

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
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DR. JANET BALLANTYNE

*Interviewed by: Kenneth L. Brown
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INTERVIEW

[Note: Dr. Ballantyne was not able to edit this interview prior to her death.]

Q: Today is January 13, 2015 this is an oral history of Dr. Janet Ballantyne on behalf of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training and I am Kenneth Brown. Janet welcome, please tell us when and where you were born.

Childhood and Early Background

BALLANTYNE: I was born in Port Washington, New York, April 8, 1939.

Q: Tell me a bit about your family background starting on your father's side.

BALLANTYNE: My father was the son of missionaries. He was born in a little town in what was then British India which is now Pakistan, Sialkot. It is a little town that I think is mostly known for the fact it's had more Presbyterian missionaries than Pakistani's at any other time. He spent the first eighteen years of his life there and graduated from Woodstock School in Mussoorie, a hill station town, and came to the United States for the first time when he was eighteen. He had only a passport, twenty dollars, and his admission to Muskingum College.

Q: Which college?

BALLANTYNE: Muskingum College, a Presbyterian school in Ohio. My mother was the daughter of a Presbyterian minister. She was born in Buffalo, New York, and they met when they were both in graduate school at Columbia during the depths of the Depression. The story was that my father could no longer afford to take her out on dates, so he married her.

Q: Well before we go on with that generation, on your mother's side where was she born?

BALLANTYNE: She was born in Buffalo, New York, the daughter of Irish immigrants. Her maiden name was Campbell which is a very Scot name, but if you recall at one point the Campbells were all kicked out of Scotland; they called them the bloody Campbells.

Q: They killed the MacDonalds.

BALLANTYNE: They did; they killed anybody who was in their path, I understand. The story is they were greatly hated and my father's family, a Ballantyne, is again another very Scot name in the Wallace Clan, and the story is that when I was born my grandfather was in the same hospital and he was dying but they took me in to see him. They said, "Here is your granddaughter Janet Campbell Ballantyne." He said, "Campbell Ballantyne? There is no such thing."

Q: The Campbells and the Ballantynes didn't get along.

BALLANTYNE: No, they didn't, but my parents did and they were both very educated people. At the time they were coming into their own as parents and into the labor force, it was a very

rough time as World War II had broken out. My father had gone back to get his doctorate. At one point when my brother was still quite young, he had finished all of his course work for his PhD and his thesis advisor dropped dead ice-skating on Beebe Lake in Ithaca, New York. Back in those days, there wasn't a backup advisor, so he would have had to repeat two years or drop out. For financial reasons, he therefore had to drop out and was, I think, always very much a frustrated academic. He certainly made sure that my brother and I were well schooled, particularly in English literature, which was his field. When I was born in New York, he was working in the academic program at Julliard teaching English as, I think, an adjunct professor and working night shifts as a night watchman for Grumman Aircraft. Of course, in those days wives didn't work. Wives stayed home and took care of the kids, so I never thought we were poor but I knew we didn't have a lot of extra funds. When I was six my father decided to scrap academics altogether and took a job with General Motors working in their human resources/personnel office and we moved to Dayton, Ohio, where I spent the rest of my growing up.

Q: What was your childhood like?

BALLANTYNE: I think we had a very good childhood. It was very free; our parents trusted us; there were no stories of children being molested or kidnapped or bad things happening to them. I see the way kids are now, particularly teenagers, who don't go anywhere unless they go in a pack or with their parents. Not long ago I had one of the mothers in my neighborhood coming to my house selling Girl Scout cookies. I said, "I thought Girl Scouts sold Girl Scout cookies." She said, "Not anymore."

Q: Was the daughter with her?

BALLANTYNE: No. I said, "I thought you'd have brought your daughter." She said, "She's doing her homework and she'd going to get into an honors program." There was never much pressure on us as kids. My parents expected me to get straight A's and I don't recall ever working very hard and I got straight A's.

Q: Were you much of a reader?

BALLANTYNE: A tremendous reader. My parents were both readers and my brother who is five years older than I am taught me how to read when I was two.

Q: Really.

BALLANTYNE: He taught me the letters and I didn't speak a lot. My brother chose to answer most questions that were directed at me; as my mother said, I used to read far more than I talked. At one point one of my friends said, "Boy, were that to be true these days."

Q: What did your brother end up doing?

BALLANTYNE: Right after he got out of graduate school at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, my brother went into the Marine Corps and stayed in the Marines for about eight years. He then came back and joined General Motors; we were definitely a General Motors family.

Q: You're a GM family.

BALLANTYNE: My father died when I was a sophomore in college and my brother came out of the service, I think, two or three years later.

Q: These straight A's that you were getting, those were in the public schools?

BALLANTYNE: Yes.

Q: At that time did they have academic majors in high school? Did you pursue an academic course?

BALLANTYNE: No, no. You took the academic curriculum or the trade curriculum.

Q: Oh, I see.

BALLANTYNE: You knew where you were in the class because they calculated every semester based on your grades and ranked everyone. With my class there were 365 kids and you knew whether you were one or 212.

Q: They would post the list? And where did you tend to be on the list?

BALLANTYNE: I was easily in the top two.

Q: The top two? Really one or two?

BALLANTYNE: My great nemesis in high school was a guy who I became much better friends with once we graduated and went to college. He ended up being number one and...

Q: So he was the valedictorian?

BALLANTYNE: He was the valedictorian.

Q: At that time did they also have salutatorian?

BALLANTYNE: Yes I was a salutatorian.

Q: So you were the salutatorian? So you graduated from high school in what about '57?

BALLANTYNE: '57.

Q: '57 and went from there to where?

BALLANTYNE: To Cornell University.

Q: Cornell.

BALLANTYNE: My parents wanted me very much to go to one of the small Presbyterian schools in Ohio where they had gone. By the time I was seventeen I was sick of those schools because we used to go to all the homecomings; I knew all the songs and I found them very boring. My father had done his graduate work for his doctorate at Cornell and we stopped there one summer when I was maybe a sophomore and I took one look at the campus and wanted to go there. But I had to come up with a good story of why I preferred to go 700 miles away for school and not follow in my mother and father's footsteps. So I developed a compelling interest in engineering and applied to and was accepted in the school of chemical engineering.

Q: So you went into chemical engineering. Did you pursue that major throughout the years?

BALLANTYNE: Oh no. It was an interesting year but it was very clear to me and certainly to the faculty that I was not designed to be a great chemical engineer. At the end of one semester I had slightly under a gentleman's C average and I was freely transferred to the school of arts and sciences.

Q: What major did you choose? You chose government didn't you?

BALLANTYNE: Yes government; I changed majors so often. When my father was dying, I asked what he thought I should major in. His response always stuck with me. He said, "Don't even think about that. You are going to a great university with great teachers. Find the very, very best teachers and take whatever they have to offer."

Q: That caused you to move around a bit?

BALLANTYNE: That caused me to move around a bit. I took courses in geology, I took courses in astronomy, I took a course from Vladimir Volkov, the History of European Literature, but what I got from Cornell was just a tremendous liberal education, and government was a convenient major when I was a junior and had to declare.

Q: did you get involved in extracurricular activities?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, I spent all four years working for the Cornell Daily Sun as it calls itself; on the masthead Ithaca's only morning newspaper.

Q: Were you a reporter or editor?

BALLANTYNE: I started off as a reporter; you have to compete for the position. Then I became interested in features, all sorts of interesting people and interesting things within a radius of Ithaca, New York, and ended up as features editor my senior year. But it was not altogether altruistic. It was the only extracurricular activity where if you got in the right position you got paid.

Q: Oh.

BALLANTYNE: For a couple of years, I was a proofreader; this was back in the days when newspapers were set in linotype. I used to go down to the print shop, which was also the print shop for Ithaca's only afternoon newspaper, The Ithaca Daily Sun or The Ithaca Journal. You had to learn to take a pile of linotype and basically read upside down and backwards. Otherwise, you could take the extra time and print out and then go back. But, I found it so much easier, and learning to read upside down and backwards is a very, very important life skill I found.

Q: You would have made a good spy.

BALLANTYNE: I actually had plans to be a spy.

Q: Well what thwarted those plans?

BALLANTYNE: I mean I didn't.

Q: You weren't serious about it.

BALLANTYNE: I was serious about it.

Q: Oh you were serious.

BALLANTYNE: My senior year I had an interview with the agency and I came down to Washington, D.C., being the capital and I had never been here before. I went through a battery of tests and lectures and I guess it was the last day that we were having a lecture and I was doing the New York Times crossword puzzle...

Q: While they were lecturing?

BALLANTYNE: ...while they were lecturing. All of a sudden the lecturer just stopped and turned to me and said, "Am I boring you?" I said, "No, not at all sir." He said, "I notice you are doing a crossword puzzle." I said, "I like to pride myself in being able to do two things at the same time." Well they were not interested in that particular form of humor. When I got back to school a couple of days later I got a letter saying thank you very much for your interest but you are no longer under consideration.

Q: So you weren't in a trainee program then. This was a program...

BALLANTYNE: I was just applying and I was devastated. I saw myself as the Mata Hari type , hanging out in bars in Munich picking up incredibly important tidbits. Well what do you do when you've been turned down by the only American agency; you don't apply to the KGB. So I was telling my advisor and he said, "You what?" I said, "I really thought that I would make a very good intelligence agent." He said, "You would be terrible." He said, "What are you going to do now; it's April?" I was about to graduate in six weeks. I said, "You know I don't know." He said, "Well what about graduate school?" I said, "Well, I wish I had thought about it sooner but I think it may be too late." He said, "Wait a minute." He picked up the phone and he called a friend of his who was the dean of The Maxwell School in Syracuse and I can just hear his end of the conversation which was, "Ah huh, you know until about a half hour ago I thought she was a very bright young woman and she was about to make a dreadful career choice. She is a wonderful writer and she's interesting; you would like her." Then he looked at me and said, "Do you need a fellowship?" I said, "Yeah, but I don't have any money." He said, "Yeah, she'll need the fellowship but I'm sure that she will be willing to work." He hung up the phone and he said, "Guess what? You're going to The Maxwell School."

Q: Without putting pen to paper.

BALLANTYNE: But you know that was the good old boys network and it turned out that the person he talked to had been with him at Harvard where they both got their PhDs. That was, I think, the turning point in my own life was going to Syracuse, which was a very serious school. They were very serious schools. As an undergraduate, I used to skip classes, I used to play bridge, I was not destructive and didn't do anything bad, but came pretty close at times. In graduate school, I learned that nobody was going to tell you what to do. You figure it out yourself and then you do it, but the faculty is always there to help. I ended up becoming very good friends with a couple of people on the faculty who were just wonderful. It was through the old Socratic method of just questioning, questioning, questioning and I'd say, "What is the answer?" They'd say, "The answer is what you make the answer." At the later part of that year they had a program called The

Maxwell Overseas Training Program funded through a Ford Foundation Grant or Carnegie Grant to take a bunch of recently minted master's degree candidates or lawyers and send them off to India for a year to be closely observed, I think, to see how many of us could take this. I was selected and was really very excited. I had never ever left the United States except for a couple family trips to Canada. The idea of going half way around the world, I think, proved that I had a little wanderlust in my blood that may have come through my father's family.

Q: Was your outlook at that point influenced by political views from your family? Was your family politically oriented? Did they have discussions around the dinner table about politics?

BALLANTYNE: My parents were rock-ribbed Taft, Ohio Republicans. My father when he was at General Motors was in personnel management and labor relations. He had to deal with the unions which he saw as being the devil incarnate. He was also a very religious man as he was the son of missionaries. He never foisted his religion, we were churchgoers but there was never this is what you have to do with your life. But, my father did tell me the story from the Book of Revelations about the end of time being signaled by three signs. My father saw those signs as Joseph Stalin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Walter Reuther. I didn't even know who Walter Reuther was at that point. So I think as an undergraduate (I don't tell my friends this very often) I was actually in the Young Republicans Club.

Syracuse changed all that. One of the things we had to do was an individual research project and I decided to do a study of political affiliations in the less affluent wards of Syracuse. That exposed me to a section of life I had never seen before; I'd never seen poverty. I had kind of a white bread, middle class upbringing, but I did have a roommate who was a real leftwing radical, SDS, the whole nine yards. We recently had a 50th anniversary of the group I went to Maxwell with and I hadn't seen most of them for 50 years. My then roommate announced to the entire class that my conversion to become a Democrat was due to her. I said, "I think it was actually John F. Kennedy."

Q: So this was a year in India in this program?

BALLANTYNE: We were placed with American institutions. I was placed in New Delhi with USAID, an organization I had never heard of. India was at that point the largest AID mission in the world; I'm going to say over one thousand direct hires, but that may be an exaggeration. Anyway, it was huge. About the time the Green Revolution was getting started there were all sorts of advisors here and there, and I got put in the executive or administrative office. I found out I would be dealing with requisitions for new carpeting, and that wasn't the reason that I had come to India. So that same professor at Cornell who had gotten me into Syracuse was heading up a Ford Foundation team in Calcutta working with the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization which was a huge undertaking to get some of the best minds that they could get in a variety of disciplines to try to develop a master plan for the city of Calcutta that made sense. I talked to the people at Syracuse and said, "This AID stuff, first of all, it's an agency that's never going to last. I really need something a little more action oriented." They approved my transfer to Calcutta where I was working with 25 or so U.S. advisors who worked with Vest. The guy I got assigned to work with, Bill Vickery, later won the Nobel Prize in economics. I can't say that he taught me enough to win a Nobel Prize myself but he convinced me that I really wanted to become involved in economic development. He was instrumental in getting me on a new track and until his death was always very, very supportive. I then came back and went to graduate school.

Q: What impact did the atmosphere in Calcutta have on you this young woman from Ohio going into that kind of setting?

BALLANTYNE: It just opened my eyes to so much, to poverty, to social issues, to issues of race. From my office I used to look out on one of the back streets and there was a homeless family that lived on the street. You hear of the street dwellers of Calcutta and I watched that family for a year just wondering how they survived. Actually before I left I screwed my courage and went down and talked to them and found out that the wretched of the earth are doomed. There was no upward mobility and that's where, I guess, I got the idea that I would like to be some sort of an agent for change in the human condition and how people live.

Q: That crossword puzzle changed your life didn't it?

BALLANTYNE: Can you imagine had I not done that, God knows where I'd be?

Q: So you graduated from college what in '61?

BALLANTYNE: '61.

Pre-USAID Employment and Experiences

Q: Then you did this year in India and that takes us to '62- '63?

BALLANTYNE: I finished Syracuse in '62 and then I did a year in Calcutta. So I returned to the U.S. in '63 and wanted to go to New York because it seemed there were a lot of things in New York that I wanted to do. Much to my mother's chagrin who, I think, thought I should marry the boy next door and live in Ohio. I went to New York and found it such a wonderfully vibrant city. One of my best friends from that time is now a professor at Johns Hopkins/SAIS, and we talk about those days when he was a grad student at Columbia and I was a starting level with the State of New York in Urban renewal and we had absolutely no extra income. But, I don't think I ever had so much fun as those two years. You learned to make your own fun; you learned what was interesting about New York. We used to go "second acting." Second acting is to go down and find a show you would like to see on Broadway, which you could never afford. You go and mingle with the crowd that would be leaving during the intermission to have a cigarette and then just walk back in with them and find a seat. I saw the second act of every show on Broadway.

Q: Did you have this internship when you went to New York, were you going there knowing you had the internship?

BALLANTYNE: No.

Q: Once you were there you found it?

BALLANTYNE: Yeah, my friends from Calcutta, the Americans, helped me out a lot and put me in touch with three or four people and I got a couple job offers. The one I wanted would allow me to continue with my graduate work and I lucked into the field of economics, finance and work.

Q: What did you actually do as an intern?

BALLANTYNE: It was not an intern it was just an entry level.

Q: Oh, I see.

BALLANTYNE: My title was urban planner, and this was back in the days of urban renewal. I was working for the State of New York agency that was implementing all urban and community renewal programs in the state. I was assigned a series of small towns and helped them apply for urban renewal grants and worked with them to come up with master plans; I actually learned how to draft. Probably the most interesting and formative experiences was when I was assigned the job of working with the Alleghany Indian Reservation. It was an Indian Reservation in upstate New York that had the oldest treaty personally signed by George Washington granting them lands in perpetuity. Well perpetuity sometimes has a different meaning. The Army Corps of Engineers had identified an area that they wanted to flood for flood control. This particular dam was going to flood out 90 percent of the Indian reservation for which the United States government was willing to pay \$22 million. My job as a 25 year old, wet behind the ears, urban planner was to convince the Alleghany Indian Reservation this was a good idea. That was my introduction to negotiating, but I was woefully lacking in those skills. I would come up with schemes saying, "Okay, now you are going to have this great lake in the middle of your land, and this is in upstate New York's vacation land, so you can get motel chains." They'd look at me and say, "No deal." Well, you know I left before a deal was struck, but it was very clear that they were going to end up with a big lake which they did.

Q: So that was the deal that was struck. Did they get any more than their \$22 million?

BALLANTYNE: No. But, I certainly learned an important lesson -- that if you are poor and marginalized in the United States, your negotiating power is pretty weak.

Q: So you were there in that job for two years?

BALLANTYNE: Yes; and I was up at Columbia University one day and saw a sign saying Wanted: Interns Latin American Teaching Fellowships. I thought wow I've never been to Latin America.

Q: Did you speak Spanish at this point?

BALLANTYNE: Not a word.

Q: Not a word, okay.

BALLANTYNE: I'd seen India and I'd done a lot of traveling in the area so I thought I could take a year and go to Latin America and then come back and do my graduate work; so I applied and was accepted. I'm sorry; this was my second fellowship, it was a Latin American internship. I was initially assigned to work at the Office of Planning and Urbanism in Lima, but that didn't quite work out. I then switched over to the Central Bank and found the skills that I had picked up in India working for Bill Vickery were exactly what they needed. I fell in with probably the nicest group of people I've ever worked with in my life and ended up staying three years.

Q: What language were you using at this place?

BALLANTYNE: Spanish.

Q: Spanish.

BALLANTYNE: They'd given me six weeks of Spanish before leaving for Lima.

Q: You must be quite a linguist if you could tackle a job like that after six weeks of Spanish.

BALLANTYNE: Well I had very kind Peruvian colleagues particularly at the Central Bank. For the first year I was there nobody ever spoke a word of English to me. Much later, I was in my boss's office and heard him on the phone with somebody and his English was as good as mine. When he got off the phone I said, "I didn't know you spoke English." He said, "Well yeah my father's English the same as Richard Webb." I said, "Why didn't you ever speak to me in English?" He said, "But you already spoke English." It turned out that everybody in the bank spoke English, but their goal was to get me speaking Spanish. They were some of the finest people I've ever known and I really loved them. A woman I shared an office with was my son's Godmother and actually came up from Peru for his wedding five years ago. She is now a senator. It was just so nice because I have very strong links to Peru.

Then it is 1968. I was at the bank and having a wonderful time, but there was a military coup and an accusation that somebody from the Central Bank had leaked information to the Standard Oil of New Jersey that resulted in assets being withdrawn before they were nationalized by the new military government. There were three foreigners working at the Central Bank, and they gave us all 24-hours to leave the country.

Q: You hadn't leaked the information had you?

