

**Semi Structured Interview**

**Transcript - Interview 2**

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Davis 0:00

Okay, so I started the recording. So yeah, basically my degree plan is more or less studying organizational culture and how that relates to organizations interacting with each other in an international environment, specifically in disaster relief and coordination. So, what I was really interested in is the Navy's interactions or the military's interactions with, you know, civilian NGOs or the UN or, you know, other organizations that come in during disaster relief because I've seen the Navy do a significant amount of disaster relief in the world. And it's been interesting, what I'm more of my studies are in the psychology and the sociology behind culture and applying that to an individual organizations culture. And then you couple that with some, you know, modern language and linguistics and intercultural communication courses, and then what I started to find was that every organization interacts outside of its own organization kind of uniquely, so they interact with other entities in very different ways. So essentially, what my degree is trying to do is bridge that gap between two seemingly opposite organizations like the United States Navy, and USAID, or other NGOs that aren't related to the US government at all. We're on basically opposite ends of that kind of communication spectrum. So how do you bridge that gap? So that way you can function effectively, and help the most people in the most efficient way. So, it's a very weird topic to try to explain, I try to come up with different ways to explain it, but I hope that kind of more or less makes sense about where my degree plan is headed. I don't know if I did a fantastic job explaining that.

Interviewee 2 - 1:49

yeah, Davis, I, I think I, you know, I, personally, I think I get where you're going with that, you know, looking at systems and, how those systems have a culture, I'll try and paraphrase. And then you know, how these maybe closed loop systems and these kinds of cultural organizations, how they, you know, communicate or don't communicate with each other? super interesting

topic. I took a class last semester; I don't know if Joby told you I was at the Army War College in Carlisle. And one of the courses I took was, um, it was called systems leadership. I can't remember the title of the book we had, it's in my shipping. So, I don't know when I'll see it again. I could dig it up. But it was really something about that. The book we did, we basically looked at organizations as systems, and then my instructor was really keen on what, what is that? He was big on metaphor, or metaphor, simile, so well, you know, the Navy is like, is a machine. And a machine is like this, and this is how the Navy is, but then, you know, just going deeper and deeper to really try and articulate that, and, and then it's like, okay, the machine one that's done. Now, you know, the Navy is like a brain. And the brain has all these different things, and what does the brain mean to you? And how would you relate that and it was a pretty interesting exercise. And I, I find myself thinking about that more and more, because, you know, we're looking at these complex organizations, and, you know, it's like, well, they're really like, you know, they're like a pack of animals, or, you know, they're like a pack of wildebeest or the way they think like each other, and, you know, I just find it, it makes me a little more empathetic and try to figure out how to crack, you know, how do we communicate? Or how do we work with that organization? So, I'm, I'm still dealing with it, but I think these are, you know, really important topics? Yeah. How do US government agencies relate with each other in a crisis? You know, you don't want to be you know, I heard that saying the other day, it still resonates with me, you know, when there's a crisis, you don't want to start asking for business cards. Hey, how do I get a hold of you? How are we going to do this, you know, you need to go into a crisis ready to communicate and work with each other. So, I think it's very, always going to be timely, always going to be a changing and interesting subject and with your background, too. Did you get involved in any disaster relief exercises

Davis 4:16

A little bit. So, I actually got to Japan in 2011, the very end of it not long after the Fukushima incident. We were most of the relief and recovery effort. By the time I got there was done. They actually delayed my report date to Okinawa, specifically because of that, but I got a little bit of the tail end of that effort for recovery. Not super in the weeds of everything. Now, I will say I also do have a background in emergency health services as well I've been an EMT for... coming up on 15 years now. So, I have a little bit of a background in the civilian side where I've done some, I don't want to quite say large-scale emergency relief. But in the town where I grew up, we would have a lot of significant ice storms that would come in and you'd end up with people having to be evacuated from their homes because of flooding or like their basements flooding and things. So that's not really quiet relief work

Interviewee 2 - 5:16

but real front-line work, you know, a real, a very human level and interacting with people that are in a crisis. Where are you from Davis Where? Where am I talking to you now? Are you in? Are you in Baltimore?

