The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project
Foreign Assistance Series

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Interviewed by: W. Haven North
Initial interview date: April 1995

The oral history program was made possible through support provided by the Center for Development Information and Evaluation, U.S. Agency for International Development, under terms of Cooperative Agreement No. AEP-0085-A-00-5026-00. The opinions expressed herein are those of the interviewee and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Assignment as Associate Asst Administrator of the African Bureau in DC 1980-1984

Trip to East Africa

Appendix A: Indonesia Remembered

INTERVIEW

Q: This is April 24, 1995 and the interview is with Charles C. Christian who retired from USAID in July 1984. How many years were you with USAID?

CHRISTIAN: 23 years.

Q: Let's start off with some of your early background; where you came from, family background and their relevance to your getting into international development.

Family and Background

CHRISTIAN: I was born October 22, 1927 in rural Missouri and grew up in Missouri in a large (eight sons) middle class American family, spending the first 30 years, except for military service, of my life in Missouri.

Q: What was the name of the town, or was your family farmers?

CHRISTIAN: New Bloomfield was the nearest town. My family had been in that rural community since 1861 when they fled north of the Missouri River during the early stages of the Civil War. Our family left the farm when I was six years old; my parents moved from the farm to Jefferson City, where we lived for nine years. During World War II we were living near St. Louis, where my father was working in defense plants, including the forerunner to McDonald Douglas, i.e., Curtiss-Wright, working in support of the military efforts. During this period I was following the normal pursuits of most youngsters growing up in the heartland, i.e., schooling, newspaper routes, mowing lawns, organized and pick-up games of softball, baseball, football, basketball, etc., eventually girls, probably in reverse order. After the end of WW II, we moved back to Fulton, Missouri which is in the central part of the state and that's where I went to college.

I can remember as a youngster playing in the marching band for a visit and speech by Wendell L. Willkie in his campaign of 1940 opposing Roosevelt. That was Truman country so Willkie's trip did not gain many votes. Dinner conversation was always heavily laced with political talk, if not sports, given the make-up of my family. I received my B.A. from Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri.

Winston Churchill made his famous Iron Curtain speech at this small liberal arts college. I attended his speech and the ceremonies on March 5, 1946. I was a freshman at the time. His dynamic personality was in abundant evidence that day; the crowd was spell-bound with his rhetoric and flourishes. Of course, he was granted academic honors and was dressed for the occasion in colorful academic robes. To say the least he was truly impressive and he fully measured up to the historic importance of his speech; he succinctly predicted the next 40 years of the East/West political struggle. (My international exposure began!) Among the many news headlines was one stating that Westminster's coup of having the Churchill visit was the envy of the Ivy League colleges. The gymnasium was packed that day, with the crowd overflowing into the Chapel and over the campus. The small town was alive with visitors, many VIPs including President Truman, Governors, Senators and the average interested person. If the media had not warned the public, the town would have been over-run...they wouldn't have been able to feed the people in that small mid-western community.

Q: What did you study in college?

Accounting Training and Related Work Experience

CHRISTIAN: I received a minor in accounting and a major in economics, but I didn't pursue economics any further than the under-graduate studies. I went into accounting and joined Price, Waterhouse & Co. after college in St Louis.

Q: What led you into the accounting area?

CHRISTIAN: I had an outstanding accounting professor who was the business manager of the college and it seemed to be a subject that I was comfortable with and did well and so I continued to pursue it. I landed a job; at that time there were not very many jobs openings as the economy was down in 1950, but I was fortunate to get a job with an outstanding international accounting firm, Price Waterhouse, and spent three years with them in their St. Louis office, acquiring a CPA. This experience shaped my entire working career.

Q: Where was this?

CHRISTIAN: In St Louis, but I was on PW audit teams, performing audits throughout the State of Missouri, and I also remember extended trips to Salt Lake City, Utah and Tulsa, Oklahoma. After Price, Waterhouse, I joined Olin (it was Olin Matheson Chemical then) a "Fortune" 500 company.) After three years in St. Louis, Olin transferred me to New York to their headquarters office.

After spending four years there and, incidentally, meeting my wife-to-be in Manhattan, I got a letter from Victoria Zakman, who was the Personnel Officer for the A.I.D. Controller Office in those days. (My friend from college, Harry Petrequin, had put my name in the USAID personnel system.) She inquired if I might be interested in international service, but at that stage, I was not, which sort of disappointed my fiancée. She was the adventuresome

one of the pair and she thought I may not be the right one if I did not have an interest in international travel and work. But I was very happy and content with Olin at that point. But as things evolved it came time for the next move with Olin which would have led me to New Martinsville, West Virginia or West Monroe, Louisiana as a Controller in one of their field divisions. After having served in their home office on Park Avenue and seeing the bright lights of New York City, I wasn't quite ready for adjusting to small towns in West Virginia or Louisiana.

Q: What kind of work were you doing?

CHRISTIAN: It was accounting systems and financial analysis. I remember taking an extended field trip with them once and spending several weeks down at a new plant that Olin was building in Hannibal, Ohio across the river from New Martinsville, WV to review the accounting procedures of the contractor and to develop audit routines for overseeing the contractor who was building a large aluminum plant for Olin. Another memory that has stuck with me, is the one where I was responsible for putting the significant corporate financial data on the "bulletin board" in the Board Room on the top floor of the Corporation's headquarters offices at 460 Park Avenue. I would fill-in the significant financial data and "dawdle" up there enjoying the privilege of being at that level in the organization. But the time had come to leave New York; we did not want to spend the rest of our life there in the big city and, especially having found my bride there and thinking about family, we decided to make the break.

I retrieved the old invitation from AID to submit an application and submitted it in due course. The AID personnel recruitment process, to be complimentary, is slow, i.e., frequently a minimum of one year after the first contact if they are really interested in you. It takes time for it to work its way through the system, security clearance, etc., so you can't be too eager to get a job when you are dealing with AID. In this regard, I got some very good advice early on from an old friend about surviving in AID; there are two offices that one would want to double check on: one was the personnel office and the other was the travel office. I found that to be excellent advice over my career. Obviously, there are very good people in both those offices, but the tasks evidently are a little too big for those people to handle all of them well. So you are well disposed to take care of most personnel matters and travel arrangements, and double check on your own; and then it is your own fault if it doesn't work out.

A little anecdote about why you want to check travel arrangements on assignments. We were scheduled for Bangkok, Thailand for our first overseas assignment. Before it actually happened it got changed to Jakarta, Indonesia. My travel orders were for Jakarta, but the papers for my air freight showed Bangkok. I was in orientation classes at the time, so my wife went over to the travel section and pointed out the disparity to the gentleman there, who was trying to figure out which form to use, and allowed as how that he never had any trouble except when the wives came in. My wife took that with good grace (that was when women had to put up with such nonsense) and we even went through with our first

assignment with AID in spite of this introduction to the vagaries of the business. Although, of course, our air freight went to Bangkok!

Decision to Pursue USAID

Q: You became aware of USAID through Harry Petrequin? He was a class mate?

CHRISTIAN: Correct. We were fraternity brothers at Westminster College. Harry was already working for USAID in Vietnam; this was in 1959. He did graduate studies at the American School of International Management (Thunderbird) in Phoenix, Arizona. He was working for the John Deere Company in Vietnam. He had a friend in the USAID/Vietnam office (it was known as ICA then) and they swapped jobs. There was a call from AID to recruit financial management or accounting people in 1959 or 1960. Harry put my name in the system and I eventually joined AID in 1961.

Q: Why did you think you wanted to go overseas? You did not have any experience with international living. What made this an attraction?

CHRISTIAN: The decision was, in some respects, a very lighthearted one. We were making our break with New York and Olin. We thought we would try this overseas adventure for a couple of years. On the other hand I remember it also had something to do with the fact that a new president, JFK, was coming onto the scene. The Peace Corps was being developed. This was during the 1960 election and leading up to the inaugural of the new president. Given the general atmosphere I remember being enthused about our decision; I thought I was doing the right thing. Until we got to Indonesia, at least, and found much of the AID Mission Controller office, and some other divisions, in chaos.

Q: Did you get any orientation or training or preparation before you went?

CHRISTIAN: We got about three weeks of orientation or so in Washington. We had "area studies" for both my wife and I. Our language study was deferred until we arrived at post. At that time most language training occurred in the field, an hour before or after work, which of course as a practical matter, was of very limited success. In an esoteric language like Bahasa Indonesian I'm not sure that it made a big difference in performance for most people in that most Indonesians that we dealt with in the government ministries and private sector spoke English. The good linguists were able to pick up the language through daily exposure. The wives picked up enough "kitchen" Bahasa that they got their families fed and made other things of necessity happen.

Assignment to Indonesia (1961-1966)

Q: So you went out in 1961?

CHRISTIAN: I arrived in Jakarta in early March 1961. President Sukarno was in power then, a full fledged revolutionary. He was a charismatic leader that could spell-bind an

audience for three or four hours, or however long he wanted to. He could walk into a room and you could feel the electricity.

Q: Did you meet him?

CHRISTIAN: I heard, in-person, some of his speeches. He addressed our American Men's Association, which I was treasurer of at that time. He would have a few people in the American community down to the palace for some of the traditional Indonesian music festivities until three or four in the morning, if you could hold up to it. At that time I was not as good at sneaking out of those things as I was later on. He was a great political leader, but he had no economic sensitivity, nor did he permit those in his administration who did to exercise it, and over the years he came to the parting of the ways with the US

Q: Did we have a substantial aid program at that time?

CHRISTIAN: It was probably one of the largest at that time. There were about 130 US direct hire people and hundreds of foreign service nationals. Also, it seemed like dozens of US contractors, including at least four university contractors--two from the University of California, and two from the University of Kentucky. The USAID programs seemed to cover all aspects of economic development, from the agriculture programs to Jakarta by-pass highways. Based on the orientation of our Director from Iowa, we even tried to do corn as an alternative to rice. Obviously, that would never fly, particularly in Asia. In my Controller work I did not get the sense of program successes as much as maybe technical, or program division personnel would. That makes it somewhat difficult for me to remember the project winners and losers with clarity.

Q: What do you think the main theme was of what we were trying to do?

CHRISTIAN: There were many main themes, it seemed like from my standpoint. One of the interesting things there was the level of people we had in AID. The Mission Director was formally a chancellor of two major universities, Dr. Raymond Allen from the University of Washington and UCLA. He was there for the first year I was on board. I joined ICA (International Cooperation Administration), and the name changed during 1961 to AID with John F. Kennedy's Administration arriving on the scene. I thought, by the way, that the choice for name change was unfortunate. I thought ICA was preferable to AID, which can connote charity. They changed the name to AID, and Fowler Hamilton became Administrator sometime during these years. Hamilton put forward a program called Operation Tycoon, to bring new talented leaders from the private sector. Under this administrative program, USAID/Djakarta was assigned a new Director.

Q: What year was this? Henry Labouisse came a very short time under Kennedy. Kennedy moved him out, and brought in David Bell. Bell was there through 1965. Fowler Hamilton must have come later.

CHRISTIAN: Hamilton was in office only a short time. At any rate Ed Fox arrive on the scene as Director of the USAID in Indonesia in 1962 or 1963. He was the owner of an agricultural business firm in Des Moines, Iowa. Ed and Bobbie are wonderful people, truly outstanding Americans from the Midwest. He arrived at USAID/Indonesia along with a deputy director, Ed Querner. Querner was not of the temperament to stay with the government in an overseas capacity for an extended period of time. He did not have the patience to make it work in the developing world. He did have much positive to do with building the Jakarta by-pass road which went from the port, around Jakarta and inland. The road was built by the AID-financed contractor, Morrison-Knudsen. USAID/Jakarta had two deputy directors during this period, one for infrastructure and one an AID career type to oversee operations for general compliance with AID guidelines...maybe good in theory, but also produced the predictable donnybrooks!