BALLANTYNE: I didn't have the information; I think I know who did. I had 24-hours to round up the few possessions I had, find a home for my cat and get on a plane and leave. What do you do after you've been kicked out of a country? I went back to graduate school. Cornell first of all gave me a visiting lectureship because this was in the middle of the school year. So I went up and taught for a year, did some research and was then accepted into the doctoral program. So up to then and even further on, my life has never been terribly well planned. But, I've always had tremendous bouts of serendipity; the right person or right situation has come along.

Q: So what did you pursue in your doctoral program?

BALLANTYNE: International development economics.

Q: How long did that take?

BALLANTYNE: I was desperate to go back to Peru because I loved it there and I worked out a deal with my academic committee that I would only have to take one year of academic studies if I did two summers and they gave me credit for the two classes that I had taught.

Q: Very interesting.

BALLANTYNE: Well the best way to learn something is to teach it.

Q: Absolutely.

BALLANTYNE: So I spent a year and a summer and then got a Fulbright to go back and write my dissertation, which you are allowed seven years from the time of passing your, what they call, A exams, your orals and submitting your thesis. I came really close.

Q: You came really close.

BALLANTYNE: but I had a lot of other things that I was doing.

Q: What were those other things?

BALLANTYNE: I was writing my dissertation, but I was trying to do it a different way. I hooked up with a very good English language magazine called The Andean Report; a very serious magazine. It covered the three major mining countries: Peru and its neighbors, Chile and Bolivia. I got a job as kind of a mineral correspondent and did a lot of writing on the mineral sector, mining inputs, production techniques and got paid for it. I was therefore able to live a life befitting the way I thought I should live instead of as a poverty-stricken graduate student. About three months before the seven year period was up I called my academic advisor, my thesis advisor, and said, "You know I would really like to apply for a year extension." He said, "Why?" I said, "You know with another year I will have a great book." He said, "Nobody is interested in your book, we want to see a thesis get up here and I would like to see you here June 1 and I get into the office early and I want you in before me and I leave late and you will stay afterwards. You'll just sit there." So I packed up a trunk of my notes and I had about thirty articles at that point. I went to Ithaca and actually wrote it in 18 days.

Q: Is that right?

BALLANTYNE: It passed and it was published in the graduate school dissertation series; it was never published as a book; every chapter had been in some previous publication.

Q: What was the subject of the dissertation?

BALLANTYNE: It was the political economy of the Peruvian copper sector and, as I always tell people, it would be a good read if you have trouble sleeping at night. It was about how politics and the economy affect the major productive sector of a country. I did a lot of traveling and I was actually offered jobs as a mining consultant. But, at that point I really was more committed to doing something that would have more of an impact on people. After I finished my dissertation, I went back to Peru and was working for this magazine when I got a call saying, "We understand you are a pretty good writer and we'd like to hire you to put together some project papers for us; it was AID." I wondered why anybody would want to work for them. But I decided to meet the people and liked what I saw; the fellow I ended up working for was absolutely delightful. I went to work with the initial intent of staying for two or three months and ended up staying on as a Personal Services Contractor (PSC) for two years. Then, I was offered a direct hire position.

Q: This was in Washington?

BALLANTYNE: I was in Peru.

Q: Oh, you were in Peru at this time, okay.

BALLANTYNE: I had planned just staying in Peru.

Q: Were you pretty well immersed in the Peruvian culture at that time?

BALLANTYNE: All my friends were Peruvian...

Q: Speaking Spanish all the time? Writing your articles in Spanish?

BALLANTYNE: Yes and just really felt really close to the country.

USAID Career Begins in 1976 – Early Assignments

When they offered me the USAID direct hire job, I wanted to take it but it also meant I would have to come back to Washington. But I figured I can't stay in Peru all my life if I want a career in international development, so I came back to Washington and that was the beginning of my career.

Q: Tell me about that first stage with AID.

BALLANTYNE: You know again I lucked into the right people. At the time I joined AID there had never been a woman AID mission director; there had never been a woman deputy director and I think there was one woman who was an office chief in Washington. But none of the senior Foreign Service or senior executives had ever been a woman. I ended up working for two men who I think were really visionary and who mentored two or three of the women in their office in the Latin American bureau. They kept telling us things are going to change. What you need to do is you need to work on this; you need to work on that. Then my first overseas assignment was Peru again.

Q: Back to Peru.

BALLANTYNE: Again, I went in as an economist. Grade 4-1 the lowest of 4 and about a year into the job the mission director called me into his office and I thought wow I'm in trouble now because he was a pretty hard ass guy. He said, "What do you want to do with your life?" I said, "I think I'd like to stay with AID probably and I'd like to be maybe chief economist for the Latin America bureau." He said, "Is that all?" I said, "Well, how much more is there? That's pretty high." He said, "Have you ever thought you'd like to be a mission director?" I said, "You've got to be kidding!" He said, "No, it's going to happen and it's going to happen because things are changing. If you want to think about it come back and I'd like to work with you." So I thought about it and I came back and I said, "Yeah, I'd like to." He said, "I'm not going to be easy." I figured that, and I was right. I would write something and he would send it back; he would have red-penciled the whole thing. He would write it's too long, it's too descriptive, too flowery, too this or that. I think one of the turning points was when he called me into his office and he was sitting there scowling. He had a cable in his hand. Remember cables?

Q: I do.

BALLANTYNE: It was all green copies and people carried them by hand for clearance. He asked: "Did you clear this?" I looked at it and said, "Yeah, that's my JB." He said, "Did you read it?" I looked at the title and I said, "You know I was in a real hurry that day but everybody else had signed it and I figured they knew more than I did about this subject." He said, "Well thank you for not lying to me. If I had thought you had read it and signed it I would have fired you." He said, "Never, ever sign your name to something unless you've read it. When you put your name on something particularly if you are working in government, you are putting the full faith of the United States government on your signature, and you can't just say oh Joe signed it so it must be okay. Take the time, don't cut corners." When I was sworn in as a mission director the first time, that particular director from Peru was retired and I had invited him to come to the swearing in ceremony. I said, "I know a lot of people have questions about what I do and I want to answer one of them and it is, Len, I do read everything." He said, "Well it's about time."

Q: Did having been PNG'd out of Peru at one point have any effect later on?

BALLANTYNE: No, because governments change and people change and the British Peruvian I was working for under the next civilian government became the president of the Central Bank. He remembered me because we had kept in touch. I think now if I thought about it, I probably didn't even think about it.

Q: Okay, you are under the tutelage of this task master. What happened after that?

BALLANTYNE: I had married when I first joined AID during the two years I was back in Washington. The man I married had been a Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal and he said, "Look, I'll go to Peru with you if you try to get Nepal for your next assignment." So we tried and that was my second assignment: Nepal.

Q: That worked well.

BALLANTYNE: Yeah, we had adopted a two-year old little boy from Cusco when we were living in Lima.

Q: So he was down there with you for a while?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, we had been about a year and a half into our four years tour. He went to kindergarten there and then we moved to Nepal which was a great post from the point of view of having a family; it was a small unsophisticated town. The kids basically had the same freedoms that I did growing up. Again, I had one of the most extraordinary bosses that I'd ever had in my life.

Q: You were at the AID mission there?

BALLANTYNE: Yeah.

Q: What was your husband doing?

BALLANTYNE: He was a contractor with the AID mission; he had been a contractor in Peru and then a contractor in Nepal.

Q: So what was your job then?

BALLANTYNE: I went as the chief of the project development office – a job I would say combined economics with visioning. I was there four years in total and after the first year the mission director asked Washington if I could become his deputy when the incumbent left. So I'd been with AID as direct hire for six years and moved into my first executive position.

Q: What was your major focus there?

BALLANTYNE: The deputy director was basically the understudy to the director. In that role, you do what he or she tells you to do. He's a wonderful person, a brilliant, brilliant man, but he did not particularly like interacting with the government so my chief job was interacting with the government of Nepal.

Q: That was done in English?

BALLANTYNE: Yes. I studied Nepali and I could follow Nepali but I could never negotiate or have serious discussion in it. But it was a very nice time, the country is a disappointment and I remember somebody telling me before I went that you will probably care about Nepal more than any Nepali you ever meet.

Q: Interesting.

BALLANTYNE: I wonder how the country has even maintained its independence over all these years because it's smashed between the two biggest population centers on the earth. The particular brand of Nepali-Hinduism, which is mixed with Raman Shamanism, and there is a fairly large Buddhist population; it's a society of enormous passivity. There are more holidays in a year than probably the rest of the world combined; we counted them one year and there were 46.

Q: How many?

BALLANTYNE: Forty-six, everything from the day you worship your younger sister to the day you worship your dog. My dog actually was dog napped on the day you worship your dog.

Q: Did you get him back?

BALLANTYNE: Yeah, it cost a bit. We had posters all over town with a picture of the dog and it said it was wearing a bright yellow garland of marigolds with a Tikka god on his forehead.

Q: Was there not a sense of Nepali nationality among the people?

BALLANTYNE: No. The largest untapped hydropower in the world is in the western hills of Nepal. Even back then, and this is 30 years ago, the World Bank was doing feasibility studies. The potential was huge and could power all of the Punjab in India. But, you know, the Nepalese never quite got around to signing or finishing things, so my projection back then was that sooner or later the Chinese or the Indians would just take over or divide it up. The U.S. and Great Britain would stand up in the UN and shake our fists but it would be a fait accompli.

Q: What is the economy based on?

BALLANTYNE: Agriculture, subsistence agriculture.

Q: With power sources just sitting there.

BALLANTYNE: Most of the country still not electrified.

Q: Is that right?

BALLANTYNE: Tremendous health problems, very low life expectancy, but a beautifully idyllic country.

Q: Water issues I assume, clean water?

BALLANTYNE: Clean water, pollution, you know, maternal mortality, infant mortality. We had some great programs going. One of the biggest was family planning, also one of the most

successful. Most people say you really can't go against the culture of the country, and use this to argue against family planning programs. But, there is no country in the world where a woman wants to have eight children and watch six of them die; there is just none. Our programs were able to explain the options to have two or three or four and have the resource to feed them all – and thus have three children who would live to be adults instead of one.

Q: So that program was having an impact?

BALLANTYNE: A huge impact.

Q: What about other programs that you were running there?

BALLANTYNE: Some of the early AID programs back when it was Point Four involved building infrastructure. When the country became fully independent with the restoration of the throne in 1950/51, there were no roads leading in and out of the country, there were no airways, there was no way to get things up to Kathmandu; it was a landlocked isolated country. AID did a lot back in those days, including building an electrified ropeway cable that brought things up from India into the Kathmandu valley. It was still operating when I was there...

Q: Is that right? So you were there from when to when?

BALLANTYNE: 1982-1986.

Q: 1982-86 and where did you go at that point?

BALLANTYNE: At that point this is, I think, one of the interesting blips in my career. I had been acting director for about a year and a half because the mission director moved on and went back to Washington, and the new director was not assigned for about a year and a half. Because I had been acting director, AID/Washington asked if I'd consider becoming the AID director in Burma. I thought wow that sounds great. So I was assigned and actually was in the process of being packed out to go to Burma when the same boss from Washington called me up and said, "We have a little bit of a problem. There is a gentleman who used to be the head of Air America who wants to be the AID director in Burma and he is a friend of the president's." I said, "I know, I understand." So I got sent to Morocco instead.

Q: In what position?

BALLANTYNE: As deputy director.

Q: Deputy Director.

BALLANTYNE: That was sort of the worst assignment I ever had.

Q: Worst in what regard?

BALLANTYNE: I worked for a man who liked to pull the wings off flies. He was a very mean guy and I had to watch it all. It was never going to work; he had some personal issues. I found it very difficult to work with somebody who I had no respect for.

Q: He was doing this to his own staff?

BALLANTYNE: Yeah.

Q: How did this affect your outside relationship with the Moroccans?

BALLANTYNE: Horribly, it was really messy.

Q: How did you cope with all of that? You must have been the interface between him and the staff?

BALLANTYNE: Between him and the staff, between him and the ambassador. Morocco has always been a political ambassador post and we had a particularly weak ambassador who did not want to confront him. I finally went to the DCM, who was career, and said, "I can't go through this. I'm at the point now that I'm going to be affected by his writing me up, because I talked with him on a number of occasions and he said, 'You don't know what you're doing?'" I said, "I do know what I'm doing, but it's not going to be good for me is it?" It wasn't. Those were the only two years I was in the senior Foreign Service that I didn't get a bonus.

Q: So did you stick it out for the full assignment?

BALLANTYNE: No, after two years of a four-year assignment I asked to go back to Washington.

Q: And he stayed on?

BALLANTYNE: He stayed on until the assistant administrator, our equivalent to the assistant secretary, asked him to leave.

Q: So they finally caught up with him?

BALLANTYNE: He was given another AID directorship post in Africa. I remember at one point somebody saying that there is good news and bad news out of Africa. The good news is the Foreign Service nationals have decided to kill him. The bad news is they don't have any weapons.

Q: What does this imply for the management of the agency at that point?

BALLANTYNE: Well you know I always wondered, if he had been a woman and had been doing the same sort of thing, would she have been given another assignment. I don't think so.

Q: Do you know what happened in the new assignment in Africa? Did he replicate what he had done in Morocco?

BALLANTYNE: I don't know; we didn't really stay in touch. He did call me one time. He was unhappy in his post in Africa and by this time I was the AID director in Nicaragua, which was considered to be one of the most exciting places after eleven years of Sandinista rule and a new reform-oriented government. He said, "I just can't understand how somebody like me ends up in a place like this and somebody like you ends up in a place like Nicaragua." I said, "Do you want me to put it to you straight? You may be smarter than I am, you may be quicker than I am, but you are a real son of a bitch."

Q: Good for you. And how did he react to that?

BALLANTYNE: He said, "I'm shocked." I said, "Ask anybody."

Q: Really.

BALLANTYNE: He just did not have self-awareness. I think the one thing I learned is you can learn as much and maybe more from a bad manager as from a good manager.

Q: Well I think that is true about learning what not to do, but systemically here you had an assistant administrator for Northern Africa who recognized this guy was bad news and yet the guy went on to a separate bureau to a responsible job. The other folks just didn't know, or was the culture such that you didn't do that to the senior people you discovered?

BALLANTYNE: Well they let it happen to me. Fortunately, it did not damage my career, but they knew exactly what was going on and they felt if you want to transfer out we'll back that; there was never any thought, we'll transfer him.

Q: But they passed the problem elsewhere. Well, I must say I've seen it happen in State as well.

BALLANTYNE: Yeah.

Q: So after the two years there you...

BALLANTYNE: Came back to Washington.

Q: And this is in what year now?

BALLANTYNE: This was in 1988.

Q: '88. What was your job then in D.C.?

BALLANTYNE: I was brought back to work on a special task force to do what was called The Future of Foreign Aid. It was a report by the then administrator, a young man who unfortunately very shortly after being sworn in was diagnosed with cancer and died. But he wanted to have some sort of legacy, so they call it the Woods Report and I was hired to be his deputy on that. It was interesting because it was pulling together lessons learned along the lines of the stuff you do here. That lasted a year and the second year I went to CDIE, the Center for Development Information Evaluation, which was the AID repository for evaluations and lessons learned.

Q: Did these lessons learned from the study you were doing get fed into CDIE?

BALLANTYNE: No, the Woods Report came out as a separate publication. I thought it was very good.

Q: Do you remember any particular highlights of that study?

BALLANTYNE: What I recall most was dealing with some of the issues raised by conservative Republicans during the Reagan Administration, including controversial areas of public health; you wouldn't think that would be political but it was (and is) very political. And sort of having to negotiate between positions, as you would have reviewers who would take a look at it and say this is a bunch of crap, this is the right-wing conspiracy nuts writing these things. So it was a

good experience – and the report was good – but I made it clear that I would take the CDIE job for a year but then I wanted to go overseas.

Q: And what did the CDIE job involve?

BALLANTYNE: Mostly it was the evaluation system at AID. At that point it was a very academic system; there were professional evaluators who ran the office who were writing for other professional evaluators. I did what I called my average man on the street interviews. I would take some of these 300 page evaluations, for example of crop rotation in Chile, and ask people how many of these have they read. The answer was a resounding zero, so I said, “Why don’t we do these kinds of evaluations to maintain the integrity of the investigative process, but write things that people will read.” So, we started a series of sector-wide impact evaluations. You’d take something like rural electrification; do five studies in five different countries, no one study could be more than sixteen pages. There would then be a resume of the whole thing. I said, “Put bright colors on it. When it comes across somebody’s desk, we don’t want them to say “oh, just another CDIE publication,” but that “this looks interesting.” I wanted to try and build up an appreciation for the fact that the history of foreign aid, much like a history of diplomacy, is important; it is important to know what went beforehand. It was kind of fun, but it was also a tedious job. Evaluators tend to be introspective people, very much introverts. The job was also difficult because it was my first exposure to the management issues of Washington, including a largely African-American support staff with a largely almost unanimously white professional class. I think we’ve come a long way, but there is a much longer way to go.

Q: How did that manifest itself? In other words what were the effects of that dichotomy that you just talked about?

BALLANTYNE: Anger.

Q: Really, anger.

BALLANTYNE: Yeah.

Q: Did the staff people think that they were not paid attention to.

BALLANTYNE: Attention to, they weren’t respected, the anger that some of them really expressed. I used to invite them into my office and say, “It has come to my attention that you are not happy here. What can we do to make this place better for all of us?” They would just let it vent.

Q: What effect did this have on performance and productivity for the agency?

BALLANTYNE: Well, back at that point, nobody paid much attention to CDIE anyway because they just turned out these long boring studies. It was also the development information-clearing house that had a very valuable database that unfortunately in another reincarnation was just left to fallow. But the evaluation function has its fifteen minutes of fame every eight years or so. People then say, “Oh we’ve got to get evaluation, we’ve got to put it on the front burner.” So they put it on the front burner and immediately it gets shoved again to the back.

Q: So these glitzier reports that you were converting did not get read as well, or they did get read?

BALLANTYNE: Yes; they were read, but the evaluation people didn't like them because they were not methodologically pure.

Q: So did they fall by the wayside?

BALLANTYNE: They fell by the wayside and then I came back four years later and revived it again. I left and went back. I think the new and improved evaluation system is looking at getting feedback from people who are actually reading the reports. Does it really fit into that feedback loop that you need for continuous improvement? I think that people are looking not only at the intellectual purity of the reports but are they serving as part of that feedback loop.

Q: Does CDIE still exist?

BALLANTYNE: No, no I don't think so, at least not in the form it once did.

Q: In any incarnation does it exist?

BALLANTYNE: Yes it is now part of PPL, the Program Policy and Learning Bureau; it's a unit within that.

Q: I wonder if they face the same sort of problems that you did.

BALLANTYNE: I think so, yeah.

Q: That's interesting. So you went from there to another job.

USAID/Nicaragua – Mission Director (1990-1994)

BALLANTYNE: That was when I went to Nicaragua in 1990.

Q: As the country director or the mission director and that was in what year?

BALLANTYNE: Yeah, in 1990.

Q: 1990.

BALLANTYNE: This was the Nicaragua election that nobody had foreseen. The Sandinistas had been in power for eleven years, and it was Daniel Ortega running against an unknown widow of a former newspaper editor who had actually been assassinated by the Somozas. She was put up as a new age candidate from, I think eleven different parties. Nobody foresaw it. I was scheduled to go to Guatemala as mission director; I'd already had agreement from the ambassador and I was in the middle of a training course when I got a call from the assistant administrator saying, "How wed are you to Guatemala?" I said, "Well, what are the alternatives?" He said, "Nicaragua." I said, "Wow."