Davis 5:26

Yes, I'm just outside of Baltimore in Catonsville. I grew up in Connecticut, though Northwestern Connecticut.

Interviewee 2 - 5:32

Oh, all right. In that part of Connecticut, is that more New England? Yes, more clearly New England and say, you know, New York City?

Davis 5:44

Yes. Much more culturally New England. It's very rural, where I grew up. So we were about 15 minutes from southern Massachusetts and about 25 from upstate New York. So very, very rural in comparison to you know, a lot of times when you say Connecticut people always think the shoreline of Connecticut like Greenwich and where there's all the New York money.

Interviewee 2 - 6:02

That's what I think of Yeah, I think of the suburban kind of New York, and I have a colleague here in Bangkok, and he was, you know, introducing himself. He's again from Connecticut. He's like, I'm from he was clear. I'm from New England, Connecticut. I'm not from Greenwich, where your, your Stamford, wherever you're thinking of, and I'm like, Oh, that's, you know, and I even forget that, you know, Connecticut is part of New England, you know, for me, you know, I just don't think of Connecticut as New England.

Davis 6:30

Actually, I find the same thing. A lot of people don't think of Connecticut as part of New England. And a lot of times I will differentiate when I say you know, I'm from Connecticut, but I'm not from that Connecticut. You know?

Interviewee 2 - 6:42

Yeah, yeah, it's so interesting.

Davis 6:44

It is completely different, you know, and we're only I mean, I could have hopped on the highway and I could have been in that area Connecticut only in about 45 minutes to an hour. And that

short of a drive the cultural difference is completely opposite ends of the spectrum. It's insane. How, how much changes and just you know, that one hour drive north.

Interviewee 2 - 7:05

Wow. Oh, so? Well, yeah. So, we got your background and you're in kind of your Capstone in your thesis. You know, made me think though, just and we can help you follow up on this. But one of my aid colleagues, who was at the there are two of us at Army War College last year and her strategic research project, the SRP, was done on, I think it was a civil military collaborations and disasters, and she was coming from Haiti, she had been in one place after another, I met her in Afghanistan in 2008. And I think she went from like Afghanistan, to Iraq, to Haiti to Bangladesh to South Sudan. I mean, she just rough put me in a difficult pose, you know, she wasn't a click guy. Um, now, I mean, she was in really challenging pose a lot of civil military interaction. side, and I think all these papers are, they're all, you know, public domain and out there. So, if you just went on to the arm, you know, Army War College website, strategic research projects, and then I think it'll lead you to a search engine, if you put signal coordination and disasters, I wouldn't be surprised if you got, you know, 20 hits over the last 20 years of different students that are sort of, you know, organizing themselves around some, you know, some similar, some similar issues, signal coordination, and disasters and development work even. Just another. I don't know if you've looked at that yet. But you know, probably the Naval War College would have something similar.

Davis 8:59

So, I've actually been using the Naval War College a little bit, I haven't used too much of the US for college. I definitely will, though, now that you mentioned it, because I've found one book in particular called waves of hope that was written a while ago, about the tsunami in 2004, in Indonesia. And it was very much about the military's involvement in coordination with all of the

other entities that showed up there. I mean, the UN, you know, is, I believe, to date, still one of the most expensive projects that the UN funded in that area, as far as relief and recovery, and because it was so destructive, in particular, in Indonesia, this book is very much about the Navy's role in the vertical lift capability that we brought to the, to the area because they couldn't get any of the supplies or relief equipment out there. Because the roads were all destroyed, the bridges were destroyed. So, the Navy became these massive central kinds of logistical hubs where everything would come to Navy ships, regardless of who was sending it or who needed it and then we had to figure out how to get it out to all these for agencies, and that's pretty fascinating. But it doesn't go quite far enough into the interactions between those organizations, it's very much about this is what we did. And it's, you know, very data driven, you know, this is how many pounds the supplies removed and how efficient we were. And I'd like to go a little bit deeper than that into the coordination side. So, I'll definitely have to look into the US work college because I can't believe I'm the only person that's ever-considered studying this.

