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

DOUGLAS CLARK

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INTERVIEW

Q: Good morning, this is John Pielmeier. I'm an interviewer for the ADST [Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training] oral history program. And I'm excited today to start off an interview with Douglas Clark, who is a very well known, experienced and renowned retired USAID [United States Agency for International Development] Foreign Service Officer. And we will start the interview now. Hello, Doug.

CLARK: Good Morning.

Q: Doug, let's start with talking about where you grew up and your family situation.

CLARK: Okay, so the first thing, I was born in La Grande, Oregon. I was born as Douglas Durning. My mother, Mary Eastridge, was married to Lewis Durning, that was her first marriage, and I was their only child. They divorced in 1945. I never really knew my biological father. And learned about him after his death in 1997 through a step sister that I found in 2003.

Q: Oh, wow!

CLARK: From birth until 1950 we lived in Oregon. My mother was born in Helix Oregon, which is north of Pendleton and next to the Umatilla Indian Reservation. And her family, the Knight family, were large wheat farmers in Eastern Oregon, and they leased land from the Umatilla Indians to grow wheat, and they had holdings all the way into Canada in which they grew wheat. So they were a pretty good well off family until the depression, and then they went bankrupt and went out of business — at least I learned that much from my mother. She had an older brother and a younger brother, her older

brother also entered the military in January of 1943. He wrote extensively about his experience in the military — he was a DD on the second day — and basically what Uncle Ralph told me was that by the time we got to 1943, the United States was running out of manpower. So men that were married, and had children were entering the military. So Lewis Durning fought through the Pacific campaign and he was a medic — I did learn that, I learned a lot about him after his death — and he wound up in the liberation in the Philippines.

So as I'm growing up, we lived in La Grande, Oregon until 1945. And then we moved to The Dalles, Oregon, and my mother was a musician and she is teaching piano and dance in The Dalles, Oregon and we are living in an old grocery store.

Q: — Where is this, is this eastern Oregon? What part of Oregon is this?

CLARK: The Dalles, Oregon is on the Columbia River about ninety miles east of Portland. If you come up the Columbia River Gorge and you'd wind up at The Dalles. The closest landmark would be Mount Hood, and Hood River, so you come up from that. And then if you keep going up wherever you wind up at Pendleton, which is where my mother's family was mostly located, that's where she grew up and went to high school. So we went to The Dalles and as you know, during life, you meet people who influenced you in some way or helped you in some way. I was thinking these people were interesting and interested in me as a kid. My mother's teaching piano, she's a single mother, and she had a son with her second husband-to-be John Clark in 1946 — my younger brother Mike. So we're living in The Dalles. She's got two young boys. She's on her own and she's teaching piano and dance in an old grocery store in which the store was in the front and the quarters are in the back. I don't remember what we had, but it wasn't very much.

Next door to us were two spinsters, as they called it then, and they were teachers Miss Rasmussen and Miss Tilden. And I needed someplace to go after school. They let me come over to their house and that's how I learned how to read. Because at the age of five, they would give me the Saturday evening post, Look magazine, and Life magazine and start to teach me how to read. And that's how I began my reading habit.You know I've been a very voracious reader all my life. And that's where I learned my reading habit, because I was doing it every day after school while my mother was teaching.
So, we lived in The Dalles until I was eight. We moved in 1950. There were two things on thinking about The Dalles that struck me and stayed with me. It was in The Dalles that I saw my first African American. And I saw my first African American, not because they lived there, but because at that time, one of the premier railroads was a Union Pacific. And they had a weekly or bi weekly train that went from Portland to Chicago called the Portland Rose. And it stopped in The Dalles. When it stopped there to pick up passengers, the blacks were in the dining car and they were leaning outside. They opened the door in the dining car kitchen. And we'll come out and talk to people. And then you had the Pullman porters were all black. So as young kids, we'd go down to see the train. And we'd always be amazed by these African Americans because we've never seen this before. And they were very friendly. And they were very nice. And we would ask to go see the train. We were envious because they were going to far away places like Chicago.

The Dalles was the home of the Celilo Indian tribe. So I met Indians, indigenous Americans. Celilo Falls was at The Dalles, Oregon. I don't know how high they were. But the salmon had to jump up those falls, there's like thirty-forty feet. And Celilo Indians had the rights to fish there. And they built these platforms out on the falls. And they went out with nets, like butterfly nets, and they caught the salmon as they were jumping in the air as they were jumping up the falls. So they had a reservation close by. And the end of that story. And I can remember this as a kid, there were gigantic riots there because the U.S government was going to take the falls away from them and build a dam, which they did. The John Day Dam was built there. And so I saw as a kid you say, “why are they burning these barges up? And why are they burning these buildings down”, which happened probably when I was seven or eight years old. Because they were going to have their falls taken away from them. And then they eventually did.

So we moved in 1950. We moved to Indiana because my mother is going to marry John Clark as soon as he can get divorced from his wife who was Roman Catholic and who didn't want to get divorced. So it took a long time. So we moved to Indiana because of his move back to Indiana. He'd been in Indiana. He went west, he worked for the Civil Aeronautics Administration [CAA], which became the FAA [Federal Aviation Administration]. And he was about fifteen years older than my mother, and had been in the military during World War Two. So he was assigned to go back to South Bend, Indiana. And so we went to South Bend. And we lived there from 1950 to 1954. So we lived in two places. We lived in Mount Pleasant, and then Mount Pleasant disappeared because it was behind the South Bend airport. And when they expanded the airport, that little town was wiped out. I went to a three room school for the third grade. So you had the first and second grade in one room, you had the third and fourth in the second room, and the fifth and sixth in the third room. And my mother was on her own again. And she got a job teaching music at the Lydick Indiana elementary school — Lydick is outside of South Bend, maybe ten miles or so, between South Bend and New Carlisle. So I went to that school and my mother taught there and again I'm on my own. I think I became kind of on my own about the age of seven. I’d go back to the Dalles. I learned how to shop because about three blocks away was a small grocery store. And my mother would show me what she wanted to buy. And then she'd give me a dollar or two, and I go down and get those cans, or those packages and bring them home. That's how I learned how to be on your own, and learned how to understand money. Because I was given money I had to buy and I had to bring the money back home, there was a change. We went to Lydick Indiana, and we lived in an area off of Route Forty (40) in Lydick, and you can rent a house and you can choose whether you want indoor plumbing or an outhouse. My mother got indoor plumbing and a duplex, it was a log cabin duplex. And the other occupant next to me, next to us, was a professional poker player. And so when I came home from school, I was in the fourth and fifth and sixth grade, I would go over and hang out with him. And I will be his dummy, as he was practicing his card playing skills. And as I recall, I don't remember his name, can't remember face. In small towns at that time, and maybe even today, you had regular poker games at the Moose Lodge, at the Elks Lodge, at the American Legion, at the Veterans for Foreign Wars clubs. And so he ran through that circuit around the South Bend area, and played cards. And so I learned how to play

poker. And I learned the strategy of how to play poker when I was a kid every day, hanging out with him. And the one lesson I learned if you play poker, is always play in a time limited game. Because most amateur players will do wild things to try to recoup their losses in the last hour of the game. And that's why you pounce on them. And you know they're going to do stupid things. And you'll take advantage of that in the last hour and you win a lot of money. That was his theory. So my mother was a musician. She wanted to be a composer. She had her own composing company, Myklas Music Press later, but she started by writing a piano instruction series, with a man named David Carr Glover. He was the lead composer and it's still the only fully integrated music publishing for piano sets. It had theory books, sheet music, the whole package. My mother co-wrote that in the middle 1960s. In fact, she has a trust in which I still get, there are still royalties that come from music that she wrote in 1965, that comes into a small trust. So her sons, she was hoping would have some musical talent. And this one didn't. I was interested in sports, I tried piano, I tried guitar, I tried percussion, I tried dance, all these musical things, from the age of about three, until sixth grade, I tried those. And I had no talent. But I tried hard.

And many years later, I learned why I had no talent, because I didn't have an ear. And I learned I didn't have an ear when I went to Peace Corps training for Thailand, and I was studying Thai – and Thai is a tonal language, and I couldn't master the tones. And I still can't today after speaking the language for nearly sixty years, because I can't hear the differences. My younger brother, though, did have musical talent. He became a musician. He had a musical career that started when he was about probably four years old and until he died in 2020 from the effects of Agent Orange. He was drafted in 1967 and served a year in Vietnam. He played for various groups, but was best known for being the keyboard player for Chuck Berry when he toured the West Coast and Japan.

I had those two teachers in the Dalles that helped me learn how to read and I had this poker player, that professional poker player, and the one other thing I always remember from that is he said trust your intuition in life. A card player has to work somewhat on their – just feel the situation and they feel what's going on and they operate on that – that was a lesson from him. After the sixth grade John Clark is assigned to Indianapolis. We moved to Greencastle, Indiana. Now he had been in Greencastle long before World War Two, and that's where his wife lived. And he had a son from that marriage, Emmett. And they finally got divorced, and my mother and John Clark married in 1954. And so then we moved to Greencastle. And growing up, that was the longest stretch we stayed in one place, I think, because I went there in 1954 until I graduated from high school in 1960. And I was pretty much independent on my own. Again, because John Clark was working in Indianapolis most of the time.

When – and I didn't realize that I guess that's the way it works today – when an aircraft or something, is being developed, the FAA participates in that to be sure that it meets its specifications. So Allis Chalmers was developing the aircraft turbo engine. At their plant in Indianapolis, that's where he was assigned to participate in whatever the FAA did. So we never saw him. He was gone. He was one of those long hours everyday kinds of jobs. And my mother was teaching piano in Greencastle, and she was beginning to work on

composing music for piano teachers at that time. Once again, I'm on my own pretty much and went to seventh grade through twelfth grade. Greencastle is the home of DePauw University. I got a job there when I was fourteen as a busboy in the Student Union. I worked through high school. And I played sports as much as I could, because that was my interest. I played basketball and football and ran track but I only participated in basketball and football for my freshman year because I was too small. And I was five foot seven during high school. And then I had a growth spurt when I went to college and I grew four inches in my freshman year in college. I wish that I had that height back in high school because I was five foot seven and too short to do anything. So I graduated from high school in 1960. I was president in my senior class. I was in a lot of activities in high school, and I went to the University of Denver.

Q: Greencastle is the school system that led you towards international activities?

CLARK: Let's see. What it led me towards was participating in kind of voluntary humanitarian efforts. So once again, in Greencastle we met somebody who's interested in me as a young boy. My mother decides when we move to Greencastle that her boys are going to get religion. And so she picks the Episcopal Church. She worked twenty four seven on what she wanted to do in life as a musician, but things crept through. She was a very early women's rights person. She was president of the League of Women Voters of Indiana that one time. She was president of the National Music teachers association. And all those were trying to further women's rights and the like. So anyway, she decided we're gonna get some religion. And so we joined the Episcopal Church because she liked it because it was kind of liberal in ways. And I met the Reverend Alan Harlan. And he was very interested in helping teenagers in learning about service and learning about helping others. And so in the summer of when I was fifteen years old, I wanted to do something humanitarian. And the Episcopal Church had many summer programs, but you had to be sixteen. He found me a program with the Lutheran church which would accept at the age of 15.

