in another building. They put us in what they call the "change building" which is the building the workers on the new Embassy building used to change clothes and store construction materials. At time, there was this shell of a new US Embassy sitting there shuttered because it had been bugged and the diplomats couldn't move in – eventually it was torn down. Initially, although we had diplomatic passports, the Embassy didn't want USAID to use the Commissary. The Europe Bureau at State was just not used to having USAID around.

*Q: All eight of you.*

TURNER: Yes, right. Well, I guess we'd have contractors coming and going. We said fine to get started. The USAID DART team people knew how to get things done and so we would go out to these little "stolovayas" which are small cafeterias that existed in most government buildings and schools. There was no choice on the menu -- you have meat, potatoes, maybe a salad and a drink, water or milk and maybe soup sometimes. So, you could go in there and for 15 cents you could get a hot meal. So, we went down the street and ate with the Russians. McDonald's wasn't there yet and very few restaurants especially for lunch. Because we had no office furniture, we went out one weekend to a large flea market on the edge of Moscow which at that time had just about everything because the economy was so bad and people were selling their goods. We went out and bought some tables, kitchen tables and chairs and I even bought curtains which everybody thought was a joke and we brought back to the office, the warehouse, and put in the tables and chairs and curtains. We had brought out laptops, back then we did have laptops and I think we had an MR satellite dish; and we set up our offices. And the Embassy director of administration or one of the senior people came over the next day and said where did all this furniture come from; it's not government issue, I'm not going to reimburse you for this; we won't approve your vouchers to reimburse. And of course, the whole thing probably cost of \$20, \$25 so we said okay, it's our donation to the cause. Of course, eventually many months later, we got offices and furniture but there was lot of work to get done before that time.

I also had a very hard time getting in to see the US Ambassador on my first trip. Ultimately the Ambassador is the one to decide on the staff approval. I was there for more than a week in lower level meetings, and I hadn't been able to get into see the Ambassador and so I went up myself to his secretary (I had been a secretary and I knew how they worked and how important they were; she was a good FSN American secretary, of course) and I said to her.. I'm here, at some point I'm supposed to see the Ambassador. I know he's really busy, can you give me some time in the next few days. While we were talking the Ambassador -- Bob Strauss --came by and said oh, this is a new person what are you working on -- because there weren't that many new people going out to Moscow. And I introduced myself and he said absolutely, get on the calendar right away. So, like the next day I was in there and of course he had the DCM (Deputy Chief of Mission) and the admin director in there as well.

*Q: Probably fuming.*

TURNER: Fuming that I was in there without their permission setting up the meeting, of course. But since the Ambassador had called it and his secretary set it up so they couldn't cancel it. Strauss, he was a well know person; while he had been appointed by President Bush to be Ambassador.

-Bush appointed him as US Ambassador to Soviet Moscow. Earlier he had been Chairman of the National Democratic Committee. He was a lawyer and a businessman so when we talked about the fact that USAID wanted to privatize companies, that we wanted to set up a stock market, that we wanted to look at the health care system and see what we could do there, especially to maintain immunization records, that we would work with the farm system, looking at the agriculture system to see if we couldn't privatize that. At one point, he said "hot damn, this is exactly what we need here." Now, I think the embassy people were ready to fall off their chairs and were quite irritated but then I was able to say well, we need your NSDD-38 approval, here's what we're proposing; you have the right to determine whether this is the right number or the wrong number but this is what we're proposing. Of course, a cable had gone out in advance saying that we need this and Barbara Turner is coming to discuss it with the embassy, so the Embassy team knew I had HQ approval for the discussions. And he basically turned to his staff and said yes, this is what we need; let's go. And so, they approved it and we got an NSDD-38 clearance. In a few months, we had a team on the ground.

*Q: Did that end the resistance from the embassy? I mean, did things improve?*

TURNER: Things improved but it didn't end the resistance. There were lots of people in the embassy who did not like that USAID staff moved around the country, had lots of contacts with Russians and consultants coming in, etc. And a lot of the embassy people still had a lot of suspicions of different people, probably for good reasons but when you go in to do development we wanted to change their minds by doing things differently and there were Russian champions there that were very pleased to work with us. We weren't doing anything without Russian counterparts in government. So, there was tension but over time there were a lot of State staff that accepted it and went along. To get set up, USAID needed to train people and so we did put people in Russian language, but we couldn't wait for everyone to learn Russian. Once we got NSDD-38 approval people were saying when are they arriving? Of course, we had to find housing, all of that, which wasn't easy. We designed a course with FSI for USAID staff being posted in the former soviet states; a sort of area studies but completed in two weeks.

*Q: A crash course.*

TURNER: A crash course in Russian, introductory Soviet history, culture, etcetera. And it was great. It worked out really well and helped. And at that point we'd selected all eight or 10 people and they were all in the training, plus some of us from headquarters staff that would be on the task force. So, by September of '92 we had people on the way,

starting to arrive full-time, we had left some of the DART people there and sent out some teams in the interim. Similarly, in the other countries of the NIS, we had to set up USAID Missions. We could not afford Missions in each of the NIS countries but set up 4 regional posts in the other countries. For those countries, there had never been an Embassy so we came in with the new Embassy staff and relations were much smoother.

USAID had a very hard time absorbing all of this reassignment of staff and expenses. Even after we had agreement from OMB and Congress on where funds would come from USAID could not move as fast in posting and relocating people as we needed. What we ended up doing because we could not get all our people processed, cleared, housing, all of the things that we needed to do, we actually set up our own little HR operation and we had an Admin Officer with signing authority for travel and assignment orders and expenditures. I think the first person was Pam White and the second person was Jerry Jordan and they were crackerjack administrators. Because we put language in the funding legislation called “notwithstanding authority” that allowed us set up our own procedures and not have to follow approved processes. We worked in collaboration with HR but we did the work ourselves to document and recruit (mostly internally) a significant headquarters and field team, train them and get them ready to go to the field. We had to hire and clear local FSNs, negotiate salaries with those FSNs. We had to find housing for US staff in the field – not easy in some of the countries. And things that would normally take a year or two, we had to do it in a few weeks or months. So, we actually set up our own min-agency, wrote our own orders, our own personnel assignments forms. It worked wonderfully without the bureaucracy.

*Q: You also used personal services contractors, right?*

TURNER: We did use some personal services contractors in several ways in HQ and the field. For instance, the Pakistan mission was closing at that time, which was one of the bigger programs. And we had a number of people coming out of that who really knew programming. We also had a number of FSNs actually there and we hired several of the FSNs on a contract -- because they weren't going to be Russian FSNs, obviously -- on a contract to go to Russia with us and help train Russians on how USAID works. That turned out to be a big task as many Russians did not actually know what a contract was. There was no private contract law in the Soviet Union and so that was a sort of an anomaly to them. They didn't even really know what a budget was because most had never actually managed money. Moscow sent them what they thought they would need to do their jobs.

We also initially had to find some Russian speakers and that is where the Personal Service Contracts really helped us until we could get our staff fully trained. Very few in USAID had Russian language skills, and if they did have Russian they probably hadn't used it in a long time although there were a few Ukrainian-Americans and Russian-Americans internally. So, we had to go out and find some personal services contractors to come in who spoke the language and could work with us and get out there and get us going. We were putting together a billion-dollar program and 10 on the ground people couldn't put together a billion-dollar program.

*Q: I'd like you to talk a little bit about the role of the coordinator and also Congress*

TURNER: State Department was the main drafter with Congress of the Freedom Support Act and the main negotiator. The White House appointed an NIS Coordinator at that point – because of the high national security priority of the program and also because it was an early US Government wide effort with roles for a number of USG agencies beside USAID. The first coordinator was Richard Armitage. He had a mostly military background but he had been US Ambassador in the Philippines and Malcolm Butler, the first task force director had been the USAID Mission Director in the Philippines so they had worked together, which was good, because Rich, is very demanding to work with. He has a can-do attitude which was really helpful but not a big support of the Agency. It was not a let's study this for a while before we do it; it was why didn't you do it yesterday attitude. But we had to work with him and he definitely had a very disciplined style. He brought in his own people and there was a lot more oversight. USAID hated that and it made our jobs tougher, but I saw the importance of it in the national security atmosphere of that time. I recognized that the relationship with Russia and NIS countries is way beyond USAID. And I think that was one of the points where I think we realized, at least some of us, you can't be entirely independent from the State Department. Maybe you can in Benin but you can't be in Russia and Ukraine; it just isn't going to be possible. We had a lot more freedoms in Central Asia, for instance, because it was of less interest to the State Department although Kazakhstan was of pretty high interest for them in relation to nuclear issues. But you just had to accept that and try to work with them through that. But even then, I have to say, we did our own budget. They didn't give us the budget. We put together the budget. They approved it or disapproved it. Implementation could be difficult as State is not an implementing or budgeting organization.

The one thing that I think made it the most difficult was not as much the coordinator's office as it was the other agencies. Because Russia was a developed country in essence and it was very exciting and there was money being allocated by Congress for the programs, every agency in the USG wanted to participate -- the Department of Agriculture and I don't mean the food aid side of it; the regular Agriculture people wanted to get involved in the farming; Energy, Water, Health, Education. It was difficult for State to manage.

*Q: And the White House may have even encouraged it.*

TURNER: Oh, the White House encouraged it, yes, because they wanted a high level of USG attention on the reforms underway.

Armitage was appointed by Bush, I think, initially but then Clinton kept him on for some months into his Presidency. So, both parties agreed it was a whole of government effort. So, even under Clinton it was encouraged it. I don't think anyone felt let's just give everything to USAID and not worry about it. It just wasn't going to happen. So, USAID people had a hard time adjusting from where we worked in Africa, which not many others in USG agencies cared about except us and ambassadors, but their career didn't

ride on it. It was uncontrollable because these were all Cabinet secretaries and they wanted some of the funds. And some really just didn't know how to work in these countries. For instance, the Department of Agriculture at one point was doing research on a new hoe for one of the countries. When I got their report, and shared it with the Coordinator's office, they said well we need them to engage. For those of us at USAID there were often frustrations with the learning curve for the other agencies. I said well, this is the price that you pay for it; they're researching a new farm hoe. Obviously, there were also some good collaborations such as with the Energy Department around the nuclear power plants and Chernobyl. So, there were definitely some positive things but it really became a free for all with all the agencies running around and that was very disheartening and unfortunately, I think, started a bigger interest in the international development budget by the other agencies since it was not their funding and there was not direct accountability to Congress for the work. But USAID did retain the majority of the funds. One of the things we did early on was use the Notwithstanding authority to help fund some of USAID's operating expense – legislation separated funding of programs from USAID operating expenses. Later PEPFAR sought and followed this legislative exception as well. I was involved in briefing and arguing to Congress for this authority. We could not have survived as an Agency without it.

*Q: This is the Appropriations Committees?*

TURNER: The Appropriations, yes. We had to notify Congress when we used the notwithstanding authority. We got pushback from the Hill saying, well, we don't want you to use the notwithstanding. And I said well, alright, then what is it for. We're ending the Cold War and Russia is collapsing; tell me a scenario when we would use notwithstanding authority. We managed to get the key things we need through Congress. But for routine USAID programs, no one wants to address the operating expense shortages.

*Q: Right.*

TURNER: Just like the head of a foundation doesn't want to talk about the operating costs of a foundation; they want to talk about the good things they do. The operating costs may sound high but they're necessary to ensure that it gets done and done well, and most people, even appropriators don't always see it that way. They want every dollar to go into the actual people on the other end and yet they don't want any corruption, etcetera. And it's not possible, you can't have it, and I don't think we've ever learned that lesson. I don't think we've ever gotten over that OE hump at USAID.

One of the great things about the NIS program was that everyone self-selected who was there. No one was assigned there. We put out a notice saying we're creating this task force, that if you'd like to volunteer they were supposed to call me and we would look at that possibility. I got a ton of calls. I got calls from great USAID staff from a variety of bureaus. Brian Kline was a well-known GS desk officer in Africa for a long time and I remember he was the first one, I think, that he called me and said Barbara, I'm interested in doing this, I've been in Africa so long, this is really different and exciting. I think I

could bring something; I know about programming. I've been a desk officer a long time. And I said well okay, I have to explain to you, I don't have any job descriptions, I don't know what your title would be. We have one room with four desks in it and two phones and it's a couple of months before we will know exactly what we can promise you. But if you are okay with that, let's work out a start date. He said I can be there tomorrow. That is the type of can do spirit the team had. Of course, I had to work with the Africa Bureau for his release and do some paperwork. But, the team took career chances to work on an interesting program.

*Q: They saw this as exciting.*

TURNER: Saw this was exciting. It wasn't just an assignment that they had to take. No one was forced to go to or pressured in any way to go to Moscow or Kiev or any of the other countries.

*Q: I remember early days and tell me if I'm misremembering that the State Department attitude was we just need to get the economy going and we're not going to be there more than two or three years, we don't need to get involved with the health system or anything else.*

TURNER: Right. Our guidance initially was that nothing could be committed beyond one year, which we knew was crazy. Institutional reform just could not work that fast. But you'd be amazed at what got accomplished there in one year. We went in with a housing program because that was a critical thing and no one owned their own housing; it was all government-owned housing. And the minister housing and reconstruction, I believe it was, was a reformer. He knew Peter Kimm, USAID's Director of Housing and Urban Development, from international meetings. So, Peter and his team helped us put together a housing program to privatize all of the flats in Russian cities. And we had the first team, I believe that got out there as a regular contractual team.