Interviewee 2 - 10:27

Yeah, but it's always changing too. And you know, you'll have a different take on it as well. So yeah, check out Army War College, and then you're right, probably the National War College at Fort McNair in DC. And then there's the Eisenhower War College, they might, they also might have, you know, I'm sure they have, I've never looked at it, but I'm sure they have similar search engines to Naval War College

Davis 10:50

Awesome off to look into all that stuff. So, I guess we could kind of jump into some of the questions I have written down if that's alright with you.

Interviewee 2 - 10:58

Yeah, sure.

Davis 11:00

So, I guess the first question I had in you sounds like you have worked in the field of interagency coordination, at least for a little bit. So, the first question is kind of how did you end up working in that field? Did you always plan to? Or did you kind of find yourself there naturally, as your career developed?

Interviewee 2 - 11:19

Yeah, so, I came into aid, lit by chance, kind of late, I came into aid in 2008, as a contractor. And that was, um, you know, that was pure kind of Civ-Mil at the time. And you know, Afghanistan was quickly becoming "the good war". They were getting more resources into it. It was right at the end of the Bush administration going into the Obama administration, and I was there for the big civilian and military surge. So, I joined as a contractor and then converted to Foreign Service while I was there. So yeah, I was kind of pushed into it. Previous to Afghanistan, I was with non-governmental organizations. And, you know, NGOs, and the military, not always an easy fit and US military. I was in West Africa, in Congo and Azerbaijan. So, we just, there was really no US military presence there. Anyway, there were British military Gurkhas, you know, local military, Pakistani peacekeepers that I interacted with quite a bit. And I stayed with Pakistani peacekeepers when I was in certain places. So, it was much more, you know, UN peacekeeping forces slash local kinds of military dealings. But then when I joined AID, it was a real interagency kind of, you know, that was a real interagency experience.

Davis 12:44

So, I guess the follow up to that would be Did you ever think you would end up doing this kind of international interagency work? Or, like when you started or just?

Interviewee 2 - 12:55

I don't know, I'm not really... No, I didn't. And, you know, Afghanistan was just a different experience at the time, I wanted to try and try working with the US government. I hadn't done any US government stuff since the Peace Corps. Yeah, so it was kind of just all pure luck. And it wasn't a passion of mine or anything. You know, I just kind of fell into it.

Davis 13:20

The other two people I interviewed pretty much said the exact same thing as well. So, it's very interesting to see across a different spectrum of people with completely different experiences. Everybody's just kind of I just fell into it. It was just one of those things. That's interesting to me.

Interviewee 2 - 13:34

Yeah. I had an I mean, I started in, so after, yeah, my first international gig was Guinea and there were, you know, that we didn't there wasn't a UN peacekeeping presence there. But then I went down to Sierra Leone, and then there was and that's when I started staying with the Pakistanis and interacting with them more and it was kind of Sierra Leone in 2002, was very much a big UN peacekeeping scene, that was kind of the darling of that year. And, and, you know, so there were, there were a lot of there was a British military force there, and they were always kind of curious as to what we are doing and, you know, they come and want to, you know, they come and drink with us and hang out with us and so that, you know, that kind of starts getting, you know, started getting the end of that whole being come, you know, just

learning some of their language, you know, they're always officers, you know, you weren't hanging out with like, rank and file soldiers, you know, usually captains majors. Yeah, probably not even like Lieutenant Colonel's. It was probably more the Captain-Major range. But I think that did help. By the time I got to Afghanistan where I, you know, I, you know, I was comfortable around guns. I was comfortable around military folks who just you know, and they were Americans. So culturally, it was much easier. Absolutely. You know, having tea with the lieutenant colonel Pakistani, you know, you're like, geez, can we, you know, it's kind of lame. Perfectly fine and pleasant, but, you know, culturally we didn't have a lot in common.

Davis 15:13

Yeah. And you said kind of getting used to the language as far as the military goes, that's one thing that everybody I've talked to is brought up, they said, you know, all these different organizations in particular the military has, even though you're all speaking English, it still is an entirely different language. You know, in the military, everybody always says, you know, we use so many acronyms for everything that Yeah, learning those little tricks of the trade as far as communicating, even though it's the same language is actually one of the more challenging things. So, was there ever any kind of experience you had where it just even though you may have been speaking the same language felt like, you were just completely separate pages?