So at the age of fifteen, I went by myself to New York City, and I worked for the Lutheran Church in an orphanage in Harlem. And he said “you need to learn about the fact that there are a lot of people that don't have anything, it's not because of their own doing. It's just the structure of the world that doesn't help them succeed, doesn't give them the opportunity”. So I learned about the humanitarian part from that. He was the chaplain at the Indiana State penal farm in Plainfield, Indiana. It was near to Greencastle. And he would ask me sometimes to talk to young inmates. The Indiana State penal farm was basically if you committed a crime, and you served less than one year, and most of that place was full of people eighteen, nineteen, and twenty years old at that time. They broke into a gas station, they urinated in public or something like that. And they got a three month, four month sentence. And so he was trying to get these young men to get back to school, and from time to time, he would ask me to talk to these young men about why they should go to school. And what could happen if you could get a better education. So there was less of something international, it was rather I learned from him about life, we should be thinking about others. In life we should be giving. And I was an acolyte and all

those kinds of things, and I learned that from him. And I certainly learned that when I went to New York City during that summer to work with the Lutheran church.

DePauw University every year was the home of the university admissions officers annual conference. And I was not sure what I wanted to do for school. I was in the top 10 percent of my class. And so when recruiters came, I was always one of the students I talked to universities looking to recruit. Yale University came, my family didn't have any money. So I couldn't go to Yale because they couldn't give you a full package of assistance. When I was a junior in high school, I was working at DePauw University as a busboy, and for some reason I met – I can remember his name, like yesterday – Ned Irish, he was the Director of Admissions at the University of Denver. And the University of Denver had received a grant from the Ford Foundation to help it become a national university instead of a regional university. And they were going to accomplish this by their centennial in 1964. So if you went there in 1960, you were a member of the centennial class, which I was in. They were recruiting. And they discovered that they had never had any students from the state of Indiana. So he said, "would you be interested in going to the University of Denver?" I don't have any idea. He came back the next summer. That was after my junior year. And he asked me again, he said, "we're actively looking, we don't have hardly anybody in University from East of the Mississippi. And we're gonna have the Centennial Scholars Program, and I can get you into that, and I can pay your tuition". I applied there, it was the only place I applied to go to school. I got accepted. And I went to the University of Denver in 1960. And then, when in September 1960 I arrived, they said, "Oh, we made a mistake. We oversubscribed, the Centennial Scholars Program. We can give you a half tuition scholarship right now. We'll work on getting you more if you show good grades during your first quarter." So that was a stress on my family because I had to come up with hundred fifty dollars because the tuition was three hundred dollars a quarter. Anyway, that's how I got to the University of Denver.

I was gonna mention something else though. That influenced me very greatly, John about humanity. I played little league baseball. And I wasn't too bad in a small pond. So I decided that I wanted to see how good of a baseball player I could be. So I looked around, where can I go? And I went to the big state boys baseball camp in Waco, Texas, after the eighth grade, so that would have been in 1956. And I went by myself again, I went by train from Indianapolis to Waco, Texas. I knew nothing about segregation. I knew nothing about it, but I met it as soon as I got to Missouri. And I really met it when I was in Waco, Texas. And it was something that I was astonished. I was – what was I then? Fourteen years old? – and I'd never seen something like this. I seen it in Greencastle because there were some vestiges of segregation. And Greencastle, you could see that we only had a handful of black families that lived there. But you could see it that way that they went in the back doors of stores and things like that. But I never met real, hardcore segregation until I went to Waco, Texas. And I spent this month at this baseball camp. And there were players from Texas, and players from other parts of the United States. So once again, I came back and I talked to Reverend Harlan, I said, "I saw this in Texas, and I didn't realize how severely people could be, I guess I use the word treated or something like that." So I learned from him like, this is the world that we live in, unfortunately can be cruel.. And hopefully each of us can make some kind of

contribution to improve the well being of other people. And if you can try to do that over your life, you'll have a very fulfilling life no matter what you do. So that's what I kind of learned out of all of that, that maybe influenced my thinking. I went to the University of Denver, didn't have any money, tried to scrape through, and there were nine of us from Indiana, who were accepted to the university of Denver, who became known as the Indiana boys. Most of them were from the Gary-Hammond area. One became my roommate for three and a half years, Mike Corson, who became a dentist and went to Colorado and never left. The one thing when you went to Colorado, as students, nobody wanted to leave. They went there. I mean, they said, “I've never seen such a blue sky in my life. I've never seen so much sunshine in my life. I've also never felt such cold in my life.” But it was very attractive. So I went to college, I went to University of Denver. And at that time, they had one of the best accounting schools in the United States and a business school was very highly regarded. Business School was downtown. And the liberal campus was out in South Denver. The University of Denver was founded off of the Iliff School of Theology, which was a Methodist School of Theology which had been founded before the University of Denver was, in 1864, set a nice campus out in South Denver.

And we went downtown for the business school. So we had to go down into Denver for business work and then come back out. I did that for two quarters. And Mike and I, my roommate, my buddy, we said, “let's go out and try the campus in the spring it must be great.” And we had visions of people laying around and enjoying the sunshine. And in Colorado, you could drink three point two (3.2) beer at eighteen. And it was a wonderful life. So we went out to the campus. And we said, “Wow, this is college.” Downtown is something different. It was like people wore suits, carried briefcases to class, we said “this isn't college.” So I got the highest grades in my accounting classes. And I went down and told my advisor I'm not going to be an accounting major. And so they said, “Can we give you more scholarships? What can we do, we'd like you to stay in the business?” And I said, “I don't think I'm going to do that.” So the next person I meet is a guy named Clark Crain, who's the head of the geography department at the University of Denver. I go to register for spring classes in social sciences, and I take three: one in international relations, one in geography, and one in American history. And I met two people that influenced my academic life, Alfred Crofts, and Clark Crain. And I went to the geography department, and they got a big sign up. It says, “we take field trips, and we drink beer.” And I said, wow, that's interesting. What are they doing here? All of the geography courses were field trips based around Colorado. And so I signed up and took one. And Alfred Crofts was their senior most experienced Professor of American history. And he was the child of missionaries who had gone to China. He was born in China, and did not leave until he came to the United States to go to college at Harvard. I'm fascinated by Alfred. He was on the staff of Douglas MacArthur, during World War Two, because he spoke fluent Chinese. He was an intelligence guy for MacArthur. I signed up for this, I'm going to his class. And his class is basically relating American history to his experiences in China. And I'm getting this perspective, wow, this gigantic world out there. And this fascinating experience of this person, I just can't imagine what this was. I just soaked it up from him. I became a geography major. I liked it a lot. They had a good department. And they had more faculty than students. Reason why they had more faculty than

students, this is 1961, is because the Denver Research Institute had beefed up the geography capacity. Because they were doing an extensive mapping program of Vietnam, for DOD, the Department of Defense. And so they had to add, probably twice as many faculty, they had majors, hardly anybody majored in geography, it might have been ten or so of us. And so I majored in geography, I took every single course they offered that Crofts taught, and I had a minor in history. And so that's where I really got a strong interest internationally. The Denver Research Institute is a classified project, but they talked about Vietnam, and they use Vietnam a lot and in what we were studying. So when we studied cartography, when we studied geomorphology, they were using Vietnam as a case of that. I start to learn a lot.

And it becomes very fascinating. The Indiana boys, most of them joined the Kappa Sigma Fraternity. Mike Corson and I , because we didn't want to be frat guys. So we go off on our own our sophomore year, and we rent an apartment and we live by ourselves. And we're students, when our seven buddies say, "come on over here and join the Kappa Sigma Fraternity, because we're socializing together all the time anyway. And look, you guys join, we won't make it tough, all that pledge and all that kind of stuff, we'll make it very easy for you. And we want you to join." So we did. And for some reason, as soon as I became a member, after I did my pledging, I was appointed as treasurer of the fraternity.

And this became important, John, because I had no money. And I'm trying to get through college. So as treasurer, I got half of my room and board paid by the fraternity. I had a half tuition scholarship. And then Mike and I, we got jobs working in security guards, with the campus police at night. So we worked something like two or three hours a night. And the job that we always had, was in the field house, they would resurface the basketball court before the season started, and nobody could touch that floor as it cured. So one of our assignments was for six weeks, we sat at each end of that basketball court, and no one could touch it. We could do our homework and get paid while we guarded this basketball floor.

Q: – that is was very unique –

CLARK: We slowly became members of Kappa Sigma. And he became head hasher that runs the kitchen because he didn't have any money either. And so we were able to cobble together enough then working summer jobs to get ourselves through college. And I graduated in 1964. I had my major in geography. I was Phi Beta Kappa. And I was the first student at the University of Denver, who had ever in the same year, been selected for Phi Beta Kappa. And there's another selection. There's – I don't know what you'd call it – Omicron Delta Kappa is a leadership fraternity you get selected for so I was the only, I was the first student at the University of Denver that got both of those in the same year when I was a senior.

Q: Doug, was there any, are there any international travel opportunities while you were at Denver?

CLARK: No. But I'll go back to my freshman year. My freshman year, we were assigned to a brand new dormitory – Johnson McFarland dormitory – and it was the first coed dormitory in the United States, 1960s. Now that's not coed like people think. Because what it was, there was a female wing and there was a men's wing, and then the coed part was the middle part of the dorm, which was the dining and recreational facilities and lounges. The women still had to lock themselves in there nine o'clock at night, during the week, and eleven o'clock at night on weekends. In my wing, I met two students. Manorak Luangkhot from Laos, and Abdul Gadamsi from Libya. Remember these names like yesterday. Abdul was a practicing Muslim. And he prayed every day, like you do as a Muslim. And the interesting thing was students didn't do anything except respect that. This is 1960. Maybe we're better trained. But Abdul is a Muslim. He prays, leave him alone. And he's going to pray certain times that he's going to close the door to his room. That's okay. I will meet Manorak later on when I'm working for AID in Laos. And he's the first Laos Fulbright student to come to the United States and study engineering. So he was in the engineering faculty at University of Denver, and Abdul was also an engineering student also, Fulbright sponsored. So this is the first time I had met anyone that I could speak to and talk to, who came from another country. And they're both interesting. They became buddies kind of in the dorm.

Q: Well, you were working the whole time you were at school.

CLARK: Yes

Q: You were working during the summers too?

CLARK: Yeah. . So in 1961, my family, my parents moved to West Chicago, Illinois, because he's reassigned to the Dupage County Airport, which is where the FAA operations are for O'hare and Midway airports. And so they moved to West Chicago. So in the summer, I went to West Chicago. The first summer I was there after my sophomore year, I worked at sola basic electronics in Elk Grove village, Illinois. Next to them is McDonald's University (Hamburger University). Well McDonald's had a big training center at that time, so it was called the McDonald's University and you came if you've got a franchise, you came to study there, that was next to sola basic electronics. And they were making batteries for submarines. So you were assembling these batteries. And you were on a team of like six to eight people, and you had a quota every day, and as soon as you made your quota, you could go home, be paid for the entire day. So here's these college boys, here’s these college guys, nobody wanted these college guys on their teams, because we slowed things down. I got assigned to this team, it was run by a black guy, I remember his name was Green. And he said, “I always respect you college guys, you're gonna go far in life. We're stuck down putting this crap together here called batteries for submarines. I don't have any office, I'll be doing these kinds of jobs the rest of my life. I'll help you out here. So you can exist during the summer. Just do the following things and do it this way, and you'll be fine.” And he said “don't go out to lunch, because all those guys do is smoke dope out there at lunch. Don't go in the parking lot they’re smoking, marijuana, smoking all kinds of stuff. Don't go out there, stay in or eat lunch with us. Because if you go out there, they're gonna suck you into that dope business.” So smart

advice. So I worked there, and we work six days a week. And we got like two dollars an hour or something like that, I don't remember what it was, but I could make enough money to say that it could substantially contribute to what I had to pay for half tuition and books and spending money. Because being in Colorado, we did want to ski.. So you went to Winter Park and you could go and you could ski for a day for about ten bucks: rent skis, rent boots, lift ticket, pay somebody or contribute to gas for somebody driving their car up there. And, so we needed some spending money also.