*Q: The Ray Struyk group?*

TURNER: Yes, Ray Struyk was key and Dwayne Kissock were part of the early team. And they helped the Russians write a housing law to privatize the housing and give housing to every single family. And within one year the law got written, enacted, passed and implemented.

It was amazing. And in fact, I remember very distinctly when the law was getting ready to pass USAID was looking at it and I happened to be out there at the time. In the Duma when the staff team writes the bill, their names would be at the bottom of the legislation. And the Russian staff had put Ray Struyk's name on the list. And we looked at it and said well, this is an honor, but we said we really can't have a US advisor's name on piece of Russian legislation. The Russians we were working with said but he wrote much of it; we want to honor him. We did not want to appear to be interfering with Russian law. But it was really a sign, I think, of how much confidence and interaction there was with the people that we had there and what we did.

The same thing with the initial small business privatization. We opened a stock market within one year; Harvard did do a lot of that but also other contractors. We actually did something that caused us some difficulty but it was another notwithstanding. We knew we had to do a lot of economic projects and so rather than go through USAID's process, which was pretty much a year-long competitive process at best --, a project identification, a project paper, a solicitation you send out, bids you review, etcetera; easily take a year if you really streamlined it totally. What we did was say alright, we're going to pre-select a number of firms and we're only going to give them a one-year contract and in that year, we'll work on a competitive bid but we're going to take firms that we know can do this. And so, we put a list of about 10 or 15 firms together, we got very short proposals from them, and then we selected three or so out of that. These firms helped set up a stock market within a year, establish fiscal policies, help design commercial law and collateral policies. The Russian reforms put the Stock Market in the main Moscow post office. And when you walked into the main post office in Moscow there was a huge bust, I mean 10 feet of Lenin, overlooking the whole main floor. And the Russian reformers decided to leave that bust up in the stock market.

*Q: Probably had to put a blindfold on him!*

TURNER: Right. The early privatization of small businesses was quite a success. They issued these stock certificates to every person and each one got to buy a piece of stock in a local shop/business. Mostly the shopkeepers and their employees all bought their local shops. And that all happened within about a year to 18 months, that all of the small shops, most of the small shops, I'm sure there were some that we missed, especially outside of the cities but were turned over to the people that essentially ran them and the local people. And there was a whole education campaign on TV and radio and everything that USAID helped design with the Russians about what it means to own a stock. It was just incredible. And that was really all in the first year, 18 months, and good that it was because beyond that the oligarchs started then populating the Duma and coming back. Yeltsin stepped down. When Russia started plans to privatize some of the big companies, corruption set in and USAID had to step out of the large-scale privatization. And that's when we began to move to areas such as health and rule of law where the reformers were still engaged.

*Q: Right.*

TURNER: In the health area, we were surprised to find a much less sophisticated health services system than we expected. The Soviets did do a good job on immunizing. Their infant mortality rates actually were pretty good but probably more because people lived in houses and with relatively clean water. Literally I think the first hospital I went into outside of Moscow had a dirt floor and I think it had a pump rather than running water. When I was in public health school we learned that Russia was almost equivalent with the U.S. in terms of its healthcare system and results. So, that was pretty shocking. But the immunization rates and child nutrition for example were good. One of the CDC team members I remember him saying we might have to have the first project for adult men

because the alcoholism, the smoking, the non-communicable diseases were really the most serious.

*Q: Life expectancy was declining.*

TURNER: Adult life expectancy was declining and very low. So, it was complex to figure out how to target change. They certainly had trained nurses and doctors. That wasn't the issue. So, some of the traditional USAID projects that we might look at were not right for most of the Soviet countries and that made it a little bit hard to get into the health sector in a significant way.

*Q: Talk about the hospital partnerships program because that was, I thought, very innovative and I don't know that any other part of AID picked up on that type of partnership effort..*

TURNER: No, no. USAID had a lot of difficulty with it. The program was not designed by USAID – it came from outside. AIHA, American International Health Alliances. They established partnerships between US and soviet hospitals. And of course, USAID has always focused more on primary healthcare, not in hospitals, and so USAID people did not want to do hospitals. Also, the hospitals selected the type of medicine they wanted to work on, where in most USAID projects, USAID focused on what we determined as key health issues such as maternal or child health. Even I had a lot of concerns about it at first. But it turned out to be a very innovative and successful program. In Russia and Ukraine in particular a great deal of healthcare came through the hospitals. The hospital leadership dictated the health care system and essentially what the primary care physicians did. They made up the country's health leadership.

*Q: And there weren't that many primary care clinics?-*

TURNER: There weren't that many primary care outlets. People went to hospitals for primary care and so it did make sense. But the program came through with some political pressure. They knew people in the White House and there was some political pressure to fund them. It might have been an earmark so that we were able to avoid the competition. But they basically were a project that both transferred knowledge but also build relationships and promoted peaceful relations between our countries. Physicians and researchers from the US would spend time in the soviet hospitals and soviet physicians would come to the US for short trainings. So, because the hospitals identified health areas the 2 hospitals thought were key, the activities were sustained. They did try very hard to get as much maternal health as many of those primary health care issues in the program and there were a couple of good, good obstetric programs; in Moscow, there was a fabulous one. But it made people at USAID uncomfortable because they were not setting the agenda. But some of those partnerships continue to this day, without US funding.

*Q: Yes, even with the toxic atmosphere right now.*

TURNER: Even with the toxic atmosphere. And people became friends. And you saw people not as Americans or Russians or Ukrainians but as oncologists and as sharing in the way you handle patient care and things like that. And people would come here and people would take them to a baseball game and to- all kinds of things not just in the clinic. And that was a great program for the soviet transition, it really was. It was somewhat akin to the USAID participant training programs. Obviously, you didn't need to give Russians masters level training- there were more PhDs in Russia than in America; we didn't need to train the Russians to get a Master's degree or PhD, they needed the practical experience and so the program exposed them to the American academic practices and culture as well. I think that that's something that we should have adapted more. It didn't pick up enough in other parts of USAID. I think partly because it was hospitals, not primary care clinics. It's a lot harder to do with smaller entities.

There are some other partnerships that did develop. There was an energy program where U.S. energy utilities established a relationship with the NIS energy utilities and that then grew to a worldwide one. And I cannot think of the name but the association still exists today and is doing that and they might be doing it with their own money or foundation money. Those type of partnerships are something USAID should be looking at as a new approach to longer term institution building. But it seems to be a lesson we let drop, to look at what kind of institution-to-institution relationship can be established where we don't have to dictate the day-by-day agenda but it establishes relationships and technical directions because most people who are going to be, for instance, at a university hospital are probably leaders in the health field. They are probably going to influence them and they know the minister of health; they might even be the next minister of health. They're going to influence those people in what they do and say, not in legal ways but in the way we all work with our professional peers and associations and so I think that is something we need to- would love to see AID rethink in a bigger way.

*Q: Right. And it sound similar to the lessons we learned in the early days of AID with participant training and with other exchange program. These exchanges don't cost that that much. And when you have a program that's got gobs of money they are just too cumbersome.*

TURNER: Yes, yes. It's also hard to report lives saved. It's a policy kind of relationship. Now, there might be some statistics and I think AIHA tried because we were always demanding metrics. There might be some statistics in a certain hospital. I think this particular maternity hospital I'm thinking of really could show births saved, mothers' lives saved, that the rates were improving dramatically, etcetera. But otherwise you were really establishing a long-term kind of policy change and that is so much harder to measure and report on.

And one thing we had from the Freedom Support Act was reporting to Congress. When the Freedom Support bill passed it hadn't gone to the president yet but it did pass Congress, I was called up before the-

*Q: House Appropriations?*

TURNER: House Appropriations Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee. And there were maybe 15 appropriation staff, not congressmen, sitting there and me and my two people on our budget. And they wanted to know what we were doing with the budget and what results we were seeing. I said well, the President hasn't signed the bill yet so I hope we're not spending it because we're in anti-deficiency violation if we did --and everybody laughed. But they literally, before the bill was even signed, wanted reports on how we were spending the money. And we had to report to them routinely on expenditures and results.

*Q: All the time.*

TURNER: All the time, all the time.

*Q: Right. Is that the most intense congressional scrutiny you ever experienced?*

TURNER: Without question. I had been to the Hill a few times before, I'd certainly prepared reports and testimony for senior USAID people but not this intensity. I probably knew every staffer on the Appropriations Sub-Committees; McConnell was the head of Foreign Affairs, Robin Cleveland was the legislative aid. There were sometimes shouting matches and sometimes great compliments. I was asked to join a couple of congressional delegations, CODELs. I had never done that before. And I went as a Civil Service employee because they wanted someone from Washington and because we were going to a number of countries and in the past only State Department had gone on CODELs. State was concerned why I was going. But I think the first one I went on Leahy's staffer asked me to go; it was something by Leahy and Thad Cochran and a couple of really high-powered senators. And I had been up briefing a lot and so the staff knew me and they wanted me to be on the team and State resisted but ended up letting me go on the team with them. Oh my gosh, it was a lot of work, keeping up with 4 senators in 3 or 4 countries.

But, it was a great experience and interesting to spend time with a congressman and senators in a small group. I got a very nice letter back from Leahy thanking me for the trip, which I think was unusual; a lot of CODELs didn't do those kinds of things. And these regular contacts formed relationships with them that are a little bit stronger. And I was also, I think, able to help our USAID interests. Our team in those countries didn't really know how to deal with a CODEL but they knew how to deal with them in Africa to go see a project. But this team, whenever you dealt with Russia, especially with the likes of these senior senators, you wouldn't get into the nitty gritty of this farm; you were trying to talk about overall why was agricultural policy important. And I had a hard time with the AID staff getting them out of the weeds and to take the discussion up a little bit higher. So, I think I did contribute there. And, it got to be kind of common that there would be an AID person on a CODEL to go out.

*Q: I want to ask one thing because we hear, and it may be revisionism, but we hear Russians say Americans were so high-handed and they treated us like dirt and of course we were resentful at that time. But that wasn't your experience at the time was it?*

TURNER: It wasn't my experience at the time. I think that definitely we took the low hanging fruit the first few years, obviously. There were a group of economic reformers who had met with Jeff Sachs before the breakdown who had established a relationship with Harvard which later went bad but at that time the Russians were wary of US groups and companies they did not know. Early on they said to us. we won't work with anybody but Harvard; we trust them, we don't know who these other guys are, etcetera. Eventually we were able to get other groups in and they did work with companies like KPMG, Deloitte, and all the other groups that we sent out. The reformers worked very closely with USAID. I remember one time I was in Moscow and there was this fellow named Chabias, he was a leader in privatization and he worked with the Harvard team. He was sending me faxes several times a day and night -- they didn't have email then -- and the hotel would slip them under my door, every day and five or six; all night I would get a fax from him. We're thinking of this; what do you think? Is this appropriate under the USAID funding. They were always asking me details and I finally had to go back and say you guys put it together; it's your program. You have to live with it. If you put something together you can live with I'll do my best to defend it to USAID. But eventually we got a lot of contractors and a lot of pressure to have a large program of activities. But we couldn't grow the USAID staff large. We got a lot of contractors; contractors had a scope of work they had to meet. We had to do reports to Congress and I'm guessing that people became higher handed in that way or pushing harder. Also, while we had a very common agenda with the early reformers when the oligarchs came back into power, they pushed back on a lot of reform, especially when we got to any privatization of large scale industry. There were clear disagreements over how to do that. We never succeeded in getting agriculture and land reform. We could get creative with many agribusinesses to process food, which was important, and we helped them attract a few supermarket stores, chains and things like that who ultimately could only work by taking over a farm, running it themselves to ensure the quality of the food all the way up the chain.

*Q: Well, that's the McDonald's story, isn't it, and Ben and Jerry's, too.*

TURNER: Yes. The Russian collective farms couldn't grow quality potatoes for French fries. Their dairy farms were of poor quality. And there was so much resistance, I guess, because people lived on the land, it always had been that way; privatizing the land, privatizing the food chain was more than the Russian leaders wanted to do.

*Q: A step too far?*

TURNER: It was a step too far into their way of life, I think.

Also, we developed programs to support a free election process, the democratic process. And this was really a time when Brian Atwood was the new USAID Administrator about 1994 and introducing a wide range of democracy activities in many countries. We were welcomed with those programs in most of the soviet states at first, especially with the opposition parties, and we were helping put a lot of educational messages on TV and radio but it clearly had an American democracy twist. I don't mean it said we're

Americans telling you what to do but it was an American style that everyone knew the Americans paid for this political ad on TV encouraging people to vote. We did not support individual parties or candidates. But, it was sensitive and I don't think that went over well with some Russian leaders. NDI and IRI did a lot of training, honestly, just how to run a campaign and create a platform, how to set up a ballot There were some simple, simple things to us but could have sounded like telling them what to do. And of course, some of the elections didn't come out the way they wanted and I'm pretty sure the US got blamed for interfering in some way because we had a presence there that was significant.

One other area the US had a strong influence over was the development of advocacy groups and the NGOs. When we arrived- when the Soviet Union collapsed there was no such thing as an NGO. Private citizens could not even assemble, not even in your own condo, in your own building were you allowed to assemble. So, there was no such thing as advocacy groups, and we helped draft laws to permit them and train groups to organize and with two or three years, there were 10,000 NGOs throughout the NIS. I think the governments saw those as a challenge to the government, which in many ways they were, and I think they blamed the Americans for being involved and accelerate the growth of the NGOs faster than the government could control them.