Q: How long were you there?

CHRISTIAN: Five years. I arrived at post in the position of what in theory was an auditor, but in those days was called an "end-use officer". I had no idea what that term meant, but they were relying on my audit background, so I assumed it meant that I would perform the audit functions. That is what it turned into at least. We became titled as auditors in a short time and the label of "end-use officer" vanished. In that period the audit responsibility was with the controller.

Q: In the mission? So it was highly decentralized.

Audit Work and Coordination with the Controller in Indonesia

CHRISTIAN: I reported to the Mission Controller; the field audit responsibility rested with the Mission Controller, and the Mission Controller reported to the Mission Director, with, mostly only theoretically, a functional responsibility to the AID Controller in Washington. So it was not an independent audit, in the sense that it would provide for the internal control normally required by the private sector. It was internal within the field Mission, rather than audit independent of the Mission. I should point out that the Controller's office in Washington also had an audit staff that performed field audits at the Missions, thus that audit activity was independent of the Controller in the field.

Q: How did that work out?

CHRISTIAN: It had both negative and positive points in the field. From the standpoint of having the capability to do a lot of financial management, the Mission Controller had the resources to do it. Most Controllers used the auditors to do more than just audit. They did a lot of the analysis work and follow-up, things that took a lot of skill and time that your main budget and accounting people just did not have time to do. Auditors were called upon to do that sort of work as well as the auditing work. On the other hand the independence for "checks and balance" was missing.

Q: Was there any planning work in conjunction with the development of projects?

CHRISTIAN: For any work like that, the Controllers, in those years, usually had to call upon their audit staff, i.e., for project analysis, pipeline scrutiny, as well as to perform the audit work.

Q: You mentioned advantages and disadvantages, what were they?

CHRISTIAN: You were not getting the independent audit that perhaps a program needed. A Controller, or the Mission Director, could filter the audit reports, if he did not like what was being said. Or higher management could filter it if they did not like what was being published. They did it with some risk. The risk came "home to roost" for a Mission Director in Vietnam, who shelved the audits in the corner for an extended period without letting them be published, and he spent two or three days in testimony, being "grilled" by the Foreign Affairs committee of the Congress. This may have led to the spin-off of the audit function under a new AID element, first called the Auditor General and later the Inspector General.

Q: There wasn't any central follow-up on the audit process or checking on whether the audits were done or whether anyone had been acting on them? It was completely local?

CHRISTIAN: It was mostly decentralized at that point, and the responsibility was in the Mission. Results were very uneven. In some places it was done well, fully and thoroughly followed up on. In other places it was given short change. It depended a lot upon the professional skills of the Controller and if he had capable and sufficient staff, and on his understanding of his responsibilities. That brings up another subject: The early 1960s saw the beginning of the professionalization of the controllers' operations. They started to hire professionally trained people, requiring education and experience that were as good as any place in the private sector.

Q: That hadn't been the case before?

CHRISTIAN: Definitely it had not. There were some exceptions to that statement, of course. Generally speaking, accounting had not been given much attention in the US Government until the late 1950s or early 1960s. Before that you only needed someone to keep track of numbers, a good bookkeeper, as opposed to somebody who could do professional accounting and financial analysis work. There was quite a dramatic change: AID also started to hire more people with the credentials in other skill areas like the sciences and the technical skills.

Q: That began when? About the time you were hired?

CHRISTIAN: Well, with respect to controller activities, I was one of the earlier group. There were some people who were hired a few years before me, but there were still quite a

few of the ones who had gotten on in the controller function earlier who were weeded out over the years or at least didn't get moved along to top positions.

Q: What were some of the main issues that you had to deal with?

CHRISTIAN: The two individuals that had a lot to do with professionalizing the controller's office about that time were Chuck Flinner, the AID controller, and his executive officer, Claud Alsop, who was more pro-controller activities than you wanted him to be at times. But Claud served us well indeed. In Indonesia there seemed to be an awful lot of problems with the Controller office before I arrived there. The previous Mission Controller was said to be an alcoholic, and his successor, the current Controller upon my arrival, only wanted out. The Controller who took the job about six months or a year after I got to Indonesia, was an outstanding person as far as his dedication to government accounting and internal control. He was very knowledgeable; he had a lot of experience with army audit, and he was a trainer of people. He trained a lot of controllers during his career with USAID. He was not too well received by some Mission Directors, which may reflect favorably upon him...he was a real pro in his field.

Q: What was his name?

CHRISTIAN: Morley Gren. He's retired now in El Paso, Texas. He did a lot to improve our overall Controller operations. We developed a good audit staff then, based on his audit background. I was an auditor at that time. I don't remember any specific, significant, or sensitive activities from that period, but I do know that Gren cleaned up our Controller act and we issued constructive audit reports.

Q: What's your perspective of the USAID programs?

Problems with Sukarno: Scaling Down of the Mission in Indonesia

CHRISTIAN: Our infrastructure programs seemed to achieve their stated objectives, although with reasonable delays considering the trying circumstances. We had a malaria program that was making progress. As I recall, there were two stages of malaria programs: "containment" and "eradication." It was a large program, because of all the islands and the rainwater of the tropics. The program achieved containment, or at least that is what the statistics showed, and began to make headway in the eradication area. However, that all went down the tubes, as well as the rest of the program, when Sukarno told us to "go to hell with your aid", which was sometime in 1964.

Q: Why was that?

CHRISTIAN: He was a political adventurer. He was challenging all of his neighbors in military skirmishes in Malaysia, West Irian and the Philippines. He joined the so-called "axis of five" that was China, North Korea, North Vietnam, Cambodia, and with Indonesia it was five. He decided that he couldn't push Uncle Sam around the way he wanted to, and

get support from us for his ventures into the neighboring countries. He desperately wanted the Irian Barat territory that still was held by the Dutch. We wouldn't give him any military support to take that back. He also wanted to attack Malaysia and Singapore; the reason escapes me. At one point, Singapore was not a separate state from Malaysia. He was getting in the middle of all of those political things in the region, to divert his people's attention from their economic plight, the prevailing poverty. So he kept nationalism issues on a front burner to try to build patriotism and build support for those activities rather than economic development which is a lot harder to achieve.

In spite of Sukarno's belief that the more children, the merrier, our family planning program was installed there. It was pretty rough going against the Muslim trend, and against the attitude of Sukarno who had many amorous affairs with many wives with the predictable consequences. I'm sure the population program had greater success in other places than it did in Indonesia in those years. By 1964 Sukarno had enough of our stiff-arming him, and trying to keep him in line. He told us in print, and in person to the Ambassador, to "go to hell with your aid". We proceeded to go.

My five year tour at USAID/Indonesia was many faceted. I started out as an end-use officer. I was then an auditor, and then the deputy controller, then Controller, before becoming the AID Affairs Officer during the last year. The latter occurred because the Mission phased down from 130 US direct hire, to myself and a secretary and two or three foreign nationals. We had all of this US-owned property to dispose of, including real estate. In the final days, there is an interesting story about the disposition of the AID office building, a four storied building we had just recently constructed using PL 480 generated funds. We had used that building for about a year before our departure. See appendix A "Indonesia Remembered" for more on this topic.

Q: You closed down the mission?

CHRISTIAN: We held it in a suspense situation for about six months, and then after being there for five years, I was ready to move on, and I turned it over to Cal Cowles, former program officer at USAID/Indonesia. And AID started building its program back up again in a new political climate. The new President, Suharto, and his people, in the Indonesian way, gradually eased Sukarno out of power after an aborted coup by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). The coup was aided and abetted by Sukarno against his own government. He believed he could control the Indonesian Communist...fat chance as they were tied closely with the Chinese Communist Party. I have not covered, in detail, the abortive coup in September 1965 which eventually led to Sukarno's downfall and removal from office.

One "lessons learned" point: The importance of the events in Indonesia in terms of the east-west struggle should not be minimized. Vietnam and Indochina get all of the attention of the historians, and, of course, the damage to our society from our experiences relating to Vietnam was surely of great importance; but you wonder about the outcome if we would have let Vietnam solve their internal problems similar to our reactions following the

abortive coup in Indonesia. Would the world, particularly the US, have been a better place today? I think McNamara has alluded to that saying in his recent book that Indonesia was proof that the "domino" theory may be discounted. All 20/20 hindsight. However, I feel that Indonesia, on the world scene and in the context of the East-West struggle, far more important in a future sense to the West than Indochina. Indochina, of course, is important, to our undoing in America, or at least our partial undoing. But just think about it...Indonesia is the fifth largest in population in the world, and the third richest in natural resources. The saving of Indonesia from the Communist sphere of influence was extremely important in world history.

Another interesting point is that USAID/Indonesia had one of the largest participant training programs in AID at that time. The USAID had trained as many as three thousand Indonesian, mid and upper level, who became Western oriented. That number may include the military trainees, many of the military leaders had been trained at Fort Reilly, or other US bases, but a lot of the other leaders had been trained by USAID who came into office later in the next government.

Q: In the development area?

CHRISTIAN: In the finance ministry and other ministries. USAID had trained many participants, it was a big part of our program. The USAID had a large training office with four or five US direct hire people, not to mention several outstanding Indonesian nationals.

Q: What were the effects of having to scale down the program?

CHRISTIAN: AID in Indonesia was for all intents and purposes discontinued. They had to start over a year later in a lot of the areas. In many cases it might have been a good thing to start over with a lot of those projects.

Q: Why was that? They weren't doing well?

CHRISTIAN: It was positive to get a clean start in an economic development atmosphere. I would hesitate to say that was the case for all of the prior activities; I am sure some of them had served a useful purpose. We completed the Jakarta by-pass highway; the residue of benefit of the education programs is difficult for me to evaluate. I guess, with the clean sweep of the government, with the new people who were receptive to the US After this abortive coup, I believed things were going to work much better. And I think they have, from what I understand. Except, unfortunately, the present leader has overstayed the time when he was beneficial to the well being of the country and the Indonesians.

Q: But what would you think were some of the difficulties and accomplishments of that period?

CHRISTIAN: As mentioned before, one of the things that comes to mind is that we had a Mission Director there who was a Iowa agriculturalist, and his first interest was corn. He

tried pretty hard to move the agriculture programs in the direction of corn production. But that was going up against a culture, and a tradition, and a heritage that it just wouldn't fly. Rice was it, and the only thing, but he tried very hard to introduce another crop. He was a very good man. I like him as a person, and as a director, but I think he had a losing cause with corn. Lasting major successes...they were hard to come by in Indonesia at that point, because the government was being so obstreperous. The government officials did not have the backing of the top man, and what the top man wanted, the country did. He was the revolutionary, he was their George Washington. Sukarno caused much trouble for the Dutch, and led the Indonesian independence revolution, as our founding fathers did with the British. I guess the malaria containment was achieved at that point, which slipped backwards during the hiatus. That initially was an achievement. The participant training was, perhaps, the lasting real achievement. Indonesia was the pincer of the southern part of Asia and the failure of their coup may have kept that part of the world from going Communist, which relates in some measure to our role in training Indonesians, as discussed earlier.

Q: Through the participant program or through the program in general?

CHRISTIAN: Our program played a part, I think. The fact that the Communist led coup of 1965 was not successful, was due to some Indonesians with Western orientation, coming forward at the right time, coming forward to put down the coup. It resulted in the killing of some 300,000 Communists. Unfortunately, many innocent people of Chinese extraction were included in this blood bath.

Q: These people that helped put down the coup were trained in the US as part of the participant program?

CHRISTIAN: I am sure many of them were. Just the exposure to Americans and our culture may well have contributed to it a great deal, but we certainly cannot take total credit, maybe not even a large percentage. However, some measure of credit was due to our presence and our AID program. The fact that the Communists made the mistake of butchering seven revolutionary heroes, Indonesian generals, and the effective use by General Suharto of this fact by parading their coffins through downtown Jakarta for a miles long parade the following week or so played a good deal in turning public opinion against the Communist party.