The second year, I got a job in West Chicago at the General Mills plant. And it was a plant that did package frosting, package noodles and Cheerios, and it was mostly populated by Korean war vets. And here's where you met people who were very alienated from their jobs. It was an assembly line job. And those things were coming on the assembly line, one box a second or something like that. And there was, you had to drop a packet into every noodle box, that was the sauce or something like that. But it was very automated. And you were tied to the assembly line. And I don't think it was unionized. But the workers were very alienated, the foremen that worked for General Mills, all wore white uniforms and white hats, and they were around checking to be sure that you didn't take more than your lunchtime, that you really didn't need to go to the bathroom to take a bathroom break, that you weren’t going to go and take a smoke break, and those kinds of things. And it was really a bad work atmosphere, and people didn't want to come to work. And so the plant worked twenty-four hours a day, and if someone didn't come to work, two people worked twelve hours. So they always said, “Hey, you college boys, you'd like to make money, right? We're gonna put you first on the list and work those split shifts. So you could come in and work a night shift and you come in at midnight work till noon, and you pick up half of somebody's shift”, and that was okay, because you made overtime money. But it was the first time I saw my life, this conflict between labor management, and these guys – each assembly line kind of had a crew chief that ran the assembly and what you had was a gigantic package machine. It was making the packet; it was making the box and putting the wax paper inside as it came down the line and then got filled and was off to putting it into a box that you shipped off to where it was going to go and be sold. So the crew chief would say, “Okay, guys, it's looking like it's time for a paper jam. I'm tired of those guys being on my ass so let’s have a paper jam.” So you put a stick in the thing or grab a piece of paper and stuff it in a box and you've caused a gigantic paper jam. And then when a big yellow – a big red light starts to flash – that means there's a paper jam. And now everybody’s got to take a break while they get to bring in the guys that do the repair on the paper jam and the machine on this assembly line. I had never seen this because every place I'd work people were kind of working together. There wasn't any alienation or negative thought. I met that for the first time. That was a crummy job that nobody wanted. And one of the supervisors said, “you college boys, you do any kind of work, right?” And there were four or five of us. And it was cleaning up all of the paper and torn boxes thrown off the assembly line. So the plant was littered with product, with paper type stuff on the floor. So there was a crew that was sweeping it up and we took it back to a furnace and we burned it, and that furnace room was hotter than hell. And you had these big carts, you went around and filled them up with all this debris, and you went in and burned it. And nobody wanted that job. Now we loved the job because it

took us off the assembly line. So we did that. So I did that one summer. So those are my summer jobs.

Q: Vietnam was starting in that year, as you were going through college, was there pressure to get involved with the war?

CLARK: University of Denver, at this time, the state of Colorado is very conservative, and the University of Denver is very conservative. In 1963, when you're starting to warm up the presidential campaign, Barry Goldwater came to the University of Denver. His reception in the city of Denver was just enormous, as the leader of the Republican Party in the Senate, but also as a conservative. I would say there wasn't too much about Vietnam when I graduated, but what there was, was a lot of interest in the military. Now, I know the way to try to go to college was – there was a program called the Marine Platoon Leader Corps – and you could go to college and join that as a freshman, and you will go to training every summer after sophomore and junior year, and after you graduated, you were commissioned as a lieutenant in the Marine Corps. So you got like fifty or seventy dollars – I don't know what it was – some enormous amount of money to us, like fifty dollars a month or something like that, and then you got paid when you went to training in the summer. I applied for that and I got turned down because I had bad eyes. And that was back in a time when you could be very selective about who you took in. As compared to when my younger brother was drafted in 1967. He said "they looked in one ear, they couldn't see it either side so I was okay".

Q: You also have bad ears. So you have bad ears and bad eyes.

CLARK: I had bad eyes. And so I couldn't get into the platoon, but a lot of people did. And a lot of people when they were graduating were looking to join and were actively being recruited into a lot of the officer training programs, particularly the Navy did a lot of recruiting at the DU, for some reason. So there has not been much about that really. There were no protests. There was not too much going on. There was not too much talked about. I knew about Vietnam from the geography department. But I didn't really know what was going on in Vietnam, too much.

Q: No threat of being drafted after college?

CLARK: No, there was no, at that time in 1964, there wasn't when I was graduating, no. Nobody was worrying about being drafted. . There was, and I was just thinking '63, let's see in '61 is when Kennedy is announcing the Peace Corps, and that was interesting to a lot of students. That's interesting. When he was assassinated in 1963, there was a very strong interest in the Peace Corps, and that's what happened to me. I done these things, and I had this orientation of, as I've described, of helping people, humanitarian, and when Kennedy was assassinated, I said, I think I'm gonna see if I can join the Peace Corps, I think I want to respond to what he asked us to do for our country. So I did. And at that time, you had to take a Peace Corps test. And in the part of the test, you took the modern language aptitude tests. So there are two parts, there's kind of a knowledge part, and then there was the MLAT. And so I took both of those. And then they asked you what your

choices were, and I can always remember my first choice was Iran, my second choice was Pakistan, and my third choice was Afghanistan. And I just learned about these countries from studying geography. I said "these are fascinating countries". And I've been kind of interested in the Muslim and Asian areas of the world from knowing Abdul and Manorak..

And I was called up in the spring of 1964. I'm a senior, and offered Thailand, and so I accepted. I said, "Okay, what difference does it make? I'll go to Thailand." And I graduated from college on June 5. And I showed up in Hilo, Hawaii on June 20 to start training for Thailand.

Q: Hilo, Hawaii, my wife trained in Hilo.

CLARK: Yeah, I think that training center opened up in 1963. We went in 1964. It was run by the East West Center. So we learned when we got there, that one of the selection criteria for Thailand was having a high MLAT score. And so I said, "Yeah, but the MLAT score was on paper". They didn't pick people who necessarily had the right ear to hear the tones of Thai. Some of us really struggled when we were studying Thai. John, going up until I go to the Peace Corps, where I've had these things that are opening my eyes to the rest of the world. But behind that even in fraternities at that time, and they're still today, we're trying to show their worth and we're doing kind of good, we're participating in the community, doing things in the community trying to help out people, food drives, helping people get turkeys at Thanksgiving from I think King Soopers was the big supermarket there or something like that. And fraternities would work with them to distribute turkeys to families that didn't have the prospect of having a turkey for Thanksgiving. So we kind of learned giving to the community was a big deal for the fraternities. I was on the Interfraternity Council and I always remember that we were balancing because we know the image of all those frat guys and all they do is drink beer and cause trouble as to having a positive image of making a contribution to the community. I thought that might be more of the reason for being selected to join Peace Corps - doing good things to help others.

Q: So you went to Hilo for training?

CLARK: Yes

Q: How does it go?

CLARK: We're in Hilo, in June of 1964. We have about a hundred and twenty people in our group that are training. We learned later, and this is an interesting story, we learned later that there's only sixty people who are going to go to Thailand. At that time, the Peace Corps had kind of a rule of thumb that we need to invite about double the number of people that are going to go because they're going to quit or we're going to deselect them. So the Peace Corps, from my perspective, was trying to learn how to do this. How to teach language, how to prepare you to effectively go to a country and do something. I was in group nine, the ninth group, the Peace Corps, the first group went into Thailand in

1962. So the first groups group one and group two are just finishing in 1964. And each one of those groups kind of had a different way in which they taught Thai. My group decided not to concentrate on the sounds and tones, concentrate on grammar, structure, vocabulary and learning how to read, that's what we concentrated on. The groups after us throughout the matter said, let's concentrate on the tones, so you can speak more perfect Thai. The curriculum was massive in which they were trying to teach us about – we studied Thai six hours a day. We then had this big load of everything else we were studying.

I met two good friends that have been friends for life, Judy Haskell and Cedric Sampson and a third person, Chuck Frederickson and Cedric and I, everybody was smoking at that time. So we're having a smoke break. And we're talking about this. And we said, “You know what this is? This is like a pledge hazing. There's no way we can do all the stuff they're asking us to do. So we got to figure out what is most important for us to get selected to go to Thailand. And that we're going to have to work as a little group to protect ourselves. And we'll try to do that.” And we stumbled into something, because we had peer ratings. I don’t know if you (John) did this in your peace corps or not. We did peer ratings, who would you like to be with? Who wouldn’t you like to be with? Who's good, who's bad? We were able to always have three or four of us supporting the other and the peer rating. So we came out pretty well in that. But we struggled, we struggled badly in trying to master all these things. So Cedric and I are sitting around and we're going to have the Fourth of July break . The Fourth of July, they're going to organize a three day trip, to take a break to go to Kona, Hawaii, which is on the other side of the big island. And Cedric and I say, “You know what? We're not gonna go. We're gonna stay in Hilo and study Thai.” Because not all of the Thai instructors are going. So let's go and ask one of the Thai instructors, if we can work with them on this three day break, to study Thai, because we weren't doing too good. And Cedric said, if that doesn't show, we're committed to this thing. I don't know what we're going to do. So we did that. And at the halfway point, they’ve deselected people, people quit like there was a guy who said, “Wow, you mean you gotta eat rice over there? I hate rice. Unless I can have butter on it.” No, you're out. Then there were two people who quit because they learned that Barry Goldwater was the candidate. They said “Barry Goldwater is going to blow the world up. I'm going back to work for Johnson.” So they quit, went back to work on political campaigns. But they started to deselect people. We had a two week transition training in Waipio Valley, which is in northeastern Hawaii. And we went down – Waipio Valley had been wiped out by a tsunami in the 1940s. There was nobody who lived there and they took it over, it was an unnatural state pretty much. You went down there, they had built a Borneo log house and built Filipino farm houses, they built a Thai one, and you went down there and you're gonna learn how to live as a peasant.

Q: I've been there. When my wife went, we went to Hawaii, and she trained partly in that area too, in Malaysia.

CLARK: We went to Waipio Valley and we were there for two weeks. The first weekend, they brought you back up, they gave you five dollars and they dropped you off in a town and said. “ See how you can exist over the weekend.” So Cedric and I went to this town,

“what are we going to do?” Well, let's go get something to eat first. Because we've been eating cold rice and cold fish down there for a week. So we did that. And people found out okay, they joined weddings, we found some people that were moving, we said “you need some help to unload your truck. And so we helped people load up their truck when they were moving and they let us sleep in that house at night and brought us breakfast and bought us a burger and so then we moved back the next day but it was obvious you were on your own. We learned how to kill chickens, kill pigs, all kinds of things that were useless because we never did those when we went to Thailand. But anyway they thought we should learn everything. We learned how to deliver a baby, in the event that that might happen. And so we've learned something I carry through the rest of my life.