*Q: From the very beginning they tried to put constraints?*

TURNER: From the very beginning. They couldn't understand letting people assemble and have a different opinion than the government; that was not seen too well. So, that was a struggle. But while we might have helped some of those NGOs we certainly didn't establish 10,000 NGOs; they came from the grassroots. Those were the people that were meeting in secret before and came out of the closet and established themselves as part of the reform era. And most persist until today.

The other thing that I think in Russia, AID policy and international economic policy got very confused and mixed up. So, you remember the ruble completely crashed and if that happens in Africa it doesn't influence the world all that much but if it happens in Russia it influences us a lot and so there was a lot of heavy handedness, I think, related to fiscal policies and to economic reform that had to happen at the top level, particularly from State and Treasury and from international organizations. And not just American government; I mean, they were getting advice from a lot of countries and the IMF, etc. So, I think maybe AID got blamed for some of that that was perceived as heavy-handed.

*Q: Right, although it might have been the Treasury Department-*

TURNER: Might have been Treasury or the IMF (International Monetary Fund) giving that direction because the NIS countries obviously were now in the international community. Or even Chase Manhattan. I mean, a lot of bankers came in. So, USAID was not the major player in fiscal and economic reform. We were largely implementers and probably the most visible on the ground.

I certainly on the technical side never saw a freezing of the relationships. I never did, even until, I forget which year a few years ago USAID was out of Russia. I had left AID and I was at URC, a contractor, and we had an office in Moscow and we had great relations with them. I went out to visit in 2007, met with the health ministry, they loved URC and the work we were doing. When the Russian government asked all contractors to leave in about 2010, the ministry of health went to the foreign ministry and asked for an exception for the USAID funded health project we were working on. They felt they were getting a lot out of this. The foreign ministry said no, they would not permit them to do that. So, the health relationship, I think even to this day, is excellent. There are exchanges, we see people at meetings, with other countries like Ukraine relations remain very good. So, the technocrat to technocrat relationships we established were good. It really was those policy reforms that were difficult.

*Q: Especially the macro ones.*

TURNER: Especially the macro reforms that were very difficult to do.

*Q: Right. And we had no idea just how screwed up the system was and how it was wired.*

TURNER: No. I have to tell you, when we went into Russia we tried to get briefings from everybody, from Langley on what was happening especially in Central Asia. We learned almost nothing. At one point we were trying to get even the major cities, and I don't mean capital cities, we knew that. They didn't know how many people were in those cities, not a good sense; what's the economy outside of the capital, what's the employment? USG people did not know the answer to those questions. They knew where all the secret cities were and where all the nuclear sites were but we knew very little about the real economy and the real people and what went on in everyday life there, at least in the government we didn't. I mean, there were people with relatives and things like that but no real analysis available. Good data was hard to find, and people later told me, in many of the countries including the Baltics, not to trust their old data because it had been adjusted to meet the rhetoric.

*Q: Right, it was aspirational?*

TURNER: It was aspirational.

*Q: But I remember the Murray Feshbach research in the '80s that highlighted declining health and that was sort of the first indication that things were not well.*

TURNER: It was and he was roundly criticized as having fake data and his was probably the best data, actually. Yes, we had Murray come in and talk to us but it was very hard to really get any kind of confirmation and understanding of even some of the basic things. I think we -- not just USAID -- but the USG were caught by surprise about the depth of collapse of the whole Soviet economy.

TURNER: Let's take a break.

*Q: We are resuming our conversation with Barbara Turner. Today is September 28 and when we wrapped up the last interview we had been talking about the program in the NIS but I think there are a number of things perhaps that were referred to before that that Barbara wants to go back and just add some information. So, we'll do that and then continue the chronology.*

**The role of Peter McPherson, Administrator, in promoting child survival and Brian Atwood, Administrator, for promoting women**

TURNER: Well, I just wanted to wrap up the 1980s. One of the things that had a big impact on me was the role of the Administrator, especially Peter McPherson. I think not just a big impact on me but on the agency. The child survival program I don't think would have been near as successful or got as much funding if Peter didn't take a personal interest in it. And ORT, in particular in ORT in Egypt he visited the project numerous times, he knew a lot of details about it. That was important but a couple of things that were more important was he talked to Congress about it. Probably every meeting he went to, every speech he gave, no matter what the topic was, there was some reference to this. So, it really brought health way more into the forefront of economic development than I think it had been in the past and I think that was very much his influence. He also reached out to the staff; he really engaged with the career staff, even the Civil Service staff, not just the field staff. I was still Civil Service and he would call me directly, not frequently but he would call me directly and ask me about something in the program and how it was going. He asked me to travel with him once to Egypt so the field headquarters technical and he could see the same things. I was only a GS-13 at that time; this is very unusual in most organizations and I think he did indeed make a big difference. He did this with many staff and programs, not just me.

*Q: Do you think your supervisors resented it?*

TURNER: I don't think so but it's hard for me to tell. They could have. It didn't mean that I didn't take them with me when I went to see him in the meetings so it wasn't that-it's possible some people that he didn't recognize or that he didn't talk about their program. He was also very good on agriculture and education, especially universities.

The other thing I think that made the programs that I worked on in the 1980s successful was that we really had a depth and breadth of technical staff. Technical we had not only people with Master's and PhDs in public health or agriculture, whatever, we had economists, we had social scientists that worked right- hand in hand with us and so we had strength in the field, we had strength in the regional bureaus who kept a regional context in lessons learned and we had the global bureau, which had especially scientific and technical strengths with other organizations like WHO and the UN agencies, etcetera. As we moved into the NIS in the 1990s that was not there. The budgets started being cut, the operating expense budgets were being cut, the cost of living overseas and establishing an office overseas were rising and so we had to do things very differently in the 1990s than we did in the 1980s.

When the new administration came in in 1993, I was asked to be a deputy assistant administrator at that time by Brian Atwood. There weren't many women in deputy assistant administrator position. That was a very senior position. Today you look around there are a lot but then there were not. And one of the things that happened during Brian Atwood's tenure was you could go to a senior staff meeting and there were lots of women and minorities. And it certainly made a difference in my career to move into an executive position.

*Q: Right. Well the deputy administrator, Carol Lancaster, probably also made- set the tone.*

TURNER: I'm certain that Carol set the tone and in particular she set the tone in the New Independent States because she learned Russian, she called us up all the time, wanted great details. I remember one story early on in the Atwood-Lancaster administration where we were briefing Carol and I had said it's very complex work in the NIS. You don't have local staff that are strong. In other countries, even in Africa many local staff have been there for 20 years and know what all of our procedures are, better sometimes than we do. Not in the NIS. Local staff did not understand budgets, writing to task, delivering reports with data or timelines.

*Q: Or accountability.*

### **Programming in the NIS 1993**

TURNER: Or accountability. And it wasn't that they were criminals or being fraudulent; it really was those kinds of checks and balances never existed among the technocrats, certainly. And I said sometimes it's even harder than working in Africa. I think Carol thought I was exaggerating. But a couple of months into that year I remember a big company came in that works worldwide and Carol knew the staff and people and they had a lot of work in Africa. And they came in and were briefing her on what they were trying to do in Russia and they said to her, but you know Carol, it's much harder to work in Russia than it is in Africa. We put out a bid on the street for something that a local firm could do and we'd get back bids that make no sense at all. People can't even add the numbers in the columns in the way that we can understand. It was just a very different world and Carol was eager to understand it and help guide us.

We often refer to Russia but really it was NIS; there are 12 countries in the New Independent States and we did in the first couple of years have some incredible successes.

*Q: Was this presented as this is what the U.S. is doing for you?*

TURNER: No, not strongly. Of course, everyone knew that the US was funding programs in Russia and the NIS and official Americas in countries with few Americans stand out.

In many ways, we tried at that point to be very circumspect about what we did. And the Russians in charge wanted it to be their program and it was their program. They didn't do everything we suggested they do, there were some things we would have probably not wanted to do but they thought were important and it was definitely their program. We did not have a lot of USAID stickers on things. We paid for printing the paper and explaining to them why new currency had to have a watermark and what was the danger if they didn't do that and how you could distribute the stocks, how you managed a stock exchange, things like that, but it was their program.

But we also established a supply chain for immunizations. The system had completely collapsed in all 12 countries because it had all been controlled centrally out of Moscow. And it worked fine in Moscow after the collapse but outside in the Urals and in Kazakhstan and other countries it had collapsed and we went in quickly. There even was a typhoid outbreak which we could get in very quickly and get prevented. There were still areas of the NIS that had, even after the first couple years, that had serious food shortages that just didn't- food wasn't getting out there and we continued to do a kind of a food aid in central Asia.

We helped design a lot of laws that we helped draft and helped people understand what they meant. There was no small business law, there was no commercial law at all, there was not what they call collateral law or any legal procedures associated with getting a loan, with collateral. We worked on women's rights in all the legislation, establishing women's rights in a number of the sections of the NIS that were very conservative.

*Q: Right. So, you were working with the Duma a lot, but the Duma probably was learning its role as a somewhat independent political voice because it had not been that.*

TURNER: The Duma had not been that when we were working in the early '90s and the Duma was quite cooperative and quite interested in these different laws and regulations, mostly probably out of necessity. The economy was in deep trouble. There was hyperinflation. They had to worry about their own investments and businesses that they- how they made their income and so we got pretty good support for a couple years from the Duma. But by the time the next election came around more conservatives started coming in and as we got past initial privatizing, things began to change. We found no opposition to privatizing the small shops and businesses but when it got to then let's look at privatizing the large businesses that's when corruption really stepped in and the control and the ownership and we just weren't able to influence that.

*Q: Well, Gazprom is an obvious one but what were the other big businesses, do you think?*

TURNER: Steel mills were huge businesses. There were shipyards. I don't think we even made a stab at Gazprom. Maybe the higher levels did but we didn't see that as a goal. We looked to see if we could get utilities that would and we did do a utility partnership with some utilities in the U.S. but we couldn't ever get them to move to independence and using it in a management sense. So, those were real constraints.

We also, I think I mentioned earlier got more into the democracy programs, which I think- I do think they had an impact. I do think in particular the rule of law programs introduced a lot of change in Russia and the NIS. Even simple things bench books to guide judges. NIS countries used to put the defendants in cages in the courtroom and that changed in most places.

We didn't do it by ourselves; we got the American Bar Association together with our Russian legal association and did those kinds of things. So, those things are critically important. I think that we as Americans think that a small little technical assistance program like that for a few million dollars will change the enormous, multi trillion-dollar economy that's been doing the same thing since the czars. It's not going to happen. And in '95, I guess, the oligarchs came back in and wanted to halt some of those things or not move that way, although I think their commercial law system is still in place today and they have much stronger women's rights, small businesses bloom all over the place. There are things, environmental groups are allowed to meet and work so there are all kinds of things that did change and that we had a hand in so I think we as Americans can feel pretty good about that.

*Q: It was also- part of the program was a lot of exchanges or opportunities for Russians and others in the NIS to come here and observe how we do things.*

TURNER: Absolutely.

*Q: And it's hard to quantify the impact of that but my hunch is it counts for a lot.*

TURNER: I think so. At first, I was a little skeptical because we even were exchange high school students - Senator Bradley, Bill Bradley, had put an earmark in the law and required exchanges of high school students. When we first started doing that we thought oh, my god, we need doctors, engineers, etc.; is this really the right thing to do? But he had been influenced as a high school student about his attitudes toward Russians and other countries by going and playing basketball and he thought that was important. So, we literally- I don't know the numbers; it would be- I'm sure that Eastern European programs kept those numbers but we did send thousands of kids from the NIS countries to live with a family in the United States, even for a summer, go to a baseball game, see how things happen. And we also sent college students on exchanges, mostly not to get a degree, they didn't need- the Russian degrees were academically pretty sound. It was really the broader exposure of how a society can function.

*Q: And then in the technical areas as well.*

TURNER: And then we had lots of exchanges, as I mentioned, we had a utility to utility program so a utility in a city in the United States would match with a utility overseas. They would go in, they would show them the latest technology, the Russians, the Soviets would come here; the same thing, we talked early about the medical exchange program. We did that in a whole of areas, in fact, almost every program had that because that was

sort of a key focus. Language was an issue and unfortunately not that many Americans speak Russian and so it always was an issue. But there were lots of people who spoke enough English that we were able to accommodate that and make it work and I think that was a hallmark. I think there are a lot of people who still feel positive about the U.S. I haven't been there in a number of years but maybe like five years ago, the last time I was there, traveled around quite a bit and was still very well received.

*Q: At the top level.*

TURNER: At a reasonably high level by ministry of health staff, governor's staff, universities, NGO that we met with still very much interested in what was happening in the United States. At that time, I was focused on health programs with a private company which had been in Russia for 20 years primarily with USAID funds and some foundation funds. They actually asked us to come and visit a program in Tver where they had continued the work we started under a USAID project that ended 7 or 8 years earlier on neonatal care. They had not only improved outcomes in their oblast but also had become a national training center for neonatal care and were very proud of that. But they also remember the role of the USAID project in that success.

One of the internal USAID programmatic efforts that we haven't talked about is the streamlining of many of the USAID processes. In the very first year of the Freedom Support Act that passed in 1993, we actually committed \$650 million of programs with a relatively small staff. We also added environmental assessments as a part of them, which weren't required in AID projects at that point but we felt in the NIS it was really, really important. That's quite an accomplishment but to do that we were allowed to streamline some of the bureaucracy that was required at that time and many of those changes were retained in USAID after the program – for example, shorter project design process and project papers, a quicker contracting process with contracts staff more closely engaged with the Bureau team, some regional admin/finance teams to help Missions in peak periods.