Q: That was big.

BALLANTYNE: Indeed; it was in many ways the most exciting job I ever had. We went in and Nicaragua relations were one of the top three foreign policy concerns of the U.S. at that point. They brought back an ambassador who had retired several times, Harry Shlaudeman, who is the

best ambassador I'll ever work for. He was trusted by all sides, and we had a billion dollars a year to start off with.

Q: A billion?

BALLANTYNE: A billion for a country of less than 4 million people because so many people had left during the war. I found out that money could make you very, very popular. But I think we were very judicious in how the money was spent; there are a billion different ways of spending a billion dollars. I worked very closely with the bureau and with Harry Shlaudeman in determining our strategy to get the economy back on a solid foothold. That was our number one priority; the inflation rate was higher than Germany during the Weimar regime. It was enormous; we'd go out to dinner and take bags of money and nobody could even count it. They'd say, "Well we'll count it up next week, and either pay us back or you owe us some money." It was like 21 million to one, 21 million cordobas to one dollar.

Q: Oh Lord.

BALLANTYNE: So we worked with the Central Bank on stabilization. We had a good relationship with the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and came up with a program that the Nicaraguans could buy into which would provide the political ruling President Chamorro's government enough breathing space. It protected against austerity measures and allowed for stabilization. It was, I think, very, very successful.

Q: It did work?

BALLANTYNE: It worked.

Q: What other things were you working on down there besides that?

BALLANTYNE: The private sector, so much of the private sector had just left the country. We were providing institutional support to COCEP which was the Organizing Committee of the Private Sector looking at agriculture. There had been an attempt at agrarian reform under the Somoza regime and the Sandinistas simply weren't interested in agrarian and collective farming. The agricultural sector just went to pot. While difficult to reverse something like that, we tried to get agricultural cooperatives to start looking at modern technologies, to start looking at different markets, including the U.S. market that was open again. We got the Georgia Vegetable Growers Association to partner with a cooperative in a little town about 40 miles north of Managua to produce Vidalia onions. The growing season in Nicaragua is the opposite of that in Georgia so the Nicaraguan onions would not be competing with the Georgian market, but would build on their existing relationships with Krueger supermarkets. So they did some very innovative things.

Q: Sounds like over all your programs there were successful.

BALLANTYNE: Yes, and then somebody says to me in Nicaragua that "Nicaragua won." President Chamorro was there six years and when she left nobody had the same appetite for change. The new president was very lackluster and then the next president was ruthlessly greedy and began stealing. Then Ortega won and he's just won his third time, so he is back as long as he wants to be.

Q: Did the program successes you seemed to be having have a lasting impact, or with these successors who weren't as interested in development did those advantages flicker away?

BALLANTYNE: A lot of them flickered away because you have to have money to stabilize the economy. We did that by supporting policy changes – and through our conditionalities.

Q: Were there any programs while you were there, you were there for four years?

BALLANTYNE: Yes.

Q: During that four year period which really didn't work which you felt for whatever reason didn't do what you hoped they would do?

BALLANTYNE: There were some I looked at that were simply band-aids to solve the immediate problems, but not sufficiently looking at the development underpinnings. In a way bought more time for the longer-term things, but these have kind of faded away. The program I loved the most was a municipal works one on the Atlantic coast. The Atlantic coast is 49 percent of the landmass of Nicaragua with three percent of the population and had been used as the battleground during the Civil War. They had actually gone in and machine-gunned down all of the palm trees to make it a place you could really get in there and fight. Agriculture had been very prominent there, but it was completely dead in 1990. I brought down two consultants who I had known for a long time and said, "I want you to go out to the Atlantic coast and come back. I don't want an options paper, I don't want a white paper, I don't want a "dyagnostico". Just come back and tell me what needs to be done to bring that part of the country back up." They were brilliant and well known here in Washington and one guy, Bob Gersony, has done a lot of work for State. They came back and they said, "What you have to do is reactivate the rice production." There used to be major rice growing, but not a stock is being grown now. "You have to rehabilitate about 500 kilometers of roads, build culverts, work on drainage and we think we can do it all with a 90-95 percent labor contents and put people back to work." It was a brilliant program. I used to go out there frequently and every time you could see something else in the economy that's come back to life.

Q: Well that must be satisfying.

BALLANTYNE: It was really satisfying and I remember taking Carol Lancaster, who was then USAID Deputy Administrator, out there and she said, "Why are we going out here for?" I said, "You're a development person, let's go out and look." She came to me and she said, "It's the best AID project I've ever seen."

Q: Really.

BALLANTYNE: I actually have a little film about it called Bridges for Peace and it's about the building of and reconstructing of bridges that were literally blown up. [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1t3oDEduXQ&app=desktop>] To reconstruct those, they used the same plans they used in the bridge over the River Kwai.

Q: Is that right.

BALLANTYNE: 98 percent labor content; I've got wonderful pictures of them doing the pile driving, for which they used all local materials: huge pieces of blocks of wood that drove these stakes down in; one was 120 meters long and it was all done by local labor, unskilled, smart technicians, and smart engineers. But then when I left none of my predecessors saw the Atlantic coast as being that important.

Q: That was none of your successors?

BALLANTYNE: Yeah, and I always thought that was such a shame. In fact, when I went back there while in country as an election observer for one of Ortega's many wins, I saw that it had again become a Caribbean tropical lethargy. Bridges have fallen down. There had been a couple of hurricanes and nobody came in and cleaned up. There is one town that used to be 14 hours over this horrible road and our goal was to be able to do it in an hour. That was done by realigning all the culverts, working on the grading of the road, and having people out there all the time working on the maintenance. I was actually on the run when they made it in 58 minutes. I thought this is development, this makes sense.

Q: Who paid for that road?

BALLANTYNE: USAID.

Q: Oh, really. So you left there in what year?

BALLANTYNE: '94.

Q: And where did you go?

Center for Economic Growth and CDIE Director (1994-1996)

BALLANTYNE: I came back to Washington and was put in charge of CDIE again. This was the beginning of the Clinton administration, and I was initially brought back to head up the new Center for Economic Growth. I was really excited about having a center within AID that would be looking at all aspects of economic growth, agriculture, and engineering. It was exciting to think about setting it up from scratch. It was a lot of fun and there were some really smart people. Then Brian Atwood who was the Administrator called me in and said he wanted me to go back to CDIE. I said, "Brian, I was there once before and I really don't want to go back." He said, "I'm sure you'll go where you're most needed." I said, "You know I'm not quite that dumb. I will certainly go where I am needed, but I would like to arrange for my parachute before I go in." He said, "Well what will you want??" I said, "I want to be mission director in Russia." He said, "Do you know how cold it is there?" I said, "Yes, but I really, really do. I saw in Nicaragua what bad policy can do to a very small country and I would love to go in and be part of that transition in Russia." So I spent two years in Washington not really doing a whole lot and then went to Russia and loved that. The energy of being in Russia is indescribable I mean everyone said don't you find the Russians difficult?" "Well of course, that is part of their charm." I made a lot of friends among the Russians and I called everybody who succeeded me. The key to making Russian friends is to take dogs with you; I had two dogs. Russians love dogs.

Q: They love Kerry Blues don't they?

USAID/Russia – Mission Director (1996-1999)

BALLANTYNE: They love very large dogs, and they live in tiny little apartments. I would take my two very small dogs out and everybody would come up to me in the street and start asking me questions in Russian. I always tell people I can speak fluently in Russian if it has to do with dogs. But I became aware of how kind people were when one of my dogs died there at 17 and we took him out to bury him at one of the American Embassy dachas, which is strictly against the law. When we got out there we bribed the caretaker with maybe 100 rubles and he said, "That section

is already full.” There are lots of dogs out there. When I came back home the front entrance to my apartment was banked in flowers.

Q: Really.

BALLANTYNE: One of the guards at the desk said, “The neighbors have all been over and they feel so badly.” Then around 8 o’clock at night they started coming over with food, vodka and we had a party that went on until 4 o’clock in the morning; a lot of vodka consumed that night but these were people who were hurting with me in the loss of a very old dog. You learned about the kindness of other people in hard times.

Q: Tell me about the program there; it must have been a challenge. Russia was making the transition from the Soviet Union, there were a lot of opportunities, but at the same time there were maybe threats brewing in terms of oligarchs and that kind of issue.

BALLANTYNE: There were two things that really defined the period when I was there. One was what is now the infamous case of HIID, the Harvard Institute for International Development. HIID had had the contract to basically oversee the privatization and market reforms. I had been there maybe six months when I started hearing rumblings that the contractors, the HIID people, were abusing their positions.

Q: What were they doing?

BALLANTYNE: Well it turns out they were using insider information for personal gain. When we found out about it, I called our inspector general’s office in a way that caused some issues with the embassy. The so-called Russian reformers were also key to the embassy’s policies and diplomatic goals. They were key interlocutors and the Embassy felt that Russia could not move to the next level without these particular reformers. Well some of these were the reformers that were very much involved in the issues with HIID. Some people say it was the stupidest thing I ever did, but I don’t agree. I called in our inspector general without informing the Chargé because I knew he would have said no to it.

Q: Don’t you have to get country clearance? Maybe not for an inspector general.

BALLANTYNE: Not for the inspector general. In country clearances the AID director signs off.

Q: Really, interesting.

BALLANTYNE: I mean the country clearance cable is theoretically signed by whoever the ambassador is, but in this case they didn’t. The chargé was furious and I guess I would have been too. I was coming back from Boston where I had gone to meet with the provost, and my deputy called me while I was on the way from the airport and said, “Don’t even bother coming here; you have to go right over to talk to the chargé.” I went over and I took one look at his face and thought this is it. Then he took me into the bubble room and proceeded to rake me over the coals. It was clear that my time in Russia was going to be limited unless I did something about it. I said, “The reason that I’ve done this was because it was a clear violation of the ethics of the United States government. This goes beyond who we think are the right people or the wrong people here, this was wrong, it’s a crime. And I would like to know if the two of you [the charge` and I believe the political counselor] would ever take a man into the bubble room and beat him up as badly as you have beaten me up.” He said, “Oh, this has nothing to do with gender.” I said, “Give me a break. If you want me to leave I will, but my first stop will be at the Washington Post because my

next door neighbor happens to be the head of the editorial board and I think people need to know how seriously we take ethics.” He ultimately became my best friend.

Q: The chargé became your best friend?

BALLANTYNE: Later, when it came out that there were serious breaks. I mean this ended up with the U.S. suing Harvard for the largest settlement that it’s ever gotten from a university, \$42 million.

Q: The Harvard folks were there on a U.S. government contract?

BALLANTYNE: Yes.

Q: I see. So your instincts were right.

BALLANTYNE: Yeah, and I had very good people working for me who backed me up, but that was a hard time.

Q: I’m sure it was.

BALLANTYNE: The people who were implicated knew what was going on and there were concerns that they were associated with the mafia and that somebody might get badly hurt.

Q: What repercussions did that have in terms of the way the mission at large was dealing with the Russians and dealing with the government issues?

BALLANTYNE: The progressive forces of the government loved us, although some of the major reformers who were seen as key by the U.S. Government were involved and thus unhappy. But it also resonated very badly with the Kremlin; I mean there were lots of letters going back and forth. One very amusing thing is I sent a letter to the minister of foreign affairs and I did a copy to President Yeltsin’s legal advisor. I got a call from the legal advisor’s office saying the legal advisor wanted to see me in his office as soon as possible. I was to come alone and he gave me which Kremlin gate I was supposed to come to. I didn’t have any idea what it was but I figured this wasn’t going to be good. So I went at the appointed time, it was not the public gate I went in the private gate and there was one of the sentries who followed me, I walked down this red carpet, seemingly endless, all of these closed doors with signs in Russian saying the first deputy secretary of the something or other. It felt like we were walking for 20 minutes and we finally came to a door and he said, “Go in here.” I walk in and he says, “Ms. Ballantyne would you please go in and sit here.” I walked into the room and there is nobody there. “Have a seat, Mr. _____ will be here to join you.” So I was there for about ten minutes and this guy walks in and he has absolutely flawless English and he said, “Do you know why you are here?” I said, “I think you are going to kill me.”

Q: You said that literally?

BALLANTYNE: Uh huh.

Q: Did you mean it or were just being ironic.

BALLANTYNE: I thought that was as good an answer because I didn’t know. He said, “We don’t do that anymore.” He pulls out this letter and he said, “You sent a copy to so and so, you

are not allowed to do that, he is to get an original.” I said, “Oh that will be easy. I’ll come back and send him an original.” “You’ve already sent him a copy, so what you have to do is write him an original asking for the copy to be returned and then send him the original.” I said, “I can do that, easy.” He said, “Remember this for next time.”

Q. That was far short of an execution wasn’t it.

BALLANTYNE: Right. Everything about our programming was complex. The first couple of years they were still looking at the structural problems of the economy, the monetary system, the banking system. About a year and a half into my tour, we were increasingly getting instructions to up the ante on democracy and governance programs, and that meant lowering the budget for bank reform and other things that the Russians really wanted. We had a bank reform program that basically brought the best experts in the world to help the Russians restructure the banking system, bank supervision, bank intermediation. The Russians are incredibly smart people. They may have been mis-educated; all of their high-level economists during my period there had been educated as physicists because the economists were all brought up learning only Marxism. There was one thing the Russians were not interested in and that was U.S. programs in democracy and governance. I had lots and lots of conversations as to why are you paying to have IFES, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, come to Russia. We know how to have elections, believe it or not we don’t need your help. Well because Washington wanted us to. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) were there; the lowering of support for the AID program was in direct correlation to the way that shift was taking place. I think some of the democracy and governance work, particularly with civil society, was great. One of my Russian friends said, “During Communism there was one NGO and it was called the Young Pioneers (Russian Youth). But, civil society became a growth industry: people were joining together in civil society, whether it was for health or environment or better elections or improved access for education, or other thing to change their own lives. But a lot of the other stuff the Russians just weren’t interested in.

Q: Was what AID was doing having an impact on the U.S./Russian relationship or was this a harbinger of feelings that weren’t quite as positive

BALLANTYNE: I think so, yeah. Had the ambassador had his way, I think he would have sided with us on the importance of economic reform. Russia sooner or later is going to be a democracy. It may not be in my lifetime, but we all have a historic path and they -- I can’t speak for all of Russia -- value stability far more than they value participation and democracy. That’s because every Russian family had some dealings with the repression of the Stalin regime, which some Russians don’t like to talk about. It’s getting to the point now that my Russian secretary’s daughter, who is now studying at George Mason University, doesn’t know anything about that, but her parents certainly do.

Q: What if the emphasis on the programs of democracy and that reform side in effect undercuts progress that might have been made in that direction on the other side. That is, if you reform the economic and financial side, that’s good news for democratic reform.

BALLANTYNE: Sure and you are going to bring more people into the economy, more people have a stake in the economy. I think so, but the democracy industry, particularly here in Washington, is very powerful.

Q: This was in the Clinton administration wasn’t it? Well that certainly was a challenging assignment.

BALLANTYNE: But you know I loved it and the Russian soul, although I don't know if any non-Russian can ever really know what the soul is. You get glimpses into it, and it is just a wonderfully rich history that has produced arguably the best music in the world, arguably the best literature in the world, arguably the best art, where art, music, and literature were societal goods. No individual was allowed to hold very much in terms of material possessions, so the arts became the communal good and the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow and the Hermitage in St. Petersburg belonged to everybody. The Bolshoi is an exceptional treat. One Christmas my husband had come out, he was working Central America at the time; once I became mission director it was hard to have a contractor husband, so he was working in Central America. For Christmas my cook, I had a wonderful cook, gave us tickets to the ballet, to the Bolshoi. He said, "Wow, I can't imagine any of the Latino maids I've ever had giving us opera tickets or ballet tickets." I said, "The interesting thing is she and her husband will probably meet us there," because class had nothing to do with your involvement in the arts.

Q: Before you move on from Moscow was there anything you want to add in regard to that assignment?

BALLANTYNE: I stayed there three years; it was supposed to be two tours of two years but I left a year early. I had a son who was having some challenges in college and I just felt I needed to be back here. I think it was a good thing to do.

National War College – Instructor (1999-2001)

Q: So you came back to Washington and went to the National War College, and what year was that?

BALLANTYNE: 1999-2001.

Q: Tell me about that assignment.

BALLANTYNE: At that time there was one AID professor, I think one State Department professor, an agency professor, and I went in not knowing very much at all about the military other than the military attachés I played bridge with. But, it was a wonderful assignment. The military takes training very, very seriously and they train up. These are all military people who are future leaders: 80 percent will go into flag rank, so these are the ones will no doubt along the way will be the epitome officer and a gentleman. They are smart, they work hard and they are just a delight to be around. They are fun, but also take what they are doing very seriously. I found that the convergence of interest between the military and AID was sometimes greater than the convergence between State and AID. The military, the leaders, certainly the last thing they wanted to do was go to war.

Q: Yes.

BALLANTYNE: That is what they are trained for, but that is what they try to avoid. A lot of the conflict takes place now in countries that are underdeveloped, where there is little economic opportunity and if you have a group like USAID that goes in and works at nation building and economic strengthening, the probability of that country going to war is much less likely. I think State and AID have always had a kind of love-hate relationship. When I was counselor, that was my next job, I used to talk to the charm school, ambassadors going out, and I used to tell them when I was an undergraduate at Cornell University I spent most of my four years looking down

my nose at the students from the agricultural college because we were arts and sciences and they were Aggies. I joined AID and met people from State and realized to State I'm an Aggie, I'm one of those, one of the un-anointed. I think it's gotten better over the years and I think certain secretaries have made AID a much more viable institution. In general, think there is a lot of silliness surrounding the whole AID-State relationship. I remember when I was in Russia there was again talk of AID being absorbed into State. One of the counselors at the embassy, his name shall be forever unknown, kind of sneeringly said to me, "Well, when we absorb you what job do you think you'll get?" I said, "I think ambassador to France." You can see the shock and he said, "Well, I don't think so." I said, "Why not? I'm a career minister, I outrank everybody here at post including the ambassador and I speak French. Why not?" He said, "Well I don't think you understand." "I know, you think I should be the third person in the second largest city of Algeria's consular office." I said, "I'm never going to be ambassador to France but damned if I'm going to be the third person in the consular office." We have to get to know each other better and look at realities, expectations. I wouldn't expect if we were to go into the State Department that I would be an ambassador.

Q: You certainly have the rank for it.

BALLANTYNE: I said, "It's not something that I aspire to but I expect to be offered that." So I think there has been silliness on both sides, things like QDDR -- and I think I would like to be quoted on this one -- futile exercises, proving once again that if you get six thousand people into the same task with too many cooks what you get is watering down.

Q: So did you mainly disagree with the findings in regard to development?

BALLANTYNE: I thought some of them were very good, but then they didn't really solve one of the major issues: who's in charge of HIV/AIDS and PEPFAR? An early version recommended shifting PEPFAR to AID; they then said "oh gee, we made a mistake, it's really going to be State." So, I think a number of things could have been done better. On the next term, I think there's a new iteration coming in.

Q: Yes, there is going to be a new one. Well, at the War College what did you teach?