If you are in a circumstance where you need something absolutely sterile and clean, it's the inside pages of a newspaper. Because a human hand doesn't touch it. So they said, “get a newspaper, get this and that”, and they said “oh, my God”. So we came back up to Waipio Valley. And now we have a crisis in the Peace Corps training. The Gulf of Tonkin incident has happened. And we're going to Thailand. Thailand at that time had a big Vietnamese population that had come into Northeastern Thailand, during the fighting against the French up until 1954. And the Thai government every other day had been in the process of expatriating all those people back to North Vietnam. So the Red Cross had these regular ships that were taken back to Vietnam. They get off the ship, then they start walking back to Thailand again, it was like a circle, and they stopped the repatriation process. There was a moment there when they said, “We don't know if you're going to get to go to Thailand or not, because of what's happened in the Gulf of Tonkin, and what's happened in Vietnam”. And then they said, “No, you can go, we talked to the Thai government, it's fine to go”. And so we finished our training. The problem, though, was that on the last day of training, we had eighty six volunteers who had finished training. And there was only going to be – we didn't know that – that there was only room for sixty. And so on our last day, we're in that old Hilo hospital up there, we go to our mailboxes – everybody has a mailbox – and we get an envelope. And in the envelope is a room number. And they said, “there are two rooms, go to your room, and once you're in the room, you'll be told what is happening to the people in that room.” So we've watched the rooms, and noticed one room has more people than the other. So we're figuring something’s not good. So the room I went into, they said, “Congratulations, Your Peace Corps volunteers are gonna swear you in.” The other room, they said “you didn't make it, you're deselected and you have to leave the island of Hawaii within twenty-four hours.” The Thai language instructors were so shocked that in Thailand, when you finish the training, you get to move to the next step. We've never heard of this before. We've never seen this before. And so the first thing that happened is one of the people who was a good friend of mine later in life, said if we're not a Peace Corps volunteer, and we just finished our training, you can't tell us to leave the state of Hawaii, it’s the United States and your ticket to go home. So give us our tickets and leave us alone, and the Peace Corps kind of had to back off on that. So there was chaos that weekend, in Hilo, because we were supposed to leave to go to Honolulu, take five or six days off, and buy our stuff to go to Thailand. But we had to delay because we had this chaos there. And to the credit of the Thai language instructors, there were five. They decided, – I don't know who they talked to, we don't know what they did – but they came back and said, “any person of the

twenty-six who wants to go to Thailand. We will get you a job. And we will get you a work visa. You have to get yourself to Thailand. Well if you can get there, we'll help you in those ways." Out of twenty-six people, sixteen went on their own. Of the sixteen they went on their own, two had international careers Bob Griffin and Matt Franjolal. And Bob Griffin will come up later when we talk about AID and my friend Matt will also. So we went to Honolulu. And my roommate Roger Coulombe in training was the golden boy of training. And he didn't want to go. He started to have doubts. Roger was a small college all American basketball player, winning concert pianist and was mayor of his hometown at the age of twenty-four. And he was older than us because he was twenty-six or something like that. And Roger didn't want to go. So the Peace Corps says "Roger, you have to go. At least go to Tokyo. Think about it till we get to Tokyo." We went to Honolulu and we flew to Tokyo. We stopped and we spent all night in Tokyo. Said "I quit." He said, "Roger, we're going to Hong Kong next, stay until Hong Kong. We're gonna stay all night in Hong Kong. Think about it some more." So we went to Hong Kong and stayed there for one day. And then we arrived in Bangkok. And when we arrived in Bangkok, it was September of 1964. And it was hot, and it was muggy. And it was the rainy season, and as soon as everybody stepped off the plane, there was a smell, they never forgot. It was a smell they had never, ever sensed in their life. This is Asia. This is real Asia. This wasn't the Ginza in Tokyo. It wasn't the downtown of Hong Kong, this was real Asia, where we were going to be. Roger said, "I can't get off the airplane." And they said, "Roger, you got to because it's not going anyplace." So anyway, they said, "Where do you want to go?" He said, "university." Okay, you go to Chiang Mai University. Anyway, he quit two weeks later. So our group was to be comprised of teachers of English as a foreign language, physical education, and vocational education, we had three parts of our group. And they didn't have enough vocational, they had too many physical education. And some of the people got deselected just because they had too many PE people than the positions they had in Thailand.

Our group had reunions every two or three years up until the pandemic, I'll say that, as Judy Haskell, and she married Cedric Sampson later, they became lifelong friends. Cedric died twenty years ago from Agent Orange, he was drafted and went to Vietnam after the Peace Corps. As she called it, that was the great adventure.

And I have to say, this was a binding lifetime experience. The people in our group, you can see somebody, and you haven't seen him for thirty years, and you can just start a conversation. It's just like it was yesterday, the way in which you can relate because we all went through this very life changing experience at the same time. And we arrive in Thailand, and we get our assignments. And it's clear that this is when the insurgency in Thailand, in northeastern Thailand, is really starting to heat up. Many of us are assigned to northeastern Thailand, the district towns in northeastern Thailand. AID is there with a massive presence, probably the AID mission has six hundred people in it. They have their anti insurgency effort, it's called the Accelerated Rural Development Program. Later years laters found out that was probably pretty effective. That was basically roads, schools, clinics, hospitals, agricultural extension, and things like that in northeastern Thailand. But many of us were assigned in northeastern Thailand to small district towns. And that's where I was assigned. We had a big ceremony, the Thai government welcomed

us, we went to a big auditorium, and they welcomed each person by name, and they gave you your assignment, and we did orientation and things like that with the Peace Corps. And then we went off to our assignments. So we learned in twelve weeks how to teach English as a foreign language, and that's what I was. And I went to a district town Mukdahan which is on the Laos border across from Savannakhet, Laos. That was in the province of Nakorn Panom and I was the first Peace Corps volunteer that had gone there. The Thai had seen the French, obviously, because they were on the border with Laos – so a foreigner, a "Farang" is what it's called in Thai, a foreigner was not strange, really, because they've seen the French and the French population was still pretty big in Laos. So you can go to Savannakhet, they had French restaurants and they still had French businessmen. But more important is that the Lao educational system was totally staffed by French technical assistance volunteers and advisors. To have somebody in your town was unique. I taught in a secondary school, it had the first three levels of five, so he went three years out and you had to go to a provincial Capitol to get the last two years of time. I was there. I lived with a family. They had two small kids. I taught English at nighttime, everybody wanted to teach, they wanted to learn rather. And I taught mostly government officials at nighttime. I was invited to join a tennis club to play tennis every day. And Nakonr Panom, which was a hundred kilometers away, which was a provincial capital, when we arrived, the civilian airport had been wiped out from a big rainstorm. So Thai Airways had to land at the Nakorn Panom Thai airbase, which was one of the bases that the United States was building to support the Vietnam War. So we landed there, and w the base about four hundred people there maybe, or something like that. It only opened like eight months before us. So the Thai came and met us. The commander, Major Diamond, as I remember, offered everybody some ice cream. The Thais were amazed that these Americans had "where'd they get this ice cream from anyway." And so then we went down, and I started teaching. And that's where I learned again, opportunity, and the disadvantages poor people have in the world for opportunity. So the first thing I'm asked to do is proctor English exams for the end of the semester. And I do, and the first thing I see is that everybody's using their book to help them take the exam. So I asked Mrs. Rauan, who I live with, who was the head of the English department, "why were they allowed to do this?" And she said, "we're not good teachers. And we can't get the curriculum taught, as we're supposed to during the semester. So there are parts of the curriculum we have not taught them. So when they take the test, we let them use the book for that part we haven't taught." Then I learned a little later I said, "How many students," this is the first part of secondary school , the first three years. And then four or five and six you go up to the provincial capital. So I said "how many students from here go on?" And she said, "None. Because they can't pass the exams." So basically, their education stopped at the ninth grade, essentially. And I said, "Wow." And I couldn't believe that. There's no way they could go to a college, there was no way they could do anything.

In the spring break, which is during the March/April period of time in Thailand, that's when their summer is. Peace Corps volunteers will have to do special projects. I was asked, "Would you like to go with the Kasetsart University, which was the Agricultural University, because the head of the university has asked the Peace Corps to do a crash English teaching program." They want us to take the same technique you use to study Thai, and teach English in the same way and they're going to pick the ten best students

from each class, who have the opportunity, maybe, to go abroad and get postgraduate degrees. There were six of us who went to Kasetsart and we had forty students, and we taught six hours a day, and the same rule we had in training, you stopped speaking Thai after breakfast, and you start speaking it after dinner and all during that day, you're speaking English. I played basketball in some way, shape, or form all my life up until that point. We had a Peace Corps basketball team. And I was playing during that summer vacation for this basketball team. And we're playing the Thai Olympic team. And this is where I met Bob Dakan, a good friend in the Foreign Service, because on the day that we played that game, all of the Peace Corps had been evacuated from Indonesia, and they came to Thailand. And so there were a couple of raigers available to help us play that game. And Bob Dakan was one of them. And they had three groups, in Indonesia groups, one, two, and three. So we played that game and in that game, I injured my knee. And I basically tore the meniscus in my knee but they didn't know that. So I couldn't walk. And I couldn't do anything. So I wound up being in the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital, and the Peace Corps said that you have a knee injury and you're going to have to have surgery. Interestingly enough, they didn't send me somewhere else. They didn't say "your Peace Corps service is over". They said, "we're going to do the surgery" so in fact there was no arthroscopic surgery. So I had to have my knee opened up. The end of the story is that I had to do therapy for four months, and I couldn't go back to Mukdahan. So they said, "there's a Teacher Training College, in which the Ministry of Education wants to volunteer there now to come and work on curriculum, you can go and teach part time while you're doing your therapy." So I did. And when I finished the therapy in August, or so, they said, "We will assign you full time if you would like", I said, "Why? My Peace Corps experience has been diminished by this medical time off. Could I extend it so I could teach two full years – academic years – at Chandrakasem Teacher Training College" they said "that's fine." So I extended a year beyond the rest of my group until March of 1967. And when I went out, I left Mukdahan. I wound up outside of Bangkok – now it's inside in Bangkok – at this teacher training college, Chandrakasem Teacher Training College. And I now we're teaching teachers, who were going to teach the same level I would teach in secondary school. So these are teachers who are going to teach at the lower side of the secondary school system.

I also taught part time at the Buddhist Institute that trained monks to go overseas to staff Thai temples. This was located at a large temple in Bangkok. The abbot of that temple was Australian - Bhikkhu Khantipalo. He was a Buddhist scholar and had asked for Peace Corps help to teach English. And from that year of teaching I learned a lot about Buddhism. At Chandrakasem there was strong interest in the American Field Service program. One student had been selected and gone to the U.S. the year before I was assigned there.

Q: American Field Service.

CLARK: – Yeah, and they had about two hundred fifty students per year that could go to the United States. So the Peace Corps volunteers thought, "hey, we don't know what we're doing here. We can't see something we can get our hands on, but AFS students – if we could get an AFS student to the United States – that would be a real accomplishment.