We had “notwithstanding” authority that gave us the courage to make changes and adjust procedures, but we seldom had to use it because most of what we were doing was changing internal procedures. It is just that no bureau had the authority to do that before without a lot of push back from the bureaucracy. OFDA/Disaster Assistance was the exception as they had the same authority and we adapted some of their approaches. We had to justify why we did it and what we did and it had to be deemed reasonable by the auditors but we were fairly aggressive about doing that.

*Q: About using that authority?*

TURNER: Yes, about using it. In places like Russia and Bosnia you can't really say we're going to do a project implementation document and then a project paper and then we're going to put a scope of work out and go through a formal competitive process. We'll be back in two years with a team on the ground to work with you on this. It can't work that way in these new and urgent situations.

*Q: Right. Did you ever have a situation where you felt you moved too fast or your ability to use the notwithstanding caused you to overlook something that you should have looked at? Or were you pretty careful about it?*

TURNER: Knowing that was a risk, what we tried to do is not make long-term decisions through the notwithstanding. We designed efforts with a one year pilot phase with the idea we would also use it to assess the situation and then a review and next steps. In a new setting, this is not a bad idea because existing data was often not reliable and real on the ground analysis would have taken a long time. But yes, I don't think we always got necessarily the best bid or a comprehensive approach. So, it's not something I would say we should adapt for everything we do but time and targets of opportunity really were important because of the situation and because there was a State Department coordinator, because Congress had us-

*Q: Was on your backs.*

TURNER: Was on our back every week. Because the American public was interested. They didn't know where Benin was or Uganda but they knew where Russia was and so there were articles all the time. So, we really had to move quickly. We could not say well, we can't do that. We just couldn't say that unless it was illegal, we could say it was illegal to do that but we couldn't really say well, it will take us a long time to get this contract in place. We had to have the ability, when necessary, in an NSC (National Security Council) meeting, to say that is something we can do, we will get on it, we will try to do it in the next six months, or at least to indicate what we could do. We had to be able to have much shorter timetables and Congress gave us funds and notwithstanding that permitted us to be able to answer questions like that. And then, of course, we used to have to defend to everyone what it is that we did. Luckily for us there were enough wins early on, because there were also some things that didn't go so well. I think I mentioned we just totally, I think, failed in the agriculture sector; we just were not able to figure out how to get land reformed, ownership of small farms, the supply chain for food, I think we would call it the value chain today. We just weren't able to succeed in that arena. Democracy, obviously, we certainly succeeded in some aspects such as a better rule of law and supporting civil society groups, but were we able to create the political parties and things like that in an effective way to reach people and were we effective in the local governance, probably not so much.

*Q: You could argue that the efforts you made to develop local civic organizations, what we would call NGOs, probably succeeded so well that it got the attention and the concern of the leadership.*

TURNER: No question. And I think in the local government area, some of the governors we worked with actually did move up into national positions and one or two were even opposition candidates after Putin came in. Boris Nemtsov was murdered because of that. From the very early days, he was a governor who was a reformer and opened arms to

Western aid on programs, and he moved into a much bigger role in influencing Russia but didn't make it.

### **DAA for Central Europe 1995**

I'm going to move on to Eastern Central Europe because in 1995, we were changing some staff at the top of the NIS bureau and a Don Presley, was assigned as DAA, a foreign service officer coming in from a position as USAID Mission Director Poland. He had managed a very successful reform program in Poland for four years and he'd been working on Eastern Europe for about six or seven years and he told me he would really like to work on the former Soviet countries in the NIS. And I was getting pretty worn out because it was really very intense and while there was a lot of interest in Central Europe at that point, Central Europe had become more stabilized and so we agreed to switch positions within the bureau. I took over the Central Europe program. We were still the same bureau, reported to the same boss, sat next to each other, talked every day but that gave me a new portfolio to focus on.

At that point in 1995/96, many of the Central Europe countries were reaching a point that the USAID program funds in the SEED Act were decreasing and we had to make a decision to phase them out. Some were entering the European Union. Others such as the former Yugoslavia countries were just coming out of war. For countries like Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, the Baltics, having an AID program there with the short resources and the short staff resources we had to manage them just didn't make a lot of sense. So, we put together a closeout strategy which was painful for USAID. We don't have many closeout strategies. And we got an enormous amount of resistance even within USAID. We tried to put in place some different ideas like endowments and it was very difficult. We succeeded in getting one endowment through for the Baltics because the Baltics really were making process in democracy but they, of course, were under much more Russian influence from the beginning and so they still had some ways to go. And they wanted support for their NGO community but not so much just for environment programs or health programs but really for the NGOs that were activists that dealt with the government. And so, we proposed that we take the last two years of funding and put it into an endowment and the Soros Foundation wanted to match the endowment. Being a naïve young whippersnapper, I did not understand the politics entirely of that although George Soros was not so U.S. politically involved at that point because he was very focused on Hungary and Poland and Central Europe. We also had the Baltic States put up office space and some staff and have some cost associated with it; they didn't give us any dollars but they gave us certainly a lot of in-kind costs and so it was a real partnership. And it was an endowment that was going to last either 10 years, the Baltic American Society, and USAID, the U.S. Government would have a place on the board but we would not have full control. We were able to get that through Congress. It was really, really tough with lots of briefings, but we were able partly because there are a lot of Baltic-Americans -- Lithuanian-Americans, Latvian-Americans, Estonian-Americans in the United States. These groups thought this was a wonderful idea because they really were very afraid of Russia, and they really wanted to have some U.S. engagement. So, they engaged with Congress; the diaspora was very active and it got through.

Our strategy was never to just set a close date and walk out of a country. We tried to put together some creative ways to close out. The Enterprise funds were USAID funded investment funds to startup businesses in Central Europe, established early in the Europe program. For Poland, the Fund had made money and we were able to create Foundation to continue development work. It helped that the Enterprise Funds were replenished as loans were paid back.

*Q: Sort of a revolving loan program*

TURNER: The people had to payback, recapitalize the loan and the money stayed in. In the end Poland several years, after USAID left, returned the full capital to the U.S. Government, they wrote a check back, had a big ceremony. Most of the other countries weren't quite as successful at recapitalizing, not in significant amounts but yes, it recapitalized until the capital dissolved. In other countries, we were able to keep the Enterprise Fund going. And we still had a person on the board and we often had one local person in-country who worked with them out of the Embassy so they were sort of an USAID rep, if you will, but always local, not an American. In other countries, we could keep the Enterprise Fund going and in a few countries like Bulgaria and Macedonia, we had to have a longer-term phase out program as the Funds just were not successful.

USAID has never really established good options for closing out programs. It was politically difficult to tell a country their assistance is ending and the TA we provide will leave. We developed an analytic methodology for looking at progress toward key indicators, strengths and challenges and used that to do a timetable for closing out the programs. Then we turned to creative ways to implement the close outs. We tried some other types of partnerships or endowments that we could not get support for. We proposed a USAID economic development rep at each embassy that really looked at helping assure that the small businesses, women, environmental issues, some of those kinds of things that AID would normally worry about were getting support or engaging in policy dialogue. We thought that would be a way to show continued engaged with perhaps a very small budget for conference or an occasional short-term US specialist. And we could get that in one or two places but that only worked for about a year.

*Q: And was it a question of NSDD-38?*

TURNER: It was NSDD-38 and it was the embassies just not wanting AID to be there any longer, seeing it as a this isn't Africa, we don't need assistance here. But, I remember going to Slovenia in 1997 and closing the USAID mission there very rightly so they had been one of the countries that reformed economically very quickly. The Minister of Finance was a woman and she said to me, "we don't need the aid, but we need the technical know-how and is there some way that we could still work with your people?" She said it was an enormous help to her as minister in trying to put the reform through. So, I tried to set up something where we could still fund IESC, the International Executive Service Corps, to send economic and financial specialists, on a regular basis.

When USAID funds ran out we hoped IESC could raise private funds, but they just did not seem interested at that time.

*Q: Where was the resistance, there or here?*

TURNER: Here. Just, we're closing out, that's it, no monies marked for them, we have to move money elsewhere. I also tried to get some of the US NGOs to raise funds elsewhere to continue to do this because that was something I thought we would be able to do. But they were living on USG grants and just didn't pick it up or maybe they just didn't see it as what their mission was and it never did really take place. But we did indeed go around and we made the closeouts a celebration. In each country that when we closed out we did a review of what we had jointly accomplished and we never said USAID did this. Never once. We absolutely tried to say look at what we did together. Look at what Poland accomplished during this time, and we are so proud that we were allowed by you to come in and be a partner with you in this. And so, we did celebrations. We let their own country know that this is what your ministry did for you, this is what, you know, these are things that happened. And we put it in that context. And our AID staff and even the ambassadors were very nervous about the closeouts and press. They did not like it. America's leaving you, etcetera. I went to several we did; we did press conferences and we had hand-outs. I think we did it quite successfully. I don't mean that there weren't any organizations that came in and said oh, but we needed this money, but in principle we really tried hard not to let it look like AID was abandoning them, that they had achieved a level that they really didn't need us.

For countries as they closed, we still invited them when we did training programs. It's just that they had to pay their own way. So, if we were doing a training for bankers on fiscal accountability or something in the region we would, even after Poland had closed, we would send our contacts there an invitation if they wanted to join in the discussion.

*Q: And did they?*

TURNER: And some did, indeed. I wouldn't say it was overwhelming but yes, we continued, especially the first year or so to have those kinds of relationships.

*Q: Yes, AID tends to talk about it in terms of closeout but the whole concept of graduation was much more palatable if you could pull it off.*

TURNER: Yes, if you could pull it off.. Obviously sometimes we'd closeout for different reasons, disagreements with the host country or serious violations. But I still don't think we've learned the lesson of how to close out yet. With current budget situations, we have to learn how we can do some things differently and that we can't have as many people and as big a budget in every single country that we do. In 2012, USAID did do a summary of various close out plans and documents. It is in the USAID Clearinghouse: [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00HR7M.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00HR7M.pdf).

*Q: And it may not be necessary to have large staffs and lots of money. You've been talking about the role of exchanges, the idea of basically a development advisor who is embedded in an embassy that might not require more than walking around money. There are some models out there.*

### **Traveling with the First Lady**

TURNER: Yes. One of the other things that we had at that time was the First Lady took a real interest in Europe and Eurasia. She studied up on it quite a bit and she traveled a number of times to Europe especially during the second Clinton administration 1996-2000. She also included USAID on her trips. And I don't know that USAID staff (not the Administrator but staff) had ever been on Air Force One before. And so that was quite interesting that she wanted staff there as well as the Administrator or Deputy Administrator. In several cases I went as the senior USAID officer with the First Lady on the trips. And she was quite incredible to see. The first thing she would do in every country is indicate she wanted to meet with women's groups and I remember in some countries you would have the foreign minister or even the president of the country would go out with us to some rural area and meet with women's groups. Often the local officials didn't even know those groups existed or what they did. Often it was the first time the US Ambassador had met them. Her visit and attention to these groups made a huge difference; they got recognized and they got local press. She met also with other NGOs as well but she did focus largely on groups that were focused on women and children.

*Q: As you think about the visits that she had with women's groups where you were along, what were the kinds of things that she was interested in? What questions did she have for them?*

TURNER: Well, one of the things she asked is how they went about advocacy and whether what their key challenges were. Sometime the groups learned a lot from each other. Because they had not had opportunities to learn from each other, they were struggling to survive and often small. She also focused on how they interacted with their government officials, mostly at the local level. I don't think she ever asked and she wasn't pressing them if they had to go to the capital city and bang on the doors but she was asking how they were engaging with their government structures, leadership there, and that was one of the key things that she would ask about. They often would want to talk about their trials and tribulations. In Romania, we were almost crying every day about how women were treated there, the way women and children were treated, the orphanages and restrictions on family planning, things like that. She talked about what should be changed in the legal structure so this can't happen? In front of the Ministers that was an important dialogue. So, even though it was certainly focused on women's issues the discussions did a lot more.

She also made speeches in almost every country. In many countries, including Romania, she was on the radio or TV --a lot more radio back then than TV to reach the countryside. She talked very much about what democracy is. I think I was on one of her USAID trips

when she that democracy was a messy business which is often quoted. She spent a lot of attention on how important the grassroots and the NGOs and the interaction of government with citizens was, not so much about elections. She was careful about that. She had to really balance her role because back then the First Lady was not supposed to talk about the high-level politics; she was really supposed to stay on women, children and NGO kind of issues. But, she finessed that very well. I must say, she was brilliant to work with and really taxing for staff, literally. I mean, just working on the speeches, asking questions, wanting statistics, and then the next day she'd give the speech and she'd use everything you said and she'd use it so much better than the way you said it. It was just incredible. So, it was very rewarding but it was very taxing. And I remember being happy that one of the first countries I went to with her to was Romania and of course the women's and children's issues were so stark and the USAID team had such good data on what was happening and we had a good program there that I really felt ready to brief her. I had beautiful color charts and things with me so I really felt prepared. When I saw how she worked and used information during the first two days in Romania I got on the phone with my people back in AID/W and said alright, for the next country I'm going to need this, this, this. It was really a whirlwind. That trip was in 1996 to 6 countries in 10 days – exhausting. But she really understood the USAID development information in ways that I haven't seen too many politicians know how to use.