Interviewee 2 - 15:50

I mean, it was never that bad. Even Afghanistan, you know, it was manageable. Probably the worst, actually, the War College was, was probably one of the more challenging ones. Because even say, when we break down, we had three international students and me, so kind of four of us that were quite foreign to the whole, but then, you know, we, you know, we had Air Force, you know, we had all the branches. It was, it was more kind of annoying after a while, it's just like, Look, you know, I mean, this is a problem with this. It's a problem with USAID too is being

able to speak to most of the world, most of the US population that has nothing to do with the military, nothing to do with the US government or foreign service. So that was a big just kind of got to be and you know, don't break up the MAGTF. It's like, Yeah, I know what you mean. But you know, you're going to who you're going to say that to? Are you going to, you know, you're going to say that to a taxpayer and expect they're going to understand that and it was just more kind of annoying, more than anything. But yeah, that is a challenge. If it's, I can't say it was too. So, I was in Cambodia for four years. And there, I kind of interacted with the military, there was a Department of Defense attached there and there we, the Marines would come in and do exercises, and I would, I was the disaster relief officer there. So, we had flooding, and I would interact with them when they came in, and we had this hims csme? the civil? no CMC, civil military support element. So, these guys would be you know, there'd always be like, six or seven of them there. And, you know, I like them as people. So, we, you know, we, you know, make sure I invited him to parties, and that we were social and went out to lunch together. And then the Marines roll in and want to do something. And, you know, there was kind of that language barrier, and cultural differences. But, you know, I didn't, I never found it annoying, or anything, I knew, we're probably just as annoying to them with our own language and our own set of rules and structures.

Davis 17:48

yeah. So, I guess the next question I kind of had is, is there a specific challenge or challenges that you've encountered during interagency work? So, you know, was there any particular event that stands out is something that you think, or just stands out as a challenge? As far as interagency work working between different agencies? Has there been one particular event or a couple that have been unique or different, more difficult than any others?

Interviewee 2 - 18:19

One? Well, I can't... There's kind of an overall theme I have, and that's, you know, I think, you know, this is part of that, being in Afghanistan, it's sort of like the military, the DoD guys, you know, what's the end state? What's it going to look like? How are we going to get in and get out of here? And even me at that time, you know, coming from Afghanistan, West Africa, or coming from West Africa, Central Africa, you know, for USA ID or diplomacy, there's, there's usually no end state, there's just these interests never end the relationship never ends, you know, we're not going to go in and, you know, kill all the enemy and leave, you know, it's just going in is just the beginning of it also, it's just timeframes and expectations are different. And another huge cultural thing is just the resources. You know, what, what DoD has, and what we have is just, the discrepancy is so huge, you know, there's 10,000 no, basically, I don't know, seven, 5000, maybe 6000 Foreign Service officers in the State Department were like, 15 108, and then you've got maybe a couple 100 with Department of Ag. That's it. You know, we have contractors and you know, other things, but, you know, I mean, if I open up an email chain to somebody in Indo PACOM, I'll get 50 emails and from captains, majors, or 10 colonels, I don't even know who I'm talking to, all of a sudden, it's just overwhelming. So just kind of the amount of, you know, the amount of people and resources they can bear are just, you know, we can't we just can't compete with it. And that's in everything in infamy. You know, I mean, I'm trying to just set up a call with one guy, and, you know, he thinks I can just walk over to the SIPR. And, you know, for me, it's a 45-minute ordeal, I've got to walk across town, I've got to get into the embassy, I've got to go set up my he's got to go read log into my account just takes forever. And he's just like, you know, he's at his desk, just knocking it out for 12 hours a day, I can't compete, you know, I've done other things. So that just these kinds of expectations, timelines, resources, all totally different.

Davis 20:31

Actually, kind of sums up my next question, so we can kind of skip over that one. So, the next one, I think, is if it starts gaining some relevance towards my degree would be, you know, what kind of training education or personal experience prepared you to, to handle those challenges as far as working between agencies? Did you have any kind of specific training through USAID or the word college or any personal experiences that you think helped you with that?