BALLANTYNE: There are five different courses. The first year you are expected to attach yourself to one of the regular faculty and sit through all of the courses. In the second year you are expected to take two sections comprised of about 13 people or something. War College courses include things like the introduction to military history that clearly was not going to be one of my courses, but also courses in regionalization, regional studies. I learned an awful lot more than I taught and then I developed two electives that I taught on my own. One was world in transformation, looking at how these transformations going on from empire to city/state, from despotism to democracy were playing out. That was a good course and I had a lot of fun doing it. The second year I did an elective on the role of development in U.S. national interest and U.S. national strategy.

Q: The students are pretty smart aren't they?

BALLANTYNE: The students are great. In the beginning I got a little worried, as a civilian. What do I know? I was a little bit reluctant to engage with them. But once I began engaging I found some incredibly smart, interested, and great students.

One of my favorite stories, and I tell you this because I take this as one of the highest compliments I've ever had: Several years ago there was a change of military command in Baghdad and the AID director was at the ceremony and another friend of mine, Peter Bodde, was the DCM in Baghdad. The outgoing military chief said, "You know I really have enjoyed this, I've learned a lot and thank God I took Janet Ballantyne's course when I was at the National War College."

Q: Is that right?

BALLANTYNE: I immediately got emails from several friends. His replacement said, "Well I was the year after you but I took that course too, and thank you Janet." You know that made the whole thing very worthwhile.

Q: Of course, evidence of effectiveness.

Agency Counselor and Acting Deputy Administrator (2001-2002)

BALLANTYNE: I liked being there. The War College asked me to stay on and they basically elected me to stay on in a permanent position, and I got AID to agree that they would give me another year on my AID salary and then I'd have to go back to a GS-14 or something like that. But that's when the new administration was coming in and I got a call that the new AID administrator wanted to talk to me. Well I'd never met him, Andrew Natsios, so I made an appointment to go over and meet with him before he was confirmed. He said, "What does it take to get you back here?" I said, "Andrew, I've been here and done that. I think you might want a little fresher blood." He said, "No, I don't want that. I know more about you than you know about me, but I want you back here. So what job?" He said, "You're not leaving this room until you tell me." I said, "Well the one job that I think I could be effective at, providing you and I had the same understanding of what the job is, would be agency counselor." The counselor position was set up by Peter McPherson. The AID deputy administrator had always been a career person and when McPherson came in, this is under Reagan, they wanted to make the deputy political and Peter said, "Okay, but I want a counselor that will have the same rank and will be the number-one civilian career person." It was a very meaningful position, with the best people, and then it sort of petered away and nobody paid attention to it. He said, "If that's what you want, so be it."

Q: So you became counselor in what year?

BALLANTYNE: 2001.

Q: Why don't we end there for today and we will pick it up.

BALLANTYNE: Great, great.

Q: Today is January 20, 2015 and we are resuming our interview with Janet Ballantyne. Janet, the last time we talked you mentioned that you were about to become counselor for the agency. Before we go to that point, though, let me ask you how the personnel system at USAID works.

BALLANTYNE: Well, I think there are two tracks. There is the official track, which is that you bid on certain jobs and a panel gets together and decides on the best match. Then there is what I would call the other track, which is you decide what job you want and you work the system so that you get it.

Q: What does working the system involve?

BALLANTYNE: That would involve getting support from higher-ups. A lot of times it is a little horse trading that goes on: I'll give you so and so if you give me so and so. One of the things that AID tries to do, and I think it is the same in State, is that they don't let people stay in one bureau for a long time; I think AID more than State. In AID you are working more directly with host country counterparts all the time and I think there is a concern about clientitis.

Q: Going native.

BALLANTYNE: Going native. I mean you have somebody like me; I started off in the Latin American bureau, I am fluent in Spanish, and my next assignment was Nepal. Well, I wanted Nepal but it was also very clear that I would have to do a lot of horse-trading not to stay in the Latin American bureau. I had done my doctorate and dissertation work and had worked there; I was kind of an insider in many ways, particularly in Peru. But particularly when you get into the higher levels -- deputy director, director, office chief here in Washington or deputy assistant administrator -- you work the system. I think it is pretty much the same at State, although nobody would officially admit this.

Q: So the fellow just applying out of the blue, even though he might be well qualified, doesn't have as much of a chance as somebody who is well known since who you know has an important role in it.

BALLANTYNE: Who you know, your reputation.

Q: Corridor reputation.

BALLANTYNE: Corridor reputation, I always tell people, is so important. If you get one instance of a bad corridor reputation, it can ruin five years of good. People hone in on oh my goodness this person doesn't respond well to supervision or this person is insensitive to gender concerns or this person, whatever it is.

Q: But doesn't one tend to get that reputation in a particular bureau? In other words you get known among the Latin Americanists or the Africanists?

BALLANTYNE: Yeah, but they talk.

Q: They talk.

BALLANTYNE: They talk back here. AID is so much smaller than the State Department. The higher-ups, the higher career people in each of the bureaus, and I think there are ten bureaus, the regional bureaus and the central, they all know each other. They all pretty much came into the agency at the same time. They may have worked in different parts of the world geographically, but they know each.

Q: At the time we are talking about, how big was the agency in terms of numbers of personnel?

BALLANTYNE: The idea, I think, when AID really started building up in the '60s was to have two people in the field for every one person in Washington; that has turned itself on its head. There are far more people in Washington than there are in the field. At one point, a point we will get to a little bit later, the Foreign Service was down below 1,000 people, so there was a lot of

reliance on personal services contractors and institutionalized contractors, for-profits and not-for-profits.

Q: We will get back to that, but what's the level now?

BALLANTYNE: Of Foreign Service officers, probably around 1,800.

Q: 1,800, so not quite doubled.

BALLANTYNE: Not quite doubled. The idea was to double up, but I don't think they've quite made that yet.

Q: So in June of 2001 you become counselor of the agency.

BALLANTYNE: Yes.

Q: And acting deputy administrator for a while?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, there was no deputy administrator for about seven or eight months and Andrew Natsios, the confirmed administrator, asked me if I would sit in as deputy. This was a big honor.

Q: Of course it was. What was the role of the counselor?

BALLANTYNE: Peter McPherson set up the counselor position in the early 1980s, I believe. The Deputy Administrator had always been a career person to that point and I guess the higher ups told him that the deputy would be going to a political appointee. He said, "I need the voice of an insider." So they set up the counselor position, which was supposed to be co-equal with the deputy administrator. So you had a career person as counselor, a political appointee as deputy administrator. Peter was one of the Administrators everybody would put up in the top one or two; he really cared about AID. He was very faithful to that principle. He got the highest person that he could; it was somebody who was personally responsible to him, who was part of the inner troika and in on all decision-making. Andrew Natsios really felt the same way, and we had a long talk. I said, "I've got this great offer from National Defense University, I love it there, they love me, why should I come back here?" Then I explained to him what the counselor position had been under McPherson and how it kind of deteriorated after Peter. He said, "Let's go back to the original." I believe he actually talked to Peter McPherson about this.

During the time I was there Andrew Natsios was an extraordinary Administrator. This was a man who cared desperately about development, who loved what AID did and what the potential of AID was. He asked me one time, "What does counselor mean?" I said, "Well, have you ever heard the Messiah?" "Yeah." "And he shall be called wonderful counselor, the king of kings, the everlasting glory. Think of me that way." He said, "We can get close maybe." I had access to every meeting he was in, and I told him that I thought that a very important part of being a counselor was that I could go into his office and shut the door and we could have one-on-ones I needed to be able to tell him hey, I think we are going the wrong way, let's look at the different way, or hey, you really screwed up on that speech. He was very faithful to that; it was a very interesting job. He asked me, and I believe he told me he checked this out with Secretary Powell, if I could be permanent Deputy Administrator and I told him, "The problem, Andrew, is that you are all Republicans and I'm not." He said, "We know that and that's okay too." As Deputy Administrator there would be a lot of work on the Hill that I could talk about and explain things

like Mexico City Policy, but I would be unable to defend it. So he said, "Will you stay as counselor?" I said, "Of course."

Q: How had the position as counselor deteriorated before this time?

BALLANTYNE: It had not been used as the counselor as the king of kings, the everlasting glory scenario, but as another line position, and there was not that direct one-on-one access to the administrator. Another role of the counselor position was to be the interface between the career staff and the political staff. Well, tensions build up. I think if you look at the composition of AID, many are very liberal, politically to the left people, I think about 30 percent are former Peace Corps volunteers, and they are not establishment people. A lot of the people who come in to form the political ranks are much more political, from time to time much further to the right on the political spectrum. There's never been a clash, but sometimes people have not spoken the same language.

Q: There wasn't a legal role to it? When one thinks of counselor, he/she counsels everyone else.

BALLANTYNE: No.

Q: You mentioned that the position was the interface between the career and the non-career. Does AID have the equivalent of director general, sort of head of personnel for AID?

BALLANTYNE: No, we have a personnel system in which over the years the human resources office has become largely dysfunctional. Recently they changed the name from the office of human resources to the center of excellence for something or other, with the idea you change the name and it becomes the center of excellence. It's probably the least functional of all the bureaus in AID, so no, you don't. The counselor oversees a lot of the assignments process, particularly the senior Foreign Service and the senior management group.

Q: So the head of that bureau then reports directly to the administrator?

BALLANTYNE: Yes.

Q: Not necessarily via the counselor?

BALLANTYNE: No.

Q: Now when you started out dual-hatted, you were acting deputy administrator. That lasted for seven to nine months?

BALLANTYNE: Seven months.

Q: After that who became the deputy administrator?

BALLANTYNE: Fred Schieck.

Q: Did you find over time, once that position was filled and you were co-equals, that there was a tension that developed between those two positions? I don't mean necessarily with that individual but more bureaucratically between the positions?

BALLANTYNE: No, not at all. The other thing that happened about the time that Fred came was that there was an opening for the deputy assistant administrator for Asia and the Near East. Andrew Natsios asked if I would take on that position as counselor. So the whole time I was there I was dual-hatted; Wendy Chamberlin came in about the time I left AID.

Q: Did you find there were many occasions in which you needed to go into to Natsios, close that door, and say, "We've got to talk"?

BALLANTYNE: A couple of times. A lot of it was personnel issues where a person was creating mischief somewhere, and a lot of it was dealing with some of the political appointees that had come in. He always listened, he always thanked me; he was an incredible person I loved working for him; we are still very, very good friends.

Q: He was a specialist in disaster relief wasn't he?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, a specialist in disaster relief and famines. I asked him one time what do you and your wife talk about, disasters and famines? It would be pretty depressing. He's written a number of books, including on the North Korean famine. His heart was (and is) very much in Sudan; he was intimately involved with the leaders of Sudan's separatist movement. In a previous incarnation, he had been head of the office of foreign disaster assistance at AID. I said, "There's never been a disaster that you haven't personally loved."

Q: That office of disaster assistance, that continues?

BALLANTYNE: Yes.

Q: Did you have any oversight as counselor in that regard?

BALLANTYNE: No, I met with them a lot but the office of foreign disaster assistance was independent at that time. So I met with them. There are two parts of AID that really act on their own: office of foreign disaster assistance and the office of transition and initiatives. By the time the front office hears about an earthquake, they have people on the ground.

Q: But they normally report to the administrator?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, and there is certainly an understanding of the political ramifications. OFDA will respond anywhere in the world; if there is a disaster in Iran, as there was with the earthquake about ten years ago, they will get people in there.

Q: Would the administrator keep fairly close tabs on them?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, oh sure, certainly the secretary was always very much interested in that.

Q: But the nominal, or perhaps more than nominal, hierarchy was that those offices came under the administrator.

BALLANTYNE: Yes, but they are incredible people. I remember when I was in Morocco, it was a Saturday afternoon, and we got the first wind of a locust infestation coming up from Mauritania. I was acting AID director at the time as the director was off somewhere. By Monday morning we had two airplanes with malathion on the ground ready to start spraying and I was in phone contact with Julia Taft, then Director of OFDA, who spent her weekend putting together her teams and

getting the logistics, and using her “notwithstanding foreign policy” authority to get out of the Buy America Act. So we had French planes on the ground filled with malathion, and God knows where they got that. So it was probably the best functioning part of AID for a long time.

Q: As counselor did you have particular responsibility for given regions, or was it overall?

BALLANTYNE: Overall.

Q: What did you find most occupied your time? What were your major challenges as counselor?

BALLANTYNE: Since I was dual-hatted virtually the entire time, I guess the thing that I will certainly remember most vividly, as will most Americans, was 9/11.

Q: Yes.

BALLANTYNE: The Administrator, Andrew Natsios, was in Bulgaria at a regional meeting with the Europe-Eurasia bureau and all of a sudden I was in charge. It’s a terrifying realization that you have to ensure the safety of about 10,000 people around the world in 92 different countries, coordinate with the State Department, and try to understand what the rules are; fortunately there were some terrific people around. I remember on 9/11 that we were trying to get instructions from the State Department -- do we let people leave their offices or do we exercise judgment and let people go. We had called the various bureaus together and a lot of people were milling around, and I told them, you find out from your people what they want to do. There were people who had husbands and wives who worked at the Pentagon, and people were worried about their school-aged children. I urged them to exercise their judgment.

I remember about three days later all agencies were called into the Office of Personnel Management and the head of the OPM stood up at the lectern and chastised everybody there saying, “I am the only person in the government to authorize early departure and many of you went beyond your scope of work and you let people go. I know who you are.” All of a sudden the administrator from NASA stood up and said, “What would you have said to the people involved in Sachs in the World Trade Center when he told his people they could leave? What would you have told Cantor Fitzgerald?” He said, “I am the administrator, I have to take responsibility, and yes I let my people go and I’d do it again.” Everybody started to clap. But it was a very scary time.

Q: Of course it was.

BALLANTYNE: There were people who were truly terrified. The Ronald Reagan building is the second largest office building in the country after the Pentagon; it’s huge.

Q: I didn’t realize it is that large

BALLANTYNE: The Environmental Protection Agency, AID, a lot of smaller agencies, it’s huge. It used to be four square miles. I remember one man who would get panic attacks after 9/11 and he would run down the fire stairs, open up the fire doors and the fire engines would show up. He did this three times and I talked to him after the first and second and the third. I said, “I know how scared you are; why don’t you just take leave? You can take leave without pay, but you need to stay home. We can’t have the fire engines here all the time, because we are going to get in trouble.” Later a person was concerned because the windows only opened six inches and he wanted to be assured he would be able to jump out of a window in case of a fire or an attack. He

demanded that the windows in his office be opened to fifteen inches, or whatever, so he could jump out. I remember finally saying, "What you need to do is pick up your chair and smash the window." You spend a lot of your time dealing with these small issues that are very important to the people concerned, and I don't mean to make light of it because people were frightened. First of all I didn't think they should be coming to work; I think they should be staying at home. But Andrew Natsios called me on I think the third time and I said, "Andrew I've got something to say to you that may be very career limiting, but you're in Bulgaria, I'm here, and I'm in charge, do not call me again." When he finally got back it was after like eight days because, of course, there were no transatlantic flights. He called me into his office and I thought well here it comes. He said, "You were right."

Q: How did you carry out your liaison with other agencies, primarily with State, I assume?

BALLANTYNE: I would generally go to the secretary's 8:00 o'clock meetings and got to know the regional assistant secretaries, did a lot of work with some of them, particularly after 9/11, sort of coordinating the response. I remember particularly in the Near East, AID had at that time huge missions in Jordan, Egypt, and there were questions about whether we should restrict travel. I said, "Look, you tell me what you are doing and we will certainly follow that; David Satterfield I remember working very well with him"

Q: So you attended those meetings before 9/11 and they became even more important later.

BALLANTYNE: Yes.

Q: On 9/11 itself were you in pretty close contact with State regarding these immediate issues of releasing personnel?

BALLANTYNE: No I was at the 8:00 o'clock meeting.

Q: I see.

BALLANTYNE: The secretary was in Peru, so Armitage was the Acting Secretary. Is that what you call them, acting secretary? Well, he was in charge. There were other people within AID; Andrew's chief of staff was very good in coordination; he knew a lot of the people at State. AID was still at that point an independent agency, but we followed the State Department's lead.

Q: Well 9/11 was certainly a major point in your tenure. You weren't there all that long, but during that period were there other things that that stood out?

BALLANTYNE: I think Andrew was very clear about what he wanted to accomplish. In his office he had flip charts with his management objectives, which were always very clear in terms of his management and personal goals; another flip chart was agency priorities. Management pretty much stayed the same, but with changing development priorities. There was always a disaster in there; unfortunately disaster is a growth industry.

Q: Yes, yes, unfortunately. Do you recall what the major goals were that he was setting forth, not just on the management side?

BALLANTYNE: Well they changed from before 9/11 and after 9/11. GWOT, the Global War on Terrorism, suddenly went to the top of the list. We had closed down the AID mission in

Afghanistan ten, twenty years earlier and, of course, we had no AID mission in Iraq. Getting the right people to volunteer or be volunteered to go into those areas was at the top of his goals.

Q: Aside from Iraq and Afghanistan, did this global war on terrorism have implications elsewhere or more broadly?

BALLANTYNE: Yes. I would that say in 95 percent of the locations AID was not co-located with the embassy. Embassies were always very secure, albeit not as secure as they are now. AID might be a couple blocks away, a couple miles away. The security of AID personnel became very important and I remember doing a lot of consultation with the State organization that dealt with overseas buildings. I worked with them because it was made clear that the only way you could really secure any U.S. government organization would be to have a co-location. That was the beginning of these modular buildings that I'd been to all over the world, where AID is absorbed into a co-located space. This has changed the way AID works.

Q: In what ways were there changes, and is this a disadvantage?

BALLANTYNE: In the past AID people could come and go pretty much as they wished and they could have host country counterparts coming and going pretty much as they wished. There was often a metal detector. I remember in Nicaragua they had a metal detector, we had a box for people to put their guns in, but you had much more contact more frequently in the AID office with host country counterparts. That's very, very difficult now because it is much more secure. So your meetings with your counterparts have to largely take place outside of U.S. government property; that's the downside. The upside is that the personnel are much more secure than they had been and I think in the long run that is the most important thing, to have people in countries where there is a lot of violence or there maybe ethnic tensions to feel secure at work.

Q: So you don't feel it has greatly inhibited AID at doing their job?

BALLANTYNE: It's inhibited but I don't think greatly; we all deal with work around us. In Russia we were on the compound but we were not in the chancery, so people would have to come through the tunnel and show a badge. If needed, we would call the guards to tell them a senior government official would be arriving. Now if you have a vice minister coming in it's a lot more cumbersome and large groups are almost impossible. But there is a payoff and I think security is most important. I have to say I've never worked in a co-located place other than Russia.

Q: Some of those embassies are huge now. So in September 2002 you went to work for Abt Associates does that mean you were retiring from AID?

Retires from USAID (for a while) -- 2002

BALLANTYNE: I retired from the Foreign Service and went to work for Abt Associates, which is a private for-profit consulting firm.

Q: And why did you retire from AID?

BALLANTYNE: There was no place else that I wanted to go. I had done what I wanted to do and I left being so grateful that I had had all of these opportunities. I didn't particularly want to go back overseas, but wanted to stay in the U.S. where my son was now entering his twenties.