Reflections on the Indonesian People and Culture

Q: Did you get to know Indonesians? What kind of experience did you have with the people and the culture?

CHRISTIAN: They were very open, warm, friendly people. The Indonesian trait is to be very agreeable with their guests, which is generally common for many Asians; they seem to hate to disagree with you. They also have trouble saying no to you. That trait may be changing with economic development...Western style. They are still very hospitable and

friendly. From that standpoint, the personal relationships were very agreeable and all Americans had many Indonesian friends. It was very incongruous; their later actions to slaughter 300,000 of their own people did not show in any of the personal relationships with foreigners in the five years that we were there. It was in this period of Sukarno's and his cohorts' great hostility toward the US, that huge billboards appeared along the main avenues of town depicting Uncle Sam being hung by a rope or our president being ridiculed. It wasn't very career-enhancing for Indonesians to be friendly with us, but some were able to keep the communications open though they couldn't come to your home for receptions or other social occasions. They were suspect if they did.

Q: That meant there was a problem of your having any rapport with any individual groups or colleagues?

CHRISTIAN: That did not occur until 1964. But my relationship with a staff member of the Ministry of Finance was so solid, that even during that period of hostilities, his friendship and support carried over. He provided the USAID with our local currency requirements for operating expenses until I left Indonesia. How he managed that I have no idea, and I did not ask. I just brought him Dutch Master cigars, and he enjoyed the irony of that little token alluding to their former colonialist masters. He had a good sense of humor like most Indonesians. They were just charming people. My wife was completely accepted, and she had a glorious time there. Remember this was a Muslim country, although a very moderate one. She had no fear whatsoever, even during the hostility period. She felt no danger traveling through crowds by herself or with the driver. I guess there were those that wanted harm to come to us, but it sure didn't show through.

Q: Were there problems in the financial management area with the Indonesians in terms of proper accounting resources and things of that sort. Were there major difficulties on use of funds?

CHRISTIAN: This was a period when you did some of the work for them. That was why there were large staffs. You would keep good accounts of the local currency generated. You would keep more elaborate, more detailed project records than you would like; you would give them a draft letter of what they should send back, of what would be acceptable to keep your records complete. Discrepancies, delayed reporting and uncompleted work was abundant, but no huge scandals surfaced during my tenure.

Q: But would they follow through?

CHRISTIAN: You had to help them, and follow-up a lot yourself, but most counterparts tried if they understood and knew how. Generally, their heart was in the right place. You had some exceptions, and it was such a large program, that I'm sure some things fell through the cracks. You were playing on their turf, and in some respects, you had to play catch-up, and you couldn't find some of the records.

Q: *What happened after that?*

Transfer to Afghanistan as Controller (1966-1968)

CHRISTIAN: Well my next post was Afghanistan. We transferred to Afghanistan after home leave in July 1965, for a two year tour. I was the Controller there. That was a smaller mission in some ways, but there were a lot of people there because it was a technical assistance program. Afghanistan was quite a juncture for East meeting West, though, and the Cold War was in plain view there. The USSR was providing transportation and communications north and south from the Soviet Union down to India and Pakistan, and we were going west to east from Iran to India. One of our white elephants there was the international airport which was built in Kandahar. I think the airport was jointly funded with the World Bank. It was planned, funded, commenced and completed (this may have taken a good part of a decade in Afghanistan) about the time the jet aircraft came into being. After the jets with longer range capability were available this airport was mostly over flown. The new airport was simply not needed anymore. They could fly directly from Iran to India (before that they needed someplace mid-way to land). The Kandahar airport was hardly used, and that had to be explained by the current Mission Director to every Congressional delegation and all other dignitaries passing through.

Q: Did you get a sense of the conflict between East and West, of the Cold War, while you were there? Did you have any dealings with the Russians there?

CHRISTIAN: You would see a lot of Soviets around. They would have their project activities in certain areas, and in traveling about you would note their camps. We were there from 1966 to 1968 and the Afghans apparently allocated certain areas of the countries for development projects by the Russian and other areas for us. Of course, later on our Ambassador was assassinated there. Maybe this is not the right way to phrase this, but it was almost under the auspices of the USSR. As I understand the political status at the time, it was under a USSR appointed, more or less, government. However, it did not come as any surprise to me that the Afghans were not to be conquered or governed by the USSR for long. They would fight to the last person, and that last person would not surrender. They are the hardiest people that I have ever been exposed to. As a little example: We would come home from a late evening out, maybe one o'clock or so, and the temperature would be five below. When we would drive up to the gate, the gardener, barefoot, would come out to open the gate not thinking anything of it. Practically everyone was that hardy a soul. They sent all the British out of there in boxes around the turn of the century. They have never been a conquered people; except maybe Genghis Khan did it early on when he laid waste to the total country.

Q: What were we doing in our program?

CHRISTIAN: There was a sizable vocational education program. The University of Wyoming had a contract team there doing vocational education. Columbia University was helping the University of Kabul develop a teachers training program, trying with limited success to get that off the ground. Morrison-Knudsen was there building highways West to

East. A couple of US contractors were working with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning to improve their operations. It was a large technical assistance program, not as well funded as the Indonesia one, but again a large US direct hire presence.

Q: Did you deal with the Afghans directly, the government people?

CHRISTIAN: They were a different breed of cats from the Indonesians. They had an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth mentality, but it was possible to make some good working relationships there, especially with those who had been trained in the West. (Of course we seldom came into contact with those trained in the USSR.) The state treasurer was a particularly good friend, and it carried on for several years. He had been trained at UCLA; he was later accused of being a CIA informant, because of his training in the US. It was politically expedient for his opponents to do so. There wasn't any truth to it. He only received some education in the West. The ones in government, and from another tribe, who were leaning towards the USSR wanted to make some hay out of it. They had banners in the streets of Kabul accusing him of being a CIA participant. Some Afghans were very hard to do business with. You couldn't figure out what you needed to do to get across to them. I can remember when one of my tasks as Controller was to keep a running account over a period of several months, down to the last hour of the day that we would run out of local currency. We prepared a letter over the Mission Director's signature telling them we were closing down the mission on such and such a day if they did not come through with the funding, the local currency. This went on for several months. I don't know whether it was a game they were playing or whether it was some misunderstanding or just playing hardball with us.

Q: But you were the one who had to deal with the finance people?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, but at that stage it got up to the Mission Director level, with the support of the Ambassador, and it was his name being used, and in turn the prestige of the US government. I was just doing the detail work of letting him know when he should pull the trigger. In spite of the difficulties, it was an interesting country and culture.

Q: Why were we dependent on local currency? What was the financial situation then that we needed a lot of local currency from the government? Were they paying for our development programs?

CHRISTIAN: As I indicated we had a large staff there, and the local currency was for paying for the operating expenses for support of all local expenses, including the furnishing of the many houses occupied by Americans. These local currency funds were generated from PL 480 programs for US uses according to bilateral agreements. This was similar to all the programs I worked on in Asia at least.

Q: Did you enjoy living there?

CHRISTIAN: It was somewhat of a difficult time to be living there, because both our children were of pre-school age. It kept us pretty close to the wigwam. It was difficult to get nannies or help there, because the Afghans did not allow their women to stay in a foreign home overnight. While I did enjoy my tour there very much, it was a very striking contrast to our experiences in Indonesia. It was a ruggedly beautiful country, a lot of it laid waste by the hordes that came through on the Silk route. Some of these folks were Genghis Khan and his friends, and so it was eerie in a way. The other part that was not so pleasant was that between our house and another American's, there was an Afghan family who wanted to lease their house to Americans to make a good return on their investment. But the house was in no condition for Americans to live in. They became very much of a nuisance to us, as they tried to get the USAID executive officer to change his mind. It was very unpleasant, as they would throw stuff (some unsanitary) at our kids. The Mission eventually had to ask the police to intervene. On the other hand the Afghans that you dealt with at a professional level were very nice. Some were oriented towards the USSR, and had been trained in Russia, so they were a little more difficult for us to deal with. Afghanistan was a two year tour for us.

Q: Did you have any relationship with the Embassy? What was the ambassador's policy?

Recollections of Contact with the American Embassy in Indonesia

CHRISTIAN: That doesn't come to mind about Afghanistan. We had more contact in Indonesia. My office did not have to deal with the Embassy much at all, only our B & A officer with the Embassy fiscal officer. We had a full mission staff, and were across town from the Embassy. I very seldom had to go over to the Embassy. Let me backtrack with respect to the Ambassador's policy. In Indonesia, I should say that we had Ambassador Marshall Green there at a very crucial time. In my mind, his biggest job at the time of the coup was to keep the State Department and the US's nose out of fixing the problem, to make sure that we did not side with any side as they were vying for power at a critical time. We stayed as far away from it as we could and watched. He more or less saved the day, and I think should get a lot a credit for that. This was in Indonesia. I was, at that stage, the USAID affairs officer, sitting in on all of the country team meetings, so I was privy to most of the stuff going on there. I am digressing a bit here, but one morning that we went down to the country team meeting at 7:30 or so, as I drove into the Embassy compound, I noticed that the soldiers lining up across the street were facing the Embassy rather than facing outward. When we got inside we found out why: The night before had been the Communist coup with the Communist picking up the seven Indonesian revolutionary generals and dumping them in a well after butchering them in a way most derogatory to Muslims.

Q: What was the significance of the guards turning around?

CHRISTIAN: We were under guard rather than being protected. We were then being considered as the possible enemy. At that point the military did not know which Indonesian Military leaders to be loyal to.

Q: But they didn't do anything?

CHRISTIAN: No, they didn't do anything, not even when the rock throwers arrived to shell the Embassy. Suharto was so far down the chain of command then that none of our present people in Jakarta in the military attaché office really knew anything about him. They had generals like we have colonels, by the bushel. We had to communicate with Washington to find out who this guy was, and if they had any book on him. The present and previous military attaché did not know him. There was a lot of talk around the embassy that day. USAID had already moved into the temporary quarters next door after we returned our large, four story USAID building back to the Indonesians. All US dependents were evacuated the week following the coup. During this evacuation of my wife and one year old daughter, our son was born in Singapore, two months pre-mature, probably the cause of his cerebral palsy.

Q: What did you do with all the records in a time like that when you close a place like that down?

CHRISTIAN: I don't recall specifically now. We kept some records for current use. For others, it was a process to see if we needed to return the records to the States, keep or discard. If there were important records without copies previously submitted, then we boxed them up and shipped them to AID/W. I know a lot of papers and records were discarded. This process evolved during the phase-down of US personnel from over 100 to 2.

Q: When the new mission started up again did they have to begin from scratch?

CHRISTIAN: A lot of it was starting from scratch again. We were down to about four rooms. The USAID office was in the embassy compound, in the part that had been the old USIA offices. USIA had dismantled and gone home. The Peace Corps was also kicked out, including Alex Shakow, later AID Assistant Administrator for Policy and Program Coordination for several years. I remember Alex Shakow appeared in my office in 1961 as a young exchange student at the University of Indonesia. He came over for friendship and "handouts". He was a student there, and then joined the Peace Corps and came back to Indonesia. He was a young man then looking for Americans to be associated with.

Q: Let's move on then from Afghanistan. What happened after that?

Transfer to Laos as Mission Controller (1968-1970)

CHRISTIAN: I was transferred to Laos to be Controller at a mission that was really in the midst of a hot, secret war that was going on. USAID's contribution was basically for building roads, providing food for the war refugees and keeping up the viability of the Kip by supplying enough foreign exchange that the Kip didn't float too far one way or the other. It was basically when Charlie Mann was the de facto prime minister of Laos. He was the

USAID Director, but the local wags gave him the honorary title. He came to Laos for his second stint shortly after I got there.

Q: Was there an ambassador there?

