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Medish served at The White House as Special Assistant to President Bill Clinton and Senior Director for Russian, Ukrainian and Eurasian Affairs on the National Security Council. He was Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs at the U.S. Treasury. He also worked in senior posts at USAID and UNDP. He was vice president and senior scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Medish was educated at Georgetown, Harvard University, Harvard Law School, and Oxford (Merton College). He was awarded Mellon, Luce, Fulbright, and Shintaro Abe scholarships.