At Chandrakasem, the head of the English department, Acharn Boonpriab was very much in favor of trying to get students in the AFS program. The way it worked in Thailand is that they had four big universities, and you took a national university exam, if you didn't pass it, then you took an exam to the teacher training college, and if you didn't take that, you went to vocational school, so the teacher training colleges were loaded up with people who didn't get in the university, and mostly came from provinces in the country where they didn't get a very good secondary education, and so that was our story there. That student body was about 90 percent women, and about 10 percent of men. I lived in the dorm there, I was kind of the dorm assistant for the men, and I lived on the campus there. And so I was asked “look at these students, and tell me if you think there's anybody who stands out that we might be able to propose for AFS?” And I said, “there's a student named Somkiat Onwimn and he is just so different from the rest of the students. He is so curious. He doesn't respond to rote learning. He's wanting to know.” And the end of that story, John, is that he became an AFS student, and we mentored him, we tutored him. He went to Kansas City, Kansas. He went to high school there for one year. He moved into a family that ran a billboard business, came back to Thailand and got a scholarship at the University of New Delhi and a master's degree there. Then there's a special fund that comes somehow from the Boxer’s Rebellion that funds Asians to study for PHDs at Ivy League universities. He was selected to go to the University of Pennsylvania to get a PhD in Political Science. When he went to the United States under the AFS program, I gave him a dictionary and I ascribe to my friend, “Somkiat, I hope you this and that” and he carried that dictionary with him all through his studies. And then when he was in New Delhi, he gave that away to a Thai student who was there. When he came to the United States – And this was opening up the world again. He was fascinated by U.S. news, as opposed to readers of news, under dictatorship, as a government elected in Thailand was a military government, a reader of the news sitting before our camera. And he decided that he was going to go back to Thailand. And he was going to emulate Walter Cronkite. And that he was going to start, and he learned about radio news, and he was going to start radio news on the army radio system. And he did those things, he became very famous in Thailand as a newscaster, as a documentary journalist, and as a politician. He ran for the Senate and was a senator in Thailand. And he told me that on one of his campaign stances, this young woman came up and said, “this is your dictionary. My mother gave it to me because she was a student after you in New Delhi. Who should I give this to next?”

Q: Oh, my goodness. Doug, when you were in the Peace Corps, you said you were there for three years? Do you love to do a lot of international travel?

CLARK: We got a per diem system. And we had a gigantic amount of days, we could travel. And we got like five or six or seven dollars a day to do that. So the first trip, we took, a group of us, we went to Malaysia – went to Penang, Malaysia. We went down through southern Thailand and in Penang, Malaysia, we took a third class train ride from Bangkok to Penang. And that was an interesting trip because southern Thailand is so different from the rest of Thailand, because it's very much like Malaysia with rubber, tin. Three of us, these two, they're friends of mine, I mentioned Judy Haskell and Cedric Samson. We also went to Hong Kong. That was back in the time when everybody kind of liked the Peace Corps. I don't know if you remember all the offers you got? You can get

this and that. Thai Airways at that time provided us a steep discount on our trip to Hong Kong because we were Peace Corps Volunteers.

One of my interesting stories of when I was in Mukdahan, we had this thing where Spiegel, the catalog company would send you catalogs. I said, “could you send me fifty catalogs?” And all of a sudden here comes a guy from the post office. “Acharn”, which is teacher. “Come over to the post office. You got these gigantic packages over there, and the customs people were wondering what it is. So could you come over and cut it open?” And I did. It was fifty catalogs. And the women loved it. All the women teachers in town just loved those catalogs, and then I got newspaper subscriptions for free. I went to Laos in my second month in Thailand illegally. There was a volunteer, Penny Khounta, That's her Lao name, as she went to Laos after the Peace Corps married a Lao and has lived there since. She was in Group 5 and had been in Nakorn Panom for over a year before I arrived. And she said she came down to see me when I was there for about two weeks and she said “come into Nakorn Panom. We always go into the airbase and get a hamburger.” But I always go with the Thakhek which is a town across the river. And there were about four or five, eight people there. But there was a hospital that was run by the British assistance program that had a British doctor and two nurses there. So she said, “let's go over to Thakhek. You're gonna like it, we're gonna go get some good French food.” And the way the system worked at that time, was you took your passport, and you showed it to the Thai customs. And they said, “Okay, I got your passport. And I see – we didn't have a visa. John, what we had in our passports was handwritten and it said in Thai “this person is a Peace Corps volunteer and is allowed to stay in Thailand until the completion of their service.” There was no standard visa. It was written in a statement, hand written. So somebody will say “you can stay there forever, I’m still a Peace Corps volunteer.” But anyway, you show your passport to the Thai immigration on the river. There's a Mekong river, and you went to Laos. And you showed it to them and they put it in a drawer and kept it. Now who would do that today? They just kept it in a drawer and at this rickety rack shack on the river where the Lao Customs work. So then we went into town. And that was the first time that I had been to Laos.

So the doctor there, a good friend of this Penny, said “we're gonna go and take a field trip.” And so a fellow volunteer named from my group who worked in That Phanom - a district in the same province and close to where I was went with us also. There were three of us that went with a doctor and his wife, and we're going to go on a picnic, and we're going to go on a field trip.” I didn't realize the field trip was one look at one of the karst, underground rivers, because that area of Laos, as all of these underground in facts it's a big national park that attracts visitors from all over the world, but it's a series of underground rivers through this karst limestone topography. He said “we're going to go on look at this big one that we want to see more of”. The end of the story, we got to this thing, and it got dark, and didn't have flashlights and candles. What the hell are we doing here anyway? Because after we had a nice lunch, now we're looking at this, and we've come out, and it's nighttime. And he's got a Land Rover that's marked with big red crosses on it. And how do we know that we're close to where this war is going on in Laos, the Pathet Lao, the communist forces actually control that area. So we come back up to the checkpoint, and they look at the car and they wave on. And Harvey who's with

me said, “Oh, Who were those people.” He said, “Those are the Pathet Lao, but nevermind because when they get sick, we treat them.” So they let us come and go as we want to. So we got back to Thakhek but we couldn't get back across the river that night. So there was no hotel. So the only thing you can do when you're staying in a place like that in Laos is temporary. So the doctor said, “Well, you guys can sleep on the floor of my house. But really I got two infants, I don't really – that's not too good. Here's what we'll do. If you go down to the pool hall, they put plywood sheets on top of the pool tables, they made beds, it only costs fifty cents to do that. So we did that. And then we went back the next day.

When I was in Mukdahan we went back and forth to Savannakhet all the time, that same system, show your passport and they hold the passport. And then when I later worked for AID, I went to the first place I was assigned to was Thakhek because I knew the place and we go back and forth to the US Nakhon Phanom air base and to show you that how the war exploded, when I went there in September of 1964, that airbase had opened up and had four hundred Air Force there. Three years later, or less in 1967. I show up in Thakhek. I go to the airbase and there's between 10,000 to 15,000 U.S Air Force there. It's a gigantic airbase. I had one incident when I was in Mukdahan, I lost the vision in one eye, it went out. I was just a big black blur. And so I sent a telegram to the Peace Corps doctor and said, “This is what's happening and what should I do?” He said “go to the airbase, and we're sending a telegram to let you see the medical unit or the medical people at the airbase to see what's wrong with your eye.” And so I got up to the airbase. This is like November, December, something 1964. I got to the airbase, and they let me in and then all of a sudden said you can't go into the clinic. What happened is that it was early in the Vietnam War two. Two Navy aircraft had been shot down in eastern Laos and they rescued the pilots who were very seriously injured, and they've taken the hospital and turned it over to try to take care of these pilots. They said “you never saw this. It didn't happen. But we're gonna get you down to Bangkok because we don't think we can do anything for you here.” So I did. And I got down to Bangkok and had a blood clot in one of the vessels going into my eye. They gave me something to dissolve the blood clot and my vision came back.

Q: As a Peace Corps volunteer did you meet any USAID officers?

CLARK: We were banned from being associated with the USAID. We were banned from being involved with the U.S military, we were banned from taking a ride from anybody. So we didn't interact with them at all, but I did take a ride. And here's how I met Don Mickelwait, the founder of DAI. Don Mickelwait was an advisor to the Thai border patrol. He was working on a contract with the Thai border patrol, which was up in that area. And I was going from Nakorn Panom back to Mukdahan. And you went on a bus which was actually a truck converted to have seats in the back. It was called a bus and it had a door and stuff like that. But that hundred ten kilometers took three to four hours to navigate because the road was so bad. I was standing there waiting for the bus. And there's this guy driving up in a jeep that’s not marked and it was Don Mickelwait. And he said, “Who are you?” I told him who I was and he said, “Okay, I'm going that way I can give you a ride” and I said, “Okay.” Who he was, I don't know. But this is the guy who

found the DAI. But we were not allowed. We were not supposed to associate with them. We weren't supposed to use a vehicle. You could have a bicycle. We couldn't have a motorcycle. We were not supposed to ride a motorcycle. We were not supposed to be in a vehicle except a commercial bus. And we could ride a bicycle that they gave us, they gave everybody a brand new bicycle.

Q:You weren't invited to any embassy? Fourth of July party or Christmas party or anything like that?

CLARK: Not that I remember. Even when I lived in Bangkok because I was in Bangkok between 1965 and 1967. I don't recall ever being invited to anything with the embassy, no. We were on our own, separate.

Q: Alright, as you came to the end of your Peace Corps tour, what were your options?

CLARK: So I met one of the volunteers that came from Indonesia, when the Peace Corps came from Indonesia 1965. They were offered to stay in Thailand, complete their tour early or go to Morocco. The ones who stayed in Thailand joined my group, because the dates of their completion, their service are about the same as ours. So group three has started training in Hilo just as we're finishing.

We had six people from that group join our group nine. And one of them was a guy named Wayne Johnson. And Wayne Johnson, all of the volunteers for Indonesia were coaches. Because the Peace Corps in Indonesia, they wanted people to help coach national teams, because at that time, there were the GANEFO games. That was the alternative to the Olympics. And they had the GANEFO games in Indonesia, like in 1965 or 1966, or something like that. In Thailand, in 1966. They were hosting the Asian Games for the first time. So they were interested in coaches. And Wayne Johnson was a track coach. And he became a very good friend. And for the last six months, I was in town and I've been worn out by being in that dorm because every two minutes someone was knocking on my door “Acharn Acharn, could you explain this? Can you explain that”. So you couldn't sleep, you couldn't have any private time at all. I asked “can I live with Wayne Johnson for my last five months in Thailand”, for the last six months or so. So I did.
Wayne completed in December, I completed in March. And he got a job teaching at the International School of Bangkok. And so he said, “why don't we stay in Thailand and apply for a job there?” So I did. But I also applied – the most popular thing coming out of the Peace Corps in Thailand at that time was to go to the East West Center at the University of Hawaii. It had the best package in the world. You got full tuition paid, you got a housing allowance, you got a living allowance, and you got all of your research costs for your PhD paid to go back into Asia to do your research. I always said well, that's a good deal. And so I applied to the East West Center. And that was pending. And I decided maybe we were staying. And in September of 1966, there was the biggest flood ever in the history of Mae Kong. And it flooded the capital. Bob Griffin, who I'd mentioned had stayed in Thailand, he came back and he taught at Thammasat University.