CHRISTIAN: Ambassador Bill Sullivan was there at the time of my arrival. He was one of the best orators I have come across in my day. He was also the ambassador when I got to the Philippines later on.

Q: What was our role in Laos? What were we trying to do? What policy was USAID supposed to be supporting?

CHRISTIAN: We were to furnish the infrastructure and financial support for the Laos government that was friendly to the US in an active war. But you could call it a "civilized" war. They had reasonable hours for the war, and they took off on holidays. They usually shut down at night. The Laotians were the most quiet and low-key of all the Asians I have met. They are the country cousins of most of the other Asians. We had a public works division there that would be the envy of many small towns in the US. The US Bureau of Reclamation was working there. Our public works division built roads into the interior presumably to assist farmers in getting their produce to market, but the roads could also be used by the CIA sponsored Lao troops to get here and there. We had education and training programs there, as well as a small agriculture staff.

Toward the end of my two year tour, the Controller of AID came out to Laos in January 1970. The agency was making the decision in Washington to split off the auditor from the Controller and to make the Auditor General a separate office with the auditors not reporting through the controller or through the Mission Director. The object of the Controller's visit to Laos and other places was to determine how the staff should be split under the realigned responsibilities; the people who should go with the Auditor General, and the people who should stay with the Controller; in other words, the percentage of time the auditors worked on audit or on financial analysis. Out of the six US direct hire auditors on my staff, I was able to make the case for five of the six to remain with the Controller office to continue to perform financial analysis work. Of course they had to replace many auditors to build up the big audit staff, but we had that much work to do in financial management in Laos.

Q: Was it a big financial management task?

CHRISTIAN: We had a very large airline contract there with the wings of Continental and Air America. We dealt with them as though they were independent contractors. They were, as far as USAID funds were concerned. We had to keep close scrutiny on all of the work they were doing. They were dropping rice from the sky on pallets. They would fly over in small aircraft. There is a whole generation of Laotian that think rice comes from the sky not rice paddies. During the visit of the Controller out there, before the division of the audit function, we took a flight up to an airstrip whose code name was Hotel India. In landing there we flew over the "Plains de Jars" where these huge jars are located; back in

ancient time they were used as funeral urns. How they got there (they came from China) is a big mystery to archeologists. We were the last Americans to visit that area and land on that strip. The next day the Viet Cong came back, usually it changed hands whenever the rainy and dry seasons changed. However, this was the last time the American-financed forces held it. This was the beginning of the end of the US presence in Laos. I guess it took five years for that to finally happen.

Q: How big a program was it?

CHRISTIAN: At that stage it was second only to Vietnam. It was a lot smaller than Vietnam, of course. I would have to dig into the archives to get an actual magnitude in numbers.

Q: Anything else on the Laos experience?

CHRISTIAN: We handled, as the liaison part of our official function, funds for bombing mistakes of "friendlies." We would receive the money in a box from our counterpart agency and deliver it to the "friendlies" when we had our payroll runs to the countryside.

Q: What are payroll runs?

CHRISTIAN: USAID/LAOS had casual hires then who we hired to help build roads. We had a few different categories like that which we did not have in other country programs. We had to send out our Laotian cashiers to pay the people working on the roads. They went out weekly. We had more loss of funds in that program than with anything else. There were reports of robberies, but I don't know how legitimate they were. I remember in making a case with the people back here once, stating that we were handling more currency than the Riggs bank downstairs from the Controllers office in Washington, and so we were bound to lose some money. There were also deaths when planes went down. The first week I was at post I attended a Laotian Controller employee's funeral who was on a "payroll run" when the plane crashed. There was a huge pyre with a fire that the body was being cremated on, surrounded by hundreds of Laotians with the atmosphere of a festival or celebration of life and death.

Q: Were there any other operations or financial processes that you thought were unusual?

CHRISTIAN: I am trying to bring back the acronyms. We had the "invisibles" program and the FEOF Program (Foreign Exchange Operations Fund). The purpose of the FEOF Program was to maintain the viability of the local currency, of the kip. We had to supply enough dollars for that fund so that the Kip would not fluctuate wildly and bring the economy and maybe the government down.

Q: Where did the dollars go?

CHRISTIAN: To the purchase of imports.

Q: Did the dollars go to a central bank?

CHRISTIAN: The office for this program was in the central bank, but it was managed by a FEOF manager that we hired. So was it in the central bank? We had to make certain that it worked.

Q: And you would allocate the dollars for import purposes?

CHRISTIAN: The Lao government did not have enough hard currency to meet all of the dollar requirements for the Lao embassies and training abroad, as well as their imports. We also contributed to the so called "invisibles" program. That had to do with the non-commodity imports like the cost of training people abroad. It wasn't an invisible fund, it was related to invisibles in that the economic transaction did not involve materials or commodities. I do not recall entirely what was the intended purpose other than what I have mentioned. But we did have a chief economist there in the mission with a staff of one or two who was responsible for "riding herd" on this activity. Garnett Zimmerly, Zim, was a program officer in Laos when I first got there who I later crossed paths with in the Philippines. There is quite a story to relate when we get to the Philippines. Gordon Ramsey followed Zim as the program officer. Charlie Mann was Mission Director with Jim Chandler as his deputy, and Harry Carr as the Executive Officer. They all stayed on and on, except for Zim and myself, for ten years or more, rather than the normal two, two-year tours. Things worked there, basically because the Americans were doing things; we were very operational. You didn't wait for the Laotians to do it; it was considered very important to avoid delays.

Q: How was the living situation?

CHRISTIAN: There was a large compound called KM6 where most Americans lived. I was fortunate to get assigned to a place outside of the compound by the MeKong River, two doors back of the Russian complex. I didn't see much of them, however. I did hear them playing volleyball behind their compound wall.

Q: Was the compound arrangement very satisfactory?

CHRISTIAN: The compound arrangement was probably quite satisfactory from the standpoint of reasonable living conditions, with a large swimming pool for the families and an American school there. It was just that as part of my foreign service experience I wanted to mingle with the foreigners that are out there as well as the Americans whom I worked with. I had 30 some years of the KM6 compounds when I lived in this country. My wife and I wanted to broaden our exposure to other cultures if we could.

Q: Did you get to know Laotians?

CHRISTIAN: Yes. But they were not as forthcoming and probably did not have the wherewithal to mix as readily on a social basis as some of the other places I've been. They were certainly receptive to invitations to your home, and a lot of Americans I know have sponsored Laotians when they came to this country. The Americans that had stayed there for extended periods did a lot of sponsoring Laotians that were not particularly treated hospitably by the Pathet Lao when they came into power in government.

Q: Were you working with the government? You said that the US was doing most everything.

CHRISTIAN: The Minister of Finance basically worked with the Mission Director. (I played tennis with the Prime Minister occasionally!) There didn't seem to be as much interchange for my office with the Laotians as in other places, because we were doing so much of it ourselves. There wasn't as much satisfaction in that direction as there had been in other posts. It was a little bit like what it was like with the regional offices in Africa where you were not relating to a host government.

Q: Well, let's go on from there. What happened after Laos?

Training at the Industrial College, Fort McNair (1970-1971)

CHRISTIAN: I was selected for long-term training at what is now called the National Defense University, at the time it was the Industrial College of the Armed Forces at Fort McNair in Washington, DC. They had the War College and the Industrial College, the latter is the management side. I also picked up a masters degree at George Washington at the same time in Administration. The year there was quite nice, although, it was somewhat hard to get back into the academic world after 20 years.

Q: Was the Industrial College experience a useful one from an AID perspective?

CHRISTIAN: Anything like that is a plus I believe. It gave you a better understanding of all fields of government and society. We were lectured by top leaders in the country, from Kissinger to Wall Street Bankers to behavioral scientists. The institution had enough of a reputation that they could draw the best people who would speak off the record. I remember Averell Harriman speaking one day; Henry Kissinger the next week.

Q: Were there management courses?

CHRISTIAN: You took regular college courses in management, also on the human behavior aspect, as well as many seminars on governmental functions.

Q: Were they more military oriented?

CHRISTIAN: They were general. And it was designed to broaden the military officers. Approximately 80% or more were military officers, Army lieutenant colonels and colonels

or commanders and captains in the Navy. These people in the military were all striking for the flag, and so they were all ambitious and gung-ho. I developed a respect that I didn't have before for our military officers. I had perhaps a twisted, unenlightened view of our military officers. The fact that I served as an 18 year old private first class, did not give me a full appreciation of the stature of our military officers. But they were an impressive group. Our current forces have the advantage over the civilians, in that during peacetime they are exposed to academics every five or ten years. Most of the branches of civilian government were represented in the enrollment, so you did get exposure to other aspects of managing our national resources. It was a very good year from that standpoint. I finished that year and AID gave me a rotation assignment in Washington; first, as head of the budget operations in the Controller office. I later became one of the two deputy AID/Controllers in 1972. I was the Deputy Controller for foreign operations and Darryl Verner was Deputy Controller for Washington operations.

Washington AID Assignment (1971-1975)

Q: What was your main task there?

CHRISTIAN: It included the assignment of controllers for overseas posts. I had under my purview the funds control staff and the operating expense budget. We had to produce all of the Controller's input for the Congressional presentations. I served under two controllers, i.e., Chuck Flinner originally and then Sid Brown.

Q: Were there any particular financial or policy issues at that time?

CHRISTIAN: When I first arrived back here I can recall that the geographic bureaus were not satisfied with the financial information they were getting from our reports. We went through a reorganization of the Controller office to provide a more service oriented operation. We placed some Controller staff in each geographic bureau, and tried to better meet the needs of program people in those bureaus. During that time I felt we made some great progress in serving the agency with better financial data. We called it the "donut" organization; it was a circle reaching out, rather than a pyramid. This was in Washington, and it applied to all controller offices that interfaced with the bureaus. However, I think we also saw during that period a diminishing of the controllers' responsibilities. In his capacity as chairman of the House foreign relations committee, AID was forced to deal with Otto Passman, a colorful Congressman from Louisiana. Passman had relied on the Controller, Flinner, to provide a lot of the budget information. There was a change in the administration. In the new Administrator Hannah's opinion, this arrangement was a little too informal and cozy for him because he wanted to stiff-arm Passman as much as possible. Hannah gave more structure to the AID legislative affairs office, and moved much of the budget activity to Sid Brown's office in the PPC bureau. That was before Sid Brown, who previously worked at OMB, came over to us as AID/Controller.

Q: This was a move to minimize Passman and the Hill?

CHRISTIAN: This was to make sure that information that went to Passman and company was carefully screened by the Administrator's office, or his political appointees. Of course a part of the equation relates to the fact that the Controllers office was located up at "Universal North" across from the Washington Hilton, not convenient to the Administrator's office at State. In reality, Passman was very friendly to and supportive of our program. We were the only dog he had to beat! He would send his "blue missile" to his constituents showing how much he cut AID after telling us to request more so that he could cut the program.

Q: Did you ever deal with him?

CHRISTIAN: No. The only exposure I had to him, was early on in my assignment to Washington. I listened to him attack the AID bill on the floor of Congress. I thought I was listening to a circus barker in small town America. He was cataloging the problems of AID and carrying on like someone wanting to totally eliminate AID.

Q: The major changes you were involved in were restructuring to a service orientation?

CHRISTIAN: Yes, that was a substantial change. There was a change in AID/controllership with Sid Brown coming over from PPC. He was favored with a lot more access to PPC, the bureau with much of the power in AID at that time, and with the Administrator's office and the legislative affairs office.

Q: Were there any policy lines that you were pushing with the administration?

CHRISTIAN: Not really, or at least major policy issues don't come to mind. We were more in the support role; doing what the policy makers wanted and giving them information. I am sure we supported Sid for major inputs into anything pertaining to financial management that was being done by AID during that period. A lot of the congressional presentations were his cup of tea. He ended up being tapped by the senate budget committee that was established under Sen. Muskie and company, and he worked with Alice Rivlin, then the Hill Senate budget director, currently head of OMB. After Sid Brown left the Agency, there was an extended period that I was Acting Controller. Johnny Murphy was acting Administrator after Parker left. It was during the change-over of administrations. For me, Murphy was very easy to work with. He was an old controller so we spoke the same language. I am sure that wasn't the case with the program people. He caused a lot of headaches for the program side because he wanted more financial information requirements developed to provide for greater management control of program activities.