I'm sure she also shared that with the President, because I heard him on several occasion cite back some of the issues we had discussed or seen with her. It created great morale for USAID staff because we felt that our leadership heard our message. Not that it was the number one thing they did in the course of a day but I think people really felt that okay, this information's being used by somebody and they're really talking in a policy dialogue way at the top levels. And we also started getting invited to more NSC meetings and State events because State or NSC would always have someone on Mrs. Clinton's trips. I started getting invited to the Department of State's annual deputy chief of mission conference for our region; they would ask us to be there, which was never done before. And the first one, I went to, the very first time we had been invited, and we were like the center of attention as the DCMs saw the White House interest.

*Q: And you'd probably met some of them.*

TURNER: I had, of course, met some of them throughout the travels because the first couple years there I was on the road probably half time so spent a lot of time in the field and in most Eastern Europe countries because our Missions were small, USAID often sat in the Embassies.

## **Bosnia**

In 1996, Bosnia became a priority for USAID. The Dayton Accords partitioning Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia were signed in November 1995. USAID did not play a role in that although we had a disaster assistance and food aid program going in the countries at that time. But after the Dayton Accords, the shooting stopped for the most part and at some point, in 1996, USAID began both a transition (OTI) program and then a development

effort. I was put in charge of a USAID Task Force on Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia to transition to a development program. Early on there were still snipers and the Accords created a tripartite government with leadership changing every few months. A bit messy. Ambassador Holbrooke negotiated the Dayton Accords and worked on supplemental legislation to support the 3 countries. I had to brief him for Congressional meetings a few times – quite a challenge. I put together a group to work with again with the DART Team, OIT and to set up a USAID Mission.

*Q: In Sarajevo.*

TURNER: We set up first in Sarajevo and then in a few months in Zagreb, Croatia. Serbia came later as it was a lot less secure and not so welcoming of Americans. It was a difficult place to travel to for our staff. Even going into Sarajevo after peace you still had to be careful because there were still occasional snipers. The main Holiday Inn in Sarajevo had been under fire during the war and still had blood stained rugs in the lobby. Many of the rooms had bullet holes in the wall or even still in a window. People pulled the mattress off and slept on the floor. It was still scary even after the truce. There were also a lot of land mines. Our aid teams had to hook up with demining groups and the US military. Even in the schools and everywhere you went you had to be careful to walk on planks that had been set to avoid land mines.

One of the early things that AID funded mostly with CRS, Catholic Relief Services and CARE, was a program and got local groups to make windows. I know that's something USAID probably never did anywhere else but almost all of the windows in Sarajevo had been shot out or blown out by explosives in some way. And in many of the surrounding areas, not just Sarajevo. But Sarajevo was cold in the winter and it meant people wouldn't freeze to death.

*Q: Right.*

TURNER: We also decided to fund rehabilitation of a huge power plant that provided heat to most of the Sarajevo area. It was also unusual for USAID but this was a sophisticated area before the war and most people lived in buildings with heat. USAID was able to put up the money but we ran into a problem when we did our environmental assessment. The plant was very old, built with Czech equipment and without modern scrubbers or environmental equipment. We could not restart it and pollute the air over Sarajevo as had been done before. The Plant renovations were costly and we just didn't have the money to add the scrubbers much less buy them from Japan. When we researched how we could fix it, the Japanese made scrubbers to clear the output from the plan. So, we went to the Japanese aid reps and to our USAID Rep in Japan and convinced the them to fund the environmental equipment. It was good to work with our USAID Rep in Japan because the Japanese do not delegate that kind of large funding decision to their field offices, and we needed it done quickly before the winter set in. And so, within a few months we had the plant up and running for the next winter so people at least wouldn't freeze to death. USAID became well-known for the windows and the heat, which is not

something you usually think about but it mattered. It was a good demonstration of how USAID can adapt to the local needs.

A couple of other things that we did there that were important. Most people were well educated, even more so than NIS countries and very Europeanized. I mean, at one point they did go back and forth to Europe and many of the systems were European and they were able to get radio and sometimes even TV although they had to jerry rig it but they were so close that they could get that. Many of them had relatives in parts of Europe. But not much experience in governance. USAID's OTI (Office of Transition Initiatives) became involved especially on the democracy and governance side. Brian Atwood and Rick

*Q: Barton.*

TURNER: Yes, Rick Barton put an interesting program together and Bosnia was one of the places they came in at the same time the USAID development program was getting started. Before that it was too dangerous with snipers and land mines, they couldn't do too much, it wasn't really transitioned yet. Once the Dayton Accords were in place OTI went in and the regular development efforts got. We worked very closely together. I think as long-term development people we were a little frustrated with OTI at first. I remember one of the things that they did was called a "swarm" strategy. It was sort of Let 1,000 Flowers Bloom. For instance, they funded a large number of newspapers and radio stations- because in old Europe every town had its own little newspaper and radio; that's how people got news. They funded local radio stations, local newspapers, helped train people in reporting on but there were dozens and dozens of them and they were in no way sustainable; they were small amounts of money but they did reach a lot of people. And the OTI strategy was that lots will fall away; there will be lots of failures. But, the three or four that survive out of these several dozen grants will be strong and people will save what they value. Taking those kinds of risks of failure is not what USAID was used to in our development programs. We were quite afraid of the auditors. But OTI had full notwithstanding authority and understanding that like humanitarian assistance, USAID would have a higher tolerance of risk. And it turned out that their strategy was very successful and worked beautifully and I got to respect it very highly. It was definitely locally owned. There has to be someone out there, especially in transition, taking the risk. What it should do is lead to longer term things, of course, so working closely with the development program helped us pick up where they left off. I gained an incredible respect for the kinds of things that OTI did.

We even adapted a program that we discussed with OTI and they helped us put together with the U.S. military which had troops over half of Bosnia. The U.S., Europeans and NATO were there because there was still a fair amount of insurgency. I had never really worked directly with the US military before on the ground. But, we were asked to collaborate with the US Army there. Although we were skeptical, it turned out to be a good relationship. Basically, the Army has staff in charge of civilian relations; in almost every key city in the country and they see reconstruction things that need to be done to bring stability, but they don't have the funds to undertake the changes. The US Army

Commander asked USAID to transfer funds to them. We were not comfortable with that, but instead of trying to tell the General – No, we looked for a way to address the problem without transferring funds with the constraints we had.

*Q: Constraint?*

TURNER: Constraints, yes. We worked out a plan where the Military Civilian Affairs staff would identify a reconstruction activities – do a one page description – and depending on the geographic location and/or type of activity, we would give it to the appropriate US NGO. We had a set of NGOs doing community reconstruction as well. The type of things the military identified were things like transmitters for electric poles in town, restringing electric wire, fixing broken water mains, etc. We put a dollar limit on each activity so they didn't waste time proposal huge projects – we were worried about what the Military saw as “small” projects. The civilian affairs officer would sign the one page form and Commander and the AID mission director would have to sign it as well and we'd give it to the NGO and they would implement. And the civilian affairs officer would be involved. So, when the electric wire arrived he was there to provide guidance and support while they put it up, etcetera.

There were some projects I saw even within USAID's portfolio that might were not routine for USAID. In one town, I went there was a crew of men painting lines on the road, painting the curbs and light posts. And I went ah, what is this project? It's not really development. But when I started interviewing and talking to people -- they were all former combatants, none of them had jobs and they were trying to reengage in the society. So, these activities employed them for something for their community -- they put down their arms and they were painting the road. That wasn't employment for life, but it gave them something to take them away from shooting and not worrying about what was going on politically. So, there were lots of lessons that I learned from OTI that helped in the first year or so of Bosnia, especially Bosnia and Croatia even more so because it was a developed place. It was not developed institutionally or from a governance perspective because Tito had controlled everything and people were not allowed to make any decisions but I think that we did some quite interesting things there and I think that the OTI approach is something that the Clinton Administration brought in to give us. And I think OTI has done well in other fragile state situations. It can equally be applied in lesser developed countries and lower income countries as well because you have to remember these countries had no income after the war. Beforehand there had been a Volkswagen plant in Sarajevo but it was totally closed down and it was years before it was able to come back.

*Q: And there was no tourism*

TURNER: There was no tourism until much later- none of their industries worked and so it was for several years truly-

*Q: A wasteland.*

TURNER: Yes. And so, I think that OTI introduced something very powerful. And I later suggested later when I was in PPC (Policy and Program Coordination) and we were looking at ways we could change and reform some of the development programs was that all of our fragile states programs, even the development part, should have OTI authorities and function like OTI. We should move them out of the DA kinds of thinking and have a transition period and some measurements that relate to that medium and short term. But I was never quite successful in making that happen. And Congress didn't like it because while many loved the OTI short term reporting, they didn't have much control over it. Congress appropriated a block of funds with no specific country or programs identified. Then OTI made the funding decisions and sent regular and good reporting to the Hill. So, when trying to expand that type of program, there was some resistance to having larger and larger amounts of money under that approach. But I think that that could really change USAID if we would think in those terms again.

*Q: I agree. It's not one size fits all. We think in terms of transitions from emergency to long-term development but well advanced countries can also fall back*

TURNER: Absolutely.

TURNER: When there's a crisis, it might not be a worldwide humanitarian crisis but there might be a situation where you need to go in and exercise that type of a new shorter term program. And we needed to have more people trained in those ways of thinking. We like to learn the technical lessons; we don't like to invest time to learn the implementation lessons. One important lesson I learned in all of this is it doesn't matter how great your technical idea is, it isn't going to fly if you can't figure out a way to implement it within the cultural, social, political, economic context that you've got to work.

*Q: Right.*

TURNER: And if you can't balance those you're not going to survive. I tried to take those lessons from the Eastern Europe experience into the Global Bureau when I moved there. It was hard. I had spent an enormous amount of time at the White House; I mean, people at the gate honestly knew me because I'd been there so many times. I knew exactly where the situation room was and I knew they had M&Ms there I could munch down and I knew when to, I think mostly, when to shut up, what to say, etc. I learned a lot of things that go on at NSC meetings and things like that are worked out beforehand among principle players so I knew sometimes to check in with some people before the meeting. Or if I had an idea I thought was good I couldn't just-

*Q: Drop it on the table.*

TURNER: Drop it on the table. You had to really talk to somebody at State or the NSC or Treasury about it. And sometimes they would step up and take all the credit for it, never mention that USAID was behind it. But if it was what it took to get to the best development decision, you just got to bite your tongue and let it happen, it's the way

politics work, small P, politics. It didn't matter what party they were from; everybody in politics at that level has egos and needs credit to defend themselves, etcetera, and all of that. I found that many USAID people outside of a high-profile Bosnia-type situation or Russia-type situation just could not do that. They hadn't had the experience, they hadn't seen that you can have an impact, an incredible impact. But they just hadn't had that experience in how to work the Washington system. There is no training, and we have to adapt ourselves to criticism or to a different language that people use or to a shorter timetable or to the fact that you might have to do things in increments, you might have to just do something for six months until you can get established and then you get the longer-term things in through your credibility. You have to match the need for long term analysis and implementation period with some short-term credibility establishing kinds of activities and understanding how to present our ideas. And I found when I moved over to the Global Bureau in 1998, -- I think it was.

### **Senior DAA Global Bureau 1998**

TURNER: Yes, '97 or '98. I still got calls saying oh, there's an NSC meeting tomorrow on Pakistan; they want you to go. I'd say well, I haven't worked on Pakistan since the 1980s, but I'll get someone to go. But NSC staff would say they weren't happy with the USAID staff participation because they only identified the obstacles rather than the solutions -- it'll take us a year to get a contractor; our contract system won't let us do this, etcetera, and they had all the reasons why they couldn't do anything. I remember once when the Clintons were going on a trip somewhere and they were unhappy with the USAID liaison who happened to be an assistant administrator and they said to -- I don't think Brian was still the administrator, I think it was Brady Anderson or someone -- couldn't we have Barbara, because somehow, I had made an impression and I could talk to them. I wasn't the only person. There were several people that could have done this; Carlos Pasqual was very good at that. There were a number of people but we were maybe five in the agency, maybe, that could do that and some of them were overseas or had moved somewhere and so that, I think, is something USAID simply is going to have to learn.

*Q: Right. And it's partly, I think, because unlike in the '70s and '80s development is an all of government activity now so you've got to learn to be able to work with and speak with other parts of the government.*

### **PEPFAR**

TURNER: Yes. When I got to the Global Bureau I was ready to move out of those high-profile jobs. My father was very ill and about to die and I had been on the road a lot in tough places and I just needed a change. When there was an opening that came up, I was happy to move. And re-engage a bit more in the technical aspects of development, especially health. I think one of the great things about USAID is there's a balance between political/economic work and technical work and I missed the technical. HIV/AIDS and infectious diseases were beginning to get a lot more attention at that point and along that line we were seeing other agencies like CDC stepping in more, somewhat

naturally. They knew a lot more about diseases like TB than we did in USAID and a lot more about HIV than we did because it was in the U.S. But our folks chose to fight with them all the time. But an opportunity for better relations opened up when CDC in Atlanta named Helene Gayle who's gone into other great assignments.