I had bought a house back in 1986 and never lived in it. I found that it was a great old house in Chevy Chase, needed a lot of work, and I thought, wouldn't that be fun to have some projects, like having your kitchen ripped out and taking eight months putting it back together.

Q: In the AID process AID personnel tend to spend more time overseas throughout their careers than State Department people do. Did you find that disconcerting in any way? Did you feel yourself, not alienated from your own country but maybe not quite as involved as you might otherwise have been?

BALLANTYNE: I never felt alienated. I always tell people what AID does is in the field and don't think you can do that staying here in Washington. We are an agency that provides assistance to other governments, local groups, and you can't do that from Washington. I think with home leaves and R&Rs you have a chance to be back here long enough. Between assignments I had a couple months to be back here.

Q: So your son went to foreign schools, international schools? How did that work?

BALLANTYNE: It worked very well. I think I mentioned he was adopted from Peru, so he puts on his census form that he's a Native American, different hemisphere. In the international schools everybody's different, so nobody's different. When I went to Nicaragua, the American school there was so bad that an added benefit of being there was that I got a schooling allowance, and he went to a private boarding school in New Hampshire near my family home. And all of a sudden he was different.

Q: Yes.

BALLANTYNE: That first year when I was in Nicaragua and he was in New Hampshire, I had no idea how difficult it was for him.

Q: That's a similar experience to my daughter, who had gone to international schools and wasn't different until she came back to the United States.

BALLANTYNE: But by his sophomore year he found his best friend, literally for life, who's Nepali, whose parents had won a visa lottery. He was actually born in the U.S. but still very much of a Nepali family, and the family lived in Vermont. My son rather than visiting my relatives on Thanksgiving would go to his family, and his friend was the best man at his wedding fifteen years later.

Q: That's interesting; there was that Nepali connection.

BALLANTYNE: Oh yes, and then he'd speak Nepali.

Q: He had learned Nepali in Kathmandu?

BALLANTYNE: Yes; his language pickup was wonderful and by the time we left Nepal he refused to speak Spanish. He said, "Nobody speaks Spanish." I said, "I speak Spanish." He said, "That doesn't count." So he would go out and talk to the guards and he would love to eat with the guards and sit in their little guard shack and have rice with lentils. He picked up Nepali and when we went to Morocco he picked up Arabic, but he's forgotten all of these now and is concentrating on Spanish.

Q: Did you speak Spanish at home with him?

BALLANTYNE: I tried, and he's now married to a woman of Honduran extraction; she was born here of Latino parents. In all of her family a number of them don't speak any English, so all of a sudden he's had to go to the back of his mind and he's motivated now. But the international schools are wonderful. I meet people who are in the Foreign Service and they say, "Well you know I've got to stay here in Washington because I've got little kids." I said, "Well that's when you want to be overseas; you can get good nanny's and the school are better than anything you are going to find here."

Q: So I infer that overall the foreign experience for him was positive.

BALLANTYNE: Very positive and it's funny because I've asked him if he would ever consider an international career and he said, "No, I've already done that." He now has his first child and he said, "I don't think I would want her to be as reckless as I was." I said, "Now tell me about it." He said, "Well, there were some times when you were working and I was home with the servants who were supposed to be in charge, that did not happen."

Abt Associates – Group Vice President for International Practice (2002-2007)

Q: So ABT Associates, what was your role there?

BALLANTYNE: I was the group vice president for the international practice and at that time it was about a \$200 million a year firm and about half of that was in the international sphere, particularly public health, economic growth, and the environment. My job was to try and grow that to make the company more competitive, do the right kind of hiring, and learn how to be a business person.

Q: Did you have to go out and drum up business?

BALLANTYNE: We had to go out and drum up business and I also had to learn how to read a company balance sheet. Every month you were handed about an 80 page booklet and we would have meetings with the CEO, chief executive officer, and all of the vice presidents and be expected to go to that book and tell people what happened. The first time I had to report on it I didn't have a clue; I didn't know where to look, I didn't know how to read a balance sheet. I'd been on the other side where you don't have to because there are always replenishments. So I think the first thing I learned that first year was the need to pick up a lot of the skills that somebody with an MBA, master of business administration, would have had.

Q: What was the relationship between Abt and USAID?

BALLANTYNE: Very good. Abt was kind of the go-to private sector company for international public health. There were a couple of innovations that came out of Abt in international health, for example the whole idea of health national accounts. Every country has its own national account, but if you can separate out the health sector it gives decision-makers an idea of total financing needs: for example, what comes from the federal government, what comes from local governments, what comes from charitable organizations. This then gives you a much better idea of where the gaps are. Abt kind of led that idea. I think almost every country now has a system of health national accounts; we just had a terrific staff, a lot of international people, excellent people. I'll always remember one Zambian doctor who was instrumental in a lot of the African programs;

I will always remember him from the day I was coming back from lunch and a bee flew into my ear.

Q: Oh Lord.

BALLANTYNE: When a bee starts stinging inside your ear you know it. I ran up and told someone I need some help. Well they called 9/11 and somebody said get Gilbert, Gilbert Kombay, a Zambian doctor who came down. He took one look and asked for a glass of water.” He poured water in my ear and the bee kind of floated out and by the time the EMT arrived I was fine although a little sore. He said, “This happens in Africa all the time.” So it was great having an African who did not think of somebody having a bee in their ear as something extraordinary. But they had a lot of great staff. We had a Chinese doctor who had been one of the barefoot doctors in China; since he left China he had had a lot of clinical experience and more educational experience; he was one of the leaders. Abt won the contract for improving the public health in Iraq after the U.S. started its program there.

Q: Now what does Abt stand for?

BALLANTYNE: No, it’s a name. Clark Abt is a person, A-B-T.

Q: Were your contacts at AID or the fact that you knew people at AID, helpful

BALLANTYNE: You know I was recused as we all are after leaving AID, especially because I had been a high level official in AID. I was recused for two years from any direct contact. But people in the company who had those contacts, I would tell them who I thought they should talk to.

Q: What there anything in particular in those five years that you want to discuss or add anything about?

BALLANTYNE: I guess maybe in the fourth year I started really missing what I had done for a living, that somehow the idea of doing public health for profit began to bother me. I think I decided about that time that I would stay five years, and that had been my initial agreement with the CEO. I told him I thought five years was just about right and I’d like to start grooming someone to take my position. I wasn’t sure what I would do but I was making a lot of money; you make a lot more money in the private section than the public sector. If you fulfill your goals you get a big bonus at the end of the year and I was retired from AID so I was getting my annuity, more money than I’d ever seen, but you start realizing that’s of secondary importance. So at the time I was just getting ready to retire for a second time, there was a change in AID. I don’t know if you recall that we had an administrator, Randall Tobias, who got caught using, I think, government phones to solicit for what he called massage girls. They were women he would meet at the Willard Hotel and he got fired or left. Whatever it was; it was a mess. The president picked his successor, an incredible woman who had been an assistant administrator for the private sector and for Asia-Near East, Henrietta Fore, to come in; there was a year and two months left in the administration and Henrietta Fore came in and took charge. She had very clear goals that were simple goals and I think there were only two. She asked me if I would consider coming back and heading up what was her number one goal, which was to double the size of the Foreign Service.

Return to USAID – Series of Positions

Q: How did she know you were available? Had you put out feelers?

BALLANTYNE: Mutual friends had told her.

Q: Oh, I see.

BALLANTYNE: And I was in touch with the guy who was the head of personnel and he kept saying we'd like to get you to come back. So the right opportunity came up and she was the most incredibly high-powered, high-paced woman I have ever met, an absolute delight to work with because you know exactly what she wants. If you do it, she is very forthcoming with compliments; if you don't do it, you also know.

Q: How did the information about Tobias come to the fore? Do you know how that emerged?

BALLANTYNE: I don't know; I was not there at the time. I know he was not loved by anyone because he came in and tried to impose a business model. He was also assigned at the time AID was moved into a stronger reporting relationship with State. The F Bureau was created, and Tobias was the first person to be double-hatted as Under Secretary for Development Assistance and head of F and AID administrator. F took over the budget functions for the AID.

Q: Is that still the case?

BALLANTYNE: That's still the case. You know, when you don't have control over your own budget you really are not very independent.

Q: It's a very anomalous situation isn't it?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, yeah.

Q: Does the administrator report to the secretary?

BALLANTYNE: I'm not sure, because the current administrator is not double-hatted. The head of F, I don't know who it is now but it is not Raj Shah. Raj Shah has set up a budget office within AID. There are these 30 people in the budget office, so they are nominally independent but they really are not. They come up with a budget and F decides.

Q: Then there are negotiations back and forth?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, if there are two sets of priorities, the secretary's set of priorities and the AID administrator's, guess who is going to win? Going back to 20 years ago when there was a real move in the Senate to move AID into State and Brian Atwood, who was then the Administrator, fought it and won; it was of great cost to him. He was the president's choice to be ambassador to Brazil and Jessie Helms said, "Over my dead body. You fight me here." So Brian was, I think, very courageous in doing it but I think there might have been advantages if AID had negotiated then from a position of strength. AID could have argued that it is an independent agency with certain skills and functions, but also agreed that it should be a part of the State Department. But, AID could have also argued how it would have liked it to be set up: the AID administrator becomes an under secretary or a third deputy secretary. But AID has lost that ability, so it's much more gradual now.

Q: But that would have been a workable model in your view?

BALLANTYNE: That would have been a workable model then; I'm not sure now. I think now it's a quarter done and we don't have that commanding position of strength.

Q: With Henrietta Fore you were working to hire this new career Foreign Service. How did that come about? Why was there a need? What had happened to the career service before that?

BALLANTYNE: It had diminished enormously. I don't know what the height was. I think the height might have been during Viet Nam, when I think there were four or five thousand Foreign Service officers. I know when I did that internship in India with AID there were a thousand people in USAID in India.

Q: That was a lot of people.

BALLANTYNE: Yes indeed and we were down below a thousand worldwide; it had just gone down slowly.

Q: Now does that mean the programs had gone down or were those positions taken by contractors?

BALLANTYNE: Taken by contractors. I remember when I joined AID that there were agriculture officers at every mission, that there were economists, and I think I mentioned when I went to my first job in Peru there were four economists in AID. We are down to about eight economists in the entire agency, a handful of agriculture people, no engineers. So whereas back in the '70s and '80s we had a cadre of special people who could talk one-on-one with host country officials. If you wanted to work with the ministry of finance in Morocco, it would be the AID people themselves who would go in and work on models; we had three economists when I was in USAID Morocco. Later, if you wanted to talk to the ministry of finance you'd go out and hire one through private contractors. So that takes a lot of the real development work away from AID people and puts it in private sector hands, or sometimes NGO hands.

Q: What impact did that have on the efficacy of these programs?

BALLANTYNE: I think it had a negative one. In my five years as a contractor one thing I learned was that contractors do a lot to please the contracting agency; you'll do a lot to keep your contract going. In any private sector firm it's not so much the development work you do as the bottom line on your profit. So if you find that there is a conflict in what you really believe and affecting your bottom line, most people go with the bottom line.

Q: It sounds like, then, that money perhaps that ought to have been going toward development was going for profit?

BALLANTYNE: And I think this continues to be the case. Every time somebody talks about reorganizing AID they talk about how contractors have taken over.

Q: Contractors are still used a significant degree?

BALLANTYNE: Significantly. Raj Shah has tried to get a better balance between AID and implementing organizations and also a better balance between the private sector for-profits with the not-for-profits.

Q: So funds were developed to start hiring again?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, Henrietta Fore negotiated like nobody, she got the Hill to agree, she got OMB to agree and we had a lot of money to bring in new people.

Q: This was part of the overall effort to build up State as well, I believe.

BALLANTYNE: Yes. For the first time there was massive recruitment. There had been some hiring of direct hire employees, but it was often done only through very circuitous routes; people instead could get a contractor to do things. Simultaneously, there had been a huge cohort of people wanting to work for AID. All of a sudden there was a dam that had been holding back. For the first cohort we were going to select about 40 people and I believe we had 6,000 applicants.

Q: Six thousand for 40?

BALLANTYNE: During the winnowing maybe half of the people did not meet minimum requirements, and they were selected out literally through the electronic submission program. Requirements included being a U.S. citizen, having at least a master's degree, as well as a couple other criteria that filtered people out, but we were still stuck with 3,000. We hired a minority owned firm to do further selection, so ended up with maybe 200 or 300 candidates who met every one of the requirements to fill the 40 new positions. We set up panels that would interview new people, so they all went through a pretty extensive interview process, and I was on a number of the panels for the economists. Once you've gone through that kind of a winnowing away you've got ten economists that are coming through and you are interviewing them individually and then in groups to see how they worked together and rating them and then you take the top ones. Some of them may fail on security but these people were absolutely incredible.

Q: There was no examination process; it was all qualifications and experience?

BALLANTYNE: No, in the oral interview they started off being given a problem and they had an hour to write a response. So you could check their writing skills.

Q: And they were brought in as GS employees?

BALLANTYNE: No, FS.

Q: Foreign Service employees. How was it determined what Foreign Service level they would enter?

BALLANTYNE: They were brought in and I think this was negotiated with State. I think they were brought in at the FS-6 level; I think that is the general entry level.

Q: I see.

BALLANTYNE: I was there for the first five classes, so about 200 people. Starting in the second class we brought in a few mid-level people for backstops that were critically under-supported, like comptrollers. Many of these were people who had left the agency to go into the private sector and wanted to come back.

Q: I see.

BALLANTYNE: But I'll never forget the first group we brought in, 40 people, and the administrator and the deputy administrator came down and I've never felt such energy in a room in my life. There were 40 people, the first 40 people the agency had hired in 10-15 years. This was the number-one priority of the Administrator. There was such incredible energy; I'm still in touch probably with about half of those people.

Q: Now did they go into a training program at that point? Is there like an A-100 course for them?

BALLANTYNE: Not as well structured as A-100; they went through about six weeks of training in Washington and then usually there was technical training. For example, the Office of Financial Management would keep the comptrollers for a month to make sure they understood the way to do their jobs. Then the bulk of them either went to the field or into FSI for language.

Q: And you succeeded in hiring the full thousand?

BALLANTYNE: I was there for the first five cohorts, so there were 200 hired under my watch and then I moved on to something else for Henrietta. But I think they got up to 850; I'm not sure; they didn't quite make the thousand.

Q: That's quite an occasion.

BALLANTYNE: It's interesting that everybody in AID thought it was a great idea. Everyone was enthusiastic about doubling our ranks, but they also often wanted them to look just like us and think like us because the AID Foreign Service has its own identity. Their message, the bulk of the Foreign Service, is you come in and look like us and you act like us. I was telling them and a couple other people, don't tell them that this agency needs new blood and you are the new blood so go in and spread yourselves out. AID needs to change its way of thinking, a little old school, don't expect to get everything out of it but a blend of the good part of the old and a good part of the new is going to very much invigorate this agency.

Q: Are you very familiar with the Donald Payne Fellowships that bring in junior AID officers? This is similar to the Pickerings and the Rangels for the State Department people.

BALLANTYNE: Yes I am, this happened afterwards, but I remember reading about it.

Q: I get involved in that sometimes.

BALLANTYNE: How many have been brought in under that program?

Q: You know it's not a great number. I think they bring in I can't remember now, 4-6 a year or something like that.

BALLANTYNE: These are minorities?

Q: These are minorities. Very highly qualified and it's a good program and I get involved sort of tangentially, evaluating writing skills.

BALLANTYNE: Henrietta was very insistent, and this was one of the things I was talking about. She wanted to make sure that we had full minority representation in every class. I would go up to her before these people were actually brought in and say okay we've picked our class, and her first question was what percentage are minorities.

Q: Interesting.

BALLANTYNE: Then we averaged between 30 and 35 percent.

Q: That's quite good.

BALLANTYNE: That's amazing for AID.

Q: It is.

BALLANTYNE: And I think most of them have stayed. Some of them have had issues; they don't like the international environment so much. One woman actually told me she said, "It was just too white bread for me."

Q: Were the PRTs, provincial reconstruction teams, in Iraq and Afghanistan an issue at this point for you? Was AID sending people out to serve in them?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, and the rule for the first couple of classes was nobody goes to Iraq, Afghanistan or Pakistan.

Q: They'd be a little too new to get rushed into that.

BALLANTYNE: Too new. I remember from the first or the second class one woman who came up and she said, "I'm going to fight that; you talk about an open assignment system I'm qualified and I want to go." She ended up moving to Afghanistan and did a superb job.

Q: Oh yeah, as long as I guess they had the motivation to go.

BALLANTYNE: Right. As I say, I'm in touch with probably 100 of the early classes either through Facebook or as a mentor to probably twenty of them. It's interesting that some of them are now on their fourth assignment and they are moving up the chain, and in the back of my head I'm wondering who's the first one to become a mission director. I've got a list and I want to see who it is.

Q: You were involved in recruiting people, so maybe you weren't involved in it but do you recall that the PRT system presented particular problems or challenges for AID?

BALLANTYNE: I don't really know an awful lot about it. I do know some people that were on the PRTs found it to be a real adrenaline high to be on them and to work with the military that closely. AID had never really worked that closely with the military except overseas or with some military attachés. I think some of them did very, very well.

Q: There's a book called We Meant Well by a Foreign Service officer who was involved in PRTs and it takes a rather cynical view of the efforts there not because of the dedication of the personnel...

BALLANTYNE: Because of the situation.

Q: ...because of the projects that got away, weren't finished or...

BALLANTYNE: You read about them all the time. Is that book available here?

Q: No, but it is easy to get on line. I've read it and you won't agree with everything but he does raise some interesting questions. As a matter of fact, I'd be interested in having your reaction to it.

BALLANTYNE: I'll look for it on line.

Q: So you did that from December 2007 to February of 2009 and then in February of 2009 your career took a new tack; tell me about that.

BALLANTYNE: I'm trying to think when I went to Almaty.

Q: You became the mission director for Central Asian Republics at that point.

BALLANTYNE: Right. This again is another interregnum period where the prisoners are in charge of the prison and the Acting Administrator was then Alonzo Fulgham. Henrietta had left; Obama had been elected in 2008. Alonzo is an extremely talented African-American, and he asked, "You've done this now for a year and a half, you've done a great job, do you feel like going back into the field? We need an interim director in Central Asia." When I was with Abt Associates I had visited Central Asia; we had a lot of programs there and contracts. This struck me as one part of the world I would love to get to know better.

I said this struck me as a place I would like to go. It would be about six months, long enough to get to know the programs that Central Asia runs in five countries; what we call the minor "stans": Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. A fascinating part of world history, and I was ready to move out for a while. So I went out in April and stayed until September.

Q: Where did you live?

BALLANTYNE: In Kazakhstan. It was great to be back in the heart of an overseas mission with bright talented people and have the opportunity to travel to the other little stans and see how AID and U.S. foreign assistance make a difference in countries that have very little in the way of civil liberties or freedom. These are the Central Asian disparate club and they all have presidents for life. I think one of the places where I was most amazed was Turkmenistan. I don't know if you've ever been there. It's one of the weirdest places you'll ever visit in your life.

Q: I have not.