Q: Any changes in financial systems?

CHRISTIAN: Those were the days of the huge effort on PBAR, which I believe stands for Program, Budget and Accounting Requirements. But I didn't get exposed to that a great deal. It went on for a year or so. Johnny Murphy's special assistant, a former Controller, Ed

Kosters, with major help from Jim Rauch, did the heavy lifting on that activity. But the project went on and on, and caused a lot of consternation. When Bob Nooter became deputy administrator, PBAR disappeared. I am sure that the geographic bureaus were shoving him in that direction, but I would assume that he also had that proclivity. During that period, I did draft the definitive statement on the meaning and use of operating expenses under the watchful eye of Bill Jordan, Senator Inouye's slashing chief of staff.

Q: After that you were back to the field?

Assignment to the Philippines as Deputy Director (1975-1978)

CHRISTIAN: I had one year in training and four years in the controller's office before going back overseas. After the five years in Washington, I was looking around for an overseas assignment. I was talking to "Zim", Garnett Zimmerly, who I had first met in Laos as the Program Officer. He was then acting assistant administrator for Vietnam, or it may been called the Supporting Assistance Bureau then. He said he was going out as Mission Director to the Philippines, and offered me a position first as controller, and then as deputy director when the incumbent departed the post. I went to Philippines as a controller in July 1975. John Hummon was deputy director at the time. I enjoyed working with the controller Filipino staff there. They were quite capable and the mission worked smoothly. The working conditions were nice. The Filipinos were good advocates of their own programs. They were extemporaneous speakers of the first order, and they could put on a "dog and pony" show that would do credit for any program.

Q: How big was the program?

CHRISTIAN: It was one of the larger programs at that time. I don't remember dollar amounts, but we had programs in all of the sectors. We had a large family planning program, a nutrition program, a large disaster program for all the typhoons and natural calamities that hit the Philippines annually. We had a large agricultural program with a lot of support for their Ministry of Agriculture; Kansas State University had an agricultural team on-board, we were supporting the International Rice Research Institute program (IRRI) big time, which was outstandingly successful leading to the Green Revolution in Asia. Rice became a more productive crop. They returned to self-sufficiency in rice. They had been historically self-sufficient, but in the 1960s and early ‘70s they had imported rice, but they were coming back strong by the mid-70's.

Q: Did we have anything to do with their coming back?

CHRISTIAN: Well, we provided active support for their agricultural programs and as mentioned we financed a team working with the IRRI project. We believed we shared the glory, but that is always problematic. Lane Holdcroft came in as head of USAID's agriculture division about the end of my first year there. There was a clean water and sanitation program in the boroughs. One of our largest programs involved provincial development, where we took several provinces and tried to make model local governments

work with everything from budget planning, training for officials, down to motor pool operations for heavy equipment and trucks, and other vehicles. The whole government operations in selected provinces were improved with the idea that it would be replicated throughout the country. There were about 70 provinces in the Philippines and we were involved with about twelve of them. USAID had some activities in most every place except the Zamboanga peninsula on the island of Mindanao, where the Muslim insurrection was going on and this area was out of bounds during my tour in the Philippines.

Q: So we weren't addressing that issue while you were there?

CHRISTIAN: The Muslims? There was no way to reach them, and we were not even allowed to visit the area. The area was out of bounds. The PVO's were doing some work there that we were supporting, but they were closed down because of open hostilities so we couldn't get in for audit review.

Q: The access for audit was a condition for whether we could carry an activity in a certain area?

CHRISTIAN: That is the way it played out there. Another area that we steered clear of involved the first lady, Imelda Marcos. One of the things that occurred early on that strongly indicated that we should keep a distance from the first lady is that the IMF had one of their annual meetings in Manila, and the first lady wanted to boost hers and perhaps her country's image and proceeded to do so in her grandiose way by building six luxury hotels on the waterfront in Manila. She was a tremendous promoter, and the city was spic and span for the IMF folks. I partly blame the IMF for these kinds of extravagances, by provoking this action in third world countries. The third world doesn't want to look like a poor country cousin, and so they spend all this money getting ready for the IMF meetings. Especially the countries with dictatorial leaders who are prone to such excesses.

Q: Did you ever meet Mrs. Marcos?

CHRISTIAN: I usually sat below the salt, but I remember attending a function there that was held for the new AID Administrator Gilligan when he came to the Philippines. Imelda was there. You could almost see from one end of the table to the other, it was like a football field. It was in Malacanang Palace, and it was very impressive. I met the Marcos a few other times. They were big on awards and ceremonies at the palace. In the first couple of weeks that I was there I attended ceremonies to award people, Americans and Filipinos, in the program. There was a huge rural electrification program that was led by a Filipino gentleman. So many of them were western educated. Their technocrats were as educated as our technocrats. They were very effective in carrying out programs. Development seemed to be moving forward until about 1976 or '77. Then Marcos and cronies began to get too greedy, or it became more and more obvious, and they just seemed to want more and more of it; and Imelda's family and friends were said to be "heavy hitters" too. Then, of course, lesser lights got more into the run on the treasury.

Q: Did that have any effect on the AID program?

American Plane Disaster in Becol

CHRISTIAN: Well things don't break precipitously. You can look at things in retrospect and they look much clearer than they did at the time. We tried to keep our distance, as did the Ambassador from the Marcos at that time. We tried to work with the true developers. In about August or September of 1976 the Mission Director, Zimmerly, had gathered together a group of his cohorts, from the Japanese Embassy, the German Embassy, the Asian Development Bank, and our Embassy, and the group went down to the Becol region in the southern part of Luzon province, which is an area that shows more patriotism to America than a lot of places here in the US For many years there were a lot of Filipinos who had worked as cooks in the US Navy and were now retired on US military pensions. We had programs in that region, because of their friendly, cooperative attitude as well as generally, it was a very poor area. It was Zim's purpose to build up that area, and form joint ventures with the other donor governments to do it. The other nations' officials seemed very enthusiastic about it. USAID chartered a small plane and flew to the Becol, and they had a very successful day. Upon returning that evening, they got within radio communication of the Manila airport, and were waved off, and that was the last anyone heard of the plane, other than when a Marine helicopter off the USS Enterprise heard the beeping of the plane's recorder when the helicopter pilot was pursuing the search. The search for the missing plane went on for 11 days, and they couldn't be found. The jungles were so thick within 25 miles of Manila that the only people who could get in were the guerilla fighters from the Philippine army who crawled along wild boar trails. These guerrillas had fought with us against the Viet Cong in Vietnam. Finally, after 11 days the chopper located the plane. The peculiarity of that search was that everyday at about 2 p.m. there would be reports of the plane being found, when it had not. This was an aspect of the Philippine culture, especially among the less educated: they would see things and hear things that a lot of us aren't aware of. That was a trying time. Things were off to such a good start. I had just moved up to the deputy director position, things were working smoothly and I was beginning to feel comfortable.

Q: How long had Garnett been in that position?

CHRISTIAN: A little over a year.

Q: He was killed. And all the other representatives?

CHRISTIAN: All seven were killed on impact. The small aircraft was about 400 ft below the top of the mountain. It may have been wind shear, because the winds were really bad at that time of year.

Q: It was the Philippines Airlines?

CHRISTIAN: No, it was a USAID chartered aircraft. We used chartered small aircraft a lot up until then. We flew them to projects throughout the islands, especially when CODELS were there and other visiting dignitaries from Washington, all wanting to see project activities. The project leaders would put on a show of a woman in a bamboo hut ironing clothes for the first time with electricity or a sewing machine with a light-bulb hanging down from the ceiling. It was very impressive, especially for Congressmen who remembered our TVA days and the beginning of rural electrification in rural America. Tom Niblock (he was the prior Mission Director in the Philippines), while in disfavor with some of the folks back at AID/W, had achieved a lot in pushing programs ahead in the Philippines. Tom had impressed Sen. Inouye and his hard nose staffer Jordan, when they were out there, with among other things, the FAR concept. This refers to Fixed Amount Reimbursement, a technique for limiting our funds to a fixed amount for an element of a project, which was based on previous engineering studies on what something would cost. Consequently, Tom had a direct line to Sen. Inouye that supposedly he used from time to time, which probably didn't stand him in too well with the AID Administrator and the chain of command in Washington.

Q: What was the response to this tragedy by the Philippine people?

CHRISTIAN: My first reaction to that question is that they waited for the next director, but there was more to it than that. There was sincere sympathy. They offered all the assistance that was in their power at the time. That left me as acting director for a few months with very little experience in that capacity, and not having a background in the program side of the business. But I got a lot of support. I had an excellent staff. That is one thing about AID in a mission like the one in the Philippines and the excellent living standards, you got a lot of good people. The staff did a good job during that time. I had a good, supportive Ambassador, Bill Sullivan, who I knew from Laos. He was supporting Joe Wheeler to come and replace Zimmerly, but it wasn't quite the right time for Joe. I suspect Joe shied away from the appointment due to the fact the Marcos's were in power then.

Q: Who ended up replacing Zimmerly?

CHRISTIAN: Peter Cody who had a long background in AID and who had experience in Latin America as well as Asia.

Q: Didn't the program have a substantial economic assistance, balance of payment support like PL 480 (Food for Peace)?

CHRISTIAN: We had a large PL 480 program, we had a two person staff handling Food for Peace, which is a large US staff for PL 480 programs. We always had a large shelf of other projects that were ready. If there was extra AID program funds, the money frequently went to the Philippines, because the Filipinos were working closely with us in planning ahead for programs. One of the political ironies that occurred that first year was the University of Kansas or Kansas State, I can't remember which, had done quite a bit of work with the Philippine Department of Agriculture. We were developing a large agriculture program.

Kansas won the contract to implement this program. It just so happened that Bob Dole was running in the primary about that time. Somehow that was associated with Kansas having gotten the contract, that the mission had tilted it that way and by extension I had something to do with it, which is the farthest thing from the truth. When Carter beat Ford a new administration came in with Gilligan. Gilligan sent his lieutenant, George Wing to selected Missions to look at all activities and he questioned every person at our Mission. He too somehow got the impression that we had engineered the agriculture contract towards Kansas, and it did not bode well for the Mission leadership for a while. Domestic politics do get into our business.

Q: Who was challenging the contract arrangement?

CHRISTIAN: It was already too far down the pike. It had already been signed sealed and delivered, with all of the required documentation in place and no apparent irregularities, so there was nothing they could do about it, but I felt that it was hard to get friendly responses from a few people like Wing and the Assistant Administrator for Asia, for awhile. But they got over it and good relations evolved.

Q: Was this contract audited?

CHRISTIAN: Not during my tour. As far as I know the Kansas team did a good job. When a mission changes directorship, especially with two strong leaders, there inevitably is a period of transition. The people on-board had been placed by Tom Niblock, and so when Zim took over he began to bring in the people he knew as good performers. There was a bit of a shake-down period with the holdovers and the new arrivals, which was in the final stages. It wasn't bloody. I guess I can say that because I was on the incoming side.

Q: Were there any major financial management issues?

CHRISTIAN: The fixed amount reimbursement procedure was an effective way to do business for the type of activities that require engineering studies or cost estimating studies that are valid. Like for example, we did a lot of school-building replacement because of annual monstrous typhoons.

Q: How did the FAR system work for the school building projects?

CHRISTIAN: The engineers would come in and estimate the cost of building the school, which was the basis for our commitment to the activity. All overruns the host government would have to bear. We would have to get an engineering survey afterwards to say that it was built satisfactorily, and we would reimburse according to the results.