*Q: Who actually had been in USAID's Office of Health-*

TURNER: She had been at USAID for maybe two years. She understood what we did, etcetera. I had met her but I didn't know her well because I had not been working as much on health activities in recent years. But we both agreed this- our staffs were sending back and forth nasty emails -- and we told them to draft an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) of how we would work together. Came out horrible; staff could not agree on anything. So, she and I had to get together and rewrite the MOU and agree that we would be collaborative, we would work together on this, here's what they would do, here's what we would do, what we would bring. Of course, it sometimes would break down around money and what you could fund and not fund and CDC implemented and did things differently than we did. But that worked well for the first year or two of infectious diseases and PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief). Helene left and it started- fell apart considerably. And we both apologized to each other several times for things our staff said or did to the other staff. It was definitely a two-way street. But USAID didn't have a champion there when she left and so when PEPFAR came about and started getting lots of money, the tension increased. The design of PEPFAR in response to the HIV/AIDS crisis was one of the things I was engaged in obviously through the HIV programs that started under the Clinton Administration which didn't have quite as much funding, but we had already started engaging with CDC and began understanding what was happening in the US and globally. USAID already has a full-time HIV/AIDS person, Dr. Paul DeLay, who went on to be a leader in the field not just at USAID but as Deputy Director of the Global Fund. But he was an officer with a desk and not even a secretary or anything but he certainly quickly learned a lot and knew a lot about HIV/AIDS. It was fascinating and fast moving.

Interestingly to me, there were two groups that, in my opinion, made PEPFAR a reality, that is made it politically happen. One of the groups was the religious community. We actually had a point when Franklin Graham of a relative conservative religious NGO, Samaritan's Purse, came to our office, and said they were going to put on a conference on HIV/AIDS in Washington. I was stunned because it was a sexual disease and churches just didn't talk about sex at that point and the only treatment known for it at that moment was condoms. They were developing drugs but nothing was FDA approved and when they were approved they cost something like \$80,000 a year per person. The chance that was going to get to most people in Africa was not likely. And he said he wanted us to participate. He wanted us to send people to his headquarters and brief on HIV and what we could do about it. And so, we had to say... you know a discussion will have to involve sex? It also involves condoms. He said, it's not comfortable for us but our communities in the U.S. and in Africa especially, when people are sick and sick and don't know what to do they come to their church. And they're coming in droves to our churches, and we don't know what we can do for them. And so, we feel we have to take this on. And he

and others, I don't think he was alone, there were a number of groups, I just happened to interact personally a little bit more with him. When we sent some people from our population and health office down to North Carolina to do some training sessions for their headquarters staff, I was nervous because our population team was used to talking very openly among ourselves about sexual health and practices. And even homosexuality.

*Q: And Prostitution.*

TURNER: And prostitution. That was a real problem. But we did it and it worked very well. And so, that conference brought together religious leaders from Africa and from many of the key church organizations. I don't mean individual community churches but the Presbyterian leadership in Houston came, etcetera. And they went to the White House and they said you have to do something about this; this is a serious worldwide problem, and they kept going to the White House.

The second group that got engaged was the pharmaceutical companies. They were developing the drugs. They knew they could have an impact but they had to have a level of volume to bring the prices down. They also needed some changes in FDA (Food and Drug Administration) so that they could experiment on people sooner otherwise it would take too long; the pandemic would get out of control before they could get drugs to people. And those two groups lobbied the White House and Congress because something had to be done. The CDC and USAID and HHS (Department of Health and Human Services) had been talking, talking, talking to people but mostly at the technocrat level in OMB (Office of Management and Budget) and staffers on the Hill. But until the outside forces were able to come in- and I'm telling you, we were a little reluctant about engaging with the conservative religious community and frankly with the pharmaceutical companies. But they had an impact, they had a huge impact and so we did step in and go to NSC meetings a number of times, and many aspects of the PEPFAR programs were ones we argued against but we had to be careful because the basic concept was the right one.

*Q: Right. Well, I think the evangelical church, delivered Jesse Helms.*

TURNER: Yes, yes. They got it through Congress.

*Q: And this is the fellow who said that AID should be disbanded or absorbed in the State Department; he had no use for AID.*

TURNER: Yes. I distinctly remember White House staff were saying there's no way the President can go up on the Hill, so you guys have to carry that weight. And they did. They did.

*Q: Yes. So, this was in the George W. Bush administration?*

TURNER: It was, indeed, indeed. The Clinton Administration initiated some funding for HIV/AIDS, but nothing like the major PEPFAR program. The meetings, the designs from

the concept to the enactment was maybe a whole year to get into place. But it definitely was in early 2002, when it really took off and got going. And we were disappointed that it was put in the State Department as the Coordinator but the first year they were a bit more of a figurehead; we really controlled the budgets and the things like that. But as outsiders came in and the Coordinator hired his own senior staff and country leaders, they took much more control of the funds and program processes. They didn't really do the budget very well, they didn't understand what it took to make activities sustainable. A lot of attention was put on visibility and numbers but not on what the numbers meant. I think most acknowledged USAID did the heavy lifting by implementing on the ground, and there were some real heroes there. But I think USAID stepped up to the plate. In a matter of a few months we had programs going all around the world. I don't take any credit for that. The field staff in Asia and Africa where it was the most serious right away this was an issue really began undertaking the programs and engaging more with CDC, especially on drug therapies and things that require a little bit more technical and clinical sophistication than USAID had on staff.

*Q: Do you remember when it was started whether there was any apprehension about how we terminate the program? I mean, we now are in this situation where you have to support these people for life.*

TURNER: From day one the biggest concern that AID was putting on the table, not a concern to not do it but to build in a plan for, was there's no exit strategy, that these drugs cost a fortune and there is no sustainability. Most of these African countries not in the next five years certainly are going to be able to afford these kinds of drugs. And then they were a lot more expensive that once you put people on drugs you just can't stop or they die. The PEPFAR leadership as well as OMB didn't want to invest a lot in building the local institutions. They wanted fast, visible action to deliver drugs, deliver condoms, deliver trainings, they'd do testing, building up the ministry or the local community's ability to deal with this set of issues was not-

*Q: It's not what they do.*

TURNER: Exactly. USAID argued against the cookie cutter approach and short-term indicators even during the legislative process, but we did not succeed and we may not have been sensitive enough to the politics. And I certainly saw throughout my time in Global Bureau that many of the activities were not sustainable, and then I moved into PPC and I certainly saw USAID people step up to try to introduce more sustainable steps without success. Many of the indicators were what you might be able to collect in the US but not so in Africa. We saw a lot of people making the same mistakes from the 1970s of international development – building new buildings rather than delivering services, working around existing systems rather than strengthening them, paying salaries I remember, I think it was Tanzania, one of the countries, PEPFAR built a new building for the HIV/AIDS staff separate from the ministry of health, not even on the same compound. They didn't want to even integrate with the ministry of health. Plus, they didn't need a new building.

I went to a maternity hospital in an area not too far from Dar es Salaam, and CDC had built a new wing that was supposed to be for HIV/AIDS patients. And they had air conditioned it while the main hospital was not air conditioned. It was very nice. And, President Bush was coming to visit it in a few weeks and I happened to be in town and was coming to visit so they took me through it. Turned out the pregnant women were all outside in the sun baking and the maternity wards were packed with two women per bed and the new wing was occupied by doctor's private offices and conference rooms for the doctors. There was a plaque on the wall saying it was built by xxx US university and company Y and did not mention the U.S. Government at all. It was an embarrassment, but no real consistent accountability I could see.

*Q: All the patients were outside.*

TURNER: Yes. And nobody seemed to be bothered by that. The USAID auditors did not review CDC or other agency implementation. There were also a lot of good things that were done but a significant portion of the program in my view did not grow in a way to turn it over to the local governments.

The USG in some countries was buying all of the ARV drugs. Uganda was one country where the USG pays for virtually all of the HIV related drugs and many of the Ministry's HIV staff and there is no plan in sight for the government or other local groups in Uganda to pick it up. No exit strategy. It's not sustainable..

*Q: You've got to start putting this into your budget?*

TURNER: You've got to start getting agreement to put it into host government budgets. Many Mission Directors were aware of this but PEPFAR just did not push for it. And so, we still have a situation now where the majority of the drugs are provided through the USG budget. There is the same situation for healthcare workers in some countries where PEPFAR is paying many salaries. Something USAID has not permitted in any of its development projects for many years because it is not sustainable. The positions have not been built into the local Civil Service budget to do the work. The situations are scary to me, especially in the context of the current cuts.

There are other countries like South Africa, where the government or private funds in South Africa have been paying for the drugs for a decade and the USAID input is TA and training. Early in the South African program, I suspect PEPAR picked up many costs until the government leadership saw the importance of HIV program and made the investments. So, there are PEPFAR success stories, and I wouldn't want to be totally negative. But clearly the sustainability is not in place even after 15 years of the program.

*Q: Well, back on the Global Bureau, I think during your tenure the structure changed. Is that right or did that happen afterwards where it was broken up into three or two independent bureaus??*

TURNER: That did not happen until I left. I was there just at the beginning of that reorg discussion. I did not think that was a good idea particularly but that was not involved in that. I actually left in early 2002. It might have been late 2001 that I moved over to PPC, Program Policy Coordination. I think that some of the cross-office lessons learned were lost a bit. But there were pros and cons to the new structure. And I remember one of the big arguments that I got into with the new bureau, the new units, when I moved to PPC is we decided that even though every country is different and every program is different, like health and population we needed a set of common indicators. We need to apply the lessons of the health/pop staff who had established good ability to communicate with Congress, to know how to put indicators together that normal people could understand and not 800 indicators but eight, and who really did good reporting to the public and to their contractors who did the work. You could go anywhere in the world and every FSN knew what infant mortality was and what it meant and every contractor did. And the other offices needed to do that. You might say in a group like the Democracy Center, that's much harder, and so we're not looking necessarily for scientifically measurable indicators but each of the other sectors really had a hard time putting their indicators together. That didn't mean that's all you collect but it means everybody's collecting these three-

*PPC 2001*

*Q: So, you standardized.*

TURNER: Standardized. We started out with a number like 20 and it kept growing every week until it got up to like 120. I could never win the argument that we need to use a limited number of indicators that we use for internal monitoring and external reporting. They just had to have every little sub-indicator in there and of course it collapsed after time on itself. And to this day I do not think that some of the other sectors have done that. Education is trying but not succeeding too well, to be able to get a core set of indicators that everybody looks at.

*Q: And agrees on.*

TURNER: Yes. And I do think, having worked a little closer with Education in recent years, they did do a pretty thorough review some years ago and they shifted their strategy or adjusted their strategy. Although the strategy put basic education and getting kids in school as priority one, the data showed that the majority of kids who were in school could not read. So, they shifted the strategy to focus on reading and literacy. And I think that was based on looking really hard at data. But for a long they hadn't been collecting and analyzing that data.

*Q: Right. And they just looked at official enrollments.*

TURNER: Official enrollments, but not below that – the next levels down. And so, they never produced those indicators the way that the health and pop people worked on their

indicators. I do reorganization which puts new people in charge can make people think differently and so I think it should be done every few years, whether you need it or not.

*Q: You just need to shake it up.*

TURNER: You need to shake some things up and encourage new thinking. For instance, we were just sort of discovering IT (Information Technology) and the role of information technology and social media, which I don't think we had that concept in the early 2000s but with the reorg that needed to be integrated into projects. And I think now as the demographics have changed with new staff much more familiar with the role of technology, we all see more in the cellphones and mobile banking, social media, etc. But we work struggling, struggling to find money and interest, and that's the kind of thing that if the Global Bureau has a broad perspective, not just a stovepipe perspective, it can bring what are the crosscutting issues that everybody's dealing with, like how you use information technology and how you use credit. And so, those were things, I think, really helped that we had a broader global function.

On the other side, the Global Bureau had several groups of leaders with health and pop backgrounds because those programs were very successful and they tended to rise to the top. And maybe people may have felt that agriculture, education or environment would get more attention with separate bureaus. That might have been a piece of it as well.

*Q: Right. Well, you do hear the criticism, and this is a little awkward to mention it, that pop and health has basically squeezed out the rest of the budget and field offices would often complain that there was no money for anything except pop and health.*

TURNER: Right.

*Q: And I'm curious; do you think that's because the pop and the health programs were just more effective at making the presentation or do you think it would have happened anyway because the nature of those programs people or because there are so many outside groups that are also putting pressure on the appropriators to make funding available?*

TURNER: I think that there's a lot of reasons but I think that the pop and health people were definitely able to better communicate their message and I don't mean just the Foreign Service and Civil Service employees at USAID. They embraced a community and they engaged with that community very aggressively, not just to let out contracts. They would have meetings where some people never even had a contract with AID, would come in to the meetings to discuss their agenda. Some of the universities that didn't work with AID would come in for the intellectual stimulation. They learned how to share those lessons.

Secondly, health is humanitarian in nature and while you can't say it's not political because it's sure political but even for North Korea Congress would let us send immunizations for babies back then. If children are dying, no matter where they are, even

if we don't have a program with that country people feel it's good to do that. Most people can also relate to what the health assistance did. Most of them did not understand the specifics of what we did but they felt they could relate to it as a good thing.

They also have information and statistics that supported that emotional response so you had the science and the emotion coming together for people including legislators. The health team also understood that while we may have promoted some of the largest efforts like immunizations and oral rehydration, there were other health systems and disease efforts as well. We know that we could not equally report on everything in detail, so we set priorities and developed strong success stories around those priorities.