Interviewee 2 - 21:05

I think it's, um, you know, yeah, I haven't thought about this a lot. But it's sort of been, you know, to an extent, even if you start in something like, you know, maybe it's university or Peace Corps, you kind of start easing into that government way of bureaucracies and communication. So, you know, Peace Corps, you start interacting with an ambassador, then, you know, use the State Department folks, and then other government people come through, and you sort of, you know, you get some exposure to it. And then international organizations, you know, are donors for the government. So, then State Department's coming out again, then the UN is coming out, and we're, you know, and then other foreign, you know, Ministry of Foreign Affairs from other donor countries, and it's all just a long process, and people still totally get it wrong, I'll still totally get it wrong. And, you know, I mean, I did a year at the War College aid, probably, I bet from Afghanistan, that first three years, I bet I spent seven months in training my first three years with aid, everything from, you know, basics, foreign assistance with the with our government to I did six weeks at Fort Bragg on a civ-mil kind of joint training operation. That was totally chaotic, not really useful. I think it probably cost \$50,000 to send me to that training, I didn't want to do it. And then it just goes on from there, you know, just the confusion, the endless training. But now, the more I think about it, everything, all these relationships, it's all you know, we have, okay, we have a memorandum of understanding, or no, we have a policy with USAID and working with the military, we have a, we have a civilian military, every mission has a CIV-MIL of contact, like, you know, anybody from God can contact them, and we'll work with them. And we have a

mandate to do that. And you still see how quickly it all depends on, on one person's ability to manage that relationship. And, you know, yeah, all these relationships, they're all just personal. It's interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, being able to communicate all basic stuff, like you can put it all on paper, you can do MOU's and policies, but at the end of the day... Does that guy at the embassy, the defense, the defensive cache? Does he get it? Does he get the interagency? Does the USAID person get it? Does the ambassador appreciate it? You know, kind of setting that tone. You know, like, uh, you know, I'm just I don't know, in my time, you know, John Kerry, very different from Mike Pompeo. two totally different kind of tones and attitudes and that kind of can trickle we can sort of set the set the culture of the work, not the culture, but it can be, it can affect the, I guess, the climate is more of the climate than the culture, it can really affect the climate of the whole organization for amount of time.

Davis 24:09

So, it sounds like and I don't, I don't want to put words in your mouth, but it sounds like more or less, the training that you received wasn't necessarily helpful, but the interpersonal skills and the relationships that you've developed over time were more important, as far as interact interacting between agencies than any kind of training you ever received.

Interviewee 2 - 24:25

That's great, yeah, that's a great summation of it and you know, and trying to communicate as best as you can, this is what I can do in the relationship. This is what I might be expecting from you and Is it is it realistic and that still goes on you know, I'm trying to do things with Indo PACOM and SOCOM and you know, just you know, being frank with them and but also trying to be responsive if they have questions and make connections and try and set them up for success if I can, and also having them expect that, hey, it's just me doing this right now. Like, I

Can, you know if it's going to be 50 emails and three sipper meetings in a week? It's just, you know, I don't have the bandwidth for it.

Davis 25:08

So, well, what would you recommend, then for somebody looking to enter that kind of field of work. So I guess any kind of recommendations that you think might be helpful if somebody was like, you know, in my position wanting to go into that type of interagency coordination, what would be your biggest recommendation to them?

Interviewee 2 - 25:29

You know, I guess, probably coming back to what you're talking about is under trying to really understand the culture of that organization. you know, the culture will dominate whatever strategy you think you're coming in with. So, if you can, kind of, if people come into, you know, dealing with another agency, and being empathetic, like, okay, these are the resources, this is what they have, this is how they work. This is how they're structured, this is sort of where I can plug in that, you know, that would be a huge value, like I get State Department sort of get, you know, DoD, probably better than a lot of civilians, still not great. But you know, enough to be dangerous enough to have a conversation and, you know, be honest with them, and, and then figure out what can we do that's realistic, and how can we work together. And, you know, it's different to I mean, I come coming from Kenya, Kenya was the biggest embassy in Africa, it's, you know, 2000 employees show up, and we're all on the same base, they're pretty much, you know, there's some other things going on with, you know, other offices and DoD installations and other places. But then, you know, getting to Bangkok, Bangkok is one of our biggest us, g presidents, and, you know, maybe we're number three or four in the world, 50 US government agencies here, spread-out all-over town, you know, both living and office wise, super confusing. You know, I mean, I'll go, you know, weeks without seeing the same person twice. You know,