Q: There were no advances?

CHRISTIAN: There were advances, but the final payment was not until after the project had final engineering approval.

Q: I remember one of the criticisms of the FAR program was that it was difficult for governments that didn't have large budgets so they couldn't hold out until the end for the payments.

CHRISTIAN: That would be a problem in many countries in Africa. The Philippines had enough flexibility that they could borrow.

Q: Is that technique used anywhere now?

CHRISTIAN: I haven't heard about it recently. It could be because we are not into infrastructure to a great extent, like road building. In those days we were doing farm to market roads, and we could get an approximation of what things would cost.

Q: Did you find that the estimates by the engineers were reasonably accurate?

CHRISTIAN: I don't know if it was tested extensively. The mark usually seemed pretty reasonable and it was a superior method to assure a greater degree of accountability to any other procedure in place at the time.

Q: Were there other financial or accounting issues with the Philippine government?

CHRISTIAN: Their planning and coordinating group was a rather sophisticated group. The person who was heading that was quite well educated. He has worked at the World Bank since the Marcos government folded. He was not a Marcos lackey, he was a very competent technocrat. He and his group were easy to work with. They were not push-overs; you had to report back to them about the uses of the local currency they had made available to you. They were more sophisticated than any other country that I have dealt with. You did not have to do their work for them. There was the impression, however, that under Marcos there was a great deal of corruption. The excesses hadn't really surfaced so much when I left there in 1978. It did really go sour in early 1980s or late '70s. They didn't have those problems with the confiscation or theft of local currencies that occurred supposedly later. We were not aware of it happening to the extent publicized later on. I believe it came out later, after the US and the Philippines entered into formal lease agreements that reflected we were renting the military bases, with Marcos and company interpreting that it was their money to use at their discretion.

Q: Was it effective and viable to do development in the Philippines? Did the political interests of America complicate the direction of the program?

CHRISTIAN: At that time there was full support for family planning and population control in a Catholic country. This with Cardinal Sin, yes, SIN, right there in the middle of things. Cardinal Sin was a difficult, but pleasant, man to deal with. To Imelda's credit she, in her way, supported these programs. Later he and Imelda, the first lady, got at tremendous odds, but at that point we were able to push a population program that was

sorely needed in the Philippines. Population growth rate was over 3% and it was pushed down to 2 or 2.5%. I suspect that during the 1980s that got turned around, in part perhaps, due to our own political interference in AID family planning programs. Imelda's interests in the program were in the areas of population control, family planning and nutrition. She had some of her consorts running those programs. They ran quite well with the only caveat being that they had to have a rather grandiose work environment; new buildings, because she wanted to show them off to her international friends. But there were some good people working there. It is always tough to get help down to the barrios, but to the extent that we could dig down and see it, it seemed to be doing reasonably well. Audit was not too difficult there in 1975 to 1978. During the search for the missing plane, we found out that USAID had the best communication system in the Philippines. We had special equipment brought in for the terrible typhoons that would flood whole provinces annually.

Q: You had a permanent disaster relief capacity?

CHRISTIAN: Yes at that point. Tom Niblock had built that up into a first class operation. During my period there, it had begun to be phased down as we turned it over to the Filipinos.

Q: I gather working with the Philippine people was attractive?

CHRISTIAN: I would say that about all the Asians I worked with. What you had to be on guard for was that they were too agreeable. They wanted to please. They were generally soft spoken and agreeable and showed a lot of respect.

Q: What were the consequences of that relationship?

CHRISTIAN: You had to be careful that they wouldn't agree to something you wanted to do, that would be counter to their development needs.

Q: Did they follow up, or did they agree to things and then let them drop?

CHRISTIAN: That was more of a problem than you would like to think. The programs had to be continually watched or the managers prodded to get the projects to come out on time, if they had other priorities.

Q: Would your impression be that most development ideas were largely USAID initiatives or largely from the Filipinos or some mix?

CHRISTIAN: I would say that in the Philippines there was a greater coordination and team spirit than in the other missions I have been in. Because there was greater ability on their side, and a greater understanding of American standards. The education system was better than in many other country.

Q: They could be quite aggressive and put forward a lot of ideas, and take the initiative in developing programs?

CHRISTIAN: And they were, while soft spoken, outspoken and prideful. It was sort of a love, hate relationship with the US, of course. They resented us being there in such large numbers, but they loved our ways and economic support. They were a product of 300 years of Spanish-Catholic influence and 100 years of US-Hollywood influence. It's quite a rugged combination. However, there was a good side to our colonial period. That was the elementary educational system which was very successfully established. While very delightful people, their elections usually involved severe violence, including such excesses as murder and kidnapping.

Q: Did you have any connection with the large military operation in the Philippines?

CHRISTIAN: Our Military Attachés were always at the country team meeting. The closest interaction I had with the military, was with the US Air Force Colonel that was the attaché responsible for the military efforts in the rescue at the time of the downing of our chartered plane. He was at the airport when I called because the plane had not come in and was an hour late. He said later that he knew then that the plane was gone. He had enough experience flying in that area, that he knew no one would come out alive with the severe thunderstorm prevailing.

Q: Did we have access to the Military PX?

CHRISTIAN: We had all that kind of support. That was one of the negatives of going to the Philippines; it was too close to state-side living in many respects. I would not have gone there earlier in my career, because it would not have been enough of a change from the American life, which I greatly appreciate, but you wouldn't have had the experience of living in the third world and all the benefits of exposure to other cultures. We had a seafront family activity facility with swimming pool, tennis courts, softball field, commissary, and other amenities.

Q: Did the Americans live in an enclave or were they spread out through town?

CHRISTIAN: They were in an enclave in a way. They were in several developments, but there were Filipinos living there too. The Americans shared these development areas with other nationalities. It was nice housing. It was equivalent to USAID housing in Latin America. We had the large PX facilities at Clark air base; we had the Baguio retreat (the John Hay military recreation camp) where the Japanese and American leaders met at the end of WWII. The Ambassadors' quarters up there were available to us to stay on a first come, first serve basis. You felt like it was a miniature Camp David. Camp John Hay was set aside for American R and R after working in the hot seaport climate of Manila. I am reminded of the bay of Manila. In the last year of my tour of duty, the Marcos were leasing out casinos on ships in the Manila bay, and other grandiose projects; some got off the ground and others didn't. The end was coming fast. I am not sure we read it quickly

enough, though. The Ambassador was very tough on the Marcos. He reported solid stuff back to State. Later in the 1980s, thank goodness we had one Republican senator in the senate during the Reagan Administration with moxie enough to keep us away from Marcos when he was about to be brought down. I believe that Senator Lugar was the only person that kept the Reagan administration from backing Marcos. In my opinion, the rest seemed to be listening to Jerry Falwell; in addition to being a preacher with a fundamentalist persuasion with praise for Marcos as an anti-communist, apparently, he was considered by some elements to be a renowned foreign affairs expert!

Q: Did you deal with any other Congressmen at that point?

CHRISTIAN: Solarz came out, and as always he was a tough man to please. It was soon after the air accident, and so he was sympathetic. I felt like I got somewhat of a free ride from him.

Q: He was very critical of the program?

CHRISTIAN: He was not as critical as I thought he would be. He would, of course, have found fault with the Marcos on human rights as he should have. We had briefings with him, and he went over the program, but we fared pretty well. We could relate most of our programs to the people as opposed to supporting the Marcos. He seemed to like what he saw in family planning, nutrition and local government development.

Q: So he didn't try to cut the program?

CHRISTIAN: I don't remember him doing that at all. I can't recall what went on in Washington at the time, but I don't remember the program being cut during the years I was there.

Q: So during that period you had a pretty open development situation.

CHRISTIAN: It was towards the end of the good development years in the Philippines. What I was impressed with was the competence of the technocrats who were running these programs, like the rural electrification program. The Filipino leader of that project came back and testified on the Hill for our program. He was so talented. At that time Marcos had a special assistant, who would make the President of the United States proud if he had one just like him. His specialty was non-nuclear energy. And they had more geothermal power than any place in those days. I don't know what happened to that. They were in the front of tapping geothermal power. Our investment in economic development seemed to be paying off in the provinces and down to the barrios. On the cultural side there were many activities with the Spanish influence, involving big festivals in all the major cities during Catholic holidays. My wife attended as many as she could throughout the islands, and took our daughter along to see it all. Of course, one of the big pluses of the assignment there was the ready access to cultural things at reasonable prices and low airfares throughout the many islands, so my family was able to see a lot. The roads were fairly good, even though they

were still third world in many places. We could drive up to Baguio, which was a five hour trip up into the mountains. We could drive to Clark Air Force base, and to the Subic Navy base. And so those were nice outings, and there were great golf courses in all of those places. Manila had golf courses that were accessible and affordable to Americans, which made living rather nice there as an added bonus to the sense of job satisfaction.

Q: And yet it was an underdeveloped country needing a large aid program?

CHRISTIAN: Certain aspects were very underdeveloped. The poor were very poor. At the same time there was a lot of affluence there too.

Q: A large part of our reason for being there was our large military presence.

CHRISTIAN: No one could do any wrong as long as they were against the Communists as far as our country was concerned. Marcos was a strong anti-communist and played this card to the hilt, finding much favor, particularly with the excess paranoia of some in the US

Q: Did this affect the program at all?

CHRISTIAN: The AID development types were trying to do their job the best they could under those circumstances. They were trying to do something to help the country. The Becol was a poor region that we were trying to help. Like in a lot of places, we were trying to serve more than one master as best we could.

Q: Were there tradeoffs that made it difficult to achieve the development interests?

CHRISTIAN: When you got down to the fish-or-cut bait, sometimes trade-offs were necessary. I can't remember any instances, but I'm sure we couldn't press as far as we wanted to sometimes, because we had a leadership in Marcos that was tremendously anti-communist and we didn't want to go too far in demanding performance or else and jeopardize our excellent military bases. I didn't get into the higher councils on that to know how much that came into play. We weren't yet getting into the AID policy issues that came about in the 1980s that Administrator McPherson was pushing. This was before his time; this was still Gilligan's time. Our theme was the poor of the poorest in those days. This is the Cold War era although human rights were an issue during the Carter years, and the Embassy was dancing on some "hot coals" with that issue. That didn't end up significantly affecting our programs though. They may have if Carter had won a second term.

In March 1978, we packed our bags and came back to the States for home leave. I was looking for an onward assignment. They had something in Portugal that sounded interesting from the standpoint of being based in Europe, but that didn't materialize. I believe I was sent to see Haven North to see about a job in Africa. The deputy post in the Ivory Coast was opening up with Gordon Evans. The Bureau wanted to send someone with my background to make sure that Evans didn't go too far off the reservation, because he was a rather dynamic individual with zillions of ideas. That was quite an experience. Gordon is

really a nice guy, and I liked him, but he kept so many balls bouncing that you could only try to catch a few.

Q: So you went out to Abidjan?

Assignment to Abidjan as Deputy Director (1978-1980)

CHRISTIAN: Yes. This was a regional development support operations with the servicing of numerous countries in West Africa.

Q: How big a staff or operation did you have there?

CHRISTIAN: We had thirty or so technicians who were located regionally in Abidjan because each of the Missions in the region didn't require full time technical support in each of the skill areas. It was economically feasible and a very good use of resources as far as USAID was concerned. It was an awfully tough duty station for many of the technicians though, because travel in West Africa was about as difficult as any place in the world at that time. And it meant spending an inordinate amount of time in pitiful airports. They have improved over the years, as all places have. The international travel, hotels, and so forth have come a long way since I started with AID. Maybe its the wrong things that have improved.

Q: What were you focusing on?