BALLANTYNE: The whole city of Ashgabat is a memorial to the late president, Türkmenbaşy; there are statues of him all over the place, He wrote a book, I can't remember the name of it, but it's sort of a cross between the boy scout manual and Tom Swift. It is really very simplistic but it is the only book that most school children ever read. There is an electronic copy of it down by one of the public squares. I would sit up in my room on the balcony and look out and there'd be nobody on the streets; this glistening white marble city with TV dishes on top of every apartment building; you wouldn't see anybody except these little old ladies dressed in black who were out there picking up every gum wrapper that might have fallen; we called them the Ninjas. On the only TV station, half the broadcasting is of current president, Berdimuhamedow, showing him visiting schools and nodding sagely. What do you do in a place like that? Well, you find groups, and the AID representative found our Junior Achievement.

Q: So there were some civil society organizations.

BALLANTYNE: Yes, but it was dormant and he found that this was a place that he could work directly with youth, working in from the margins, developing a program that was not robust but provided an insight into the society. I remember meeting with the Foreign Service Nationals in the AID room; there was just one American, and they are talking to him about what their aspirations are. They were very guarded because nobody was going to be talking against the regime, but they also had dreams for their kids that went way beyond it. I think having programs there was the right thing to do, and certainly in Kirgizstan. AID was there for one reason and that was the use of the airbase for transit of supplies to Afghanistan, but there was a civil society with ethnic issues. We had an AID representative there who was a woman who loved to engage with people. She took me with her to a couple of events where you could tell she was influencing people to, say, think the right way, not of the present but of the future. What do you want for your kids? Do you want them to live in perpetual violence between the Tajiks and the Uzbeks? The geographic lines in all of Central Asia were drawn by Stalin. He sat down at his desk one day and said, "I think I'll divide this up for no rhyme nor reason. Oh let's see, all of the Turkmen live here so we'll put them together. Eh, I'll just draw the lines." So everybody is sort of mish-mashed and they still don't like each other.

Q: You were developing a regional approach to these countries?

BALLANTYNE: Right.

Q: And what did that involve? You said there were individual missions in each country and then they had you overlooking all of that.

BALLANTYNE: Yeah, they did have a pretty good strategy and I urged them to do a little more differentiation. You have targets of opportunity in Tajikistan and don't have to follow what everybody else is doing. If you have a target of opportunity to work on water rights, something that is very important throughout that whole area, do it. I got to know all of the ambassadors. Tracy Jacobson was the ambassador in Tajikistan at the time and that's how I first met her. I think all of the ambassadors loved having those AID programs; they were very small with, I think at most, two or three Americans, usually one direct hire and a couple contractors.

Q: What were the attitudes of the government toward these AID programs?

BALLANTYNE: In the minor stans I think there was more tolerance. I want to say it did no harm to the political structure, nobody cared with the tinkering around the edges of the economics. Kazakhstan was very different. The Kazak government, the current dictator for life, was a very progressive thinker who had put together a program in which they send about a thousand Kazaks a year to the United States for advanced degrees. Then they go back and they work largely in the public sector; the private sector also sends their people to petroleum school and things like that. But it made working there really very interesting. My counterpart within the ministry of finance, and I used to get in a lot of arguments. Then, I got a note from a good friend of mine who teaches at Duke and he said, "If you ever run into..." and he named this guy, "he's a former student of mine." So the next time we were negotiating and it got a little testy because we were asking for counterpart funds and they didn't want to put up the money. I said, "Let's try and think, I wonder what Bob Conrad would say." He said, "Do you know Bob?" I said, "I know Bob very well." He said, "I do too." That changed the whole atmosphere. He was still representing Kazakhstan and I the U.S., but it changed the dynamic. This is a country with unlimited natural resources,

petroleum and natural gas. AID was getting ready to pull out. This is a middle-income country, we were uncertain AID should remain. The government begged us and said, "Okay, we'll put up the money. We'll put up \$20 million a year and give it to you and you decide how to use it; we will not influence you. But we would like to work on poverty alleviation." A lot of the very important programs were financed totally by the Kazak government.

Q: Were there any programs in any of these countries which were oriented toward developing democracy, human rights?

BALLANTYNE: Human rights, I think, in every country, and working with the Kazak equivalent of Human Rights Watch. Human Rights Watch is in a lot of these countries -- I think including Kazakhstan, which is trying to put itself more on the world stage. It was elected president of, I think it was of one of the OECD major committees at one point, and is trying to get more on the stage. So I think that people are well aware of human rights. Also, I think in Kazakhstan as much as any other place, I got to understand that when you have a series of really good American ambassadors who understand the region or speak the language and who really care about defending or promoting U.S. interests but respecting what's important in the country makes all the difference in the world. When I was there, Dick Hoagland was ambassador and John Ordway had been before; I knew both of them from Russia where they had been. But at some point I would like to talk about the U.S. ambassadors and my thoughts as an AID director.

Q: As a matter of fact that's on my list of questions I do want to talk about, that relationship in your case and more broadly in general.

BALLANTYNE: I enjoyed working in Central Asia and I think there were a couple of things where I made a difference. One of the areas of concern to me in talking with the local people was the U.S. policy that urged Central Asians to "look South, look at your neighbors in Pakistan and Afghanistan and consider diverting some of the water that is now being used to irrigate the cotton crops and channel it toward Afghanistan so we can build up the hydro capacity there." I was concerned that this strategy was very artificial, that these Central Asian countries were creations of the Soviet Union and they had been looking North to Moscow and their entire economic structures were geared toward that. To create the artificiality that these were no longer part of the Russian "Near Abroad," the former Soviet Union, was artificial and would never work. I had the opportunity at one point when I was in Turkmenistan and Bob Blake and a group of people were coming through and staying at the same hotel and I had a chance to have dinner with them. I told them I had written a memo to AID about water uses, and Under Secretary Blake asked to look at it; I don't know if it made any difference. But you take that bloc that was very Soviet and they are never going to identify with Pakistan and Afghanistan no matter what our policies are; it's like taking Louisiana and saying you know you guys really should be part of the North.

Q: In September 2009 when you left that position to become acting assistant administrator...

BALLANTYNE: For Latin America.

Q: ...for Latin America and the Caribbean, you did that for a year. What happened during that year? What were your preoccupations?

BALLANTYNE: My biggest preoccupation was Alan Gross and that happened about a month into my tenure. I had no prior idea of the extent of the programs that AID was funding in Cuba. Of course, trying to figure out if there was anything we could do as an agency to get this guy

released was a huge priority. Probably the most important lesson I learned was that the power of special interests is much more powerful than the power of government bureaucrats.

Q: Expand on that in this particular case.

BALLANTYNE: There is no doubt in my mind that the U.S. could have negotiated release for Gross within months of his being captured, but his being held a prisoner there was very much a symbol for Cuban-Americans who were looking for regime change, including one senator and three members of the House as well as a lot of powerful people in South Florida. I think that the power that they brought was greater than the powers who said, "Hey, let's release this guy."

Q: They saw that as some sort of a concession to the Cubans?

BALLANTYNE: Yeah, well he was the Cardinal Mindszenty; he was the symbol. This was an innocent American, not quite so innocent, but an innocent American being held by the evil empire.

Q: What did his program involve and why did the Cubans take umbrage?

BALLANTYNE: He was a subcontractor under a contract that AID had with a for-profit company. The expressed purpose was to take in equipment that would allow the small Jewish community in Cuba to have Internet access.

Q: And that was against Cuban law, I take it?

BALLANTYNE: Yes.

Q: Was this a clandestine operation on his part or was he doing this openly?

BALLANTYNE: It was clandestine.

Q: So he knew that the Cubans were not going to be happy about it?

BALLANTYNE: Yeah.

Q: Did the Cubans consider it espionage or were they...

BALLANTYNE: Espionage.

Q: I see.

BALLANTYNE: The overt breaking of laws -- and I think that the trial certainly questioned whether he was providing access for a much broader segment of Cuban society than the very small Jewish community.

Q: What was his overt role there? What was the cover story as to why he was there?

BALLANTYNE: The cover story there was that he had been invited by the Jewish community, which is very small. The Jewish community here was furious. They said, "No, we take care of our own, we don't rely on AID contractors." When he did finally get caught he was picked up at customs carrying part of some equipment; a couple other colleagues were carrying other parts that when you put them together was something far beyond allowing a small group of people to talk to each other.

Q: Do you know how this project came about? Was this an AID thing or were other agencies involved?

BALLANTYNE: This was the Helms-Burton Act which has as an objective of regime change and this has been on the books since 1986 and funded at about \$20 million a year ever since. There is a call for applications for grants, mostly NGOs some for profit but mostly NGOs, who say, "Look I want to provide for support of the families of prisoners of conscience." They were mostly Cuban-Americans who would fly to the island carrying down medicines, food. After Gross was arrested I looked into all of these programs and just was shaking my head, you know, what are we doing.

Q: Were these coordinating with State? One would assume they would, the State side of the house...

BALLANTYNE: The Cuban desk officer I think knew about it. I don't think it was well coordinated. AID had had a series of assistant administrators for Latin America, Cuban-Americans; there were three in a row. They filled the office of Cuban affairs largely with people who were very sympathetic to the regime change. So I don't think it was so much clandestine as they just didn't tell people and nobody asked.

Q: I wonder if Gross really knew what risk he was taking.

BALLANTYNE: Certainly I've gone over all of his reports and I think he knew that if he was picked up that he would be in trouble and I think he knew he had been followed. This was his fourth trip...

Q: He was going back in at this time?

BALLANTYNE: Yes. So I was just thrilled to see that the idiotic Cuban policy we've had since 1959 is finally coming to a close. I think of all the things Obama has done, and I think he is going to go down eventually as one of the great presidents, personally I feel that opening U.S.-Cuban relations will go down as one of the greatest accomplishments. I'm wondering if there is a way I can get to Cuba.

Q: Yeah, I would like to go down. Is there anything else about that time as assistant administrator? Obviously Gross was a major element. Were there other issues?

BALLANTYNE: Well, I'm a great believer in Latin America. We used to refer to Latin America as our backyard. It's not, it's the front yard and over the years going back to the Alliance for Progress we have invested greatly in Latin America. It's almost as though we are saying, "Okay, we are finished, you are done" and there is still a lot to be done. I think my Latin friends say, "What have we done wrong?" They don't understand why we have closed AID programs in a number of countries. We've been kicked out of two now, Bolivia and I think we were kicked out of Ecuador, certainly we were going to be if we didn't. We've got the ALBA, Bolivarian Alliance

for the Peoples of America. Cuba inspired by Venezuela picked it up, and there are at least five member countries now. Many used to be friends to the United States but now are committed more to regimes that reject U.S. policies, U.S. interests, and say we can go it alone. Well they can't and we can't either. How can we live in a hemisphere with Venezuela, which is a dying state at this point? Do you remember the name Carlos Andres Perez, who was one of the great diplomats? He was our friend? Look at Ecuador, at Bolivia. You fly into the La Paz airport. There is a plaque there in honor of Ed Coy, who was the AID assistant administrator at the time that AID built that airport, and it's sad to see countries turning away from democratic values. Once you do that it's such a slope downhill particularly for the poor.

I mean one of the things that the U.S. policy has always maintained is integration of the poor into the mainstream. Everybody talks about it, but U.S. international development groups did it. I remember one point in Peru when a young Peruvian-Indian (Alejandro Toledo) came into my office to thank me because he had just won a scholarship. The next time I met him was at his inauguration when he became president of Peru and this was the great upward mobility story; it was wonderful to know that the U.S. had had a hand in that. The Peace Corps first of all, the kids in the Peace Corps, recognized him. He was a shoeshine boy and they said, "Come on, you can do better than this." They helped him get an undergraduate scholarship to the University of San Francisco; AID helped him to go and get a master's degree at Stanford, where he then stayed on and got his PhD. Every time he'll tell people the U.S. helped him do it. We don't have those stories any more. This is a big continent and it's an important continent in terms of resources. You know, they've had our back so many times, and there are some middle-income countries. I have argued till I'm blue in the face, going back to when I was an assistant administrator to Latin America, that we were too concerned about the drugs on the border with Mexico. They start in a little field somewhere in Bolivia or Peru and they pick up momentum as they go through processing and the cartels and they're crashing into our border. If you go back to those little fields and offer the farmers alternative crops that they can make a living on they don't want to be producing drugs; they know what drugs do to people, but nobody is providing them alternatives. The U.S. is doing a great job in Peru with a very reduced budget; we should be doing that all over.

Q: So in September of 2010 you started working on the 50th anniversary project for USAID as their senior historian and you put together a new volume of articles.

BALLANTYNE: Well I picked that title out of the air. The legislation calls for AID to have a historian and they've never had one and I thought it was time we started thinking about that. I've always been interested in history and I've heard some of the oral histories from State Department, which I've found extremely inspiring. I teach as a sideline and I've turned students on to them and I've said, "If you want to know grace under pressure listen to Ellsworth Bunker when he describes Viet Nam." This is an extraordinary part of our history that most people don't know. We have some pretty impressive stories too, so I set about doing this and I wish it had been more representative and I wish more people had responded. I figured we needed 120 -- it would be five decades and we needed about 25 stories per decade to make it real. I think we are missing some important things, as there are one or two where key people are no longer with us. We went through the oral history archive and got the transcripts and wrote some stories based on them. But I would love to continue that; it was very rewarding but, as I said, it was like pulling teeth sometime. I would go to my friends and say, "Weren't you in Viet Nam, would you write that up for me?" "Oh God, every time I think about it, it brings back such awful memories." But if you read it from decade to decade I think you get a good view of the overall policies and leadership and what people were really doing.

Q: You went through a few bumpy patches getting this through the official system didn't you?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, we had money to publish it and we had picked a publisher over at the State Department, but then the Administrator decided that he didn't want AID's name on it. I don't know or understand why. So we were desperately trying to find a group that would become the official owner of it and would take the copyright. This is where we have to thank ADST and you personally, Ken, for coming to AID's rescue.

Q: It's a worthy project and a good product.

BALLANTYNE: People who have read it are pleased; they like it and a lot of people are saying, "I wish I had known, I've got a great story too."

Q: Well for volume 2, we can approve it for volume 2.

BALLANTYNE: I would love to do that.

Q: July 2011 you became an adviser to the Foreign Service Institute.

BALLANTYNE: Yes.

Q: What did that involve?

BALLANTYNE: Well we had talked a long time with the then head of AID's office of human resources, Debbi Kennedy, and Ruth Whiteside. The Foreign Service Institute is a superb training place, I mean, you've got the physical infrastructure and training instructors; yet AID is going off and doing its own training. Why don't we at least see where at the margins, to begin with, you could start combining AID officers and State Officers learning together? It would also provide additional benefits. First of all you are learning from a common curriculum, you are learning how problems are solved, but you are also learning how the other agency works. We started off with an online course, Development in Diplomacy, which was about a three to four hour module, which I think I had more fun putting together than I had in a long time. We were given a group of people, one from executive leadership, a couple from SPAS, working with the people who put together these things, the graphics people, and working together as a team. We had a great time looking at the same problem with a different perspective. We put together the on-line course, which I think is one of the best courses I'd ever taken.

Q: Are there other courses that are being developed?

BALLANTYNE: They've talked about it; I think there may be a gender course that they've developed. Then we got the idea of taking the on-line course and turning it into a one-week course here at FSI where you would have an equal number of AID and State people. I taught that along with an FSI counterpart from State. I think we had four iterations, and I understand it is still going on. When I left, another AID Foreign Service person, Frank Young, replaced me for a year, and then Bambi Arellano replaced him. She left, I believe, last fall and has not been replaced. So we developed those two courses, which I thought was kind of the jewel in the crown, but there's never been a training course for new AID directors equal to the excellent training course that FSI runs for new ambassadors. You can't compare the two, but when you become an AID director you've got supervisory and fiduciary responsibility for a lot of things you've never done before. There are right and wrong ways to do things. I do not pretend that everything I did was right, but I learned a lot from the people I had worked with over time. I worked with the AID people putting

together a one-week curriculum for new AID directors which I ran along with somebody from the executive leadership team. We did it four times and most people said it was the best course they ever took.

Q: So that's on-going?

BALLANTYNE: I talked with the new director of executive leadership and they don't have anybody here to do it, so I'm not sure if it is going to continue or not. What was nice about this was there was a lot things AID people need to know, including how to development stronger working relationships with senior State colleagues. All AID Directors need to know what their ambassadors want; to do so, they need to listen. I always tell them, "The first lesson to learn: there has never been an AID director who has thrown an ambassador out of the country; think about that."

Q: Where do AID personnel get their language training?

BALLANTYNE: FSI.

Q: Has that been traditionally true? I had the impression there's been some resistance on the part of AID to sending students here.

BALLANTYNE: There was at one point. I know when I studied French, it was done with a private contractor, CACI, and the same thing for Russian – what, twelve weeks one-on-one at CACI. It was when I was running the Development Leadership Initiative (DLI) program. I had long talks with Ruth and with the head of language, saying, "This is our golden opportunity; not only do I think that the language instruction here is the best anywhere outside of Monterrey but it enables AID officers to learn side-by-side with State Department officers and military. You are getting an idea of the people you are going to be working with." (This was the new internship program the DLI, development leadership initiative.) The agreement was that we would do all our language training here.

Q: Was DLI what you were involved with, with the new 1,000 hires?

BALLANTYNE: Yes. I think the response has been very good from the DLI. They appreciate the chance to get to know their State Department counterparts. They find they all complain about the same thing; they all complained that French was too hard, and that's a consistent concern, the language being hard. But, that criticism is from State/AID alike. I remember one couple, a tandem assignment, was on their way to Mali I believe, and I ran into them at lunch and they were just tearing around. They said, "This morning we learned how to say, 'Excuse me monsieur but I believe you dropped your white handkerchief.' I need to know 'how do you get to the feed store where you can buy improved animals.'" I said, "Well you can walk into a feed store and say, 'Excuse me monsieur, I believe you dropped your white handkerchief, do you have any improved feed?'" I think that has worked and that continues; all language, I think, is done here.

Q: So you were at FSI through December of 2012 and after that, beginning in 2013, you started your own consultancy?

Private Consulting – and Work with Arizona State University

BALLANTYNE: Well, I decided I wanted to see what real retirement was like, where you did nothing except what you wanted to do. I took two months. I actually drove out to Oregon, I've

never driven across the U.S., and then down through California; I went down into Baja California. About half way back, I thought this is crazy, I need to do something more substantive than this. So I came back and talking with some friends decided to set myself up as an independent consultant and, getting the word out, and was amazed that there were people who wanted to hire me.

Q: So you are getting contracts?

BALLANTYNE: I have now a continuing consultancy with Arizona State University; this is going on two years now and I find Arizona State is the largest University in the United States. It's got a brilliant president who wants us to revamp how American education works; he's designing what he calls a new American University, which is that students don't simply go to get a degree, they learn involvement in society, international affairs. They've hired two of us as consultants here; another former AID senior executive to show them how to negotiate Washington. They've got one of the largest criminal justice programs in the country and very highly rated at Arizona State. They'd like to see how they can work with State/INL (International Narcotics and Law Enforcement). Nobody has a clue how you get into INL, so we showed them; we made a few phone calls and now I'm free of any restrictions on talking to anybody. A lot of it is figuring out how AID works, how the Inter-American Development Bank works, the World Bank, how do you go about bidding on programs. For example, there is a request for proposals for higher education programs in India. This is perfect; it is bringing Indian teachers, teachers of teachers to the United States for six months. This is the type of stuff you can do. They'll say, "We've got really good capabilities in energy, so we should be bidding on this Cambodia energy project." "No you don't, but you would make a great sub to such and such firm that has back office support." So it's been fun. I think they are very fast learners, so I'm not sure how long this will go on but this probably takes up 50-60 percent of my time. I don't mind being retired the rest of the time as my dog and I take long walks and I'm involved in some work with an animal shelter and I work with my church and different things. With Arizona State, the best part is they are two hours behind us.