just, you know, every, you know, 50 agencies is a lot. So, figuring out who's doing what, when, and where, and trying to stay on top of that is about him, it's just about impossible. So yeah, also recognizing that, you know, just yeah, just and also, you know, being okay with that, being able to operate in that, and that's, that's fine. You, you do what you can figure out what you can and, you know, try and learn from who's left before you and set the next person up as best you can. But, you know, there's just so many funny things going on here, and so many different activities out, nobody can really keep track of it.

Davis 27:43

And I guess the last question that I kind of had was, do you think that interagency collaboration is kind of a fact of life today? Or do you think that that's going to continue to progress towards this...I don't want to say global but much more interconnected form of work? Do you think that that's just temporary this shift? Or do you think that we're going to continue to shift towards that?

Interviewee 2 - 28:07

I think that it is the future. And I honestly, I believe in it, I believe in organizing a whole of government interagency approach around complex problems that no, no one and they hammer this end at the War College to their like, nobody has a monopoly on good ideas, you know, you need to work with each other. And now more than ever, to I mean, we just we don't we're not none of not Department of Defense, not state a, any agency, we're just not going to have the resources. So, we all know, the US government, we have to, you know, we have to work together, we have to organize around problems together. And because we're just not going to have the resources to go it alone. So, USAID has to work with the Centers for Disease Control. We have to work with the Department of State, we've got to work with, you know, definitely with the Department of Defense. I mean, I've been, you know, I've been hearing the three D's, defense, development, and diplomacy since I joined aid. And, you know, there's a lot of truth to

it. It's not a perfect system. But I was thinking a lot the last year about well, okay, so COVID kicks in, but the PEPFAR program, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief that George W. Bush started, and that's an \$80 billion investment right now. And that's its Department of Defense. It's stayed at CDC, as you know, a really big player in it, but for all the issues and all the problems that PEPFAR has, you know, it's probably saved 17 million people's lives. It's, it's changed, it changed aids, you know, for all of Africa, globally, you know, and even now, is, you know, you think of COVID I mean, you know, we haven't had a cure for the common cold for the flu. You know, you know, you push all kinds of US government resources around a problem, you know, we're only 10 months into this thing, and we've got a 95 percent cure for it. I mean, we're not over the hump. But I mean, that's incredible. So, I mean, that was only, you know, that was, you know, it's a lot of its executive branch. It's research. It's, you know, the Department of Health. I mean, it's just, it's a huge US government kind of push. USAID has a small role in it, because they were doing research and zoonotic things around the world for a long time, including in Wuhan. So, it's, for me, it's all kind of interconnected. And, yeah, so I do think that's the future, especially because we just won't have the discretionary funding going forward. It's just especially now, I mean, I don't know, we're \$6 trillion into COVID now and counting, you know, I mean, yeah, it's just not going to be there eventually.

Davis 30:45

Yeah, absolutely. And I was gonna say, that's kind of an interesting take compared to you, I've interviewed some military officers for this project that have worked interagency wise, and they kind of have a very different take on everything. And it's not so much they have recognized the fact that they have to work with other agencies. But like you said, it's, you know, nobody has the monopoly on good ideas. And a lot of my experience, and what these officers have been kind of saying, as far as the military is concerned, is kind of the opposite end of that spectrum, where it's, it's not so much we all have to work together. The military always has this abundance of

resources, like you'd mentioned earlier. So, it's very much when the military comes in, it's like, well, how can we help all these other people? Like we're the kind of fix all and it's kind of this, this almost attitude of, you know, we're the best whenever we come in anywhere? And you know, my experiences. I see that, and I see that we're also not in a lot of cases, you know, that's part of the reason why that one vote, waves of hope was so fascinating to me was the military came in, and it wasn't, I think that was just luck of the leaders that just happened to be there in charge at the time. But they very much said, you know, we're not the best people to be necessarily providing aid because the local population doesn't want us there. But how can we help all these other organizations get aid to these people. So that was one of the only examples I've seen it, the Navy, really stepping back is more of a support structure versus a, we'll say, direct action, for lack of a better term here. And in my experience, I haven't really seen that in the Navy. And a lot of the interviews I've conducted, don't seem to have that same attitude. So, I'm trying to figure out what was different about, you know, the tsunami in Indonesia, in my own research, to figure out why the Navy functioned that way, if it wasn't just, you know, the leaders that happened to be there recognize the fact that they weren't the best people for that job, or was there something unique about that situation?