CHRISTIAN: I was focusing on keeping the office moving, and seeing that we got support for the technicians, and reasonably efficient scheduling of the technicians. Gordon Evans was Mr. Outside, and I was Mr. Inside. He, as the Mission Director, did most of the traveling to the other posts, that was required by the position. I made a couple of trips, to Mali, to Guinea and one to Senegal. I had been to Niger and to Upper Volta before. I had an earlier role before, as deputy controller of the agency, to set up the financial operations in the field in support of programs in West Africa. I had gone out to visit the likes of David Shear, when he was a REDSO/Director, and John Koehring, when he was Mission Director in the Cameroon, and the wild man who was Mission Director in Niger, (I don't remember his name); he drove us in his car across the desert so fast that I was sure that I wouldn't come back alive. He died out that way I think; I believe he had a heart attack while he was out there in the late 1970s or early ‘80s. Norman Schoonover was mission director at USAID/Senegal. Two new mission directors came out to Mali and Burkina Faso, Upper Volta it was called then, John Hoskins and Ron Levine, a couple of young lawyers. I had a lot to do with selecting the controllers to go into the new missions in West Africa. I recall having a lot of trouble getting John Koehring to accept the idea that he needed a Controller in the Cameroon. John was a pretty strong character, and he thought they were doing just fine without another position. I finally forced that issue with the powers that be in Washington. We finally got a Controller by the name of Steve Liapis on-board and John later came back with only high praise for Steve, and thanked me forever after.

Q: How did the operation work out in the other countries?

CHRISTIAN: It was a big step forward. Previously they had received only long distance Controller support from Washington. Washington was providing whatever services they got, but that of course was extremely limited. This was 1974. Don Walls was assigned to Niger, serving Niger and Upper Volta. Phil Amos went to Senegal, and served Senegal and Mali, the latter initially was a very small program. As I said Steve Liapis was assigned to the Cameroon. We also sent a controller, Harry Shropshire, to the regional operation in Abidjan.

Q: How well did that work?

CHRISTIAN: The structure is still basically in place today, with controller positions added to some of the other Sahel countries. We had trouble monitoring the generation and use of local currency in the Sahel. The local currency tended to disappear in large chunks according to audits released in about 1980-82; it simply wasn't accounted for, particularly in Mali. We undertook the Sahel Financial Management Program to correct the problem. That was quite an undertaking in training host country nationals throughout the Sahel.

Q: That was the time of the congressional concern about $10 million that couldn't be tracked?

CHRISTIAN: That's right. I have a sneaking suspicion that much of that audit report was unjustified, because the auditors were non-French speaking, and a lot of the first generation project officers had been transferred by that time and the newcomers were not necessarily strong in defense of past performance, nor experienced in dealing with audits. That may apply to some of the controllers in place as well as to the project manager side. They probably did not stick together as a mission and present their case in a balanced way. I venture to say this, inasmuch as about a year later we had a French-speaking TDY controller out there, and he found many records in French that would have accounted for at least some of the funds in question. There were a lot of French records in the archives, but at that late date it would not have done AID any good to try and make a correction. We had already taken our punishment, and we had a good Sahel financial management project underway, which I felt was benefiting the host country financial types by training them and making them better equipped to account for their finances in the future.

Q: But how did this issue affect the program?

CHRISTIAN: Like many of my experiences at AID, we were able to take a hit and convert it into a much better situation. It is unfortunate that a loss occurs in the first place, but we do not just leave it there. It is to our credit that we are able to do that. It is usually a situation where we have had too few human resources to obtain the necessary level of accountability. There is a list of things that contributed to our inability to do as well as we should have in the financial areas.

Q: But you are now talking about your work with REDSO? What kind of issues were you faced with in that unusual operation.

CHRISTIAN: The big thing was keeping the clients, the missions that we were servicing, satisfied; that each Mission was getting a fair share of the talent in a timely manner. Frequently, more than one Mission wanted the same person at the same time to assist them on some phase of project design or implementation. Frequently you had to juggle and try to placate the powers that be. Sometimes there were unhappy campers!

Q: Did you have to deal a lot with the morale of the staff?

CHRISTIAN: You have families there with the husband away because he is always traveling. The least gratifying was that the community spirit was not there. The relationship with the host country was not there. There were not too many community facilities; there was a small pool at the Ambassador's residence. It depended on the nature of the Ambassador and his wife as to the access you had to that. The tennis courts were extremely limited and in poor conditions. You had to be an African hand and really feel the calling. There was an oasis at the Hotel Ivoire that was too grandiose for that part of the world, but it wasn't like the latest excess in senility. I am referring to the basilica in Yamousoukro, the largest church in the world, surpassing St. Peters in Rome.

Q: Generally you found living in Abidjan difficult?

CHRISTIAN: It was quite a change to go from the Asian to African lifestyle. The Africans seemed to be in pitched battles when they were just having a friendly discussion. Their natures were very different from the Asians, which you gradually came to understand in time. Abidjan was extremely high humidity, but you did have the beach. The staff developed a lifestyle there, especially if they had a French background, that made it enjoyable for many. The housing was reasonably good; the food in the marketplace was plentiful, but at that time the exchange rate for the dollar was extremely unfavorable. If you went out for pizza with your children, it was like going to one of the most expensive restaurants in Washington, DC. It changed over the years. The next time I went back, things were more reasonable. There was a cost of living index while I was there that took care of that, but it was just the feeling that you were paying too much for what you were getting. Travel was extremely expensive there, so you didn't travel much by air. My wife did a circle tour by car around the Ivory Coast. She and a couple other ladies took our car and drove all around the Cote d'Ivoire, and a lot of it was washboard roads. She enjoyed that; she saw the dancers on stilts up in the villages and all the local culture, but the roads were bad, limiting access. Politically, and also economically, things were not very good in Ghana at that time, so we couldn't go there. I have been to Togo though. Togo was a pleasant surprise. I got over to Benin for a few days. Because of all the French influence, if you are a Francophile you are right at home in that part of the world. A lot of French ex-pats remain from the colonial days.

Q: What about the quality of the staff?

CHRISTIAN: We had a good US hire group, qualified people. The foreign nationals had not been trained in American office procedures. We had to use whatever was available in the controllers office in the way of ex-pats, and to gradually bring local foreign nationals up to speed, who were slowly being trained. The largest crew was in the Communications and Records (C&R). Also on the management staff, which was being developed by Anne Bradley who was a former secretary who had served in Laos up-country with the legendary Pop Buell. She could handle most everything that came in the way of unorthodox ways of doing business. (At times I was not sure either of us would survive.) We had staff from the other coastal countries like Guinea and Ghana at that time, because things weren't going so well in those countries in terms of development. One of the things that impressed me in the Ivory Coast was how much progress they had made development-wise compared with other countries in the region who were much better off at the time of independence less than 20 years before. The Ivory Coast based its progress on small agriculture programs, and the country had accepted retaining a lot of French ex-pats working in their government.

Q: Were you involved in any development projects in the Ivory Coast?

CHRISTIAN: No. We had a little PVO activity and a RUHDO, a housing program, but that wasn't under our auspices really. As an interesting, at times humorous, aside: There was a long standing, if not big, dispute between Gordon Evans, the REDSO Director and the head of RUHDO as to RUHDO's place at the table for country team meetings. The RUHDO chief had been in Abidjan for ten to twelve years, and knew everyone in town, if not the country. For this reason, the Ambassador wanted him in the meetings, and Gordon didn't feel that the guy was high enough ranked on AID's totem pole to be at the country team meetings, particularly, if Gordon's higher ranking division chiefs weren't included.

Q: So there was some competition which was typical of RHUDO everywhere. They tended to operate quite independently of AID.

CHRISTIAN: I remember Zim made a comment once, but I didn't get into it with him. He said he had no idea why we were giving out assistance in this functional assistance area since we hadn't even been successful at home with housing projects.

Q: That's another story, but it shows the interesting history of those kinds of operations that get special funding and special mandates and tend to be operated independently of the AID organizational structure.

CHRISTIAN: There is always something like that. I wasn't aware of it in the field. I think that was the first place I ran into the housing program.

Q: Then what happened?

CHRISTIAN: About the end of my first tour in Abidjan, I had lunch with Golar Butcher, the Assistant Administrator for Africa. Gordon had a dinner for her with all the division

chiefs, and the next day I was to have a luncheon for her, and it just so happened that this second round was to include a lot of women and minorities, and, of course, that put me in high esteem with the Assistant Administrator, a minority female. At that time, you folks were looking for an Associate Assistant Administrator in the Africa Bureau, and I was tapped for that position back in Washington. I came back in June or July of 1980.

Assignment as Associate Assistant Administrator of the African Bureau in DC (1980-1984)

Q: Maybe I can fill in some background on that. It was a time when the bureau was under a great deal of pressure, because it had difficulty getting its field staff, and the whole administrative process to function smoothly; because at that time there was only one deputy. Today bureaus have two or three deputies. There was the concern that more attention needed to be given to the administrative aspect of the operation and to the staffing, and we weren't getting enough leverage within the system. We therefore created the position of associate assistant administrator for program management and resources.

CHRISTIAN: I was very fortunate to have David Mean come on board as head of the executive management staff and Ford Brown, an experienced controller, the two functions of my new position. Both were very experienced and knew their work. I was asked several years later on by Fred Fisher about the position I held in the Africa Bureau. He was being offered the same opportunity in the Latin America Bureau by Dwight Ink, so he wanted to know what I thought about the position. I told him it is great, while you have the same bosses that brought you in, afterwards it is no good at all, because it is not in the traditional, established organizational pattern of AID and no one knows what you do, or what you should do, or, it seemed even why you are there. Even if you were a strong outgoing person, it could be difficult to make something out of it in the long haul, as I believe it would be "bucking the system". After the people who have established the organization, unique at the time, are gone, and especially after the successors bring in a total of three deputies, the raison d'etre was gone. I didn't want, for personal reasons, to return overseas, so I retired in 1984.

Q: But you found the definition of the job was a bit nebulous?

CHRISTIAN: No, not really. Before I go into some of the problems, let me say that, in preparation for retirement, I sent a message to all of the missions in Africa, summarizing Bureau progress over the past few years in the management areas on about a dozen fronts that were innovative and aggressive approaches that were favorably recognized within AID and on the Hill. I definitely thought there was a job there to do, especially in those days when we were trying to move forward, and start new programs in Africa. We were having a lot of trouble getting qualified staff to take the toughest assignments and we needed to make the case for our fair share of the operating expense budget. I don't think AID has ever been that successful at getting assignments to stick where you need to...in the tough spots. Maybe reaching the decision where you need them is a tough part too; that's a legitimate question. But once the Agency agreed to a program in a country and you decided you

needed staff, and then not getting the right person for the job over a lessor priority, I don't think is good personnel management. One glaring example of this problem was when we were going into Ethiopia with emergency assistance with US prestige on the line. That was high profile if anything ever was. The person we put in as head of Food for Peace on the scene was just out of internship, and it just about cost her career. Fortunately, it didn't cost the program too much, because we had a good manager in there, Fred Fisher. Not everyone in our business are managers; some are program types that conceptualize projects, or are technical people; a few can also manage. Because you were dealing with food to relieve the famine in Ethiopia in this case, you would think that you would put one of your top Food for Peace people in there, but because of the difficulty of the assignment you couldn't find an experienced officer to go. That defies acceptable behavior. Someone should have gotten their walking papers.

Q: You didn't get support from the system?

CHRISTIAN: This was after I retired, but it was too typical throughout my career. We had a hard time getting an adequate number of positions allocated to Africa in the first place.

Q: Why was that?

CHRISTIAN: There were only so many to go around, and all the bureaus were fighting for their own cause, for the limited number of positions, and some of the people involved in making those decisions may have been influenced by places they wanted to be assigned later on.

Q: This was the time that the Ambassadors and the State Department were blocking assignments too?