Q: Yes.

BALLANTYNE: So they don't even get to the office until about eleven o'clock our time; it makes for a much more leisurely morning for me.

Q: Today is July 30, 2015 we are resuming the conversation with Janet Ballantyne. Janet during your career what would you say was your management style?

Final Concluding Thoughts

BALLANTYNE: I think for me the most important thing was to gain a reputation as somebody you want to work for. This way you get the very best people because you can choose among various people that want to come and work for you. I remember in Nicaragua when we opened in 1990, we'd had no mission there for 12 years, and it went out as a worldwide volunteer appeal for our 22 positions. We had about 300 people that applied for these 22 positions. That way you can pick and choose and you look at the balance and skills of the people and thus have a better chance of getting the very best. In a way this is a very selfish thing to do because if you've got a really good staff you don't have to work so hard. My style is to delegate. When people gain my confidence; I give

them the longest lead possible with very little second-guessing. I count on their expertise, and it certainly makes one's life a lot easier than having to pour over every detail of everything people are doing. In Nicaragua, for example, we had a huge program. This was President Bush, Senior's star program; he loved Violetta de Chamorro and we had close to a billion dollars for a country of four million people. We could do huge things. I had three economists on the staff and their job was to sit down every day with the World Bank, the IDB and the Central Bank of Nicaragua and come up with a very technical approach to reversing balance of payments problems, inflation, and debt. The Sandinistas had dug the Nicaraguans into a huge hole. With the people on hand, I didn't have to sit down and go over their work. I didn't have to question why – I just knew that if Bob Burke, the chief economist, said this is the right approach then that was the right approach. I have always had an open door policy and I tell people any time my door is open, which will be 95 percent of the time, anybody can come in. It doesn't matter if you have a huge problem or there is some nagging detail that's bothering you. So the only time the door is shut is when I am arguing with my son about his allowance and that's about five percent of the time. At the beginning of every tour I would say I want a fifteen-minute interview with everybody in the staff; everybody from the cashier to people in the mailroom to the deputy director; I want to get to know you and to get to know your family. I'm going to count on you for an awful lot and I want you to know who I am.

Q: How did you keep tabs on what they were doing having given this fairly free range to do things. Obviously you didn't want to be surprised.

BALLANTYNE: No, that was the other rule, no surprises. Occasionally you would get one but we would have full staff meetings with everybody -- FSNs, contractors -- once a month. Once a week, we would have a staff meeting of usually all US employees. In addition, I would meet with the office chiefs, all of whom were very good, on as needed basis, usually once or twice a week. Occasionally there would be something that would come up that needed more attention; or a lot of times, people would say we are having an issue with such and such ministry. They would ask me to use my personal relationship with the minister to go over and sit down and talk with him as they were having trouble at the lower levels. It's interesting because when I got to Russia I worked for about a year with the incumbent deputy director; then the second deputy was a guy named Mark Ward who's a very, very accomplished person. He later became mission director in Pakistan and he is now the US Liaison with the Syrian Resistance to ISIS. The first day he said, "How do you want to do this?" I said, "Well you can have Mrs. Inside or Mr. Outside there are all sorts of ways." He said, "How about Batman and Robin?" I said, "If I get to be Batman." He said, "We'll argue that out." This was the only time we were absolutely equal in everything and it worked.

Q: What about relationships between the AID mission and the embassy, particularly the front office? What was your approach to that and how did you see the ideal relationship there?

BALLANTYNE: Well a lot depends clearly on the ambassador and what the strategic objectives of the United States are. In Nicaragua, the number one objective was the revitalization of a very moribund economy and helping the Nicaraguans move out of command economy to a market economy and into the democratic camp. The first day I arrived at post I met with the ambassador, Harry Shlaudeman, who was an amazing ambassador, and he said, "Number one, no surprises. Number two you were picked because you know how to do this job, do it." I met with him every day, every day. First of all when we got there we were all camped out in the old Butler Buildings that had been built after the 1962 earthquake but even when we moved across town I'd meet with him every day. Russia was interesting because if you go through the strategic objectives of the United States, foreign assistance isn't mentioned in the top ten. Rather, the goals relate to nuclear proliferation, enriched uranium, arms control, etc. I'm not going to go through all of them, but USAID was working with small medium enterprises, environmental cleanup, NGOs. Tom Pickering has this reputation of knowing everything. He was very much interested in the USAID program, and usually once every two weeks we'd have a one-on-one for fifteen minutes and he would just say, "Give me the headlines; I need to know the headlines. Are you having any trouble with anybody in the Russian Federation Government; is there anything I can do?" We then went through a period when we had a Charge for almost a year. Coincidentally, he, John Tefft, is the ambassador there now; he's a wonderful, wonderful person. He is more interested in what they were accomplishing rather than what we were. So with both Ambassador Pickering, and then Jim Collins who replaced him as ambassador, we had very good relations, but there was not a terrible amount of interest on the part of the Embassy. We were not part of the most important things.

Q: We sometimes hear stories of AID mission directors who are sort of at loggerheads with the ambassador or the embassy in general and, "I've got my role here, I'm the guy who runs the AID program, stay out of my business."

BALLENTYNE: Yeah.

Q: I've been told by other interviewees that's a definite statement on the part of some AID directors.

BALLANTYNE: Oh absolutely. When I met with new hires to AID here at FSI in the class for new mission directors I'd say there are all sorts of rules for the universe. One rule you should remember is no AID director has ever had the ambassador kicked out of the country. Think about that and think about what that means. You can disagree over certain things. But, there are other things when that would be foolish. For example, I would not deign to disagree with the ambassador over nuclear proliferation because I don't know anything about it, but if we are doing something like pushing small or medium enterprise and the ambassador says, "You know there are some American entrepreneurs that want to come in here and we would like to use AID money to get them in" Yes we can discuss that, what the proper uses are, what the value added would be, because the value added of aid is less to U.S. businesses than to Russian business or Nicaraguan business. But I personally have never had a real problem with an ambassador

other than during the Harvard problem. I think I mentioned that earlier, where there was a strong disagreement, but you know eventually I think we all came around.

Q: Was there ever a strong disconnect between what you saw as being in the best interest of the AID program in a country you were in and the Department's approach -- not necessarily the relationship with the embassy but thinking, hey we are way out of step here?

BALLANTYNE: No, I can't think of any, certainly at the ambassador and DCM level. A lot of times there were difficulties with other members of the country team. I can think of one issue where one member of the country team in Russia felt that the AID people should not be meeting with high-level government officials without a note taker from the embassy. At one point a sort of decree went out that at any meetings at the ministerial level somebody from the State Department should accompany people. Well that's got a chilling effect like you won't believe. I understood the reason for the decree and I tried to say, "Look, we will take notes and we will provide them to the front office." I kind of cheated on that one. I made a determination that it applied only if we requested a meeting with the minister. In that case, we would take somebody. But if a minister should call me and say I really want to talk to you about the housing program, I couldn't say to a minister I'd be glad to come but I'll have to check with the embassy and see who is available. So interestingly enough, ministers started calling us a lot more frequently.

Q: Were there any repercussions with your embassy colleagues?

BALLANTYNE: No, because we would inform them usually after the meeting. So it was kind of cheating, but I thought it achieved everybody's objective, though probably not the econ counselor's.

Q: Did you have any situations at post where you had to reign in your own personnel or there were morale issues, culture shock issues, there were issues of dissonance between your staff and either the Americans or the local people?

BALLANTYNE: No, when I was in Almaty in Central Asian Republics as acting mission director for about seven or eight months we had some of the newly hired AID people under the DLI, Development Leadership Initiative program. There were two I remember very distinctly who came in with the idea, I may not be in charge but I'm certainly above any Foreign Service National. In one case, we had a Foreign Service National who had been thirty-five years in financial management, who probably knew as much as any AID comptroller in the world. This person came in and immediately announced, I will be your boss now and I will check your work. I remember bringing the two of them in and saying, "Look, this isn't working, we need you to come to détente. We need to understand that Tatyana knows this job probably better than anybody else. You've got to kind of move back and maybe you can learn something." This went on for four months and I finally said, "Look if you can't settle among yourselves I've got to get both of you out of here."

Q: How did it work out?

BALLANTYNE: I got both of them out of there.

Q: Really they couldn't do it?

BALLANTYNE: The American was transferred to another AID mission and the Kazak woman was in great demand and we got her a job as kind of a deputy comptroller in Iraq. So she made a lot more money and they both saved face because they both moved on to good positions. You know when you have something like that in an embassy or any work place, you have two people who are fighting all the time, it affects morale throughout the whole area.

Q: That's for sure.

BALLANTYNE: I've found particularly with some of younger people that the appreciation of the Foreign Service Nationals was not as great as it should be. Anybody who has worked with good FSNs knows that they are the backbone of the agency and a good one is pure gold.

Q: I found that to be true. In AID how did the system work for performance evaluation of both the Americans and the Foreign Service National employees?

BALLANTYNE: Not well. We had gone through some of the iterations of, they call them AEF, annual efficiencies, something or other. We'd gone through maybe ten iterations during the time I was at AID and the idea was to set your goals early in the rating period, to have periodic reviews, and then to write it up based on the evidence. That doesn't happen; a lot of times the goals aren't even set until the person is writing the evaluation. There is also a code. I've written maybe 500 evaluations and I knew not to put anything in an evaluation that could be grieved. But, sometimes I did want to get the message across that this person is not doing the kind of job that is ideal. So there becomes a code. First of all you stay away from the principal objectives and you talk about what a nice person Liv is and how he or she improves morale. People who have been in the system know how to read these and to interpret the code.

Q: So you were not obliged to deal with things like how does this person advance principal objectives of the mission.

BALLANTYNE: You just kind of ignore that and say so and so did an adequate job of meeting the objectives and then move into irrelevancies. It's like when somebody calls you and says I'm thinking of bringing Jim Jones into my mission, can you give me a report. Somebody sends you an email saying I would rather deal with it by a phone call. You know what that means: you don't have to call me.

Q: Exactly.

BALLANTYNE: But you know I've been interested that Accenture, which is one of the big companies, has now done away with evaluation reports. There has even been a lot of chatter on AID networks that it is about time we thought about doing the same. I don't know how you go about working promotions without some sort of assessment, but I do know that personnel assessment time is an agonizing period, particularly for a deputy director who has to write usually ten or fifteen for people who are at the threshold of Senior Foreign Service. There has got to be a better way.

Q: Yes I can say the State Department has struggled with that for decades. As you moved into senior ranks, who wrote your evaluation?

BALLANTYNE: As deputy director, the mission director; and then as a director, it would be the ambassador.

Q: Were you reviewed back in Washington or essentially you had no reviewing officer?

BALLANTYNE: The reviewing officer would be the assistant administrator for Europe-Eurasia. I wasn't naïve enough to think the ambassador really wrote it. I know in Nicaragua that the DCM wrote it. But Harry Shlaudeman certainly had his input and then later John Maisto.

Q: How did promotions work in AID?

BALLANTYNE: Somehow despite the shortcomings of the evaluation system, they seemed to work pretty well. Every year you would look at the list and think, oh my gosh, how did Jane Brown make it, she's such an idiot. But you'd look down the list of 50 people and think it's a pretty fair job. These are the hard workers, these are the people who take risks and also accept the consequences. If I make the wrong decision I will stand up to it.

Q: Is there an annual review or do panels meet to discuss these performance reports?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, yeah. I'd been on panels three times I guess.

Q: What kind of challenges did you face on the panels?

BALLANTYNE: Well the first time I was on the panels I was doing threshold FS-1 to Senior Foreign Service and there were so many people in the 01 category that they divided it into two groups, A through L and K through Z, or whatever they did. Each group came up with its own ranking and then we had to meld them. It was interesting because we all became advocates of our lists. So we found ourselves saying, "Okay, you list your top ten and we'll list our top ten and try to meld them." Well people would battle almost to the death saying no, no, no Jane is better than John, read her evaluation. So we almost came to flipping coins but didn't quite make it that far; that was the hardest part. I found being on the panels always fascinating because you'd see so many different aspects of performance and also you really bond with the other members of the panel. Last

summer I was the retired member of the consolidated Senior Foreign Service. We had a great time; there were two other AID people and an outside member. It was a very enjoyable six weeks that I was not really looking forward to.

Q: How are people recruited for AID?

BALLANTYNE: For new entries?

Q: New entries.

BALLANTYNE: We advertised through Biz Ops, the federal page. Right now I know they are recruiting in two categories: I think it is education officers and program, the budgeting people. Word of mouth gets out usually. I think Devex, which is a group that is sort of a business consortium, lists it. For a period of six years there were no new entries. As we discussed earlier, when Henrietta Ford asked me to head up the DLI program, we were seeking about 700 recruits and had 30 thousand applicants.

Q: How in the world did you whittle down 30 thousand applicants?

BALLANTYNE: Well the computers did the first part; they reviewed against the minimum qualifications. One criterion was to be under 58 years of age, as you have to be able to reach tenure before you are 65, which is mandatory retirement age. We actually hired somebody who was 59; she was great but is gone now because of mandatory retirement. I always tell people to make sure that you read the question before you answer it. Of the 30 thousand, probably half didn't make the initial cut. Then we had groups of people that went through the technical applicants. For example, for economists, I would go through say 100 and take a look at the background, the language abilities, and maybe winnow that down to 25. Then we would bring in people, usually three at a time, to have a half a day of written tests in the morning, where they would have to write up something, and then a group interview and then an individual interview. Usually we had a panel of three people that would rank them one through ten.

Q: You talked about them paying attention to questions before they answered. Is this in the application process, were there certain thoughtful questions they had to answer? What sort of questions did they have to answer?

BALLANTYNE: No, the initial screening test was all mechanical. It was list your highest degree, BA, MA, PhD, Not Applicable. Some people would just hit not applicable because it was the highest thing, thinking they had a PhD. Have you ever advocated overthrowing the United States government by force of violence? Some people would tick off yes. I used to say, "Oh come on, give them another chance." I figure if somebody is dumb enough not to read something maybe we don't want them, maybe that's a good indication.

Q: But you would recruit on the basis of...

BALLANTYNE: Categories.

Q: The agency says we need some people in education, we need some people in agriculture, health.

BALLANTYNE: We need budget people.

Q: And you do this so many times a year?

BALLANTYNE: At the time I was heading it up, Henrietta Fore wanted to double the size of the Foreign Service, which was down to about a thousand Foreign Service officers. I think we got up to about 800 new officers but that program has ended. Now they look at categories. For example, there is a lot of money going into primary, basic education now and they want to have a Foreign Service officer at every post. So with attrition they are down maybe fifteen people in this category, so they are recruiting specifically for that right now.

Q: Once the new recruits came in, what sort of orientation or training did they receive?

BALLANTYNE: First of all there is a five-week orientation class. We had a contractor to do that but when I was training I was always there and we talked about what is a Foreign Service officer. We would look at regional issues; we always had at least a day on relations with country team and other agencies at post, how to work with your ambassador. You'd think after all the time you and I have spent it would be intuitive but it is not.

Q: This is a course designed specifically for new AID officers.

BALLANTYNE: Yes, and we would try to get them together and I think this became pretty much routine with the A100 class.

Q: You had your class at FSI?

BALLANTYNE: No, we had our class at the Ronald Reagan Building.

Q: I see.

BALLANTYNE: We now have a training facility in Alexandria and they do it there now.

Q: What was the nature of getting them together with the A-100 class? Was it sort of a social mingling or did you have sessions together?

BALLANTYNE: We would have sessions together and then try to have at least one social mingling. Ruth Whiteside and I used to coordinate that together and that was good because when you are talking to people, some of these people you are going to be

working with or in language training with. I think it also increased the appreciation that officers had for one another.

Q: What was the likelihood that new officers would be assigned overseas right away?

BALLANTYNE: Virtually a lot of them would be. There are certain categories that would need to stay here to get warrants, for example contracts officers, so they might end up staying a year here, but the idea was to try and get them to an overseas mission where the senior person needed backstop, for example health. The theory being this is the Foreign Service and you really have to understand what the host country climate is like. So I would say 80 percent of them would be overseas once they had language. We made sure everybody was qualified in a language. Some people can't learn languages, so we had some people who were going to Africa who ended up taking Spanish, so at least they qualified in a language before they went overseas.

Q: Is the lack of qualifying, and I assume generally that means a 3-3, a deal killer and they can't stay in the Service?

BALLANTYNE: Yeah. I don't think there is a waiver possibility for that; I think you have to have a language.

Q: Trace for me, if you would, at least during your time with AID, the way the staffing worked. By that I mean I know there was a period which was direct hire Foreign Service officers, Foreign Service personnel, and then we went into a period in which it seemed to be predominately contractors and then there was a return to hiring at least some new officers.

BALLANTYNE: Yeah. Going back to my first overseas post, which was Peru, I think we had a couple institutional contractors that were working in specific fields. Agriculture, I know Iowa State and North Carolina were there but they had a long term relationship going back to the Alliance for Progress. But in terms of economics, the people who dealt with the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance were AID officers. Our chief economist was also assigned to the embassy, so he wasn't the chief of the office but he had an office over there, so we worked very closely with the embassy. But I don't remember any institutional contract officers. We had a program in nutrition, so we had a nutrition officer and an AID Foreign Service officer and we would round that out with Foreign Service Nationals. Then, there was a drought in hiring and no new nutrition officers were available. We still had a nutrition program, and the only way to cover it was to hire somebody, an institutional contractor because they could do everything. They could do their own financial planning and handle all management responsibilities, but it also meant more money going into contracts. The idea with the DLI program was to build up AID's technical core: economists, public health, education, and environmental protection. I don't know where they are now, but there are a lot more technical people so I would assume it means fewer contractors.

Q: Do you think it's still predominately contractors?

BALLANTYNE: I think probably in technical area, yes. If you are doing a program in privatization, and there are still a lot of countries where the state still dominates the economy, most of the technical assistance would most likely be provided by big companies.

Q: And overall, not just on the technical side, is it still predominately contractors?

BALLANTYNE: Probably not; the AID Foreign Service is almost double the size it was even a few years ago. Within missions, there are probably far more Foreign Service officers. That said, on the technical assistance front, there are probably the same numbers of institutional contractors, e.g., within the agriculture sector.

Q: As an AID hand do you welcome this return to a predominance of the career people?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, I think it makes for a much more interesting career. I mean if you are responsible for an economic policy or agricultural production program, I think you have a much more rewarding career if you are dealing with substance rather than managing other people who are doing the substance.

Q: What advice would you give and did you give to aspirants to USAID Foreign Service in terms of preparing for a career, what to expect of the career and how to succeed in the career?

BALLANTYNE: I have done that for a number of younger people. One of my neighbors is a young man who desperately wants to join AID. When he graduated from Brown he came here and he said, "Can I apply?" I said, "No, you need to have a Master's degree and I think you need to have some overseas experience." The average age for people coming in is in their 30s, 34 or 35, so he joined the Peace Corps, then he came back and said, "Am I ready now?" I said, "You have to get a Master's degree." So he got a job working half time and he just got his Master's degree from Johns Hopkins in management and he applied and he didn't make it. So I said, "The next thing is you've got to get some work experience with an international contractor; so he is now working for one of the big companies. He's applied again and he is going to make it, but probably ten years after he thought he should be in.