Interviewee 2 - 32:33

Yeah. Yeah, a lot came out of that, you know, tsunami, Haiti comes to mind, you know, six years later, and yeah, some of these huge, these big disasters. And, you know, I remind the, you know, to remind my colleagues at War College and, you know, when I was in Cambodia dealing with them that you know, that we were the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance out of USAID. Now, it's the Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs, but still USAID, it's the lead, it's the lead agency for foreign disaster response. And, you know, I mean, nobody wants to hear that. But you know, it's the lead when there's even Fukushima, I think OFDA did the... They have the dogs, the sniffer dogs, I think out of Virginia and out of LA. And I think that was the only response they did. But,

you know, when a country asked for help, it's, you know, it's USAID in the lead before everyone, and you know, it's one of the few agencies that is, but to them, it's just like, Well, you know, USAID doesn't, you know, we don't have an aircraft carrier, we don't have nine aircraft carriers. We don't have one C130. You know, that dynamic starts coming in how different we are.

Davis 33:49

in Yeah, what I think is actually crazy, is, you know, my six years active duty in the military, I had never once even heard of USAID, it wasn't enough actually got out of the Navy, that I even heard about it as an organization, because I just happened to meet a friend of mine in the reserves, who, who worked for USAID for a little while. And that was how I learned about it. And then as I started researching, you know, you just Google like USAID, and I was like, we never heard of that. And it just, you know, this massive index of, of articles and documents online all come up, and I'm just a new thing and how could have gone, you know, six and a half years active duty in the medical field and never heard of this.

Interviewee 2 - 34:25

I yeah, you know, even the word college, I mean, every almost everybody's like, yep, never met a USAID officer, you know, had no idea what you guys did had no idea how big or how small you were, you know, just Yeah, and part of that's maybe USAID issue of not being great about communicating, you know, communicating up and out on its message.

Davis 34:51

And I guess that could actually go back almost into an organizational culture kind of thing as well. You know, how open you are to other agencies, if you're doing kind of a self-reflection of your own organizational culture, I do it with the Navy a lot about the way we communicate with other agencies. And we're not great at it, in my experience, but very much, you know, how well

are we projecting our message, like you said, out of our own organization, you know, promoting a message within your own organization is fantastic. But if nobody else receives that message either, then how effective are you really being?

Interviewee 2 - 35:23

Yeah, totally. I mean, we suffer from that, I still they're like, Hey, you know, what about that fact sheet? I mean, you mean that fact sheet on that website that nobody's reading the fact sheet, nobody's going to the website, like, you know, we're still sort of stuck in the, like, a lot of, you know, like, a lot of organizations still not great at telling the story. And, you know, not great about communicating up and out.

Davis 35:45

Absolutely. Well, that was all that I had for questions. I guess I don't want to take up too much more of your time, because it's kind of late over there.

Interviewee 2 - 35:54

yeah, well, Davis, if I can do, you know, friend of Jo B's, if I can do anything for you, you know, shout give a shout out shoot a message any time. You know, I'm sorry, it took so long to make this connection. But, you know, there's, you know, it sounds like it's a great topic. It's a super important topic. And, you know, don't hesitate. You know, if there's anything I can do for you, you know, please reach out anytime.

Davis 36:18

Awesome. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Interviewee 2 - 36:20

Yeah, hey, best of luck on everything, stay safe and healthy. You know, think about us all the time and friends and family there. You know, and I worry for him, but sounds like we're you know, hopefully Oh, there's a vaccine. You know, that's a start.

Davis 36:35

It's a start. Yeah. Anyway, have a good night. I appreciate all the help and I'll reach out if I have any other questions or anything like that.

Interviewee 2 - 36:45

Yeah, don't hesitate. Anything I can do.