Focused programs like immunizations and ORT were the engine that drove the train. And I don't think other sectors completely learned that lesson. It's not like there was not dissent and special interests, but I can tell you that in one other sector I worked with in Global Bureau, when you brought that community together you could not get two people to agree on anything. They all wanted their own thing in there and we never were able to get a truly coherent and focused strategy. They did not have a common agenda that they were putting forward and they did not have the common indicators that they wanted to achieve. Same thing in agriculture. There was a whole range of agriculture things from research to extension services. The sector didn't pull it together in a real focused program that was both strategic and tactical. It didn't happen, at least during my time there. You now see a little bit more effort in some areas to do that. Feed the future, is trying to do that.

*Q: Right, And Power Africa.*

TURNER: Yes, Power Africa is an understandable focused program. Yet, it can include a wide range of development activities. In a recent meeting, a group was talking about how do we get Power Africa to electrify health centers. Because there's a lot of health centers without power and if the fiber optic cables coming down the coast, can we link Power Africa to the Health Systems project in Ghana, say. So, there were a lot of things in Power Africa that don't come across in the title or in the one-page description of it than has an impact on other development sectors. But they've succeeded, I think, in getting a focus. And USAID has to do a better job at that across the board.

*Q: Right.*

TURNER: When I went to the Rockefeller Foundation, they were well-known for their health work, that had been what they had been doing for years. Health, agriculture and the arts were their priorities. But they also had a fund, it was called Special Projects, and I got put on that review panel on Special Projects. Well, they funded many things. They were working on narcotic addiction issues. They were working on a whole range of things on how to get power to poor people or in isolated areas. And it was 25 percent of their budget. But they didn't go out and list all those 200 little things that we did with those special projects in their brochures and PR work. But someone from each department was engaged in the Special Projects. And I remember them saying look at

how people advertise. GE says we bring light – a lightbulb. GE is much, much more than lightbulbs.

*Q: Yes. Well, you're talking about it from a strategy and a communications point of view but I think that it's also something else, which is any organization that doesn't want to die intellectually needs what in the Ford Motor Company was called the skunk works, where you're trying out different ideas.*

TURNER: Absolutely.

*Q: Because who knows that you're going to need to be doing in 10 years.*

TURNER: Right, right, yes. Absolutely.

*Q: And I think that Special Projects unit that you were talking about was basically Rockefeller's way of keeping an eye out-*

TURNER: Absolutely. Their environment program started as special projects and grew. Also, the substance abuse efforts.

TURNER: Let's take a break.

### **Senior DAA PPC and Acting Deputy Administrator**

*Q: we're resuming the conversation with Barbara Turner on Thursday, September 29.*

TURNER: So, we're up to 2001 when the administration changed and a new president, new team came in from the 2000 election. The new USAID Administrator did not come in for at least six months after the new Administration started in January, so it may be July or August of 2001 before the USAID Administrator was confirmed and sworn in, which is quite common because the cabinet people have to get nominated and sworn in first and USAID is not a cabinet agency. So, I had to serve as acting Deputy Administrator of the agency. Colin Powell was Secretary of State, Rich Armitage his Deputy Secretary. Since the new Administrator was not on board, Don Presley and I and then Janet Ballantyne and I had to go over and brief them on USAID and its programs, face-to-face in their offices, which is pretty heady. It is a challenge to explain our entire Agency to folks who are not familiar with the programs. I also went to Secretary Powell's staff meeting every morning and had a parking place in the State Department building for those first 6 months. So, it was very interesting to see the transition so close up.

One of the things that I found was that it was a nice opportunity for the Secretary and senior State staff to see USAID career staff which seldom happens once there is a full political team in. I didn't do all the briefings myself, of course; if it was HIV/AIDS, I would take Paul DeLay, if it was Africa you'd take people in Africa that knew details about the programs. It forced us to think concisely about what we were doing and it allowed us to influence their thinking. I think although people come with preconceived

notions that we could give them a lot of practical info about USAID, its programs and its staff. My experiences in transitions have been that usually the USAID Administrator is not selected for their political prowess but for their knowledge of international work. I don't think we've had many administrators that didn't really know something about international relations before they came in. But, few have details of how USAID works. A political transition is a real opportunity for USAID staff to show results and explain what is important about our programs and approaches/processes. USAID staff should not fear it.

But, you do have to, again, recognize your audience. Naturally, the Republican Party often wants to see what the economic efficiencies, etc. are and almost everything USAID does has that. What if we can expand the number of educated people in the world? Our products could be better sold, we'd have better trade, better markets, more effective rule of law. What USAID does has political, social and economic impact and we often tend to focus on the social impact of it alone. It's the immediate thing you see and it's what we know but we also have great economic impacts, whether it is health, small farmers, or energy.

I did always find that we had to struggle to make it as simple and try not to use too much bureaucratic language and not too much detail at one time. It takes some effort to focus on a few salient points. And nobody in any party likes people saying we can't do that. It's certainly possible to say that we haven't done that in the past or we haven't looked at that, or we would have to adjust to do that. It is an opportunity to present new ideas, not just to say what we cannot do.

In 2001, the new Administrator, Andrew Natsios, asked me to move over to the Program Policy Coordination Bureau as Deputy Assistant Administrator. He used this Bureau as a direct staff of the Administrator's Office. I had worked with Andrew Natsios before. He had been the OFDA (Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance) Director when I was starting the New Independent States program, and so we worked very closely on that for over a year. State was becoming increasingly engaged in foreign assistance budget and implementation decisions particularly in an increasing number of fragile states, and he wanted a team in there in the policy and budget operation that knew the agency well. He wanted us to have a greater role with the NSC. He promoted and achieved establishing a full-time development position for a Development Officer from USAID at the NSC. There had never been such a thing before. It took him maybe two years to do that but from the day one that's what he wanted and he wanted people that had that relationship or ability to establish credibility in State and the NSC policy making. Andrew was very big on policy agendas and he wanted to revitalize some of the AID policies, such as the policy papers USAID had done in the past. He did talk to, I believe, a number of people like Alex Shakow and others who had led at that time and he had a great intellectual interest.

I actually was not excited about the position because I enjoy the implementation level of things and was concerned the policy role might take me away from that. But, I also wasn't excited about the restructuring of the Global Bureau and so I made the PPC

choice. It turned out to be a very interesting time and like most jobs at USAID, the opportunities for interesting work are many. However, it was probably the hardest job I ever had, largely because the budget is a hugely difficult process and no matter what you do you don't make people happy. No one ever gets as much money as they wanted and even if you gave them all the money that wouldn't be enough. And when you're dealing with numbers and policies in the abstract all day long you have to struggle to stay in touch with the real world. All my other jobs before this had really been hands-on jobs, even the Global Bureau. We traveled, we were looking at real situations, there wasn't a single day where there wasn't someone from the field working with us, talking to us about their specific field things. So, it was very tangible. We did not have that in PPC. So, it was a challenge for me.

The State-USAID relationship was truly changing. State did want to change the relationship with AID. I think it might have been because of the military leadership at State; they were used to having control over the units under them and USAID had always had kind of a weird relationship with State. No one could ever decide whether they were in charge of us or not in charge of us. They used to get a copy of our budget and congressional presentation and there might even have been somebody that read it. But, few were deeply immersed in USAID allocations and activities beyond the political and geographic allocations. What is the total level of money going to Egypt, Pakistan, etcetera. But they certainly didn't look very tightly at whether that money was going for agriculture, education, health or whatever. And the new leadership wanted to do more of that. So, almost from the beginning but certainly after the first year or so we had to prepare the budget and defend it to State in detail and at the highest levels. We had to do a presentation to the Deputy Secretary of State for half a day on our budget. It was very-

*Q: Adversarial?*

TURNER: It was adversarial, yes, yes. It was. Because the foreign affairs budget is one budget a dollar or two in a USAID program is a dollar not to an embassy and that became starker. The internal allocations between diplomacy and development were often made by the Congressional committees but it became much more contentious with State and much more difficult, particularly on the operating expense side which involved staff and staff training, buildings, security, etc. While I was there it was tough largely because few State staff had a basic understanding of USAID's work, budget or policies and there was a lot of educating. For USAID, it was another layer of work. But it was professional and we did have a chance to engage at the highest levels so State and mostly won our points and once we agreed on the budget we got support from State with OMB and the Hill. But, with the introduction of the large PEPFAR budget and a Coordinator and coordinator's staff, they wanted to get into greater and greater detail which really slowed down the process. So, by the time I left USAID in 2005, State had just created this F bureau and a whole bureaucracy to revisit the foreign assistance budget and later gradually moved the budget process over to State and out of USAID. And there was a delinking of policy and what you're doing with the money from how much money. I think USAID suffered in defending our budget and results both with OMB and on the Hill from this restructuring.

*Q: Well, I think that's right. I think they never really understood how engaged the Hill was with the role of earmarks, the role of keeping close communications with the interested Hill staff.*

TURNER: Yes. There was a point at which State said that we, at least we in PPC, could not directly go to the Hill and told Hill staffers they shouldn't be calling us directly. When they told the staffers on the Hill not to be calling us directly, the staffers complained. They pressed State back and so that plan was dropped but we had to keep State informed of Hill interaction and State wanted to assign staff to go with us – duplication. But, after a while, State didn't have the time or staff so it faded away, but left us uncertain on what State really wanted to be briefed and engaged on so that made the relationship a very tough one which PPC had to spend a lot of time on. Fortunately, in PPC I had a very, very, very excellent partner, the other Deputy AA, Jon Bressler, who was a brilliant budget person and he had a fabulous sense of humor so he could almost make budgets fun. And he was very genuine in his presentations and so people felt a lot of credibility with him. That was great for USAID because it could easily be quite irritating to have such a focus on process over substance.

But the Administrator struggled greatly as there is no easy answer. There were debates about whether the USAID Administrator should have two hats. We talked about some reorganization, should we become a department within the State Department. I was concerned about that. I didn't think USAID should be an assistant secretary level; at least there could be two deputies, one for State and one for AID, if you will, in diplomacy and development. During my time, we never really got integrated and we never got unintegrated or made independent. So, USAID has been in organizational limbo for many years. During the Bush Administration, the desire to control USAID definite accelerated. But, I didn't see anything positive or better for the programs coming from it. And as PEPFAR came along with a high-profile program and a State Coordinator, that shifted the overall balance greatly. And when I left USAID in 2005 that's when State created what they call the F bureau. The new bureau took over the full budget function which seemed nuts to me as budgeting, and, especially, budgeting for longer term development programs was just not something State had ever done. A budget that doesn't link with clear goals and results is just numbers, it is meaningless. Perhaps, State eventually learned that because they let USAID take the budget back some years later. But the State-USAID relationship is still an unresolved issue in the structure of USAID and it's not a minor one. A lot of it has to be resolved with relationships, it really does. It really makes a lot of difference that the USAID Administrator be senior enough and established enough with enough credibility, politically and diplomatically, that they're able put together a strong team at the top that can influence the State Department, NSC, etc. USAID should develop a mix of staff, especially in Washington, that have both strong field implementation experience but also have broader knowledge of foreign policy and USAID's role in it. Not only do you have to relate at the top but every assistant secretary and deputy assistant secretary and even desk officers at State tends to think their role is to oversee USAID, not as peers. I remember once going to the War College for a presentation; there was a panel with one person from USAID, State Department and Peace Corps. The State Department person assumed they would were the senior officer

on the panel, but I was a deputy assistant administrator and they were a deputy assistant secretary and I was given the first chair; I was considered the higher rank because my SES grade was higher than his. He was really upset. He was arguing with the General in charge of the panel that this was not correct, etcetera, and the General was having nothing of this. He said: we go by rank here and your rank is lower and it doesn't matter where you work.

*Q: Right. It's a story I've heard many, many times where the AID person outranks the State person.*

TURNER: Yes, right, right. And at that session I got all the questions. People all gathered around me at the end to talk. They were interested in the USAID story. The diplomatic story is not quite as exciting, and State presentations are usually very diplomatic and reserved. We've never resolved that relationship.

*Q: And in every transition it comes up again.*

TURNER: Indeed, in every transition. I'm hopeful on the new transition in 2017, the current Administrator has all those credentials, he's been an ambassador, he's been a congressman, he's been in the Peace Corps, he's run an NGO; I mean, he's touched all the development principles and has credibility and has done well in all of them. I don't know him, but it certainly is a hopeful in an administration that starts off not favoring USAID's work.

*Q: Right.*

### **Creation of the MCC**

TURNER: Eventually during the Bush Administration, in 2003, the time the Millennium Challenge Corporation program was developed, there was a discussion at high levels of elevating USAID to a cabinet level and finding ways to revitalize the foreign assistance program and USAID. I met people on the White House staff who thought that should happen, but they just couldn't take the political heat. And of course, with Iraq brewing and all of national security issues related to countries like Afghanistan after 9/11, there was just no way they were going to take on State and Congress.

But one of the things the team felt was there had to be ways to streamline USAID and to get away from some of the earmarks and directives. USAID was involved in those discussions and many meetings. There was a team of people from the NSC, State Department, USAID, OMB and Treasury looking at what could be done, especially in the more reforming countries. The structure for a new program was the key issue. From USAID, PPC was the point for this and we had a Senior Foreign Service Officer join the team who had worked on the USAID Africa Development Fund that the senior staff such as Ray Love and Carol Peasley of the Africa Bureau had developed many years before.