And then he got a PSC job working for the AID mission to set up an entity called the Agriculture Development Organization, which was how AID was going to help Laos become self-sufficient in rice production. The Agriculture Development Organization was designed by the International Rice Research Institute, and had been used in Taiwan after World War Two, and had been used in Latin America and was called a servisio. These were basically bypass units. So the Agriculture Development Organization was chartered by the Prime Minister Vorster, and basically said, “the purpose is to make the country self-sufficient in rice. The purpose is to help Lao farmers produce other products, and it will operate in a businesslike manner”. It was co managed, so it had two co-managers Lao and America from the top down through the local level. So Bob Griffin came during the flood. And he came to Wayne and said, “you guys want to come to work for us?”, because we've got these provincial ADO representatives, they work with a provincial agriculture chief. And the way we started this organization off was the U.S. international voluntary service volunteers, IVS volunteers, and they had a big contract with the AID mission to provide volunteers to work in rural development and agriculture. So they did that. And after about a year, or maybe less, the, I guess, volunteers revolted. They said, “we weren't hired to look after AID stuff. To look after their cash, their fertilizer, to hire people, to do all these kinds of things. We were hired, we came here to be volunteers to work at the village level. And we're not doing that. So we quit.” AID went off to start hiring PSCs to replace them.

So Bob Griffin said, “You guys want to come to Laos. It's interesting. This is an interesting venture. And you can make good money.” We're, as a volunteer, we're getting eighty dollars a month, and we'd go out and with the differential make, like 9,000 dollars a year. That was a big deal. We could have a refrigerator, we could have an air conditioner, we could have screens on our Windows, all kinds of amenities. So we thought about that. And we said, “Ah nah” and Bob said “come on, I need help to get people up here.” I heard one Peace Corps volunteer to come out in the fall. I was looking around for a job. So when I said, “Okay, let's go and try it for a year. Let's just go and see what it's like.” But a lot was going on up there. Now we're going to be comprehensive because there was a volunteer named Don Schuster, who was every new volunteer who came into town and you had kind of a mentor, and Don Schuster was two groups before mine, and he was in the next district town. And acted as my mentor in 1964. And he'd gone to Laos, and he moved to work in northern Laos. He was killed in February 1967, by the North Vietnamese, he got caught in an attack.
So he said, “Wait a minute, you're not working in Northern Laos. You're working in the Mekong valley. Don't worry, it's safe. You're not working up in Northern Laos, where–The cities we work in are Savannakhet, Thakhek Luang Prakong and Pakse, Those are all safe areas of Laos right now.” So we decided to try it for a year.

So we had one interview with the USAID liaison guy in Bangkok. And we got to be approved by the USAID field rep, where I was going to go, in Thakhek. And his name is Tom Ward. But we went to Laos. And the day I signed my contract in Laos, I got a telegram for the East West Center, and I was accepted. And so I said, “Okay, I just signed an agreement with these people. I'm not going to break that agreement. So I went back to the East West Center and said, “I just signed this agreement to work in Laos for one year.

Is it possible to delay coming to this?" "No problem come next year." "Okay, I'll come next year." So that's how we got to Laos and I was assigned to be the ADO provincial representative and Thakhek in Khammouane Province, and that's where I went.. So the options were, I was not threatened with draft, but many of the men in our group. My group finished in May, in April 1966. And I was approved to go March of 1967. My draft board gave a deferment. So I had a deferment around until I think it was like June of 1967. But the ones that were completing in 1966, I would say a substantial number of them got letters from our draft board that just said, "When you arrive back in the United States, you can be expected to be drafted within ninety days." So people who've got themselves into graduate school, they got married, they did all kinds of things. And the only person from a group that went to Vietnam was Sampson, he was going to be drafted. And they said, "Why don't you enlist? Just don't draft me." And he became a lieutenant and served in the northern/southern part of i-Corps in South Vietnam, and wound up dying of Agent Orange complications when he was sixty.

Q: We've been going for a couple of hours. You want to continue this straight on for another half an hour and then stop?

CLARK: Yeah, let's do that

Q: Okay. So anything else you want to say about that first period, that first hearing loss? Before we go to the East West Center?

CLARK: I never went to the East West Center at the end of the day. So we're hired to work in an agricultural program.

Q: You're an agriculture specialist?

CLARK: I'm not. I'm a geography major who taught English for two and a half years as a foreign language.

Q: Right.

CLARK: So why did they hire us? As near as we can figure, they hired us, because we spoke Thai, and we can easily speak Lao. Now, in the seven months I was in Mukdahan, in northeastern Thailand, I learned –Isaan dialect which is based on Lao. Most of the people living in Northeastern Thailand are ethnic Lao. And they speak Isaan. My wife Pahn, she speaks Isaansan and she speaks Thai because also to digress for a moment, King Chulalongkorn, in the 1800s decided that the way to unify Thailand was to do three things. Set up a postal system that unifies the country through the postal system, set up a railway system that unifies the country by transportation, and require that all education, all government, operates in Central Thai. So if I'm born in Mukdahan, and I'm on the Lao border, I'm going to go to a school in which I am taught in the central Thai dialect, and I learned central Thai, and at home I'm speaking Isaan, which is very close to the Lao spoken in the Mekong Valley. I learned Isaan. USAID assumed that we either knew some of it, or we could quickly learn it. Because we were going to work at the provincial level

and we weren't going to be working with any speakers of French. The second thing is that if you looked at the living conditions, and they tried to recruit somebody in the United States to go, they probably wouldn't have gone. But for a Peace Corps volunteer, it was an upgrade in life.

So that's where I think they recruited us and now we have to learn about what this agriculture development organization is doing. And the first thing I was asked to do, and Tom Ward was the head of the USAID office in Thakhek. He was called the CDAA (community development area advisor). Khammouane province, inside that province had maybe 40,000 people. And they had three USAID direct hire people living there. They had four or five IVS (International Voluntary Service) volunteers living there. So yeah, the presence in that province was about seven Americans that were full time. One is going through working on rural development, they had a rural development area advisor guy named Barney Chesson, in the southern part of that province. So the first thing I was asked to do was that the IVS volunteer had alienated all of the Lao in the provincial agriculture office, about five people. He said "the first thing you have to do, is these ruptured relationships, we've got to work on that, because it's supposed to be co managed," and he didn't respect the co management part. He thought he was in charge. He was ordering the provincial agriculture what to do. IVS Volunteers working in agriculture had advanced degrees and many had farm experience..The Agriculture Chief had received six weeks of training from the French, in Cambodia in the 1930s. There was a big gap there. And he probably thought "I should be running this thing." No, it's supposed to be co managed. So we got to lean on Lao when we're doing this, otherwise, we won't get anything done. So the first thing I was asked to do is just do things, whatever it is, to get that rupture relationship mended. I had two people work for me that would have been hired by ADO. And so that's the first thing I did. They were just starting. The interesting thing, John, we're at the beginning of the Green Revolution. Laos had not seen any fertilizer, or pesticides, or irrigation, or improved varieties up until that time. IRRI is testing its first variety, IR8.. That was the first variety that came out, IR8. And it's interesting, because when AID had a, I don't know how many, I'm gonna say the AID mission probably had three or four hundred people, but they had a lot of people on PASA agreements. So they were borrowing. So the head of research was Dr. Muir from the USDA, Agricultural Research Service. And they were doing field testing, IR8. And they couldn't find any results from our province. So I asked them, I said, "Where are the IR8 trials?" "We don't have any." "Didn't you receive this rice seed?" "Oh, yeah." "What are you doing with it?" "We're growing it." So we're trying to figure out this mystery. And what we found out was that the Filipino word for rice is palay. PALAY. And so they had these trials with PALAY. That is what was printed on the rice sack of research seed. The first thing we discovered was we actually had IR8 trials with farmers, and we're just getting started with improved seed, and improved fertilizer. The Lao, learn about the value of fertilizer for vegetables. And so the first fertilizer can be used for vegetables. So we're trying to figure out about this variety of IR8. As a Lao learning, people like me, are learning from the bottom just like they are. "Okay, here's this improved variety, IR8. And the problem is that it's not glutinous rice, and the Lao eat glutinous rice, it's sticky rice. So if you go to your Thai restaurant and buy Sticky Rice and Mango, that rice you get with that, that's glutinous rice, and that's what the Lao eat is

steamed in a basket. It lasts a couple of days. You can put it in a basket and take it out on the field and eat it for two days as you're working your agriculture field. So it's a perfect food to carry around. And that glutinous factor is paraffin content. And it didn't have enough paraffin content in the IR8. So they didn't like it. But that was what we had to grow. And that was our program, to grow IR8. And then the second problem was when it was milled, it broke. So the breakage rate was very high. So if you go to a Thai restaurant in the United States that is actually serving what they should serve, and you buy a bowl of rice or you eat, you eat a fried rice that should be 100 percent a whole grain rice in it, there should be no broken rice kernels in that rice. And this broke so that it was like a 50 percent breakage rate.

We're looking at the British government who has donated these big pumps called Rustonn pumps, you can put them on a barge, you could put them in the back on the river and you could irrigate about twenty hectares of land. So that was a program that was beginning to start this irrigation program. There has been no irrigation, there was a small pump program to try to do pumping. When there was a drought, you can do some pumping into a regular field. So the first year I was there was setting up, we had to set up a merchant program in which the Lao government said “we're going to have a merchant program, it's a consignment basis, they're going to sell rice, seed, they're going to sell fertilizers, they are going to sell pesticide.” They're gonna sell these little pumps. But oh, by the way, no Chinese or Vietnamese can be merchants, it can only be Lao. They were only Lao merchants. Lao didn't run any business. All the business enterprises in Laos or Vietnamese or Chinese. Certainly you had to find all kinds of people in the village to sell the stuff. I was there for about six months and the Vientiane Province, provincial ADO representative Philip Brant had been drafted, so Philip said, “I'm not going”, he jumped on a boat and went to Cambodia and just left. So I went to Vientiane to replace him. And I started to do the same things and in a much bigger area. I covered the Vientiane Plain. And then the two provinces on each side Vang Vieng and Paksane___ for, and now we're really building up the ADO program, with the rice seed is out. We have a rice marketing program, a guaranteed price, and we had a big pumping project. There was a pilot that I worked with in Sitantay in Vientiane Province and we were trying all kinds of things. This is when AID was crazy. We had a guy named Don Murray who was a special assistant to the USAID mission director Joe Mendenhall, and he was a young guy, maybe thirty years old. He was very interested in ADO. And he came over as the executive director temporarily, because the first US co-manager had left. AID at that time, had many interesting ways in which they hired people.

Around 1961-1962, they decided that the way we find good managers is we hire city managers. There was a guy that managed my office who was a city manager. Then they said “no, we have to find people in the federal government who are good managers.” So when I got there, they just fired the executive director of ADO who's an American, he had come from NASA, he had been a successful launcher of rockets, but he didn't work out. So when I went there, there was a void in terms of who the leadership was, but Don Murray came over. And you would say, “Okay, let's try this. Let's try that. The Chinese do a program in which they buy the rice, when it's green, we'll do a green rice program, let's buy it then. No, let's do a different way in which we charge the farmers for water,

we'll take a share of their crop." And nobody was thinking at all, as we will get worried. We say "wait a minute, there's a war going on in this country. The communists are gonna say there's those Americans, those capitalists stealing the rice of the farmers." It's a bad signal if we go in there and say, "the way you're gonna pay for water from a pump is going to be by taking one third of the crop, or something like that." So I did that for about let's see, I was in Thakhek for six months. And I was in Vientiane for about I would say a year or so. We finally got a permanent executive director, a guy named Tony Babb, who became instrumental in my career in AID. Tony Babb had gone to Laos as a community development advisor in central Laos in Savannakhet, a place called Keng Kok. And he had an agricultural background from when he studied agriculture in California. He had done agriculture. And he was selected to be the executive director of ADO and his counterpart by the Ministry of Agriculture. So they hired a rice marketing advisor, a Chinese guy who had totally failed, and couldn't work with anybody. So Tony said, "Okay, you've learnt a lot about rice, how might you be my rice marketing advisor?" So I said, "I don't know how" he said, "you'll learn about it." He said, "anyway, we're going to learn about it. Here's what we're going to do. What we're going to do is we're going to go on to run a rice mill. And we're going to run a rice mill will, learn about how the rice system works. And you're a smart guy. And so let's run this rice mill. And we're going to learn how both the production part works. And the marketing part works. And you can go over to Thailand and try to figure out the Thai way, how does rice marketing work? What do we need to do?" So I did that. So I became the rice marketing advisor. And we did run a rice mill, we ran two, one in Vientiane and one in Thakhek. And they were both Chinese operated, the one in the Vientiane had an American involved with it, that's how we learned. And I learned about how the rice marketing system works, and how the rice milling process works.