Q: We have talked about the Payne Fellowships, the fellowships named after Donald M. Payne to bring particularly minorities into AID, which actually pays for their graduate education. I would think it would be a fast track into AID Foreign Service.

BALLANTYNE: I remember hearing about the program but I was not really aware of the particulars of it.

Q: People who manage it are the same ones who do the Rangel Fellowships over at Howard. What about advice regarding life within the service, life overseas, did you have advice for them in that regard? Not just this one young man but others?

BALLANTYNE: Be flexible, get to know the country, get to know the people and don't talk much your first six months, but listen a lot. Get to know the FSNs; get to know your neighbors. For people going to Russia I'd say the best way to learn Russian is get a dog.

Q: The Russians love dogs don't they?

BALLANTYNE: As mentioned earlier, the Russians love dogs and I had two dogs. I would take them for a walk every evening and people would come up to me on the street and start asking questions. I remember them asking if they were big or small dogs and I would say they are small. Well they meant were they old or young.

I got to know everybody probably within a ten block radius who liked dogs. One of my dogs died there and I buried him illegally at the American dacha. When I returned home, the whole front of my apartment was banked with flowers from my Russian neighbors. And that evening they started coming over with food and vodka and shampanskoye (champagne) and we had a roaring party in the memory of Alexander. I always tell them to take dogs; people like dogs.

Q: Did you talk to new recruits about the impact on family lives?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, and one of the things that has changed dramatically and I'm sure it's the same thing in State, is the greater expectation of spousal employment. Spouses come with their own set of skills, and what happens when they go to Bangladesh and there is no job? How do you deal with that frustration? Some people said they would only go to a post where their spouse could get a job and I tried to tell them that you can't guarantee that. There are always spouse employment opportunities, but it may not be in the area you want. Say your wife's a chemical engineer, maybe she doesn't want to be the community liaison officer, but there might not be other options. There are no guarantees; no Foreign Service job is a "twofer position." Regarding kids, I've had people say they can't go overseas because their children are too young. I said, "That's when you should go. You can get wonderful child care; the schools are terrific, maybe not in most places but every place I've been. And you find incredible new opportunities. When your kids are older that's the hard part, because they don't want to move."

Q: That's right.

BALLANTYNE: No matter where they are. If they are in Nairobi they want to stay there, if they are in Alexandria they want to stay there.

Q: What impact on your career and on your role in AID was gender, the fact that you are a woman?

BALLANTYNE: I think my expectations when I joined AID were never to go into management because there had never been a woman in senior management; there had been no women directors or deputy directors. I think there had been one-woman office

chief. I was an economist and I wanted to do economic analysis, so I never expected to go into mission management. I ended up in the great serendipity, working for men who wanted to move that particular token. I remember my first overseas assignment was Peru and Len Yeager calling me into his office one time and saying, "What do you want to do with your life?" I said, "I'd like to be the best economist that AID's ever had." He said, "Is that all?" I said, "Well what else is there?" He said, "What about being an AID director?" I think I laughed and I said, "Oh right, sure." He said, "I'm serious. If you want to move beyond the traditional role I'll help you, but you will have to do what I tell you." I did and he did and I credit him with that first big jump when he made me a supervisor of an office. I've always thought that he was my mentor from day one. I've never run into a male supervisor who told me I was just a woman and that it wasn't my place to lead. I know there are some, but I was lucky and very fortunate and very grateful. I've had some wonderful, wonderful supervisors.

Q: What about with colleague? Did you find yourself ever in a situation of harassment or unwelcomed attitudes or behavior?

BALLANTYNE: I've had a few situations where I have witnessed unwanted advances by male officers, particularly on FSN women. I made it very clear that this is not a question of preference, it is a question of law, and that if anybody steps over any bounds he or she is going to have to face the consequences and the consequences are not good. People always say, "I didn't know. I wasn't brought up in a family that taught me the equality of genders. I always thought that men were the stronger and smarter." That's a stupid excuse. But I think it is now much better. There has been so much raising of awareness on this, there are EEO counselors at every post; there is always someone you can report to and with whom you can talk things through. I don't know if anybody has ever left the service because of unwanted gender violations, but I think there have been an awful lot of cases in which people have been counseled and warned.

Q: When you were counselor of the agency did you have really thorny personnel issues that you had to deal with?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, when I was counselor I was acting deputy administrator for about a year before the new deputy came in. Two, if I remember correctly, of the assistant administrators were political appointees who objected to the fact that I outranked them, saying this was not fair. One of them actually went to a member of Congress to complain that this was violating the Succession Act.

Q: I don't understand that.

BALLANTYNE: There is an act that defines the succession in government departments to the effect that the Senate also confirms the number two person in that department. Sometimes, that can be a career person, but they must be confirmed and thus a political appointee. Fortunately, the head of the legal office, a political appointee, came to my defense. I knew that there were a couple of people during this Republican administration who said they had looked me up on line and they knew that I had actually made a

contribution to a Democrat. I said, “Is that a reason to assume that I am against an administration? I may have my own political preferences but my number one preference is loyalty to the United States, and there are times when you hold your nose but you always, always defend it.” But it was not a pleasant time.

Q: I think there is often times not an understanding that career people they carry out the job...

BALLANTYNE: No matter what.

Q: ...loyally no matter who is in charge.

BALLANTYNE: That was the only time, and as counselor working for Andrew Natsios was wonderful. He understood what the role of the counselor was, and I could go to any meeting that he attended unless it was personal business. Some of the political appointees didn't like that because I'd be the only person from his senior staff and the only one who had not been confirmed. It seems so silly in retrospect; people should have just gotten over it. Probably the hardest thing I had to do -- and I'm not sure I'd want this to go in -- was when Andrew decided he wanted to get rid of one of the political appointees and made me do it. But it worked out okay since the person got a good job that he actually preferred.

Q: In general looking over the AID programs in its various iterations, I mean broadly I guess since World War II, has U.S. economic assistance been a success? We've heard some horror stories; we've heard successes. In your experience overall how would you assess that record and are there particular successes, or not so, that you would note?

BALLANTYNE: I've always advocated that the success of at least one program was unequivocal -- that was the Marshall Plan. I think there were three major reasons. First of all, the reconstruction and recovery of Europe was so important to the United States that we put in three percent of GDP; I mean that is a lot of money. Right now our whole foreign aid program is about .7 percent of GDP. We really do not have the resources to do the job in today's world. Second, there was a firm exit date for the Marshall Plan. When they announced the Marshall Plan, they announced there would be a three-year program: in and out. Third, planning was joint from the outside and throughout the Marshall Plan period. The work that we did in Belgium, for example, was done with the understanding and full support of the Belgians; they knew exactly what was being done and were involved fully in negotiating the activities. If you look back it was a wild success.

We do not have enough resources today. The total is about \$20 billion, but there are about 120 recipients, with the largest amounts of money going into a few countries. I mean look at the amounts going into Mexico, look what is going into Afghanistan and Iraq; then you look at a place like El Salvador. I was recently in El Salvador, which has now edged out Honduras for the murder capital of the world and you have about \$30 million going in. It's not enough to scratch the surface.

The other thing that I think is very important -- and I've had a lot of disagreements with people -- is that the United States' objectives in some countries are very different than the host country's objectives for itself. In Russia, for example, there was a press from Washington to put more money into democratization. Well you know the Russians have nothing against democratization. My Russian colleagues would say it is going to come, it is going to take us 20-25 years but right now stability is so much more important. Every year, more and more of the money was switched into democracy programs. I think this is ultimately why AID got kicked out three years ago. The Russians took the approach that there is nothing in it for us; we want economic reform, we want technical assistance in areas that are important to us, bank reform, privatization, the rule of law. The Russians actively wanted assistance in those areas. I saw that NDI got kicked out of Russia a couple days ago. Somebody said, "Why did it take them so long?" So I think it's been a mixed bag. I think there is a lot more we could do, but again we need to listen more carefully to what people really want.

I don't think this is the place or time to go into the Afghanistan program. I mean all you have to do is pick up any paper any day of the week and you see yet another instance of things just not working. You don't have an AID program in the middle of a war zone; it doesn't work. It's sort of like saying well I can't hear you, I can't hear you, let's do something silly.

Q: How much emphasis, not only in a situation like that but away from war zones, was there on ensuring that whatever AID left behind could be sustained by the host people?

BALLANTYNE: Well we talk about sustainability a lot and I've learned to ask people what they mean by sustainability. They talk about sustainable development. I say, what is unsustainable development? I don't understand that concept. What you need to do when you are designing any program, for example, irrigation canals, is to ask whether you are building into the program steps where you can start recovering costs at a certain point. Otherwise the system when you leave, when you stop the maintenance, it is going to collapse. The same thing applies with rule of law programs. In Russia we had programs that were dealing with trial by jury, things that would require the host government, the Oblast, to put in funds to carry out a system once it is built. It seems at times our political objectives are sometimes more important than long range sustainability. How many hospitals have we built that are sitting empty now because nobody thought it important enough to ensure there would be operating funds available once the U.S. government finished its job?

I was working for Abt Associates when it was implementing an AID health program in Iraq. One of the things they were looking at was the provision of health posts, and looking at maternity hospitals as the first level hospital. But, we realized that nobody was looking at how you can build up a hospital if you don't have a water system or a drainage system. If not, why do it? Well nobody was looking at that issue. You need to have people who really understand all aspects of a program before beginning it, regardless of sector.

Looking at voter registration, in Nicaragua we had programs working with the Dutch government to increase voter registration, but nobody was planning how to print the identity cards once people were registered. We didn't think about it and the Dutch didn't think about it. Well we finally got somebody else in, so the program was successful. But, we do need to remember that development is a very complex process. If you look at the development of the United States from 1776 it was not easy. I think that maybe the uniquely American experience is that we had people who cared so deeply about this country and that our founders put in place safeguards and systems. I have yet to find another country where the people of the country care as much as we care about our country.

Q: That's a good point I think. I know when I was in Congo-Brazzaville an aid organization had provided a generator for a hospital. There was the hospital, there was the generator, but the local government couldn't come up with the cable to connect the generator to the hospital, and so it sat unused. I also found out about ethnic politics, because the director of the hospital was from outside the region.

BALLANTYNE: I remember when I first went overseas I went to India on this fellowship and somebody telling me that I would have a wonderful time but that I shouldn't be too upset if I found out that I cared more about the country than my Indian colleagues did.

Q: Aside from war zones and examples of Iraq and Afghanistan, are there instances of a project going down the drain that you recall, either for lack of planning, lack of follow-up on the part of the host government? Do you have something to say about that?

BALLANTYNE: The one that comes to mind was a business partnership program in Russia that had been started before I got there. They had made grants to ten U.S. companies to form partnerships with Russian companies for a joint venture. I remember there was one, ABS, American Bull Semen.

Q: American Bull Semen?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, we were working with a group in central Russia to increase livestock production. But, I actually don't know as much about that example. The proposed private partnership that I am most intimately acquainted with was when Ben and Jerry's received some money to open up a Ben and Jerry's plant in Karelia, which is the part of Russia that kind of looks like Vermont: a lot of cows, not very many people. Of the ten agreements that were made and for which the U.S. paid out I think close to \$100 million, 100 percent of them failed because in every instance the Russian partner realized, "Hey, this is a good deal, why do I need those Americans?" The American management of Ben and Jerry's, for example, was out there, but left, and when they came back the plant was bombed. Well, the plant was still there, but it was no longer Ben and Jerry's; it was Sergei and Maxim's. U.S. companies had no standing in the Russian courts. So that was a dumb idea. The peril of having too much money was that anybody

with a good idea could get funding for it, and even people with mediocre and bad ideas too often could get funding. There are interesting times when ideas might look good on the surface, but you need to make sure you understand the culture before moving forward.

I remember in Nepal we had a very active program in family planning and we had an instance in which one of our officers went on a field trip with an implementing partner representative to see project activities. The contractor was showing villagers how to use a condom and explaining the use of condoms, and they would demonstrate by using a broomstick. I went out with a group of people, probably the same people, six months later and we found all these villages that had broomsticks with condoms on them. So they got the idea but not quite the full technique or purpose.

Q: Sort of fetishes, I guess.

BALLANTYNE: No more children just put a condom on a broomstick.

Q: That's quite an image isn't it?

BALLANTYNE: And they are very colorful, as all AID condoms are.

Q: But there are offices in AID Washington where project development is an activity. So some of these broader issues, like making sure that aspects of the project that perhaps nobody would normally think of, are covered in the project design.

BALLANTYNE: You know I have never quite understood the role of AID Washington. When I first joined AID I think there was one person in Washington for every two people in the field. The Washington staff served in backstop and facilitator roles. There are now three people in Washington for every person in the field. I don't know what most of them do; they kind of make up new rules and new reporting schedules. They think big thoughts and, of course, under the previous administrator there was a new initiative every week, so they would have to come up with guidelines for the new initiative until the next initiative came up.

Q: Were the other initiatives pursued?

BALLANTYNE: No, a current example follows from when the president was recently in Kenya and there was a lot of talk about Power Africa, which was an initiative announced I think two years ago for \$9 billion to power up Africa to get the grid expanded. The president was taken to a fair and shown different aspects of the program. The same day an article came out in the Washington Post saying Power Africa is dead because 90 percent of it was going through EXIM Bank and EXIM has been defunded.

More generally, the personnel in Washington and the field feel burdened by Congressional report requirements. I don't think it is so much the reports levied by Congress as the reports that we have burdened ourselves with. Congress is frankly not

terribly interested in AID; individual Congressmen will pledge their support. One Congressman I know said, “You know there is no member of Congress that will stand up before Congress and support a larger AID program. It doesn’t sell back in Dubuque.”

Q: But there is a fair amount of criticism in Congress.

BALLANTYNE: Yeah, we’ve got a lot of detractors. It’s hard to say in Congress who is really pro-AID.

Q: There is always a misunderstanding, perhaps in Congress but certainly in the public, as to what percentage of the budget goes for AID.

BALLANTYNE: AID has done surveys and the average person thinks about ten or fifteen percent of the budget.

Q: It’s less than one percent isn’t it?

BALLANTYNE: Less than one percent.

Q: What do you see as the future of USAID?

BALLANTYNE: I think the handwriting is clear that State is taking more and more interest and has more and more control. People try and pretend that is not true because AID now has its own budget office. The problem is that the budget office doesn’t control the budget; the State Department does. Back ten years ago when there was first talk about AID being absorbed into the State Department, I was I think one of the lone people who said, “Do it, do it now while we still have a position of comparative advantage, while we can go in and negotiate a good deal, get a deputy secretary position.” “No, no, no we need to be independent.” Well State has taken over more and more functions and as a loyal AID person it kind of bothers me, but at the same time it makes a lot of sense. We don’t have two foreign policies. I think we have not done a good job within AID of educating our colleagues in State as to the importance of the AID program or brought them in on the planning process. For example, if I am sitting in Nairobi, the AID Director needs to actively participate in the Country Team and ask the Ambassador explicitly what AID can AID do to further over U.S. government positions? I don’t think those kinds of things happen and I think sooner or later State will assume total control.

Q: If you had your druthers what would be the future of USAID?

BALLANTYNE: Cabinet level position with a budget that would allow AID to really have a strong presence at the table.

Q: As a separate entity from State?

BALLANTYNE: Yeah. I think there is a creative tension between development and diplomacy – or between State and AID. Right now State has almost as much money

going toward AID types of activities. I just finished looking at the budgets for Central America and Mexico. State/INL has more money than AID to do administration of justice, juvenile justice, and things like that, things that were traditionally considered to be AID's purview. There are times when we are doing very, very different things that may create confusion or chaos in the host government.

Q: Is there not enough coordination between the programs like that?

BALLANTYNE: No, no, I've followed Mexico pretty carefully since I was acting assistant administrator and I hope to talk to Roberta Jacobson before she goes down there. I think she can do an awful lot; she's going to be terrific as ambassador.

Q: Looking back over your association with AID are there important accomplishments that you would cite?

BALLANTYNE: I think in Nicaragua we had a very, very talented staff and a lot of money. Within the first year we worked with the right people to get inflation under control, to work on privatization of things like the banks and a lot of the productive sectors. We got the economy rolling again; we had great counterparts. Most members of de la Violetta de Chamorro's cabinet were no longer Nicaraguan citizens, as they had left the country during the earlier Sandinista period. There were Costa Ricans, Argentines and a couple Americans. They came back and wanted to lead change and to see Nicaragua succeeding. The problem was that the structural and macroeconomic reforms didn't, in the short-term, positively touch the lives of the average person. I remember that we commissioned a study on the effect of AID. One of the questions asked was what do you associate liberalization of the economy with? The majority of people said unemployment, because that was the effect they had felt themselves. The government had been employing about five times as many people as it needed to, so reform inevitably led to reductions and to unemployment. This led to less support for AID government programs. So, while the program was very effective, it was not seen that way. It was like the operation was a success but the patient died.

Q: Looking back were there disappointments, things you did but didn't work or things that you aspired to do but couldn't do?

BALLANTYNE: Yes, you know I think in many ways Russia represented that. The potential is so great; this is not an under developed country; this is a country with a highly educated citizenry. The people want change, but you have a system in place that took 70 years to evolve the way it did and it's not going to be torn down for a long time. My closest friend there was a guy who had been the first prime minister. The night before I left we had a one-on-one dinner where we agreed that we would not ask embarrassing questions but would be honest with each other as friends could be, not as representatives of our governments. My question to him was where is Russia going to be in 20 years? He said, "I'm glad you asked 20 years because if you said what is it going to be like in five years I'd say exactly the same. In ten years maybe we will start shifting a little bit, in 20 years we will have been exposed to a different system and people will start looking out

the portholes.” He said, “The worst of the economy was headed due north because we said it was going due north. We never checked with anybody else. We didn’t use radar or we didn’t look out and all of a sudden we looked at it and said oh my God it is heading north by northwest and we are just starting to make those corrections. The more we have a window on the rest of the world the faster it will be, but this is a really big country. You’ve got 88 different Oblasts and a lot of them are not in agreement with each other, we have ethnic differences, there are parts of Russia that are kind of at war with other parts. So in 20 years we are going to start looking more and more like you.” It was disappointing because I wasn’t going to be there in 20 years and I would love to be part of this team, I would have loved to see real change, I would have loved to see candidates come forward for the presidency that had a real chance of making it. We are looking at different models. Putin is probably the only choice that could have come out of this because as my friend said stability is so much more important than democracy and if it is one thing Putin’s done it is consistency and stability. And if it means invading another country so be it.

Q: As we draw to a close is there anything that you would like to add?

BALLANTYNE: I guess the one thing is just how very grateful I am that I had the opportunities that AID has afforded me. Of all of my friends, not AID friends, all my other friends, I am the one who has had the best fun by far and it is not just living in exotic places. Living in Kathmandu in the winter is not exotic. But the people I’ve had a chance to meet, both Americans and host country nationals and other nationalities.... I just thank my lucky stars that I took that first PSC job in Lima. God how many years ago was that? Forty years ago.

Q: Janet, thank you very much.

BALLANTYNE: Thank you.

End of interview