

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
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GEORGE CARNER

*Interviewed by: John Pielemeier
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INTERVIEW

Q: This is John Pielemeier on May 23rd, 2018 beginning a new oral history with George Carner. George, I'm going to start by asking where you grew up and what led you into international work.

CARNER: I was born in New York but raised in Los Angeles, at least until the age of 14. Then I wound up going to Barcelona, Spain to study an international baccalaureate instead of high school in L.A. because my folks were originally from that part of Spain; and in fact were political exiles from the Franco regime. So I went to school there for three-and-a-half years and learned to speak Spanish fluently; I already spoke Catalan at home. When I got back my parents had moved from Los Angeles to Fayetteville, North Carolina. My dad was working as a civilian at Fort Bragg on a contract to provide translation and interpreting services to the Special Warfare School there. When I came back from Barcelona and wanted to go to college, I wound up applying to the best college that was nearest my parents' home, which was the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I went to Chapel Hill for about two-and-a-half years and got my Bachelor of Arts as I had received a lot of college credits for my schoolwork in Barcelona. The international baccalaureate basically catapulted me into a second-semester sophomore. I was only 17 ½ at the time so it made me a pretty young sophomore. Naturally, with my international background, I was very quickly drawn to frequenting international students, many of them were graduate students. In fact, I wound up rooming with a Venezuelan, a Cuban, and a Mexican. We had a house off campus so Spanish was the language we all spoke together. My roommates and I adopted an international perspective on everything. So when it came time to choose a major, naturally I chose international affairs with a focus on Latin American area studies.

The Peace Corps ran training programs at Chapel Hill, and I was asked if I would be a Spanish conversational instructor to a group of volunteers that were heading to Central America. That was an interesting exposure to Peace Corps and its philosophy, and also to those idealistic volunteers that were eager-eyed and enthusiastic about going to Central America to see if they could help some community.

I graduated from Chapel Hill and wasn't sure what I was going to do next because I was still quite young; I was 19 at that point. I toyed with signing up for the Peace Corps, but I wondered whether I had anything to offer villagers or anybody else with so little life experience.

Q: George, what year was that?

CARNER: This would have been 1965.

Q: Were you draft eligible?

CARNER: I had a deferment up until that time while I was in school, and then when I left school that deferment expired – I'm getting ahead of the story, so can we park that?

Q: Sure, sure.

CARNER: Julius Nyerere had commented once (not very nicely) about the Peace Corps. He said he had enough Tanzanian kids to train without having to train Americans! (laughter) That comment struck me. In the end, I went to Washington D.C. (District of Columbia) where my parents at that point were living and working. For the summer, I taught Spanish at the Berlitz Schools of Languages and came into contact with a lot of World Bank and USAID (United States Agency for International Development, also AID) personnel and other international personnel who wanted to learn languages, so I heard a lot about what they were doing on the international scene --all of which seemed quite interesting.

One day, the Berlitz director asked me: "What do you want to do with yourself?"

I said, "I don't know."

He said, "Berlitz has schools all over the world; where would you like to go? I could arrange it so you could go off for a year abroad and get some experience and then you can come back and decide what you want to do for graduate work."

I knew that I was going to continue my studies. So it didn't take me very long to say, "All right, I'd like to go to Paris."

I already spoke some French, just enough to get around but not very fluently. I had studied French in Spain because I needed to study a foreign language. Ironically, Spanish

at that point was still foreign to me though all of the classwork was in Spanish. So I chose French.

Anyway, I spent the next year in Paris where I met my wife-to-be.

Coming back to the earlier question about the draft, while I was vacationing on the Mediterranean in the summer of 1966, I got a letter via American Express instructing me to present myself to a medical facility that the U.S. Army had in Paris at Rue Marbeuf – at that time, France was still part of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and there were American military facilities in France. So I took a flight from Rome for the day to go for my physical. I went through all the hoops and at the end the doctor looked at me and said, “I’m going to give you a 4-F because you’re left eye is nearly blind as result of the retinal detachment you had as a kid; that’s an automatically disqualifying medical condition.”

So that was my contact with the draft, beyond having duly registered for it in North Carolina.

Q: Can I ask how you felt about that doctor’s decision?

CARNER: (Laughter) I felt terribly relieved; frankly, I did not want to go to Vietnam. I did not see myself as a soldier and I couldn’t see myself killing people, and I certainly didn’t want to be killed. That just wasn’t in my background at all. I had absolutely no experience with guns. Moreover in my studies I had come to basically think that Senator Fulbright had the proper diagnosis of what was going in Vietnam; that this was a war of national liberation that Ho Chi Minh had been fighting against the Japanese, against the French and now against the Americans. As such, Vietnam shouldn’t be seen through the lens of just a Cold War conflict. My international affairs studies taught me that wars of national liberation had a lot of committed fighters to the cause. We, on the other hand, were backing a very corrupt regime, which doesn’t make for a strong ally. For all of those reasons, I felt relieved.

So then I returned to my vacation and continued all the way to Greece and Turkey. Then I came back to the States and enrolled in a master’s program at GW (George Washington University, GWU). I was attending night classes and, during the day, I was teaching Spanish at Berlitz.

I had wanted to study economics considering that it was probably the best entry card for an international career either in business or government or working with an NGO (non-governmental organization). But when I went to apply and talked to college admission people around town, they said “We can’t accept you into a master’s program in economics without your having a bachelor’s degree in economics. You’ll have to go back and pick up all the economics courses.”

I said “Well, that’s not something I’m prepared to do.” I knew that I would need to keep working to pay for my master’s. Because of that, I was looking at night programs rather

than full-time programs. So I opted for continuing my studies in international affairs and picking up economics courses as part of the international affairs curriculum. If I hadn't been strapped for money and been able to go full-time, my preferred graduate program was clearly Johns Hopkins School of International Affairs. I did go see them, but their program required a full-time commitment and quite a hefty tuition.

At GW, I pursued my master's in international affairs, which included international law, Latin American studies, and international politics. Within a year or so I decided to look for a civil service job, because the demanding schedule at Berlitz was interfering with my studies. Plus I knew I needed to start working professionally if I was going to make a career in international work. So I took the civil service entrance exam and the department of Commerce picked up on my high score. Since most young people didn't apply to the Department of Commerce it used to look at the civil service applicant rolls and identify people they thought could fit its needs, then reach out to them.

One day I got a call out of the blue from a personal officer at the Department of Commerce, saying "We've seen you civil service exam results; would you like to come for an interview?" I said, "Sure," and a week later off I went to this interview. It turns out I was being interviewed for a GS-7 position in the Office of Export Controls in the Bureau of International Commerce. I wound up accepting that job and thus entered the civil service. It was serendipitous as it turned out to be a terrific experience. I had a mentoring boss at Commerce who took a special interest in showing me the ropes. I was 20 years younger than my next oldest colleague. That job really turned me on to international work. The Office of Export Controls was set up to control sensitive dual-purpose commodities (e.g., computers, trucks, etc.) that could be used for military purposes. It sought to keep these goods from winding up behind the Iron Curtain or countries in conflict. The Export Control Office was very active during the Cold War and there were a whole variety of commodities that were restricted to Soviet bloc countries. The policy was pretty straightforward to deny applications for strategic and dual-purpose goods. What was more complicated were exports going to neutral countries like Sweden or Yugoslavia, where the concern was that they might be transshipped to the Iron Country. These also needed export licenses and end user certificates. As a junior officer, I was assigned to these neutral countries. Of course, the export controls were also immediately invoked as one of the first U.S. foreign policy responses in the case of a conflict. For example, during my early years at Commerce, the Biafra War broke out in Nigeria. So export controls were slapped on right away.

The upshot was that I was getting an inside look at foreign policy and international events thanks to the intelligence reports I got on events as they happened around the world. In addition, I learned the bureaucraties of drafting issues papers and making recommendations on the issuance (or not) of export licenses. I had to analyze the export application and compare it against our export policies and regulations. I had to draw up an issues paper that went to a policy committee that reviewed the questionable or sensitive applications (i.e. those that weren't black or white where I could just deny or approve the application). Computers were a good example of applications that required committee review. The export policy committee would weigh the pros and cons and then

decide the fate of the particular application. These issues papers required a blurb on what was being requested, what the background was, the end user and the likelihood of transshipment, reference to export policy and precedent, some reasoning of whether it should be approved or not, and then a recommendation. It was a wonderful introduction for me into public administration. It was great first government job.

At the same time, in the master's program at GW, I was studying international affairs, the Cold War, past and present conflicts in specific countries or regions like the Middle East, and applying theory to the practice I was seeing in the reports coming across my desk. The latter were giving me insights, government information and a government take on those conflicts or those situations of instability or conflict. So by the time I was coming to the end of my master's program and after three years of experience at the Department of Commerce, I felt really hooked on international work and had gained quite a good understanding of foreign policy and international trade.

Q: How old were you?

CARNER: I started in October of 1967 at 22 and finished my master's in 1971 so 25.

Q: Did you have a security clearance?

CARNER: Absolutely. I had a secret level clearance but not top secret. A lot of the reports we got were classified.

Q: You mentioned you had met your wife-to-be in Paris; were you married at this time?

CARNER: Just about. We got married in '68. In fact it was the prospect of marriage that prompted me to begin thinking about a professional career because I knew that I would have to provide for a wife and a family. Michele by that time had come to Washington, DC.

Q: What was her maiden name?

CARNER: Delamotte, Michele.

Q: Did she have English?

CARNER: She was immersed in it upon arrival. She had a little bit of school English but it wasn't until she reached the U.S. that she really had to learn it. She now speaks English perfectly, with a lovely French accent.

Q: Wonderful.

CARNER: Coming up on the last semester of my master's program, I surprised my advisor by declaring "I've decided to write my master's thesis on the unilateral independence of Southern Rhodesia." My advisor looked at me and said, "But aren't you

studying Latin America?” I said, “Yes, I am – but I’ve been studying that for quite a long time and have a pretty good idea of what’s going on with the oligarchies and the military juntas that have taken over so many of these Latin American countries. I’m not sure I have a whole lot I can bring to that area that hasn’t already been written about.” Latin America in those days was the focus of a fair amount of academic research. A lot had been written about the military coups, United Fruit Co. influence in the banana republics, on U.S. foreign policy and government involvement, shall we say, in these events. He said, “Well, listen, if you want to strike out in a new direction that’s fine.”

So I did my thesis on the lost opportunity of the Rhodesian multiracial constitution that was tried in 1962 but upon which the parties couldn’t agree. Then Ian Smith’s government declared independence unilaterally from the UK (United Kingdom) and tried to establish a form of Apartheid. That didn’t last very long because the majority of the population of Southern Rhodesia was African and opposed to the white settlers backing the Smith government. It didn’t take long where it became untenable for the minority white government to stay in power in the face of rebel action. It ultimately allowed free elections and a black majority came into rule what is today Zimbabwe.

Q: Did you travel to the region?

CARNER: I did not. I didn’t have the opportunity nor the means, so my thesis was all based on secondary source research, though I had been introduced to the history of the Southern Rhodesia by a South African friend in Paris. I was struck by the fact that the Rhodesian political system was set up to serve the 250,000 white settlers and left disenfranchised the 5,000,000 Africans. I wrote in my thesis, “How can you have an effective political system when 90% of the population is outside the system?”

I had a debate with my advisor about that, he asked “What do you mean, they’re outside the system? They’re part of the system.”

I said, “Not if they don’t have a political voice.” It was really funny. I still think to this day that my approach to analyzing that system where so many people were excluded was on the mark since it created the instability and disaffection that ultimately led to the fall of white minority government. I believe my advisor was still thinking in very classical political science terms that the system by definition includes everybody, even those that lie outside the formal system since they can be considered part of the informal system. Anyway, that’s a digression.

At that point, I had basically learned everything I felt I could at The Office of Export Controls. I looked around and saw the other officers who had been there for 15 or 30 years, I shook my head, and thought “I can’t see myself being here for the next 20 years. Moreover if I’m going to be a public servant, I’d rather be an administrator somewhere other than Washington, DC.”

With that in mind, I put my name forward to two programs. One, as a Commercial Attaché. The Commerce Department was proposing to set up an international commercial

attaché program The Department was still trying to get approval from the State Department to locate commercial attachés at embassies. Can you imagine that? We take that for granted today, but in those early days the State Department was pretty powerful and said well, we can handle trade promotion, we don't need an attaché from the Commerce Department. I expressed my interest in being considered for the first postings once they were open, although I knew they would be very sought after by long-time Commerce people. I also looked at the Paris Air Show group; but I didn't apply for a position..

Instead I applied to A.I.D.'s International Development Intern (IDI) program. It was thanks to a coincidental contact with an IDI that I decided to apply to the program. My wife was teaching French at the Berlitz School of Languages. She had a student who was an IDI trainee by the name of Joe Mueller. He was to be assigned to Morocco. Since I had been considering USAID but hadn't yet applied, Michele said "Why don't we invite Joe and his wife Cathy over to dinner?"

I said, "That sounds like a winner."

So they came over to dinner and we connected right away. We were young and just starting out in our careers and our marriages. We had a delightful dinner and Joe told me all about the IDI program and how much he liked it, and the quality of the training He said, "Here's what you have to do to apply."

So I applied. Lo and behold, USAID came through with an offer much sooner than the Department of Commerce was able to get its program up and running and start recruiting people. So in the spring of 1971, I found myself starting the IDI program.

Q: Very interesting. I started in the IDI program in I guess the last days of '70 or the first days of '71, so I must have been in the prior class.

CARNER: You were in the prior class, probably. In my IDI class I had people like Hank Bassford, Bill Nance, Larry Armstrong – those are three that immediately pop to mind. Jerry Woods was our coordinator.

It was a terrific experience. I found that the program was set up to relate to young people and to inspire them. I've always thought very highly of the IDI program, even when it went through periods of underfunding and under-appreciation by our leadership. Generally, the graduates of the IDI program have all done very well in the agency, and the agency has been well served by them. The IDI program selected really good people that had a chance to contribute to international development. I think the selection criteria cast a wider net than was often the case say for the State Department.

Q: Were you brought in for a particular country?

CARNER: I'm trying to remember if the letter of offer came with a country, or whether that was decided a little bit later. In any case, very early on I knew I was being assigned –

would you believe? – to Morocco to replace Joe! Talk about the funny coincidences in life, that was the last place I expected to be assigned, in part because of my Spanish. Naturally, I assumed I'd be offered a Latin American country, given my studies and Spanish and background at Chapel Hill frequenting Latin students. The whole thing made cultural and linguistic sense as well as academic sense, to assign me to Latin America. But I guess French won out. My French by then had become quite fluent. I tested a 4 in French, and a 4+ in Spanish. I concluded in the end that French speakers were a much more scarce skill in officers and that probably the Africa bureau was more in need of IDIs. The Latin America Bureau had the reputation even back then as a pretty close knit group (which I learned later) where a lot of officers just circulated within that Bureau. Remember, Morocco was part of the Africa Bureau at that time and had a harder time recruiting.

Q: North Africa was part of the Africa bureau, which changed fairly quickly I guess.

CARNER: It changed while I was in Morocco as I recall. Sam Adams was the assistant administrator for Africa. North African countries were put under the new Bureau of the Near and Middle East.

Q: One more question on your recruitment. What backstop were you brought into?

CARNER: As an O2.

Q: As a program officer. Did you know what that was?

CARNER: Not in detail, but I did have an idea that it was a general officer as opposed to a technical officer. My work at Commerce was administering programs, right?

The factor that determine relatively short rotation in Washington was my high linguistic aptitude test score. I only rotated among offices in Washington for about three months without having to enroll in language training. I came in with the April class and I arrived in Morocco with Michele in July of 1971.

Shall we keep going? Any questions up to this point?

Q: I think you've covered it very well. Did you look at the State Department at all as an option?

CARNER: Nope.

Q: Why not?

CARNER: I don't know why! I can't really say why I didn't look at the State Department. I think because I felt that either the international Commerce or USAID jobs would suit me fine, I would take whichever one of those two came through. The Commerce one was obvious because I was already working at Commerce. The USAID

one was clearly influenced by the dinner with Joe Mueller. I guess I just left it there. I thought: if one of these pans out, I'm good; if not I'll start looking elsewhere. It wasn't a rejection (of the State Department) by any stretch of the imagination, but I wasn't looking for flooding my CV (curriculum vitae) everywhere. I must say, USAID was the one I was really rooting for. I thought it would be a great experience, and I think temperamentally the idea of going abroad and really doing things to help people was appealing. Again, I wondered what I was going to find and if I was going to be able to help people, or whether I would just be pushing papers and representing the U.S. government. I just didn't know. It's not that I doubted, it was just that being a student of international affairs you learn about statecraft and states' national interests. National interests often take one in different directions when it comes to working in these countries than just worrying about development.

Q: Did you have any sense at that time whether this was going to be a life-long career, or was this just a thing you were going to try out for a couple of years?

CARNER: The IDI program wanted you to make a commitment and I made the commitment in good faith that I was in there to pursue a career. But I was at a stage in my life where I was taking things as they came and making the most of the day. I had no long-range plan, long-range ambition, or long-range career plotted out. A lot of my colleagues wanted to be a millionaire by age 30. I couldn't get behind that idea. My attitude was: "Hey, life is out there. Let's see what it's got to offer!" I had a very open view both of the world and of where I might go, and I was willing to flow with whatever came up. USAID looked like a terrific place to start, but I didn't look beyond that. I was totally excited about the opportunity. Michele was excited too about going to a French-speaking country. I didn't know the first thing about Morocco when I started! I took it as an adventure, without looking beyond the next couple of moves.

Q: What age were you when you entered the IDI program?

CARNER: Well, in April '71 I would have been 25.

Q: That's a very young age for these days, but in those days I think that was fairly typical. Did Michele have an interest in working overseas?

CARNER: Her background was in chemistry. She pretty much gave that up when she came to the U.S. She developed into a good French language teacher. So she assumed she could find employment teaching French, which she did. While we were abroad for the first decade-plus, she was a French teacher, either at the international school (mostly), or sometimes privately.

Q: That's excellent background. Let's move on to Morocco then. Were you the only IDI there? How did that go?

CARNER: Yes. I replaced Joe Mueller. As I recall, Joe was leaving as we arrived. We moved into his house.

Q: Who was your boss?

CARNER: My immediate boss was Gordon McArthur. Very much of a gentleman. Considerably senior to me. Julius Coles was the deputy program officer for about a year. Donald Brown, a legend, was the first mission director I worked under. He influenced me for the rest of my career. I've always looked up to Don Brown as an outstanding example of a hands-on mission director. He would lock himself in a room and in three days type out an absolutely perfect strategy or field document. Maybe that taught me a lesson, to share the workload with my staff. Being such a total professional and able to do anything his staff could do, he tended to do a lot of things by himself. I learned as a director much later on that you need to engage your staff and take advantage of all the talent in your mission. Anyway, he was an extremely talented director. His wife Micheline took an interest in Michele for obvious reasons, she being French too. That was good as we got invited to the Brown's residence a lot.

I did several rotations among Mission offices. One of the most memorable was rotating to the agricultural office. The head of the office was a senior ag officer by the name of Carl Ferguson. Of course as a junior officer, all these office directors seemed very senior. His deputy was Jerry Edwards. Jerry Edwards, bless his soul (he passed away many decades ago), was one of the most capable agriculture officers I ever came across. Maybe because of my youth I was especially impressionable. Jerry went on to be the ag officer in Egypt and the Philippines. He was one of the agency's truly senior ag officers before we started forgetting about agriculture.

This rotation really impacted me. I had grown up in cities, in Los Angeles, went to school in Barcelona. Chapel Hill was a nice little town, but I didn't get out into the countryside in North Carolina, just drove through it to get down to Fayetteville, and later to Washington, DC. So here you have this city boy and he's working on a rotational assignment with these aggies. What do they do? They take me out on a combine and we start harvesting wheat, eating dust and getting grain in my face – it was the thrill of my life! When these guys poked fun at me and said, "What is that over there?" I couldn't tell the difference between a grain of wheat and a blade of grass let alone a weed. I was totally out of my depth. They took me under their arm, they put me into these situations in the field, seeing how trials were run, showing me what we were trying to do in cross-breeding varieties and in extending the better ones to local farmers. That really influenced my whole career. Since then I've always felt that agriculture had a place in our development efforts and looked for opportunities to do things in agriculture, thanks to the knowledge that I acquired back then. I learned to talk to agricultural technical people and understand what they were saying, and respect what they were trying to do. Later on as a program officer where you have to say "No" to a lot of things, that kind of rapport and understanding really helped me as a team player when I was moving up in the AID hierarchy.

We had in the ag division two contracts or grants; one for extension services with the Near East Foundation (I think) and another with CIMMYT. They were introducing the Green Revolution technology.

Q: What is CIMMYT?

CARNER: It's the Spanish acronym for The Research Center for Corn and Wheat.

Q: An international research center.

CARNER: That's right. CIMMYT stands for "Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maíz y Trigo" (International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center). We were among the missions across the Mediterranean and extending all the way to India that were testing the new wheat varieties that would propel the Green Revolution and triple grain crop yields across the whole world. The Green Revolution is well documented and written about in academia. Some writers have taken issue with some of the second-generation effects, but as far as I'm concerned, the Green Revolution was a real success in bringing many countries closer to self-sufficiency in grains and raising the level of many farmers' income, those that were able to participate in it. In any event, the Morocco Green Revolution for this oral history is well worth documenting. To my mind, it shows many important lessons.

Here we are, implementing this wheat improvement project – one of the bigger projects that we had. The well-to-do farmers in the fertile belt between Rabat and Fez signed up for wheat trials. We were introducing a variety that was called "siete cierros" which means "seven heads"; it was supposed to triple their production, so all these big farmers signed on. We had our extension people out there. The philosophy then was you go with model farmers, get the big guys who could afford to take the risk and show the way. Instead of doing just trials on a few plots, they had planted most of their fields with this stuff. So, what happens? About 70 or 80 percent of this crop was lost. It turns out that this variety of wheat is susceptible to stem rust, "septoria" as it's called due to the wet agro-climatic conditions in this area. These guys had bet their whole year's income on this variety, and they took a bath. Afterward, they said, "We're not interested in this project, it's a failure, we don't want anything to do with it and if your extension people come out here we're going to string them up" (figuratively speaking). "They are persona non grata."

So there we were with this huge fiasco. We called in Norman Borlaug, the Nobel-Prize winner for his breeding research that was the foundation for the Green Revolution, to come to Morocco and find out what happened. This particular variety was grown in Sonora, Mexico, which gets 10 days a year of rain if even that. The project farmers planted this variety in a region that gets 120 days of rain. It didn't take Dr. Borlaug very long to identify the problem and to guide us in establishing a research program that would cross varieties of wheat with local varieties that were resistant to this rust. In effect, they crossed Mexican varieties with Italian ones and identified a successful variety, I believe it was called Tobar. It took a couple of years to identify and for that

part of Morocco to begin to grow miracle rice, rice that was adapted to its climatic conditions.

Meanwhile, our extension agents were office-bound; they didn't know what to do next. The following season, no two seasons later they begin to get reports that in the south of Morocco there were some huge increases in farmers' production. Our extension team decided to go find out what was going on. So they go and start interviewing farmers, who tell them "We were up in Meknes and Fez and there was this grain that people didn't want any part of which they were practically giving away. So we brought some down here and we tried some last season and we saw that it worked pretty well, so this year we planted a whole bunch more and now we're collecting more of that seed for next season." It turns out that the siete cierros seed that had been collected from the failed harvest and the seed we had put into the supply chain had gone unused, and these farmers from down south, who were a lot poorer than the farmers we had worked with, picked up this seed on their own, smartly tried a little bit before they got over-extended, and lo and behold because their climatic conditions were very similar to those of Sonora, they had colossal increases in their yields.

What I took away from that experience was that good seed and good applied research are probably more important than extension and technical assistance; if farmers are given a chance to see something that works, they'll run with it. That doesn't mean that extension isn't important, too, but in the whole debate about agriculture it was always, "Who should get more money? The guys who do extension, or the research guys?" (laughter) Ever since then I've said the most important input is good seed; give farmers good seed, and they'll do the rest.

That's my first Green Revolution story. I will give you a second when we get to the Philippines.

When I had graduated as an IDI I became the assistant program officer. Right about that time, we had a change of directors and Al Disdier became our new director. I don't know if you know Al?

Q: I do, Al was an old capital loan officer I believe.

CARNER: He was the head of the Africa bureau's capital development office. Al Disdier had his eye out for up and coming capital development offices. He did everything he could to mentor them, gave them assignments that enabled them to learn the business, and then moved them up in the system. Probably a sizable percentage of capital development officers were helped by Al Disdier in one fashion or another before that backstop disappeared. In fact, in the lore of USAID that group of capital development officers were called Al's boys. (Laughter) Had you heard that? There were a whole bunch of them and I'd have to wrack my brain to come up with all the names, but Peter Bloom was one of Al's boys. So was Anthony Schwarzwaldner. And I like to think that at the end of the day, I was probably his last boy, even though I wasn't a capital development officer. He really took an interest in me and mentored me and exposed me to some good

assignments. I think the next assignment I want to talk about is thanks to him. Did you ever run into Allison Herrick?

Q: Yes.

CARNER: She was the head of the newly emerging evaluation office. It was the embryo of what would become the Agency's office of evaluation and ultimately development information.

Q: CDIE.

CARNER: Yes CDIE – development information and evaluation. Allison Herrick if I'm not mistaken headed up the first small office that was responsible for this general area. It fell to her to introduce the logical framework for project design as a basis for subsequent measurement of progress to explicit project objectives. She personally came out to Morocco to introduce the logical framework methodology to the entire mission. The program office was made responsible for following through and helping apply it along with the capital development office. At the end of the day, I think it was the capital development office that was most concerned because it was the template for designing projects. Anyway, I wound up being the control officer for her. I was assigned to facilitate her work in the mission and set up the training sessions. As a result, I got a first-hand exposure to the logical framework methodology; and then, because I picked up on it fairly quickly, she anointed me to help do some practicums in applying the logical framework. I think she was there for a week, then it fell to the mission staff to keep applying it to our project designs. I took to it like a fish to water. I don't know what it was, maybe that it was conceptual or very logical, but it appealed to me. I unwittingly became the mission's go-to person on methodological questions about the logframe. Here is this junior officer that's given the latest methodology and becomes the go-to person for more senior people. I must say, that gave me a certain standing – not that it went to my head. But it did give me a sense very early on of being able to contribute and not just being the lowliest officer on the ladder. I don't know if that makes any sense?

Q: It certainly does.

CARNER: Anyway, with that experience an opportunity came up to go help a fellow by the name of Madison Broadnax, the mission director in Sudan. This must have been about 1973, in the fall. Broadnax was the director of the reopened, smaller mission, and had been a former aggie in Sudan in the late '60s when Sudan was one of our bigger missions in Africa. He needed people to help with some design work applying the logical framework. So Al asked, "Would you like to go help him out?"

I said, "Sure." I'd never been to Sudan. It sounded like an enticing assignment. So off I went to Sudan. I was part of a design team with a couple of more senior design people. Madison wanted us to design two projects, one in Juba in southern Sudan and one in Darfur in western Sudan. Our design team broke into two: team A went to Darfur and team B to Juba. I was assigned to team A. We took a four or five hour plane ride to a

place called Nyala, which was a dusty little town in the middle of Darfur, where we were met by Sudanese ag officers; one in particular, Mousa, was very engaging. The next morning we rode in several land rovers through gullies, scrub brush and savannah for another five hours to an agricultural research station that was nearly abandoned because it was so remote. We took a look at the station and talked to some farmers and assessed the potential of the area. It seemed to have some potential for fruit trees, particularly citrus, and maybe some other export crops. The problem was it was so far removed from anything, how would you get the produce to market?

Our quick assessment concluded, we went back to Khartoum with our findings, as did the other team. Then we had these incredible brainstorming sessions where we were designing these two projects in tandem. Broadnax was so pleased with the designs and with what I was doing, that he tried to recruit me. I suspect he was also fairly hard pressed to get people to come to Sudan. Before the projects be approved, a Sudanese faction of Black Septemberists were released from their trial in Egypt and came back to Sudan, and once again we cut off aid and may have even broken diplomatic relations. Can I talk about the Black Septemberists?

Q: Sure.

CARNER: Okay. The Black Septemberists in question were a Sudanese branch of the Palestinian terrorist organization of the same name (which was responsible for the Munich Olympics attack on Israeli athletes) who had stormed a cocktail party in Khartoum and killed our DCM (deputy chief of mission) there at the time. Then they fled to Egypt and we pressured Egypt to put them on trial. They put them on trial, and the Sudanese government was all supportive and apologetic, clearly wanting to keep diplomatic relations open. Sudan along with the rest of the Arab world had broken relations with the U.S. and sent our ambassador home as a result of our support for Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. As an anecdote to that, it is rumored that when the ambassador and AID director were about to board the plane, the foreign minister who was seeing them off said to the ambassador, “You can go but we want him to stay!” pointing at the USAID director.

Anyway, after the trial was over and the terrorists were released to Sudanese custody, and were set free. So we cut off our aid and those projects never went anywhere.

All to say that having a mentor like Al Disdier and exposing me to the assignment in Sudan was very important to my development. Unfortunately, with the pace of work today along with staff and budget cuts, it's so much harder to get the kind of mentoring that we used to enjoy in our agency. I'm sure you benefited from mentors all along your career. As I've gotten into more senior positions I found that you had make a point of mentoring given the limited time available we had. I always felt that when you reduce your staff to the barest minimum, what suffers is that qualitative factor. That little extra time to do mentoring or make that last contact or establish that relationship with a counterpart that's going to make a difference in whatever activity you're trying to get off the ground. If you don't touch that base, maybe you're going to regret it.

Q: So George, let's explore this a little further. How did Al mentor you? Did you have regular meetings? How did that go?

CARNER: He would look for assignments to give me like the Allison Herrick visit or the Sudan design work. He always had a smile to offer when I came into his office. His office was open to me, I didn't have to go through the program officer (though I naturally did). Morocco was a small mission. I don't remember the exact number of direct hires but we couldn't have been more than 35 or 40 US direct hires, plus our contract staff and our FSNs (Foreign Service nationals). The program office was made up of the program officer, the deputy, and me. So when we went in to discuss an issue or talk about a project or present budgetary implementations to the director, we all went along, and Al was very gregarious and open. You could tell that he cared and sought to open up possibilities for younger officers. I think that's all that you need to mentor. You just have to set a tone where the junior officer feels part of the team. Of course, I was already assistant program officer, it wasn't as if he was doing it for an IDI, as you might expect.

I want to mention something that was to influence my career in a big way. Our Washington office director was Tony Schwarzwalder. He headed up the Middle East and Near East Office (MENA). Tony had just come out of Bangladesh where he had made a name for himself as the youngest mission director when Bangladesh declared its independence from Pakistan.

Tony happened to be the capital development officer visiting Dacca when independence took place, so he became our man in Dacca --the only American from our embassy in Islamabad that happened to be there. He was the one that began to coordinate the politics and ultimately the relief effort in response to the big humanitarian crisis that ensued. He really excelled in that incredibly challenging and responsible position. He was ultimately named the AID rep to Bangladesh before we really established a full-fledged mission. He had come back to Washington to become the MENA office director which encompassed from Morocco to Afghanistan. The purpose of his visit was to learn about the program and see how things were going. Al knew Tony from way back and assigned me as Tony's control officer. After guiding him through his official schedule, I asked him what he wanted to do with his weekend. He said, "I don't know, what can we do?"

I said, "I see that you're a photographer; Morocco is a splendid place for photography. Do you want to head to Marrakech? We'll get up at 6:00 am and you can shoot the most spectacular pictures you've ever taken."

We bonded over that weekend. As we were coming back in the car he asked, "What do you want to do next?" I was in my fourth year in Morocco.

I replied, "I don't know, what openings are there?."

Tony said, "Here's my briefing book that has all the different MENA countries, look it over and give it back to me on Monday. Let me know if there's anything that interests

you.” It contained briefings on Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, Jordan, Turkey, Afghanistan, and maybe Lebanon? I think Egypt was already a separate office.

I studied the briefings, and on Monday after Tony had gone through the day’s schedule, he got back with me and asked, “What would you like to do?”

I said, “I’d like to go to Afghanistan.”

He said, “I don’t know what’s open there but I’ll check when I get back to Washington and let you know.”

This must have been January or February 1975. In any event, Tony calls me after here gets back to Washington and says “George, there’s going to be an opening in Afghanistan for an assistant program officer but not until January of ’76, and your tour is up in July. We either need to do an extension or, if you like, I can see about getting you into the economics course at FSI (Foreign Service Institute).”

Q: A six-month course, right?

CARNER: That’s right. Tony explained: “If you opt for the economics course, they’re picky about who they take. They don’t take many USAID officers and moreover you’ve got to work your butt off.”

Q: I also took that course.

CARNER: Then you know; I don’t think I’ve ever worked so hard in my life. I replied, “I’m game; I always wanted to study economics. I’m getting to the point where I feel the need to understand economics a lot better than I do, so let me know what I have to do.”

He said, “You’ll have to apply, and I’ll see what I can do to recommend you and lobby for your acceptance.”

I said, “I think we’ve got a plan; that sounds great!” That was the end of the phone call. He kept me posted. Ultimately, I wound up being accepted to the econ course and being tagged for an Afghanistan assignment come January of 1976.

Meanwhile, Michele was pregnant with our second son. We went to Washington, DC in June and rented temporary quarters, me studying like mad and she growing a belly very fast. The course ended early December. Our second son was born December 6th; our first had been born in Morocco. Six weeks later, we’re on a plane to Kabul. I must say Michele was real trooper and as keen on the adventure that the assignment to Afghanistan represented as I was. I was drawn to Afghanistan because of the enormous development challenges it represented.

Why don’t I stop there and see if there are some things you want to go back to for questions?

Q: In Morocco, what kind of relationship did you have with Moroccans? Did you have a chance to get to know them?

CARNER: I did. I made some real friends. I met Moroccans socially. I'm still in touch with Andres Acedo, who was a Spanish national on the staff helping coordinate the commodity import program. I had several Moroccan friends my age. I'm still close friends with a Moroccan, Mohammed Yassine, who was the training officer on our staff; I go visit him in Marrakech or he comes to visit me here regularly. I connected with our Moroccan staff because as a young person and starting out, it's easy to work on an equal footing with your FSN staff. In Morocco, there were several Moroccans who invited us over regularly, and we had a chance to interact with them. One of the counterparts that stands out was the head of the ag extension division at the Ministry of Agriculture. I met him when I'd gone over with Jerry Edwards to the Ministry and then afterwards we became friends and saw each other socially. I was even approached and almost became a Rotary member in Morocco for the first time because of my contacts with Moroccans in the business community.

As a young couple without children before our first was born, we had a very active social life with third secretaries in various embassies and with French "coopérants," which were the equivalent of Peace Corps volunteers but with slightly more resources. We used to have a lot of parties and events that brought everybody together, Moroccans, Africans, Europeans, and Americans. In fact, there was a Brazilian diplomat who became the Chargé and would throw an annual samba party. He would have us over to train us in dancing the samba as if you were in a samba school, and then we would have this incredible costume party at his residence. He held it three years running, and the last year it was the event to be invited to. He didn't invite on the basis of protocol but on the basis of people who were committed to dancing samba all night! He got a lot of pressure from many ambassadors to get invited to this costume party! (Laughter) We had a wonderful time in Morocco; that's probably not the gist of your questions.

Q: We cover it all.

CARNER: We enjoyed Morocco so much that my wife to this day still says, "Why didn't we sign up for a third tour?" I told her then and even today, that I couldn't have signed on to a third tour and ever expected to be promoted. There were people who had been in Morocco for four tours; talk about starting off at a cushy post. In Morocco in those years, you really had to pinch yourself. It was a delightful country to be working in and the people were so nice, the people we worked with. Today, the world has gotten very conflictive but in those days Morocco was just wonderful.

Q: What were some of the programs you feel were particularly successful?

CARNER: I already mentioned the Green Revolution one. I think we started to make some inroads on family planning, though it was a tough slog in a conservative country like Morocco was at that point. There was one other thing of perhaps historic significance

that I got involved with in Morocco that I would consider a success. I had the good fortune of working with a talented CRS (Catholic Relief Services) director, Conchita Sanborn, who launched one of the first maternal-child feeding programs which included extensive nutritional training for the mothers. I helped design the project with her and then put forward the grant we gave CRS for that. That proved very successful in Morocco and went on to be a model for CRS globally. I must say, it also really rooted in me the importance of nutrition and how awful malnutrition is for the poorest families. That experience really instilled in me a commitment to the whole nutrition area long before it became important in USAID. Nutrition had waves; in the '80s we began recruiting nutrition officers. In the '90s, we let that emphasis go by the wayside. More recently with the emphasis on food security, the international community finally added nutrition to the sustainable development goals, as a separate goal. In those early years, nutrition wasn't being given much attention. Agricultural production was, but what people were eating wasn't looked at very much. Working with such a talented CRS director as Mrs. Sanborn and her committed staff was a real inspiration.

Q: I recall a cloud-seeding program at one point, were you there for that?

CARNER: I think that may have been later. Here we're talking 1971 to 1975. There was another quite successful agricultural program that was the subject of an A.I.D. impact evaluation. It involved the Hassan II agriculture research institute in Rabat. I think it was the University of Minnesota that supported the institute but I may be off there. That was a long-standing program that lasted well into this century. I think it may have finally reached its end. But it trained agronomists at the university level and conducted critical research to support Morocco's agricultural development. It is no an internationally recognized institute of excellence.

USAID also supported King Hassan II's irrigation strategy. He set a goal for Morocco of irrigating 1,000,000 hectares. We had been helping put in the irrigation system up in the northeastern corner of Morocco, in a place called the Moulouya Valley. Toward the end of my tour, we began looking at the Doukala irrigation scheme which is to the northeast of Casablanca. The upshot of Morocco's irrigation policy and investment was to really make Morocco quite an agricultural powerhouse, not only in terms grain self-sufficiency but also in agro-export crops.

Q: Was Peace Corps there? Did you have any contact with Peace Corps?

CARNER: Yes, I had good ties with Peace Corps volunteers because of my youth. Also, you will be interested to know that the Peace Corps director that we overlapped with in Morocco was Holbrooke!

Q: Oh my goodness – Richard Holbrooke.

CARNER: Richard Holbrooke had been one of Michele's students in Washington at Berlitz. Michele was giving private French lessons in Rabat to peace corps volunteers. When Richard Holbrooke took up his duties as Peace Corps director, we got invited to

Peace Corps events. I had established relations with a number of Peace Corps volunteers on my own. I was interested in hearing about their experiences and their assignments. By virtue of being a young USAID officer, it broke down the normal taboos against Peace Corps volunteers talking to USAID officers. After all we were contemporaries.

Plus, we had a really important Housing Investment Guarantee (HIG) program in Morocco supported by Peace Corps volunteer architects. That was another program that became quite successful. The Government was piloting these basic infrastructure programs where it put in the streets, the lighting and electricity, it gave mortgage loans, and the applicants built their own housing. It was “sites and services” development, coupled with self-help housing. USAID guaranteed the loans. People would build one small room and then over time would build a second room, then a second story and so forth. We had HIGs in Morocco for a number of years. Of course, what we needed were architects to help with the sites and services program that the ministry carried out. Very early on, Peace Corps architects were being tapped for assignment to the Ministry of Housing with which the HIGs were negotiated. This was an early example of Peace Corps-USAID collaboration. HIGs were a little separate from the USAID mission, as they were run directly out of Washington with the mission serving as a facilitator. The actual loan guarantees were boilerplate agreements. AID/Washington would often send somebody out to negotiate the loan and its terms. We had the role of facilitator and project monitor. Peace Corps offered their architects. At that time Peace Corps had a pretty solid stream of architectural volunteers. In a place like Morocco it was really important because there was a long tradition of urbanism. In fact, that’s what the ministry was called, the Ministry of Housing and Urbanism. This dated back to French colonial days when one of the Resident-Generals of the Protectorate was a military engineer himself and launched a major urban development effort in the cities in Morocco. His name was General Louis Lyautey.

Helen Wilson was the multi-sector office director in the Morocco mission. I rotated into her office, which backstopped the HIGs as well as our health and family planning activities and the commodity import program. That’s how I got involved in the housing investment guarantee program. She was very considerate and conscious of her mentoring role. She would explain things, encourage me to ask questions, make sure that during my rotation I got a good feel for her office and what her staff was doing.

One of the great strengths of the IDI rotations was you established these relationships with the staffs and office directors, whether it be in the technical offices or for that matter the controller’s office. Then later when you took up your position in the organization (in my case, the program office), even when your roles brought you into conflict with these offices over budgets or strategy direction, you had the foundation of a relationship there that just made much easier to work as a team. I think that was one of the great strengths of the IDI rotational schemes. (Recording ended.)

Q: This is John Pielemeier on June the 6th, 2018 with the second interview with George Carner. We’re doing this by Skype; the sound is coming through very nicely. George, you

were leading us along and had just arrived in Afghanistan with your family; please take us from there.

CARNER: I began as an assistant program officer. There were two assistant program officers in the program office. The Afghanistan mission was led at that point by director Vincent Brown, and his deputy was Fred Sly, and the program officer was Ron Rogers. His deputy was Chuck Johnson. The senior assistant was Larry Crandall; he and his wife came to meet us because they were our sponsors. Cathy Crandall herself had young children, the youngest the age of our oldest. She had lined up everything we needed to function in the house we had been assigned. We had a nanny, somebody to boil water and soak the vegetables. Kabul was very basic in those days. There wasn't much infrastructure. The sanitation was abysmal. There were a lot of health hazards and clearly that required boiling water, dunking vegetables in iodine. Being a cold country which was certainly unusual for AID postings, you needed to get firewood, stoke the fires and all of that.

After a weekend of settling in, a car came to pick me up on Monday and took me to the AID compound; it was called the governor's compound (it no longer exists, having been blown to smithereens during the war years). I don't know how it acquired the governor's name, but it was an enclosed compound with a main entrance gate. There were half-a-dozen or more bungalows, and each division essentially had a bungalow, or shared one. The program office was in the main bungalow on the first floor, the mission director's office was on the second floor. Then you had different divisions – we had an agriculture office, a project development office, and offices for rural development, education, health, and even a com-media center which had to run off our project papers and project identification documents and project agreements in mimeos! Every time there was a revision made, you had to start the process all over again. We had a Filipino in charge of that who ran the shop with 50 people. We had our own fire department with two fire engines that were on call to Kabul city, because fire was a real hazard since everybody burned wood during the winter months. We even had a dispensary on the compound with the health staff and even a psychiatrist, because this was a really remote hardship post. Of course, the dispensary and psychiatrist and the nurse weren't just for USAID; the entire embassy had access to them. We had a commissary, a tennis court, and a pool. And there was still green space to walk about. Going to visit the technical offices was a treat, especially if it was sunny out and not snowing, because you got out of the office and walked through this green compound, isolated from the hustle and bustle of Kabul.

We had 450 staff, about 50 Americans and the rest Afghan Foreign Service nationals and third country nationals, mostly from India.

Q: George, just to remind us, what year was this?

CARNER: I arrived January 1976. We had some pretty basic development activities as you might imagine in a country that still had so much road to cover to develop. We had a rural works project that was building small rural infrastructure in villages, building and repairing bridges, small irrigation systems, carrying water from one side of the river to

the other on flumes, and doing some other basic construction. There was a rural development agency that was one of the more performing parts of the Afghan government, run by a dedicated engineer by the name of Sadiki.

The Afghan government was at that point headed by Prime Minister Daoud who had overthrown the King Zahir Shah who was in exile in Rome. Daoud was running the show with his various ministers. In Afghanistan the Kabul government only handled monetary and fiscal policy, foreign policy, defense and security but didn't have much authority for local affairs into the countryside. There the local khans were in charge. There was a very strong patron-client relationship. I say this because it helps to understand Afghanistan. Basically, there was an entente; the central government came to the villagers and said, "We need so many men for the army and so much for taxes." The khans made sure they got that; the central government appointed some local governors but governance was very much in local tribal hands through tribal councils. Once the central government had its tithe – its taxes and recruits for the army – the local authorities were free to dispense justice, deal with local affairs, and settle things in very traditional ways.

Our rural works project fit that model very nicely. It worked directly with the rural development agency as opposed to a ministry. Its technicians went to the villages, identified and agreed with local authorities the projects needed to make sure the small irrigation system worked, the roads (dirt, mainly) were unencumbered by rock-falls and things like that. So this was an important project for the local communities.

USAID had a primary health project which was also a priority. Health conditions were very poor. The infant mortality rate of kids under five was something like 150 per 1000. It was way up there, one of the worst. The basic health project got us out into the boonies. We worked with a very strong team of doctors from Management Sciences for Health. Ron O'Connor coordinated a team of highly qualified doctors who implemented the project. That was before John Snow had broken off from MSH, so it was a really powerful.

On agriculture, we had a hard time getting access. It was so traditional and politically sensitive a sector that the ministry was difficult to work with, and probably skeptical of foreign involvement. So we didn't do much in agriculture. Our ag advisor Ray Fort tried to get something going in wheat in the south; but it was tough slogging.

We had an education project – higher education at Kabul University Engineering Faculty. That was an important training ground for Afghan engineers. At that point, Afghanistan had very few trained people. They used to go to Germany to get engineering training during the King's reign. So creating a faculty at Kabul University was essential. I think that faculty continues to this day. University of Nebraska had the contract and Tom Gouttierre coordinated from the project from Nebraska. Didn't Peter McPherson hail from those parts?

While we were there, we started designing a primary education project to introduce more modern curriculum, train teachers, and build some classrooms because a lot of the

schooling was done under a tree. In a cold climate, that meant you didn't get very much schooling in the winter. In spring and summer, the kids were often drafted into labor for the fields. Not many rural kids made it past the third grade. So primary education was a needed project.

Q: That was also University of Nebraska?

CARNER: No. I forget who got that contract. Development Associates, perhaps? I was the assistant program officer assigned to the education office. Stan Handleman was the education officer and Bill Charleson was his deputy with whom I worked the closest to design the education project. John Blackton backstopped us from Technical Resources in AID Washington.

The biggest and most significant project we had was the Helmand Drainage project. It was a major infrastructure project that laid down primary drainage to catch the runoff water from the primary canals in an irrigation system that Morrison-Knudson had built at the request of the King in the '50s, without USAID help. We had helped with secondary canal construction in the '60s, and now in the '70s we were tackling the drainage problems. There hadn't been any provision for drainage so you had some fields affected by salinization from over irrigating and you had other fields going out of production due to waterlogging. You needed a major drainage system to help get the water to drain off the land after irrigating it. To implement the project we turned to the Soil Conservation Service who fielded a 10-person team and lived in Lashkargah, which was in the heart of the Helmand Valley, about 50 miles due west of Kandahar. They set up a little American community there. I was tasked with backstopping that project from the Program Office.

USAID had a very talented engineer with whom I traveled down there frequently. Don Riley, who later became Africa's Technical Resource Office Director, was a very capable engineer and manager. We would go down there with the mission's anthropologist, Dick Scott. Because we had to deal with so many tribal issues, the mission had its own anthropologist, which was fairly unusual. The three of us used to go to Lash about every month and check on the project. We would make sure that everything was going according to plan. We would talk to John Geter, who was the chief of party and had a lot of experience in the southwestern US working on these issues, as his team did. We would watch the four draglines digging huge ditches to build a parallel drainage system. Our task was to monitor progress, make sure that if there were implementation issues with the Afghan government that we could bring them back to Kabul and the mission director could take them up with the authorities. This was routine monitoring.

As you recall, in those days we had enough personnel that it was regular to go into the field and monitor projects, see what was happening. To me that was very important. One, because you learned a lot especially as a young officer. But two, you saw what was happening on the ground and could deal with real problems and help the implementing teams resolve their issues if there were difficulties. The issues didn't go unattended very long because you saw them right away. And if there were performance issues, you could deal with those too. Over the years, as our staffs kept getting reduced, our ability to do

that became more and more narrow. I've always felt it's the qualitative factors that make development succeed. This kind of monitoring was especially important.

On occasion I would accompany the ambassador or mission director on their visits, which was maybe once every six months. Then we would call on the provincial governor and deal with issues that would come up. One issue in particular comes to mind. Sometimes the electric lines would be cut and the cables stolen to be re-sold. Of course, that created problems for the project so we would bring that to the attention of the governor. He would deal severely with the culprits.

Afghanistan was a real learning ground for me about basic development.

Q: George, tell us a little bit about the status of the Afghan government at that point and its relationship to the United States.

CARNER: At this point, we were close. The Soviets had no influence in Afghanistan. Daoud was very Western-oriented. From the King's days Afghanistan had close relations with both France and Germany. There was a French "lycée" (high school) that had French staff and a quality program that the more affluent Afghans sent their kids to, with a view to ultimately going on to study abroad. Usually in Europe, because it was closer, but they did study at the University of Nebraska which had a participant training program for Afghans. Until April 1978 you had a pretty common government set-up with ministries and basically a good relationship with Western countries, no particular influence either from the Chinese (who were more worried about their own development) nor the Soviets who had their own Central Asian republics as buffers. India was of course nearby with whom it had relations; I think Afghanistan had always been more leery of Pakistan than India, despite the fact they were of the same faith. In its foreign policy Afghanistan was a member of the neutral bloc, as I recall.

Two monumental changes marred and ultimately upset our good relations. The first was USAID Washington wanted to downsize Afghanistan as it was trying to downsize many of these huge missions. Sudan had been a huge mission until '67; Afghanistan was still one of these long-standing big missions. There was pressure at that time to staff more countries and reduce the number of staff in the larger ones. The second was a communist coup.

Chuck (Charles) Grader was assigned as the new director in 1977. He was a new breed of mission director, much more management-oriented, very development-oriented, and fascinated with everything Afghan – its history and culture. He was a very engaging and charismatic. Unfortunately, one of the first things they asked him to do was to cut the Afghan staff by 50% and the American staff by 30%. It fell to him to bring the Afghan staff from something over 400 to something under 200 (I think it was like 150) and the direct hire staff was brought down from 50 to about 35. This sent a fair number of US staff home who didn't get replaced. The deputy director Fred Sly was replaced by Owen Cylke. Ron Rogers had been succeeded for a time by Chuck Johnson who moved up but then went off to Bangladesh as did Larry Crandall. Chet (Chester) Bell came in as the

new program officer. Dale Pfeifer took up the deputy program officer position. Mark Silverman came on board as an IDI in the Program Office. Basically, we had a whole new mission line up. Our outgoing mission economist, Ray Hooker, had been exceptionally good, using regression analysis to predict the wheat crop based on rain and snowfall. In those days, that was pretty sophisticated and blew the Afghan authorities' mind because he could predict pretty closely whether they were going to have problems that year with their wheat crop. He was replaced by Larry Sayers who later went on to bigger and better things; we'll come back to Larry later since we connected later on in my assignments. Anyway the Afghan government was concerned about that citizen's treatment and if the aid program was being reduced. To Chuck's credit he negotiated with Washington a very generous severance package and helped place many of the Afghan employees being laid off in the Embassy, UN and other organizations in town.

In the middle of all of this. I got the chance to go to the Development Studies Program (DSP), one of the first sessions. It may have been the pilot course; otherwise it was the second course. We're now talking about March 1978. I left post with my family for the three month DSP course. That DSP course was headed by Dick Blue. On his staff you had such figures as John Wesley who would later go on to be mission director in Kenya and elsewhere. There was an environmentalist on the staff and an American University social anthropologist, Corky Bryant. Those were the main faculty – Dick Blue did the political science as I recall. It was a very ambitious course that aimed to update USAID officers on the latest development thinking and to bring a multi-disciplinary focus to development.. I found it fascinating. It was an infusion at the right time in my development as an aid officer. I absorbed that theory and practice like a sponge. I really got interested in the systems stuff, in the multi-dimensionality of development beyond just focusing on economics or a technical area. I got very interested in the environment. Certainly following the economics course, this training was a rounding-out experience.

While I was in Washington attending DSP, a Communist coup backed by the military took place and overthrew Daoud. They succeeded by mobilizing tanks and taking out the radio station and attacking the palace, by killing Daoud, and installing a Communist group called the Halki Party. At their head was Nur Muhammad Taraki --the figure head, but his general was Hafizullah Amin. The two of them set up a government that was very much Communist in orientation having been trained by the soviets. By then, we had a superb ambassador with Soviet experience, Ambassador Adolph Dubs (better known as Spike Dubs). The new government informed us, "We want to put the AID program on hold. We want to examine everything; we don't trust the West." So for several months the USAID mission was almost incommunicado because we couldn't get the time of day from any of the new ministers.

These guys (by then I had returned to post) tackled land reform and women's rights but from Kabul, issuing edicts and then trying to enforce these in local areas. There aren't two things any more sensitive in traditional tribal Afghan society than land and women. Give you an example – the new government would send their commissars out to the regional capitals and call in the farmers. They would have a list of different farmers working for different khans, and they would tell the khan "You better give over some of

your land.” They would hand the farmers a piece of paper and they would say “You work for khan so-and-so; here’s a paper that entitles you to two hectares” (or whatever it was, I’m not sure if it was two hectares or one). “You give this paper to the khan and he has to give you the land, then you can cultivate the land and you’ll own it.”

These farmers would go to see their khan and give the khan the paper, and the khan would say, “You see that ditch over there, or that hillside? You can have that plot.” The first month went by just fine and the farmers were happy.

Then they had to plant. Before then, it was the khan who gave the farmers the seed he’d been storing. So they’d go see the khan and say, “I’m ready for the seed.”

The khan would say, “Who gave you that piece of paper?”

“Oh some government guy over in Khost.”

“Why don’t you go see him about the seed?”

Of course, he didn’t get any seed. Next month, he would come back and say, “I need fertilizer.” Same thing.

Third month, he’d come back and say, “My daughter’s getting married, I need a dowry.”

“Go see the man that gave you the piece of paper.”

Naturally, the farmers began tearing up those pieces of paper and going back to the old patron-client relationship that served them very well – both the khan and the farmer.

It didn’t take long before these khans were mobilizing the countryside against the government in Kabul as heathen, as Soviet puppets, and as crazy, trying to change traditional life. So the insurrection began. It began slowly, but by the fall of 1978 you had a significant insurrection going on.

We still didn’t have any contact with the government and our program was on hold, so I suggested doing a strategy to refocus what we’re doing to take account of the new reality that we had. Chuck and Owen thought that was great way to fill the time. I suggested we bring some of the faculty from DSP to serve as resource people to run us through our strategic thinking. By February of 1979, we had set this up. On a Monday morning – or maybe it was a Saturday – we were meeting in Chuck’s residence, having coffee and getting ready to strategize when Chuck gets a phone call. He hangs up after a few minutes, and he’s ashen. He says, “Our ambassador’s been kidnapped.”

Our ambassador was on his way to work with his driver. A policeman approached him and said he had to speak to him in private, so he told the driver to unlock the doors to the back and two mujahidin jumped in the back and two in the front and commandeered the car over to the Kabul Hotel, took him to a room and held him hostage.

From what we were able to piece together later, the only reason they nabbed the U.S. ambassador was not that they were anti-American, but that the Soviet ambassador was so well protected, police-state-like, that they didn't see how they could easily apprehend him. Whereas the American ambassador in those days used to travel without additional cars or overt protection. We used to feel like we were well received around the world and didn't need such precautions. So, that's why the Mujahidin chose to take our ambassador.

An embassy officer tried for three hours to talk to the foreign minister or somebody in command to offer negotiating services and to remind them of the Vienna Convention that required protecting diplomatic personnel, especially ambassadors, but he got nowhere. Meanwhile, the Afghans turned to the Soviets. A Soviet KGB officer commanded a firing squad of Afghans across the street in the central bank and by 12:00 they had fired a volley of AK-47s into the room where the ambassador was being held by these mujahidin. Officials broke down the door and surprise, surprise all four were dead. You can imagine the shock ripples that went through the American community.

Spike Dubs was a thorough professional. He had come from Moscow, having had a distinguished career up till then, including being chargé d'affaires in Moscow. He knew the Soviets well. Knowing the Soviets after all these years you have to wonder if he hadn't done something in Moscow that they wanted to pay him back for. Nobody's ever mentioned that, but the thought just occurred to me, seeing all these poisonings around the globe.

At any rate, we were all just so shaken. We went on with the strategy exercise, but without much enthusiasm. We began to hunker down, and instead began contingency plans for an evacuation.

For the mujahidin, they just wanted to get some leverage to get some of their freedom fighters released. Instead, what they achieved was tremendous international attention and a polarization of the political situation between Western countries and the Soviet-leaning Afghan government.

The irony of this is that in country team meetings, Chuck, Owen and I would argue that given Afghan history and Afghan resistance to occupation that we needed to give the new Afghan government room to decide which way they wanted to go: if they wanted to maintain some kind of independence from the Soviets and follow a more even keel policy of neutrality as in the past— in which case they might come back towards the West. The ambassador didn't think so. He thought that once the Soviets had a foothold in Afghanistan having tried for a century or more, that they wouldn't let go lightly. He had no illusions about how ruthless they would be. But he said, "I'm willing to listen, I'm willing to give the Afghans a breathing spell. But in three months we have to decide on hardening the policy if nothing has changed." Chuck was naturally trying to defend the AID program; a hardening would have meant ending most of our assistance programs.

I was a pallbearer for Ambassador Dubs casket as it was being taken to the airport. I can tell you that his murder was the most traumatic event in my entire Foreign Service career. I really felt the loss of this fine man whose death was unnecessary; executed only to prove a point, that you don't negotiate with hostage takers in keeping with Soviet policy. I had come to know the ambassador on trips to the Helmand. He'd come to the house for Christmas parties, he had bounced our kids on his knees. I can't tell you what a loss it was. I was really angry. In fact, I was so visibly upset that Chuck and Owen said you've got to get out of here and clear your head, you're too angry with the Afghans to stay here without harming your health or working effectively. They suggested I move up my R&R (rest and recreation) and attend the project implementation course that was scheduled to start shortly in Manila.

So the family and I went to Manila. I attended the two-week implementation course and then went for R&R to several southeast Asian countries. When I returned I was ready to go back to work.

Come May, a good part of the USAID staff led by Owen was evacuated. Most of our projects had been put on hold except for the Helmand, but by then the insurrection in the countryside was such that we decided to pull the Soil Conservation team for security reasons. We couldn't guarantee their security any more. Any central government representative caught travelling on the road between Kabul and Kandahar was often hijacked, taken out of his car or the bus, tortured and shot. It was a very dangerous road if you were in any way connected to the central government that was increasingly unpopular.

Not long after I returned from R&R Chuck asked me to stay on in case we were going to crank the program back up. I answered that I didn't see things getting better; on the contrary they would get worse; the writing was on the wall that we were going to have to close the program down. He said, "Well, I still want to hang on and see if we can crank this up if there is a dramatic change."

So Chet and I stayed on with a couple or three other Americans while everybody else had gone.

Q: Was your wife still there?

CARNER: No. My condition for staying was that she and the family leave and go to safe haven, and that our goods be packed up and shipped to Pakistan awaiting my onward assignment. You can see that I was humoring Chuck, I was not in any way convinced that there was much chance – nor was Chet Bell for that matter. It's interesting because Chuck Grader in June had to go on home leave, and he left saying "I have to take this home leave, but I'm taking only three weeks – don't do anything until I come back!"

We said, "We'll try to hold the fort, but things could change very fast." Indeed, within two weeks things got much worse. The fighting got worse, the gunships leaving Kabul

and bombing villages intensified – it was really a step up. Obviously, Soviet materiel had arrived and they were trying to fight back what was a countrywide insurgency.

We wrote a cable back to Washington describing the situation and concluding that our continued presence was untenable, that there was no point trying to hold the mission open any longer; that we should shut the program down and turn off the lights. Washington concurred.

The date was set for August the 4th, 1979, to close the mission. I was scheduled to go on home leave, so the EXO was preparing my travel orders for home leave to California and post to be determined. I didn't have an onward assignment but I'd gotten a call from Tony Schwarzwaldner who had just been named mission director to the Philippines.

You'll recall from our last interview that it was through his auspices that I wound up in Afghanistan. So he called and asked if I would be interested in joining his team in the Philippines as the long-range planner. I said, "What is that?"

He said, "It's a rarely used position that exists on the books. It is like a program officer but without the normal day-to-day program officer responsibilities. You'd be responsible for preparing the strategy, guiding longer range programming and running impact evaluation."

When Tony offered Manila, I jumped to it. I said it would be terrific to work with him and in the Philippines. Having just been to Manila, I'd seen the mission and thought it would be a great assignment, not only for me career-wise but also for the family. There was a good school and compared to Kabul, Manila was a modern city! the family was also excited about moving to Manila.

So we went on home leave. In between, personnel had decided I should be assigned as one of multiple desk officers in Washington for Egypt. So I cooled my heels in California, wondering where I was going next. I certainly didn't want to go back to Washington and least of all, to be one of five desk officers for Egypt. Tony was very influential and his star was riding high; he got his way. So I wound up with Michele and the kids assigned to Manila.

Let me stop here. Is there anything you want to pursue about Afghanistan before we go on to the Philippines?

Q: That was an excellent discussion. You mentioned going to Helmand; did you travel to other parts of Afghanistan as well?

CARNER: Yes – both personally and professionally. I went to Mazar-e-Sharif and all the way up to the Oxus River to inspect a rural development project where there was some dispute as to whether the project had been completed. Afghanistan was one of the first countries where we were pilot testing the fixed-amount reimbursement (FAR) method. FAR is a scheme where you basically agree with the government upfront on some basic

cost elements of the project and to pay based on the budget that results from that estimated costing. The estimates are done very methodically by going into the local markets and costing what materials are to be used, for example in the construction of a classroom; you come up with a budget and offer to reimburse 90% (or other percentage) as a fixed amount of that budget. Then if there are overruns they are the responsibility of the government not USAID. USAID may in fact only reimburse 50% of the final cost if the budget is exceeded. So it really puts the responsibility for performance on the government. We had gotten indications that we had reimbursed a flume, one of these little open pipes that goes over the river carrying water to the other side to irrigate fields, and that the project hadn't been completed although we had reimbursed it. So since I was backstopping the rural works project then, I was dispatched up there with the project officer to verify that the flume was completed. When we got there, we saw that the flume was not completed; the open pipe crossing the river had not been installed. So we had to ask for reimbursement which we duly got. The project officer had a bit of egg on his face. I learned a lesson; in projects, you have to trust but as President Reagan used to say, "Trust, but verify." I think that's a good motto for monitoring projects. You either go to a project to see it for yourself when it is completed, or you send somebody out there that you know will go and will report back credibly.

On a personal trip, I went to Bamian, to the lake region, even to the center of the Hazarajat to the Minaret of Jam. In those days in Afghanistan you could travel anywhere. You needed a four-wheel drive, extra gas and provisions because there were few gas stations and no hotels; at best you could have a rug to sleep on in a teahouse. In our case we had connections so we were able to use the floor and lay our sleeping bags at a meteorological station. It was wild. Another monitoring trip, out in the desert south of the Helmand Valley, we reached the Iran border to check out a bridge in a town called Nauros, and even got lost in the desert on the way back. Afghanistan was really one of the wildest countries I've served in.

Q: Was there any religious animosity building at that point?

CARNER: No. The Afghans were quite devout. At that point I don't think you could have called them fundamentalists. They certainly were not adverse to Americans. We knew a lot of the rug merchants and there was a street where foreigners used to go called Chicken Bazaar Street; there were little shops and you could buy nuts and fruit and handicrafts. It was a little less hectic than going into the real Afghan market, though my wife and Cathy Crandall went in there virtually every week unconcerned. They dressed appropriately, they wore hats and sleeves and were respectful. They never had any problem buying meat or vegetables.

After the communist government took over, we continued on Saturdays to go strolling the modern part of Kabul. After our ambassador was killed, merchants we knew would wave and say "Come on in! How about some tea?" They'd sit us down and serve tea and after the ritual of how's the family, what do you want to buy, then they'd say "Let's get down to business; when are you guys coming to get rid of these bastards?"

The Afghans have a saying – “Vengeance is sweet after 100 years.” Many of the Afghans had family in the ‘stans’ (i.e., Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, et al) when the Soviets took over. As a result their families were uprooted and in many cases killed. Their descendants still kept track of which grandfather the Soviets had done in. In fact, one of those merchants showed me a rifle he had inherited, a British musket from the Anglo-Afghan wars with notches on it. He proudly announced “This was my great-grand-dad’s; I inherited it and I want to put more notches on because he suffered at the hands of the Soviets.”

The Afghans at this juncture were totally anti-Soviet as being ungodly; here is where the religious aspect came in. To mobilize the insurrection, the imams and the mullahs issued a holy war edict against the Soviets. A lot of Soviet civilians were killed. I’m reminded of one case in Herat fairly early on before the Soviet build-up where a bunch of mujahidin went into a compound where a lot of Russian civilians were housed and butchered them. The Soviets were the target, and Americans were at this point seen as friendlies – and there were high expectations that we would help them in their fight against the Soviets..

Q: I don’t have other questions on Afghanistan; you’ve been thorough and we can add things in the editing process if you think of things you’d like to. Let’s move on to your transfer to the Philippines.

CARNER: I got to the Philippines in August 1979, three weeks before Tony Schwarzwald. I found a mission that was larger and more hierarchical than USAID Afghanistan where once we were down to 35 USDHs, we were a close-knit team, especially after all the events we had gone through, the change of government and the loss of the ambassador. There was no distance between the director and the program officer or anybody else. We were all part of a family by then, not just a team. So I get to the Philippines and the first thing I see is a very bureaucratic mission. Very hierarchical with division chiefs with lots of staff, lots of money, and lots of turf to protect, and junior staff that can’t get a word upwards without going through the senior staff. The senior staff was ranging from 40 to 60 in age in most cases, and here you have Tony Schwarzwald who has got to be one of the youngest directors, he must have been 43 by then while I was 38 by this time.

Moreover, the previous mission director had been pulled out – I won’t say why so as not to mar the history – and the program was in escrow pending preparation of a new assistance strategy that conformed with the new Foreign Assistance Act of 1973; which by then had become quite institutionalized in AID, and essentially promoted a basic human-needs approach to development. Apparently, the Philippines Mission hadn’t quite picked up on that; the Asia Bureau headed then by John (Jack) Sullivan as Assistant Administrator believed in the basic human needs approach and so did many of the officers reviewing assistance strategies and programs. The Philippines Mission had been told to go back and do it over and until you do, you won’t have access to program funds.

When Tony arrived, he had a memo from me on his desk saying, “This is what I’ve observed. You have a communications problem here, a stilted structure that doesn’t allow any lateral flow; it’s all hierarchical and filtered. I don’t know that you can expect to get

accurate feedback on what's really happening. And you have an entrenched senior staff that you can be sure wants to hold on to their perks and program resources. Plus, you have a group of younger staff that are full of ideas and that can be inspired to pursue the basic human needs approach. I think you have a lot to work with; you just need to assert your leadership and we need to use the strategy as a way of opening up communications through a process that's participatory so all the ideas can bubble up and you can get a process going that aligns with your own participatory management approach."

Tony thought that was really very helpful and proceeded to pick up on several of those ideas. His deputy director was a really down-to-earth, fun and extremely nice guy, Dennis Barrett, who later would be assigned as ambassador to Madagascar, and I would be his mission director. We established a good relationship in the Philippines.

Basically, I had no portfolio. My task was to produce an assistance strategy and manage the process of doing it. Tony said go to it – don't worry about anything, just focus on getting a good diagnostic of where the Philippines is right now, what that implies for a new strategy, and for our ongoing program and for new programs. Stu Callison was our economist and my colleague in the same suite of offices next to the Front Office who helped with the economic analyses. I asked Tony if I could recruit a social anthropologist because I wanted to get the social dimension into the strategy. I also wanted to tap the technical offices particularly the environmental officer, who was a very talented Filipino and who later went on to do a lot of good things for the environment in the Philippines.

I began by following the guidance that had been issued by PPC (Policy Planning and Coordination) in A.I.D. Washington: who are the poor, and why are they poor? This was pretty revolutionary. Up until then and certainly in the '60s and early 70's most A.I.D. projects had been about macroeconomics and building infrastructure and manpower skills through degree training. We didn't have a targeted focus. The 1973 Foreign Assistance Act changed that. It created a shift in paradigm, an important one, by focusing aid on addressing people's basic human needs, especially the poor. Since the incidence of poverty in the Philippines in those days was upwards of 40%, you had a really big poor population, about 28,000,000. By then, the Philippines had about 70,000,000 people in total.

So I set upon trying to find out who made up the poor and the dynamics behind their poverty. With Stu and Cho Roco, our social anthropologist, we began to pull together all the secondary research we could find – academic research, unpublished papers, articles and the like that would help us define Philippine poverty, to avoid having to do first-hand surveys, which clearly we didn't have time to do. For that I began to reach out to universities. I went to the University of the Philippines in Los Banos, where there was a well-respected social scientist, Gelia Castillo. She had written a lot about Philippine poverty. I talked to her about our strategy exercise, our interest in her research and asked for studies that could be useful; she was very cooperative. I went to the Central Philippines University. I wanted to talk to an economist, Mahar Mangahas, but the first couple of attempts he said "I don't want to talk to Americans, you guys are supporting

Marcos.” I left it at that. I then began talking to other researchers. I reached out to Peace Corps volunteers and asked them what was going on in the countryside.

This was very disparate research, and I said “How are we going to synthesize all this?” I came up with the answer thanks to the literature on household survival strategies. Today, household survival strategies are well institutionalized into poverty analysis but in those days it was fairly novel. I began using this framework to organize and synthesize our findings. specifically we looked at: What is the household unit, what are its members’ occupations, what are their assets, and how does this research help us explain their poverty? Pretty quickly it became apparent that the poor could be classified as landless agricultural workers, upland farmers (most lowland farmers on Luzon had already benefited from the Green Revolution program called Masagana 99), landless agricultural workers, coconut farmers, and artisanal fishermen. We then we began to profile these five groups to understand their livelihood dynamics. The analysis made for interesting reading; it was quite innovative. I shared it with some of the researchers I’d interviewed or gotten papers from. I even shared it with Mahar Mangahas, and he replied, “Come see me.”

So I went to see him and he said, “You are asking questions I didn’t expect from anybody associated with the U.S. embassy. This Marcos regime is exploiting all these poor people and you guys are supporting it.”

I said, “I don’t know about that but my mandate is to figure out who they are, why they are so poor, and what USAID can do to help them.” After that meeting he joined the informal outside group of Philippine academics who generously provided us feedback on the poverty analysis and eventually on the assistance strategy we came up with.

All of this vetting helped sharpen the analysis. Then we started our process in the mission by sharing that analysis, before talking strategy. Everybody was amazed (this took about nine months to pull together). It frankly shocked my colleagues at how severe and widespread poverty was.

Once people bought into the diagnostic, we began spinning out options papers about what we could do. It didn’t take long to figure out that, we needed to start directing our new programs toward the Visayas Islands of Leyte, Negros, and Panay where the poor groups were concentrated. (We had stayed mostly on Luzon Island where Manila is located). I had even suggested working in Mindanao, the southernmost big island, but there was already the beginning of insurrection there; it had always been a difficult region. So we decided to focus mainly on the Visayas while maintaining our ongoing regional development project in the Bicol, the poor area in southern Luzon

I need to give you some background here on an earlier A.I.D. supported program. The Philippines had been very successful for a decade in introducing Green Revolution technology with our support. It had gone from being a rice-deficit country to a rice-producing surplus country. It progressed from one shaky crop of rice a year to three reliable crops a year, thanks to irrigation, to high-quality seed and to tech pack packages

that included fertilizer and pesticide; along with a support structure of rural credit and rural infrastructure for storage of all of the grain that was all of a sudden being produced. The program was called Masagana 99; we had supported it from the outset. There was a charismatic minister of agriculture called Bong Tanco who led that effort for the entire decade. It brought about a rural transformation on Luzon. As a result, those farmers were better off than the upland farmers in the Visayas who were still largely subsistence farmers. So when our strategy shifted towards a poverty focus, one of the conclusions was we should declare Masagana 99 a success and recognize that the Masagana 99 model was not suited to the uplands, because it required too many inputs and irrigation. The uplands required different varieties of rice adapted to rain-fed and upland growing conditions. You also needed to worry about the environment and conserving the trees less they be slashed and burned to clear land for rice.

The other backdrop to our strategy shift was that the Filipinos had their own five-year planning process. Their current plan had been prepared with the help of Professor Gustav Ranis at Yale University who was one of the intellectual architects of the basic human needs approach. Our strategy wasn't done in a vacuum, it linked to this latest five year plan that put the emphasis on employment generation and basic human needs. Our strategy focused on employment generation for the poor in the upland, fishing, and plantation areas. That fit very well with Philippine Government priorities with whom we naturally shared our analyses and proposed strategy..

You have to understand that our poverty focused strategy was pretty revolutionary. Washington loved it; we came up with broad strategic directions: i.e. rainfed resources development, local resources development, health and family planning and said we'd be developing sector-wide programs to address the needs of the identified poor groups in the regions where they were concentrated. To reassure everybody we said we'd let the existing projects run their course and declare them a success. The staff accepted this tact fairly readily as it didn't immediately threaten their on-going activities. The process also enabled young officers to speak their minds and contribute their knowledge to the strategy.

All of this effort attracted the interest of the Ford Foundation. David Korten was affiliated with Ford as a freelance researcher doing research on economic and social development and some teaching at the local universities. He was a neighbor and his wife Fran, a professional in her own right whom I had met at the project implementation course, introduced us. He got really excited about this new approach to planning and in one of our conversations said, "This is people-centered development." I roped David in to being a resource person for the Mission on development to stimulate critical thinking among the staff. After our strategy exercise, he started writing about people-centered development and asked me if I would contribute to a book he was editing on that subject, and another book on reorienting bureaucracies. Our strategy preparation experience got documented and published in these books ; I can give you the references. [See "*Planning Frameworks for People Centered Development*" by David C. Korten and George Carner P. 201 and "*Survival, Interdependence, and Competition among the Philippine Rural Poor*" by George Carner P.133 in *People Centered Development: Contributions toward*

Theory and Planning Frameworks, Edited by David C. Korten and Rudi Klauss, Kumarian Press, West Hartford, CT. 1984. Also see “*Reorienting Bureaucracies to Serve People: Two Experiences from the Philippines*” by David. C. Korten and George Carner in Canadian Journal of Development Studies, Vol. V No. 1, 1984, Published by the Institute for Development and Co-operation, University of Ottawa Press.]

I was invited to the East-West Center in Honolulu for two weeks to talk up our research and planning approach and the dynamics of poverty in the Philippines. I even got invited to Harvard to talk up this experience as a faculty guest-speaker. The most memorable thing about that visit was being put up in John F. Kennedy’s freshman dorm room for the night. I’m saying all this to underscore how innovative USAID’s work was at the time.

Our approach was well received within ministries as well as within Philippine society. We gained a tremendous amount of credibility with everyday Filipinos, Filipino NGOs and think tanks -- people that were striving to improve conditions in the Philippines. As a result, I forged some of the most professional counterpart relations I had up to that time. This experience for me was really a professional coming-out; a tremendous growth experience. And I like to think we actually helped a number of communities get out of poverty.

Within eleven months or so, we had an approved strategy, a committed team to the new strategy who felt pride in what they were doing, and were inspired by Tony’s leadership and open management style. If there were a few recalcitrants, he made sure to move them on when their tours ended. By the end of the year, we had a stellar team in the Philippines. Many of the senior staff went on to occupy the senior most positions in the agency.

Let me just run through the names. Don Presley was our lawyer and ultimately became AID rep in Poland and served as acting Administrator when Andrew Natsios stepped down. Steven Sinding was our population and health officer, who later established himself as one of the real experts in the field of population and family planning in the agency. He headed up the Technical Resources Office in the Asia Bureau when he got back from the Philippines. He went on to direct the Agency’s Family Planning Office in S&T (Science and Technology Bureau) and served as mission director in Kenya. He went on to preside over Planned Parenthood International in London. George Laudato was our program officer; Laudato went on to be deputy Assistant Administrator for Asia and ultimately Assistant Administrator for PPC (Policy Planning and Coordination) before he retired.

Q: Was Mary Kilgore there?

CARNER: For sure. Mary Kilgore replaced Dennis Barrett as deputy director. I only overlapped with Mary for about a year. Let me continue naming staff. We had Jim Donnelly as our deputy EXO (Executive Officer). Jim Donnelly became the agency’s senior EXO. He served as the EXO in Cairo. He was really an outstanding Executive Officer. If you have the chance to interview anybody in that backstop I’m sure Jim’s

name will come up. He was already a terrific deputy EXO then. He was able to get so many things done and so nicely. He was a treat. Frank Young arrived as an IDI and then stepped up to become a very creative assistant program officer. He went on from there to distinguish himself in senior postings.

Who else did we have? There were a lot of other talented professionals – you would know them but they may not have gone on to senior management positions: George Flores and Don Wadley in the rural development office. Jerry Edwards heading up Agriculture. Bill McDonald was the chief of Capital Development. Monica Sinding and Tom Rishoi were among his capital development officers.

The Mission's program was quite large with lots of resources. The mission had two teams in effect. One team implemented a separate ESF (Economic Support Fund) program derived from the US military bases compensation package. ESF was the rent that we paid for maintaining an Air Force base, a Navy base, and several communications and commissary facilities. Clarke Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Base were the two biggest ones. Most of those bases have since been closed. Our military relations with the Philippines were a very significant part of our foreign policy. Given this, it is all the more surprising that our development assistance program could be pointed in such a poverty-oriented way. Or perhaps that's why it was welcome, to give the relationship a humanitarian dimension.

Basically, these projects focused more on improving infrastructure around the bases with poverty reduction a secondary aim. They were implemented with the Ministry of Human Settlements, which was run by Imelda Marcos as minister. To her credit, she surrounded herself with a bunch of young professionals interested in development who actually tried to use their money to help communities initially in and around the bases. With the ministry's Philippine budget money, they then took what they learned around the bases and extended the lessons well beyond. The project development staff worked very closely with her people on the ESF funded activities.

The second team, which included the majority of technical staff was responsible for designing and implementing the new programs in support of the new strategy as well as the ongoing development assistance (DA) funded projects, some of which fit nicely into the new strategy. In agriculture, you had Jerry Edwards and his staff working on our new rain-fed agriculture program; you had the office of rural development working on rural water and an innovative program called Local Resources Development. Then you had the health people working on primary health, again having shifted more to the uplands and the Visayas. In fact, the on-going Panay Health Services Project was one of our first efforts in the Visayas even before the new strategy became operational.

I want to highlight the Local Resources Development program which was particularly innovative. By way of follow on research we decided to do some regional poverty analyses to provide the socio-economic and environmental context for our new program activities. On the island of Negros was where all the sugar plantations operated. The only employment available was on the plantations cutting sugar. Clearly, it was a plantation

economy where you had a plantation store that gave credit to the laborers, and the laborers got into a debt cycle they could never break out of. They earned below minimum wage and lived in huts in very basic conditions around the plantations. We decided to go into these communities working with the local mayors and do a diagnostic to help them identify alternative employment opportunities so they could begin to create other demand for these laborers, and in doing so with these alternative activities create a labor market, so the plantation owners if they wanted people to cut their cane would have to start paying them the going wage. Our reasoning was: If the going wage is rising, the plight of these plantation workers will be improved. Also, with employment alternatives they won't be held hostage to the company store— because, they can earn money off season or quit the plantation all together .

The mayors were eager to give this approach a try. The laborers found other income-producing opportunities – raising pigs or ducks, a precursor to microenterprise activities. After an intensive project design effort led David and I, the project got approved. One of the first implementation steps was to set up a fund to support such activities. Although I left the Philippines before the project got fully underway, I read an evaluation a decade later concluding that it did succeed in improving conditions for sugar plantation workers. It showed that our innovative thinking wasn't just pie in the sky but could produce results.

Q: Did you have much contact with President Marcos or Imelda?

CARNER: No. As I say, our side was more with the technical ministries – the human settlements ministry with Imelda at its head was by far the more political ministry. It was the counterpart for the people working on the ESF package.

Q: How did USAID compare to other donors in size and program?

CARNER: We stood out. We were THE donor. I was trying to remember how much we were providing. I think we were doing about \$150,000,000 a year – and we're talking 1979-82; back then that was a big program. Of course, about \$100,000,000 was ESF compensation, only about \$50,000,000 was DA (development assistance).

Q: Sounds like an extraordinary time for you and the program. Did you find that the philosophy you developed there spread elsewhere within USAID?

CARNER: It did for a time. We were just getting rolling on figuring out how to do this new mandate from this 1973 Foreign Assistance Act amendment which was called “the new mandate.” It took us a good six or seven years to learn how to do poverty-oriented programming – not just to mouth it but to actually try to change our programming to target the poor. We were just getting going when the 1980 election took place, and in 1981 President Ronald Reagan was inaugurated. Then we shifted gears.

I think part of AID's history needs to reflect that our development performance would have been considerably enhanced had we had more continuity and been able to continue

those things that we pioneered through the transitions and changes in the political scene, in the presidency and administrations. As a technical agency, I would have thought we could have maintained a fairly even keel but that wasn't always the case, particularly in more political programs – and certainly the Philippines was a high-profile political program because of the military bases. You had to accept that there was a shift and with subsequent mission directors new strategies were done and a lot of that stuff was allowed to come to a close, sometimes abruptly, and new stuff was done.

The first thing Administrator McPherson did was to emphasize technical assistance, institutional development, privatization, and economic growth. Addressing the need of poor people was no longer the main focus. So in the '80s we moved away from rural development and agriculture to a considerable extent and went much more towards macroeconomics, economic reform, structural adjustment; which of course in the '80s was much more in vogue with the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank. The mantra was that all of these economies, especially the African ones, needed to get their macro-economy in balance and price signals right if poverty was going to be addressed. So we shifted from a targeted poverty focus, which ultimately entails a micro-economic focus on households and small businesses rather than a macro-focus. We maintained our emphases on primary health, primary education, to some extent reproductive health where it was possible. But family planning took a back seat to what we had seen in the '70s where there had been a big push in family planning, when you had Ravenholt heading up the Agency's Family Planning Office. So in the '80s things changed.

Q: One more question related to that and I had a question related to the Philippines. Family planning was not supported by the church for many years, and there were times when as I understand it that church influence was so strong that contraceptives were not allowed to be made available through government clinics. What was the situation when you were there?

CARNER: I wasn't directly involved, but we did have a family planning program, a fairly good-sized one. So I'm inclined to think the Philippine government was quite permissive on that score. You had to be careful with the sensitivities of the church. Filipinos were basically Catholic and believers. I think it was managed sensibly. We probably stayed away from abortion and stressed health issues. You also have to understand that in the Philippines you have faith healers; I think the church was more worried about faith healers competing with them. The faith healers – a lot of people swear they got cured by them. I don't recall the anti-family planning groups being so mobilized as I saw later on in countries like Nicaragua. But remember that Marcos controlled and curbed any opposition to his policies in what was an authoritarian regime.

Q: Your family adjusted well to the Philippines and enjoyed being there?

CARNER: Oh, yeah. We all had a great time. The boys grew up – we got there when they were four and six. We went snorkeling a lot on the smaller islands where the coral reefs are amazing. The Philippines is an absolutely beautiful place. The traffic and

pollution in Manila was a big issue. In the tropics you get a lot of rain and even typhoons. But aside from that, certainly compared to Kabul, we had a great school and lived right next door. The Filipinos are a lovely society, they are really warm, welcoming, and friendly. Filipino are real professionals – we worked with counterparts who’d studied at Stanford and Harvard, they went to some of the best schools in our country. The level of counterparts especially in Manila was really quite remarkable – and they were used to dealing with Americans. The ties between Americans and Filipinos have always been very close since the Spanish American war and especially since World War II.

Q: That leads to the inevitable question – why did you leave?

CARNER: You know, your question is insightful. I left because of a dilemma. I got a call from Washington from Jim Norris saying would I come back to be the India desk officer.

Q: Jim Norris was the director of the Asia bureau?

CARNER: He was the office director for India and Bangladesh. This was just before he was assigned to Moscow to be mission director. He said, “We have a vacancy on the India desk and want you to fill it. Moreover, personnel is insisting that you have to come back since you’ve now been out 12 years.”

You’ll recall, Personnel had already wanted to assign me to the Egypt desk. So I assumed they were still ticked off at Tony for having derailed that assignment. I was getting ready to go on home leave. Tony was on a personal trip to China, and I had to decide whether to accept that job and leave with home leave transfer orders, or whether to go on home leave/return to post orders. I worried that Tony would not be able to turn around the assignment this time because clearly I had been out a long time and they had just stiffened the policy on no more than two full tours (i.e. 4 years) out; I’d been out three.

So I said, “what do I do? Accept? Stay?” In the end I asked the family, “What do you want to do?”

My wife said, “I don’t want to go on home leave then come back here and have to pack out in the middle of the school year and then go to Washington and have to look for a house. I’d rather that we close out here before we go on home leave, go on home leave, get to Washington in the summer, look for a house, enroll the kids in school, and start a Washington assignment sensibly.”

I couldn’t argue with that. The boys had been born or lived overseas up to that time. They had gone to American schools overseas but hadn’t lived in America. So we both felt this would be their chance to go to school in America and understand their American heritage. So for all those reasons, I said, “Okay, write my orders for Washington.”

But I wasn’t enthusiastic. There was a lot of work that I still felt needed doing. Indeed, David Korten and Tony asked “why did you do this, there is still so much to do to

consolidate what we've started here." I said, "I was faced with this dilemma, and family came first."

Q: So George, you're moving back to Washington to the Asia bureau.

CARNER: Of course like so many things, one of the attractions of the job was working with Jim Norris, who I had been told was an excellent office director. I get back and he's been shipped off to Moscow! So that was the first disappointment. The second one was that the Bangladesh desk officer, Vikka Moldrem, had been appointed acting office director and continued as acting director throughout my tenure. She was my peer and we forged a good working relationship. but it wasn't the same as working for a seasoned office director. Under these circumstances, I started backstopping India.

Q: This is what year?

CARNER: This is 1982, I took up the job in August or September. Priscilla Boughton was mission director and Dick Brown was her deputy. About then, John Westley was the program officer. I had an assistant desk officer who was Civil Service, Jim Manley, who had been there a long time and really knew the India program very well. I began doing the normal thing. It wasn't particularly challenging, especially after the intense and rewarding experiences in the Philippines; this was Dullsville.

I guess the most interesting event was the chance to get to India after about nine months. I went in the spring; John Wesley asked if I'd help the program office write an irrigation strategy because we were doing a fair amount of irrigation in Maharashtra State. We were just doing projects and not looking at the whole sector and trying to understand how we fit into the broader sector development plan. Of course, in India irrigation had long been in the hands of the irrigation engineers who were the Brahmin. They knew everything, were properly trained and had a higher education. It turns out that these engineers weren't listening to the farmers on the ground and the local people. The engineers' attitude was "what could these people know, we know better." Of course, in something as sensitive as irrigation you need local knowledge – on where to put the canals, to understand where the water flows, etcetera. this local knowledge is critical to making sure the system functions beyond the primary canal system, which includes the big engineering works. The real challenge then is to get the water to the farmers' field, particularly the little farmers and not just the big agro-industrial plantations.

That was interesting and it gave me a chance to work on the institutional issues of irrigation in India, and I learned a lot. John Wesley had done his Ph.D. dissertation on the Green Revolution in the Punjab. John and I had become close in the Development Studies Program, so it was really fun to go out and work with him on that.

The assistant administrator now was Charles Greenleaf; the deputy was Rocky Staples. Larry Smucker was the head of DP (Development Planning office) and Larry Crandall was his deputy. You had characters like Bob Nachtrieb as the Philippine desk officer who was an absolute professional with the greatest sense of humor. When you put John

Wilkinson, his assistant, and Bob in the same room, you were in for a treat. They once put a jar in the outer office of the Assistant Administrator where people could put pennies to send Jack Sullivan to summer camp, and spoofs like that. Soon Nachtrieb left and went to Personnel. When I had come back to Washington to defend the Philippines strategy I had found that the Asia bureau was very open under Sullivan. Jack Sullivan had been very supportive and receptive. Greenleaf and Staples didn't bring the same dynamic to the bureau. It was more serious, more formal.

Perhaps the most interesting thing going on in the bureau was the "Asia Experiment," which was looking to develop sector programs to replace or at least complement freestanding projects and doing some innovative thinking on how to structure such programs. There were working groups on several topics that I signed up for. At the same time, the Bureau introduced the evaluation function which was new to USAID at that point. We had had a central evaluation unit but bureaus didn't have their own evaluation functions; evaluation was beginning to get more attention. Asia/DP established an evaluation unit and I joined the working group they set up as they were looking for volunteers. The Asia Experiment gave me a lot of intellectual challenge. I felt I was contributing beyond just being the gofer for the India mission, while not neglecting my duties.

India did require a lot of backstopping between helping the mission recruit staff, resolving issues and general program support. I was on the telephone with Priscilla sometimes Dick Brown twice a week. Priscilla had been the office director before going to India and knew what Washington could do for her. She always had a long list of to-dos, and I would take care of them. That was my priority. I was coming into the office at 8:30 and leaving at 4:30, as I had carpool to catch. It was a much easier job than what I was used to in the Philippines.

Then a really interesting assignment came up. India had a big Public Law (PL) 480 Title I program. That program was providing vegetable oil (vegoil) as part of a very ambitious effort to create small oil producer cooperatives. The program was directed by an Indian agricultural engineer by the name of Anan Kurien. He had broken the dairy monopoly 10 years back with the help of imports of dry milk powder, and now was using PL-480 vegoil to prime the market through his cooperative structure, while he helped local farmers improve production and create a production and distribution chain to compete with the vegetable oil monopolists. The approach was modeled after his dairy production success. He had pioneered a scheme that was absolutely genius. One of his roving staffers would stop and buy half a liter of milk from a farmer at noon and then come back and pay that farmer at 6:00pm for the half liter he had picked up at noon and pick up another half-liter. This scheme meant the farmers got income right away. The farmers were able to meet the demand because they only had one or two cows and a half liter was within their capacity. Pretty soon thanks to this, he was enabling producers to fill the very high demand for dairy products in India. He used dairy powder to prime his own market in competition with the monopolists until he had enough of these small-scale producers to fill the demand. Vegetable oil was a bit more complicated but he applied a similar approach

This was a very innovative use of Title I. Our Food for Peace folks found it hard to justify because there was no food and it was too economy oriented, it wasn't targeted, so they already had problems with Title I generally and this particular manifestation of it; as you couldn't eat vegetable oil and its commercialization did not neatly fit our PL 480 food policy. We had begun the debate over monetization versus direct feeding. At any rate, Kurien was one of these inspired leaders who didn't worry too much about keeping accurate books. So when he got audited, the audit recommendations stayed open for months because he was too busy to pay attention to them. The mission was being badgered by the auditors something awful because these recommendations kept going unclosed. So finally it fell to me, working with Julia Chang-Bloch and the Food for Peace people to figure out how we were going to help Kurien close these recommendations. It had to do with outstanding bills; there weren't enough invoices to justify some of the expenses.

Kurien even came to Washington once. As India desk officer I played a go-between and tried to understand Kurien's point of view and help him understand the auditor's point of view. On one of my trips to India I went to Gujarat to meet with him and figure out how to find a solution. I forget how we managed to find a way forward, I think I worked with his accountant to come up with a paper trail of receipts that justified some of the expenditures and he did three or four things more. I helped them write a report to the auditors on the actions taken. All told, the auditors said they were willing to close the recommendations. Julia Chang-Bloch met with them and with Priscilla and then we closed the audit. Kurien was given a clean bill of goods.

I learned a lesson that you have to keep the auditors happy! You don't want those headaches. Learning to work with the auditors was another important lesson. I think it's an important function in our agency, to have professionally done audits actually focused on helping management do a better job. Sometimes audits can seem simply critical but I think if used as their intended they can be an effective management tool. I've had very professional experiences with the audit teams I've had to deal with in various contexts, usually over project issues. When the Inspector General gets involved in an issue that's a lot more complicated.

Owen Cylke replaced Priscilla after she got sick and had to be medically evacuated. Sadly she passed away not long after. Owen very much wanted me to be his program officer. We were living in Reston and the family was so happy with the boys' schooling. Plus my wife was going to community college. When I approached the family they said, "No way, we've only been back a year and a half, we're not going back out again. We're settled in a house, going to school. No way!"

It took me about six months to convince Michele that India would be a wonderful experience, while Owen kept leaning on me. By then there were about 20 bidders on the program officer job. Charley Greenleaf said, "You're such a latecomer, plus you have an inside track with Owen, since you're the desk officer. If I allow you to bid at this stage, I'm going to have Personnel and the unions all over me." Assignments were getting more

formal, the old-boy network was beginning to disappear, there was a lot more scrutiny. Charley didn't want to face the opposition. So in the end despite my having convinced Michele and having told Owen I was willing to go to India, I had to give it up. Not having the support of the AA (assistant administrator) made the assignment impossible. Instead Chris Crowley got the job.

Leading up to that point, I told Charley, "I can't continue to be a desk officer; this is not challenging enough for me. Either I go to India, or I look for something elsewhere, and I've got an offer from the Africa bureau."

He said, "We'll try to find you something else in the bureau."

The offer from the Africa bureau was to join DP. Hariadene Johnson was restructuring DP. Africa/DP had long been mostly a budget shop and she wanted to build it into a strategy and economics powerhouse. As part of the restructuring she had hired Larry Sayers to be her deputy on the policy and strategy side and Jerry Wolgin to be the bureau's economist. She wanted me to be the bureau's strategist/planner heading the policy, planning, and evaluation section under Larry Sayers.

I thought that was right up my alley. So I told Charley and Rocky, "This is what's out there. You guys come through for me for India, and I won't take that. Otherwise, I'm going to the Africa bureau."

They didn't come through for India. In one last attempt to keep me, Rocky came to me and said, "We're trying to recruit for this Afghan cross-border program in Peshawar, would you like to do that?"

I said, "That doesn't fit anything that I've ever done! I probably could handle the programmatic side but I have no experience on the clandestine side, working with other agencies. I'm a basic human needs guy, what am I going to do out there playing politics? You've got somebody right here who is perfectly suited for that role, and that's Larry Crandall." He said, "I already asked Larry's, his first answer was no. He is going to the senior seminar and doesn't want to give that up. "

So Rocky was going down the list. Finally Larry Crandall did accept that assignment. The pressure was enormous so he didn't have much choice – "You will go." He did a superb job out in Peshawar for five years. I believe you have already interviewed him.

I wound up going to the Africa bureau. So the next chapter in this will be in the Africa bureau but I wanted to finish with one more thing. Before I left, Peter McPherson asked me if I would help develop the justification, description, and memo for the Indo-U.S. Scientific Foundation. This was an idea that Owen Cylke had had and he was developing it. I'd been out to the mission helping develop a new assistance strategy for about a month and he had broached this idea with me. We had a lot of local currency from the PL-480 work in India and one way to sop up all those local rupees was to endow a local foundation. The idea that he came up was this Indo-U.S. Scientific Foundation to do

research in areas where India and the United States could complement each other. One example that comes to mind was leprosy. Because of leprosy in Hawaii, the NIH (National Institutes of Health) was doing research on leprosy, but the number of cases of leprosy was very slim in the United States, not enough to permit extensive research, whereas in India there were a lot of lepers at the time. So it was a natural to team up and do joint research on leprosy. That's how the Indo-U.S. Scientific Foundation got going. Our scientists teamed up with Indian scientists on research grants. It was a precursor of things to come. When Portugal graduated from our aid program, we set up the Lusitano-U.S. foundation and something similar in Thailand later.

So I went to Africa Bureau having made one last contribution to the Asia bureau. (end recording.)

Q: This is John Pielemeier on the 11th of June with George Carner, our third interview. We'll be talking today about George's initial tour in the Africa bureau; he's in Washington and moved from the India desk to the Africa bureau. George I'll let you take it from there.

CARNER: This was not my first time in the Africa bureau; when I was assigned to Morocco, it was part of the Africa bureau. So this was a bit of a coming-home, but this was my first experience with Africa bureau in Washington. The other thing that made the assignment interesting as I began to explain earlier was that Hariadene Johnson, the director of DP, was reforming DP to become much more than simply the budget shop. She concluded that DP needed a policy, a strategy, and an evaluation arm to respond to the Africa bureau's challenges due to the expanding number of programs and greater policy interests. By then the Africa bureau had something like 35 or 36 posts of which the majority were full-fledged missions. In terms of the number of countries to backstop, Africa bureau had the largest number, even more than Latin America.

Ed Donahue was the head of the budget side of DP and had been there for a long time; his deputy was Jim Govan, who succeeded him. Both were seasoned civil servants. Donahue retired while I was there and Jim became the division chief. The budget division had quite a number of officers working on budget issues. Hariadene had recruited Larry Sayers whom I first met as our economist in Kabul. He was the deputy office director for policy and strategy. In turn, he recruited Jerry Wolgin to the economic policy division chief, and I was recruited to head up the policy planning and evaluation division (PPE). All of these were new sections of DP. Wolgin had to recruit economists. He took advantage of IDIs to schedule their first assignments in DP and recruited others. I had to recruit a person to help me with the strategy side and I selected Colette Cowey. I also recruited Patrick Fleuret to help review the strategies from a social perspective. Cindy Clapp-Wincek, who was just starting off in her evaluation career, rounded out the staff. The four of us along with a secretary ran that little division, reviewing strategies, setting up an evaluation program, and handling donor coordination, which I took on.

When I got to the bureau, there were about 30-odd mission strategies in limbo, that hadn't been approved. PPC had recently created new guidance for preparing assistance

strategies. I did some checking as to why there were so many strategies pending approval and I couldn't get a clear answer. I began to look at them and at some of the minutes of the review meetings and I quickly realized the bureau didn't have explicit criteria for reviewing strategies. Essentially, everybody was reviewing a strategy from their particular technical perspective and interest or from the perspective of where they sat in the bureaucracy. In fact, those that didn't have an ax to grind focused on how well written or how complete the strategy was in terms of following the guidance. Its overall coherence and feasibility didn't seem to be the main focus. With that kind of dynamic it wasn't surprising the reviewers couldn't agree on anything that was worth approving. They were all pulling in different directions.

The first thing I set out to do with Colette and Pat was to lay out an explicit set of criteria for reviewing pending and incoming strategies from the field. There was guidance from PPC, but there really wasn't a procedure for reviewing strategies. So I drafted a memo and sent it to Larry and Hariadene who sent it up to the AA's office. It argued for setting up formal transparent procedures so the missions would know what to expect by way of review. Obviously, the essential part of the criteria was: does this strategy respond to agency and Africa bureau priorities; does it fit the development needs of the country as described in the analytical section; does it fit within the budget parameters; does it have a reasonable chance of succeeding; does it respond to the host government's own plans and priorities; and does it fit within a donor context? Those criteria were adopted by the bureau; everybody felt at last comfortable because they said now they knew what to review. Then we picked up all the pending strategies and reviewed them one-by-one against those criteria. Within six or eight months, all but three strategies had been approved; the three that hadn't didn't fit well enough into those criteria. We told them to go back and revise their proposed strategy and offered, if needed, to send somebody from Washington to help put a strategy together. The whole thing was about enabling missions to have a mandate and to be able to pursue an approved strategy.

This new review approach became very popular among the office directors because it stopped all the second-guessing by technical staff and even by DP and PPC. (PPC in those days sat in the strategy reviews when the mission representatives came in to defend their strategies.) It really lightened the load bureaucratically for everybody. Having prepared the issues papers and participated in all the reviews, my staff and I became the most knowledgeable about the missions' programs..

As a result the front office started asking me to write speeches about what the Africa bureau was doing and what we were trying to accomplish. The strategy material was the grist for that mill along with evaluation findings we generated in due course. The assistant administrator was Mark Edelman and the deputy administrator was Ray Love. So depending on where Mark would have to speak, I would prepare talking points or full speeches. The heady thing was to find out that some point that I had put into a speech resulted in the front office adopting it as bureau policy. That shows you that he who shapes the agenda and the administrator's talking points in the end has a lot of influence.

Once we brought the evaluation function on-stream we then had some results to show of what we were accomplishing. That was really important.

It's worth mentioning what Jerry Wolgin was doing in parallel, which was putting the focus on economic policy reform. Here we're talking 1984, so the Reagan administration has already greatly influenced the direction of foreign assistance along with Peter McPherson as our administrator. Of course, with a macro-economic outlook on the world and on development as we mentioned before – in contrast to the '70s focus on basic human needs, which was more oriented toward a micro-economics, the household and the community.

This outlook takes you to a national policy orientation. This is of course the time of the Washington Consensus where structural adjustment is the going philosophy of what countries need to do. They need to get their policies right and then everything else will follow including poverty reduction. The NGO community wasn't yet mobilized (as it became later) against structural adjustment and “trickle down” economic growth policies. The World Bank's policy conditionality backed up with the IMF was influencing African governments to pare back their parastatal apparatus, which was very inefficient and in many cases corrupt; to really reduce the size of public sector; to reduce the subsidies going to urban consumers; and in general to adopt open, free-market policies including discontinuing import-substitution policies and begin increasing industrial and agribusiness production with a view to increasing non-traditional exports,.

All of this had some good economic grounding but in hindsight this really didn't take account of the impacts that these policies were going to have, first and foremost on the emerging middle class, because much of the middle class held government jobs. They worked in parastatals and ministries. So when you began to reduce and reform the civil service and the parastatals, a lot of these public servants were out of a job and without a pension or other income to fall back on. They were not only the emerging middle class but the consuming class as well; so you began to get a really strong economic contraction. And what the World Bank and IMF and ourselves didn't pay enough attention to was the political blowback. The International Financial Organizations (IFIs) worked mainly with technocratic finance ministries because this stuff was very technical and grounded in economics. You had some stellar finance ministers in African governments that were the interlocutors with the donor community and the World Bank and IMF who often had reps in situ. The presidents of the countries gave them a free hand until popular discontent force them to roll back many of the reforms in later years.

Q: George let me interrupt – were you taking a model from any other bureau at that point?

CARNER: Wolgin led this effort as he was very familiar with the World Bank's structural adjustment lending and its policy prescriptions. He did a significant paper on policy reform in Africa. (Jerry ultimately went on for a distinguished career at the World Bank as one of its experts on African economic reforms.) Jerry, thus, became our in-house expert on economic policy reforms and impacts, along with his staff of economists.

The economists constituted such a small pool in the agency that most of those being assigned to Africa would rotate through Wolgin's shop before going out to the field thus forming a close knit network that worked very well. They held a common set of views on how African countries could reform their economic policies which coincided with the IFIs.

Perhaps the most significant initiative we came up with was the Development Fund for Africa (DFA). Larry Sayers, under Ray Love's instigating, with Hariadene's support and Wolgin's and my shop's input crafted this policy reform based program to focus attention on the continent's needs. Congress approved the establishment of the DFA on the basis that we were going all out to help Africans get their policies right so their economies could start to grow. The DFA provided the sub-Saharan Africa region, for the first time, a big, set amount of funding for an ambitious, coherent development initiative. The belief was that if Africa could grow at four or five percent a year, then many of its problems would be solved. In those years, it was growing at about two percent or less in most countries, while population was growing at 2.5 or three percent. So the demographics and economic growth were out of sync. A very important part of the argument for the DFA and its sizeable resources was that it would bring about the needed economic policy reforms. Of course, that basically meant supporting or at least complementing the World Bank and IMF's structural adjustment loans. Most missions didn't take the World Bank's policy matrix for their countries lock, stock, and barrel. They looked at it and were selective in supporting policies that complemented what USAIDs were trying to achieve in their broader assistance strategies. Hence, USAIDs stayed away from the really heavy macro-economic stuff on taxes and things like that. Instead missions focused on sectoral policies and institutional reforms. We were much more developmental in our approach to policy reforms than sometimes the Bank was, particularly when the IMF was advising on the policy framework which tended to emphasize budget equilibrium and financial stability.

After two challenging and very satisfying years, Mark Edelman one day asked me if I wanted to go out to the field as a Mission director. I was offered a small mission in Africa to learn the trade. I told Mark Edelman, "I'm not ready to run a mission; I haven't worked in the front office, I've always worked in the program office. I'd like to be a deputy alongside a real professional mission director." He replied, "Well, we need somebody in Dakar which is directed by Sarah Jane Littlefield, would you like to go there?" I said, "Sure." Michele was game for that. So that's how we wound up going to Dakar. Sara Jane Littlefield was a seasoned director with a successful career and the reputation of being an "iron lady." But that suited me fine; I wanted to learn from an old hand. Senegal was her last mission as director. I enjoyed working with her and learned a lot from her. Sarah Jane was very smart. She was quick to make up her mind. She was very logical in her decision-making, and very practical. You never left her office wondering "what did she want me to do?" Never any doubt. And she didn't suffer fools lightly.

I arrived in Senegal in the summer of '86. I must have been in Dakar all of six weeks when Sarah Jane got a call from the minister of agriculture, Famara Sana. He said we

have a big problem; we have a locust infestation that is beginning to explode which is devouring farmers' fields and everything in sight. Sarah Jane agreed to look into it. We had a really top-notch agriculturist staff. We had a couple of Vietnamese local hires, one in particular – Koi Lee, who were very dedicated and knew the countryside and the farmers. Sarah Jane dispatched them to see what was going on. They spent three days roaming around the peanut basin, came back, and confirmed that there were baby locusts marching all over the area in big swaths, crossing the roads and fields, and even farmers' houses. Sarah Jane got the program office to prepare a disaster declaration and give the ambassador the first \$25,000 walking-around money to do some quick effort to fumigate until we could assess what else could be done. That small amount of money was enough to signal that we took the locust threat seriously. Shortly thereafter we brought out a team from OFDA (Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance) of entomologists (otherwise known as bug specialists) and disaster response experts. These scientists – we had three or four of them – went into the field and took samples. One of them knew a lot about locusts and their morphology. They looked at the results and saw how serious the infestation was. The OFDA team then came up with a response plan. Their proposed plan was to have four DC-7s (airplanes) do blanket spraying over the infested areas in swaths of 77,000 hectare. Sarah Jane and the ambassador reviewed it and the ministry of agriculture, who was thrilled, approved it.

Within three weeks, OFDA had contracted a company out of Phoenix, Arizona that had a lot of experience spraying forest fires to come out to Senegal and begin spraying operations. They'd never sprayed for locusts before, so this was a novelty. We had four of these planes with a crew of four – a pilot, a co-pilot, a navigator and a mechanic. A mechanic was the vice-president of the company and the president of the company came, too. I assume this was a big contract for them. They started operations. This was an enormous operation by Senegal standards; this was aerial spraying on a large scale. They would fly high to get to the site then drop down to 150 feet, which was pretty impressive to see – a four-engine DC-7 with booms spraying Malathion over farmers' fields at that altitude. Malathion is what is used to spray cargo shipments of wheat; it's safe for human consumption. But it's still a pesticide and has noxious effects particularly on bees. So much so that we were very careful in using Malathion in the Casamance, which is much more tropical. We didn't want to affect the bees.

By way of background let me say a word about locust patterns. Locusts rise on a cyclical basis, usually every decade or so. They come with the rains. During the dry periods (and in the Sahel, you have seven years of drought then two years of rain, then another long spell of drought). During the droughts, locust eggs lay dormant in the ground. With the rain, they hatch and you have all these larvae crawling around eating everything in sight. When they become mature they fly in swarms, eat even more, and lay more eggs, and the cycle repeats.

Sarah Jane was clearly in command but she began to delegate things to me, which immersed me in this operation 24 hours a day.

We faced three important management challenge. The first challenge was keeping the ambassador abreast and comfortable with what we were doing. Our ambassador, Lannon Walker, a very charismatic fellow who spoke Wolof as well as French and had a lot of contacts not just in government but in society, including the Muslim brotherhoods led by imams who were the religious figures in Senegal. These imams had disciples and ran the mosques. They had a strong influence and even control in many rural areas, especially in the Peanut basin. Their religious capital was Touba. The ambassador was concerned that these planes not fly over Touba and start dropping pesticide on the imams and their religious sites. He made his concerns known in one of the early planning meetings in Sarah Jane's living room. Sarah Jane could be very short when she thought things were tangential; she was quick to dismiss his concerns and get on with planning the operations, saying "Yeah, yeah, we'll take care of it. Well, the ambassador saw he was being buzzed off (he was a smart guy too and had a healthy ego as many ambassadors are wont to have) – and so he stood up and stomped out of the planning meeting. I said to myself this is ridiculous and raced out after him. In Sarah Jane's yard I said to him, "Ambassador, I heard you loud and clear. Please rest assured we will put Touba off-limits, and we will keep you up to date. Please, don't worry. We need your support."

He looked at me and said, "Okay George, if you assure me like that you've got me on your side." (Laughter)

I went back in and didn't say anything to Sarah Jane.

Q: What a good diplomat you are!

CARNER: Well, that was one of my first experiences in dealing directly with a relationship issue between a mission director and an ambassador. It was a lesson well-learned that served me later on. Clearly, one of the real challenges of a mission director is gaining the trust and confidence of one's ambassador and forming a partnership. Not a subordinate role, but a partner that allows the mission director to play a leadership role in the development arena, and allows the ambassador to exercise his or her leadership and control of the overall relationship with the host country. A strong partnership between a director and an ambassador can advance U.S. foreign policy and our development objectives; that's key.

After that meeting, Sarah Jane said, "From now on, you deal with him on locusts." So on the whole locust disaster response it fell to me to brief the ambassador on what we were doing. The next day I went out to Yoff airport where our team had set up a command center with the Senegalese military. The planes were dispatched every day based on maps with the coordinates for spraying. The team included entomologists who helped identify the priority areas. The planes only had enough spray to go once or maybe twice over the same area and then come home. As I said earlier, they laid down swaths over 77,000 ha. a day. I took a big red marker and put a big red circle around Touba on the map and said, "You guys, avoid Touba. If you get anywhere near it, turn off your booms and this way we will keep good relations with our ambassador, and that's in your

interest as well as ours.” To their credit, there was never an incident of any misdirected pesticide.

The second challenge we had was the French who were really upset at being upstaged by the Americans. The French had a specialize center in Montpellier that only worried about locusts. They knew everything there was to know not only about Senegalese locusts but about migratory desert locusts in the Sahel as well. So these folks were upset that the Senegalese government had not called on them. After all, the French were the big players in Senegal; the Americans were upstarts that had gotten there long after the colony. So the French were put out by the fact that the Senegalese had turned to us. They also took issue with our spraying on a large scale with these big airplanes, forewarning of an environmental disaster. They had a point because we hadn't had time to do any serious environmental assessment – in later years, that would have probably been *de rigueur*, we would have had to do one before we launched such an operation. But we had chosen the pesticide with care. We broadcast a radio campaign a day before to inform farmers in the areas where we were going to spray, telling them to cover food and water supplies and stay indoors on that day. So we took precautions. I think in the end what the French were most upset about was that we were using American-made Malathion; in the past they had been using French-made pesticides. There was a lot of profit in pesticides for the donor country's suppliers. The result was that the French began to badmouth our operations and say it wouldn't work, sneering that we were taking a typical American cowboy approach to things.

Of course, it didn't take long for operations on this scale to catch the attention of the media. The fact that I spoke French meant that pretty soon I became the spokesman for the operation answering local and international media questions. I was getting phone calls from French TV and radio in the middle of the night after having worked all day on the operations; they were concerned: “we hear you've mounted this environmentally damaging locust spraying operation.” So I was able to correct the record in French. It really made a difference that I could speak French. We worked closely with USIS (United States Information Service). USIS said “You've become the expert on the locust operation and you speak French; you've got a free hand and we'll just channel interview requests to you.” My wife and kids hardly saw me for three months because of the demands of this operation. We were still in temporary quarters and had even set up house. So it was hard the family.

The third challenge was every donor active in Senegal wanted to do something. This was the emergency of the day. The French wanted to do things on the donor level, leaving aside the politics of it. Pretty soon it fell to the U.S. to lead the donor coordination group. Sarah Jane thought donor coordination was too time consuming to be bothered with for the returns one got from it. Having been responsible for donor coordination in Africa/DP I was much more positive about it, so it fell to me to handle all the donor coordination. We were meeting as a donor community every two or three days for two hours at a time, each describing what they were prepared to provide, what aid was on its way, and then discussing how best to coordinate and complement each other, et cetera. Fortunately, the Canadians were mobilized and very active because they had a long relationship with

Senegal as a Francophone country. They had a fully staffed Canadian CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) mission. The director, Carol Voyer, a Quebecois, was very clear-headed and practical. We had a very good relationship and quickly found common ground. Because of the unique agro-climatic conditions in the Casamance and the risk to the bees, the Canadians argued, “You guys can’t deal with the Casamance with these big planes; let us bring in some small crop dusters and we’ll do targeted spraying in the Casamance. Just let us use your pesticides.” We were bringing in barrels and barrels of Malathion, being flown from the U.S. through an OFDA contract. So the Canadians provided four small planes and effectively addressed the locust threat in the Casamance

The other problem we had with the donors was that some of them, particularly the European Commission (EC), the French and the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) were fielding entomologists of their own. It turned out that their soil scientists and entomologists had different taxonomies for describing different aspects of the evolution of locusts. So the biggest problem wasn’t coordinating the donor heads or donor representatives around the table, but dealing with technical conflicts when you had entomologists from one donor and ours going out together and not agreeing on what they were seeing or at least using differing terminology to describe it. Of course with the French being so touchy about this whole operation, their entomologists were automatically coming to different conclusions than ours about the gravity of the situation and the appropriate response.

Q: Our entomologists didn’t speak a word of French either, probably.

CARNER: No, they didn’t speak any French and that was another problem. I found myself often having to interpret. It was a real learning experience.

The plane crews did a superb job for about five weeks going out on daily sorties. They were very well liked by the farmers. After about a couple of weeks of runs, when the planes flew over at low altitude the farmers would wave at them because the Malathion not only killed the locusts, it killed the mosquitoes and every other crawling bug; so they were delighted. It was killing the malaria carrying mosquitoes, as well, which was a major health problem in Senegal.

I went up in one of those planes to see what we were doing first-hand so I could talk about it in interviews and with the donors. I can tell you, one of those big planes flying at 150 feet above the scrublands was thrilling – you can see the farmers smile! You’re flying with these open doors so you can look out and see the trail of the spray. It was an exciting operation.

And then tragedy struck. One morning the four planes were going out to spray at dawn, probably in late September. The weather was calm and clear. Maybe a bit of smoke from the household fires. The sea was calm too so you could hardly see where land ended and the sea started. One of the four planes on takeoff developed a fire in one of its engines, and the crew got so taken up with trying to put the fire out (feather it), that they thought they were higher than they were. In fact they hadn’t gained enough altitude, they’d got

behind the power curve. They tried to lighten the plane by releasing some of the pesticide, but it was enough. The plane just plopped down on the ocean, not far from the airport. The heavy plane sank to the bottom quickly. Two local fisherman dove down, went into the plane, checked on the pilot and co-pilot who were dead and saw that the engineer (the vice president of the company) was still alive; they pulled him out, brought him up to the surface, resuscitated him, and he lived to tell the tale, after a short stay in the hospital.

Of course, this put a pall on the whole operation. Around that time, Sarah Jane got really ill and had to be evacuated to the States, starting to fight the cancer that would ultimately take her away.

So it fell to me to coordinate the aftermath with the embassy – thank goodness for the embassy’s help; the ambassador said “You have to help the AID mission, get out there and do whatever is needed”. Coordinating with the embassy, we issued press releases,, we contacted the company in Arizona and the family – I called people directly. We held a local funeral service. We made repatriation arrangements for the deceased. I went out to the airport to console the other crews. It was a big tragedy for everybody. These guys had worked together on forest fires out West for years and now were in a foreign setting, all the more tightly knit, when the tragedy occurred.

When we had taken care of all these arrangements, we put together a thank-you ceremony for the two heroic fishermen who saved the engineer; the engineer, the ambassador and I were there (Sarah Jane had been medevaced). We gave the two fishermen two big brand-new outboard motors which made them very happy; I think we gave them some money as well. And speeches thanking them in front of their neighbors. The local press covered the event.

The company went on to do two more seasons of spraying in Senegal. They spent six months of down time until the locusts started hatching, then they would start operations again.

This company was ill-fated. After Senegal, there was a major desert locust infestation in Morocco, Algeria, the southern parts of Tunisia and into Sudan. These were desert locusts; when they mature, they migrate. And these hordes, as described in the Bible, just decimate all the crops in their path. We had pretty much zapped all the Senegalese locusts (which are not migratory) and they were no longer a threat in Senegal, so Morocco asked if the three remaining planes could open up operations in Morocco to spray desert locusts which were already hatching. They wanted to stop their maturing in Morocco before they flew east. So the crews wrapped up their operations with us and left. They were flying at low altitude over the disputed Western Sahara when a band of Polisario fighters saw this plane and decided to shoot at it with their rifles. As fate would have it, they shot one of them down. (The Polisario were fighting for independence from Morocco.) So a second plane and crew was lost in the service of USAID locust operations. Talk about a sad, sad experience for a contractor going overseas. I heard that news when I was in Tunisia.

The other most interesting assignment I had in Dakar was engaging in the policy dialogue on economic reforms. We had an ESF program of around \$15,000,000 a year to play in the policy game. Jerry Wolgin's shop was the one that reviewed our policy packages for our ESF cash transfers and gave advice to us, as well as other missions. As a high-profile mission with ESF allocations for structural adjustment we had a resident economist. In Dakar, we had worked out a deal with the embassy where we shared the economist (an economist, not an economic officer), and that economist both helped the embassy with economic analysis and reporting and the USAID mission where he was located. He was on-call to the program office and front office to be able to advise on the whole range of economic issues. This came about because USAID did not have a USDH economist and, while there had been embassy economic officers, they were not fully versed in structural adjustment lending. So well before my time, USAID had hired a contract economist who did very well. The embassy got wind of it and said, "Hey, this is terrific, can we use that economist, too?" So there developed a pattern of a shared economist and shared expenses. The USDH counted as half-a-head on each's staffing pattern.

The Senegalese finance minister was Mamadou Toure who later went on to be the IMF's vice president for Africa. He was a very capable minister, very honest. Every quarter he would call to a meeting the donors who were contributing to the budget in support of economic reforms through cash transfers. These included USAID, the EC (European Community), the French Caisse Centrale, the World Bank and the IMF. We would sit in the minister's office and he would ask, "How are we doing on meeting the policy conditions we agreed to? Am I going to get my quarterly disbursement to meet my budget needs?"

We would reply "you're doing well on these three, but these two haven't moved." One reform would often be related to the grains parastatal. He would pick up the telephone and call the minister of agriculture under whose tutelage this parastatal was, or the parastatal director directly, and say, "You guys are holding up my disbursement for this quarter. Why haven't you moved on this policy reform?" They would have to scramble to make progress, as he did not accept excuses!

This degree of donor policy influence was often overlooked. People on the Hill and later in the front office at A.I.D. like Brian Atwood and his own deputy Carol Lancaster could never understand cash-transfers. They felt this was just budget support and since budgets were fungible we didn't get anything from it, that it was all hocus-pocus. But the fact is – as I discovered later in Madagascar where we had an environmental policy reform program supported through cash transfers – that dealing with a finance minister who is at the top of the hierarchy in a president's cabinet gives you an influence that you wouldn't have. An environmental minister usually has no clout in a cabinet, while the finance minister does. If you're trying to introduce logging fees, the environmental minister isn't going to get legislation or a government decree past the opposition. But if the finance ministry is expecting a payment because of that policy reform, then you are going to get real leverage to introduce or increase logging fees. It was an interesting experience to see a structural adjustment at work in that setting.

In Senegal we were also engaged in agriculture research, irrigated farming, primary education, and primary health. So we had a regular development assistance portfolio in addition to this ESF portfolio. And then we had a PL-480 program Title I program which for years had generated a lot of local currency, and that local currency was also being programmed to reinforce policy reforms; we were using local currency to help the parastatals carry out the policy reforms in ways to mitigate the negative impacts. For example, if fertilizer policy subsidies were being reduced we looked for ways to strengthen the commercial distribution of fertilizer to include extension services.

There was a French-seconded administrator right in the Senegalese president's office that ran the local currency committee that programmed all those resources. The French and the EC also sat at that table because they had quite a bit of local currency as well. Senegal was quite a learning experience for me in terms of this macro-economic structural adjustment approach.

I only stayed two years, from '86 to '88 in Senegal. It was a very eventful two years and in the end I would up being acting director for a year and some months. Not continuously; Sarah Jane did come back after her medevac and was recovering but she was slowing down and relied a lot on me. I felt honored she was doing that. I only learned later how seriously ill she was. She would not go into that with staff; she was very private in her personal side. We had some stellar officers on the staff like Terry Myers, who was head of the Capital Development office, and Bill Hammink, his deputy. Harold Lubell was the program officer and Wayne Nilsestuen was the Agricultural officer.

I guess it was the locust operations that gave me the high visibility and recognition that ultimately led to my being offered a mission of my own. I got a call from what then was Europe/Near East Bureau (ENE) to which Tunisia and Morocco belonged; Carol Adelman was the assistant administrator. ENE was starting to work behind the Iron Curtain after the Eastern European countries opened up. The Berlin Wall fell in '89. I got this call from the Office Director, Dave Merrill. he said, "We're looking for someone to take over the AID directorship in Tunisia; would you be interested?"

I asked, "What are you asking me to do? Close it for good?" A.I.D. had been trying to graduate Tunisia forever. They said not on your watch, but we need somebody right away because Fritz Weden (the mission director) has to take up a deputy slot in Cairo.

I talked it over with Michele. Although we had only been in Dakar for two years Michele and I agreed to go on a direct transfer with deferred home leave. Within six weeks we wound up going from Dakar to Tunis by way Switzerland because our oldest son was in boarding school there having run out of grades in Dakar.

Thus I took up my first director's assignment in Tunisia. Tunisia was a small program, especially if you didn't count the PL-480. We had \$37,000,000 a year in PL-480 Title I that generated local currency, so that was some real money. I had met the senior Tunisian professional, Salah Mahjoub at DSP in Washington. He coordinated this program and

helped me navigate the Tunisian government. He introduced me to many key counterparts with whom I developed close working relationships.

We also had a \$5,000,000 a year ESF-funded participant training program financed through cash transfers and managed by the Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was a unique kind of program. Washington did not like it very much, the participant training people did everything they could to get their hands on it. And finally succeeded in imposing Handbook 10 on it. As a result the participant training program cost the Tunisian government double per student because of the insurance and all the things they had to do to comply with our regulations.. Before then, they gave a scholarship with a minimum stipend for the students in the U.S. but it didn't conform to Handbook 10 as the stipends were lower than A.I.D. deemed enough to live on. The students were unaware of this; they were just delighted at the opportunity to study in the US. Plus many of the Tunisian students were getting parental support for their living expenses. The upshot was that a lot fewer students were able to go for training.

Q: Handbook 10 was the book that related to participant training?

CARNER: Correct. I think they had just updated and standardized it so all participants would be treated the same. I tried to resist and argued that the Tunisia program was unique by virtue of its being funded through ESF budget support rather than via the usual DA participant training project but finally I had to give in. At least we were able to keep our \$5,000,000 ESF and the Tunisians continued to run it through their embassy in Washington. We did have to get more involved in writing PIOPs (participant training implementation orders) which required more Mission staff time.

We had a small DA (development assistance) program, something like maybe \$4,000,000 a year depending on disbursement and obligation requirements. That was mainly for a pretty solid population program with the Population Institute that proved very successful; a rural potable water program that was a model of working with rural communities and was also very successful according to all the evaluations that were done on it. And we were working with a technology institute, IRSIT, on helping train and develop Arabic-scripted programs for computers. We even had a private sector support project.

I got there and my mandate from Carol was to support “open economies and open societies” -- an approach tailored to Eastern Europe. In Tunisia, there had just been a major government changed. Izzedine Ben Ali had eased into retirement President Bourguiba who had been in power for 30 years and was getting a bit senile. Ben Ali was his interior minister and managed a virtual coup, constitutionally sanctioned, since Bourguiba was failing mentally. Carol Adelman wanted the mission to come up with a transition strategy; the Destourian Party had been a socialist-leaning party and Bourguiba had led a very Western-oriented Arab country. Carol felt it was time for Tunisia to accelerate economic growth and open up the political system to a multi-party system.

Our ambassador, Robert Pelletreau, whom I had met before in Morocco when he was State's Office Director, was a very distinguished Arabist. He was not only the

ambassador to Tunisia but the designated envoy to dialogue with the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization), which had its offices in Tunis then – so the ambassador was effectively ambassador to two entities, Tunisia and the PLO.

The mission had staff of about 16 Americans and 35 or 40 FSNs. There were four senior staff – I didn't have a deputy. I had an EXO, a controller, a program officer and a PD (project development) officer. The PD office, headed by Nancy Tumavick also had a couple of fine technical officers, the ones who took care of the water project, the pop (population) project, a technology project and the private sector project.

I made my rounds, asked for a portfolio review to get a sense for what our program was like. I was told, "You don't have a program. You've got this humungous PL-480 program and this participant training program that can't be touched for political reasons, and this piddling \$4,000,000 DA program."

I said, "Well, okay. We still can use the opportunity to think how we can influence this transition and perhaps do something more innovative than just clocking time with these activities." Although some of them were quite successful I wanted to see what else we could do.

So I proposed to prepare a new assistance strategy following a participatory process, drawing on my Philippines experience. Of course, immediately the program officer said that's a waste of time, just lock me in a room and I can write it in three days and you can review it and we can send it to Washington and be done with it, why futz with the process?

I said, "Humor me."

I put the mission through an abbreviated strategy process that said, "What does this transition in government mean for Tunisia? Since Tunisia is approaching middle-income status, what will it take for Tunisia to begin to grow, open up economically and politically, and where should we be intervening to support that process?" I had a very good economist, Robert Rucker, who right away was amenable to doing some poking around to see what it would take to kick-start Tunisian growth. Rucker was a kindred spirit. He started pulling up information and did some analysis. It became pretty obvious that Tunisia needed to start to think about exports, including ag exports, if it was to generate enough employment to absorb its youth. It was keeping its best produce to sell on the local market virtually at cost. Under Bourguiba, the Tunisian economy had been very inward-looking; how do you turn this around?

To make a long story short we put together a strategy that emphasized employment. How could we get more employment? Half the population was under 30 and the young people had very slim employment prospects. It was clear that you couldn't open up politically if you had such a large unemployed youth that might cause trouble. We said, "Let's look for things that will generate jobs and improve the chances for economic growth."

We submitted the assistance strategy. Carol Adelman and the bureau liked it very much. I started saying we had a boutique program with selected quality items. We shared the strategy of course with the Tunisians and they approved because Ben Ali wanted to foster growth as did his minister of planning, Mohamed Ghannouchi (who much later would become prime minister). As my main counterpart. I went to the Minister and laid out what we wanted to do and why, and he concurred.

The Tunisians were on board particularly with the job creation side of it. They came to us and said, “If we’re going to open up to business and investment, maybe we need to do something with the stock exchange.”

I said, “I’m open to that.” Strengthening the stock exchange was a far cry from working on basic human needs, but it fit within our private sector support project. They wanted to do privatizations too, which fit with A.I.D.s priorities in ’88. You may recall, that the deputy administrator had tasked every mission with doing two privatizations a year. We recruited a contractor who was an expert on privatization. The contractor began help the Tunisians privatize some parastatals that were inefficient. I established a private sector division with a very talented staff – a Tunisian, by the name of Rashid Nafti, and the head of that office was Monica McKnight, who was the spouse of the embassy’s EXO. Before Monica, Mark Karns had started a few private sector support activities. When Monica came and she staffed up, we began to put together a small portfolio. These weren’t expensive projects; this was pointed technical assistance that we could do with some first-class personal services contractors or at best an institutional contract that wasn’t too expensive.

So very quickly after getting the strategy approved, we started to get more money. We grew the program to where we had about \$15,000,000 in DA and I began to insist on allocating the local currency from PL-480 Title I to try some innovative employment activities. For example, creating an apprenticeship program in the factories in the export zone where the government would recruit young 18-, 19-year-olds that were looking for jobs from the cities and rural areas and wanted to learn the trade of sewing shoes or shirts for export. By then, Tunisia was already beginning to get into the “maquila” (offshore manufacturing) business, making apparel for the big French labels like Lacoste. So they were doing the sewing in the export zone and shipping it off to France. There was a wide open opportunity there. We began to use our local currency to provide grants through the Industry ministry to local companies to support these kids for a three month long apprenticeship next to the assembly line and then begin to incorporate into the assembly line those who the firm wanted to hire. Then the subsidy would stop and they’d be fully employed. That began to take root.

Then we began to look for ways to connect Tunisian agriculture to export markets and started to design a new project. There was a talented minister of agriculture who was an agribusinessman. One day I took him a Christmas gift catalog and opened the page to dates, and said “I want you to see something.”

There was a box of about two dozen dates selling for \$18.95 or something like that. He looked surprised and said, “That’s not even a pound of dates and it’s selling for \$19! Here I can’t get even 90 cents for that amount of dates.”

I said, “You’re in the wrong business selling in the local market; what you need to do is invest in packaging, quality selection, and a supply chain that’s going to give you the quality exports”. They were Egyptian deglet nour dates, and he said “Our dates are better!”

I said if you want help getting people into packaging, marketing, quality selection we can provide it. I engaged the Embassy’s ag attaché from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Can’t you get some experts out here on a farm-to-farm basis or some other way?”

That was very attractive. We were starting to prime some business ventures. We even put together a visit of some California vintners to come see whether wine could be produced in Tunisia, under the label of California vintners. And with olive oil – the Tunisians were shipping their olive oil in barrels to Italy; Italy was bottling the oil, slapping an Italian olive oil label on it and selling it for \$5 for a three-quarters of a liter bottle, but beautifully packaged. I said, “Why are you sending your olive oil to Italy? Why don’t you package some of it and get the value-added?”

I used to quip that when I got to Tunis I went from bouncing around in carry-alls to visit primary health centers to doing my aid business in corporate boardrooms.

All of that came tumbling down with the first Iraq War broke out, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and we launched star wars over Baghdad on January 16th, 1991. That was at the height of all of this programming and innovation which got kudos from the bureau and from the Tunisians who thought we were doing real well. And the ambassador. We were also doing some early political programming of political-party strengthening.

At any rate, what happened then was Ben Ali who’d only been in office for two years was still feeling his way. He was quite insecure; he didn’t know how much support he could count on in the street and he didn’t want protest demonstrations. So he leaned towards supporting Baghdad as an Arab brother, although the Iraqis are not necessarily Arabs! (laughter) But as a Muslim brother.

Despite our efforts, particularly the ambassador’s, to explain to Tunisian authorities and the president directly that one could not lean toward Baghdad in this conflict without consequences in the bilateral relations with the United States, Ben Ali chose to sit on the fence. He chose not to come out in support of the Coalition against Saddam This saved him political demonstrations but cost him a privileged bilateral relationship with the United States. Of course, our program the next year dropped back to \$3,000,000 in development assistance and Tunisia’s cozy military relationship with the US disappeared.

Morocco had done just the opposite. King Hassan II basically said, “You’re doing the right thing. We’ll even send 1,000 troops of our own to buttress the coalition forces and I will take whatever flack” and he did get a lot of local demonstrations, people asking what he was doing supporting the Americans against a Muslim country. He weathered those and after that the aid program in Morocco increased substantially. AID is always subject to the political ups and downs of relations on broader foreign policy issues.

At that point, I saw my program falling apart. I went to see the ambassador and said, “Without a budget, a lot of what we’re doing will have to come to a close. I’ll do my best to salvage what we can, do as orderly a phase-down of the rest and fend off a complete phase-out. But it’s going to look different here and that’s going to affect my relations with my counterparts, and also yours.” Then I told the minister of plan this is the reality, “As long as you’re sitting on the fence you’re not going to have the warm long standing relations with the United States that you had and our aid will be reduced..”

In fact, I remember President Ben Ali invited Ambassador Pelletreau to lunch and indicated the ambassador could bring one other officer; the ambassador asked if I would come along and explain the consequences for US aid of Tunisia not supporting the U.S. and the international coalition. So we went to lunch at the palace and Ben Ali had a very close advisor, just the four of us. It was a cordial lunch because Ben Ali really appreciated Ambassador Pelletreau and the ambassador was a straight-shooter and though very diplomatically he spelled things out very clearly. The ambassador explained that Ben Ali was walking a thin line and he needed to support us, and I made the point that with all the unemployed youth he had, our program was very helpful, even though it wasn’t a lot of money, it stimulated processes that would pay dividends in growth and employment generation. Then we got onto the political parties and that he needed to consider opening up the political system to allow more political parties to compete in the democratic process. Ben Ali’s answer was interesting. He said, “I hear you on democracy but I’m afraid that if we do that, the Islamic party will dominate and we’ll have the insecurity and violence we’re seeing in Algeria.” Ben Ali even then was hesitant to open up the politics of Tunisia.

A bit later that spring, I got a call from Larry Sayers. He said, “We have a huge problem in Madagascar. I hear Tunisia is going down the tubes; are you interested in a new assignment?”

I said, “The writing is on the wall here; we don’t have much of a future. I’m sad to have to be the one to dismantle everything I’ve worked so hard to create!”

Michele was up for Madagascar. By then, both of our boys were in boarding school in Switzerland. There was no schooling to be had in Madagascar but because they were enrolled in high school, we decided to keep them at the same boarding school until they graduated which would be less disruptive for them. So I accepted the assignment, and off we went.

Q: What year was this?

CARNER: I got to Tunis in the summer of 1988 and went to Madagascar in September of 1991. I arrived alone as Michele was not allowed to come. I was told that Michele couldn't accompany me to post because there was an evacuation order due to widespread demonstrations and political unrest.

She had been evacuated from Tunis at the start of the First Gulf War in January. I had sent just about everybody home except for six officers who were either tandem officers or bachelors; I didn't want to break up families. I encouraged everyone to leave who wanted to and had a family. It was a voluntary evacuation. In December 1990 we had received the heads up on the counter attack when the word went out across the Muslim world where we had embassies and AID missions that we needed to start contemplating voluntary evacuations. With Ambassador Pelletreau, we designed a program and I laid it out to the staff. Lew Luck by then had joined the mission as the PD officer and agreed to serve as de facto deputy director in charge of the mission in Washington and of keeping the staff together, so when it came time to return we still had a cohesive staff. The staff could still work from Washington. They wound up leaving before Christmas. My wife took the ferry on the 15th of January to Marseilles; I kissed her goodbye and put her on the ship and went back to the office. That evening is when all the fireworks started. It was the night of the 15th/16th January that we saw star wars over Baghdad.

So here we go again being separated twice in the same year for 3 months both times. On both of these evacuations we had got permission for safe haven in Europe since our sons were going to school in Switzerland. Michele came to our summer house near Barcelona and I went to post.

In Madagascar, there was a pacifist movement mobilizing massive demonstrations against the long-time dictator of Madagascar, Didier Ratsiraka.

Q: Not too many of us learned how to pronounce that.

CARNER: Rat-si-ra-ka, you're right. The way we pronounced it in the bureau was 'ratsirak'. You had these Gandhi-like demonstrations, sit-downs that impeded him and his government from moving around and basically closed down everything. He retired to his palace outside of Antananarivo, or Tana for short.

I was met at the airport on arrival by the deputy director, John Roberts and taken to a house he had chosen for us. I began my briefings right away. There were several problems facing the mission. The biggest one and the one that had occasioned Larry to call me was that the then-director had an awful relationship with the ambassador. They engaged in open shouting-matches at country team meetings; she accused him of being a bigot and a male chauvinist and all of that. He just couldn't deal with her and the ambassador was complaining to Washington about how impossible the USAID director was to work with. It was also vitiating the relations between the staffs who didn't know what to do. They were at such loggerheads that communications between the embassy and the mission were really complicated. Then, on top of that, the mission was growing

very fast in program size and staff. So what had been a little AID shop in the embassy was moving across town to a good size office building. But because of these communication issues, half the people were still in the embassy. So even communications within the USAID staff were stifled by logistics. It would take 40 minutes to drive across town in the Tana traffic, since the embassy was located halfway up a hill in the older part of town and we were on the opposite side of the lake below. Have you been to Tana?

Q: I've been there nine times.

CARNER: On top of it, the reason for this problem was that the director wasn't making use of her assigned EXO. Instead, she relied on a Haitian PSC (personal services contractor) to do her bidding. That PSC was cutting corners to get things done more quickly, but not necessarily following the rules that EXOs are supposed to follow. As a result, you had a difficult relationship between him and the EXO -- which complicated the move. Not a good situation at all.

Then you had about five different projects midway through design that were just stalled. Yet they were needed to be able to obligate the expanded resources. This was in part due to the director being dissatisfied with them; she kept saying this isn't good enough and changing her mind repeatedly. The staff was at wit's end of how to please her. The Regional Development Support Office (REDSO) in Nairobi had said, "We're not going to Madagascar anymore because they're not taking our advice." In effect, the build-up of the program was stalled.

Faced with all these problems, the staff was totally demoralized. You can imagine. Meanwhile, the director was telling Washington that her staff was mutinous and incompetent.

I had seen most of these problems before just never all in the same place. So Washington was pulling out the director and the deputy – in a situation like that, the deputy usually suffers the same fate as the director does, painted with the same brush so to speak. The deputy was still there when I arrived. He facilitated the transition. During the first three months I worked on forging a team with the staff and used a portfolio review mechanism to do that.

Q: We're about to run out of time; let's stop here.

Q: This is July the 10th (2018), and I'm talking again with George Carner. We were in the midst of talking about his assignment to Madagascar and as part of that, George mentioned the fate of the deputy director. and then wanted to mentioned the deputies he has had. I know we want to talk in this oral history about some of the lessons learned from how mission directors and deputies work together, so George I'll turn that over to you.

CARNER: First, I think my own experience as a deputy serving a very capable and seasoned director helped me in my career and to worked well with my deputies. I was

fortunate that I had some great deputies, certainly starting in Madagascar with Buff McKenzie, then in Nicaragua where Mark Silverman was my deputy, followed by Liliana Ayalde. In Guatemala I had two deputy directors, Leticia (Tish) Butler and Erhardt Rupprecht; Tish worked on the bilateral program and Erhardt coordinated the regional program. Tish was then replaced by Debbie Kennedy and Erhardt was replaced by Richard Wheldon while I was there. I've been very lucky. I think the secret to a successful front office is to have the director and deputy work as a team. As two people you obviously bring to any assignment your own set of skills and personality traits. What's important is to look for where the complementarities lie so that you're making the most of the team's combined skills. I think that works very well.

The other thing that's important is delineating some clear responsibilities for the deputy so the deputy feels he or she has a role other than just being the mission director's alter ego. That role needs to be defined and put into the performance evaluation objectives so the deputy has a sense of autonomy to carry out those responsibilities, obviously keeping the director informed and vice-versa. There are many ways to play that. In my own case, I tend to be very much of an extrovert and as I've gone on through my directorships, I've moved more and more to work the external side and I've left to the deputy day-to-day running of the mission. That seemed to work pretty well. But at the same time, deputies need to get out of the office, to be visible and to be able to represent the mission. At the end of the day, a good deputy assignment should lead to learning the business of the front office sufficiently well to become a good director him- or herself.

Where I've seen things fail is where communications between the director and deputy are poor, where personality conflicts arise, where the deputy seeks to undercut or upstage the director vis-à-vis the staff, the ambassador or Washington; I've seen that, too, in other missions, not mine. That can get very ugly; that can really turn a front office away from being an example and inspiration for the staff and into a divisive entity where people find themselves having to take sides. That's not good. I've seen a couple of those situations when I was doing management reviews and they are ugly situations, to be avoided. Washington has some responsibility in that too. Sometimes, whether it's the AA or the administrator wanting to give recompense to somebody for whatever reason or even Personnel that isn't doing its job in assigning people to well suited positions. You have to consider who you are matching when you send a deputy out to support a mission director. You have to ask: are they compatible? Are they complementary? Are they going to make a strong management team up? Sometimes you can see in advance that it isn't going to work and yet the assignment process goes through. I saw that in one management review where though we didn't put our recommendations in writing we met with the AA and said, "We hear this is the candidate being considered for this posting; we don't see that this candidate brings to the assignment the skills needed to complement the director, so the director continues to be effective." No-one heeded those insights, and indeed that was a failed relationship between director and deputy, and it ended quite badly for the deputy.

Q: George, you mentioned complementarity and giving clear roles to the deputy. Would you sit down with your deputy and work that out personally?

CARNER: Absolutely. A good way to start a relationship with a deputy is to sit down together, get acquainted, and say, “Here’s what I think needs to be done, what do you think? Here’s how I think you can help me accomplish our goals. I welcome your feedback on how we’re doing and your advice on how to do it better. What are your preferences and skills and things you’re interested in within this scheme of things and what you already know about the mission? What areas would you particularly like?” It’s easy then to talk about sectors or issues and divvy up responsibilities; we all come with different backgrounds and interests. Some deputies come with a health background or interest, some with democracy or agriculture. Pretty quickly you can begin to define areas that you naturally like and obviously if the director and deputy like the same area you either have to exert your prerogative and say I’m taking that one or hey, this is a challenging enough area where we can both work at it.

It’s important for the director to be the director and set the tone. “Hey, I’m in this chair so let me make the final choices,” but there has to be a conversation where the two come together and have an understanding. Of course, directors have different approaches to directing. There are some that are much more directive and expect the deputy to be second in command and have a very clear idea of hierarchy. I wasn’t so caught up in that; I believed in participatory management and thought the deputy director was part of the management team. Of course, good deputies also look to support the director and resolve issues before they become problems. Both need to manage by walking around and be available to the staff. But staff may find it easier to raise a personal issue with the deputy than the director.. I viewed the mission as an entire team focused on helping the country we were in to develop and considered my deputy as a partner in that endeavor. So for me, it was not a difficult approach to share responsibilities with my deputies. In a busy program you need to delegate anyway. I must say, on the whole I felt that my deputies responded well to that opening and that approach. I really can’t think of a serious conflict I had with any of my deputies. I remain in touch with several of them, we’re good friends.

Q: While we’re on this subject, let’s talk about the relationship between a mission director and an ambassador or DCM (deputy chief of mission).

CARNER: Madagascar was the first situation where I walked into a setting where the mission director and ambassador were in open conflict, and not talking to each other. It was a classic bad relationship. I had mentioned in Senegal that I’d seen two egos clash when Sarah Jane and Ambassador Walker were planning the locust response, but that was just one little episode. Otherwise, Sarah Jane had good relations with Ambassador Walker and both strived to maintain respectful relations. In the case of Madagascar, that was not apparent. So my first objective was to gain the trust of Ambassador Howard Walker. It turned out to be easy. He was so relieved to have a new USAID director. I went to see him immediately on arrival, and I said, “I’m here to help put this mission and our relationship back together. I gather you and the previous director had some run-ins.”

He said, “That’s certainly an understatement.”

I said, “I’m an up-front guy. I need to know what your issues are and I’ll tell you what mine are and keep you abreast of what we’re doing.” He said that works for me so we established weekly meetings. I think it is a must to have a weekly one-on-one with your ambassador so you can keep him or her informed of the issues you think your ambassador needs to know and vice versa. Certainly, one way to gain the confidence and trust of your ambassador is to make sure he or she is the first to know about things happening on the USAID front, especially if they have wider ramifications, and not reading about them in the newspapers. Ambassadors need to be forewarned if there is something that’s going to splatter the front page and put USAID right in the line of fire. S/he needs to be prepared for that; s/he needs to know it’s coming and have his or her staff ready to respond when s/he gets questions on it. This is essential to forge a partnership.

The first thing is to establish that personal and institutional relationship, that the USAID director is part of the ambassador’s country team and that he or she is there to do a job as part of that team and to be an adviser to the ambassador. In my experience, the assignments I felt most satisfied is where I could forge a real partnership with the ambassador, where I knew the broad foreign policy objectives s/he was pursuing and s/he knew the broad assistance strategy objectives the USAID mission was pursuing. One way to do that was to involve the embassy in reviewing the assistance strategy. Any assistance strategy document I worked on to send to Washington I always made sure that it got to the ambassador and his staff to review with time to give feedback before we sent it in. Not that the embassy ever changed very much, but just the opportunity to comment and see how the assistance strategy supported our broader foreign policy objectives as well as the country’s own development objectives. Of course, you have to synchronize the foreign policy and the developmental objectives, recognizing that the USAID perspective tends to be more medium- to long-term than the embassy’s perspective.

I must say, on the whole I was fortunate to have some wonderful, professional ambassadors who were happy to have a professional USAID director on their team and made use of me, and I made use of them. One thing that’s really tricky for a USAID director in a country where USAID is very visible is how to manage your relationships with the press, counterparts, ministers given that you have money at your disposal and everybody knows it; how do you manage that in a way where your profile doesn’t get higher than the ambassador’s. Upstaging the ambassador is not good politics for a USAID director. If you’ve got to go to something where there’s going to be a lot of press, it’s important to let him or her know. It’s important to invite him or her to come along. All ambassadors like ribbon cuttings and project agreement signings. AID directors need to be visible at these events but I’ve always let the scissors be in the hands of the ambassador. That’s important; the ambassador’s stay in the country is about visibility and representation, whereas the USAID director’s delivering aid – there’s nothing wrong with standing behind the ambassador. When you’re in a signing ceremony at least when I was director, it was my pen that obligated the documents and he or she knew that so it didn’t matter if I sat at the end of the table and s/he sat at the center with the minister or president. That was fine with me, and everybody knew what the game was about. Being savvy in that way is absolutely essential for a mission director’s success. I think you need

to know also what the ambassador's needs are; different ambassadors have different requirements. Some ambassadors want to know when you visit a minister; others are less concerned so long as anything important discussed is relayed back. Some don't even want you to see two or three of the key ministers because they consider that is his or her prerogative, like the foreign minister for example (which is natural enough) or the president or vice president of the country. In some countries that works fine, where you have a clear hierarchy and pecking order. In an open society like Nicaragua which is very small and everybody knows everybody, you bump into everybody and everybody knows who you are and you know who everybody else is. That gets a little tricky. Fortunately, I've had ambassadors that were very supportive and open to my having a reasonably high profile particularly in Nicaragua where I guess my profile was the highest. I had a wonderful ambassador in John Maisto.

Sometimes, there are conflicts that arise with an ambassador over a project or some activity the Embassy is pushing. Sometimes those can get difficult to manage. My experience is that it's best to work it out directly with the ambassador and not go to Washington with it. Once you get Washington involved, you're basically confronting the ambassador and I don't think there are too many mission directors who will win a frontal conflict with an ambassador particularly engaging Washington. But at the same time, it is optimal to explain to the ambassador what the regulations are, the development policy, what the legislation is. Most ambassadors will listen and not push for you to do something that you plainly advised him not to do. Still, you've got to explain why you don't want to do something that an ambassador wants you to do. Sometimes it's good to see it from the ambassador's perspective, and it may not be that difficult to give the ambassador what he wants if it's relatively minor and doesn't affect the basic direction of the program. I'm not saying give in, but be smart about which swords you want to fall on. (Laughter)

Q: In my experience, the ambassador or DCM would write your performance review and it would be reviewed by the regional office director in Washington who worked for USAID. Is that how it worked for you? Where there any difficulties in that process?

CARNER: I tried to make sure the ambassador was my rating officer and signed my EER (employee evaluation report). Whether the DCM wrote it or not, the ambassador signed it. I considered my relationship to be with the ambassador and felt s/he should evaluate my performance. That was the case in Tunisia, Madagascar, in Nicaragua, and with Ambassador Prudence Bushnell in Guatemala. Then yes, I think the review comment went to my office director – or perhaps to the DAA? I'm not sure. I don't remember who was doing the review. At any rate, there was a Washington-level review statement. I always made sure to be on good terms with my DCM's, as a peer and once in a while as an ally in meetings with the Ambassador when s/he was getting competing advice.

Q: It sounds like you didn't have any problems with that process.

CARNER: No, and I must say the ambassadors were very generous with their evaluations and I didn't have any problem with getting promoted.

Q: When you went to Madagascar, what was your rank?

CARNER: I think by then I was probably a counselor. What was the first rung in the Senior Foreign Service ladder?

Q: Counselor level, then minister, and then career minister.

CARNER: I think I got counselor in Senegal because of the locust operations. My visibility in Senegal was so great and the job was so intense that I got promoted at the end of that assignment. Then I went on to Tunisia and I think it was in Madagascar that I got promoted to minister, and then it must have been the tail end of Nicaragua or beginning of Guatemala that I got promoted to career minister.

Q: Tell us a little more about what you found in Madagascar and what you were able to accomplish there.

CARNER: As I began to explain at the end of our last interview, the mission was undergoing growing pains and the director had not performed to the level that the demands of a growing mission required. I talked about the management problems.

Buff McKenzie joined me in January and quickly signed on to my approach to cleaning up things. We systematically went about getting the new offices set up and the staff moved from the embassy and all co-located together. That enabled us to rebuild the team as a whole. I worked hard to re-establish an open a fruitful relationship with our ambassador. We picked up all the pending projects and invited REDSO back to help us finalize some of the designs we couldn't do on our own. I took a hand in designing some of them; Buff did the same. We met with the design teams and said, "What are the pending issues? What will it take to get the project approved and obligated so we can start our program?" We tackled them systematically, there were four or five projects in that status. Within six months those got approved and obligated before the end of the fiscal year. Our relations with REDSO improved, they were pleased with how productive we were.

We hadn't really developed a strategy for dealing with the government in chaos. As you'll recall, Ratsiraka was being opposed by a Gandhi-like citizen's uprising that was supported by some of his former allies. He was cooped up in the palace for nine or ten months until he agreed on a transition formula that would lead to elections. We said, "Even if we get our projects up and running we won't be able to sign them until there's a government in place. Let's review our strategy and see what else we need to do to be prepared for when we have a government that we can begin to work with." Of course, we did that in tandem with the ambassador and his political and economic officers participating in some of the discussions. We put together a revised strategy, got it through the embassy and Washington. It was a revised to fit the new situation. By that time, there was a technocratic caretaker government that lasted a year or so until elections were held.

There was an electoral commission preparing those. Ratsiraka stepped aside; he didn't abdicate but he just let all of this happen.

Q: What year would that have been?

CARNER: I arrived in September of '91, so this played out over most of '92. By December of '92, USAID Madagascar was back in the good graces of the Africa bureau; we were seen as a performing mission, with an up and running program and approved strategy, and that with no further management problems. Washington could get on with other things. Washington never likes to have to deal with mission management problems. This is a good lesson for mission directors: try to solve your problems in-house and not get Washington involved unless you really have to.

The mission had developed into a high performing team. Buff and I had invested a lot of time in nurturing the team and letting their talents bloom. We had brought out the Training Resources Group (TRG) to facilitate a retreat during the down months. I had combined the capital development and program offices and recruited Bill Hammink to head up the new office. That really strengthened our team. I fought in Washington to get our own contracts officer so that we could accelerate implementation. We had a very able economist and technical staff in agriculture, environment, health and family planning. We relied on our EXO to keep us honest, happy and supported logistically. Our able FSNs were also an integral part of our team.

We then began to work closely with our key ministries. The big focus in Madagascar was the environment and conservation. We had three major programs going; one that had been in place for a while and we extended called SAVEM (sustainable approaches for viable environmental management) which was creating protected areas in some of the key ecosystems around Madagascar, which is the fourth biggest island in the world. We had some really strong contractors and local staff implementing that project. Lisa Gaylord, a PSC then as I recall, was really the champion of the environment and worked hard to get those parks up and going.

Q: Lisa was a personal services contractor for USAID.

CARNER: One of the first parks was Ranomafana which was a rainforest in the Betsileo region. Duke University Primate Center had rediscovered the Golden Bamboo Lemur there --a lemur thought to have been extinct. That had given Ranomafana its claim to fame. It became one of Madagascar's first protected areas which we supported from the outset. We also worked up in the Amber Mountain area in the north. Later we added Masoala in the northeast.

One of the things that was very disturbing about our environmental program was that the Malagasy perceived the international community as more interested in the lemurs than in the Malagasy people. There was a cartoon that appeared in a local satirical magazine that really summed up for me the challenge we faced. The cartoon showed a lemur up in a tree looking like Bugs Bunny wearing sunglasses, a cocktail glass in one hand, legs

crossed and lounging on a tree branch. Below, there was this little Gandhi-like Malagasy at the base of the tree looking up and saying, “What did you do to get it so good?” and the lemur replying, “Just wait until you’re an endangered species.”

The bite of that satire bothered me a lot. One day when I was visiting Amber Mountain I called on the local mayor just outside the park, as I usually did when visiting projects. I said, “How are things going with the project? What do you think of it?”

He replied, “What project? All I see are WWF” (World Wildlife Federation) vehicles racing through my town kicking up dust and putting signs on the park boundary telling my citizens they can’t do this or that.”

Surprised I said, “Really? They’ve never stopped in to say hello or tell you about the project?”

He said, “No. They haven’t even stopped to buy a Coca-Cola.”

I concluded there was something really wrong with this picture. When I got to the research station in the park, I read them the riot act. I said, “You can’t possibly succeed in this project if the people affected don’t buy in to what we’re trying to do. Conservation is not about restricting people’s livelihoods, it’s about engaging them and seeing the value to themselves and their children of conserving the ecosystem and giving them sustainable income opportunities they might not otherwise have.”

When I got back to Tana, I met with the WWF rep and told her how shocked I was that the WWF team seemed to be concerned only about the trees and the lemurs and not the people, and that we needed to change that approach. From that point on I began really pressing – John Thomas who was our able ag officer and Lisa, as well. I said, “From now on we need to pair our environmental grantees with rural development grantees in every one of these parks. When we renew or seek out new grantees, we need to include in the request for proposals a requirement that the program include both an environmental and a rural development component, preferably by two grantees in partnership. The first team to work inside the park with the lemurs, other fauna and the flora and the second team to work outside the park with the people on sustainable income producing activities.” We even entered into cooperative arrangement with the Peace Corps to field rural development volunteers in communities bordering the parks.

From that moment on, we began to integrate into the parks program this rural development component. That began to pay dividends. I read an evaluation not long ago that said the Madagascar protected area program was institutionalized and reasonably working well, and that the surrounding villages were part of it. That made me feel very good.

The other project we had was something called KEEPEM (Knowledge, Education and Economic Policies for Environmental Management). This was a budget support program that was about trying to keep the forest intact, by passing environment-friendly laws and

regulations and supporting public education programs.. One of the more important laws was to control illegal logging. This was a policy reform project, but instead of being directed at economic policies the disbursement triggers were environmental policy reforms. We got quite a bit of policy traction because we weren't talking just to the minister of environment, we were also talking to the minister of finance, as I mentioned earlier. When the minister of finance says I want this budget support, what's it going to take? We said, "We're trying to get the ministry of environment and parliament to move on these reforms." It didn't take the minister of finance long to get after them.

This was an argument I made to Carol Lancaster and Brian Atwood at a mission directors' conference a couple of years later when they began to respond to Congressional concerns that budget support was worthless and we shouldn't be engaged in it; that there was no place in the AID program for budget support because we couldn't control the funds or show any results. I said, "I beg to disagree. There is a place for budget support in certain well-defined contexts. I much prefer to speak to finance ministers about environmental policy reforms than to an environment minister who is at the bottom of the pecking order in any cabinet."

I don't think I made much headway with Carol or Brian, we never came back to budget support except in questionable places like Pakistan where we were doing it for political reasons.

We then went on to try to control the illegal trade in endangered species with TRADEM (Environmental Trade Management) project – but we never got that quite off the ground. We also put in place an innovative agribusiness program and implemented a health project and, I think a population project as well, but the big money was going to the environment.

Q: You also had as I recall work on ag research with new seed varieties?

CARNER: We started that program with Ranomafana and brought in rice researchers to help the surrounding villages develop much more productive rice strains, which they did on a subsistence level. With the help of IRRI (International Rice Research Institute, located in the Philippines) the farmers began to move off of subsistence and began to market some surplus rice.

One other thing, just to make the link. The next ambassador I had the pleasure of working with turned out to be Dennis Barrett, who had been deputy director of USAID Philippines and had been my carpool cohort in Reston when I was commuting to the India Desk while in Washington and to PPE in the Africa bureau. We live in a funny world where things happen quite by chance and work out very well. That relationship became a really important partnership as we dealt with the political crisis and as we then responded to an elected government. Ambassador Barrett was very effective with the Malagasy. Since he knew the AID business, my weekly meetings were a cinch! I didn't have to explain things unduly; I could just use AID-speak and very quickly put him in the picture and he could

quickly see what I was doing and feel comfortable. The fluidity of that relationship was wonderful for my next two years in Madagascar.

There's a lot more I could say about Madagascar, but let me leave it at that, unless you have any further questions about Madagascar. You know Madagascar yourself.

Q: I'll just mention that the environment program (I was involved later) was one of the most successful environment programs. It morphed from SAVEM/KEEPPEM/TRADEM side to eventually having a strong partnership with the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility, carrying out major environmental reforms.

CARNER: I also participated as did the staff with early Bank appraisal missions to help the Malagasy develop a national environmental program which included these things. As usual at first the World Bank was a little out there doing its own thing and not consulting us. It took a little bit of pressure to get them to consult with us and build in to their framework what was already going on. They have a tendency to want to reinvent the wheel and often it's crooked when it's put on. Those early months on which they worked on that was a very important time for us making available to them people like Lisa Gaylord. You're right that the Malagasy program and later the national environmental program with its comprehensive approach became a model for the rest of Africa. Many environmental conferences were held where the Malagasy experience was reported on and explained, and many of the ideas were picked up on subsequently by other African governments wanting to pursue environmental conservation programs. It even was the model for Madagascar national poverty reduction strategy.

Yes, our investment over a long period paid off. I think we began investing in Madagascar's environmental health in the mid-'80s; we had an AID rep there before '91 when USAID was ascended to a full mission and its budget and staff increased to become a major African program.

Q: I think there's at least 20 years programming and then unfortunately a coup took place which led to the U.S. government closing down assistance to the Madagascar government and most of the environment program was put on hold. For the record, there's a really useful summary of the program over the years written by Karen Freudenberger.

CARNER: I gave her some feedback on that.

Q: Paradise Lost? Lessons from 25 Years of USAID Environment Programs in Madagascar. I found it a little bit too negative because I don't think she had any other country to compare it to.

CARNER: I share your feeling that she was not giving it enough credit. I also pointed out a gap in her analysis regarding the rural development aspects we built into the program; I don't know if she took those comments on board and included them in the final report.

Q: Let's move on. I don't have any other questions about Madagascar. You were there for two years?

CARNER: Three years.

Q: And then you were offered something or started looking for an assignment?

CARNER: By that time I felt I was on a roll, that the mission was humming and the program was beginning to show results. I knew my way around town, had a terrific ambassador to work with, my staff doing a fine job and was appreciative of all the things we had done together and felt I had brought the leadership ingredient that was missing. – We used to say we finally got this thing going the way we want. So I was doing fine! Then lo and behold I got a call from the Latin America bureau saying, “Hey, we’ve got this opening in Nicaragua and we really would like you to consider this directorship. Janet Ballantyne has been the director but now she’s moving to Washington.” Janet followed up with a direct call urging me to take the assignment. We had met when she headed up CDIE.

By this time, President Clinton had been inaugurated and there were policy changes afoot. Mark Schneider had been appointed AA for Latin America and he was looking for someone outside the bureau; in fact he was looking for someone with no connection whatsoever to Nicaragua!

That was one of my questions - “Wait, why are you coming to me? I don’t know the first thing about Nicaragua! I’ve never served in Latin America.”

Buff McKenzie had served in Latin America; we talked it over. He said, “You’d probably find it very interesting.”

I said, “Do you think the mission here is moving smoothly enough that I could accept that without doing harm to what we’ve got going? Could you carry this forward?”

He said no problem. Of course, I saw it was also in his interest to have a crack at being the director!

So I talked to Janet about the job and looked into the program in the Congressional Presentation and other references. I saw that Ambassador Maisto was there; I knew it would be essential to have an ambassador I could work with in such an important political program. So for professional reasons and – I won’t deny it – family considerations I accepted. Our oldest son was attending university now in California (my youngest was still in Switzerland) and telephone calls were very expensive and difficult from Madagascar to California. The travel was so hard that my son came for our first Christmas in Tana and said never again. Our other son was graduating and also planning to attend college in California. My wife wanted to be in the same time zone.

I went in '94 to take up the challenge of being director in Nicaragua. I had some briefings in Washington. That was interesting. I'd gone from Senegal to Tunisia and was sworn-in in Tunis by the ambassador.. I'd gone from Tunis to Madagascar and was sworn-in in Tana This time given the high profile of Nicaragua, I was sworn in in the administrator's antechamber with Bob Nachtrieb holding the Bible – I forget whether it was the administrator or deputy that was swearing me in. The Nicaraguan ambassador was there and I gave a short speech. It immediately signaled to me that this was going to be a much more challenging and visible assignment than I'd had up to that time.

I also visited Congress and asked different staffers involved with Nicaragua what I should pay attention to. The advice I got was, "Keep Nicaragua off our radar screen." I said okay, I'll keep that in mind.

As you know, Nicaragua had not had an AID mission during the '80s when the Cold War played out in the guerrilla war against the Sandinistas with our support to the Contras from Honduras and elsewhere. With the election in '90 of Violeta Chamorro, a surprised Daniel Ortega stepped down after a visit from former President Carter and the Carter Foundation explaining how democracy worked (laughter)...

Q: That could be repeated today!

CARNER: Indeed. Carter was to come back for another election; I'll tell you about that later. Mark Schneider made it very clear that our policy in Nicaragua had to be to reinforce democracy, and to do that, to foster reconciliation. The most significant thing I found upon arrival was that USAID seemed to be supporting the anti-Sandinista side of the equation at the insistence of the Bush administration, because those folks were our allies during the confrontation and people like Senator Helms and his staff felt very strongly that we shouldn't abandon our allies. There was no question that there was a certain favoritism toward non-Sandinista grantees and independent farmers' groups that was not lost on the Nicaraguans, either. President Clinton declared that the Cold War was over and his administration decided that in Central America it meant supporting reconciliation and peace – whether in El Salvador or Nicaragua or even Guatemala, which had an ongoing conflict at that time. So it became important that our policies and activities in-country did all they could to support that. My mandate was pretty clear. When I got to post, Ambassador Maisto also made it clear that reconciliation was the priority..

I began to review the program. We had a strategy as I recall; we probably did a tweak to the strategy, combined some things and focused more on reconciliation explicitly. Maybe the best example of that was in our work with Nicaraguan farmers to help improve their productivity and take advantage of agribusiness export opportunities, whether it be in coffee, onions, or any number of other products thanks to the nearness of U.S. markets. Of course, the ag attaché was also involved in helping meet the phytosanitary standards they had to comply with if they were going to enter our market.

We were doing a lot with the non-Sandinista farmer's union, UPANIC ("Union de Productores Agropecuarios de Nicaragua", Union of Agricultural Producers of Nicaragua). One day I got the visit from the head of the Sandinista farmers union, UNAG ("Union Nacional de Agricultores," National Union of Farmers). As you might imagine, in any polarized society you have mirror images on both sides of the political spectrum. His name was Daniel Nunez. He came to see me and said, "You guys have only been helping UPANIC; what does UNAG need to do to get your help?"

I said, "Is this a conversation about agriculture or politics?"

He said, "I want your help in improving my farmers' agricultural productivity."

I said, "If that's what you're interested in, our objectives coincide and we'll help you if you can put together a sensible proposal and if you'll agree to sit down with UPANIC when it comes time to sign your proposal. I want to sign your proposal and UPANIC's renewed grant at the same time at the same table with the minister of agriculture."

He stopped and said, "But that's political."

I said, "Perhaps but a reconciled sector will be more productive. – if you're game, I'm game."

He said, "Okay, we'll get a proposal together and we'll take it from there."

So then I went to see the ambassador and said, "Guess who came to see me?" Daniel Nunez had been a rallyer for Daniel Ortega in mobilizing the farmers to support the Sandinista movement, so he was not a particularly neutral person. I mentioned it to John Maisto, who said isn't that interesting.

I said, "Here's what I offered, with no commitment – give us a proposal, we'll see. But I also conditioned it on a joint signing ceremony with UPANIC. Ambassador Maisto quickly saw the advantages for reconciliation in the approach I was proposing. I called on the minister of agriculture who was a moderate, not an anti-Sandinista minister at all. He issued from INCAE ("Instituto Centroamericano de Administración de Empresas" Central American Institute of Business Administration), which was the Harvard-bred management institute out of Costa Rica that had a campus in Nicaragua. He saw the advantages too and said let's go for it; if we can pull it off it will help the sector and bring these two organizations to work together.

I then had to call the UPANIC director who asked: "what are you talking to the Sandinistas for?" I said that it's time you moved on. I gave him the example of Chile. "Chile's agriculture is booming because they got together and forgot their left-right differences and started worrying about agricultural exports, and they're making money hand over fist. Chile, Inc. We've always been good to you, we're not going to leave you in the lurch. Let me play this out with Daniel." He reluctantly said okay and ultimately agreed to sit down at the signing ceremony too. Though he said, "This is going to slow

down my proposal. We know how to write proposals but they don't know a thing about writing proposals, it'll take them forever."

He was right. We had to give a little technical assistance to UNAG. In about three months we had a proposal we could accept. To make things simpler, we funded it from local currency, so I wouldn't have to respond to the Helms' staff about giving UNAG American taxpayer dollars. Even so, I knew I was going to get a lot of grief over this.

We had PL-480 local currencies which were programmed by a Nicaraguan local currency committee that we participated in. The local currency was owned by the Nicaraguan government which proposed its uses for various development projects on which we usually concurred. We brought the UNAG proposal before the PI-480 committee and convinced them of the merits of funding it.

The day of the signing ceremony came. We signed both agreements the same day at the same table. Ambassador Maisto was there. Minister Mario de Franco was there. The planning minister, Robleto and I affixed our signatures. The media was in full attendance and all over us afterward with interviews and questions. The reconciliation message was broadcast loud and clear.

The two associations continued to worry about their members and didn't meet and talk very often, each implementing their separate grants. One year later, the bean crop was in jeopardy in the southeastern part of the country due to a serious drought. The minister called me and said, "Can you help with this drought?"

I said, "Sure, anything you need. But why don't you call a meeting with UPANIC and UNAG directors and ask them how they would respond to this crisis?"

He invited them (and me) to a meeting in his office, and he said, "This is the situation according to my technicians. What do you know about it? How can we all best respond?" Both of them came up with constructive proposals, each willing to work in their own way to address the crisis but following a coordinated plan. Essentially, all parties agreed that beans in surplus areas unaffected by drought should be marketed in drought areas so as to avoid a scarcity of beans and throw the national markets in disarray. Thanks to that seed we had planted early on with the simple signing ceremony, bringing them together a year later was straightforward. They were willing to work together to head off a bean shortage.

To me, this was really important. It showed that AID projects can not only do good for farmers, but can bring together people who otherwise might not get together, and you can accomplish several objectives including political ones. As we move into conflict situations and work in fragile states, I think the lessons of this kind of programming where you're alert to the political economy and political imagery opportunities become very important. Reconciliation is essential to peace-building; you cannot achieve peace simply by signing a peace agreement. You have to work with the ex-combatants to lay down their arms, to collect those arms, to do things that help heal the wounds in communities. I saw this a lot more in Guatemala.

The other big thing we got involved in was democracy building. We had a major democracy program and that blossomed as we moved forward in the strategy. We had a superb democracy staff headed up by Alexi Panehal, who would later become a Mission director in Ecuador. Susan Reichle was first assigned as an IDI and graduated to a full time position as a democracy officer. She was smart and talented and it was obvious then that she would rise rapidly to leadership positions in A.I.D. The program was aimed at strengthening political parties and the national assembly; it also had a component helping improve the judicial system and a civil society component. All of those things became very important during the 1996 elections that pitted Arnaldo Aleman, the Liberal Party mayor of Managua, against Daniel Ortega who was running again on a Sandinista ticket. We supported the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE) in its role of managing the electoral process with all the modern tools they needed, including an updated voter registration list, election materials, technical assistance to help count the ballots. We worked with other donors. It was a big enterprise. It was fascinating to work in that political environment.

To be sure, we had U.S. electoral observer groups that wanted to participate. We wound up with every single electoral observer group in America wanting to participate in this Nicaraguan election. When you start by granting to one like the National Democratic Institute, the Republican institute says, "me, too." There were two others that insisted. So soon we had more electoral observers than we had wanted. The pressures on all of this became very high. It was a very visible election and Arnaldo Aleman won. After that, his administration was marred by a tremendous amount of bad governance and corruption. It was sad to see the democratic experiment take this turn again and see Nicaragua in the throes of very partisan, autocratic politics. The transition that President Violeta de Chamorro had led with difficulty achieved a reasonable degree of success in reconciling the nation and establishing democratic governance. Aleman ran on an anti-Sandinista platform. He would later, to avoid prosecution on corruption charges, strike a deal with Daniel Ortega, who was the head of the opposition in the national assembly, for immunity in exchange for changing the electoral math that enabled Ortega in the next elections to win with a simple majority. It was sad to see that reversal.

Q: Were you there that whole time, through that next election?

CARNER: I was there from '94 to '98. Almost a full four years. Thankfully, I missed Daniel's reelection. Ambassador Maisto had returned to Washington, to the OAS (Organization of American States) as Ambassador and then on to the White House, at the NSC advising the President on Latin America, among other high level assignments. It was a real privilege to serve with him. He was replaced by Ambassador Lino Gutierrez in time to witness President Aleman's inauguration.

Yeah, it was a fascinating time. It was so political that Senator Helms' staff, Dan Fiske and Roger Noriega would pay me a visit every year and grill me for five hours to make sure USAID wasn't forgetting their anti-Sandinista Contra allies and that our program wasn't favoring Sandinista organizations. During those sessions they grilled me on a long

list of prepared questions. I just sat there patiently and answered every one of them to the best of my ability, laughed at some of them, joked with them about some others

To be sure they gave me hard time over the UNAG grant but understood the rationale behind it. They took special issue with our activities in the health area. Our reproductive health activities were with women's groups most of which had been mobilized during the Sandinista era. Around the world women's groups, certainly those engaged in social action programs, often hail from the left. Certainly in a setting like the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua which emancipated women and mobilized them politically, it's not surprising that many of these local NGOs working on reproductive health and women's issues would have been associated with the Sandinista movement during the '80's. But these were professional groups, NGOs registered with the government and doing good work providing reproductive health care. We vetted them beforehand as we vetted all NGO grantees.

In any event, our relations with all of the anti-Sandinista grantees remained strong. I nurtured them. I was always available to them when they needed to see me or when they had events they wanted me to be at or officiate. They were the first to say I and USAID were very even-handed in our projects. I tried to keep politics out of USAID programming other than the efforts at reconciliation. The only thing that counted for me were results in development terms. Some of our programs were working with ex-combatants in former conflict areas like Quilalí and the Atlantic Coast region. Consequently, we needed to be alert to the political implications of our activities. Ambassador Maisto had high credibility and always supported me and USAID. USAID also enjoyed the support of Congressman Cass Ballinger (D-North Carolina) and Senator Mike DeWine (R-Ohio), who took a special interest in Nicaragua and our projects.

All in all, the experience for me was a very good one and I think our program helped a lot of people. When I left, there was a tremendous number of Nicaraguans from all walks of life and on all sides of the political spectrum that genuinely thanked me for setting a tone of reconciliation and putting the focus on socio-economic progress and helping the poor. A USAID director's task is more than managing money – it's leadership, and how you represent what you're doing to a larger society. In the end, that's the best measure of your success is if people recognize that USAID is contributing to the progress of the country – social, economic, political, and environmental.

I should mention that beyond agriculture, health and electoral support we had a full plate of projects in the justice sector, in micro-enterprise, and the environment. Many of these produced impressive results. I also reorganized the mission. You'll recall in the mid-'90s A.I.D. was re-engineering and were very concerned with results. So what I did, given the relatively small staff, I suggested: "Why don't we organize ourselves horizontally around results? We don't have to eliminate the offices, but within each office let's have results team with members from other relevant offices; for example, let's have a health results team, a democracy results team, and an agriculture results team, each with assigned members from the controller's, the program office and any other relevant offices. Then let's look at all the activities we are doing in those sectors as a whole effort, then see how

we can maximize the synergies and see if we can't achieve results in a more systematic way and on a more ambitious level?" That was a very dynamic way to organize ourselves. Our portfolio reviews were also organized around gauging progress on project results and identifying slippages and problems and deciding on actions need to accelerate achievement of results. These reviews were held annually with all the implementers invited and were able to coordinate activities better. I don't know if this model was transferable and if everybody thought it was worth the effort; I think people humored me on that one! It served to steer us in a much more purposeful way to achieving results.

In the end – USAID's work is about implementation and achieving results. We spend a lot of time on design and obligations and justifications, but to me USAID has to spend as much time if not more on insuring that implementation is taking place as we want and that we're getting tangible development results. That means a lot more downstream effort. Also our assignment process is often not conducive to people sticking around long enough to see the results of their own work. That's an important element as far as I'm concerned. Questions?

Q: I think that's fine. Four years, you decided you wanted to look around or you had another phone call?

CARNER: I started getting questions from the assistant administrator's office- "You're tour's coming up, what do you want to do next?" It was kind of understood by everybody that if I wanted, I could go to Guatemala. Guatemala was a logical next step because it was not only a bilateral mission directorship but it was combined with a regional mission directorship, USAID/G-CAP. Everything sort of pointed me to Guatemala. Guatemala was going through a peace program; Mark had been a Peace Corps volunteer during the El Salvador civil war and was very much into Central America. He felt he had recruited me, he had seen how I worked in Nicaragua, I had basically kept Nicaragua off the radar screen, in part thanks to Haiti's dominating the radar screen. Larry Crandall, as the director in Haiti, was the one who had to respond to Congress and Mark Schneider. It worked out that Stacy Rhodes was leaving and they needed a director in Guatemala, so it was one of the smoothest and closest transfers that came along.

In the end, I must say I've been very fortunate in getting great assignments. The only assignment I would have wanted that I never got despite having asked for it was the India program officer, which we talked about, and I didn't get for the reasons I stated in the interview. All the other assignments came my way, some unexpectedly, some sought, some by mutual agreement like Guatemala. I think I have been very lucky in my career.

Q: Did you do a direct transfer to Guatemala? Did you take home leave?

CARNER: I think we went on home leave first, having packed out and said our goodbyes. My wife stayed on visiting the boys in California for a bit longer and flew to Guatemala city. I returned to Managua so I could drive our car to Guatemala with our dog and some suitcases. On the first leg I drove from Managua to San Salvador and stayed overnight in the deputy director's apartment, who kindly offered to host me even

though she wasn't there. Next day, I jumped back in the car and drove from San Salvador straight through to Guatemala.

Yeah, Guatemala was certainly the easiest mission to transition into because it had an approved strategy, a very strong staff, an effective ongoing program; the projects were well-designed and being implemented. My biggest challenge was fitting myself into it and learning how the program was working, steering it if and where needed to succeed, and helping remove any stumbling blocks, of which there were few.

Q: What year was this?

CARNER: I arrived in July of 1998 and stayed until August 2002.

Q: Another four year tour.

CARNER: Yeah. Implementing the peace accords was the big challenge in Guatemala. They had been signed in '96 I think. Alvaro Arzu was the president, having been elected after being mayor of Guatemala City. He brokered the peace deal and civil society had played a key role. There were a lot of challenges to demilitarize Guatemalan society and put it on a democratic footing. A lot of our programs were designed to help Guatemala implement some 350 commitments in the peace accords that had to do with respect for indigenous rights and community development, especially in the most conflict-affected areas. We had programs to train indigenous leaders and teach indigenous languages, notably Quiche in the primary school system, and to send indigenous leaders to university. The University del Valle was our prime partner in the latter effort.

We had a variety of reconciliation activities. One of the peace accord commitments was to convene a truth commission to investigate all the abuses. Our funding supported the work of the investigators and report writers. The Truth Commission found that 93% of abuses came from the Guatemalan army and the other 7% from the insurgents. This was a war of insurrection where the military fought the guerrillas in the mountains and many villagers, especially indigenous villagers, got caught between two fires. On one side, they were often forced to support the guerrillas. On the other side, the military would put them up against the wall for a firing squad because they had supported the insurgents. It was an ugly conflict that lasted 30 years, with a tremendous amount of violence and abuse of all sorts. As you might expect, in very remote, rural areas military commanders had full authority and gave their troops free hand to terrorize the insurgents and supporting villagers, while the guerrillas sought to pay the soldiers back for all the violence they perpetuated on them. Of course, the regime of Rios Montt also went after any intellectual or community or labor leader that spoke out against the war or in favor of democracy and human rights.

Nicaragua had gone through the Sandinista Revolution which basically got rid of the old guard and put in place a new, younger regime, not one acceptable to the U.S. but nevertheless it did politically mobilize students, women, and a cross-section of society while putting in place a lot of social programs.

Guatemala did not go through such a change of the old guard. It tried to during the mid-40's until the mid '50s when the U.S. government stepped in and supported our commercial interests in the banana plantations and helped topple the leftist revolutionary government presided by Arbenz in a coup. The history of Guatemala was altered very much by our intervention. As a result, a counter-revolution ensued that was anti-Communism and led by authoritarian governments backed by the military. When President Arzu came into office and began to dismantle the military, the biggest problem was that in retiring a lot of the generals and the top brass, a lot of these officers had properties and supporters in rural areas. They carried on as local barons engaging in a lot of nefarious activities. This was a big problem for the Arzu government, especially because he retired so many military at once.

There was also a need to get civilian control over the military. There was a presidential guard that was run by the military rather than the president, and served more to keep the President in line than protect him. That had to be reformed to fulfill a peace accord commitment but it took a long time to weed out the old guard. There were a lot of serious issues to contend with, a lot of impunity issues in the courts.

That's why we had a major judicial program, working with the ministry of justice to help streamline the docket and improve procedures, so justice could be served with due process. Jeff Borns was the head of our democracy office and Steven Hendrix coordinated that project. We helped set up justice centers – we supported about a dozen of them around the country; some worked better than others. We helped set up local mediation groups that were supported by local civil society and collaborated with the justice center in their area so that some of the minor civilian-type disputes could be handled in these mediation centers and not clutter docket of the justice center. There were difficulties; sometimes we had to deny funding to a justice center because it was overly politicized and not providing due justice. We were very strict in the criteria for our aid to justice centers. Steven Hendrix wrote this experience up in a published article. [even E. Hendrix: Guatemalan "Justice Centers". The Centerpiece for Advancing Transparency, efficiency, Due Process and access, 15:4, American University international law Review 101 (2000) Pages 813-831, Pages 832-851 and 852-867]. Steve went on from Guatemala to a distinguished career and is now a director.

We were supporting the secretariat for implementation of the peace accords, the Peace Secretariat (SEPAZ). We worked closely with its director, Raquel Zelaya and her deputy, Ricardo Stein of to plan a series of activities implemented through grants to local organizations. Tish Butler, my deputy was our representative to that secretariat and the committee that programmed those resources. That program was an important part of helping to build and consolidate the peace in Guatemala.

We had a particularly moving program in support of the peace accords, which was helping the Association of Forensic Anthropologists go into villages and work with the villagers to uncover mass graves and give the victims proper identification and burial and help the community heal. We collaborated with the UNDP (United Nations Development

Program) and Dutch aid on that one. I must say, those programs really moved you when you saw those villagers come to terms with the horrors of the conflict and try to find some closure and turn the page. It was a very small project, but you just had to take your hat off to them. This group of anthropologists were truly admirable. When we had high-level visitors, they often wanted to meet with the members of that association and some of the villagers they had aided to hear their stories about how this had helped them come to terms with their losses and move on. These communities inevitably feel that they're at fault. They feel they somehow have done something wrong, that they are somehow guilty of the horrors they suffered. You have to relieve them of that guilt and give them the elements to be able to venerate their dead and lost ones. For example, it may involve erecting a monument in the town square commemorating the events, and giving them counseling that helps them accept it wasn't their fault, that there were bad people who did bad things to them, and that as a community they're stronger than that, and that they've got to come together and move on.

We also had a project on the Mexican border in the Ixcán, helping revive that area that had seen a lot of conflict. Even building a bridge between a village that was on the side of the military and a village that was on the side of the guerrilla. The project brought them together to build that bridge. The symbolism was terrific and the actual bridge was important for opening up local trade. The Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) implemented the project with a team of agronomists and engineers headed up by James Schenck, who I had met when he was Peace Corps director in Nicaragua. That project was also very worthwhile.

The other most noteworthy endeavor we undertook while I was there was to provide major disaster relief and recovery. Hurricane Mitch devastated Central America. I have some statistics I pulled up for the record. Hurricane Mitch hit Central America in October and November of 1998. It sat over Honduras and parts of Nicaragua and Guatemala and Belize for about four days and then moved off and then came back. It dumped a lot of rain and wind on the region. It killed over 10,000 people. It affected over 500,000 people. It damaged crops, housing, infrastructure in an estimated amount of \$8,000,000,000. It was the first super-storm. We would later have to deal with the tsunami in Asia and Katrina at home and since then there have been too many to name. But this was the first super-storm as I recall where OFDA had to deal with the whole region. Maybe with the exception of the Sahelian droughts in the '80s; that was a regional disaster too.

A storm of this magnitude was really most unusual, and the devastation was terrific. President Clinton mobilized the entire cabinet and told all agencies to do what they could to support the effort that OFDA and USAID would coordinate. It fell to each USAID mission to coordinate relief and recovery assistance in country. In Guatemala, the Zacapa area had been badly affected. The Guatemala mission worked mainly on helping rebuild the irrigation structures that had been washed out. From a regional perspective, there were regional coordination efforts that fell to USAID's Central America Program for which we were allocated some regional funds.

Honduras was the most affected country. The capital was devastated by mudslides. The government became inoperative as its leaders and officials raced home to try to respond to the disaster. It was nearly a total collapse in Honduras. The northern, poorest part of Nicaragua got hit. El Salvador suffered some effects, and the Zacapa valley in Guatemala. Belize and Costa Rica, suffered very little. So we worked on a set of activities, all of the missions, which we coordinated with each other. Following a donor meeting in Washington we'd adopted a common strategy for rehabilitation and construction. The Swedes took a lead, they even issued a set of Stockholm principles for managing all of this disaster assistance.

At USAID we underscored the importance of technical and diplomatic coordination in-country and across countries. Each country established a project inspector's office to be managed by an international firm; this was to ensure there was no corruption in the implementation of such a large-scale response. You'll recall in the Nicaragua earthquake in 1972 the funding had been captured by the Somoza government which hadn't done much to help Nicaragua recover from that earthquake.

Great emphasis was put on enlisting citizen participation and involving local governments in responding, setting priorities, making decisions, and in the oversight. As a result a whole slew of complementary programs were thought necessary to strengthen civil society to play the role foreseen for them in rule of law and anti-corruption. It was a big deal, and it lasted more than two years in which we were all engaged. There was even a consultative group meeting held in Madrid at the end to see what had been achieved and what else was necessary.

National coordinating mechanisms were set up at the very highest levels of government, with our ambassadors in charge of coordinating the joint effort – U.S. ambassador, Frank Almaguer headed the coordinating committee with the President in Honduras. Similar coordinating committees were set up in Nicaragua and Guatemala. Those committees later led to a policy dialogue committees. The one in Guatemala was very effective in bringing to the attention of President Portillo a number of serious policy issues he faced in corruption in customs, in his own ministries, and whole slew of other issues. USAID served a secretariat function and I accompanied Ambassador Prudence Bushnell to all of those meetings with President Portillo.

Disaster responses have to be probably the best example of humanitarian assistance. They demonstrate what USAID and the U.S. government can do to help countries in times of dire need. I participated in a number of disaster responses in my postings; I think that is one of the strongest elements in our USAID structure and it deserves all the support and resources needed. If anything, disasters and humanitarian needs are growing. Disasters are a lot more frequent and severe than say 20 years ago, when we thought USAID's main business was development assistance, while disaster response was an occasional thing that we'd deal with for six months then leave it be until the next time a disaster struck. We live in a different world. The risk of disaster and the associated vulnerability to affected people is there continuously; we need to be prepared for it. The humanitarian crises that conflicts generate are enormous; the migration problems we're seeing around

the world with the flow of refugees – not just immigrants seeking better economic livelihoods, but real refugees whose lives are in danger and have been uprooted. Today OFDA is vital and we should recognize it for the tremendous good it does in this world. My soap box for the day. (Laughter)

Q: When you have a moment, you can go on the website for the oral histories and you'll find an oral history by Ollie Davidson who spent about 15 years in the beginning of OFDA, setting it up and expanding it and making all the partnerships. You'll find it very instructive.

CARNER: Have you interviewed Bill Garvelink?

Q: No, I have not. I don't think we have.

CARNER: You might reach out to him. His experience from so many different vantage points might be quite interesting.

There was one other aspect of the Guatemala assignment I wanted to highlight. While I was there, coffee prices collapsed. Of course, coffee in Central America like bananas is a major export. The health of the coffee sector is not only important to the landed gentry and the coffee barons, but to the smaller farmers, the seasonal laborers, and the rest of the sector who depend on coffee production, processing and marketing to earn their living. The coffee prices collapsed in large part because the World Bank had helped Vietnam develop coffee without paying much attention to the capacity of Vietnam to flood the world market. Of course, the Vietnamese being as industrious as they are were able in a very short span of time (four or five years) to develop low-grade coffee for mixing or blending with your canned supermarket coffee in such quantities that it brought prices down to about 45 cents a pound. In Central America, it costs about 65 cents a pound just to produce coffee. If you want to make money, you have to sell it at 80-90 cents a pound. The contraction in coffee prices created a serious crisis. USAID dealt with it strategically, helping growers develop gourmet coffees and helping others to switch to other crops, in effect helping sort out the sector in Central America. In Guatemala, where we were already supporting the cultivation of high quality coffees in higher altitudes, of which Vietnam doesn't have a whole lot. We helped introduce a grading system and auctions, and began to promote partnerships with the likes of Starbucks to help overcome the immediate drop in prices. This strategy succeeded in saving the sector but it did mean that the lower-grade coffee producers had to find alternative income sources; we also looked for programs to help them grow other crops and get out of coffee.

The upshot of the coffee sector restructuring was that those seasonal laborers and small coffee growers who had to get out of the sector lost their income source and began to suffer (especially their children) serious effects from undernutrition. We began to see children in villages that supplied labor or relied on low-grade coffee production showing signs of acute malnutrition.

Our health and ag staff brought this to my attention, saying that there was a serious problem beginning to develop. I went to Ambassador Bushnell with a PowerPoint that Brian Rudert our ag officer had provided and said, “Here’s the reality of what the impact of the collapse of coffee prices is doing to the rural sector; this is a humanitarian crisis and we need to alert President Portillo and the government to this problem.”

She agreed, so off we went with our PowerPoint to show it to President Portillo and a couple of his key ministers. He was as shocked as we were, and his health minister said, “That’s absolutely correct, Mr. President. This is what my medical staff in those areas is seeing as well.”

Then President Portillo said we need to bring this to the attention of the nation so we can mobilize resources to deal with this problem. Portillo asked, “Can you do a presentation to the cabinet in Spanish?”

The ambassador looked at me and I said, “Sure.” We polished and translated the PowerPoint and I presented to the cabinet with the ambassador, the president and the vice president sitting on the dais and me before the microphone looking up at them, with TV cameras beaming down. In effect, I am delivering Brian Rudert’s amended presentation to the nation, warning of a severe malnutrition crisis.

In the meantime, we had been alerting OFDA and the Food for Peace Office to the seriousness of this. We had trouble convincing the latter; they said, “Guatemala’s a middle-income country, how can this be? Any malnutrition there has to be structural arising from general poverty.” We showed them the spike in data and explained the coffee crisis. In the end OFDA sent a DART (Disaster Assistance Response Team) team and they confirmed there were a lot of punctual nutrition problems. As a result, we were able to get the aid resources we needed to help the ministry of health set up nutrition diagnostic and treatment centers. Our health staff in conjunction with ministry personnel conducted a survey of the municipalities at highest risk of malnutrition and drew up a map of 35 seriously at-risk municipalities. Based on that map, nutrition centers were placed in those municipalities where mothers could bring children for diagnosis and then for therapy. The therapy included oral rehydration treatments, but also feeding; we were able to mobilize additional PL-480 Title II resources to help as well. We piggybacked on our ongoing nutrition activities and engaged some of our NGOs who were working on rural development. I went to see the private sector associations and asked if they could mobilize contributions in cash and in kind, for example donate powdered milk and other things to supply these centers. As a result, Guatemala avoided a major child death toll among these very marginalized populations that were at risk.

It helped that we were supporting quality coffee and putting in place alternative income sources whether it be through microenterprise and other activities, along with the recovery of coffee prices and longer term contracts with gourmet coffee suppliers (thanks to Starbucks). I worked closely with the coffee association. That took up a lot of time.

The coffee crisis caught Administrator Andrew Natsios' attention. When he visited Costa Rica for a close-out of the Costa Rica mission, I was able to brief him. As the Central America Program Director at USAID/G-CAP, I had been invited to that ceremony. Before we had dinner Andrew said, "What's going on with this coffee thing?" I walked him through all of the ins and outs of the coffee crisis and what problems it had caused. When he went back to Washington, he was seized with the issue. He provided all the support to Central America that we needed. We had NGOs working with coffee farmers like CLUSA, the Cooperative League of the USA. These NGOs put out all they could to help small farmers meet the standards of Starbucks so they could get three-year contracts and get \$1.10 a pound for their gourmet coffee. This was thanks to an alliance under the Global Development Alliance.

The coffee crisis dovetailed with the start of the roll out of the Global Development Alliance (GDA). One of the first in-country global development alliances was with Starbucks as I recall. Another GDA supported initiative was the creation of a Coffee Corps. Just to tell you how sometimes things work out in our business, I was invited by TechnoServe. Peter Riley was president of TechnoServe then; we had done a lot of things together starting in Nicaragua and I was sold on TechnoServe's approach. They were one of the few NGOs that focused on income generating activities from a business perspective. Their motto was "Business solutions for poverty." I got invited to a board meeting in New York by Peter. At dinner I met a lady from Proctor & Gamble and somebody from Starbucks along with a staff person from the Global Development Alliance. We started talking about the coffee crisis and how we ought to set up some kind of exchange where people – perhaps retired executives or retired people with experience in processing or roasting coffee – could get together and help the Central Americans modernize their coffee sector so they could face this international competition.

From that came the idea of thinking up a coffee corps. It also primed Starbucks' interest in helping Central America and elsewhere surmount the crisis. We started suggesting that Starbucks ought to be looking at the crisis, as a member of the TechnoServe Board. Starbucks was getting coffee from Kenya but not from Central America. One thing led to another and Starbucks representatives visited the Guatemala mission and Brian and I ran them through coffee crisis 101 – I was becoming quite an expert on coffee by then. They found what we were saying very interesting; they took the long-term enlightened view that it was in their interest to make sure that Central American gourmet coffee growers didn't go under. I went to see the Guatemalan National Coffee Association (ANACAFE- "Asociacion Nacional de Cafe"), and I explained the Starbucks initiative and said this isn't just about the big guys, you have to bring the little guys in so they can take advantage of gourmet coffee deal with Starbucks. I would say that was a pretty successful effort. I'm sure if you ask the coffee growers in Central America about that period that USAID will get very positive reviews for its actions. Not only in Guatemala, but in Nicaragua as well.

I must say, that's one of my favorite stories.

We were doing about \$30,000,000 a year in Guatemala on the bilateral side and about \$15,000,000 on the regional side. On the regional side we were working on trade facilitation, reducing and harmonizing customs regulations with Central American trade ministers. We were working on harmonizing labor issues and labor market regulations. We also had a big environmental program that was working on the “pasillo de la pantera”, the jaguar corridor, which was meant to be a green conservation zone going from Chiapas, Mexico to Costa Rica..

Q: I have to interrupt you for a second because my son was a Peace Corps volunteer in Guatemala in a place called Chisec; Brian Rudert saw what they were doing with community ecotourism and provided some AID money to the NGO and youth group he was working with. They fostered some successful tourism programs with the local community. Then my son was involved with setting up this panther corridor program.

CARNER: It would have been a section of this whole corridor.

Q: As I heard the story, he was there for three years (did some work for Idaho State at the end of his Peace Corps stage). Then there was an election in Guatemala and the Mayans who didn't own any land (they had been squatters) petitioned the government to get title to their land because they were participating in the panther program, and the new president gave it to them. My son -

CARNER: President Alvaro Colom.

Q: Yeah. My son was back in the States and got this urgent call, “You have to come back here because we have to convince these people not to sell their land, now that they own it!”

CARNER: We also had an important environmental program in Guatemala especially in and around the Mayan archeological sites. That program probably provided the NGO grant that your son as a Peace Corps volunteer was working with.

The regional program was most directly helping Central Americans develop the Pantera Corridor and each USAID had a bilateral project that reinforced it. Thus USAID/Nicaragua helped create the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve.

The regional program helped Central American governments harmonization different policies. In doing so, we helped strengthen the Central American institutional structure. In Central America, you have the Central American Secretariat for Economic Integration (SIECA) which is moving toward a free trade zone. Given that Central America is populated with so many small countries, getting this kind of regional policy harmonization and institutional coordination is important to their long-term prosperity and security. In recent years, other agencies in our government have worked with Central Americans to coordinate on security or immigration or drug trafficking.

As I was nearing the end of my second tour in Guatemala, I got a lot of queries regarding what I wanted to do next. Some suggested, “Why don’t you come back and be a DAA?” A Washington assignment at that stage of my career did not appeal to me. By then, Washington had become filled with political appointees many with little development experience. DAAs jobs were not what they once were. So I was not taken with that. I said no to an awful lot of things. While I attended my last mission directors’ conference in Washington, the Deputy Administrator Fred Schieck called me to his office and asked, “What do you want to do?”

I said, “Retirement is looking awfully good.”

He said, “Isn’t there anything in this agency that would entice you?” and he ticked off several possibilities in Washington, as well as going back overseas, which we doubted Human Resources would approve. In my 31 years with USAID I’d served 27 overseas!

I replied, “I’m a firm believer in quitting while I’m ahead. I just finished one of the best assignments I’ve ever had. Great mission, great program and fascinating country. I think it’s time for me to move on while I’m young enough to enjoy retirement.”

Fred insisted, “Isn’t there’s anything that might interest you?”

I said, “I might consider something like the delegate at the DAC (Development Assistance Committee).”

He said, “Kelly Kammerer is out there but he’s not due to retire any time soon.”

That was the end of the conversation. I organized my retirement straight from Guatemala to Spain, to simplify the transport logistics of our household effects. I attended the retirement course and organized out my affairs stateside. This was August of 2002.

By late September, I got a call from the LAC bureau asking if I would lead a management assessment team to Colombia. I said sure. I’d done one before; it’s fun to go to a mission and assess what’s going on and try to be helpful. While I was in Colombia on this assignment, I got a call from Schieck. He asked, “Are you still interested in that Paris job? Because Kelly just told me he’s planning on retiring next summer.”

“Well, let me check with my wife.” I checked with her, and we weighed the pros and cons. The most important one being we were exactly a nine-hour drive from our home in Girona to Paris and could go back and forth for long weekends and summer vacations. Plus I knew the DAC; I’d been offered it once before but I’d preferred to be more engaged in the field.

I accepted the offer; Andrew Natsios approved it. There was a political appointee, Patrick Cronin, heading up PPC that had heard good things about me. I interviewed with him and he said, “My main reason for picking you is I want someone at the DAC that can make it

field-relevant. The DAC seems to operate in an ivory tower, lost in its donor coordination mechanisms that have little to do with field realities.”

I said, “That’s what I know, the field. Count on me to do that.”

He was also working with Andrew on reforming USAID, but he didn’t stay around very long; he went on to bigger and better things.

The DAC for me was a nice transition to retirement. I arrived at the DAC in September 2003, expecting to stay 2 years. This was an easy assignment; no money to manage, and a secretary who was very effective and a delight to work with by the name of Catherine Guerin. I’d go to meetings, meet interesting people, then we debate development.

I had travelled to Paris in March for a briefing. Kelly was frustrated with the DAC chair and warned me that he had trouble synthesizing and summarizing the discussions and tended to get the conclusion wrong, while siding with the Europeans when there were disagreements. I overlapped with that DAC chair for about six months. Then Richard Manning arrived to take up the chair, a real professional from DFID (Department for International Development), the British aid agency. We hit it off right away. As the U.S. delegate I was one of three vice-chairs of the DAC, who helped the DAC chair define the agenda and sort through issues and do tasks as designated by the chair.

What Richard and I found was that the DAC was still very process-oriented, not very strategic or purposeful in what it was trying to achieve. He too wanted to make the DAC more relevant to the field and more policy oriented. He wanted the DAC to help document good practices that were relevant to the field and then make them general practice among donors. For the first year we worked on internal issues of the DAC, making sure proposals came with budgets (for a long time, they didn’t), prioritizing the DAC’s work, setting up an agenda for research relevant for policy makers – just the simple bureaucraties for helping an organization become more strategic and purposeful.

I spent my first year and half on this internal DAC business, getting acquainted with procedures, working with the secretariat on different issues, weighing in where I could to get documentation right, going on peer reviews to assess other countries and the like. Peers Reviews are probably one of the DAC’s most useful exercises along with its compilation and analysis of comprehensive aid statistics. I was representing U.S. positions in the face of a Washington increasingly moving away from the multilateral approach. This was the Bush II administration. It was questioning our involvement in many multilateral institutions and there wasn’t much interest in the DAC. It fell to me to soften the edges. By drawing on my field experience and considerable autonomy on aid delivery issues I was able to have a positive influence.

Then along came the Aid Effectiveness Agenda. We started preparing for the Paris Declaration which was signed in April of 2005 six months in advance. This was my first experience on seeing how a major international meeting was organized. To be sure I had

participated in many donor consultative groups as a member of the US delegation. I was now seeing the process from the inside.

The Paris Declaration established five principles for improved donor effectiveness: *country ownership*; *alignment* (by donors with country priorities, plans and strategies); *harmonization* (among donors); *managing for development results*; and *mutual accountability* (between the donors and the partner country). It called for defining a set of targets to measure progress; the initial indicators in the declaration were generally political aspirations as opposed to measurable indicators; and this caused quite a bit of hesitation for the U.S. delegation before signing the declaration.

The Europeans took aid effectiveness very seriously; for them it was a political agenda responding to a mobilized and active civil society which their own parliaments were insisting on.

In contrast, the U.S. government saw it as a technical challenge best left in the hands of USAID, and of little political significance at home. To Andrew Natsios' credit, he came to the international meeting in April 2005 and signed the Paris Declaration on behalf of the USG with some reservations put into the final document. Afterward, the Treasury people said, "What have you committed the U.S. government to? We didn't have a chance to see this!"

He said, "You guys thought it was all technical and didn't matter much."

"Well, we have problems with country systems, with managing for results..."

One of the reservations Andrew had insisted on dealt with country systems. Country systems means using the aid-recipient's planning and financing mechanisms. For the U.S., the implications it had for providing budget support were still hard to swallow. Plus we were all cognizant of the institutional weakness and the risk of corruption in many countries. So to adopt country systems one needed to proceed cautiously and case by case. Europeans felt strongly about these issues, but accepted our caveats and agreed to try "to make progress toward them." Indeed, the Millennium Challenge Corporation had been trying to use country systems, so it wasn't so far-fetched to think that USAID under the right circumstances could also use country systems to manage projects and sector programs without having to provide general budget support.

On managing for results, we pointed out the contradiction in their stance: "What about all your entreaties to the international financial organizations about being accountable and delivering results? You don't think bilateral donors should be accountable for results to their partners too? What's going on?" There were a lot of seeming contradictions at first in the way Treasury reacted. I suspect it was more a question of they not having got involved soon enough to influence it, and maybe some higherup thought the staff wasn't paying close enough attention; maybe some people got their knuckles rapped. It is worth pointing out that Treasury approaches development from a banker's financial perspective whereas A.I.D. has a broader socio-economic-environmental-institutional development

focus. I was impressed that DFID, as a development ministry was responsible for all donor coordination, with the bilateral aid agencies and the multilateral banks. As such their positions were coherent and strategic rather than only issues focused. Consequently the UK punched well above its weight in international donor fora.

In any event, the Paris Declaration set in motion a process that became really intense. We started off by setting up task groups at the DAC on each of these principles, including a task group on defining indicators to measure progress against the Paris Declaration. I wound up being the co-chair of the Joint Venture on Measuring the Paris Declaration, as well as participating in a lot of the other task groups.

All of a sudden, the agenda in Paris became a lot more interesting to me. It reminded me of the reforms we tried to do in the Asia bureau back in the '80s. It tapped in to my inclination to look for ways to reform processes and relationships. I've always felt we could do a much better job of partnering with host countries and that the donor-recipient relationship needed to be more of a partnership in a development enterprise of mutual interest and commitment, and that if one side didn't share that, it was hard to succeed.

The Aid Effectiveness Agenda responded to many of my own experiences in the field, by promoting the things that really make aid effective, leaving aside some of the grandiloquent rhetoric in the declaration. I focused on the things that seemed to me grounded in field realities. I pushed very hard to convince Washington of its significance. Andrew Natsios was receptive; he was already beginning to wonder from a Washington perspective whether USAID had become too bureaucratic with too many hindrances to effective implementation. He was working on ideas for a book and writing articles in that vein.

We did define the indicators and put down some benchmarks, and set up a process for measuring progress. Then in September 2008 there was a mid-term meeting. The Paris Declaration was supposed to last five years; this was the mid-way mark to see what progress was being made and to come up with an action agenda to close the gap between progress documented and the deadline for meeting the commitments in the declaration. So we gathered some 1200 delegates in Accra, Ghana to review the Paris Declaration and come up with an action agenda. Henrietta Holsman-Fore who was now AID administrator attended and played a facilitator role. An action agenda was approved that aimed to accelerate progress particularly on things like adopting country systems.

The Accra Action Agenda was finally approved despite some hemming and hawing and some grandstanding by some European ministers that it wasn't prescriptive enough in terms of specific targets. Henrietta kept her eye on the ball, guided us to a successful conclusion. The Ghanaians expressed their appreciation for her equanimity and practicality. I must say, our Ghanaian hosts and many developing country ministers were quite upset with the Europeans' behavior. I did a detailed reporting cable on the event.

I retired after that, for the second and final time, feeling that the Aid Effectiveness Agenda had gone from donor effectiveness to aid effectiveness, putting more emphasis

on the partnership aspects. Then three years later the international community met in Busan and came up with a Development Effectiveness Agenda which is what governs donor-host country relations today.

I think the Paris Declaration in retrospect when it's finally evaluated is going to prove to have been quite influential in changing the way donors work with developing countries and the way these countries relate to donors by trying to modernize that relationship so it's more of a partnership and less of a dependency relationship. There's a lot to be said for this work which recognizes the maturity on the part of our developing country partners who today are not the same countries we found 50 years ago when we started pushing aid projects in Asia, Africa or Latin America. I also think we're moving toward being more strategic and programmatic rather than project-focused, being more results-oriented rather than inputs-oriented. All of that speaks to a healthier relationship.

At the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), I saw my job as the DAC delegate, not as being the USAID rep but representing the U.S. government on development issues. After all, I was a member of the U.S. Delegation to the OECD headed up by Ambassador Connie Morella. So I always spoke to my State and Treasury colleagues in the delegation as well as in Washington, along with USAID PPC and the regional bureaus about what they wanted from the DAC and what positions they expected me to uphold in terms of broader U.S. government interests. I also consulted with MCC.

So I got a chance to see the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in its formative years. Early on, (MCC) was pointed in the right direction but then copped out when it came to innovating beyond projects. It fell into the same trap that Congress insisted USAID navigate, where you're counting pennies instead of counting development results. Some MCC senior staff later regretted they'd chosen caution over innovation. They had a long debate over whether they should do budget or programmatic support or projects. They opted for projects, maybe because they had recruited a lot of USAID controllers. (Laughter) Of course, the MCC turned to a lot of USAID staff (and lawyers) to help them set up shop. MCC probably didn't want to test Congress. They missed an opportunity. To this day, I think MCC was set up to compete with USAID. MCC was after all the Republicans' creation at a time when USAID's standing was low. As MCC has expanded its mandate this competition has become more and more evident. It would have been much more efficient to find a way for MCC to work under USAID's umbrella. It would have avoided the growth pains in having to create a whole new agency from scratch and would have improved coordination in the field from the start. Now you have an MCC representative with a couple of staff and a USAID director and fully staffed mission in the same country not necessarily pursuing the same assistance strategy. It also caused confusion among our partner country counterparts.

Q: Another comment on that – I think it's probably factually correct that AID budgets have gone up more under Republican presidents than Democratic presidents.

CARNER: True. But I do think – here is my parting shot. As we move forward and people look at these oral histories and think about reforming yet again USAID and the

development apparatus of the U.S. government, I would say do what you want in Washington but in the field there should be one implementing agency. One development implementing body with one director that coordinates MCC, USAID, CDC (Centers for Disease Control) activities. If we can get over the purity of Peace Corps being separate from government, Peace Corps and any other entity that is supposed to be engaged in development overseas should come under the same tent. Put that entity in charge, have some standard operating procedures for grants, contracts, and programmatic support with shared controllers, lawyers, and EXOs. Have one general director that could be chosen from any of the members of that entity, reporting to the ambassador, and coordinating U.S. government development activities under one roof, with one common strategy, one set of guidelines so the host country knows who to talk to and so we're not tripping over each other as we implement HIV/AIDS (human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome) programs where CDC is out there doing one thing while USAID is doing another in its reproductive health program, and the Department of State's global health maybe saying something different. We are spread out far too much, especially in the field where we should be a tight organization that's working to promote U.S. foreign policy with development being an integral part of development, diplomacy, and defense.

Q: Applause, applause! George, let me ask you at least one more question.

CARNER: Ask as many as you want, and I do have some tips for directors if you want them.

Q: Let's go with them right now.

CARNER: Many times when I was meeting colleagues and had been a director for a tour or two, newly assigned directors would ask me, "What advice can you give me?"

I'd offer some tips, just off the cuff. One day, one of these colleagues (Olivier Carduner) said, "This is terrific – why don't you write it down and send it to Human Resources?" Other directors have since done the same and today there is a very useful document on USAID's website called Tips from the Field, from mission directors and others. I was able to pull up some of those tips that seem most relevant:

-- Keep in mind that in working with other people, there are two sides to every story and you'd better hear both sides before you make up your mind.

--Obligating funds is important but don't let that drive your life. Development isn't about obligating money, it's about using money smartly to achieve development results.

--As a director or office director or team leader, you need to run meetings well. I have wasted more time in poorly run meetings that had no clear outcome, when nobody knew what was decided. Meetings should be focused and short, and only include those who need to be there; there needs to be an agenda and a preparatory document circulated in

advance; the meeting's purpose needs to be clear in advance and reiterated at the beginning: The purpose of this meeting is to decide the following – or whatever.

Q: There's a great learning tool called "Meetings, Bloody Meetings"; the star is John Cleese the British comedian. I've used that for training and most of the points you gave are in that training video; you might want to look for it.

CARNER: Okay. I think we both agree, effective meetings are essential to leadership; you can't be a leader if you don't run a good meeting.

-- You need to manage the ambassador smartly; build confidence, avoid surprises. We've already talked about how important it is dealing effectively with the ambassador.

--You need to cultivate counterparts not only in the capital but in the field – mayors, local officials, civil society. As a USAID officer, one of the most important things is building relations of trust; that distinguishes us as field people from visitors just parachuted in. The great value of a resident mission is building resident relationships of trust – you can call people by their first names, joke with them. That helps prepare for when there is a tough issue to resolve, so you can sit down and talk about it frankly and find a solution. Also you can judge who you can count on; a lot of our counterparts are not necessarily people you can trust in a pinch. It goes both ways.

-- Have in the front of your mind a few key policy messages you want to deliver. This is a great tactic. It's said that Joe Wheeler used to keep a three-by-five card with six policy messages on it and he would repeat them whenever he had a chance – with a minister, at social events. I've always been surprised at the opportunities you have, and sometimes in the least expected place, where you plant an idea, and it manages to thrive and influence a decision-maker later on. It can be a parliamentarian, an adviser to the president, or an influential journalist.

--I'm a great believer in getting out in the field. I think anybody who stays in the capital is missing the point. You really have to see for yourself what's happening. Talk to the beneficiaries of the projects as well as the implementers. I got out once every six to eight weeks no matter how busy I was and really pushed my staff to get out, too.

--Use portfolio reviews and field trips to stay on top of projects and their progress. I wanted to hear about problems; I didn't say, "You fix it, I don't want to hear about it." I wanted to hear about it and then I asked what I could do to help the implementers fix it.

--As a corollary, meet regularly with implementing partners, not one on one but bring them together to cross-fertilize so they better understand what the mission's trying to do across sectors (and especially within a particular sector), and also so they can understand what each other is doing. I've been amazed to find out in such quarterly meetings – people say to one another, "I had no idea you were working in the same municipality we are!" That doesn't make sense. I guess the internet makes it easier to geoposition projects

today. But before the internet and GPS (global positioning system), direct communication was the only way to find out what people were doing out in the boonies.

--Similarly, you should meet with the FSNs regularly. We all know that making the most of our Foreign Service Nationals is in everybody's interest as they are a great value to USAID. Our FSNs provide such exemplary service across the world and keep us going; we keep moving on and they stay on helping provide the needed continuity.

--Read the local papers closely. I've always felt in a country with a lively press this is invaluable to our work. That implies being able to read the local language. The local press is full of interesting tidbits. You want to be sure you're not in it in a way you don't want to be!

--The other thing is get ahead of the assignment cycle. I don't know if the assignment cycle has changed all that much since you and I were in the field, but I always called my EMS (Executive Management Section) in the regional bureau well in advance of when the assignment cycle opened. I'd say "I've got these people coming up for assignment and I want them placed in good positions. But I also want to fill their positions with people who will reinforce the team, not people who will obstruct it; who do you have?" I'd reach out to and woo candidates I wanted and do my best to convince them they would have the time of their life by working in our mission. I didn't always succeed, but I got a lot of the people I wanted and avoided people who had no business joining a high performing team.

--Pay special attention to financials and internal controls, and work closely with your controllers, EXOs and Lawyers. They have a lot to offer and a mission director is foolish not to draw on their expertise and good advice to keep you out of trouble!

Q: George, let me ask you one final question. This has been a great interview; I think it's going to be a best-seller as they say. When you finally retired, you moved to Barcelona and you stayed there? Have you done consulting?

CARNER: Actually I live in Girona province north of Barcelona, on the coast, in a small vacation community. If it hadn't been for the internet, I would have been really isolated and probably unable to consult. Yes, I have done a fair amount of consulting since retiring in December of 2008.

Q: Are you still doing it?

CARNER: No. I was actively consulting from 2009 to 2015. Mainly in response to people soliciting my help at OECD, USAID, the U.S. German Marshall Fund, and some DAC member countries. I did some consulting for Slovenia and the Catalan aid agency. The DAC called me back to do a couple of things, notably to do some pre-membership reviews for three Eastern European countries and a special review of Chile. As a result of the membership readiness assessments, those Eastern European countries are now full DAC members. OECD also had me go out to Guatemala to help set up a decentralization

project. USAID asked me to do an assessment of the Regional Bureaus role when the F Bureau was created at State to coordinate foreign aid policy and budgets. It also asked me to prepare a position paper for the UN meeting to review progress toward the Millennium Development Goals after 10 years in place.

I followed a couple of rules in my consulting: one that I only wanted to do short term consulting; and two, that I did not want to commit too much time after the consultancy beyond completing the report. I preferred one shot assignments. I was consulting maybe 40% of the time for a couple of years, then it went down to 25%, then in 2015 to 10%. Then the calls stopped. I did turn down a lot of chief of party offers or to join contract firms to capitalize on my name and network of contacts for proposal writing to USAID. I made it clear I wasn't interested in padding their proposals.

I also wrote a few articles on development for in-house journals – French AID asked me to do an article for their Paris-based newsletter on development effectiveness. The Catalan government also asked me to do an article on humanitarian assistance and disaster response. One of the more interesting reports I drafted was on Public Private Partnerships in Agriculture for the U.S. German Marshall Fund. [See *Transformational Partnerships: An Innovative Approach to Food Security in Africa*, U.S. German Marshall Fund (2012), report co-chaired by Jim Kolbe and Jean-Michel Severino]. I had done some writing in the Philippines, as I mentioned earlier but I hadn't come back to it once I got caught up in directing missions. I always liked the idea of doing some writing once I retired.

I've given some lectures at the local diplomatic schools; there's a diplomatic school attached to the University of Barcelona and another run by the Catalan government that gives in-house diplomats' training. I'm still doing a lecture or two and talking to community groups if they're interested in hearing about development work.

In between I've been working on getting my dad's memoirs, other books and unpublished manuscripts re-edited and published. My dad was a writer and poet in Catalan. I wrote a short biography (in Catalan) of his remarkable life which has been published. I did a personal memoir for my grandson and sons that maybe I will convert one day into something of more general interest, but this oral history probably captures much of that.

Q: A very productive use of your time.

End of interview