And unfortunately, what we learned was that the border between Thailand and Laos is very porous. So any kind of a program we established in Laos, basically, if it was a benefit to the farmers, Thai farmers would take advantage over them for the country's rice. And that happened in 1970, when the rice price in the world collapsed, the price that we paid in Laos was higher than what was paid in Thailand. So I did the rice marketing work with Tony. By that time I was learning enough about rice to be dangerous. You had to understand your limitations. I didn't know, it's like another person I met was very influential. I met a Canadian missionary when I was in Thakhek. And he was very interested in these young men coming to Laos, trying to help the US keep the government together, provide services to Lao people. He thought that was very honorable. And he'd been in Laos, for coming on to forty years. And his mission in life was to translate the Bible. And so we started talking about what we thought we knew, didn't know. And he said, " what I'm hearing all you young people with tremendous enthusiasm. You're learning a language which is commendable. You're trying to understand how the culture works. You're trying to understand how things operate. And I would suggest all of you pause, and do like I do, which is try to figure out what kind of questions should I ask? What is going to help me understand? And I have days in which I struggle trying to figure out what question am I trying to ask? Because I don't understand something. And don't jump too quickly, when you think you understand something, have that pause where you say, if I asked all the questions, I need to ask to try to understand something. And

when you're working across the culture, and across the language, I think you really have to do this." So I carried that with me all my life, I said "okay, this guy. Wow." And we were in our 20s. And we're thinking we're understanding things real quick, and know what to do. And that certainly was kind of prevalent, you could easily fall into that when you're working in something like I'm working at rice for the first time. How does this work? And thinking I knew how it worked and jumping into things and doing things. And they needed to, you needed to have that pause in what you were doing. Tony Babb had gone back to Laos, let's see, we left Laos in 1975, and Tony went back probably twenty years later. And he was meeting with the Minister of Agriculture, and the guy said "Why do you speak Lao?" he said, "I was here before" he said "what did you do before?" He said, "well I was an advisor. I worked with the Lao at ADO. We love ADO! Can you come back? We need you to come back, would you come back and help us? That helped us, and figure out how to grow improved varieties of rice. Can you come back again?"

Q: That's funny. Yeah. So you didn't go to the East West Center?

CLARK: No, no, I asked for a second deferral. And I didn't go in the end. In 1968, I said, "Can I come the following year? Yes again. But I also learned in the meantime, because there were probably five or six when I grew up and went to the East West Center. And the feedback I got was, the East West Center is an interesting idea. And it has a lot going for it. But your academic studies are done by the University of Hawaii. And many of the departments in the University of Hawaii are pretty weak. And so while you have really interesting, first class, high level interactions with the programs at the East West Center in itself, you've still got to complete your academic studies, they get your master's degree and PhD. And we didn't find that those departments were strong at all there, in fact, they were quite weak, a couple of them quit, and went someplace else. They did their masters and went someplace else for their PhD. So anyway, it was an easy decision to make.

Q: What did you do?

CLARK: I stayed in Laos. I did another AID contract. So in 1969, Richard Nixon has a program called BALPA cuts, balance of payments. The United States is suffering, a balance of payments, and a negative balance of payments, and they're going to cut overseas costs. So they came to AID, they call them BALPA cuts. So they started to cut staff in AID missions. And I think at that time, LAOS maybe had two hundred and fifty direct hire. There are no contractors in AID. So you've had people there that were on your PASA agreements. So for example, AID, we bought everything, we did everything else under the sun, everything. And we had a gigantic procurement machine to buy stuff. And so we had to PASA it with the GSA, they sent five people who would run USAID procurement. So we were buying everything from roofing sheets, to vehicles or whatever. We had seven hundred pieces of construction equipment, because we built anything. As a part of the AID mission we had a public works division. So it was basically supporting the Lao government to stay in existence, provide services to its population, the annual AID budget equals about 50 percent of GDP. So it was, it was an enormous program. Now BALPA cuts are coming and we had the direct hire workforce, you had the PASA workforce, and the PSC workforce. So once again, bureaucratic entrepreneurs go to work.

And AID says, “cut”, AID Mission Director says “I need these people”. So I think that we were the first host country PSCs because they took all the ADO people and they converted us to be host country PSCs, and then we were working for the Ministry of Agriculture, so the numbers went down in terms of numbers of people in the mission, but the numbers of people on paper, but the numbers of people that are working on ADO didn't change. So we shifted over to-that in the late 60s and early 1970. So we became the first host country PSCs. So in May 1969 Charles Mann who was the mission director, he's one of those powerful mission directors that we had in the past that we don't have today. He was mission director there for a total of six years. He called me into his office one day, and he said, “there's this thing called the IDI program. And we have our first IDI graduate, Bob Aslan, who is in the mission. Go meet him.” I did. He said, “I've nominated you for this program. I think you're good. You've done a good job. I'm going to nominate you for this program. And I've nominated Paul White.” Paul White was working in Northern Laos with the refugee programs. “I've nominated both of you for this program so go over and talk to the head of personnel in the mission. You got a couple things you’ve got to sign. I put it in a recommendation, you're going to get into this program.” So okay, and we did and in early 1970, I don't know, the spring? There's a guy who comes out from AID Washington, and he interviews Paul and I. And then he basically told me, he said, “you know in the astronaut program, a lot of people get selected to be astronauts. There's only a few people who get to go to the moon. You’ve been selected to the astronaut program, but you're not going to the moon. We have too many applicants, and we are not accepting you.” . I went overseas to my mother's consternation in the summer of 1964. And I haven't come back yet. And in 1969, I got married. And my mother hasn't seen me. And my stepfather hadn’t. I've been gone for six years. And I was a local PSC hire, I had no benefits. So the mission said, “Hey, go home, and get hired from there. So you come back and do all these benefits that you don't have as a local hire PSC.” I said, “Okay, that's fine.” So I went back to the United States in the summer of 1970. And in the meantime, Tony Babb has left Laos and gone back and he's on a Laos desk. And I get back to the United States in July. And my wife Phahn, its her first time coming to the United States. We're in Colorado, and Tony Babb calls me up and he said, “Hey, there's going to be a new IDI class, you want to be in it? Or do you want to go back and be a PSC?” I said “okay, what is it?” He says, “Well, what they've done is they discovered that they got some really good applicants that AID doesn't want to let it get away, and they're going to have this special small class.” – That's our class, John.

Q: That’s right.

CLARK: And he said “but it won't be until the fall. And you can't go back to Laos. So what do you think?” I said, “Okay, we'll go to the IDI class.” And the mission, let me stay, as an employee of ADO until about August, I’d leave and other things. And then I terminated. So that's how I became an IDI and went into. I'm pretty sure Tony died last year, but I'm pretty sure that he was an advocate that I get into whatever this class was. And they also knew that Paul had to wait another couple of years. I think he went in like in '72-'73, maybe maybe '74. But he didn't go immediately like I did.

Q: This is an off, off to the side. But it's a striking feature in my mind that you and I and Paul White are all from Indiana.

CLARK: Yeah. Did you know that Paul White is from Brazil, Indiana?

Q: Yes. I knew that.

CLARK: Well Greencastle is near Brazil. During my time in high school. That was the big rivalry. It was a big sports rivalry between Brazil and Greencastle. Paul was a multi-sport star and led Brazil to end our undefeated football team in its last game in 19589 . I never met Paul during high school.

Q: Oh really?

CLARK: He's a very good football player. He's a very good athlete. So yeah, three people wind up with AID from Indiana, coming from about the same era.

Q: Yeah. Why don't we stop now.

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Q: Good morning. This is our second interview with Doug Clark. We have gone through a good deal of a very interesting period of his growing up and then spending time in Thailand and Laos, and one of the things we didn't cover was his marriage, which happened during this period. So Doug, would you talk a little bit about when you got married and who with?

DOUGLAS: Okay, so John knows my wife, he knows her by the name Pahn, which is her nickname. Early in her being introduced to my friends in AID [Agency for International Development], she used her nickname. Her actual or her born name is Prakong, which is a traditional Thai name, and her last name is Kotama which is an unusual Thai last name. But they chose last names. In Thailand and Laos, people didn't have last names for most of their history, so as they modernized, they have to get last names. In Laos, after they became independent, they had a list and they said, pick one. Everyone needed a last name. They kind of had that same experience in Thailand where you developed a last name. So if you're ethnically from Thailand, in the northeastern part of Thailand, you probably got a last name a couple of generations ago, maybe. Her last name is Kotama. It's an unusual one.

I'm in Laos, and I have been reassigned to Vientiane from Thakhek and central Laos. I'm responsible with this
ADO for a very large geographic area much different than what I had. Vientiane, Vang Vieng and Paksane are provinces and the Vientiane plain is a huge agricultural area. So that's what I was doing there. AID had housing either out in the local economy or they had a big housing compound, six kilometers out of town called Kilometer Six. It had about 140, 150 houses in it. I was given a house in town, near the oldest, most famous

temple, That Luang. So I had a house. I had it all furnished. It was in a nice neighborhood, it was a Lao neighborhood. In 1968, I was a nut. I was a running nut. I had started running in the Peace Corps in 1965. The reason why I started running was that we had been told by our Peace Corps doctor Dr. Silverman that the Surgeon General had suggested we all stop smoking, because it was causing cancer, and most Peace Corps volunteers smoke. So my group took a pledge–sixty of us– we're going to stop smoking. One of the volunteers who joined us from Indonesia, Wayne Johnson, who I wound up living with later said, “If you want to stop smoking, come down to the national stadium where I'm a coach of the national team and start running and you will not want to smoke.” So I did. So I started running and I became a running nut. The Asians were like who's this crazy white guy , who's this crazy farang as they say–which is a foreigner–running around on our streets? So in Vientiane, I was running. I used to run up around the temple. I was the only runner I think that existed in Laos in the foreign community at that time.

I used to run by this area and I saw this young woman and I'd seen her all the time and that was Pahn. So I would stop and talk and chat. Her dad was a contractor. He's Thai, and had come to Laos to build houses for senior Lao officials to rent to Americans. So that's how most of the housing was owned by the military. Military often rented to AID. So I wound up talking to her, I would see her when I was running. People were like look at this crazy guy running in these shorts all over the place. I got to meet her and I liked her a lot. But I never courted in the traditional American way. All we had was these casual conversations. I said, “I really am enamored with this young woman and I think I want to see if I can marry her at some point.” So a year later, I decided I want to do that. That this is the person I think is going to be the love of my life. But the Lao way of doing it is to have an intermediary. The woman who was working for me and taking care of my house, my domestic, she volunteered to do that. So she went and contacted her parents, went back and forth and back and forth. I agreed upon a dowry, and we got married the following year in March of 1969.