CHRISTIAN: This was the time, which was most of the time, when they wanted the programs, but not the people. Frequently, you couldn't get adequate grade levels for the staff for positions at new posts. I remember after the Camp David Accords, Egypt was being staffed, and the Ambassador was holding a very hard line that all he needed to run the planned program or any other AID program was seven people who would report to his economic officer. The economic officer was probably an FS-2, and the dear Ambassador was still fighting that battle with President Carter at his farewell meeting when he retired years later. He failed of course. They got 100 AID bodies in Egypt eventually. That was the general climate of the time, and still is as far as I know. You would only win after expending considerable, several months, and effort. Of course, during that time the necessary planning oversight lapsed. It took a person like Bill Gaud, former AID Administrator in the 1960s-70s to say to State that if you want the program, you get the AID people to run it. Because after all it will be the AID people on the Hill being grilled for their lack of accountability if that occurs, not the State Department.

Q: During this time one of your constant battles was getting positions?

CHRISTIAN: Getting staff and getting people out to the hardship posts. We ended up doing quite a study for categorizing missions as to the type of programs and the staffing requirements. I think it was a model that was eventually adopted agency-wide for awhile.

Q: What was the purpose of having a controller at that time in the bureau?

CHRISTIAN: This was part of the reorganization of the controller that dated back to the mid-70s. They wanted to have a controller in each bureau to handle financial management issues; to get the allotments out to the field; to be responsive to the budgetary needs of the missions; and to help in the allocation of the operating expense budget.

Q: But this was a new creation at the time?

CHRISTIAN: No. The bureau controllers had been in place back in 1972 with the reorganization of the Controller's office, which I played a role in. Ernie Wilson followed by Steve Liapis were the early controllers for the Africa Bureau. When I arrived, the Bureau Controller was pulled under my new division. Before the Controller had reported to the Bureau's DP division.

Q: How did you find the mission operations when you traveled around? Did you find any issues you had to address.

Trip to East Africa

CHRISTIAN: I remember a trip to East Africa: to Tanzania, Swaziland, Botswana, and Zimbabwe. I got to Zimbabwe when our USAID had only been open in this new country for a month or two. I could readily understand, but not accept, why the Rhodesians were so reluctant to give up the beautiful country they had built on the backs of the blacks. Well, I got a call before I arrived in Botswana to sort out the relationship between the Mission Director and the Ambassador. It was just good fortune that I had sat across the table from the Ambassador to Botswana at the country team in Manila who was then the USIA director in Manila. It also helped that he was a very easy going guy and I was able to smooth some ruffled feathers. Our mission director had not been sufficiently diplomatic, and he did some things that irritated the Ambassador. It seems that he tried to limit the Ambassador sharing the credit for some of AID's achievements, or failed to provide for the Ambassador to participate in ceremonies. Which is a mistake big time, because the Ambassador is the representative of our President, and you always give him the credit.

Q: Were there any other issues?

CHRISTIAN: I am sure there were operating expense questions, but I don't remember anything specifically at this point. In Tanzania we had a few personnel problems. Jim Williams was the Mission Director there and I go way back with him as he was a former senior Controller. We were able to work those issues out. Tanzania was a tough host then. There was not much in the marketplace. They were just beginning to realize that you

needed a pie to cut up; that socialism was just grand from the standpoint that you got your education and your health care but they seemed to have overlooked that you also needed productive agriculture and other things that produce a standard of living. The Tanzanian agriculture people were just beginning to accept/consult with the agriculture experts we brought out from the States. Down in Swaziland, Julius Coles, was in high gear as always.

Q: But what was your impression about the mission leadership at that time?

CHRISTIAN: Lou Cohen, Julius Coles, John Patterson, Jim Williams. They were all energetic and enthusiastic. They did not have the experience or longevity as many of the Directors in Asia. To some extent this could be considered a training ground for the comers, for the ones who were ready to move up. In some cases that may have served everyone well. In other instances some needed a lot of controlling and hand holding; much more so in West Africa, where, initially, I considered them to be somewhat unruly with limited appreciation for AID procedures and regulations. Maybe that was just a matter of experience and time. That was part of the problem I alluded to earlier of how we don't send our very best to the most difficult places. On the other hand the junior ones get a chance.

In 1984, I thought I had finished so I retired. We decided that we didn't want to take another tour overseas; that we had given all we could. Since then I have enjoyed many consulting assignments for AID as they come up...many in Central America and the Caribbean where I had not served during my active career.

In conclusion, let me leave a couple of observations. AID should not commence planning and financing activities in any new country without Controller participation from the very beginning. Too frequently the Controller has been brought in down stream, six months or longer after the fact. At this point, more often than not there are already skeletons in the closet. Many at AID top level management, including political appointees with prior government experience, fail to appreciate the need for more qualified financial management skill in meeting AID controller needs, particularly in overseas development programs, than in many other US government agencies. This relates to the high level of accountability expected by Congress as reflected by the AID legislation as well as to the difficulty in many aspects of financial oversight in the third world environment. Over the years I believe the quality of financial management has slipped, if for no other reason than the fact that personnel resources have declined markedly while the demand for greater accountability and audit oversight has expanded.

An area that disturbed me frequently throughout my career, that I did not know how to resolve was the fact that the Embassy, based on State control of Foreign pay scales and other overseas benefits, would not permit AID to offer competitive salaries to foreign nationals to employ personnel for key positions in AID. For example, the Embassy tendency was to equate the Embassy Budget and Fiscal office, responsible for maintaining only routine budget and fiscal procedures, with the USAID Controller office positions. In some instances that was like equating the local college star with Michael Jordan, but AID was never very successful in winning its case as we were going up against the judge. This

is not unlike the cost sharing of joint administrative expenses between AID and State. That finally got so outrageous that Congress legislated an arbitrary cap on what State could charge AID for such support.

Appendix A

Indonesia Remembered

Joining the Foreign Service, the Christian family arrived in Indonesia on March 6, 1961 after shivering through a tremendous snow storm in New York City that brought the vibrant Manhattan to a virtual standstill. The temperature in Djakarta (spelling au currant in 1965) was in the high ‘90s with humidity at least as high. So on our first weekend in Indonesia when we received an invitation to accompany my boss and his wife to the retreat in the mountains (3000 feet) at the renowned Bill Palmer' cottage (former Dutch tea plantation), it was a welcome relief from the sauna baths while stuck in gridlock traffic in Djakarta. An added bonus was the usual Sunday brunch (dinner) of the famous Dutch Rijsttafel followed by a vast selection of delicious fruit, in abundant supply throughout Indonesia. This festive occasion was attended by ex-pats of all descriptions, nationalities, and ranks, ranging from Ambassadors, oil company executives, white Russians, secretaries, interns and artists.

But the main event occurred on Saturday evening. Bill Palmer, our host, was the U. S. film representative in Indonesia. Whether it was for one particular movie/film company, I cannot be certain after some 34 years, but he was one big celebrity with the Indonesians living in little bamboo huts amongst the rice paddies adorning the hillsides all of the way up the incline from the port of Djakarta to the top of Punjak, the mountain retreat for ex-pats. The ritual involved the delivery on Saturday afternoon by a small van, bearing the film company title, along the one road leading from Djakarta to Punjak with the film for the traditional Saturday night movie at the old tea plantation, i.e., if something did not go awry, which is about 80/20 in the developing world. But the little rice farmers and their families knew and the word went out, far and wide, if the little truck bearing the movie was on its way up the hill to Palmer's. As the sun began to set behind the Punjak, the crowd began to gather, slowly and almost mysteriously, appearing from behind banana trees, exotic flowering plants, and seemingly out of nowhere, but by the hundreds. The Suk Hongs with their sticky rice and other sweets to be savored by the vast audience were there for an evening of sheer pleasure while watching in utter silence, except when the hero kissed the lady, an action packed John Wayne or other shoot'em-up grade B western movie. A more mannerly, well behaved crowd you would not find anywhere. When the movie was over, they disappeared as quickly and as silently as they had arrived, with no evidence left behind, such as debris or trampled-on plants. That was our introduction to the charming, friendly, lovable Indonesians and their lush paradise.

During early 1965, after President Sukarno told the United States to "go to hell with your aid", the USAID Mission in Indonesia phased down rapidly from about 130 US direct hire personnel and a supporting cast of hundreds more of contractors and Foreign Service nationals (Indonesians), to a caretaker profile of two US employees and perhaps 5 or 6 Indonesian staff. Formal relationships at the Government to Government level, if existing,

were difficult at best. While it was not career enhancing for Indonesians, either government employees or ordinary citizens, to socialize or extend themselves to Americans during this period, there did not seem to be a stigma for them to work for us in the office or as domestic help. However, one could assume that our employees were to report on the activities of the remaining Americans. (It is easy to speculate as to the pointlessness of that activity.)

Amidst this atmosphere I was responsible for disposing of AID's excess real property, furniture, equipment and supplies. Included in the real property was the relatively new four story AID office building on Djalan General Sudirman, one of the main arteries in the densely populated capital of Indonesia. The building was constructed using PL 480 local currency, funds generated from delivery of US food commodities. The rupiahs were Indonesian-owned, but jointly controlled. The relevant bilateral agreement provided for USG use of the building, but it would revert to the Indonesian government (GOI) when no longer required for our use. It appeared that the appointed reversion time had come in the late Summer of 1965. Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Frank Galbraith called the Protocol Office for an appointment to transfer officially this prime piece of real estate to the GOI. I was to join the DCM in the ceremony marking an end to an era, not to mention, a sad day in my five fabulous years in Indonesia commencing with John Kennedy's famous question asking what we could do for our country! The night before the meeting with the Foreign Office for this event, our house, in the midst of an American compound was burglarized. In a flattering testament to my excellent taste and high fashion sense, the burglar made off with every piece of outer garments in my possession, except for a well worn pair of casual slacks and an old shirt hanging near my bed. Although I felt inconvenienced by this incident, our country can be proud of the use of this vignette by our diplomat, Frank Galbraith, in upbraiding the Indonesian counterpart for the inconsiderate treatment by their countrymen of an American (present at the meeting in little more than skivvies) whose only raison d'être was to assist them in economic development. Frank's ire may also have had something to do with the fact that the Indonesian Foreign Office chose to have us meet with only a mid-level Protocol Officer.

The events of 1965 and the aftermath of the coup involved the slaying of seven (7) Indonesian Army Generals, revolutionary war heroes, in their sleep, by the Communist Party (PKI) and the following bloodbath of an estimated 300,000 PKI members, sympathizers and not a few innocents. This action was totally incongruous with the Indonesian character as we had come to know and appreciate over the previous four years of pleasant and peaceful encounters.

Viewing the movie, The Year of Living Dangerously, I believe it was called, was truly nostalgic for me in bringing to mind the dramatic events of 1965 in Indonesia. One of the leading characters in the movie was a small Indonesian young man, played by a woman. This character and the role s/he played could not have duplicated more a young Chinese-Indonesian, both in his appearance and in his activities, who worked in my office. Although, to my knowledge, in real life I do not believe he committed suicide as in the end of the movie. (He took his severance pay when AID closed-down operations and, my best

guess would be, he went on to bigger and better things, reflecting his keen business sense.) We called him "Little Kie", "Big Kie" being the larger and chief accountant. While Little Kie was suppose to be one of our voucher examiners, he spent considerable time following up with Americans around the Embassy and AID offices pursuing the sale of volumes of photos that he shot at American receptions and parties the night before. He could be seen wheeling around town on his moped in the American and other ex-pat neighborhoods. Of course, as diplomatic niceties were replaced by limited contacts and billboards expressing the official Indonesian disdain for our President along with demeaning characterizations of our red, white and blue Uncle Sam, nightlife was substantially moderated along with Little Kie's photography business. Perhaps Little Kie returned to his profitable business of dealing with the generous Americans after the Communist supported coup of September 30, 1965 was aborted and a Government more friendly to the USA rose to power the following year. The movie story ended before this reality occurred and in real life we, now blossomed to a family of four in fertile Indonesia, soon departed Indonesia for Afghanistan and other adventures worthy of merit.

End of interview