*Q: Yes, in the '80s.*

TURNER: The team moved ahead with a program design with a decision on where it would be housed. USAID proposed many of those Africa Development Fund criteria for how they allocated the Africa budget at that time. Most of the criteria were accepted by the group. Governance issues were added more strongly. The intent was to allocate at least some portion foreign assistance more they quality of governance and the political freedoms and economic reforms and health and education rather than earmarks and US political interests. We also insisted these factors needed to be evaluated against some evidence. It shouldn't just be judgmental, it had to have some evidence behind it and so USAID really were the ones who insisted that there be indicators and identified sources to get those indicators. Over the years, USAID had lost was the ability to do big projects like construction because of funding earmarks for other activities. USAID also pressed for local ownership and direction so the MCC compact ideas really come from the host countries.

Once the basic ideas behind the program were in place, we discussed extensively whether the program should be in USAID or not. We put together a couple of options: in USAID or in State or an independent operation with USAID and State on the board of the MCC. And I thought for quite some time that it was leaning toward USAID because they adopted our recommendations for how the program criteria and design, we had the staff, and the capability and I think created a lot of good will with the other agencies during the team meetings. No one seemed to favor moving it into State. But in the end, after discussion with Congress, the White House staff felt that if it went to USAID it would fall prey to the same earmark and directive practices and appropriators would not see it as a separate entity. This was a big disappointment. A decision was made to get a businessman to run the MCC like a business so that we could try to convince Congress not to put a lot of barnacles on it. Of course, we at USAID didn't agree with that. We fought it. But it was a hard argument to make, to be honest with you. We couldn't say no, no, we can Congress. We knew that if it came under the Foreign Assistance Act in the same way, there was a risk. So, they determined to write new legislation and create a new independent entity.

The White House was in charge of this. OMB was heavily engaged and the NSC was involved but Gary Edson and others on the White House team were very, very involved.

It was agreed that USAID was on the board, a full board member. State was chairman of the board but each member had a vote. They could not let a country in that did not get the votes so our vote counted. So, we certainly got a lot. We envisioned that a lot of USAID people might move over to work at the MCC, but when they hired a businessman he wanted it to bring outside people, new people, in and he did not want large field offices. At that point in early 2004 when the MCC legislation passed, the MCC head reported directly to the White House, so we had limited chances to make changes.

*Q: Right.*

TURNER: Largely because they did not have a team that knew the countries, the MCC got off to a very slow start. They got a lot of criticism from the Hill and in fact, what the White House and OMB had proposed as the MCC budget was fully approved in the first year by Congress. But, by the second year, Congress cut back the budget proposed by the White House and the third year cut back even more because the MCC wasn't able to move the funds. In the government if you don't spend money you're not going to get you more money. Unfortunately, the MCC budget never really got back to those higher initial funding levels because they took a long time to get up and structured. And I think that was very demoralizing to USAID staff. After a couple years the MCC started bringing more people in from USAID.

Also, the MCC ask USAID to handle what they called the threshold countries, a pre-compact funding program for countries that had to improve in only one or two of the criteria. So, there was a direct relationship with USAID. Also, the budgets were additive to the USAID budget and appropriated separately. And one of the biggest shortcomings at USAID was a shortage of staff. So, it wasn't easy for USAID without increases in its own staff budgets to take on a lot more of the MCC work. I had hope for more of a direct connection and relationship between USAID and MCC.

*Q: Maybe it still could happen, that it becomes part of AID.*

TURNER: It still could happen that way. Given what it is it doesn't really make sense. Now that it's established it doesn't make sense to be in a separate bureaucracy.

One discussion we had at the beginning of the program was that maybe at some point, if MCC established credibility in Congress and others saw that you could function better without all the earmarks and special provisions you would morph more of the USAID program over and joint parts of USAID and MCC without all the barnacles. But it never evolved to that and not everyone had that vision. But it was quite fascinating to work on it and most people don't know that USAID was indeed very instrumental in creating the MCC. We had a couple of full-time people, Cynthia Rozell and others working on it full-time for many months.

*Q: You were sworn to secrecy?*

TURNER: No. Discussions were not public but sometimes quite a few staff including from USAID were in those discussions because we were discussing options. I am sure the USAID Administrator was called to the Hill to discuss some of those options and USAID views. But there was not a lot of public debate and dissent. At the same time, when the new organization and legislation was presented to the Hill, there were not a lot of champions for USAID. And when it was announced I think Andrew Natsios, and many others talked to the USAID staff, did presentations, discussed it, and we fully expected a lot of USAID people to move over to MCC. The USAID Administrator was an active Board Member and we did staff work for him around the meeting agenda. It was only after about a year of operation that we saw the MCC wasn't going in the direction we had

hoped. So, then we were in an awkward position of not jeopardizing the funding and complaining.

*Q: Right, right.*

### **The Asian Tsunami 2004**

TURNER: One of the last things that I worked on at USAID was the disaster assistance program responding to the tsunami in Indonesia in December 2004. In a large disaster like that, the budget team are engaged in the program because it impacts the entire Agency's resources. I literally was on vacation, out of Washington at my sister's house for Christmas and I was not watching much TV when I got a phone call from the disaster assistance people saying there's this huge tsunami and we've already committed the \$25,000 disaster authority, we must have authority to spend more money. OFDA cannot do that without PPC, the budget office, releasing additional funds. So, I got engaged right away because that involves adjusting funds from other places. When I got back the next day or two to DC, we had a task force together which I joined regularly. Eventually, the President and the past presidents, Bush and Clinton, got involved and really started elevating the public and private attention to the issue. We were working very closely with the military because they had a lot of ships in the area. And we also couldn't just have the DART team, the Disaster Assistance office handle it because they're just small teams and this was a huge, huge effort in a number of countries. And so, we really had the Asia Bureau staff actively engaged and I think the task force leaders were Mark Ward and Debbie Kennedy from the Asia Bureau. So, they really put together an incredible effort of USAID at its best. Even now in 2017, we have the hurricanes in Puerto Rico and there's no power or water. And the USAID DART teams know that's the number one to survive, is water. So, we had all these huge containers and we got them out and got them helicoptered out to the Aceh so the military tankers with water could get the water inland to the people. The military gave USAIDs full credit for it. From the very beginning, Presidents and Bush and Clinton who were on this, 41 Bush, saw that USAID was making a difference because we did things like that. I think we did bring our lessons from Bosnia and Russia and other places in for that tsunami. And budget can actually be fun when you've got a clear goal and measurable results to really see how you're making a difference.

*Q: Was Congress deeply involved? Did you ask for supplemental for the-?*

TURNER: We did eventually ask for a supplemental, but it was happening so fast at the very beginning. It was about April or May before we got a supplemental and this happened at Christmas. In Washington that's like miracle to get a supplemental so quickly, but there were literally people dying the first couple of months with no water and no infrastructure so we had to move fast. And the place with the worst damage was in Aceh, which is a remote region of Indonesia so it wasn't like you could just fly into the capital city. It took some time. It was a fascinating process to be engaged in and feel you were making a difference in real time, and an interesting cap to my USAID career.

And then I went on to the private sector.

### **President, University Research Company**

*Q: Yes. Could you talk a little bit about that?*

TURNER: I let a lot of friends know I was retiring from USAID. I had wanted to leave USAID in 2004, but the Administrator asked me to stay through the 2004 election because transitions are difficult and I'd been through a lot of them. The AA of PPC was leaving at the end of the first term, and if a new president came in I could help with the transition. So, I agreed to do that and then in the spring of 2005, I left government with great sadness. It was a real hard decision. Within government, I don't think there's any better jobs than USAID. I really don't. The agenda is a global one and very exciting. Even though some of the government bureaucracy may get you down, the work brings you back up. Later that summer, I took a job as the president of a private company and even as the president of a company you don't get that same level of excitement and involvement and engagement as we had at USAID.

### **Service to America Award 2005**

I was very honored in 2005. There is a Service to America award, which is awarded by a non-profit private company, Partnership for Public Service, together with the Atlantic Magazine for government employees. It is government wide and they have several categories such as a career achievement award, US Government employee of the year, science award, etc. About 6 or 7 categories. USAID nominated me for the career service award and I won it.

*Q: Congratulations.*

TURNER: The Partnership for Public Services holds a big black-tie dinner with maybe 1,000 invited guests including many Secretaries, businessmen and Congressmen. It is very nice for the private sector to recognize public service as civil service don't get a lot of public recognition. These are awarded every year with the winners meeting with Congressmen, pictures in The Washington Post and an article in the Atlantic Monthly. A handful of USAID staff have won these over the years.

I had planned to take off about six months or so. I knew that I did want to continue working in the private or non-profit sector. And I knew that I wanted to stay international. While I had planned to take off for about six months, I kept getting phone calls because people knew I had retired, and a few of the jobs seemed interesting so I did a few interviews. It was certainly different especially in private executive jobs where you had to know how to manage to meet the payroll and deal with profit and loss.

*Q: The balance sheet.*

TURNER: The balance sheet I didn't understand. I was nervous about whether my government experience and even my budget experience would transfer to management of the balance sheet. And I was very nervous about some of those positions and I was reluctant to apply. But one head hunter kept calling me about an opening for president of an international health company. He kept saying to me that my name kept coming up as the right person for this job. He convinced me to meet with him and talk about jobs his company had placing a senior government officials. So, I went in and met with him and he was really a wonderful advisor. He basically said look, profit is just another line item on the budget. These skills you have, and he would go through some of them, they're just as applicable to the private sector or the NGO community. The company, University Research Company, had worked with USAID for a long time. They also had a domestic health program. They did a lot of work called operations research back then, which was very evidence-based and that interested me so I took the job as the president of the company.

It was a company that was an LLC (Limited Liability Company) privately owned. The owner had been involved with the company since 1965 when it started so he was very committed to the work. We worked well together, and I found that skills I learned in government absolutely applied and very easily to the private sector. I really did. People helped me, the owner helped me, and mentored me. It was very fun to start working on some U.S. programs; the similarities were incredible. The company worked with migrant seasonal farm workers throughout the United States in a program of getting their kids in school and in CHIP, the health insurance program for children, which they are eligible for with no questions asked about citizenship. The health work we did with HHS was for minority populations, many of which- one of the things the company, I thought added was because they did international work they understood the cultures we were dealing with and a lot of people would take information and just translate it. You don't just translate the words; you translate the culture. All our international experience was relevant. A company runs on a tight budget, USAID thinks it has a tight budget but a company's budget is really limited and very mercurial about what happens to government funds so my skills and experience served me well.

And then I got to see USAID from the other side. The frustrations were just enormous among staff working with USAID. I did a lot to explain to them why things were happening because USAID would just say we don't have the money with no explanation, and I would say they have the money; they're deciding not to fund this. They're putting it somewhere else. We know their budget; they've got \$14 billion, this is only \$1 million. So, the way USAID communicates outside with its contractors is even worse than it communicates with Congress inside, just horrible. Partly, because some people don't understand how hard it is actually implement a project when decisions and funding are delayed. USAID hasn't in recent years implemented projects itself and so how long it takes to stand up a project and to get the local relationships going at the beginning, are things they do not seem to see or feel are part of their role. How to respond to the changes in the government and changes by different USAID project representatives. They often don't honor the scope of work in the agreement or what the host government feels they need. The contractor's role is one of a mediator often.

*Q: Right, right.*

TURNER: Probably the biggest thing that disappointed me is I see very little serious policy dialogue between USAID and the host countries and especially not at the technical level. So, I have had situations where we would say we really need an MOU with the government to agree to do this because they have to do some of these things. USAID would say well, why don't you write it? It should be an MOU between USAID and the government, not the contractor.

I saw little policy and very few relationships. In one country we had a big opening of a new project and the minister came, regional health directors and other country officials. The Mission Director arrived late, said a few words and left, didn't even stay for the coffee afterwards and it was so embarrassing. And, to be honest with you, health was the biggest portfolio in that country so I don't know where else they had to go. And it had been consulted with their calendar. It was an isolated case.

*Q: Is it arrogance or is it ignorance?*

TURNER: Well, I think it's a little bit of both. Clearly the USAID staff are too stretched with too few staff for their portfolios. But also, they are focused inward. They spend all their time talking to each other and writing reports.

*Q: To themselves.*

TURNER: -to themselves, to Washington, including to the mission director, to the auditors, but they don't get out to the field and see the program in action or get to know the local government officials so there is a strong relationship. I've talked to health officers who haven't been out to the field more than once a year. So why are they posted in the country. They could visit once a year from the US. Even some of the FSNs don't get out. I remember in Uganda going out to western Uganda and the FSN in the mission was our activity officer and I invited him to go with us and he was so excited because he'd never been there. It's not that big of a country, you know. And he managed the project that had activities in that part of the country, and he's Ugandan. The dialogue and the relationship and help guiding them to policy reforms is what USAID should be doing. When you have a good activity officer and a good mission director, boy, can you accomplish so much more as a contractor. And we have some of those situations but I have to say-

*Q: They're rare.*

TURNER: they are just too rare today. The culture has changed and it impacts implementation success.

*Q: Or you've got to think of a very different model.*

TURNER: Or we need a very different model if that's not what we're going to put the investment in. And as we go forward when we see the increased security cost of being overseas and decreased budgets I think we're ready for some totally new models. And I hope, as they do that, staff would involve some of the implementing organizations, not financially, but with brainstorming and working on how to manage the foreign assistance programs. It's not just the academic, scientific piece of the policy, it really is what's the implementation and ability to make our work have an impact and be sustainable locally.

*Q: Yes. That's fascinating. Well, that's probably a good challenge for the next 10 years*

TURNER: Absolutely. It's not short-term; it really is a long-term proposition.

*Q: Thank you. This was fabulous. What a career you have had, and what a difference you have made!*

*End of interview*