So I'd known her for about a year and I'd seen her in these informal ways because Asian culture doesn't allow this kind of coming together. It's distant, in a way. Lao culture is very traditional. We're not in Bangkok, where people can freely do something together or go someplace, that's kind of very rare. I kind of followed the Lao way of doing it and we were married in 1969. Because she's a Thai citizen, at that time, any Thai could go into Laos with just their ID card. You showed your ID card and went into Laos, you could work there, you could live there. Her parents had been there for quite some time because her dad had been building these houses for people. But we had to go and get married in Thailand. So Nong Khai is the city right across the Mekong from the entry point of Laos. Vientiane is up river some distance so you go into Laos at Nong Khai and you go up about twenty kilometers into Vientiane city. We had to go to Nong Khai, and her parents had to go. So they went down. If you are Thai, you get on these long tail boats and you go across Mekong and they're informally going back and forth. They're not going near the customs points at all. I had to go down and check out and check in that system I had mentioned where I leave my passport with the customs people in Thailand. I went into Nong Khai and we went down to the district office and we had a civil ceremony.

Q: Did you invite anyone from your family?

DOUGLAS: No, I didn't. My family was in the United States. My mother did not want to come to Asia. I think my mother–I didn't ever ask her about it too much. But she has two sons, one son is in this war in Laos. Her second son had been drafted in Vietnam as an enlisted military policeman. She was not too keen about things in Asia I don't think. So no, no one came from my family. So we went and did a civil ceremony. I always remember the district officer telling me in Thai, "And by the way, I don't want to see you coming back to my office to get a divorce. So I wish you well." And we went off. Then there's a secondary traditional ceremony called a Baci, that's a Lao word. In the Baci you have monks come and chant. But their ceremony is they have–I don't know if you've seen pictures of this anyplace–but you have string tying. So you get strings about maybe this long and they're blessed by a monk, you get them from a temple-

Q: Since this is an oral interview, "this long" is about a foot long?

DOUGLAS: I'd say maybe six to eight, no probably about six inches long, just enough to get around your wrist. The big part of the ceremony is everybody you've invited, they tie a string around your wrist and give you a blessing. Lao people are very, very humorous, and the Lao culture likes fun. They have two things they drink. They have Lao-Lao which is a wine whiskey, which Americans call jet fuel because it tastes like that and it has a very high alcohol content. Then they have Lao Hai which is a rice wine. So people like to get drunk. Then when they get drunk the greetings start, "Please sleep together well and have fifteen kids" and things like that. So they're having fun giving you the blessing. You can wind up with strings from your wrist almost halfway up your arm because everyone ties one and everyone gives you a blessing and that's the big part of this. You have nice flowers and things like that while you're doing this. Then you're not supposed to take those off or cut them. You can't cut them, that'd be very bad. They have to wear off. You can take off a lot of them and have a few laughs maybe from your family and then you wear that string on your wrist until it wears off, which can be quite some time. Then you have a lot of food. It can be an all day affair. I had friends of mine that I'd worked with or knew in Laos and her family, she has six brothers and sisters. She had aunts and uncles that came from–she's from Khon Kaen, which is a big city in northeastern Thailand. Nam Phong is where she was born, which is outside of this big city. So that's what we did. If you're an American marrying, then they encourage you to register your marriage with the American Embassy. So the second thing we did is we went down and we did that. So then you get a document with a big seal on it, and wax and all kinds of things so they're recognizing–your marriage would be considered legal in the United States anyway, but this for sure makes it that it's been recognized by U.S. law. So that's what we did. That was our marriage in March of 1969, so I'm gonna guess that we had thirty, forty, fifty people that came to this Baci, mostly people that worked with me at AID and her family.

Q: Did I ask what the dowry was?

DOUGLAS: I think it was about 50,000 Kip. At that time, one Kip, which was the Laotian currency, was five hundred to the dollar. So if I gave 50,000 it would be about a hundred dollars. But the dowry agreement was that there was a dowry plus, that I was obligated to give her family a one-hundred-kilogram sack of rice a month. That was the dowry arrangement.

Q: All right. And you did that as long as you were there.

DOUGLAS: I did that. My perception has always been that if you marry a Lao or Thai–and she's Northeastern Thai themselves to be Thai, they have a Lao background, ethnically they speak Isaan, which is a Lao language–even if you're an American, you're marrying that family. You're marrying that extended family. So it's expected, obviously, that while the dowry may have been your commitment to that family, that you're going to be part of whatever arises in that family as a problem or a need. So for example, we helped all of her brothers and sisters who were younger, she was the oldest child. So we helped all of them go to school. We helped them go to private schools. We helped five come to the United States over time. All three of her sisters came to the United States when they were very young, and one brother. You're doing those kinds of things. In Thailand, the oldest girl is responsible for taking care of their parents when they're old. That's the cultural norm. So that responsibility comes to my wife. Her dad is still alive at ninety-five. Now he's bedridden. He's very frail. He requires medical help. He lives in Khon Kaen, Thailand. It's her obligation to help organize whatever's needed to give him the medical help he needs. The same with her mother. Her mother died four years ago, at eighty-seven. It was the same thing of organizing, as the oldest child, her medical health and her support. When they stopped working, when her dad stopped working when he was in his seventies, then you have to organize to give them support because there's no safety nets for elderly people in Thailand except, again, they get six hundred baht a month, which is about eighteen dollars out of a social fund of some type.

Q: So just to finish this up, how many children did you have?

DOUGLAS: Two. We have a son, Christopher, who is fifty-one and we have a daughter, Michelle, who is forty-five. Christopher was born when we were in Laos. I'll relate this story later. Last year was the sixtieth anniversary of AID and there was a request from the organizers: did anybody have any pictures from the 1960s or early 1970s of life in AID abroad, and could you write us a vignette? So I did. I wrote a vignette about my son's birth. He was born in Bangkok. At that time, US Embassy spouses could not have children in Laos because there weren't sufficient medical facilities. So women who were going to have children go down to Bangkok about six weeks before, and make their choice. I could either go the American way, and use military doctors, and have my child born at the US Army

hospital. Or I could go the Thai way, and have a Thai doctor or a European doctor and be born at the Bangkok nursing home. We chose to go to the Bangkok nursing home and her doctor was Danish. So there is a large alumni group of children that were born at the Bangkok nursing home. For example, our friend Bob Dakan, his youngest daughter was

born about eight months before Chris was born. Michelle was born when we were back in Washington, DC, in Fairfax.

Q: We should probably go back when we left off. I believe you had an opportunity to go back to Washington and join AID. Want you to bring us back to where we stopped last time.

DOUGLAS: Okay. So what I thought I'd do is mention a few things. I am finishing–I was now selected into an IDI class. So I'm now going to accept a two-year contract to return back to Laos, and continue to be the rice marketing advisor. I came back to the United States and within a week of getting back, I was offered an opportunity to go into this special IDI class of thirteen people and I accepted and did that. I thought I'd take a moment and think about what happened during those four, three-plus years, three and a half years I worked for the agricultural development organization. I thought a lot about this since we last talked. I don't think I said enough about the fact I didn't realize when I went to Laos in April of 1967, I was going into the middle of a war. I mean, there was a real war going on in Laos but I wasn't knowledgeable about that too much. Nor had paid much attention to that. The air war had started in 1964. In fact, I remember that when I was in Mukdahan which was right across from Savannakhet, Laos, and right another thirty or forty miles is the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex and that was the target of U.S. bombing. I just thought about this the other night, after we talked. We had a day in Mukdahan in which there were these booming shockwaves of aircraft. Nobody knew what these things were. Everybody ran out of the school to look up and said, "What's going on in the sky?" What was happening was that this was in December of 1964. Aircraft were flying at a very low altitude, fast, and they were leaving behind a sonic boom. People were walking or coming out of their shops and things, looking around like what's going on. I looked this up about the US air war in Laos since we last talked. That's when it started, in about December of 1964.

As you remember, the American public didn't know about it until 1969. So there was an effort to keep all of that concealed at that time. So I'm wondering, and it's just wondering. I've never read anything about this. There's been a lot written about Laos and the secret of war. But in 1964 as it started, there were a series of air bases in Thailand. So they had to have been building these long before this started. So there's an airbase at Takhli, Thailand, there's an airbase at Udorn, there's a base at Khorat, there's a gigantic base that can host a B-52 at Sattahip. All those were built before then, which, in my mind, I say, wow, I wonder if the United States strategically was putting in place its assets to fight a war? If we go back and think about Laos for one minute, it's said in history that when John Kennedy was elected, and was talking to President Eisenhower about his most important concerns, Eisenhower said, "Your biggest problem is Laos." That was in 1960. The reason why, maybe, is because there had been a civil war going on after independence from the French when they left in 1954 between a right wing element, a left wing element, and a neutral element. The right wing was military, a man named General Phoumi Nosavan led them. The neutralist was Souvanna Phouma who became prime minister for Laos for about twenty-some years and was prime minister when I went there, I think it was 1961 to 1975. Then you had Prince Souphanouvong, the Red Prince

as they called, who was associated with the communists. The United States was fearful that a communist would take over.

Now I'm thinking back to Peace Corps training. We had a big piece of our curriculum at that time in 1964, on anti-communism. We had experts who came in that taught that. It was one of the rare pieces of our training where they brought in outside expertise to teach. They taught us the domino theory, that the fear in Southeast Asia was, you have the Huk rebellion, rebellion in the Philippines, you've got the communist rebellion in Malaysia, you've got this rising communist insurgency in Thailand. The fear of the United States is it's all going to collapse into communism. If one goes, they're going to all start to go. So there was this fear that Laos–this is what Eisenhower was saying, I looked it up, just confirmed that he was concerned that the United States would lose Laos. And once that happened, then that's going to impact South Vietnam and Cambodia, and they would go communist.

We provided some assistance. Kennedy had a choice: am I gonna go in in a big way militarily? Or am I going to try to get some type of a settlement, something that prevents us from having to go in strongly militarily. That's the Geneva Peace Accords in 1962. It was supposed to neutralize Laos. To neutralize Laos, there was a commission set up to oversee that. There was the International something commission, it was Indian, Canadian and Polish. The three countries each had a veto power. So nothing happened too much with that commission, because one country could veto the other two, and you had one communist nation included. All foreign forces were to be removed from Laos and it was to be neutralized. So from 1962 to 1975, there was this pretending that Laos is neutral. The United States withdraws all of its military assets but North Vietnam doesn't. North Vietnam maintains its military presence in Laos. Now we are just pretending we're going to be neutral. But the North Vietnamese are present and probably build up more military capacity in the country. So we now have been embarking on what is called the Secret War, where the United States supports the Hmong population. They became the forces that tried to repel the North Vietnamese in Northern Laos.

In the meantime, the North Vietnamese built the Ho Chi Minh trail complex. We decided that we have to do something about that, because that is how South Vietnam has been supplied. So that's where we go. I didn't realize when I went there, you didn't know all these things. I've had many conversations about that since then. Tony Babb–who I mentioned I worked for, for two years or for about three years– and I had what his wife called mega phone calls. We talked for two or three hours and we kept asking ourselves, “Are we a cog in a bad machine? Did we do something that was helpful? Were we selling ourselves out in some way?” You think about that even today with what's happening in that country. I was not associated with what happened in Northern Laos. