

DAVID R. ADAMS

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is 10 July 2007. This is an interview with David Adams. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Do you go by David or Dave?

ADAMS: Either one.

Q: Well let's start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

ADAMS: Well, I was born in Washington DC on July 8, 1951, in what was then known as Doctor's Hospital.

Q: My son was born in that, on 9th Street.

ADAMS: That is interesting. I spent the first nine months of my life here before I was whisked off by my mother to Greece to join my father who had recently embarked on his career with the Central Intelligence Agency.

Q: OK, well let's go back. Let's talk first on your father's side? Where did the Adamses come from? What do you know about that?

ADAMS: Well, there is another irony here. Actually my father's name was Koki. He was an Albanian immigrant; he came over here when he was six years old. His father had been in the States for several years establishing, this was back in the late 20's, establishing himself. So my father and his mother came over from Korca, Albania, in the south of Albania to Ellis Island, and they settled in Worcester, Massachusetts. I believe my father changed his name when he was in university.

Q: Well it is a good name if you are in Massachusetts. It is not a bad name.

ADAMS: Well the irony is, not to digress, but my mother's side of the family had their roots in the Revolutionary War. My mother's mother's side of the family hails from Lawrence Washington, George Washington's half brother. They are also linked to the Lee, Custis and the Lee family. They are an old Virginia family. My father was right off the boat.

Q: In the first place do you know anything about what the Koki's were up to in Albania?

ADAMS: Well, I believe my father's town Korca I believe was relatively prosperous, but they also went on hard times as did most of the country even before communism. Here my grandfather worked in a specialty "widget" factory, a tool factory. I think he had tried his lot at farming in Albania. I am not a hundred percent sure exactly what he did. It didn't work. So he had just heard from other relatives. Quite a few Albanians settled in that area of Massachusetts, Worcester, Boston and the corridor in between.

Q: Well then your grandfather was working in a tool factory, is that it?

ADAMS: Yes.

Q: What sort of a family, how big a family did your father grow up in?

ADAMS: My grandparents had two more sons after they came to the States, so three sons and my grandmother and grandfather. Grandmother stayed at home. I don't think she ever worked outside the home. But my father was about six or seven older than his second brother who recently passed away. Actually my father is going strong at age 84 and will be 85 this year. His younger brother just passed away a couple of months ago. The youngest brother died of cancer a number of years ago. But anyway it was the three of them. My father spent a fair amount of time chaperoning the younger two when they were children.

Q: In the first place were your grandparents part of your growing up, I mean as a kid?

ADAMS: Yes, we used to make regular trips when we were in the States. Remember we were in Greece for about six years. My younger brother was born, I have one brother, my younger brother was born in Wheelus Air Force Base in Libya. My parents decided to have my mother fly over to that hospital. We came back in about 1955 or '56, and they bought a house in Falls Church which they are just selling now after all these years. They are moving in with my brother.

Q: Well back to Massachusetts with your grandparents. How Albanian were they?

ADAMS: Very.

Q: They had pictures of King Zog and all that?

ADAMS: Yes they did, and Prince Leka. They spoke very rudimentary English. But my father retains his Albanian to this day. He is fluent in Albanian. He never lost it. But it was an Albanian-American household with the emphasis on the Albanian.

Q: Your father now, did he go to school? What was his education?

ADAMS: He was very fortunate that he was a good student because my grandparents were very poor and they certainly couldn't have afforded a college. But my father did very well at his high school. In fact he was number one in his class when he graduated in Worcester, so he got a full scholarship to Worcester Tech.

Q: Would you spell Worcester for the transcriber.

ADAMS: Worcester, pronounced Wustah.

Q: My daughter went to Clark.

ADAMS: Well, in fact the uncle who just died, his wife worked for years in some administrative capacity at Clark.

Q: What was your father majoring in and all?

ADAMS: Well originally he thought he was going to be going into engineering or a technical area, but he soon found after being in college for awhile that engineering was not something he had a great aptitude for or that he was enamored with. So he actually studied history, he studied psychology and some other subjects. So he was kind of searching for his long term expertise. I think he actually got a degree in history when all was said and done.

Q: How did your mother and father meet?

ADAMS: At a church event. It was in Washington DC. He had come down here to work for the Navy originally. Then after the Navy worked at the U.S. Patent Office for awhile. Then he decided he wanted to go into teaching. Somewhere in there he got his masters in Education and Physics. He also had a minor in psychology at Catholic University. About that time he converted because he was Orthodox, raised Albanian Greek Orthodox. He decided to be a Catholic and converted to Catholicism. My mother was a Catholic. So that I think was part of the equation. So they dated, I think he was in grad school while they were dating. They got married shortly after he finished grad school, I think. He taught in DC schools including for example, St. John's High School. He actually, and I know I am missing something here, he actually was also very, he had a strong aptitude in mathematics. That was why the engineering emphasis at the beginning. He kept that aptitude. So mathematics, and they got married after grad school.

Q: You grew up in a Catholic household. Again how Catholic was it?

ADAMS: Very. He was a convert.

Q: Oh yes.

ADAMS: They are the strongest.

Q: How did that impact on you

ADAMS: Well it certainly planted the seed because I am a very devout Catholic myself, but it took me a long time to get there, because let's face it, I was growing up in the 60's. Even though I spent a fair amount of my time overseas and not imbued with the cultural movements here, it still had an effect on my development. So eventually I followed a similar path as my father.

Q: did you get much of a taste of Albania in your childhood?

ADAMS: You know not in my household. It was when as I began to say earlier, when I digressed, when we did visit my grandparents regularly when we were in the States. I spent my elementary school years in the States, so that is when I remember most of my trips back and forth from this are to Worcester and back. But not so much in my own house.

Q: Politically where did your family fall?

ADAMS: Well they have always been moderately conservative. My mother less so. My mother had a very strong social conscience, as did my father, but my mother it was much more important for her. She for example, got very much involved in literacy, helping refugees overseas learn English at ESL. She had an award from the State of Virginia about 20 years ago. I mean they voted for Kennedy for example, so it wasn't like they were stalwart republicans. The fact that he (Kennedy) was a Catholic helped. But moderately conservative. My father has grown much more conservative over the years, but I still cannot say he is a lockstep republican.

Q: Well then how old were you when you went to Greece?

ADAMS: I was about nine months old.

Q: You were there for what?

ADAMS: A little over five years.

Q: Do you remember much of Greece?

ADAMS: I remember some things, distinct events: a birthday party, school play. I was in nursery school and I think kindergarten in Greece.

Q: And your father at that time was with the CIA?

ADAMS: Yes. What happened was he was recruited because of his Albanian background. They were searching for people who spoke Albanian along with having their expertise. By the time when the Greek Civil War wound down and the Enver Hoxha regime in Albania was solidifying its power, the United States targeted that regime as one that needed to be brought down. Of course they failed miserably. It was, as my father would tell you if you interviewed him, it was kind of a sad. I mean he enjoyed living in Greece with all the benefits of living in Greece, but in hindsight he kind of wished he had quit then and gone back to teaching, which he did eventually. In fact he taught many years after he retired. That was his first love, teaching.

Q: Well then you came back when you were about six years old.

ADAMS: Right.

Q: Where did you go?

ADAMS: We came to this area. We lived briefly with my grandmother and grandfather, my mother's mother and father in Great Falls, Virginia, while my parents searched for a house. About two months or so after we returned, it must have been about 1956 when we returned, or '57. They bought the house in Falls Church where they have been ever since.

Q: Well your mother's parents, how sort of Virginian were they?

ADAMS: My Mother's mother was very Virginian. From an old family; they used to own property in Warrington that used to be called New South Wales. It was a huge estate. So she grew up as a child of privilege, but they lost it all. This is before the depression; they lost it before the depression. I don't know the entire circumstances, and she married a jolly old Irishman. I think he was second generation. He may have been first, but I think he was second though. He was Catholic. She was Episcopalian, so it was a bit of a scandal, but she fell in love with an Irishman, and she migrated to the Catholic church as well.

Q: What sort of a family environment was it with your grandparents?

ADAMS: My grandmother was a very strong individual. In many ways she ran the family because my grandfather was, he was a fireman for most of his career, but he also was shall we say a very gregarious sort. He liked to hang out with the boys and go hunting and fishing. So she was the one who sort of kept things together. He died fairly young, in his early 60's, which was not long after I returned from Greece, so I only knew him for a short while. On a hunting trip he had a heart attack. My grandmother, among other things, came to work for the State Department for a number of years in, I think, first the budget office and then the overseas schools program. Not AID, State Department, so she had at least between 10 and 20 years. She retired from the State Department.

Q: You came back you were obviously just a kid. This is the time when Virginia was hit by the civil rights, desegregation, schools were shutting down and all that. From your family and from your school as a kid did you feel any of that?

ADAMS: You know, I didn't because I think most of that happened after my elementary school years. We went to Germany in '63. We were in Munich. My father had made a decision to stay with the agency after five years, six years back here when he was searching and debating what to do. He dealt with the disappointment of the failures in Albania. He actually used to have men parachute in. He would advise his bosses by the way, that this was a bad strategy but they still went ahead with it. So he can tell you some very interesting things. A number of people died.

Q: I was in Yugoslavia the consular officer during the 60's, and we were having to deal with people coming out of prison who had been sent in by one of our intelligence agencies, mostly military. But they had been sent in during the late 40's, you know, without much regard. These guys would be released and say, "Well Captain Smith promised me that if anything happened he would take care of me." Here we were faced with you know had no idea but we knew they had been doing...

ADAMS: My father was very bitter about that.Q: Right, and I am sure in Albania they didn't even bother to put them in jail.

ADAMS: Yeah, they killed a lot of them. So anyway he had that experience. He returned to Washington and they gave him some work that he enjoyed. He had a job in Munich that looked to be very interesting because he was assigned to work with I think it was Radio Free Europe. That really appealed to him, and he also would interview with refugees that had escaped from Albania. So we were in Germany from '63 to '66. So to get back to your question, then we went straight to Taiwan while he was in Vietnam.

Q: So '63 to '66 you were in Germany.How did you find it as a kid?

ADAMS: Very interesting. I really enjoyed it, although I was in American schools. With the benefit of hindsight I wish that I had been forced to go to German schools, but at the time I didn't want to have to do the immersion route because I didn't know any better. I wish I had again, but in any case, I was growing up in a sense in a military culture although I did get out and meet Germans. My father was very much involved with the German community, not willing to stick with just Americans in the enclosed community where we lived in Munich. So we had exposure to German friends and families. That is where I began to drink beer, I have to admit, at the tender age of 12 or 13, given that there wasn't any age limit so we used to sneak a few now and then. One of the things that really struck me, one of those seminal events that most of us remember was where I was when Kennedy was shot. I was watching a movie. I forget the time of day it was, I guess it was a matinee, although they are six hours ahead, so it may have been the evening. In any case they stopped the movie right in the middle and didn't tell us what was going on. We thought that maybe the movie reel had broken. It was on the military base. So I went home and my parents told me what had happened. So that was one of those things where you remember where you were and what transpired. So but in terms of the civil rights movement, I remember, where I was. I guess I was in Taiwan when Martin Luther King was shot, and Bobby Kennedy. I remember the riots. I was watching it from afar on television. So the point is I was out of the U.S. from '63 to '68, for five years.

Q: As a kid were you much of a reader?

ADAMS: Yes, although I wouldn't say I was necessarily voracious, but I did like to read. Unfortunately television was beginning to catch hold back then. But my parents pushed me to read, and I enjoyed it. The Hardy Boys, I read a lot of the Hardy Boys books.

Q: Well then how did you mesh with school?

ADAMS: I enjoyed school except for mathematics. I hated math, and I didn't do well in it.

Q: Unlike your father.

ADAMS: Yeah. So that was one area. That would bring my GPA down, everything else would be up there, A's and B's but the math would be C's and D's. So that was established early in my career and continued.

Q: You were in Taiwan from when to when?

ADAMS: Taiwan from '66 to '68.

Q: '66 to '68, so you were a teenager basically.

ADAMS: I was a freshman and sophomore. I returned in the middle of my junior year to Washington.

Q: How did you find Taiwan? Was there an American school there?

ADAMS: A very good American school. I really enjoyed Taipei American High School just outside of Taipei. It was international. Unlike the school in Germany which was pretty, almost exclusively military or civilians who worked for the military like my father, the one in Taiwan was much more international. People from a lot of different walks of life, and a lot of Chinese as well.

Q: At that point what sort of courses grabbed you?

ADAMS: History, English. Those were the ones I gravitated toward, and geography. I really enjoyed geography.

Q: Did you get any feel for the Chinese history, culture at all?

ADAMS: Not as much as I should have. I had a Chinese culture course which was quite interesting. But I continued my German instead of taking Chinese, a mistake, but anyhow that is the way it was.

Q: Were there any disturbances during the time you were there?

ADAMS: Not that I recall. It was pretty placid. I was sort of feeling my oats because my father was in Vietnam most of the time. He would come back every couple of months. I think it was every two months he came back. So my mother was supervising two teenaged boys. So she had her hands full.

Q: What were you getting both from your father and from students probably who also had the same connections about our Vietnam. What were you getting from them?

ADAMS: I didn't become politically aware on Vietnam until I returned to the States. At that point in time there was no controversy. I don't recall any political discussion. I knew that my father was in some danger, but it wasn't like it was a pervasive fear of bodily harm or worse. But I didn't really start to hear much about the anti war movement for example, until I returned to the U.S. my senior year in high school.

Q: So you came back in '68?

ADAMS: Yes, January of '68.

Q: Where did you go to school?

ADAMS: Bishop Dennis J. O'Connell in Arlington.

Q: How did you find that. I mean this is your first really tie...

ADAMS: It was tough because even though it was the Washington area which tends to be a transient community, most of my classmates had been in high school the full four years together, or two or three years. So the cliques had been formed. My senior year was OK, but the transition in the second half of my junior year was quite difficult. I remember being very resentful of my father because he was called back to Vietnam for another four or five months. I said, "Why can't I finish my junior year in Taipei?" My grades plummeted my junior year. Then they rebounded as I regained my self-esteem and my social contacts, played football blah, blah, blah, my senior year. So things got better as I managed to get into the swim of things.

Q: In this period, Vietnam, did it permeate down to the high school ranks.

ADAMS: Not too much. It was really the early 70's when I think it exploded. When I was in college definitely. If I may jump ahead briefly, my college career was as peripatetic as I was in life, because I went to three different universities. That is just undergrad, still searching for what I really wanted. I started out at John Carroll University in Ohio. It was a Jesuit school just up the street from Kent State. And then Kent State happened when I was at John Carroll. We had campus riots at John Carroll.

Q: At a Jesuit university that was very unusual.

ADAMS: Yeah it was.

Q: Well what attracted you to John Carroll?

ADAMS: Well, frankly my father was very keen on my going to a Catholic university. I didn't have the grades to get a scholarship or financial need but wanted to go to a good school that would not cost my parents an arm or a leg. So I did some research with my counselor at O'Connell, although I was, I forget why, I was kind of enamored with even though it wasn't Catholic, with William and Mary. I figured with what I knew about it I didn't have the grades or the board scores to get in. Well it turned out I was "borderline" for them and I was placed on the waiting list. It is funny how history repeats itself. Same thing happened to my son, who ended up attending Va. Tech. But I couldn't wait, because W&M was going to keep me waiting until the last minute to see if I was going to get in. So I went ahead and agreed to attend John Carroll. Even though William and Mary wasn't Catholic it was obviously an excellent school and I qualified for Virginia tuition, so my father would have backed it if I had gotten in. But I ended up transferring to William and Mary and finishing there later.

Q: Well then how did you find education at John Carroll?

ADAMS: It was quite good. It was a good school, small, small classrooms, good professors. It wasn't up there with William and Mary, but it certainly wasn't that much inferior. I made friends that I have kept to this day. The main thing about it was it informed me about my best college experience and that was the junior year abroad program in Rome. Loyola University in Chicago I think to this day has a Rome center. Back when I was in school it was much bigger than now. We had the largest overseas junior year abroad program at the time. So I ended up going there before I went to finish at William and Mary.

Q: How did the Vietnam thing impact on you at John Carroll?

ADAMS: Well at John Carroll it was, I remember being on the fence, being very conflicted because I had heard a lot about Vietnam from my father. His view was basically that we needed to hold the line against communism. He was down on the way the war was being prosecuted by the CIA and the military. He thought, my father had a nickname, The Bishop. He was somewhat "holier than though" in the view of people who were more pragmatic or amoral than he was at the CIA. So, on the one hand he would defend the policy, but denigrate the people carrying out the policy, because he thought they just didn't have very high scruples. He worked for Howard Hunt at one point. So anyway I remember being conflicted about it. I guess the closest thing I did to making an anti war statement publicly was when a bunch of us got together when we were going to the Jesuit school in Rome. We signed a petition to the Pope asking that he come out with basically an anti war statement. That the war needed to end. Too many lives were being lost. It ticked off my father, but anyway.

Q: Well at John Carroll and the year abroad, was the priesthood in the offing at all?

ADAMS: For me? Not really, but you know with the benefit of hindsight I would say that maybe if I had the faith that I do now I would have given it more consideration. But no, I was too interested in girls.

Q: Well this seems to be the dividing line. I had one person who was I went to a Jesuit school and was Catholic, Towards the end of high school he realized this wasn't for him. Did you see any as a Catholic in college or maybe even in high school, did you see any conflict within sort of the American society? Being a Catholic was this a problem or not?

ADAMS: Not really. I remember vaguely the prejudice that was out there that my parents talked about to some extent with respect to Kennedy's candidacy. That sort of came out and was out there in the public domain. But I never felt it personally in any way. I know later in life, later when I was a young adult the issues, moral issues of abortion and birth control mattered and not so much gay marriage, that wasn't even an issue. So I began to grapple with those issues but I was sort of shall we say a cafeteria Catholic myself, so I would pick some and ignore others.

Q: But also you were at the time, the Kennedy election marks a turning point. I mean all of a sudden even though there hasn't been a Catholic since, there hasn't been really an issue. Nobody paid much attention to this sort of thing.

ADAMS: Well it is with Romney though.

Q: Well Romney is a Mormon another, we have right now a republican aspirant to be a candidate, Governor Romney who is a Mormon, and this has raised some religious questions. Many of them left, it sort of disappeared with Kennedy. I remember, I was born in 1928. I remember I was told don't mess around too much with Catholic girls because they will raise the children Catholic. Somehow this is supposed to be awful. My son is married to a Catholic. I don't think the kids are particularly anything. The real change in the culture, but it was an important one prior to that. I am sure your parents experienced much of it. What was your overseas experience in Rome?

ADAMS: It was wonderful, it was, there were students from around 90 different schools. It was quite a cross section. Most of them Catholic, not all. It was about an even mix of boys and girls. We were in a beautiful villa. Some of the boys were across the street in an apartment which was fine. Most of us were in the main building in Monte Mario just outside of Rome, up on the hill. The hills out side of Rome on via della Camilluccia. I have been back since and it is now a retirement home, because they moved to a smaller campus soon after my class finished. So I was there during the, what is the right word, Halcyon days. Just really got into the culture, the food. Not so much the Italian woman because we had American girls who were just fine (thank you very much) at the school. I did a lot of traveling. They had a schedule that every other week we had the Friday off to allow us to travel. No classes on that day, but the school year was longer to compensate for it. I remember, and I sort of came into my own as a student because I kind of struggled at John Carroll. By that I mean I got a 3-3.2, but I had to work for it. My first wife was a teacher. To make a long story short, she is convinced that I had untreated ADD. My older son had a pretty severe case of it.

Q: That means what?

ADAMS: Well I had a hard time concentrating. I used to day dream a lot. I really had to force myself unless I found a text or a book for pleasure reading it was eyes out the window. That is one reason why I was poor at math. I never really focused. I found myself, and maybe it was because I was getting to be a better student. Maybe it was because the course of study wasn't as rigorous in Rome although I took extra hours. I was taking 18 hours a semester because I started to get really into it, let's say the education experience. I did really well, about a 3.8. So I really began and it continued when I finished at William and Mary which is not an easy school, my grades stayed up there. I was quite interested in the work. I have the dubious distinction to have been the last person at William and Mary to receive a degree from the university after only enrolling for one year. They told me that, you are the last one. Initially they tried to renege and tell me that we are not going to accept a lot of your credit hours. I said, "Wait a minute, that wasn't the deal when I got in." They backed off and said, "All right any link with any of the courses that we offer and it turned out to be almost all of my courses. But I had extra hours anyway. I had taken 17-18 hours almost every term since my freshman year. So I was fortunate to have had enough to graduate after only one year. But I enjoyed that as well. I really enjoyed my last two years at university,

Q: Well in Rome did you get any feel for European political life or was this at all part of your experience?

ADAMS: You know from an historical perspective I studied Italian politics. Not that I remember a lot of it now, but I remember being quite interested because I was a political science major. But I focused more on Soviet politics because that was really the hot topic. We had an excellent, a Soviet refugee for a professor who taught at Loyola in Chicago but he came over that year sort of on sabbatical to teach in Rome. His name was Marcus. He actually changed his name to something else, but he had a very good reputation. I really enjoyed him, I think I had both Russian history with him as well as a course on Soviet politics. But I also studied Italian politics, but it was much more from an academic perspective. I don't really recall getting interested in any kind of practical way in Italian politics.

Q: You had graduated in what year...

ADAMS: It was '73.

Q: You were a political science major?

ADAMS: Yes, international affairs, political science.

Q: Was there again any concentration at that point?

ADAMS: Well I actually studied Latin America and the Caribbean. I had a top notch Latin America professor, a specialist on Mexico. So I studied under him and I studied under a Haitian, Louis Noizon, who had escaped Papa Doc's clutches and was teaching at both William and Mary and Hampton College. So it was people and cultures of the Caribbean. It may have actually been the first time I got interested in Haiti was back in his course. Then I had some other political science courses, but those are the ones that really stood out.

Q: Did you find going to school at William and Mary which is the top liberal arts school, extant in the Virginia university system. Did you find that one year you were up against sort of being an outsider pretty much there at the time coming from somewhere else or not?

ADAMS: Yes and no. I didn't experience the same cliquishness that I experienced in high school when I finished up at O'Connell. I lived off campus, but I fell in with a group of folks who had been there all four years, and I easily mingled with others in the student body. Then I took Karate and was a member of the Karate club. Plus having sort of being raised as a Foreign Service brat, I had been able to make friendships easily over the years. So this stood me in good stead when I finished up at William and Mary. It was a very fulfilling experience. I really enjoyed it.

Q: So in 1973 you graduated. What were you pointed toward?

ADAMS: I was trying to decide about whether to go to a Harvard MBA program in Iran, because I really enjoyed the overseas experience. I was thinking about Johns Hopkins' program in Bologna or the Harvard program in Iran, but then I wasn't going to get a scholarship and I was determined not to have my parents pay for my graduate school. In fact I had paid for a good portion of my senior year myself. I received an interest free loan from the Hattie M. Strong foundation for my senior year, so my parents paid very little for that last year. But anyway graduate school I was determined not to take any money from them. So I began I got a job through a referral with USAID as a glorified clerk. That was in the summer of '73. Well that was temporary.

Q: Was this in Washington?

ADAMS: It was in Washington, in Rosslyn, back when USAID had offices there. I was in the office of what was then called the Auditor General. Now it is the inspector general. But I had also applied for Peace Corps and I was accepted as a Peace Corps volunteer but not some place I was particularly interested in going. They were going to send me to Korea because I had experience teaching English as a second language in Laos. My father's last post was Laos. I was in university, and he was finishing up his career in Laos and I was going back and forth from the States, John Carroll, to Laos. So Peace Corps offered me an assignment in South Korea, and to some extent it appealed to me because it was pretty modern. But it wasn't what I envisioned as Peace Corps. I wanted to learn a foreign language. Korean was not one I thought I would learn that easily. I wanted to learn one, either improve my French or learn Spanish. But I was going to do it, so literally two weeks before my staging, you know you go to Chicago to get ready to be shipped somewhere for training, I received not a full scholarship, but a very significant scholarship from George Washington University that I had applied for earlier. That coupled with the after hours study program USAID offered paid for all of my grad school. Plus I was working almost full time as a clerk. So I went to grad school at George Washington, and didn't go to Peace Corps.

Q: Did you get your masters at George Washington?

ADAMS: Yes.

Q: What '73 to '75?

ADAMS: Yeah, I began in January of '74, and I finished in the summer of '75. I was actually studying almost full time.

Q: How did you find George Washington?

ADAMS: I enjoyed it. Back then George Washington's reputation overall wasn't as strong as it is now, except some of the graduate programs were pretty good. This was what was known as the SPIA, the School of Public and International Affairs, now the Elliott School of International Affairs. A former ambassador I think, is running it.

Q: Skip Gnehm, is he...

ADAMS: Yeah, Skip. Of course he wasn't there back then. I remember one of my professors was very highly regarded. For example, Peter Dunn in international economics, there were a couple of others, a fellow named Grunewald, I think was his name, was a professor of economic development. Anyway working with AID; I was earlier interviewed by the CIA but what my father had said about the agency, and what I was reading in the press, kind of turned me off. I was pointing more toward what I saw as an altruistic type of international affairs career. So I stayed with USAID at that point.

Q: Did you at this point have a significant other or not?

ADAMS: Yes, I was dating my first wife intermittently. She was a school teacher. I met her actually at a summer job I had before I joined AID. When I finished my undergraduate work I worked for the Defense Department in the Defense Communications Agency as a clerk basically. I met her there, and we dated off and on for something like five years before we got married.

Q: So you got your degree in '75. Then what?

ADAMS: Then I was given a promotion at USAID, civil service. I was a management analyst which it was kind of dry work but it was still part of the bigger team that was doing development work. Interestingly I was accepted as a Foreign Service intern at the same time that I was accepted to a UN program that I had applied for as a lark almost. I say that because the UN program was called the associate expert program. A high falutin' title for intern. They were recruiting people from bilateral development agencies in various countries to work on a time limited basis in one of the 26 least developed countries. So if USAID had offered me the kind of job I had wanted, I would have stayed with USAID at that point, but they weren't...

TAPE 1 SIDE A ENDS.

ADAMS: I was accepted concurrently into the USAID foreign service intern program, and was called the IDI, International Development Intern program, and the UN Associate expert program. I was slated to go to Nepal. My wife to be and I were thrilled about that. We always wanted to hike the Himalayas and all that. We had a disappointment after we got married because I had already accepted the Nepal job and turned down the USAID offer and the UN decided that I should go to Bangladesh instead. It was the Food and Agriculture Organization was the agency, FAO that I would be working for. It was explained to me anyway I didn't have that much of an agriculture background but I was meant to be an assistant to the representative, the top person in the country. The person in Nepal was a Swede who I guess didn't have that much of an agriculture background himself and sent word back that he was looking for somebody else. He didn't want a generalist. So they offered me Bangladesh which I found ironic because I used to joke with my spouse to be, "Oh marry me and I will take you to Bangladesh," because it was in the news. The civil war had ended a couple of years before that. Also the concert for Bangladesh and the famine and floods.

Q: By some it was considered the armpit of the universe.

ADAMS: I had a rough time for a bit because on the one hand I had my eyes, my sights set on Nepal, but on the other hand I said you'd be a hypocrite because you want to help those who are the most in need, so give it a chance. So my wife bless her heart, said, "OK," actually we had already gotten married, "give it a shot." Which was hard because her mother was a widow. Her father had died a couple of years beforehand. She was an only child, so she was leaving her mother by herself. I had a major guilt trip about that. Which led me to Haiti later. I will come back to that in a few minutes. So we just spent two years there. It was a very interesting experience. My first foreign service experience per se was with the UN in Bangladesh.

Q: All right, let's talk, I mean there are two sides, one working with the UN and the other Bangladesh. Let's talk about Bangladesh first. What was, you were there from '77 to '79. What was the situation in Bangladesh while you were there?

ADAMS: Well it had improved from the dire situation that of course they experienced after the war with the refugee issues and being very unsettled in terms of security issues. The Indians of course, had come in and kicked out the Pakistanis and helped the Bangladeshis form their own government and country. But it was peaceful, calm, very poor, very primitive. Its capital was unlike anything I had ever seen. Although Laos was very primitive but in a different way. It wasn't teeming with people. You hardly could go anywhere at that point in time without seeing at least one or two people. Because in an area the size of Wisconsin even back then the population was 55 million. Now it is about 130 million. Anyway so it was tough to take, especially for my new wife. She had studied in France. That was the extent of her overseas living experience was junior year abroad. But we made a go of it. Made a number of good friends. Did a lot of traveling. I had a very nice boss, now deceased. His name was David A.P. Butcher, Alan Palance Butcher. He was British. Before that senior agricultural advisor was basically a position under the UNDP resident representative FAO had a director general at the time, Eduard Saouma, who had been in that position many years and was determined to make the FAO more independent of the UNDP. So he had established a separate FAO representative slot, with people reporting directly to him. That created some tension. So David Butcher was being assigned to the new FAO representative position in Bangladesh. He had been running a big project in Indonesia before that. So we had to basically set up shop and he had to take over projects that had been run by the UNDP, that were now under him. There had been a senior agricultural advisor as I began to mention who actually worked in the UNDP Resident Representative's offices. One of the manifestations of this new independence was that we looked for a separate office down the street from UNDP, not very far away. An American was the UNDP resident representative, Bernard Zagorin, who I think had been a U.S. diplomat and World Bank Representative before that. But he was a bit of a legend. Anyway, so David and I set up this new office and hired Bangladeshi staff, and got to know the various projects and individual project directors. I did a fair amount of traveling in Bangladesh and went to China. I set up the trip as sort of a semi official UN tour with representatives from various UN agencies and went to China my second year. It was very interesting because there were very few foreigners especially Americans being allowed in there unless you were some special connection or were with the UN. So we were the cutting edge of "official" tourism to China if you will.

Q: Well what were the projects that you were involved with in Bangladesh?

ADAMS: Well there was food security. We had for example another British advisor, Hugh Brammer, who had lived there many years, who was an expert on agricultural policy, who worked for FAO, was funded by FAO, but was assigned to the minister of agriculture. We had several people like that in key government ministries advising them on various facets of agricultural policy, food security policy. Then we had folks that were involved in fisheries development, warehousing, jute production, let's see what else. I think those are the major areas, rice production and so forth.

Q: When you say food security, what do you mean?

ADAMS: Food security is in the context of where we were involved primarily from the standpoint of production and storage....saving food for a rainy day or lack of a rainy day. So it was to try to encourage conservation and storage techniques. Interestingly one of the fellows who ran that project was a Haitian, a former Haitian agriculture minister who got a job at the UN with a much higher paying salary, who I got to know and who piqued my interest in Haiti. His name was Ramon Tournier. But food security, there are different aspects of it, but it usually involved production techniques that will create higher yields....a green revolution type thing. Through those higher yields you do not have to consume as much of the crop on a seasonal basis. You can store it. Certain types of produce is more easily dried or otherwise stored. Rice for example, is one that can be stored for some time. Pest control was a big issue though.

Q: When you talk about food security, one thinks of say in the problem of even a dry climate like the Soviet Union where they have a horrible problem, I guess had, some still do, of rodents and other things so that they lose about a third of their...

ADAMS: Yeah, they do in Bangladesh too.

Q: I would think that in a basically moist wet area you would have terrible problems.

ADAMS: You have got humidity; you have fungi growth problems and also rats and various insects did their dirty work.

Q: How did you find the Bangladesh authorities worked with you?

ADAMS: Well it was a certain amount of the *maï½ana* culture. The higher ranking folks, the senior officials were very well educated, highly motivated seemingly, but as with many countries like Bangladesh was anyway, you didn't have much of a bureaucracy underneath them. In other words the training and education was spotty. People had second jobs as happens frequently. So the dedication was not there, poor working conditions frequently with office space being minimal or not well lit. Forget about air conditioning, even fans depending on where you were. This was the pre-computer age, at least personal computers. So not all the typewriters would work and so forth.

Q: I think of at that time the image of an Indian office was a place of an awful lot of clerks running around moving piles of paper but not much coming out. But insistence on form and almost an overly developed civil service that didn't produce much.

ADAMS: Similar. It produced a lot of paper. Back then, however, much of agriculture had some government oversight which made it not very efficient. Fortunately for Bangladesh that oversight in a practical sense it really hadn't been that much of an effect. The farmer was on his own. You had a nascent microcredit movement. This was when I think I remember meeting Mohammed Yunus way back when he was just getting off the ground with the Grameen bank. We helped to fund it. FAO helped to fund the bank. I remember meeting him, being very impressed because even back then he was beginning to get a name for what he was trying to do, but there wasn't much of it going on yet. The farmer had the benefit of very good growing conditions. He had very fertile soil, pretty much countrywide. That is how Bangladesh was able to make it with all those people. The fertility alluvial plain profited from the river flow coming down from the mountains. So they could pretty much grow rice just about anywhere, and lentils, and tea up in mountainous area. So there was agricultural production. Obviously it was low tech in many cases.

Q: This was a period when the miracle rice and the green revolution was really beginning to kick in wasn't it?

ADAMS: Not so much in Bangladesh though, elsewhere, Philippines, elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Bangladesh was behind the curve.

Q: Well was it the thing behind the curve or they didn't need it because of their productive soil?

ADAMS: Well in one sense the incentive wasn't there to do the experimentation but one thing I recall hearing from Hugh Brammer the advisor, the grand old man of agriculture in Bangladesh was on our payroll. I heard him saying that part of the problem was that basically they could have benefited from more experimentation to grow a more hearty variety that would be less susceptible to fungus and pests. That there were ways they could have been more forward leaning.

Q: Well now was there any mechanism either to the UN or to the U.S. government or Philippine government, somewhere working on this problem and was the UN pushing research or not?

ADAMS: Yes I think I think it was primarily through Hugh Brammer's relationship with the secretary of agriculture, Obaidullah Khan, and that he was advising them to be more forward thinking, but the problem was one of resources and one of FAO's weaknesses if you will was that as opposed to say USAID or the World Bank or even UNDP, but UNDP was in somewhat of the same boat. The actual resources for projects were quite limited. The UN, FAO in this case spent a large percentage of its budget, and I think that is probably still the case, on technical assistance and publications. One of the things I did, I liked handling and overseeing the local staff in the office and to do a weekly report and then other similar reports on a less frequent basis on agricultural conditions in the country particularly looking at potential for disaster or drought or insect infestation. I would get data from people with real expertise in the projects and from this fellow Hugh Brammer and then I would put it together and then report back to Rome. So that was in terms of practical engagement of FAO, a lot of it was advice. In other words we couldn't help them finance commodity imports or research of their own to speak of; they would have to do it themselves. They would have to put out their own money, the capital, and they didn't have the capital either. So FAO's impact was somewhat limited. You had these other agencies like the World Bank and USAID were very much engaged. I think they were to some extent financing some of this research. Bangladesh to this day is still very well known however for research in the area of diarrheal diseases. They have an anti diarrheal center I think it is just outside of the capital. They have done tremendous work in pioneering oral rehydration therapy which was then replicated around the world. And also I think vaccinations among other things.

Q: Well while you were there, Bangladesh has the unfortunate history of typhoons and monsoons and all. While you were there did any of that hit you at all?

ADAMS: Yes. I was fortunate enough not to be in the middle of a very bad one, but they did have, they had a tropical storm and even a tropical storm-level tempest would result in significant death. There were a lot of fishermen who were exposed, not getting weather reports in time, etc. Even inland with the water ways, flooding was very easy and people couldn't swim, so you had a lot of people drowning even inland but especially out in the sea., in the Bay of Bengal.

Q: While you were there did you feel like you were wading in sort of a pool of humanity or not. I have heard people from in Calcutta talk about where at some point it gets pretty indifferent to people sleeping or dying out on the streets.

ADAMS: Yeah. You do get, I began to develop a bit of thick hide. It didn't bother me as much as when I was younger and I was in some of these places. Nothing like Bangladesh. You didn't get that overwhelming feeling of being in the midst of a mass of humanity every day, but if you were in certain parts of town, the downtown area you almost get claustrophobic in a sea of humanity. Or if you were on a ferry, you read to this day about overloaded ferries in Bangladesh capsizing, but where our offices were and where the government offices were, and where we lived you did not have that teeming population so you had some relief. You get used to it. I got used to it.

Q: You were working for the United Nations. I realize you were at one of the farthest reaches of its tentacles, but did you get a feel for the UN bureaucracy, the UN method of doing things which often is criticized and often is praised. I mean how did you feel about it?

ADAMS: Yes I did. Part of the problem with the UN that occurred to me was what I call the tower of Babel effect. In that you had people of different cultures and backgrounds trying to work together. It complicated the already complex difficulties involved in international bureaucracy or any kind of bureaucracy. As I said, FAO was not overly endowed with resources. So power was exercised not so much with the purse strings but by being able to hold up or speed along necessary documents to make one's life easier or more difficult depending on how things were managed. So having experienced AID, albeit from a clerical perspective primarily, I found that by comparison that AID was much more efficient, and work for AID was much less frustrating than for the UN. The FAO offered me an onward assignment, but in addition to my reservations about FAO's effectiveness, I realized if I chose to stay with the UN I would have limited opportunities to live in the U.S. In other words I would be living overseas all of my life, and that didn't appeal to me because I had my wife's mother and my parents to consider.

Q: Did you get any feel for the politics of the UN where you were?

ADAMS: Not so much in the macro sense, not so much from the standpoint of what you typically read about, issues that are written about in the press normally. That is to say we heard precious little about what was happening with the UN secretariat in New York and other headquarter agencies. It was much more what is going on at FAO Headquarters; Director-General Saouma was viewed as an authoritarian. You do it his way or it was the highway. The relationship with the UNDP was strained because he was trying to be more independent, and the problem there was to some extent it created difficulties and lack of coordination within the UN system. There was tension with the World Food Program because they had their equities to protect, and there were some similar mandates. The WFP had the resources. It is one of the few UN agencies that had significant resources, not so much money but food, and that is very attractive to host governments. So the World food Program representative was probably the most, from the host government's perspective, most important of all the UN reps in country in a place like Bangladesh. So yes I got something of a flavor of the UN. There was also a competition of sorts, well it wasn't even a competition. It was more something of contempt on the part of USAID officials, contempt for the UN because USAID had much more money, and their staff lived more high on the hog, relatively speaking.

Q: Well the staff of AID at that time, were they benefiting by this huge surplus we had in India which accumulated to be used for...

ADAMS: They might have. I did not get a sense of that. What my perception was that because on paper UN salaries look better, but when you add up all the benefits including housing, the home leave, annual leave, all of that, USAID and the embassy clearly outstrips what the UN has to offer. The UN has a structure within which it often pays to serve in headquarters because you can get better paid, because they are much more keyed on the cost of living than they are on their hardship differential, which was perhaps comparable to that of the USG, but the shipment of household effects, car and all that, forget it. It was at that time much less generous than U.S. government bilateral programs. So housing was, we had a housing allowance that was much less generous de facto than the U.S. government. We lived in a smaller house than many USAID staff which, frankly, was more appropriate given the conditions in the country.

Q: Well then you were there what until 1980.

ADAMS: '79, two years.

Q: Then what?

ADAMS: I decided to come back to the States and I had to re-apply for a job with USAID because my re-employment rights were with civil service. I wanted to enter the foreign service. Well they were hiring in the Latin America and Caribbean region because there was a push to beef up our capabilities in Central America, but also in the Caribbean. This was the beginning of the Central America Initiative. No wait a minute. That was a couple of years later. I actually forget but I do know I wanted to learn Spanish. I wanted to get involved in programs in this hemisphere in part because of the situation of my mother in law. I didn't want to take her daughter halfway around the world again, at least not for awhile. So I was looking to serve in Latin America. So I scheduled an interview. It is ironic that I am talking about it because the fellow that hired me was at a conference I attended yesterday. It has been awhile since I had last seen him. He was doing the recruiting for the Latin America bureau for certain types of jobs for USAID. So he brought me in as sort of a direct transfer. I didn't have to take the exam and all that because I had already had a career in the civil service. AID had a different system. If you had a masters degree in a skill area that was desirable and you had experience in the UN or an NGO that was transferable, if both of the skills are directly transferable, you could be brought directly in. So I did not come back in the intern program. I came as a so called capital projects development officer or project development officer in the Latin America bureau, and was assigned to what was called the South America finance division, the development resources office. That was loosely speaking the repository of technical expertise in Washington for the Latin America bureau for USAID. We had people ranging from economists to agriculture officers, engineers, health officers, micro enterprise specialists and so forth. Because I had an agriculture background with the UN, even though I wasn't a trained ag economist or agronomist, they assigned me to that project design office. My role was one of working with the technical folks to actually write and edit project documentation to justify a new program. Or on the other side of the equation critiquing project proposals that came in from the field. So my countries were Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Brazil. This was back when we actually had some programs in Brazil, although they weren't growing as fast as Bolivia's and Peru's. Even back then anti coca programs were beginning to take root. I spent a lot of time on the Upper Huallaga Peru Project. This was an area where they had significant coca production. So there was a push. The U.S. government was designing alternative crop development programs to try to convince farmers to stay out of coca or at least grow other crops along with coca. Mixed results at best over the years. So I thought I was headed for an assignment after another year or so in Washington, in Central or South America. That was what I was keen on. I think I was taking early morning Spanish. I had the Italian already and some French, so Spanish wasn't that hard to learn.

Well, enter Haiti for the first time in my life. My wife, remember I told you she studied in France. So I was looking for someplace that was close to the U.S. for my next post and that had a culture that I thought she could relate to, because she had some trouble in Bangladesh. Even though English was well spoken, English was a second language. She had some difficulty with the culture, sort of a first warning sign that there could be trouble for the marriage, which later fell apart. But in any case she was not enamored with the foreign service life right from the get go. But she was a trooper. She tried. She was not alone by a long shot. She tried to stick with it. So I thought it would be, I took a TDY to Haiti. They brought me down, because I had some French, and they were looking for someone who had something of an agriculture background and was working in the finance area and had some French to do a TDY to work on an agriculture credit project. So I came down and I enjoyed it. The capital struck me as dirty and run-down, but it had its charm. I had been in Bangladesh; I had been in Laos. Haiti didn't really phase me. The housing was nice, functional. I checked out potential places to live because I had gotten vibes early on from the mission management that they were looking for a new project development officer in the mission. I actually found what turned out to be our future living arrangements. It was rather unusual. It was kind of a California type town house complex. In fact the fellow that owned it and designed it had studied at UCLA, architecture. So it was very nice and not too ostentatious, with good security as well, full tennis courts, blah, blah, blah. I told my wife of the time about it. She seemed interested. I enjoyed the work, and next thing you know I am posted to Haiti, Port au Prince in '81.

Q: You were there this time from '81 to when?

ADAMS: 1984.

Q: What was the situation in Haiti at the time?

ADAMS: It was Baby Doc. Francois Duvalier had been in power for several years. I have always said that if you weren't poor and Haitian, Haiti was not a bad place to live. Very good security. You could leave your door open and not have to worry about crime. In fact the post differential was quite low. I think the post differential was 10%. It was 15% when I got there and they dropped it. But there was quite a bit of official crime and corruption. Voodoo was pretty pervasive, practiced quite openly by government ministers as a way to consolidate their power and scare their underlings into doing what they wanted or they would get a curse put on them. So we at the time we were working both with the government and NGO's. I got my first taste of government corruption. As we suspected, the money we gave them for project implementation, money was being siphoned off. That actually caused USAID at that point to devolve more and more toward working with NGOs in Haiti. In think by the time I left we were doing very little with the government.

Q: This was during the time this '81 to '84 period. Well when you got there, or even before you went out, what were you saying about the Duvalier government?

ADAMS: Well the U.S. was most concerned it seemed with illegal migration even back then. My first ambassador was Ernie Preeg, who later came to work for AID in Washington. He had been DCM in Peru I think before he came to Haiti. He negotiated the first interdiction agreement with the Haitian government whereby U.S. coast guard cutters could come into Haitian territorial waters and pick up would be migrants and bring them back. So that was a priority. Democracy was also something we had begun to talk about with the Haitians, but it wasn't something the U.S. was pushing overtly. It was much more economic development and humanitarian assistance. Feeding programs, agricultural production, health, education, those types of things. I was doing design work in Washington, i.e., writing. For example, the big program I justified was a potable water program that we worked with CARE and to a lesser extent the government. We didn't give the government any money except maybe bought them a car or two. It was all going through CARE because we didn't want it siphoned off.

Q: Well were there screams and yells from various Haitian ministers saying give us some money and all this?

ADAMS: There was some of that. They were still getting money through other channels from us and other U.S. government agencies. So there wasn't, and we were finishing up a road construction project with them which was actually going fairly well. It was secondary, tertiary roads. It wasn't expensive, we weren't paving the big highways. It was hand labor where we were hiring work gangs to dig, grade dirt roads and to basically dig culverts for water channeling away from the natural roadway, that sort of thing, so it was relatively basic stuff. So there was some whining over the trend of working less and less with the government. I was on the implementation side, I ended up sort of by default because of our agricultural officers not getting along with the contractors, ended up serving as the project officer for the Ag credit project that I had helped to design. I got a lot of joy in that. That was really the most interesting thing I did until I did the potable water project; a number of those systems exist to this day. So in terms of longevity the ag project eventually lapsed. We had a very good expat team working with the ag credit agency, but the bureaucracy was stifling. They were siphoning off money it turned out, or getting kickbacks from people who were getting the credit. So I think in fact after I left, the project was still going, the ag credit project, but then when they kicked out Baby Doc about a year or two after I left, the ag credit bureau folded or was shut down because it was seen as being not very effective and corrupt. I actually went back to Haiti and damn near got PNG'd. I went back once, only once after I left in '84. USAID sent me back to lead an evaluation team of a project that I had not been involved in to speak of. A tax reform and public administration program. We were interviewing the head of customs. Haitian customs was notoriously corrupt, and so basically in diplomatic terms, but still quite clearly, I accused him of siphoning money off, and that pissed him off big time. We had a former deputy assistant secretary of the Treasury who was the head of the project team who was mortified. He had to continue to work with the corrupt bureaucrats, poor guy. I guess he smoothed ruffled feathers later. I wrote a pretty scathing report basically saying that it seemed to us that the project was not having the intended effect, which didn't endear me to them further.

Q: This of course was when?

ADAMS: '85.

Q: '85. Being with AID in Haiti, and I have never been there. I only know the accounts I have read. But one gets this feeling that in the first place all the trees have been cut down to make charcoal or whatever. And that the population keeps growing and there is no hope. It is just, I mean when you are going there did you feel like you were rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic or something of that nature.

ADAMS: Possibly when I went there in 2001 I felt that way. But in '81 perhaps I was too young, fresh faced, and naïve. I had just come from Bangladesh which was a real basket case. But in reflecting upon it where there is no doubt Haiti is still a mess in many ways; what has changed is that there is or there are participatory government institutions. That is a big change from the 80s. There is a broad cross section of civil society now. And there is if you will a vibrant political dialog that is ongoing. They are economically kept afloat in many ways by the remittances. That also is the big change from back then.

Q: Well what do the people in the States provide?

ADAMS: The States, Europe, Canada. You also have that flow of expertise back and forth. Haiti as the advantage of being close to the U.S. So unlike Bangladesh...actually things in Bangladesh have improved in many ways too, which is interesting....Because (re Haiti) of the flow of resources, because we finally now have this new trade act, and the assembly sector is beginning to return. Back when I was there they had something like 90,000 jobs in the assembly sector, "maquila" industries. Sewing baseballs, electronic assembly. They lost a lot of that in the turmoil of the late 80's through the 90's. But now with stability having returned to some extent under Pres. Preval, you have the return of investment. It is always marginal. Some were saying Haiti was going to sink into the sea, and that they all would be coming here. Well Haiti with a lot of help is proving viable. They will need a lot of help for a long time.

Q: Well one of the sort of stories one hears about that the Haitians who come to the United States are remarkable for being quite peaceful and are very hard working. I mean they really settle in and all, and yet when you look at Haiti itself, you don't get that feeling. Was that the case when you were there?

ADAMS: Yes, and I find that rather remarkable. Although the one caveat there was Haitians always impressed me as being hard working at least laborers in Haiti. Now I think it was just such a remarkable sight to see a human being perspiring profusely dragging a cart behind him all stacked up with whatever, produce or tires to eke out a living every day. But you are right. I think they are still grateful for the opportunity in this country. That is one reason why they strive hard, as do a lot of immigrants, to make the most of their opportunity. I use these same arguments to (fast forward) when detailed to the deputy secretary of state's office and I sort of inherited the Haiti portfolio for Deputy Secretary of State Wharton because of my background and because the person who had the job of handling all the hot issues for him didn't have a background on Haiti. This was when Haiti was really getting a lot of attention regarding what to do with Aristide under the early years with Clinton. So one of the arguments I made with the immigration policy was that if you look at the performance of the Haitian immigrant community in the U.S. and the fact that crime was very low and employment was very high, and education, taking advantage of educational opportunities was important for them. The argument was that one of the papers I wrote-this was in one of the papers I gave you too-was that what a lot of us saw as the artificially low quota for Haitian immigrants which unfortunately was a hangover from the four H problem - Haitians being identified as one of the source communities for HIV AIDS - that there was a strong case to increase the quota if only by a relatively modest amount. The Clinton administration for a variety of reason lifted those quotas significantly later. Now what you have is quite a large Haitian community in Florida, south Florida especially, and elsewhere that as I said, they are getting much more in remittances than they are getting "official" foreign aid.

TAPE 1 ENDS.

Q: This is tape two side one with David Adams.Can you talk about your impression of the ambassador? Maybe there were two or more when you were there, American ambassador with AID as you observed it?

ADAMS: Sure. Well the first ambassador was Ernie Preeg, who was bright, an economist. He was a very good negotiator. He had a bit of a complex because he was a short man. He didn't like tall people to stand next to him in photographs.

Q: And you qualified.

ADAMS: Not so much me but our agricultural adviser Tex Ford was about 6'5", and the Ambassador definitely didn't like Tex standing next to him. So he had a little bit of a hang up on that; he was also quite officious as some ambassadors and mission directors can be. When he came to AID later he loosened up. He was much less officious and was much more down to earth. I don't know what really happened. I really didn't get to know him too well. One of his "distinctions" besides his negotiating that agreement for picking up refugees in the territorial waters of Haiti was to build a tennis court, a nice tennis court that exists to this day, at the ambassador's residence, which I used quite a bit. He stuck up for his subordinates when the going got rough, though. Preeg was replaced by I think it was Clayton McManaway, who as I recall had more of a security background. I think he was, I don't know what cone he was in, but Preeg had been in Econ. Preeg was a renowned economist. McManaway had more of a military background. Pleasant, low-key fellow as I recall.

Q: Military, and he was involved in Vietnam quite a bit, and I think the NSC, but sort of an action oriented tough guy. I am not making this to be pejorative. I know Clay and have interviewed him. He came out of almost the Larry Eagleburger school of diplomacy.

ADAMS: He came near the end of my tour. I think that Preeg left a few months before I did. I really didn't get to know McManaway, but he impressed me as being more down to earth than Preeg was. He was more approachable as well.

Q: Well did you sense there a split between the State Department foreign service and the State Department AID people too.

ADAMS: You know you had some of that. At my level I didn't see too much of it. In fact I had a very good friend, a guy named Andy Parker who still may be in the foreign service. He may have retired. Last I heard he was DCM somewhere. But anyway so I had some very good friends who were State Department. At the more senior levels there was tension, although Preeg saved the career of my boss, Harlan Hobgood. Harlan was responsible for the establishment of several private sector promotion NGOs in Haiti. He put some of his own personal money into some of them because he was so committed to helping them to begin to establish, again in the Duvalier era, sort of the nascent structure of commercial oriented civic organizations., In other words they weren't getting involved in politics. They were promoting investment in Haiti and Haitian entrepreneurship. This was under the Reagan administration. Peter McPherson was the administrator. So even though Harlan was more of an Ag Techie type, he took that mandate to heart and really established institutions that exist to this day in Haiti and have grown. But his problem was he was very loquacious and sometimes his mouth ran ahead of his brain. He made a derogatory comment about the views of the head of the agency, that a political appointee overheard and reported back to Washington. The head of the agency was so infuriated that he called Hobgood and told him he was being removed. We were all kind of shocked. Well Preeg came to Hobgood's defense. He called the administrator and said, "this man has been implementing your policy, the policies of the president faithfully. He has been doing a fantastic job. I just encourage you not to take this perceived personal slight in a way that you would potentially undercut or destroy what this man has accomplished on behalf of the administration." So the administrator backed off. So after that Preeg and Hobgood were pretty tight. They got along very well.

Q: Did the situation in Central America, I am talking about El Salvador and Nicaragua which is a major focus of the Reagan administration. Did that intrude on Haiti at all?

ADAMS: In terms of Haiti's position in the constellation of foreign policy priorities or issues in the Western Hemisphere, it was much more in the context of Caribbean Basin Initiative that also I think that was put into play by '80-'81. So that helped grow the assembly industry in Haiti at the time. There was more foreign investment. Haiti was at that time was very stable. Haitian women especially were seen as very dependable workers and very dexterous.

Q: With their hands.

ADAMS: Yes.

Q: The Cuban influence?

ADAMS: Not significant during that era. It would grow in prominence later.

Q: What about the Dominican Republic. It seems as though you have got this island and you have two quite separate nations.

ADAMS: Yes, very.

Q: Did that intrude?

ADAMS: You know I would say I wasn't as cognizant of cross border issues then as I was later in life when I returned as mission director. But there was very much a feeling of inferiority on the part of Haitians, and superiority on the part of the Dominicans. Haitians greatly resented the way they were treated in the DR, clearly as second class citizens, many of them kicked out of the country even if they had roots there for many years. They would have these sweeps every now and then and they would find these Haitians, even second generation, throw them out if they were undocumented. So there was that tension. That was really palpable, the tension between the two countries politically and culturally. You had a number of Dominican workers, in Haiti, not that many but a number of them in certain industries. The sex industry as well as hairdressers and some other areas. But I didn't really pay too much to the politics at my stage of life back then.

Q: Were you sensing in the Haitians, were they picking up you might say the attitudes of the blacks, you might call them the African Americans in the United States, resentment about white dominance in the United States. I mean there is this tension. I mean were the Haitians, often people coming from a different culture where they are in the majority don't have quite that same feeling. Do you see what I am getting at? Did you get any of that?

ADAMS: The elite, the Haitian elite were cognizant of what was going on in the U.S. But they were such a small percentage of the population. The common man is more worried about making it day to day. But the elite both in government, education, business sector, where you didn't have resentment. In other words it was something of which they were aware if they had traveled in the U.S.; they were well aware, especially if they had some tales of mistreatment. But they held no resentment that I could discern against white Americans in Haiti or elsewhere. They were very open and friendly and interactive with us.

Q: Well was the word that was coming back was that the Haitians who had got to Florida and particularly New York doing pretty well. In other words there wasn't tales of oppression or that sort of thing?

ADAMS: Yes. It was of course the illegal migration was nothing like it mushroomed to later in the early 90's especially. But most of the migration was legal. But legal migration decreased after HIV became a public health issue, and the CDC made its infamous pronouncement in the early '80s.

Q: This is the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

ADAMS: Lumping Haitians in with homosexuals, hemophiliacs and heroin users, they became the other H.

Q: Oh my gosh. Was there any justification for that?

ADAMS: The only justification was that Haitians had a higher rate of infection than I think of any other island population or any other "ethnic" population in the Americas. I think those attending Haitian patients in Florida reported some higher level of infection, so that is what caused CDC to say watch out for Haitians too.

Q: Did you get the feeling, I am going back to this early to mid 80's period. Did you get the feeling that we were sitting on a time bomb of one, Baby Doc and his regime and how long it would last, and two, what would turn out to be boat people the mass immigration without being able to control it. Was this, how did you feel about this at the time?

ADAMS: Particularly because of the unusual agreement that was negotiated by Ernie Preeg with the government where, and I think it was basically we will scratch your back on exports and imports and making it easier for people to invest in Haiti and give you foreign aid if you will let us have this agreement. The very fact that the U.S. had pushed, successfully pushed to negotiate an agreement to not just pick up people but to give the population a clear signal that their attempts to migrate illegally by sea likely would not be successful. That was an indicator that there was a pent up demand for migration out of Haiti. In fact there had been polls taken, I am not sure about that era but later, polls take like something like 80% of Haitians saying that if they had their druthers, they would rather live somewhere else.

Q: Well what about Baby Doc and all of that. I mean I realize things were stable at the time but sort of at the embassy and in your own group were you saying OK this is fine but what about next week?

ADAMS: You know during my time there, that was never any concern. Of course I was not privy to most classified information. There was never any overt concern expressed that Baby Doc's regime was in jeopardy, immediate jeopardy. There was discussion that ok this is not sustainable in the long term, and in fact we were pushing democratic government elsewhere in the hemisphere so this was an anomaly of sorts and there was a recognition that eventually it was going to have to be dealt with, and that he would not be president for life necessarily. What happened was you had U.S. encouragement of local forces, encouragement of democracy even in a rudimentary state, and also from Haitian ex-pats. There was a very strong engagement of people traveling back and forth and of course you had media which was becoming much more prevalent, free media in Haiti, if only broadcast from the U.S. People were seeing and hearing more and more about democratic forms of government. I don't know all the factors that went into play but he was booted with U.S. encouragement about '86.

Q: Well I was wondering what about Madame Duvalier and her family. I recall having talked about them being particularly voracious in their appetite for property and this kind of thing?

ADAMS: Property, yeah. The Bennetts. Yes both she and her father and other members of her family that were there. The acquisition of wealth was the primary motivator for her existence. Her marriage to Baby Doc went sour once they got kicked out of the country, and she married another rich European.

Q: And last before we end this up, how did you find sort of social life there, you and your wife.

ADAMS: We mingled quite a bit with families from different backgrounds, Haitian, American, European. We had a group of friends with small children like ours. We'd hang out together, go to the beach together, have dinner parties. One of the participants in that group and fathers every other Saturday or something we would have just a play group and let the ladies have some time off from the kids. One of the participants in that group was Guy Mallory, who was at that time a lawyer, a young Haitian lawyer who was on retainer with the U.S. embassy and USAID to give advice on local laws and legal issues. He later was assassinated because he was minister of justice when Aristide was in exile. In fact I dedicated that paper to him, the one that you have now, you will notice that his name is on there. It was particularly sad because he had served as minister of justice and because of threats against his life was on the verge of quitting and emigrating to the States after doing it for a couple of years and then again during the exile period in the early 90's after Aristide was booted the first time. Then right after the USS Kohl or , rather, Harlan Country was turned back

Q: The Kohl is the one that was blown up.

ADAMS: Harlan County was turned around by a bunch of thugs chanting on the dock, then they murdered Guy. They thought OK now we have a free hand. The U.S. is not going to do anything. So they shot him.

Q: Did Aristide hit your radar at all while you were there the first time?

ADAMS: Not the first time. I started hearing about him and reading about him when he was a priest. He was gaining some popular following for his charitable work with St. John Bosco, and I started hearing things about him. But as time went on he gained more and more of a following and notoriety, but it was particularly while he was in exile in the U.S. that I learned more about him. I met him.

Q: While you were there the first time, did you have a feeling that we were reaching down to not just the elite or whatever you want to call it aristocracy of Haiti but also to the lower reaches at least as the Haitians sort of differentiated themselves. Were we making a real effort to make sure that we weren't just hitting one sort of Haitian collapse.

ADAMS: Yes and no. By the way one thing, one of the only positive things Francois Duvalier did, Papa Doc, he insured that black African-descendant population got a piece of the pie, at least in terms of the corruption and getting jobs in government and so forth.

Q: Just sort of looking at it, he came from a black African as opposed to the Creole.

ADAMS: Yeah, his wife was of mixed racial heritage.

Q: They had wars back in their history.

ADAMS: Yeah, throughout their history they have had fights. So the elite was a mixed bag, but it was still the elite, and acted accordingly. Typically what you had would be in terms of our daily interaction, the US Embassy empathized with the intelligentsia, the elite, but on the other hand USAID made an effort to design and implement programs that reached down. It was pretty basic stuff. We did nothing really complex in Haiti. It involved for example secondary, tertiary road instruction that involved hiring local labor. That was the main component. The same with their maintenance operation. We helped to fund the road maintenance operation. That involved the local community. Potable water, a very basic need, and the program that we implemented with CARE was in the remote areas in the south and southwest.

Q: Showing on the map the huge bay on the southernmost branch.

ADAMS: Yeah, the southern peninsula. So even the agricultural credit project theoretically was helping small farmers. It did to some extent. It was inefficient and wasn't sustainable. The potable water project has been sustainable. So it is a mixed bag. Some were, some weren't. As I mentioned some of these specific institutions we helped to establish, they were aimed actually more at the elite, the more educated to help promote foreign investment and all that. So there were some efforts at that. Education, we focused mainly on primary education in rural areas. So when we didn't get too much into secondary or university except for scholarships, some scholarships to the U.S. to study. There was some of that, but it was mainly textbooks and teacher training. Bilingual Creole French. To help keep kids in school, hold their attention. Health. That has been a huge thing for USAID over the years. That is mother and child health, HIV Aids now, we are jumping ahead, but we put a lot of money in for HIV Aids prevention, treatment and care. That is the one continuum for the U.S. investment in Haiti over the past 20 years it has been to invest in health systems at the fairly rudimentary level. Now we are getting back to helping to fund government systems. We found that using the NGO structure was much more efficient. And while health indicators are still bad in Haiti, they have improved quite a bit over the years.

Q: OK, I will ask you one final question. What about the Reagan administration came in and birth control was not very high on the Reagan list. As a matter of fact there was the Mexican conference and all this. I would think Haiti would if any country Haiti along with Bangladesh would be pretty high to try to stop the growth of population. Did this affect you at all?

ADAMS: USAID has pretty consistently over the years offered a wide variety of family planning programs. In fact I will never forget, jumping ahead, the administrator of USAID, Andrew Natsios, a stalwart Republican once said that they were now exporting, we were now supplying more condoms than ever before in the history of the U.S. government. So family planning in its purest sense shall we say and condoms now for HIV Aids control, has been pretty consistently supplied by USAID. In Haiti back in the early 80's. I am a little hazy on it because I don't recall being directly involved, but there was a family planning program. The thing about Haiti the birth rate has come down. I think it is about 2.1. Back when I was there in the early 80's it was about three something, 3.1 % contraceptive prevalence? No I am sorry, that is the population growth rate. So it has declined for various reasons even though Haitian men like men in any other part of the world aren't overly enamored in using condoms. But women have tried the pill and the injection, the other forms. Being a Catholic, I am, just to fast forward in my recent tours, I was mission director, because I found that an organization in the south was having tremendous success with natural family planning. The acceptance rates were much higher. I went ahead and had that replicated elsewhere because it was more effective, meaning Haitian women were much more interested in using that type of method where they could gauge when they were fertile, and were more successful than getting men to use condoms. Plus they didn't necessarily want chemicals in their bodies.

Q: All right, but I always put at the end here where we left off. You left in 1984. Where did you go?

ADAMS: I went back to Washington. I had a very interesting usual career path for a USAID officer beginning at that point. I had already had the UN experience. I worked on Central America and was very much involved in the Central American issues, the Kissinger Commission Initiative in El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Honduras. I also worked on the Hill. I worked in the House Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations..

Q: OK, so we will pick it up then in 1984.

Today is 17 August 2007. David we are going to go dealing with the problem of Central America in 1984 until when? When were you working on that?

ADAMS: Let's see, I got back from Haiti in the fall of '84 and as I said worked primarily out of Washington on El Salvador and to a lesser extent Honduras, and Costa Rica. I think for a couple of years, two years until '86.

Q: OK well why don't we talk about sort of '84-'86. What was the situation in El Salvador and all that you were particularly concerned with?

ADAMS: Well El Salvador was the focus country among the focus region because of the civil war that was in full swing. Other countries were affected of course to one extent or another and had their own internal issues along the same lines. But Salvador was the ground zero and USAID was pumping in a lot of money for both balance of payments assistance as well as project related assistance for infrastructure development or repair. Things were being blown up and, it reminds me of a mini Iraq you might say. We were rebuilding roads and electrical infrastructure and buildings of different sorts. Then also there was a major health initiative that I was involved in in trying to shore up the rural health system which was under a lot of stress because of the war, and doctors didn't want to work out in the countryside, that sort of thing. Education, the same things with the schools, trying to keep the school system going despite the violence and dislocation, refugees or rather internally displaced persons. So those were a number of the things that were being heavily funded by USAID in El Salvador particularly.

Q: How did you find working in Salvador? What were your greatest projects, I mean what ones do you sort of look back with and say worked? Could you talk about how they worked?

ADAMS: Well let's see, I worked on health, infrastructure, family planning. It seemed like a bit of an oxymoron with people being killed. They still had a relatively high birth rate. But in any case, not that that was something I would hold up as a paragon of development virtue if you will. In El Salvador, I think the public services restoration project was one where I was told I was helpful because the folks who were running the show in country were so busy traveling, going out to the hinterland and doing what they did negotiating with various authorities to be sure that money was going to be used in a certain way. So I fulfilled more of a writer-editor role, in that coming out of Washington I was particularly aware of the documentation requirements, justification requirements. I fulfilled an in-house need because a number of folks who would do the packaging, the writing, editing didn't have the time, and because I knew relatively well, typically better than they did about what needed to be presented back to Washington to justify funding, e.g., to Congress. I was writing Congressional notifications, for example, as well as what we used to call project identification documents, PIDS, Project proposals, or sections thereof. And I was told that was quite helpful because they didn't have the time to take it on.

Q: How did you find the response of the Salvadoran officials and the people that you were working with?

ADAMS: You know I was impressed. Having had met a cross section and worked with a cross section of folks in other Central American countries in addition to El Salvador, mainly Honduras and Costa Rica in particular. I was favorably impressed with the Salvadorans, particularly in the context of the stress they were under because of the war and economic dislocation. I was impressed with their willingness to collaborate, pull their own weight shall we say. That is to not rely, as I have seen happen in other countries, unfortunately where USAID had been involved, not rely on the foreigner, to fulfill functions that locals should be doing. So they were true counterparts in the sense of their work ethic. They were also very congenial, gregarious, very hospitable to us. That has sort of been borne out by the way by where El Salvador is today. Despite the fact that they have had some major national disasters, earthquakes and I think one of the Hurricanes hit them. That the country is thriving in many ways economically. They still have their issues, but they are still doing very well. I attribute this primarily to their industriousness of the Salvadoran people.

Q: I would say this is borne out by the Salvadorans who are here in the Washington area. Take a look, they are hard working people. It is an impressive contribution to America. Did you find yourself at all in cross purposes with sort of the military, either the Salvadoran military or maybe some of the CIA type operations?

ADAMS: You know I can't say that I discerned a situation, which I have seen in other countries with Haiti by the way. Where USAID certainly on the surface was working at cross purposes or vice versa with the military or CIA. I think there was a concerted effort to help the Salvadoran government and its people, aside from those who were involved in the insurgency of course, to have a more or less a functioning democracy, a market economy within the confines of the emergency situation they were in. So now one could look at the extremes of the Salvadoran military, the D'Aubuisson faction for example, extreme right wing, and say that yes in a sense we might have been working at cross purposes with them, but they were influential in they weren't terribly fond of democracy or democratic institutions and getting the job done in the war and lining their own pockets, was sort of their perspective. I think for example on the other hand, Napoleon Duarte was the president for at least some of the time when I was involved with the country, and he impressed me as again, I didn't know him personally, so you never can tell. He impressed me as being a very upright individual and wanted to do what was best for his country and taking the risks by virtue of the job he had taken on.

Q: Of the Salvadorians you were working with, was there a sense of optimism is the right word, but a sense of things were moving in the right way or were they looking over their shoulder or not?

ADAMS: I think there was a lot of trepidation on the part of officials with whom I worked, and had contact with on an intermittent basis about what the future held for them, concerns that the U.S. might not stay the course for example and that a Sandinista type situation might occur where, as appeared to be the case in Nicaragua they might say, the left might take over. Then of course there were terrible incidents like the murder of Archbishop Romero and people thought if that can happen, anything can happen. So they were caught between the right and the left, the bulk of the population and the people with whom we worked. Although there were I have to say there were a number of those folks with whom we were interactive that either secretly or openly were sympathetic to the right.

Q: Did you feel under any particular threat yourself or not?

ADAMS: You know I didn't really feel threatened until after I left El Salvador. On one of my trips it was driven home to me how dangerous a situation was for me personally among others because I was sitting not just in the same bar but at the same set of tables at an open air restaurant in what was known as the Zona Rosa, which was a night club area, in the late afternoon about two days before several U.S. soldiers and USAID contractors were murdered in that area. In broad daylight in the afternoon. Probably some of the same people I was sharing a drink with a few days before, two or three days before in that restaurant. So I realized that but for the grace of God I would have been there for that happy hour too a couple of days later.

Q: Well then in '86 whither?

ADAMS: Well I had expected to finish three years in Washington and go overseas again. Somewhere in Latin America per se. But I was approached by a friend, a colleague at USAID, a civil service colleague who had just spent a legislative year on the hill. She was the first person to have been assigned from USAID under a new arrangement under the House Appropriations subcommittee on Appropriations. She had been asked by the staff director to identify informally, while they were going through a formal process as well with the administration, a candidate, people who might have what it took to serve effectively on the committee. So I was one of the people she came to. We had worked together years before in the management analysis office, sort of an administrative management operation when I was civil service myself. Long story short, there were several people identified and I was the one who was picked. To be honest the head of the agency I found out later, who I became friends with later in my career, Peter McPherson was quite irritated because he realized that I had been selected through the informal channel and was not his man. And to be equally frank with you, he had gone to the committee, or one of his representatives, and said, "We don't think Adams is the right man for the job. We have this other person who would do better." And after interviewing me and after Chairman Obey interviewing me and I guess one or two of the others, they decided no, they wanted yours truly. So I was told in no uncertain terms by USAID that if I screwed up my career definitely would suffer.

Q: OK, well let's talk about how you went. What did the job involve; what insights did this give you?

ADAMS: Well the job, particularly at the beginning, was administrative. They did have secretarial staff, and they had two professional staffers in addition to the individual foreign affairs staffers who worked directly for the members. I was on the committee staff, and it was relatively small, the subcommittee staff. So initially while I learned the ropes I answered phones, photocopied documents, etc. They would ask my opinion every now and then on a country or regional issue where they knew I had some specific expertise like Haiti and Central America. I would write a note for the chairman on something occasionally. And as time went on, and I grew more comfortable with this and actually knew what was going on they had me drafting report language and bills, legislation. That was one of the things. Doing numbers crunching was a big thing for appropriations. Not that I was particularly good at that, but I did OK. So I got a very strong recommendation. One of the highlights was during the period when we would have these sorts of lulls and then a tremendous crush of activity where we had to work 18 hours a day at times, particularly when it was time for legislation to be marked up, whether it was the appropriations bill or an off cycle. Whether it was an annual appropriations bill or one where we had a special appropriation as we did to support the Aquino government in the Philippines. So that was exciting because I was able to contribute to drafting of that legislation. Aquino came up to the hill. I didn't meet her personally but saw her from afar. So it was heady. One of the things I learned was I was both appreciative of what legislators go through, and I became somewhat cynical. You do have to some extent Jekyll and Hyde behavior. When you see it up close and personal it is not pretty. You have members of congress who for their constituents and the public will act noble and upright but then behind the scenes they can be real jerks and very full of themselves. So there was a fair amount of that. I saw the influence of lobbyists, even in foreign operations you had some of the more influential ones where obviously by blandishment and other approaches to staff, as well as members, got their way. No doubt in my mind there was an impact on legislation by lobbying.

Q: What kind of thing in the foreign appropriations, what would be an example. I don't have names but...

ADAMS: Well there was a very effective lobbyist who had some of the biggest accounts I think involving Egypt for example, Pakistan, where they would represent the governments of those countries. Particularly if there was already a receptiveness on the part of the hill. They were able to take advantage of that receptivity.

Q: Yeah, you weren't getting enormous amounts of aid for Libya for example.

ADAMS: Right, but they were able to, in effect, get earmarks included or increased by the way they worked the system.. We even had a situation which would sound shocking even for the hill, where this one lobbyist who was very effective and had these big accounts brought pizza and other goodies into a markup session that was going on involving members and staff in the late evening hours. He brought pizza and drinks right into the room and said, "Here we want to make sure you all don't starve while you are working on this."

TAPE 2 SIDE 1 ENDS

ADAMS: What else. It was extraordinarily interesting, along with working for the Secretary of State, one of the most interesting times in my career to have a good bird's eye view of how our legislative process worked.

Q: Did you get any feel or was your job not where you could get a feel on the responsiveness or the effectiveness of the Department of State vis-a-vis congress.

ADAMS: Very good question. Let me just preface it by saying I think State H has gotten much better, because at the time...

Q: State H meaning the legislative relations branch of the State Department.

ADAMS: Yes. Excuse me. But they were behind the eight ball relatively speaking to USAID. I think USAID at the time had a very high powered legislative affairs operation as evidenced by my being placed on the committee and my predecessor on the committee, and three or four people after me, all from USAID. I think it continued until the Republicans took over the committee and then they abolished the job.

Q: This was '94 I guess.

ADAMS: '94. So I think it continued from, it began in '85 and through '94 there was always somebody from AID. But I don't know what it was but for much of the period the fellow that ran the AID operation, Kevin Kammerer, was quite effective in his personal relationships with people on the hill. They were comprehensive; he did his homework. They approached all members. H, my impression with H is they were less effective, although it was interesting because I got to know at the time a very high powered duo who were running a kind of a parallel operation to H within the State Department. I mean they would consult with H but they wouldn't always let them know what they were doing. One was our current ambassador to Thailand, Skip Boyce and the other was Bob Bauerlein. They were representing Bill Snyder who at the time was the undersecretary of state for T, Security assistance, science and technology. Bill had pretty much taken over budget planning, certainly when it came into interacting with key actors on the hill, for State. In fact AID learned to cooperate carefully with him to be sure there was coordination because otherwise I think he would have rolled AID because he was so effective. Well these two guys were very savvy. I had a very good working relationship with them. It is worth mentioning because fast forward a few years and we will talk about it later, I ended up working in the office that was the successor unit to the Bauerlein and Boyce team. When it was moved to the deputy secretary's office several years later, I was recruited by one of their successors, Dan Speckhard, who eventually was named ambassador himself. Dan, as was Bauerlein I think, was an OMB wunderkind before he came over to State. Anyway that was where it was at in terms of appropriations and funding issues not exclusively but certainly on the key issues it was Snyder as represented by Boyce and Bauerlein.

Q: Then in '87 where did you go?

ADAMS: Right, in '87 I came back. They actually created a semi-new position for me in AID. I think it had been judged that I had done pretty well on the hill. So they had in the policy bureau, policy and program coordination it was called. They designated positions known as "coordinators" a sort of a senior mid level position if you will, a GS-15, FS-1 type of a designation. I was an FS-2 at the time. Anyway they had coordinators who were links to other parts of the agency. Most of the coordinators were either geographical or functional. They also linked with State and other agencies. It was kind of a trouble shooting and problem solving type of function. They originally recruited me to be the security assistance coordinator, because I had the experience on the hill. Very few people in AID knew anything about security assistance. So it was ESF and military aid. ESF, Economic Support Fund, was the primary pot of funding. They funded Egypt, Israel, other security or political cases, Pakistan, El Salvador/Central America. The Kissinger commission thing was funded largely by ESF in Central America and a few other high priority country programs. Even though ESF could be used similarly to development assistance with respect to the types of things it could fund such as education & infrastructure development. But it was the country within which money was being used where the justification would be linked, even though it was used for development purposes or balance of payments types of cash transfers. So they put me in this job, but then the person who was the Latin America coordinator moved on, and they said, "Well we know you can handle that, Adams, so we are going to give you another job. So you will have two jobs at the same pay." So I had the privilege of also being appointed the Latin America coordinator. Well having the two together actually was fortuitous because it helped me line up my next overseas assignment which I enjoyed very much. Not to jump ahead too much....in Latin America. So it was quite an interesting position. One of the highlights or low lights depending on one's perspective, I represented USAID on at least one if not two NSC chaired working groups. One was on low intensity conflict, and you will find this quite amusing. My second meeting with the group was actually in the basement of the White House per se. I was ushered into a situation room if not THE situation room and told to sit in a certain chair. A military officer leaned over to me and said, "Do you know who sat in that chair not too long ago?" "No, who?" "Ollie North." He had to leave.

Q: Did the Iran Contra affair affect you at all?

ADAMS: Yes it did. Let me tell you how. It is a good segue into another interesting although unsettling time in my career. Well because of the security assistance and Latin America portfolio, it was determined that I would be a perfect representative from my bureau to the new inter agency working group. Humanitarian assistance to the Nicaraguan resistance. What had happened was because of the stink that they created by Iran Contra and because the CIA theoretically did not want to any longer "handle" economic aid to the Contras, or so it was determined by the White House. They were not to handle assistance to the contras for anything but weapons or what have you. They turned over that portfolio to this inter agency working group that was largely staffed by State and AID together. The Chairperson of the working group was Ted Morse who had been a mission director in Zambia, interestingly and some other places. One of the people, one of the young staffers, political appointees who struck me as being a very nice guy and not full of himself at all was one Roger Noreiga. Roger was the public affairs officer for the task force. Well I joined part time. I had my existing portfolio, and I did not want to be full time in the contra thing. I had some qualms about being involved altogether given sort of what happened with Iran contra. So I got into a bit of a tug of war because the deputy director who shall remain nameless of the task force was determined to have me full time. So he raised a stink, but Morse understood that I could play an effective role. I was putting in long hours. Some days I worked with them all day, so it wasn't like I was goldbricking or goofing off. Anyway so it was unpleasant. The guy tried to write me a terrible evaluation just because I didn't do what he wanted me to do. Ted Morse took it, ripped it up, and wrote me a very nice one, for example. But one of the more interesting trips I took serving on this task force was into Honduras to visit people who were working on the ground with the families of the contras who had been moved out of Nicaragua because of the threat against them. There was a camp, a couple of camps. One was in Yamales, Honduras, and I forget the other one, mainly women and children who were being fed and clothed and housed on a temporary basis while the war was going on in Nicaragua as the Contras moved back and forth across the border. So I went and visited this and saw how cash was being distributed. They had had this system with onsite audits with one or two auditors from our office of the inspector general watching money being counted with this machine. It would just rapidly count out the money in local currency to be sure that the right amount was being given to each family for their welfare. Then I took a helicopter ride which was somewhat unsettling along the border with Nicaragua because we were going in as a small team, was going in on the Honduras side of the border theoretically. I never knew which side we were really on. Into the Mosquitia area of Nicaragua, that is the Caribbean coast. It is like a different country. Mosquitia Indian and African American slave descendants. They had their own little band of anti Sandinista, loosely affiliated with the contras. They felt they were being oppressed by the Sandinistas as well. So we landed in this border area. Flying in there I was half expecting a surface to air missile to come flying toward the helicopter. The guy was an ex-Vietnam pilot and he knew his stuff.

Q: Zooming back and forth.

ADAMS: We landed and out of the bush comes this band of motley looking types led by the famous or infamous commander, depending on your perspective, of the Mosquitia Indian contras by the name of I think it was El Tigre. They were very friendly and glad to see us. I guess we were bringing them some provisions and some food or something. Maybe it was money and I wasn't being told. But anyway they asked me to give a speech. "You are the senior guy here," which I didn't realize. "Why don't you," this was one of the Nicaraguans who was serving as a translator. Back then my Spanish was very minimal. So I gave a speech just congratulating them and telling them we were behind them and that we hoped their families were being fed blah, blah, blah. Anyway I was told it was very inspirational by one of my colleagues, Sharon Isralow. Who knows? So that was one of the more interesting assignments.

Q: Had the hearings on the Iran Contra affair and all, had that taken place before you got there?

ADAMS: Yes. And I believe because it had hit the fan already, I don't remember exactly where in the process my involvement came, but it was after the worst of it had been in the press. Because of what had transpired with North being pulled off of NSC committees, inter agency committees, and also because of the CIA transferring at least the above the table aspect of their help to the contras to us and State.

Q: Well there must have been anybody touching this thing, you must have put your plastic gloves on and made notes of where you were and what time and all of that. It was sort of like dealing with radioactive material wasn't it?

ADAMS: You know I felt somewhat unsettled. Some colleagues of mine refused to get involved at all. I didn't have that. I believed in our objectives in Central America. I didn't believe in the way obviously in the ridiculous aspects of our policy revealed in Iran Contra. But having had the benefit if you will, of seeing on the ground what we were accomplishing on the ground in places like El Salvador and Costa Rica and Honduras, I was in agreement with the economic policy overall.

Q: Yeah, well then after dealing with this then what?

ADAMS: Well as I alluded to earlier, I began to do some research with respect to potential assignments to my next overseas position. Because I was coming up on the three year mark and I wanted to go overseas. Long story short, there was, I mean if I hadn't had a family, I would have gone to El Salvador. That would have really been interesting for me. But I had a wife and two children, so I had to think about their situation, and ended up in Guatemala. I saw when that position was opening. The head of the program office which roughly speaking was equivalent to the political section chief in the embassy. So I applied for the job. Actually I went down and did a short term trip, a TDY to Guatemala. Introduced myself to the mission director, told him my background. Had him check me out, my references, and applied to that position on the top of my bid list along with a couple of others, and was selected for the job. I had to go to Spanish training because my Spanish was about a 1/1 at that point. So after getting my 3/3 I went to Guatemala.

Q: You were in Guatemala from when to when?

ADAMS: From '89 through '92.

Q: What was the situation in Guatemala in '89 when you went there?

ADAMS: They were emerging from a period of a terrible civil war. It was worse in the early 80's, but the friction and the murders and extra judicial killings continued up until even late '89. They had the first, I think, democratically elected government for some time in power, that was led by President Vinicio Cerezo. He was in his third year. I think it was a four or five year term. So things were relatively stable, and they didn't have the street crime they have now. So even though it was still tense, it was a situation where I felt comfortable taking my family. I did in the course of my assignment get a death threat. I am still to this day not clear why. It was one of these anonymous calls. It could have been against my wife who was involved with some union activity and was seen as a bit of a rabble rouser at the local school for teacher's rights. But it is hard to say. So that was the only I think real blip in the three year assignment.

Q: Well what were we doing from your perspective in Guatemala?

ADAMS: Well the program just prior to my taking the job, which for AID was considered a plum assignment because it was considered a great country to work in, good for your career. There was a lot of money still, but they were on one of the downward trend in funding. It was one of those several countries that received quite a bit of money including as I said, balance of payments and cash assistance. But there were a number of neat development activities that were being well funded and ongoing, including a bilingual education that AID had pioneered in the country with Guatemalans instruction for native American children in their native language; Quechua I think was the primary language, and Spanish. So that was a big emphasis, as was non traditional exports which we were helping them develop, as we had other countries in the region develop their winter crops, to take advantage of the winter crop market in the U.S.

Q: When the U.S. market producers are down because of winter, South America kicks in, the grape business and a lot of other things.

ADAMS: So that was going well. There was also, in addition to writing a new strategy for our programs since it was evolving, to focus less on the balance of payments and political assistance and moving more toward a traditional development program. Health was another one. Health in the highlands, the health indicators were quite bad for the native American population. So that was my day job. My night job in a sense, something that I saw as a vocation and worked on weekends concerned assistance to street children and children who had been rendered orphans or were with a single parent because of the war. Most of them were teenagers at that point, but there were younger ones. I was fortunate because I had maintained my communications with my former colleagues on the hill. That was seen as a bit of a no-no, but I didn't care because I had these little back channel communications with these folks on the hill in my old committee. Long story short, working with them and somebody who actually managed an earmark for orphans and displaced children set up a new project with money additional to that which was coming into our regular budget, to fund a number of local Guatemalan orphanages and entities with kids of that nature.

Q: I wonder I would think that that type of work with orphans and ones who had been displaced and all, does this seem to be a place where church organizations would get very much involved. How did that work in Guatemala?

ADAMS: Interesting question. It was a mix, a mix of faith based organizations and secular ones. I really at that time wasn't looking, I was looking for organizations that were effective. For example the one that was sort of the primary implementer of the program was the Guatemala version of Covenant House, Casa Alianza. They are I think, they are secular. They might be linked loosely speaking to a group of churches, but the woman I worked with, Eugenia Monterroso was a lay woman. There were some other ladies who ran other orphanages. There was an American couple who I actually developed the program with who basically managed the umbrella project for us. They were very religious as I recall, but they weren't affiliated with a church. Tom and Kathy Taurus were their names. Tom is now a vice president with Save the Children which is secular. Anyway it was a mix.

Q: The protestant groups have gotten quite involved down there. Was it apparent there and was it a conflict with the Catholic Church or not?

ADAMS: You know not as much. I don't really recall that being a factor or an issue that we had to deal with, having to worry about the competition or conflict. You are right there has been a significant growth of evangelical churches. In fact it is interesting in my own, I was beginning to have some troubles in my marriage at that point, and I am Catholic, still Catholic. I found it more interesting for a time, I guess because of the emotional quotient if you will to worship at evangelical churches occasionally.

Q: I know my wife's church here in Annandale contributes to an orphanage that might not have existed at the time. Something called the little roses or something like that.

ADAMS: Our Little Roses in Honduras?

Q: Yes basically it was the children of single prostitutes.

ADAMS: It might be the same one because they are affiliated or they are supported by a group out of Christ Church in Alexandria and other Episcopalian churches. Is your wife Episcopalian?

Q: Yes. My wife is Episcopalian.

ADAMS: They are linked to the Episcopalian church. In fact I, it is a long story, but I visited them last year because I had gotten their name. We were opening up in Honduras.

Q: Yeah, it was Honduras, not Guatemala.

ADAMS: They are very good. They are very effective. My organization is not helping them. We offered them some money, but it didn't work.

Q: How did you find the orphan street children program, how effective was this?

ADAMS: Well it is difficult. I moved on before the real fruits of the project seemed to be obvious, but I did get positive feedback of course, from those whom we were helping saying, "Oh there are so many more children benefiting because you came in and offered us additional assistance and help in how to manage our program, manage our finances," that sort of thing. All I heard later was that the project did morph into something more. It added I think, a justice component whereby a unit was established in the government, in the justice ministry of Guatemala to try to protect the rights of street children in particular. But in terms of the genesis of the project, the way I sold it was timing was everything, because there was a lot going on in the news. You might recall back in '86-'87 and in '89 too there was a lot in the news about abuse of street children in Guatemala and Brazil.

Q: Particularly Brazil was...

ADAMS: Well sheer numbers.

Q: Horrific stories.

ADAMS: There were some bad things going on and stories out of Guatemala, and our, the head of the Latin America bureau for USAID was a former State Department officer, Ambassador Jim Michel. I had gotten to know Jim before I left through my work on the hill. He was politically astute. He, when I made the proposal I said, "Look, this is a hot issue in the news. I have a line on some money additional to our budget through my connections to my former colleagues on the hill." He said, "Hey go for it. This is great. Whatever you can do to strengthen relations with the guys on the hill." The staff director on his own time was working with orphans and kids, he and his wife. He was more than happy to work with me, so that is just a consensus to move forward.

Q: I am intrigued. You mentioned in passing that your wife got involved with the school and unions. How did that work out?

ADAMS: Well she wasn't involved in any programmatic sense with the schools. She was a teacher at the American International School. They had some real issues there in terms of teacher's salaries and benefits, and particularly how some of the local teachers were being treated, Guatemalans. Second class citizenry. So she befriended several of the Guatemalan teachers and felt that they weren't getting a fair shot or a fair salary. So she sort of lobbied on their behalf, and some of that lobbying involved making a bit of a stink at parent teacher conferences where a number of the Guatemalan parents, the more wealthy parents didn't want to contribute any more money. They are notoriously cheap frankly. That is one of Guatemala's big problems has been traditionally that their income tax is very regressive, because they just can't get the elite to pony up. They had to get it through the VAT tax and other types of taxes to get their income. So their tax structure is seen as being one of the most regressive in Latin America. So that mentality carried over to, most of the parents were Guatemalan. The international may have been about 50-50. Anyway plus my ex-wife was a very vocal person, and if she grabbed onto something she would hang onto it like a junkyard dog and not be intimidated. To her credit she was very forthright and couldn't be made to back down.

Q: OK you left there in '92. Whither?

ADAMS: I came back to Washington. Because of the I guess bad experience including some other things that had been going on including our house being, I wouldn't say trashed, but not treated well by the renter, my wife was soured on the foreign service life. She wasn't all that thrilled with it for other reasons. Prior assignments too it was a bone of contention. Anyway I had made noises about wanting to go to El Salvador, and had been offered a job there which in some respects would have been very attractive except my boss would not have been, I wouldn't have interacted very well with the fellow who would have been my boss. So I wasn't all that enthusiastic about it. But he would have been leaving in about a year so I was thinking maybe I could stand it until he left and rotated out. She basically said forget it. So I said, "All right, I am going to have to plan to stay in Washington for awhile." I was being recruited to be the deputy office director for the desks for Central America which was. Oh I know what it was, I am jumping ahead. I actually before all that happened, I applied for what was known as long term training because I had a couple of colleagues who said it was the best year of their lives in terms of their career getting away for a sabbatical. So I applied and was accepted into the foreign service fellows program at Georgetown University, out of Guatemala. That was a year, so while I was doing that year at Georgetown was when I was approached about the Central America job which I didn't take for reasons I will get to later.

Q: Well back to Guatemala, who was our ambassador while you were there?

ADAMS: His name was Tom Stroock. He was a political appointee.

Q: How did you observe his operation?

ADAMS: I wasn't too fond of the man because he had some preconceived notions that eventually he modified, but not totally. He was a conservative Republican appointee. He kind of treated career employees contemptuously in that if they went up against him, he was very dismissive and could be very threatening. He came into the country making statements like, "The only institution in the country that you can trust is the military." Then he got into hot water later. You might recall among other cases the one about the nun, Sister Diana Ortiz who was kidnapped. He and one of his political officers who was a bit of a right winger too, criticized her for being a lesbian, being involved in a lesbian love ring or some crap like that. That was an example of the kind of his mentality and behavior. So anyway he and I didn't have much of a personal relationship because I was a couple of layers down from him. My boss was the deputy mission director of USAID, and he reported to the director who reported to the ambassador. But it was a difficult time in that respect because Stroock was a problem.

Q: Well did you find from your vantage point was it one of these things where you had somebody who was making an extreme statement and taking an extreme position and sort of the work went on and you kind of worked around him? I won't say went against the orders but you know just kept out of the guy's way and do your own thing.

ADAMS: I was fortunate because he didn't have a problem. He knew what I was doing. He didn't have a problem with my work and the arena I was in. He approved of the types of projects we were doing and it was sort of the political sphere where I think he went astray. So when it came to the types of programs I was involved in or sponsoring there was no issue. In fact he was supportive. One point, the one time he was particularly happy with me was I took the initiative when the peace agreement was announced, the peace accord was announced in El Salvador in I believe 1991, I took the initiative to draft, OK this is a plan, a "Peace Plan" for Guatemala, from the perspective of what types of additional assistance would be beneficial, and could be catalytic and could help us solidify the democratic coalition that was being built in Guatemala. There wasn't an outright peace accord in Guatemala. Even though the conflict was much more low intensity than had it was just previously in El Salvador. Then years later I think the mid 90's they finally signed an agreement in Guatemala between the factions. So they were behind El Salvador in a sense. So Stroock was very happy with that, and sent a cable to Washington saying, "OK this is what we have to do to be prepared for a final peace accord in Guatemala."

Q: OK what did you do in Georgetown?"

ADAMS: Well you had a select field of endeavor and study. So I was primarily a student studying international trade and investment, an area which I didn't have much background in. There were some other, there was a course, I forget the exact name, a fellows course where high profile speakers would come in on just a number of topics. We went on a visit with Madeline Albright for example, in UN New York. She gave us a spiel. It was primarily students from other countries who were brought in, either military or civilian. There were several of us from U.S. government agencies who had been selected. So my course work was primarily trade and investment with a smattering of other things. Then I did some guest lecturing on foreign assistance.. Then I did some editing for Hans Benedick who was the director at the time of the Institute for Public Diplomacy. Hans later moved to the administration to work in the office somewhere in the seventh floor of State. After I left Georgetown I ended up working for the deputy secretary and then the secretary. Hans was in policy planning, SP. He moved to SP. So he was editing a book, I forget the author, on foreign assistance that I helped him with. I organized the visits by the Fellows with Madeline Albright at UN HQs. It was my suggestion. That was very fulfilling, a very interesting time. The only bad thing about it was my marriage was falling apart during that period.

Q: OK we are talking about you were there sort of at the beginning of the Clinton Administration was coming in. Did you get any feel, I mean you were out of the State Department, but at least you had your contacts, that it seemed to take quite a bit of time to grab the levers of control and know what they were up to. Or did you get that feeling?

ADAMS: Yes I did. I think what happened, not to generalize. I don't want to be too broad brush here, but my strong perception, and I have to admit my political leanings colored my perception. I joined at that period the democratic leadership council, which is sort of the conservative arm of the Democratic party. I met their Virginia state chairman and he brought me on as sort of his unofficial foreign affairs advisor. Anyway, so I was one of those who was very enthusiastic about having a new Democratic administration in the White House and perceived Bill Clinton as being a true moderate to conservative, DLC type. So it was in interesting time. My perception early on was that there were a number of folks who were held over from the prior administration who in effect were subverting the policies. Now that is a simplistic point of view. I think there was some ineptitude as well in terms of the ability of the new administration to get a handle on things and to formulate policy. Another reason I felt this way was I have been a humanitarian interventionist for awhile. My instincts and what I saw and determined early on was that a number of the folks, Warren Christopher on the one hand were very loathe to get involved in Haiti or Bosnia for example. Then Rwanda of course was a huge debacle. The behind the scenes story on that was very unsavory. I wasn't directly involved but being on the seventh floor, I had a really good, you know my information sources that I developed were really quite good within the building and outside. My strong perception was there was a lot of floundering around and lack of coordination. In part because of the structure. A great example of that was the interaction between AID and State, which historically has been uneven, let's put it that way. But they had established a bureau for global affairs at State led by former senator Timothy Wirth as undersecretary of global affairs. He had a portfolio that sounded very similar from a policy perspective to that of Brian Atwood who was initially the undersecretary for management at State, but because there was an impasse in choosing a new USAID administrator, Warren Christopher asked him to be the new USAID administrator. He went over, both these men had giant egos, Wirth and Atwood. Wirth de facto tried to assert himself as policy guru for key development issues for the administration. Well at that time Atwood had an independent portfolio. He actually didn't report to the Secretary of State at the beginning of that era. He reported to the President. And the budget was largely independently developed. Not totally, as I told you before there was Bill Snyder before that era who asserted himself particularly in his relationship with the Hill and OMB had sort of a primus inter paris for the overall foreign assistance budget for both security assistance and other types of assistance. But there wasn't a formal authority of -State over AID for the budget or policy. There was a de facto broad policy over the security issues, Israel, Pakistan, Egypt. So anyway they started in right away. I was in one of the delicate situations because I was detailed to first that unit within the deputy secretary's office that used to be run by Bauerlein and Boyce within the Undersecretary of state's office. They actually got it moved when Snyder left and a guy named Derwinski came in, a former Congressman from Chicago who had little interest in the budget. He had his own people who tried to grab control from Boyce and Bauerlein. Well they saw the handwriting on the wall. They convinced deputy secretary of state Whitehead that that function should be moved to his office. It became Deputy Secretary policy and resources, DP&R. So they got themselves moved under Whitehead, and that is where the function stayed for a time. But there still was independence within AID on the assistance budget and to some extent how the ESF, security assistance budget for AID was implemented. Well the inner workings of process involved State trying to assert itself more, mainly through Timothy Wirth. What transpired was Atwood for USAID had under him for management the husband of Congresswoman Leslie Byrne of Virginia. She was a one term Congresswoman. Her husband Larry Byrne, who was a consultant, Democratic activist, very hard charging fellow who had his way, ended up being Atwood's hatchet man in a number of ways which I will get into later. But he wasn't about to take any orders from anybody at State. So he just threw down the gauntlet right away. So this was all transpiring when another evolution was happening within State where deputy secretary Wharton who was the first deputy secretary under Christopher wasn't working out. He was there for about a year only. He was the one who arranged for my coming over after Georgetown because they were looking for somebody with my relative set of skills, the hill experience, security assistance, budget, AID, field person, all of that together. So I was convinced to come into state instead of taking the deputy position in the office of Central American Affairs at AID. That gives you sort of the overall context. They moved the DP&R function from the deputy secretary's office to the secretary's office. Anyway because the Wharton was removed; Strobe Talbot became the new deputy secretary.

END OF TAPE 2.

Q: This is tape 3, side 1 with David Adams.

ADAMS: There was a perception that the state department leadership was a gang that couldn't shoot straight. Christopher was ultimately responsible for this, but he lacked confidence in some of the people underneath him. One of those was Wharton. Wharton had been a private sector senior manager of the TIAA-CREF Fund. Even though he was the son of an ambassador, I don't think he had any foreign service experience. He was a bit of a reticent fellow anyway, not very assertive. Wirth among others was getting impatient with his lack of assertiveness with AID. He was seen I think, as being too cozy with AID. That was part of his problem but not all of it. Then Wharton was pushed out. Talbott took over, and being close with President Clinton as well, and Dan Speckhard who had been the head of that unit, DP&R, the successor to Boyce and Bauerlein, had a small group of us underneath him. Talbott actually had taken Dan away before. He wanted Dan to run some of his operations in the former Soviet Union czar's office. So we were, our fate was somewhat up in the air because we didn't have an immediate successor to Speckhard. So when this move happened, when Talbott came in, he left Speckhard with the Soviet office or the Russia NIS office and we were pulled into the new configuration of the Secretary's office. Well it was the evolution that was going on there, because of the gang that couldn't shoot straight image was that Ambassador Samuel Lewis, former ambassador to Israel and SP director, had a motorcycle accident- he was having a hard time recovering from it, but also apparently Christopher was not happy with his leadership with SP, which was seen to be falling on hard times. It wasn't generating the ideas that it had been known for in prior years. The point where they could not convince the heavy hitters to take over after Lewis was in part because he was convalescing. So they ended up pulling in Jim Steinberg who was DAS under Toby Gati in INR, a very smart fellow. Meanwhile by the way, you have to remember what was going on was there was a lot of dissension with administrative policy on Haiti, particularly by the black caucus, others who thought we were being much too timid with respect to allowing crises to fester. So there was a lot of criticism of the administration. Then you had the right saying don't you dare intervene or else. So the administration was being buffeted. There was internecine warfare going on within the State Department, between AID and State, and NSC and State. You had Tony Lake, whom I came to know later, who was basically like Talbott, a humanitarian interventionist type. Tony was running up against Christopher and others who were saying, "Don't get involved. This is not our fight." Christopher, one of his hats was Clinton domestic advisor. He would look down and was crystal balling I think about the negative reaction for example in the '94 Congressional election if a Haiti intervention went awry. Interestingly it went very well. I think this helped Clinton in '94. So I was one of those who was militating behind the scenes for intervention in Haiti. In fact even though he never told me so, I think I can say without being immodest, that I influenced my former boss, David Obey. A paper I wrote got to him.

Q: Wasn't he head of the foreign op subcommittee.

ADAMS: Yes, House Appropriations, because David Obey was the first person of any stature in the foreign affairs community to come out for intervention. Everybody else was calling for an embargo. Which I think others and I who knew Haiti knew that it wasn't going to work. An embargo would just make the Haitian people suffer more. But even Aristide who was here at the time in exile, called for an embargo which I think belied his lack of real love for his people, frankly. He had to know that they would be the ones who would suffer. That it would leak, the embargo would leak. I wrote this and made it very clear in a briefing, as did others, not just me. It was ignored; and they tried the embargo and it was a disaster. The next thing you know the country is leaking refugees, who thought they would get a sympathetic hearing in the States, but of course Clinton didn't want to hear about it. They were being farmed out to islands all over the Caribbean. Guantanamo was full of Haitians. Anyway that is just an example of how this gang that couldn't shoot straight was, frankly had a lot to it.

Q: Well you were in was it policy planning?

ADAMS: I didn't complete the thought and was getting a little bit too all over the place. What happened was that when they brought in Steinberg, the decision that some of the staff of policy planning, which was quite large at the time, would be melded with our small unit, and we then would be established as the new office of policy and resources. Resources, planning, and policy underneath former Ambassador Craig Johnstone who had retired, still a relatively young man. They brought him back. He had done some work on NAFTA, lobbying the hill for NAFTA. He was close to Marc Grossman who was head of the secretariat at that time. So Grossman prevailed upon the secretary to bring Craig back. Well Craig had his strengths, but working the budget was not one of them at least initially. Fortunately we had several staff who knew the budget well. Ironically with this tension between AID and State, we had, state department staff and one political appointee or two that had been brought over from the policy planning staff, and then there were two of us from other agencies, both from AID. Mike Usnick, brilliant on the budget, who had been the controller at USAID, but Larry Byrne who had been head of management and took the budget as well, AID wanted his own person on the job, the CFO I guess it was called, Chief Financial Officer. So he booted Usnick and found a place for him in this new office with Craig Johnstone. Well Mike, it was ironic because Byrne had it in for Johnstone because he did not want Johnstone to do his job effectively, given his independence. He wanted power through the budget because the secretary's intention, to his credit, was to have a much more high powered budget unit, resource planning operation. That is why I think in part they took office space and officers from SP and brought us over to another corridor closer to the secretary's office. Then with Usnick there, Usnick basically repeatedly pulled Johnstone's chestnuts out of the fire. Craig is a very nice and genuine person but he comes across as being officious, and has this affected air about him. So I will never forget that first appropriations or first budget request briefing he gave, I think for the 1995 foreign affairs budget justification to the Hill. These seasoned staffers, some of whom I had worked with closely, several of us standing behind or next to Craig, but he was doing all the talking. They were shaking their heads, as if he were treating them like children. This is another example of how State blew it on the budget and the way they interacted with the hill. Because the folks at H weren't any help to Craig. Of course they couldn't do much because he wanted to run the show. So he did his little power point thing. But it was Budget 101. It should have taken into consideration the fact that these people knew the game. So maybe I have to take some of the blame for not preparing him better or warning him. But anyway it didn't start out well. S/RPP's reputation was not that good initially, but over time it got better and Craig got into the job and he was I think, an effective interlocutor eventually.

Q: Did you get involved with the sort of major issues Haiti, Bosnia and Rwanda? Did these come within your purview?

ADAMS: Well, yes and no. For Haiti, I was actually given the portfolio initially by Deputy Secretary Wharton's staff director. I forget his exact title but it was I think his name was Jim Warfield, who was really under the gun. He had a lot on his plate, and Haiti was frustrating everybody. So when he learned that I had served in Haiti and knew Haiti, and had followed Haiti, he said, "Look, I want you to run with this stuff. Keep me informed. So I did. I sort of interacted with folks on the Hill. What was going on as well was there was an official Haiti working group led by Larry Pezzullo and Ambassador Dick Brown and Mike Kozak that had been held over from the prior administration. They basically were taking the approach that Aristide and the military were both equally bad, and that they couldn't be dealt with. I am not being simplistic, but long story short they were ticking off a lot of the traditional Democratic party constituents in the process, and being very close hold, which was a big mistake. Craig told them later, Craig Johnstone who I kept informed of my activities when we moved over to the secretary's office. I stayed in AID until the time of the intervention. So I wrote some papers and did some interaction with some folks on the Hill that were unauthorized. Pezzullo became very angry with me, frankly because of my unauthorized interaction with folks around town. At one point he asked the secretary to get me yanked and sent back to AID. Johnstone intervened in my behalf and said, "This guy is doing the right thing, and doing a good job." But after I had written my papers and tried to bring other coalitions together, once the course was set for intervention, I was pulled out and told to do other things in no uncertain terms. The other problem was the secretary was not in favor of intervention either, in fact fought it up to the end. He got rolled by Tony Lake, and possibly behind the scenes by Strobe Talbot, but I never saw that in writing. There were articles about Christopher including one by the New York Times that very clearly laid out the dynamics between State and the NSC. In fact Christopher didn't even go over to the White House, showing his disagreement with the decision to intervene, when the troops were on the way to Haiti, just before being recalled when Colin Powell, Jimmy Carter and Sam Nunn were successful in getting the Haitian military to stand down. In fact a number of us had been arguing that they would stand down. That Haiti was NOT Somalia. That was the other context. We had the Somali fiasco, and to some extent it was personal for me; I admit it. It was right after Somalia went sour when the administration turned around that ship that was bringing U.S. advisors to Haiti, the Harlan County, and then they killed a former colleague of mine, the Haitian military did. Guy Malary, who was the Haitian minister of justice who was warned to quit the job before they killed him. So that enraged a number of us who knew Guy. I had known him when I was in Haiti the first time around; got to know him quite well. So anyway, Pezzullo was relieved of his appointment. The Haiti working group was taken over by former congressman Bill Gray who coincidentally staffed, when he was on the hill, by Hazel Robinson who was the wife of Randall Robinson, who later went on the hunger strike for Haiti. Hazel and I worked together when I was on the hill, and so she had moved over to work for Dellums who was chairman of the armed services committee, Ronald Dellums. So Hazel was one of those people I engaged on the hill about the policy and was working behind the scenes with. Then Congressman Gray was brought in to sort of handle the politics of the Haiti situation. Ambassador Jim Dobbins with the Rand Corporation was brought in to handle the day to day. So I did informally give my two cents worth to Dobbins. He seemed to appreciate my ideas. So the rest is history. I mean I learned later, and I have to eat crow on Aristide. I went back to Haiti as USAID mission director later and saw first hand what a destructive force he was. Even though I felt that the intervention was the right thing to do at the time. With the benefit of hindsight, well the administration did the right thing by basically forcing Aristide to step down after he finished his term. He still worked behind the scenes to do his thing with President Preval. Preval seemed to have learned later that he had to keep Aristide at arms length.

Q: Well did you at the time when you were back in Washington working on handling aspects of the Haiti situation, were you and others dubious about Aristide, because Aristide had become the darling of the Glitterati and all that.

ADAMS: That's right, and I became more involved in the politics. I had spoken with people who had a good or better knowledge of Haiti than I did. I became more and more skeptical, and my work reflected that in terms of well you know he could be involved with drug running and what have you. So that was reflected. So it wasn't a whole-hearted endorsement. I will tell you what argument may have had the strongest impact on policy makers was that the refugee issue was the third rail if you will. I knew Clinton himself was very paranoid about the political effects of refugees running amok, as happened to him in Arkansas when the one election he lost was his re-election as governor and reportedly had said that it was the timing of when a number of the Cuban Mariel refugees broke free from the prison in Arkansas and scared the hell out of people. They blamed Clinton evidently for accepting the refugees in the first place, in a close election. Anyway that was one reason why he was adamant that we had to control the entry of refugees from Haiti, as with Bush before him. But I borrowed from an analysis by a brilliant Congressional Research Service analyst at CRS on the refugee flows from Haiti. What were some of the levers, what were some of the buttons that would be pushed that would influence refugee flow. There was a perception that U.S. policy was going to be more lenient. As a result more refugees would attempt to flee to the U.S. despite the dangerous journey. It is interesting to note that when Aristide first came to power, in fact even before he was elected the first time, several months before that when the elections were being put together and he was the clear favorite.....the attempt at illegal migrations to the States dipped significantly from Haiti, and they stayed quite low until he was booted by the military the first time. Then attempts at migration shot up. There was a perception by the Haitians that they might get a favorable hearing in the U.S. by some comments that Clinton or his senior people made. Then the embargo happened and with all that a huge spike in refugee departures for the U.S. And so I wrote a paper, the central thesis of which was that if you brought Aristide back, no matter what you think of him, that would create hope. And if you want to mitigate the flood of refugees to the U.S. get him back there. That was another argument of course for us to intervene. That paper was given to Tony Lake by one of my colleagues at State who used to work for Lake, Lionel Johnson. It also was given to Sandy Berger. Did it get to Clinton? I don't know, but I think the argument made it to Clinton. Again not mine, the CRS analyst deserves credit on the hill. (What was her name, Maureen Morales?) Anyway, but you asked about Bosnia and other things, Rwanda. I can't say that I was involved with Rwanda at all. I wrote a paper about Rwanda. I don't think it influenced anybody. It was about the hate radio in Rwanda, Mille Collines, and what a destructive force it was. It stoked the violence. I tried to link that with the sort of hate speech that influenced Timothy McVeigh who bombed the Murrah building in Oklahoma, and how hate speech can cause otherwise prompt volatile people to do terrible things. I had no influence, no direct involvement in Rwanda policy (until later). Bosnia, yes, I actually worked informally with Bob Gelbard. I don't know if you saw the letter from him in the package I sent you, but he clearly articulated the impact on of my arguments on Haiti policy as well as Bosnia, and Kosovo to a lesser extent. Bob was quite generous with his comments. But anyway Bosnia was another one where the administration was being very timid. It was that fear of casualties, the fear of the political ramifications. I think initially that Warren Christopher was in that camp. I give Christopher credit. He came around quicker on Bosnia than he did Haiti. And was a very important actor, of course, in the whole Dayton Accords, along with Asst. Secretary Holbrook.

Q: Were you picking up the almost revolt within the State Department of not doing something about Bosnia?

ADAMS: Oh yes. That was similar to Iraq later. I know that a lot of people have similar sentiments now. But yes you are right, you are very right, and I was one of those, believe me. As time dragged on we thought it was just criminal because unlike Iraq, in Bosnia the same thing with Haiti....if you knew anything about the situation, you knew that the chances for U.S. casualties if the interventions were handled right were minimal. That despite Somalia, that showed the foreign policy inexperience of the president and the people under him. I think and it has been written about. Clinton was thinking this situation was like Somalia with Haiti and Bosnia. He just didn't want to take the political risk. Eventually he was convinced, I think Christopher and Strobe Talbot were instrumental in this, to move him forward. Now I tried a long-shot argument, given my conviction that the refugee issues was the core issue in Haiti that made Clinton move to get Aristide back to Haiti. But in Bosnia there was a terrible refugee situation for Europe. There were hundreds of thousands of Bosnians and people from other Balkan countries involved in the war. Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia had people fleeing to Western Europe in lesser numbers. In Germany especially there were a huge number of refugees. The U.S. had accepted all of 6,000 I think, in the summer of 1995. So some of us argued assiduously that we either intervene, or work out a NATO intervention. Not just bombing, a ground intervention because bombing alone just wouldn't be effective. Or the U.S. was going to have to accept thousands and thousands of refugees from Bosnia. Those ideas made it to Talbot and Christopher, I know that, because Johnstone gave one or more of my papers to them. Gelbard gave some feedback that these arguments were very persuasive. So they may have taken it forward. Again I am not claiming credit here. Christopher and Holbrook did the heavy lifting, as did Gelbard.

Q: Did you get the feeling that there was a lot of internal debate? I mean or was this just one of these things where both sides are percolating up to the secretary.

ADAMS: Yeah, there was a lot of debate. There were a number of people, and I wasn't linked up with all of them by a long shot, but there were people in the EUR bureau that were outraged. Folks in the field, in the embassies within those countries but also in the surrounding European countries. It wasn't just with us. The Europeans were very attentive too. It was a European problem.

Q: Yeah, well the Europeans grabbed the problem and then wouldn't do anything. I mean they upped it.

ADAMS: Yeah, so it is not. I understand where some conservatives are coming from when they say here "you humanitarian interventionist types want us to be policeman of the world. What about others who should be?"

But eventually there was a coalition that was put together that was quite effective. A similar situation happened in Kosovo; I went back to AID for Kosovo and was the Kosovo coordinator for a time. We had the same thing where the administration took its time and tried bombing and that didn't work. But something, I don't know the extent to which you read the articles, but where I am the most curious to this day about the impact of my work is North Korea. Because that was of course the most dangerous situation for the U.S. I think you and I discussed briefly before if you read Oberdorfer's work, and I think I saw Brinkley's book among others make it very clear that we were on the verge of war. We were sort of drifting towards it because of lack of resolve at senior levels including the president to develop a policy that was going to be effective in blunting North Korea's obvious move towards war. Again I think it was people like Bob Gallucci our unsung hero who worked behind the scenes to develop that policy despite the limitations of our leadership. Jimmy Carter had an impact, of course, but it was kind of , well on the surface of it, a bumbling type of situation where they de facto ceded the policy to him because they couldn't get it together. But I think what happened was, I am convinced that we avoided war, again this is based in some measure on Oberdorfer's work, because while we were moving towards the strengthened sanctions with the UN that would have among other things cut off remittances from Japan to North Korea, which was a life line. And because Kim Il Sung, who wanted desperately to have Korea reunified under him before he left this earth, perceived tremendous vacillation on the part of this administration looking at what happened with Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia. So that is why I am convinced that we were headed for war. The administration on the surface demonstrated more vacillation by pulling back from those sanctions, but I think the North was searching for an excuse. Because I believe from the intel I saw, and I had an interesting conversation with the CIA officer ("John") reputed at the time to be the top expert on North Korea.....through another CIA officer who was a personal friend of mine who told me "John" was the top North Korea expert at the CIA. I had several conversations with CIA folks. But at the CIA this fellow said, Yeah, that they (the DPRK) are coming if we don't do the right thing. In other words that the scenario that was laid out by Bob Gaskins, I don't know if you have read. It was in that conclusion.

Q: It has been awhile since I have read that.

ADAMS: It is in the papers I gave you. I have copies here. I am pretty sure I included it, the Bob Gaskins Scenario. It was a Time Magazine article. It may have been the cover article that basically laid out the scenario where we would be up the creek without a paddle because we were basking, the Pentagon was basking in the glow of Desert Storm. They thought we showed them and the North Koreans wouldn't dare. Well the South Korean army was in bad shape, very undisciplined, undermanned and under armed. So there was a much heavier reliance than there should have been on our 32,000 troops. You remember we had quite a few civilians there as well, in addition to the military and their dependents.

Q: I know because from '76 to '79 I was consul general there. We thought long and hard about what to do.

ADAMS: Well, thank God Jimmy Carter didn't pull the troops out then, right?

Q: That was scary.

ADAMS: Anyway so not to belabor this, because it was such an intense period. Again I didn't have an official role. I could have made it my business to become involved. Initially Johnstone told me to back off, but then when he read my work he said, "You have got something here," and he passed it on. Although he told me that he never got any reaction, any direct cause and effect reaction so to speak from Christopher except that the arguments were being taken seriously. What happened interestingly was after the Carter trip happened, they decided to do as I had recommended. Again it isn't just me. Others I'm sure had recommended that we offer North Korea some type of carrot and the stick. The carrot being foreign aid, and that because of the economic crisis in North Korea that was already occurring at that time. It got worse later; there was every appearance that the regime was going to crack. The CIA director for South Korea told Tony Lake, and was quoted later in Oberdorfer, that they expected the North Korean regime to collapse within two years. So I am convinced that this is something that has not come out to this day even though there is strong evidence that the policy was when the KEDO nuclear reactor program was put together as the carrot for North Korea, and that we would string them along until the regime collapsed. In other words they would never get those reactors. They would collapse before that time because of the internal stress in the regime. That was the strategy that I think was developed was that let's string them out and eventually all the internal pressures in the economy would do it. Well, the Chinese came in and helped prop them up. However, the stress continues to this day. But it was a very interesting theory because I had a bird's eye view, albeit from behind my cage, and we seemed to be heading towards war. Some of the things that others and I wrote about were dead on. In fact Johnstone told me that my analyses very accurate.

Q: Well David, I am looking at the time. This is probably a good place to stop. We will pick this up when?

ADAMS: We can do it by phone anytime, or I can come back sometime this fall.

Q: Why don't we wait and come back this fall. I think it would be simpler. So we are talking about, Bosnia, Haiti, and North Korea. Is there anything else to talk about or should we move to the next stage?

ADAMS: Let me ask you to do something. Let me ask you because I know you have got a lot; your plate is very full, but I did give you some background documents in that file I sent you including some stuff on North Korea that I found particularly interesting given the national security implications for the country. That you try to read those papers and then let's form your questions around some of that. And then we will close out North Korea and Bosnia and all that next time and then move on to the next thing.

Q: OK, great.

Today is 5 October 2007. David let's see what shall we talk about do you think?

ADAMS: Well let's think about it. Obviously we didn't listen to the entire tape segment if you will, but I think spent a fair amount of time on Haiti. Bosnia and North Korea, especially North Korea, we can wind up with that.

Q: OK, why don't we talk about North Korea than. Again what was your job?

ADAMS: I was an analyst, in policy and resources under Craig Johnstone. Craig himself had an abiding interest in North Korea. He was one of the circle of advisors even though that wasn't his primary assignment, on the secretary's behalf he had done some negotiating with the North Koreans in a prior assignment in his career. So he and I actually informally got involved in the planning about what to do with diplomatic initiative. The problem being of course that what was transpiring, little known to us, was a lack of cohesion in our policies towards North Korea. Of course the primary advisor to the secretary, I think, was Bob Gallucci along with some others. I think Bob reported to Lynn Davis who was the undersecretary of state for security assistance. But he also had a direct line to the secretary. I don't really think that Strobe Talbot.....that was a portfolio that Talbot was too much involved in. So there were relatively few people. I was not privy to high policy discussions. I basically fed information to Johnstone who was. Even though his key portfolio was resources he, as I said, and there were obviously resource implications. And in fact the one area where we might have had the most influence had to do with the aftermath of the crisis with respect to the assistance agreed to, the assistance package for North Korea. My specific recommendation to Johnstone which he indicated he forwarded was that as we were trying to help defuse the crisis whereby the North, you might recall, Kim himself I believe or maybe it was one of his henchmen, threatened to turn the peninsula into a sea of fire if among other things strengthened sanctions were implemented. There was a movement in fact that the White House seemed determined for a time to get the UN to agree to strengthened sanctions package which among other things would have cut off remittances from Koreans in Japan.

Q: That was a major source.

ADAMS: Exactly. So that greatly concerned Kim because as we found out later his economy was very shaky. It wasn't as evident as it became after his death. So when there was that threat among others, other measures were threatening to the North. Oberdorfer among other Korean specialists said that they believed that the North very possibly, only the Lord knows for sure, wasn't bluffing. That because they knew it really could bring the regime to their knees on the one hand and on the other Kim had designs on the South before he passed to the great beyond. He wanted reunification. So it was also a perception, a very clear perception of weakness in terms of our military posture, and the president's own willingness to react of the North launched a strike. So there were a lot of concerns. The general who commanded our forces in the Korean Peninsula said, "These guys might not be bluffing. This could be very serious." And so there was a lot of hand wringing and I am sure, even though I wasn't privy to the details, I am sure that people like Gallucci and others did offer a steady voice to the secretary and to the White House.

Q: This is Christopher at the time.

ADAMS: Right, still Christopher. Anyway to go back to the point I began to make, Since Craig Johnstone's key role in all of this was for any major policy initiative happened to be the resource part of the picture or package, he recommended, he put the recommendation of mine forward which basically was to offer them bait. You have to give them the carrot and shake the stick. For that matter given they were economically depressed, they needed economic assistance, which under normal circumstances the U.S. would not have provided. So the point was that because their regime was so shaky, there was a strong feeling at the time which Oberdorfer wrote about later that it was going to collapse. That because the economy was so bad and dissatisfaction was so seemingly serious, that the combination of the squeeze and the potential for some type of military action could bring the regime down. But the military action wasn't necessarily required, and that if you squeezed their economy some more, or even if you didn't, if you just drag the situation out whereby they would to some extent collapse of their own weight. That maybe that collapse would happen sooner rather than later. So you wanted to preclude, key point, preclude any type of military action especially when the U.S. and the South Koreans weren't ready for it. I think I mentioned before that earlier in the interview, the assessment behind the scenes was that South Korean forces were very weak and disorganized and poorly trained, and poorly equipped, for whatever reasons. We kept our own forces well supplied and what have you, but South Korea was in bad shape. The intelligence was weak on North Korea. One thing that we were fairly certain about concerned the strength of the North Korean military in that they had a million man plus army, the majority of whom were deployed very close to the border, which as you know is not far from Seoul at all. They had what was described and written about as the world's largest artillery battery built up in the mountains. It could have rained fire upon Seoul. They had a fifth column, the intelligence was they had a fifth column in Seoul and elsewhere in the south that they had infiltrated in over the years, very strong and large special forces, probably the largest in the vicinity in regards to proportions vis a vis the regular military of any military in the world, and very highly trained. So there were a lot of factors that didn't bode well. Another concern was that if they did do a 1950 or '51 whatever it was, kind of blitzkrieg, that we would be set back on our heels and they would take quite a few American hostages. It was the optics of the situation, and knowing how, let's face it, Clinton was one who cared very much about public perception. If he was in a situation where they were parading U.S. hostages, potentially quite a few because we had what, 32,000 troops. You know this better than I do having been there. Civilians and dependents and blah, blah, blah. That if, it wasn't a doomsday scenario, but I think I may have mentioned to you before, and I think I brought a copy of this. I will give it to you for your files. There was a very perceptive piece among others written by, in Time Magazine of all periodicals about these potential scenarios that were as good as anything I saw on the intelligence reports, about the potential for a pincer movement and the like to put us in a very bad situation where Clinton would have had to say, "Go ahead and kill our hostages." Who knows what would have happened. You know that Clinton would probably have paid. I don't think he would have risked having all those hostages killed, or even some of them. The article was Jill Similoe and the analyst who wrote it, again it is in the package I sent you, for some reason it is not on here.

Q: What issue was this?

ADAMS: Here, Time June 13, 1994. Bob Gaskins, a senior Pentagon analyst. I think some people saw him as being a bit of an alarmist. Let's face it when you are outlining a scenario like this, many people will say well this is crazy. But ..

Q: Well the potential.

ADAMS: With North Korea you had to. Gen. Gary Luck was the U.S. commander, who was very worried about how things were shaping up and how weak the force posture of the South Koreans was in particular. So anyway the point was, if you are going to rely on diplomatic initiative and you needed to bargain from strength, and you needed to have U.S. forces, nuclear forces nearby. Let's face it that is about the only thing that would get them to stand down was to the North Koreans to say, "You invade, you are going to get a cruise missile or a B52 strike...

TAPE 3 SIDE 1 ENDS.

ADAMS: That we believed, and Tony Lake said this himself-I think this is in Oberdorfer's book "The Two Koreas"-that as I said before the very senior officials in South Korean intelligence said very specifically to our people including Tony Lake who I came to know later, that they were convinced that the North Korean regime would collapse within two years by its own weight, and because of the economic distress and what have you, maybe the dissatisfaction of the military and elsewhere. So the plan was to take our sweet time. What happened was, I think, well you never know with the North Koreans. You never know if they are going to follow through on their commitments. Years later under the Bush administration when it was discovered that they had unilaterally gone back on the agreement, one could say that the North Koreans probably figured it out, that we were taking our sweet time and building the light water reactor and getting all that together. Therefore they felt that they were justified in abrogating or not following through on their commitments. Because unfortunately they didn't collapse. They came close I guess, but given how strong the regime was and how strong the military was they kept the military on their side, unfortunately despite the terrible economic distress, the people suffered.

Q: Well in a way though we just didn't want a collapse. It causes all sorts of problems to the Chinese, to the South Koreans and us.

ADAMS: It depends on how it collapses though.

Q: OK, well as a working stiff what were you doing in this process?

ADAMS: Well as I said my involvement was purely unofficial. But I was writing different scenarios and policy recommendations for Johnstone, Craig Johnstone to carry forward. Now Craig was fairly reticent in terms of his feedback he would give his staff. He did every now and then. He made it clear to me that he was taking the recommendations forward. There was no direct feedback about what was being implemented. There was indirect feedback later that the one concept at least that an AID program should be designed that would take its time in being unrolled whatever the term is in being implemented. That, it could have been purely by chance, but it seems awfully coincidental.

Q: Well what would have happened if we said, "Ok we are going to do an AID program, and we really are going to deliver in a hurry." What was wrong with that?

ADAMS: Well you are rewarding dictators. Not that we haven't done that in the past, right? For my perspective that was something that was a least desirable scenario. More desirable than war of course, but given the intelligence and the information, I thought, and so did others evidently, that the preferred option would be to dangle that carrot, but keep moving the carrot down the road so they would keep chasing it while they got weaker and weaker. But if we had to deliver, I think I was surprised at how long it did take when it became clear they weren't going to collapse after two or three or four years despite the tremendous distress. I was kind of surprised that we didn't do more to try to appease them. So in a sense it may have been a mistake to carry it out, to drag it out too long, because they did then of course get back into the nuclear program.

Q: What about Bosnia? Did we talk about Bosnia? I don't remember.

ADAMS: We talked about Bosnia to some extent. My initial involvement in Bosnia was with the office of the secretary in the latter weeks before I moved back to USAID. It was again writing policy papers or proffering ideas as we had been encouraged to by the deputy secretary among others, because there was as you recall until the Clinton administration made the decision in August—was it August or was it later—of 1995 to take more aggressive action than had been taken before. The situation was unraveling pretty badly. Human rights abuses kept getting worse and worse. There were a lot of us that were really outraged about the Somalia hangover apparently affecting Bosnia or Balkans policy the way it did because we were going nowhere. Anyway it was fairly clear that the Clinton administration was not going, and the expectations were not there that we were going to invade in the classic sense. But it was certainly more targeted bombing, for example. A no fly zone situation, inserting U.S. peace keepers along with the Dutch and the others who were so ineffectual. Some type of nuanced policy, a get more aggressive stance was required. Later on I became involved in implementation, when it was back in AID. But the one paper I hope made a bit of a difference, and again it was one of those situations where the feedback I got from Johnstone was that it was very well received by the deputy secretary and others, and that was about it. The name of the paper was, "As the Balkans Burn." In a nutshell, as I said before, I developed a scenario where I said that if we continued to dither, that we would because the refugee crisis was so severe in the Balkans and Western Europe, our Western European allies, particularly the Germans and to a lesser extent I think the French, the Netherlands, some of the other countries were absorbing hundreds of thousands of refugees. Not just thousands, in Germany it was hundreds of thousands. They basically were saying, "If you are not going to help us O NATO ally United States do something more aggressive here in terms of troops and military contributions, then you need to help us by absorbing many more of the refugees than you have." I think the U.S. took all of 6,000. Well as we know due to the Haiti situation, different situations because of the racial issue there unfortunately, but the Clinton administration and the president himself was very loathe to accept refugees. I want to think that that among other pressures that people like Holbrook and the allies were putting on Clinton caused him to finally get off the dime and risk casualties. That is what it was all about, ever since Somalia. It was very risk averse because of the potential political backlash.

Q: Where did you go after you left this involvement?

ADAMS: Well I extended my stay in Washington, while I would preferred to have gone overseas, believe me. But I had a family situation where I had gone through a divorce, and my boys were still young. Their mother had joint custody, and I couldn't take them overseas. Instead of going overseas, I had an offer to be the number two in an AID mission, I felt I had to stay in Washington until they were out of high school. So I went back to the Africa bureau. I had not worked on Africa in USAID, in a position running a unit that dealt with disaster prevention. It was, for example, one of the programs we ran or we managed from Washington even though, of course, there were folks in the field who were directly responsible. It was called the famine early warning system or FEWS for short. It was deployed or split up in particularly those countries that were seen as being most subject to famine historically or where current conditions were such that the prospect of famine was out there, especially Ethiopia.

Q: Their home was in the....I.

ADAMS: Right. They were in Kenya. They were in a variety of East African countries.Q: What were they doing, I mean going out and looking at rain?

ADAMS: A combination. They gave out both human intelligence if you will, crop forecasting. Field conditions, get a look at conditions on the ground, market, looking at market prices.. Looking at availability of crops currently. Then we had the contract with NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration NOAA, for them to do remote sensing.

Q: Had they got pretty good, by that time were there rather good predictability models they could run through or not?

ADAMS: Yeah to the extent you can predict the weather. That is a crap shoot to some extent. In other words they could provide data when a crisis was relatively close. You couldn't forecast a year in advance but you could say the crop season doesn't look like it is going to well. It looks like the rainfall patterns are such that the crop is going to be bad. So you better store grain, or we, the U.S. through the PL-480 program would send grain in to have enough stock to prevent two, three, four months down the road, famine type situations.

Q: Well I would think you would also have a problem with grain storage. Whether reduction of its worth in rooms and whatever else. Did we have sort of big areas where we kept grain?

ADAMS: Yeah. Off the top of my head I can't tell you specifically, but typically around the capital city, Addis Ababa for example, they would have big grain silos, Nairobi. There were some in regional capitals as well. Near the seat of government it usually would be or in the port they would have storage facilities.

Q: Was there a problem in these countries monitoring the grain storage places to make sure they were as effective as possible.

ADAMS: Definitely because corruption is always an issue, and theft and all that. I think over the years we got better at it. But I am sure there were times when grain was siphoned off.

Q: You were doing this from when to when?

ADAMS: this was, I came back from the secretary's office to his job in late summer 1995. I did it for a couple of years. So actually in the latter part of that assignment I was seconded to an interagency task force that was basically getting ready to help deal with the UN and others deal with the aftermath of the Mobutu regime in Zaire, because at this time he was quite ill. I think he was in exile.

Q: Yeah he was in exile with what's-his-name from the east came out of?

ADAMS: His son is now president. Kabila. Anyhow we, the inter agency led by Susan Rice, the Africa director at the NSC. So she chaired with the assistant secretary for Africa. Who is the assistant secretary for Africa now? It was an African American gentleman. Was it Moose?

Q: George Moose.

ADAMS: I think George Moose was, and then she replaced him later. But anyway so it was interesting for me because one of the things I did was serve as task force deputy. Well the AID deputy. They brought in a political guy Tony Gambino, who later went out to be the AID mission director in former Zaire. So I was a deputy to him, the career person. We basically did a lot of strategizing and participating in the inter agencies, getting ready to deploy resources. But I went in for a time to help reopen the AID mission because it had been closed. In fact I had been partially responsible for closing it down early in the Clinton administration when I was at State because I was the state person at the time who was interacting with folks at AID on the closure of a bunch of AID missions. The new administration led by Brian Atwood who was the new head of AID, wanted to make a statement about both if you are undemocratic regimes we shouldn't be giving aid to them, and on the other hand it was a way to save money, operating expense money. Of course you don't realize those savings for two or three years down the road after closure. I was involved in that. Here was three years later and guess what we are going back in, so it was quite interesting.

Q: Well how would you think of it going back in. From what I gather this wasn't a, the change of regime never really quite, it wasn't a full countrywide change of regime. There were guerilla problems, different forces. So you are dealing with a bowl of jello or something.

ADAMS: Sure. Well there was a recognition early on this was not going to be a countrywide strategy. That the country is so diverse and the security situation was so variable. In the course of the east it was a mess, and is still a mess from what I can tell, or largely anyway. So part of the development of the strategy was to determine where an AID program of some type could be useful. We had, I don't know if you have ever heard of the office of transition initiatives? That was the Clinton administration initiative. It was the office designed within AID to react very quickly. In other words we had our disaster assistance folks, OFDA for short that did pure humanitarian aid. Basically through the main NGO's like CARE, Catholic Relief. But then this was seen as being an entity that was offering assistance for recovery from disaster including everything from financing community development activities meaning trash pickup or reconstruction of houses that had been damaged. Because a lot of this was in Bosnia later, or rehabilitation of water systems that had been destroyed or damaged. Damage repair, everything from large infrastructure to just helping communities re-elect mayors or city councils. It was a hodge-podge of different things to help people recover from war or crisis, usually man made crisis, not just a regular disaster unless it was a huge one. So we deployed a team and they were there working as I was involved in the logistics with some admin folks to physically reopen the AID mission in the capital, the AID headquarters. We had folks who were traveling to some of the regional towns around Zaire to determine some of the things like tribe identity, you know helping them with the reform of civil government or repair of infrastructure. If conditions were such in the different towns, Kisangani for example, to make that kind of aid effective. So a determination was made that there were a few places where that kind of aid could be helpful. That went out to Kit, what was the name?

Q: Kitwe?

ADAMS: It had the distinction, this town to fly into it, it wasn't that far from Kinshasa. I think it was Kitwe where they had a major Ebola outbreak just a year or two before that. A relatively peaceful area that recovered from the disease. It was kind of interesting.

Q: You had been away for awhile and in coming back had you found that the relationship between AID and the non governmental organizations had matured considerably or not, or maybe there were new strains?

ADAMS: It depends. Ironically the segment of the NGO community whose relationship was the most strained with AID were the democracy and governance movements. The National Democratic Institute and the republican equivalent. The National Endowment for Democracy, the elections group, there is an election NGO that is IFES, International Foundation for Electoral Reform. And there were others who felt similarly, and I think it is ironic because the head of AID at the time was the former president of the Democratic Institute, Brian Atwood. They were upset because of among other things the slow process within AID of entering into grants or awarding grants and contracts, and then all the bureaucracy involved in actually releasing the money and in the oversight for the grants. So there were other NGOs which had a similar view, but the situation seemed to be exacerbated for some reason with the democracy group. People's careers were damaged within AID because they were perceived to having contributed to the problem. I won't mention any names. I am sort of fast forwarding here to the next, after two years in Africa I then got involved with the reconstruction of the Balkans, and in the whole Kosovo thing which was coming to a head at that time. Bosnia and Croatia reconstruction. That is when the relationship went downhill the most between the number of NGOs and AID. In part it was because AID didn't have a cadre of officers that had a strong background in the democracy and government arena. So a number of the NGO's field personnel were giving feedback to their headquarters that they weren't getting the kind of support and help that they thought an AID mission should be. It was a strained relationship, and now it continues actually.

Q: I can see a problem with democracy and governance and all. This is pretty soft stuff. This is not delivering grain or help and it allowed for a bunch of people with maybe good ideas, maybe not good ideas, but it is pretty hard to say if you are delivering wheat you know people are eating. But if you are delivering advice, particularly coming out of the academic world or some other world, it is a little difficult to see are they really making much of a difference. I don't know. Sometimes I have a feeling that maybe that type of thing is a great boon to the Ph.D. candidates or what have you among the universities. I am not sure about the impact on overseas. But this is maybe a job that is new.

ADAMS: No, you are right. But fundamentally the problem was you had a very risk averse bureaucratic mindset in AID, somewhat similar in State but it is worse in AID because there is a lot more money, and because Congressional oversight and the strings attached to the funding have become much tighter to put it in more benevolent terms it has caused folks, especially those like contracting officers and agreement and assistance officers who legally can be penalized if something goes wrong. That is a key reason why I think the number of the NGOs have been upset, and a number of the for profit companies who deal with USAID is because of this butt covering that goes on. In a sense you really can't blame some of these folks whose careers and their pocketbooks are on the line. They get in trouble if they do something intentionally or unintentionally wrong or illegal.

Q: One of the complaints by foreign countries if they are getting aid what they get are an awful lot of accountants.

ADAMS: Right, or it pays for high priced U.S. expertise. They would prefer to have it in hand.

Q: Well while you were dealing with the Congo thing how did you feel it came out during the time you were there?

ADAMS: Well on the one hand I thought that our task force and then the mission that was later set up and run by my colleague Tony Gambino did a pretty good job under the circumstances. They never really got that much money. And of course it is a huge country, and huge problems, and very diverse, and infrastructure needs and the road system especially being as bad as it is just getting things done is quite hard. Now I think they have had some relatively decent elections. Kabila senior was a problem, and I think a lot of the governance and corruption issues and what have you, while not on the same scale as under Mobutu, they continued. But downstream his son was elected in I think a fairly clean election, and some of the humanitarian assistance was effectively used to feed starving populations. You don't hear about the famine or what have you. You don't hear as much about Zaire these days at all frankly, although I understand significant human rights abuses continue in the east especially. But considering the level of effort, people, and resources, I thought it was relatively well done.

Q: Well then you moved back to Bosnia.

ADAMS: Well I got recruited to the Europe/NIS Bureau; they were looking for a deputy director for European affairs, European country affairs, the desks for Europe. Now in AID that meant for all intents and purposes Eastern Europe.

Q: Well yeah because saying AID in Europe is like an oxymoron. I mean at least for a decade.

ADAMS: There are some liaison officers in France and Brussels. In fact one of the more interesting respites I had was they sent me over after I had been in the job for awhile, sent me over to open up a new office in the U.S. mission to the European Union that was overseeing sort of liaison with the World Bank office in Brussels and the European Union offices that dealt with Balkans issues. The most interesting aspect of the job was in my portfolio basically as a deputy was supervising all the desk officers while the director did her thing at the high levels. I supervised the desk officers and was involved with recruitment and so forth, but also Kosovo began to get hot. Actually I was originally recruited to be the division chief for the Balkans, Bosnia and Croatia, Macedonia and one or two other countries. I had only been on the job a few weeks when the new director told me she wanted me to...

Q: Who was the new director?

ADAMS: Paula Feeney. She was married to an ambassador in Kazakhstan. He is now the president of one of these major beltway bandits. After being ambassador to Kazakhstan he was the NSC director for Russia. I am blanking on his name. Anyway what happened was I moved out to the deputy job. You know I still had a similar portfolio when I took on, also the administrative stuff, recruiting and supervision of all the desks. But not too long after that Kosovo began to get hot. The word came down from the administrator, the head of AID, that they wanted a Kosovo-focused operation, the word came through the head of my bureau, Don Pressley, the assistant administrator for what was later called Europe and Eurasia. He did both Eastern Europe and he had the former Soviet Union under him. He expressed an interest in setting up a structure to deal with Kosovo. So I wrote a paper, one of these if you have got an idea, write a paper. So I wrote a policy paper on what that structure might look like, offered myself to help run it or get it set up. He agreed and he gave the paper to the administrator. Initially the administrator wanted one of his protégés a very sharp man, Rick Barton, who is now over at Georgetown with strategic studies.. Rick Barton was running that office called transition initiatives that I mentioned awhile ago, the new quasi political effort. Overseeing programs between war and peace if you will, or crisis to peace. So Rick was the initial agency director for the task force on Kosovo. He just did it for about a month and then said he needed to move onto other things, so I took over. My chief function was, initially we were doing some forward thinking. This was before the war in Kosovo. Initially there appeared to be a chance that there would be a peace agreement that would preclude war. Even as the tensions rose between the Kosovars and the Serbs, I made a couple of trips over to Pristina and Belgrade to work on some of this stuff. Next thing you know the Serbs started bombing Kosovo. So of course we stood down and the transition strategy was put on hold. That is about the time I took over the task force, so we morphed into a humanitarian response. So once things calmed down and the Serbs had backed off, we started, or even before the Serbs had backed off we started rushing aid into Albania and Macedonia to get into Kosovo.

Q: You were pre positioning it.

ADAMS: Right.

Q: And also weren't you dealing with refugees in Macedonia/

ADAMS: Yeah, Albania too, that is what it was, so we hooked up with the UN and major NGOs like CARE.

Q: What type? These weren't starving people. These were people who from at least what I have seen they had cars and houses and small farms.

ADAMS: Yeah until they got kicked out.

Q: Well this in a way was this somewhat of a different type?

ADAMS: Well yes and no because the conditions were. They may have been better dressed and had brought more goods out form the country when they were forced out by the Serbs, but we basically had to with the UN and NGO's we established tent cities for them. So we were there just as with other refugee situations. Then to figure out how to cope with their flight and figure out how to do schooling for the kids and tutoring, provide health services, whatever could be done, that sort of thing.

Q: Did the air war have any particular impact on you at all? Were you seeing this?

ADAMS: We weren't in Kosovo at the time. We were on the border, so the air war basically got the Serbs to back down, and then after a time the refugees got to go back, so we went in with them trying to help them re-establish their lives in Kosovo.

Q: How did you find the Kosovars as a People? They hadn't had a lot of experience running things and all this, and also corruption and efficiency. How did you find them?

ADAMS: Right. Well it was they had not really governed themselves, although there were shadow governments, underground governmental structures during the years that the Serbs ran Kosovo. But there were issues with initiative and organization and a bit of a tribal mentality, more of a family against family type of thing. Honor my brother first and I don't care about my neighbor. So there was that and then big fighting between factions, Kosovars even within the Albanian ethnic community. There were gangs established. You had people who had not been disarmed, because while the air war was going on there were guerilla groups, Kosovar guerilla groups who were fighting hit and run types of strategy against the Serbs on the ground. Those folks' arms were not take away from them, at least not right away. I kind of lost track of what happened downstream because I kind of went back to my day job if you will, my former position as deputy director for European affairs, once we established a mission. In fact the guy that ran our mission in Bosnia, a fellow named Craig Buck came over to Kosovo to help put all that together. Then they sent Craig to Afghanistan later and he retired out of Afghanistan. He is a legend in AID for his work in post crisis environments.

Q: Well after we were able to respond positively to the Kosovo business and you say you went back to your day job of dealing with European affairs. What were some of the other concerns that you had?

ADAMS: Well I think it was after that experience, as a matter of fact after I finished as Kosovo task force director, I was sent over to help coordinate, set up a new office in Brussels to work with the European Union and World Bank office in the Balkans out of Brussels. I just did that for three months or so and then we hired somebody on contract to do it longer term, who then actually went into Kosovo later to run the office there. So it was different. It was enjoyable because I hadn't had an overseas assignment for some time given my family situation. I think in terms of its utility I think Washington found it useful because I was feeding them information among other things on World Bank and the European Union strategy was for reconstruction in the Balkans, particularly Bosnia and Kosovo. Then also our ambassador to the European Union, Dick Morningstar, and I hit it off. I ended up being sort of a staff person for him writing cables and what have you given my experience in the State Department I had a little bit of a broader perspective than most folks in AID, and knew better what he wanted. Because we had a representative there, a fellow who was actually assigned to the ambassador for broader AID issues, and they weren't getting along for whatever reason. So I ended up actually taking some of that fellow's portfolio because the ambassador was growing impatient with lack of action. So he and I had a great time. He was very kind to me in his comments when I left. I enjoyed that. Then I came back to Washington.

Q: While you were still in Europe, what was your impression when all of a sudden you are in a big city dealing with the European Union and International Monetary Fund, back like in civilization. These are people who are responding and they are not Americans. Did you see a difference? What was your impression on the issues that you were dealing with?

ADAMS: Well the circles I traveled in we were all more or less focused on the same mission. So we didn't really have the kind of stresses, strains, differences that you find in bilateral relations. It was more OK, we do business differently. I tend to be a consensus building type anyway, and I was there relatively short term, so I wasn't looking to protect my turf or establish my own little legacy. I basically tried to organize common task forces involving membership by the different entities within that community who were focused on the Balkans, and look for ways to collaborate and to share information with our field missions in the various capitals in the Balkans, in Sarajevo. We had a big mission in Sarajevo. We had of course, the relatively new mission in Pristina, Kosovo, and in Croatia Zagreb. Then we have to interact with the folks in Hungary at the regional mission in Hungary in Budapest for AID that provides services, contracting and personnel and other services to the missions, and then also in Macedonia, Skopje as well. I did some traveling, although not so much, to those missions. But it was mainly setting up the operation in Brussels that could then on an ongoing basis serve the ambassador and my folks back in Washington as well as sort of AID liaison function with the various offices for the other international organizations in Brussels. NATO, we also had interaction with NATO.

Q: Well I think that if you found that the international organizations that you were dealing with for this relatively short time, by this time were pretty responsive. We were all working pretty much as a team wouldn't you say?

ADAMS: Well yes and no. I mean you had what was interesting was the European Union, and I think they'd tell you that themselves, was pretty hide bound. It was sort of like a mini UN, in that they had some ponderous procedures for approvals given the way that they were set up and the different country memberships, complementary members, and the fact that Germans aren't too fond of Frenchmen making decisions on how they should spend their money. That type of thing. One of the things I did was because there were complaints by member states about slow movement of the UN in Bosnia in particular, they asked me, they need representatives of the EU office that dealt with parliament said, 'Look we understand you have got a guy, this guy Craig Buck, or not so much a guy but Your mission in Bosnia has a reputation of moving quickly. In part because we had this OTI, office of transition initiatives. They had expedited funding authorities like the disaster folks did. So they didn't have all the contrasting rules. They could move money quickly. So when it came to rebuilding roads and houses and what have you, they moved much faster than the European Union or the World Bank for that matter, because of the expedited funding approvals. So word had gotten back to some of the European capitals about how fast AID was moving in this environment. So they said, "What is your secret?" I said, "Why don't I bring in this guy, Craig Buck, to testify before your parliament." Kind of unusual. We hadn't done that very often. So they said, "Good." So they talked to people up the chain and they said, "Yes, we have a session on the Balkans, what has gone well and what hasn't." So I get ahold of Craig and he said Yeah. I helped him write his testimony. So he came in. I thought he was pretty well received by the Europeans. And this was not just because of our intervention but we helped. The practical effect, the European Union when it set up its mission in Pristina, Kosovo, gave that mission their folks there expedited funding authority. They could waive a number of their contracting regulations. So there was that type of cooperation I think, helped them to get their operation in a little bit better, more effective mode.

Q: Well then we are moving up towards 2000. Where did you go after?

ADAMS: Yes, we talked a little bit about this earlier. My sons finished high school. My second one was going to finish that following summer, 2001. So I said to Washington eight years, time to get overseas again. So I applied for the AID representative position in Mexico. It was a relatively small office, but because I had not served as a deputy mission director, the advice from my personnel counselor was applying for a full fledged mission, because you haven't been overseas for so long number one, and even though the job I had in my last overseas assignment, long term assignment as head of the program office in Guatemala was roughly equivalent to political counselor in an embassy. That served me in good stead. But not being a deputy mission director, I was at a disadvantage with my competitors. But Mexico being a small office for AID, they said, there shouldn't be a problem in you getting that if they want you in the Latin American bureau. In other words the committee that does this sort of thing wouldn't vote to say eliminate you. So I had some folks in the Latin America bureau championing my cause, and I was given the assignment. So as far as I knew at that point I was heading to Mexico. I was in Spanish language training because my Spanish was rusty. It had been many years since I had served. The next thing you know, as I mentioned in an earlier interview, the next thing you know the mission director in Haiti retired. Haiti was considered one of the toughest missions anywhere because of the conditions in Haiti. There was a lot of money involved, although this was the beginning of the Bush administration. Haiti had been one of the highest priorities under Clinton. Under Bush it was winding down in priority.

TAPE 3 ENDS

Q: This is tape 4, side 1 with David Adams.

ADAMS: So word got out they were searching for an experienced mission director to be the director in Haiti. Initially I said well, it is the kind of job that I, you know having served in Haiti back in the early 80's I would find interesting but I wouldn't be qualified for it given the fact that not only did they want someone who had been a deputy director, but also a mission director before. The problem was they had at least a couple of people in mind who turned it down because it was such a can of worms. Not only had the then director quit early and retired, he came back to head up the mission in Iraq about a year later. They enticed him back to go to Iraq as the first mission director there. But the director before him who shall remain nameless, was featured in a very unflattering way on 60 Minutes because of alleged mismanagement, corruption, what have you. So that had not ended well. So Haiti was seen as having a lot of political landmines as well as other things. Anyway, so a couple of the folks who were approached turned it down. I went and I talked to the fellow who had assigned me, who had been my champion for Mexico. I said, "You might think I am crazy, but it was a much bigger job and better chance for promotion and I know Haiti." I said, "If you can't find somebody you want, then keep me in mind. I would be interested in jumping." There were other reasons too, but long story short, he decided that the people who had come forward they didn't want for whatever reason. Even though I hadn't been a mission director, I had the background in Haiti and I had served, what I had done when working for the secretary on Haiti, word had gotten around on that in terms of my policy activities if you will. So they figured this guy knows Haiti quite well. Even though he is a little short on recent field experience blah, blah, blah. Well there was a big fight with the committee because there were folks on the committee who said, "No, we need an experienced director. It is like sending an ambassador to Iraq who had not been an ambassador before," somewhat comparable. So there was a brouhaha. Finally the head of the agency, Natsios, decided that he wanted to give me the chance. So I then switched and got my French brushed up.

Q: Well you were there from when to when?

ADAMS: 2001-2004.

Q: To set this up, what was sort of the situation in Haiti when you got there? First who was the president and the type of government, and the ambassador, and where had AID fit in? What was it doing?

ADAMS: Sure. Well AID was still the biggest kid on the block because we had a lot of money even though the trajectory was down in the funding. I think it had been about a couple of years before I was assigned as high as \$200 million a year. By the time I got there the budget was about \$75 million, still significant. Mexico was about \$10 million. But anyway it was a huge mission, a lot of staff even though it had been in the process of downsizing. The ambassador was an experienced hand named Brian Dean Curran, who had been the ambassador to Mozambique before Haiti. He had been in Haiti about a year at that point. He had like about a 4-4 or a 5 in French. He also spoke Creole, a real linguist, and had also been a DAS for legislative affairs at H for State before he went to Mozambique. Aristide was president. He had been re-elected after the Preval regime finished the first time around in 2000, disputed elections. There had been a lot of, there had been ballot box stuffing and what have you for not so much Aristide. He was such a prohibitive favorite that there was no accusation that his election had been fraudulent, but there were other senators who from his party had been alleged to have been fraudulently elected, and it is very possible that some of them were. So there was that. There was still the great divide in the society between the elite and the masses. I will never forget my first meeting with my foreign service national staff because some of them remembered me 20 years ago. A few were still around who had been there in the early 80's. But I began to describe U.S. policy toward Haiti, and said something about how we needed to support the Aristide government because Aristide himself needed to have a chance. Most of the white collar folks were very anti-Aristide, coming from the elite. So they blasted me about being sympathetic to him. He is a bum, blah, blah, blah. Whereas the blue collar folks were still pretty pro Aristide, the lower paid employees if you will. So I realized early on this was a political thicket I had to be careful of. That was the trickiest part of the job, managing the politics. The rest of it was not an issue. I could delegate a lot of it, but I had to handle the politics. I was struggling earlier for the name of the Republican equivalent of NDI was IRI, the International Republican Institute. Well I had a little bit of a political challenge early in my stint because the NDI was going great guns and doing a good job there and could operate openly. The IRI folks could not work in Haiti because of threats against their security by the Aristide goons, especially because they saw them being linked to the Republican party which was usually anti-Aristide. So we had tremendous pressure from key constituencies on the hill to help IRI not only give them a grant. The ambassador and I wanted to give them what was known as a cooperative agreement which involves some oversight, more oversight than a grant. You have got three basic instruments for giving money in Haiti. Contracting, you give a contract that involves the most oversight. The AID cognizant technical officer or project manager has every right to get into the weeds of who in an organization is managing the contract. A cooperative agreement it is not quite as intrusive. A grant it is pretty much they do what they want to do and they give you reports. If they don't give you reports you can make a stink. But they give you reports, that's it. The folks at IRI knew that. Because it was not only such a politically-delicate situation. The fellow who was the lead officer for IRI was a Haitian American who had a very strong political agenda, a guy named Stanley Lucas. The ambassador was very suspicious of him because he was known to spread rumors about U.S. policy that were false and spread personal rumors about key U.S. personnel like the ambassador, which he did. So it was, I was trying to negotiate an agreement to allow IRI to get involved again if you will in political development and democracy and governance in Haiti, political party development, which is what the contract is for. But the ambassador wanted to make it a very tight agreement. Well guess what, the people on the hill, some of the key Republican staffers and political folks in the State Department said, "No, you have got to give IRI as much leeway as you can." Luckily I had a very good democracy and governance office chief at the time, a woman who is now mission director in Cambodia. Erin Soto is her name, and she was very good about knowing the politics of the situation. So she protected me, and we worked together with the ambassador to put together the best deal we could. I also made it my business to befriend and work closely with the vice president of IRI, Georges Fauriol, who knew Haiti very well, and to try to work with him to insure that his Haitian-American staffer didn't muddy the waters.

Q: How did you work around the Haitian American? Did you sort of isolate him or what?

ADAMS: Well I basically said, "I will deal with the VP. I don't want to deal with this guy. I don't want to communicate with him." He was such a hot potato. So my office director worked with him. Remember that there wasn't because of the security issues and threats against IRI staff earlier in Haiti, and it gets even more complicated because one of my supervisors in Washington was a former IRI staffer in Haiti before they got chased out by Aristide's folks in the late 90's. She was deputy assistant secretary-equivalent at AID responsible for Haiti in Washington. So it got complicated because she used to work for IRI, and she should have recused herself frankly from the situation, but she didn't. She got involved in oversight from Washington. So she and our ambassador ended up butting heads to some extent. So I had sort of several masters, and these two were both my supervisors. It got a little tricky. I didn't always please them each. But most of the time it worked.

Q: What role was the black caucus, because the black caucus in congress would be basically democratic wouldn't it?

ADAMS: Right.

Q: And they were great Aristide supporters?

ADAMS: They had begun to sour on him. Not entirely because there were some of the folks who were pro Aristide. Some of the female members of the black caucus, Barbara, I forget her name. There were two or three of them. I think some of the folks like Charlie Rangel soured on him and figured this guy has gone bad. There were others who were very reasonable to deal with. Kendrick Meek was one, out of Miami. He was a good fellow, and he knew the challenges and the problems with Aristide.

Q: Was Aristide, had he learned his lesson or was he back to, you know he had been out and he is now back in?

ADAMS: He had become increasingly authoritarian. You know, there were a lot of allegations that he was corrupt. We think he was, but I don't in terms of direct evidence he was slick. He was involved in the narcotics we think or he was getting funds from narcotics traffickers to get the police to stand down. Don't know if it was ever proven. We know there was a part of the budget that went to the palace that was quite large. The National budget, and there was no accountability for it. Then there was evidence near the end of his second tenure that he ordered hits on people. People were killed, and I think ultimately that was why he was driven out. He became very transparent and ordered a hit on a fellow that used to be an ally of his. That did it. That was the catalyst that gave the people outside the country who wanted to come back in.

Q: Were you there when this happened?

ADAMS: Oh yes.

Q: Did you have any dealings with Aristide?

ADAMS: Only superficially. Actually I did deal with him behind the scenes. In terms of face to face it was all very formal and the ambassador had to be there, and so forth. But one of the other tricky situations I faced when I got there was the former, somebody who worked with me in Haiti the first time around who I stayed in touch with loosely speaking, a woman, a program officer in Haiti who was very close to Aristide. In fact a key Republican congressional staffer told me before I took up my assignment, "you had better do something about her. You know, she is funneling information to Aristide about what is going on within the U.S. mission. The ambassador didn't necessarily buy this. So I basically worked with her over time and she retired voluntarily. There were family and other reasons why she decided to leave, so I didn't pressure her to leave immediately. I wasn't about to; there was no real cause. So anyway, but she would tell me, she would read the president's pulse for me to keep me informed as to what was going on inside the palace, so she was useful. But she was also a bit of a hot potato to have.

Q: It sounds like here you are with this very difficult basically a political problem for you. How good, during the time you were there 2001-2004, how good would you say was the delivery system?

ADAMS: It was quite good because none of the aid was going to the government. That created a whole...

Q: Except right at the end.

ADAMS: Except during the end.

Q: And this was deliberate wasn't it?

ADAMS: Yes it was, and in fact when I was in Haiti the first time around in the early 80's under Duvalier, we evolved to an NGO based strategy because of corruption in the government. And inefficiency. It wasn't just corruption, it was not being able to get the job done. So when I came back in 2001, we were almost exclusively channeling aid through NGO's, U.S. and local. Except in order to keep the government from really being unhappy with us, even though Aristide would make pronouncements about Embargo on Aid and this is why we are so far behind the U.S. and others won't give us the aid directly, we did in the health field do scholarships and short international visits for key health ministry officials to the U.S. and elsewhere for seminars and what have you. There wasn't much more than that. Although interestingly it is funny how you see things, you can see some things 20 years later the seeds for which you planted earlier. Two things that I was involved in during the early 80's that were still going strong. One were potable water systems that we had built mainly with NGOs but with some government involvement mainly in the south, were still working, feeding different communities, gravity fed systems. But also there was an office in the government sort of a parastatal entity that was implementing what was known as the PL-480 title III program which involved local currency that had been generated over the years as a result of the sale of U.S. grain under an agreement with the government that we negotiated in the early 80's, that because they did implement a number of policies that we had required, the loan was forgiven, a loan of the food. Theoretically they owed us the money that was obtained from the sale of the food back in the 80's, in the 90's should have come back to the U.S. government. But since it was local currency we would have used it for local projects.

Q: As we did in India.

ADAMS: Right and elsewhere. That was still going. There were a number and I had a couple of my staffers go out and check the projects that had been handled by the government. It was usually roads, simple tertiary road construction or rehabilitation using local labor, hand labor. That sort of thing was happening.

Q: Could you do anything, one hears story after story for decades of the problem of trees.

ADAMS: Oh yes. Well back in the 80's in fact just as I arrived in '81, the guy that was my boss at the time was very much involved in finishing up a design for a major agro-forestry project. Of course when I arrived back in 2001 we sort of looked back and said, what happened? Well I don't know how many millions of seedlings were planted. I think by one count something like 5 million a year. A tremendous number of seedlings. The idea was that the farmer would want to harvest some of that for charcoal, which is the big issue in tree cutting. But that he or she or the family would want to allow a lot of the trees to mature to use either for charcoal or in the case of fruit trees, mango especially, to obtain the fruit for the market. So that strategy had evolved over they years into one where we were really focusing heavily on the fruit trees. So that part of the project, you know when people say Haiti is 95% deforested or what have you, the situation is bad believe me. I am not going to deny that, but as I was reminded when I was traveling in the south of Haiti recently, the claw, the southern claw, that area is still very much forested. This right here. Up here in the northern and central part of the claw there are still areas where the tree growth is not bad. A lot of that is new tree growth that has been generated by programs like ours. It is the fruit threes that they won't cut down because they want as I said...

Q: I was going to say ___ stops erosion, all sorts of good things happen.

ADAMS: So a lot more could be done, should be done. A lot of people have tried agro-forestry in Haiti with mixed results at best. The deforestation continues especially in the central and northern part of the country.

Q: Well I am looking at the time and you said you wanted to stop at 4:00. David I was wondering whether you did anything after 2004?

ADAMS: Yes, in fact there is more on Haiti I would like to tell you about, so maybe one more session would work.

Q: Ok, do you think we can catch you again?

ADAMS: Yes, in fact I am due back here on Wednesday through Friday, I come back Wednesday night through Friday, October 17-19.

Q: Ok, this is 20 March 2008. David, it has been quite a hiatus. You are back from Florida for a little while. So you want to talk more about Haiti.

ADAMS: Sure. If I may, listening to the last bit reminded me of something I heard recently which is you might say the most hopeful news, at least from a development perspective I have heard from Haiti for awhile. I just had some colleagues return after they drove from the capital to the south to Les Cayes, a southern town, a trip by road that used to take, by used to I mean in the recent past, about five hours. They made it in three. What that indicates is that some of the major road building efforts, road reconstruction at least for primary roads has come to fruition. I have heard some stories, I have not yet had a chance to experience it myself, that I believe through the financing of the Inter American development bank, again maybe the World Bank, a number of the larger roads have been improved. So there is some progress. There is progress in terms of security as well. I may have discussed in the prior session with you the UN peace keeping troops, although their mandate has been extended, and while they have their problems, they have been successful in breaking up some of the gangs, and I gather the training and the standing up of the Haitian police force has been going relatively well. So there is progress in some areas, stability in the Haitian context. Actually what I have also heard recently, substantiating earlier reports is that in the area of health, particularly the incidence of HIV aids that there have been great improvements. The incidence has fallen dramatically, down I think nationwide to about 2.2%, whereas it was as high as 14% or at least about 10%, which rivals some of the African incidence which are even higher. But it hasn't been 14% or thereabouts for some time. There has been a steady decline about the past four, five, six years, seven years, and there have always been demographic health surveys recently that have borne this out. So reliable statistics just haven't been available until relatively recently.

Q: You live in Florida. Do you get any reflections or context from the papers or something about how the Haitian population in Florida is reacting to changes in Haiti?

ADAMS: You know while one measure, a key measure is, how shall we say it, that they are voting with their feet, or they are voting with their flights, and the air traffic is always very heavy, and it has been since security especially has returned. That is a big measure of how people think Haitian Americans think the progress stands. Mind you, you still get heart rending stories of poverty, children being forced to eat dirt, that sort of thing, which crop up every now and then. So in no way are people saying we have got to on the verge of Nirvana in Haiti. It is still a dreadfully poor place. There are certain things that are improving. What is interesting is a statistic I saw recently indicated that a phenomenon that was already very much responsible for maintaining a de facto social safety net has grown even more. That is the flow of remittances from Haitian American and other, Canada and Europe as well, but primarily from the U.S. has grown from something like \$900 million a year estimated when I left in 2004, to over a billion. So 1.1-1.2. It has kind of rivaling places like the Dominican Republic which has been over a billion for awhile.

Q: You left there in 2004. What were you doing after you left there?

ADAMS: Well I was eying retirement at that point. I had accepted a position as the director and the dubious distinction of being the last director of what was known as the center for development information and evaluation, CDIE. It was housed in a bureau roughly equivalent to the State Department's policy bureau, or policy and program coordination, which actually encompasses a number of overall budget management and evaluation and research functions. My unit, which was the largest unit within the bureau, was involved with the evaluation and research functions in particular. Not to belabor it but one of the key assignments I had when I came back and wasn't looking to do it that long before I left, so I was using it to be frank as kind of a shall we say jumping off place for opportunities after I ended government service. But we put together at the behest of the then administrator a primer on how USAID does business that would be something which laymen and other government officials could read easily and understand, sort of a pithy summary of the various aspects of how we do grants, contracting, project management in general and the various functions within the agency. So that in addition to try and serve as a technical assistance entity for program evaluation were kind of the key functions of the office. What happened was that after I had been there about a year, a little over a year, a decision was taken by the secretary with the agreement of the AID administrator who was on his way out, to reorganize USAID. It was kind of a de facto partial merger of USAID functions into state. That is when they set up the so-called F bureau at state for foreign assistance and brought in Ambassador Tobias who formally headed up the AID entity, F-GAT I think the acronym is, Global aid coordinator office. To take over USAID with two hats, one as the theoretical equivalent deputy secretary of state for foreign assistance, although they called it the director, and administrator for USAID. So I was I had to say even though I felt badly for some of my colleagues, I was fortunate enough to already be planning my retirement. It worked out because not long after I left the job my successor had to, actually I am belying what I said earlier. There was somebody who took over, but she didn't have exactly the same job because they dismantled the bureau and pulled a number of functions over to state. Some people went this way; some people went that way.

Q: Well what was your feeling and maybe the take of some of your colleagues who had been doing this for a long time about this reorganizing and putting things into State. It sounds like they are disassembling a working machine which doesn't make an awful lot of sense.

ADAMS: Well I think that is the perspective of a lot of people in USAID. I have to say now that I am on the outside I can be a little bit more circumspect. This is the latest step in a process that has been ongoing really since the mid 90's. That is when you had the first, I think I may have spoken about that earlier session with you. They began the process of slow absorption or unification of certain functions with state. It began with budget. Well the first big step was the decision taken by the White House to have the USAID administrator report directly to the Secretary of State. Prior to that time AID had been more of an independent agency, and the administrator had reported to the White House even though he was, and it was always up until recently, he de facto had to report to the secretary even though the formal lines of authority were through the White House, and on the budget for example, directly to OMB. But the change that occurred beginning in the 90's involved budgetary authority being bifurcated. You had, State had to clear on the budget in the formal sense in order for it to be approved by OMB. So things like that happened slowly over time, but what I talked about a minute ago was the first big formal step of unification.

Q: Well was the feeling that this was done because of dissatisfaction with Aid., to make it more efficient or a way to sort of diminish the Aid that we were giving abroad.

ADAMS: Well, I think it was more the former because Aid levels have increased significantly in the past several years. Mainly because of Iraq and Afghanistan on the one hand, but also HIV aids through PEPFAR, and activities for implementing most of PEPFAR.

Q: The Bush II administration has put great emphasis on aids in and all in Africa.

ADAMS: Many of those programs have been administered by USAID. Less so in Iraq. In Iraq more of the money has been spread around to various entities. It has been kind of a mess frankly. But I think it was, there was a desire to have a unified approach to foreign policy across the board. I was privy to the early discussions under Bush II you might say because it was not long after that I returned from Haiti to take over the position, my last job in Washington that they brought on a new policy guru at AID, Doug Menarchik, who used to work for Bush 41, who then had a very collaborative relationship with the fellow who was head of SP at state. His name escapes me, Krasner. I think it was Steve Krasner. He was a close colleague of Secretary Rice. So one of the top priorities if not the top priority for Krasner and Menarchik, the fellow at AID that I referred to who used to work for Bush the father, was to work on this; they weren't calling it unification but this policy, unification of function that would allow for a smoother coordination between AID and state.

Q: Did, How long were you doing the job after you left Haiti in 2004?

ADAMS: About 18 months I think, from the time I took it up I think it was December, 2004, until I actually entered the retirement course here at NFATC at the end of March beginning of April, 2006.

Q: So while you were in that job about 15 months, a significant period of time, did you have a feeling that you were looking at a dissolving empire or was it sort of interesting how to approach the aid process in a different manner?

ADAMS: Well I guess I would have had more of that perspective, that is to say approaching aid from a different manner, if my head had been into the job more for a longer term perspective. I knew I was leaving so I was to some extent disengaged in terms of my spiritual commitment to what I was doing. I was looking at the outside. I had certain tasks that I felt were important to finish along the lines of how evaluation, program evaluation was being handled by the agency. That effort I have to say I think was stillborn because even though we had the mechanisms in place there never really was a strong commitment at the top levels of the agency to do objective rigorous program evaluation, although it was a somewhat decentralized process. If there was a commitment by the various mission directors overseas to have a good evaluation done of their program by an outside party, it got done. But having it done from the center wasn't going anywhere. The primer turned out very well. It was the first document of its type, and I was told by the chief of staff of the administrator that as long as he had been with Aid which had been eight or nine years, and the administrator felt the same way, it was the best Aid document of its kind that had been produced under this administration. So that was gratifying. So certain tasks got done, some didn't. My commitment was short term because I knew I was leaving.

Q: Well you know looking at the evaluation of programs and all, one of the criticisms I have heard over time, it may be very dated, but you know, we would have a program in an African country, and somebody would come in and be a forestry expert. All of a sudden you would get this forestry program going. He or she would be replaced by a dairy person. In other words you had a lot of these programs which were going nicely until the person who was committed to that type of program on the American side and the money and interest would be switched elsewhere. In other words and these things would just shrivel up. You know it was a terrible waste. Were we looking at things differently by the time you were getting ready to retire? ADAMS: You know that is an important point you are making, Stu, and my experience over the years has been that the commitment has to be broader than just the key individuals leading an effort. That is why particularly in the foreign assistance context you need the commitment of the host country, the government or government entities although that is helpful. If you don't have at least other stakeholders, private sector, NGO's local government, what have you, who can carry on, and of course what was very important for AID over the years is the commitment of the local foreign service national employees. I know there is a different acronym for it. Local staff of the embassy or AID, if they have a commitment, then things tend to work over the long term. But if it is something that has been carried out or carried forward and was first designed and carried forward mainly by the ex-pats who do move on without the other level of commitments, you are right. That is what happens. That has happened all too often, but I have seen other situations where you have that commitment, that buying in by others, local folks especially where things keep going. Now the other part of the equation is the money, you are right. If you have shifting priorities which frequently happens on this end by the administration or congress or both, then that is the other key factor in whether or not something can move forward.

Q: Well one of the things particularly since the, well it has been around a long time. The man in Bangladesh who got the Nobel prize for essentially setting up...

ADAMS: Mohammed Yunus.

Q: Yeah, setting up micro loans, small loans.

ADAMS: Yes, the Grameen Bank.

Q: Did you see this for, this does sound like it gets the people committed, the people who are going to benefit committed as opposed to these aliens coming in from outside, digging a well, building a bridge and then departing. Were you seeing, was this a fertile field?

ADAMS: Yes. I mean there are pros and cons to that approach. The pro is of course you have people who are at the very grass roots who are benefiting, who are committed, who typically are organized in a group as borrowers in a group and additional lending does not come their way unless all members of the group are repaying on time and participating. A peer pressure type of model. I think it is frequently women who are the ones because they are from country to country invariably the ones who are the most dependable in terms of focusing on the objectives of the group and making sure they are in a position to repay barring a disaster or some significant economic downturn. The one criticism I have heard of the model is that it doesn't necessarily evolve without that outside capital coming in over the long term, it doesn't generate much capital over the long term just from indigenous small micro businesses. In other words you don't have economies of scale necessarily as you do for even medium scale enterprises or larger enterprises. But be that as it may in the context of a Bangladesh or a Haiti, and the models they used in Haiti. When I was running AID there we used it to some extent. For example an outfit called Finca which uses the Grameen bank model mainly in Latin America and the Caribbean. So we sponsored, funded some of their programs for example. But yes that commitment at the indigenous grass roots level is needed.

Q: Well taking a look back on this, I would think one of the interesting and important developments would have been the growth of the non governmental organizations, the NGO's, betting away from sort of you might say starry eyed idealism or people running around not very coordinated into a much more powerful and effective set of organizations. Would you say this is true/

ADAMS: Well it depends on the country but yes, that has been a phenomenon of the past 20 years especially in a number of places where AID has worked. You know civil society is the other term that is used. That tends to be applied more to civic associations or those that are involved in political development. You have got obviously a broader array of NGOs and organizations that are sort of roughly to some extent mirror professional associations in this country. Those involved in a certain sector whether it is health, education, agriculture. But certainly in Haiti countries that are quite poor and the majority of the folks operate the quality of life is quite meager of you will or existence is at a very basic level, that because of the paucity of government services and the weaknesses of the government structures, the private on profit sector that has provided many of the services But it depends. Over time even a place like Haiti as is being borne out now to some extent, you have to have that growth in government services in certain areas for there to be long term progress. The road building endeavors that have been proven to be successful now, hopefully they will maintain them in the long term in Haiti, have resulted due to a partnership between international banks and the government of Haiti. I don't know having been away I am not fully informed on this, if the non profits really had anything much to do with this.

Q: I mean they just aren't designed for that. I mean they can't do everything in heavy lifting in a way.

ADAMS: And tourism in a way has been borne out right next door in the Dominican Republic. Tourism I think is one of the major future means of progress for Haitian...

TAPE 4 SIDE 1 ENDS

ADAMS: ...and developing roads would be a big factor, but they are sprucing up beaches up beaches and resorts to the extent they have them. It is nothing like they have in the Dominican Republic, but they do understand this in Haiti, and this administration, the Preval Administration does understand this. They just renegotiated their agreement with I think it is Royal Caribbean to expand the number of cruise ship stops in Haiti in an area I think primarily but not exclusively in an area called Labadie which is in the north near Cape Haitian. They have some interesting tourist sites up there. If they can get those roads in shape there could be a significant earnings of foreign exchange. That is most notably what is called the Citadelle, a marvel of human...

Q: Henri Christophe's fortress.

ADAMS: Yes, So having been up there and having traveled between the beach area and the Citadelle I can attest to at least just a few years ago the road being pretty bad. But I think they understand if they are going to have better roads, the distance is not great at all. So if they get people in there on the cruises they have built already an artificial area called Labadie, a tourist area, they could bus them up rather quickly to the Citadelle among others. There is also an area called the Palace of Sans Souci not far from the Citadelle.

Q: Well when you left, what did you do? You left in 2006.

ADAMS: Well I looked around for awhile. In fact for a time there it appeared that I wasn't going to be leaving government service because I kind of out of the blue I got a call from the assistant secretary of state for Latin America, Western Hemisphere affairs, who was Roger Noriega at the time saying that my name had been thrown into the hopper for a second time, to be ambassador to Haiti. The first time was actually Guatemala when I was in Haiti. But that time I was kind of like cannon fodder, because as I mentioned the fellow who ended up going, Jim Derham, the only way he wasn't going to go was if there was some skeleton in his closet. But for this one I was the leading candidate, and it seemed to be all set up to the point. I waited for about a five or six month period. This was from the summer of 2005 to the winter of 2005, looking like it was going to move forward. Meanwhile the security situation in Haiti deteriorated more. It was a huge mess, and the word that I got was at the level of the secretary, she decided. And I was up to the interview stage. I interviewed with the then deputy secretary who is now president of the World Bank. How soon they forget. Word got back that my interview with him went well, so it looked good. But something happened. There was a National Security Council meeting and the secretary decided she wanted somebody who had been an ambassador before in a high threat environment. So they sent Janet, I have forgotten her name. Anyway I was told thanks but no thanks, which was fine. A little disappointing. So there was a silver lining, but it would have been nice to have been an ambassador. Janet Sanderson I think is there. She had been ambassador in Algeria when things got hot there. She has done a pretty good job as far as I can tell. So that did it. To get back to your question, as of about November or December 2005, I realized that I indeed had to get serious about looking on the outside. So I began to cast about setting up appointments, checking various job sites, and long story short, being a religious person, I really felt the calling that the Lord was directing me toward where I ended up. The circumstances were quite interesting. I was reading an issue of Catholic Digest and on the front page of that particular issue was an article about this priest who was running basically a Boy's Town, and American priest in Haiti, who I had gotten to know quite well and who was doing fantastic work. Well I had not known until I read the article that his primary support was not coming from Catholic relief services or one of those well known entities but Cross International, about which I had not known anything earlier. Headquartered in Pompano Beach, Florida. So it just happened that not long after I read the article, my wife and I were traveling down to Del Ray Beach some 20 minutes away from Pompano Beach for the birthday of my octogenarian mother-in-law. So I decided well since it is so close I should drop in and introduce myself and meet these folks. It was a very flattering article about Cross International and their work with outfits like this one in Haiti. I met the president and he struck my wife and I both as being one of the nicest people. The guy had an angelic face and countenance about him, Jim Cavnar. I said to myself working with this guy would be a great experience. So not to belabor it, he and I began a dialogue. He said he needed somebody to take over the international operation. What he does is fundraising, his strength with another vice president for marketing. We began a discussion. I went down and did a consultancy over a holiday for him a couple of months later just to analyze the management needs of the organization. He liked the report. Meanwhile I had some other interviews with some local DC area NGOs, one of which I was a finalist for one of their VP jobs, IFES, International Foundation for Electoral Systems. I was on friendly terms already with their president and found, Richard Soudriette. But they picked somebody else who was better suited to the job, a friend of mine actually, mission director in Nicaragua earlier. So Cross came though with an offer, the second vice president position, and I just felt that looking back I made the right decision. I really enjoy it. Low pressure unlike what I was doing for a lot of my U.S. government career. Low pressure but room to grow. In addition to running the overseas programs....we've expanded into Latin America and other areas. And in addition to leading that expansion, I have been overseeing an expansion of our grant applications to both U.S. government and the private foundation community. So I have been keeping busy. We just got word last week that we have made the first cut for our first U.S. government grant application of any consequence, a seven million dollar request to the PEPFAR (HIV/AIDS) program. We were one of 49 out of 800 selected in this procedure to do a full proposal. So I am cautiously optimistic that is going to work out. So things are going well. (Note: we subsequently were awarded a \$5 million grant.)

Q: Well let's talk a bit about this NGO. What are the origins of this.

ADAMS: Cross International is a Christian NGO, interdenominational. Our focus is those who are truly the most disadvantaged. We work in about 26 countries. To get back to your question, you may have heard of an organization, a similar organization called Food for the Poor. They are headquartered in Deerfield Beach not far from Pompano. In fact Food for the Poor had received some grants I had worked with in Haiti during the latter part of my tenure in Haiti. Our president, Jim Cavnar, had been executive director of Food for the Poor for a number of years. He decided along with the fellow who is vice president for marketing and some other staff, to leave Food for the Poor when there was a big scandal at the end of the 90's. So he got some support from some other independent foundations and donors and they began with a Caribbean focus because that had been the main focus of Food for the Poor. So the experience of the folks starting Cross was mainly in places like Haiti and Jamaica, Guyana, Belize. They hired some new folks, people with overseas experience, and then expanded to Africa and Asia after that. That is the short history.

Q: Essentially do they look for organizations or projects where Cross can help with the money and other things? Is that essentially how it works?

ADAMS: Yeah. Unlike some of the bigger faith-based organizations like World Vision, Catholic Relief Service, Compassion International, we don't have our own bureaucracy overseas. We are in that sense more like a foundation. What we do is search out indigenous NGOs, churches, or faith based ministries that are reaching those who are the most destitute basically, with some exceptions, and then helping them grow their own organizations and improve their administrative systems and oversight, evaluations that sort of thing, and fund raise for them. Either grant, cash assistance, or an area that I was quite new to when I joined the organization, but I have learned a lot since I have been there, for the acquisition of donated goods: medicine, medical equipment, supplies, didactic materials, food, clothing. Those sorts of things that are donated by U.S. corporations to get the tax write off and to find some good use for excess goods. One of the things I have been able to do is bring on a new director of this operation under me, who has done a fantastic job. When I arrived to be frank, we had two people who were quite a dysfunctional unit doing this acquisition and placing, and it just wasn't working well at all. So we actually merged with another organization. A fellow who had done this work for 20-25 years who was the CEO of his organization joined ours and is now working for me, and has really improved the quality and breadth of the types of goods we send abroad. So that is the basic model.

Q: Can you point to a couple of places during your tenure where you really felt things have worked well.

ADAMS: You mean what I am doing now or prior?

Q: What you are doing now.

ADAMS: Well a couple of things, we weren't doing anything in Spanish-speaking Latin America except for the Dominican Republic. The first person I brought on, a very talented young man in his early 30's had quite a bit of experience in other organizations, multi-lingual, speaks like five languages fluently. Claudio is his name, Claudio Merisio. So Claudio and I basically did the reconnaissance together. I didn't go on every trip with him, but most of them, six, countries, three in Central America and three in South America. First of all backing up a bit, we wrote the grant application to a foundation that was already favorably disposed to us to help provide seed money for this expansion in addition to donated goods for which we already had sources. But for the cash part of it so the grant application was favorably reviewed. We received the seed money, and I hired this fellow more or less concomitantly with the grant, and brought him on board, and he has worked out very well. I think we can say we have already done, helped quite a few different NGOs and ministries that were already doing good work. In some cases they were just operating on a shoe string. Abused women in Guatemala. There was a home for abused women that was getting ready to fail. They had these three Guatemalan ladies, no foreign involvement. Guatemalan ladies who felt called through their church to help women because abuse of women is such a significant issue in Guatemala City for a variety of reasons. So we helped them lease a large facility. They have up to three families of women with several children who have had to escape harsh conditions where they were being beaten or abused by their husband or the kids were being sexually molested, stuff like that. They really are thriving now, and they were on the verge of collapse when we found them. That is one story but there are others. Others that are more developed that are doing good work. The key is who are they reaching. Typically, in Africa or Haiti we look for organizations that are helping kids that are affected by AIDS. Some have AIDS or they have one or both parents have died, or single women with families who are struggling to make ends meet, unemployed or are working at a very basic level. Handicapped children. People who are living in various shelters that are ready to collapse in various places like Latin America and Africa. So we finance low cost housing, construction of very basic but sturdy low cost housing structures. So that is the kind of thing. That has great appeal for me to be able to reach down to that rung of society.

Q: Have you found the support of various churches in the United States with what you are doing. Do you sort of help them focus? ADAMS: Interesting question. Yes. Even though we are inter denominational, we have two sides of the house for fundraising. To make it more efficient and effective we have got a Catholic fundraising and a Protestant fundraising operation. I might add that in terms of the programs we support, we do not support outfits if they require Bible reading or conversion of aid recipients. We support some Christian ministries that are helping Muslims, building houses for Muslims in places like the Philippines. To be clear though, except for emergencies, we do channel our aid through Christian ministries only. But getting back to your question, the Catholic side of the house is more productive mainly because of the organization of the fundraising operation. A key facet of it or aspect of it is that 30-35 priests who are retired from active priesthood or active ministry or are working part time for us on weekends. They serve a parish during the week. With agreement of the bishop they will travel the different parts of the country for us. We have one of our divisions contacts parishes and obtains agreement for one of these priests on a given weekend to give basically a homily and a presentation about what Cross does. Then usually they won't try to collect money at the service. They will leave envelopes. It is very productive way of raising money we have found. Then the other benefit of that, when people mail in their contribution you then have their name and put it on the list for follow up contact throughout the year. Typically you will have people who will give three or four or five times on an ongoing basis. Another way that we raise money, especially on the Protestant side is through what we call through major donors. There is also the direct mail operation on both sides of the house. But the major donors have been cultivated over time, people who are wealthy who have through a variety of means have been contacted through one of our departments and have checked us out and felt that Cross reaches the kind of people they want to reach, and so they give big donations of from anywhere like \$1,000 a year to \$100,000 a year or more. Then you have as I said, direct mail. We have a radio outreach. We do some television. I am being interviewed this evening by a local DC area television, it is actually northern Virginia television station as part of our outreach campaign. Then we also as I indicated earlier, we are expanding our a number of proposals to independent foundations as well as putting our toe in the water with the U.S. government. We are not going to be in any extent heavily dependent on the U.S. government, but we don't receive any money from the U.S. government now. So I am leading the effort. We have applied for two U.S. government grants that I have mentioned and then a third one this year, and we will leave it at that for the time being. It is really the private side that we focus on . But it is as I mentioned we have got the Catholic and the Protestant. The Catholic is more productive because of the model. We are trying to set up something similar on the Protestant side, where we have hired a couple of Episcopalian priests now to do something akin to what we are doing with the Catholic priests.

Q: Well David, this is fascinating. Is there anything else we should cover do you think?

ADAMS: Well how about a little commentary about current U.S. government foreign policy and then what will happen in the future? Is that appropriate?

Q: Why not.

ADAMS: I have to admit I have been ambivalent about U.S. government foreign policy during this administration. I share the frustrations of people who think we have gone off course to some extent, particularly with Iraq. I was one who thought we should have waited, should have given the process a little more time to work before we invaded Iraq. However once we were in it I was one of the ones who said OK we are in it, we are committed. We can't be half baked here. We certainly on the military side did it right, but probably agree with many State Department and AID officers who think that after that we screwed it up, and gave too much power to Defense. We just made a number of missteps. Even though I tend to think it was a mistake in many ways, I hope and pray that in the long term it will work better and that the Iraqi people will finally have peace and security and somewhat of a functioning democracy. I am greatly dismayed of the very negative side effect of Christians being pushed out of Iraq and the persecution that has occurred in Iraq, ironically considering that they were doing better under Saddam. It is very sad from my perspective. I think we have done largely the right things in Afghanistan except we have been distracted by Iraq, and we could have done better in Afghanistan if we had more commitment of resources in Afghanistan. The Bush administration has been a great thing with PEPFAR through its HIV AIDS emphasis. A little slow in terms of the antiretrovirals. I am a big proponent of the ABC, Abstinence, Be Faithful and Condom. Unfortunately I think there has been less emphasis on the "be faithful" than there should have been. I think we would have done better, particularly for adults and older teens to focus on partner reduction, because that is where it is at. The literature, the research has been pointing out that where the biggest impact has been made, and this is true in Haiti, as it has been in Africa, is to get people to reduce the number of partners. Condom use has a very mixed record at best; frankly, many men in Africa and elsewhere don't want to use them. Abstinence for kids and even teenagers has worked when the effort has been serious. But be that as it may I think in terms of the resources that have been dedicated, the overall performance of S-GAC and implementing agencies has been very good.

Q: What does that mean?

ADAMS: Global Aids coordinator. S is for secretary you know, under the secretary. It is too bad what happened to Tobias. I think his legacy has been unfortunately through his own actions as with Elliot Spitzer, a similar situation. He did a great job from what I could see when he was heading the HIV AIDS effort for the administration. But then he came over to Aid and though his personal weaknesses blew it.

Q: Well somebody can look this up but what essentially was the problem?

ADAMS: You are right. I should give a little more background. He was, well he claimed he was just getting massages from what shall we call them, escort services. But his name cropped up on a list during an investigation and he quit right away. He basically said, "I haven't done anything wrong but this looks bad, so I am leaving." The problem is as with Spitzer...

Q: We are talking about the Governor of New York who just last week got caught in a prostitution thing and has resigned as governor.

ADAMS: Well Tobias had been running AID and he had been preaching abstinence and being faithful. Anyway I digress.

Q: Well I mean it is all part of there is the problem. I lived in Annapolis and one of the mottos, and this goes back to the 40's KYPIYP. Keep your penis in your pants. I mean when particularly people in senior positions they ruin themselves but also the programs over which they have authority.

ADAMS: That is right. It gives a very bad impression of the program at times. Btu in any case to get back to the point, an unqualified success I think you can point to that. I am a proponent of the pro democracy philosophy. The implementation has been a mess. What I think what also has been borne out in this administration was the mistake that was made under the Clinton administration, well more than one, but this one with respect to the folding of USIA into the State Department. I think that created, it has made our public affairs, especially our public affairs outreach in the Middle East all that much weaker.

Q: I couldn't; agree more. You know, looking at the long term effects of American foreign policy, probably our greatest effect has been on raising a generation of foreigners who have come to the United States and have benefited from our various outreaches, most of which have been run by the USIA side of things. We have at least for the short term since this has been folded into State ahs turned into more a flak agency to promote the latest foreign policy initiative or something rather than sell America.

ADAMS: Right, and I have to say getting back to my own area of expertise, picking up on a point of discussion earlier, that has happened to USAID as well. Now I look at it, I look at the continuum, looking back where the seeds were sown for USAID becoming weaker even before the Clinton administration. I think that one of the problems we have had over time is serving so many masters, and having to a large extent operate under a structure where a lot of the aid is earmarked with all kinds of directives from Congress and I think it affects that aspect of foreign policy in a negative way even more than it does the diplomatic initiatives. What happened beginning in the mid to late 80's was you had a situation where the AID began to in effect outsource more and more its functions. Even though theoretically and in some cases actuality outsourcing can result in more efficiencies and a higher degree of technical capability what you do is weaken the officer corps, the core operation of the agency, and the esprit de corps is weakened. You have a lessened commitment over time to the agency. I think back when we had, not that the model didn't have to be modified to keep up with the times. To some extent you had one of the biggest differences I have seen now in AID from what I saw back in the 80's was that you have less technical expertise being applied to a problem. What you do is you have people who are more administrators. Who will administer, shuffle the paperwork and then give it to the contractor, the grantee, the NGO to actually do the work on the ground so to speak. I just think that structure has its down side, and that is in the context of all the other things how AID has been buffeted. What is very telling is the work force. If you look at the workforce reductions over time, it has been huge. I think at the height of AID let's say the size of the officer corps, not just the officers but full time government employees working in AID, we were up to about 12,000. This was like in the early 80's, after the Vietnam War, late 70's early 80's. Now we are down to about 2,000. I may have my numbers wrong but to give you the rough percentages. Just we have outsourced so many of the functions, and even though we have taken on more responsibilities for example with the newly independent states in the former Soviet Union came into being and Eastern Europe came on line. We have got obviously Iraq and Afghanistan and all that. So it has been I think what has happened over time is a very haphazard strategy in effect has been implemented in AID because of all the different...

Q: Of course the downside of this outsourcing is it means you have to keep several sets of books. And the NGO has to keep books on themselves and you keep books on the NGO. Each one has different disciplines and strengths and all. It doubles the administrative costs really.

ADAMS: Then it has made evaluation, monitoring and evaluation more difficult because as I found out when I was running the show in Haiti, that you have to rely heavily on the NGO or the contractors and grantees, mainly grantees to monitor themselves and to tell you how they are doing. To some extent unless you go to the trouble of having an in depth evaluation which takes a lot of work and money and frankly a lot of missions don't have time for it.

Q: Well other than that are you playing baseball at all?

ADAMS: Oh you mean in terms of my, well frankly what I am doing now is a full time job, and I have my recreation. I live on the beach. I live in small but very nice condo on the 19th floor of a beach side apartment complex with a fantastic view. As long as we don't get hit by a hurricane things are fine. We are renting our place out here in Northern Virginia. How long I will be doing this I can't tell you. I am enjoying it very much and I plan to do it for several more years at least. I will possibly move on to other organizations. I am not saying I will do this work in the one that I am in now until I retire. In fact I was told in one of the briefings I had at the NFATC retirement course was, these days if you are in the private sector you can count on moving every two or three years. That seems to be the norm. So I have my elderly parents in this area living with my brother so they are taken care of. I am spending this weekend with them. My younger son is in grad school in Baltimore. So I still have got ties to this area. I plan to stay very much linked to Washington. I could end up finding a job back here at some point. I don't see myself as retiring for many years.

Q: Well also my brief business in Florida, fine if you have got a job, but to be retired in Florida you are not really going to have much time to go to the Florida Alps and enjoy the high altitude. I mean it is a pretty dull place looking at it. But I mean as a work place, great.

ADAMS: We enjoyed the Keys and the Everglades. There is much more to explore up north. You have got Orlando. You have got NASA Space Center. The west coast is interesting too, Naples. There are actually a lot of retirees there, very nice, but it is basically beaches and snorkeling and that sort of thing. We have my son in LA who is getting married later this year, so we have other reasons to travel to California off and on. So traveling keeps life interesting and between my wife and my personal job I am on the road a fair bit which is fine for now.

Q: Well David, I want to thank you very much. This has been a lot of fun. We have had a long road together.

ADAMS: Yes, thank you very much. I have enjoyed this, I appreciate it.

End of interview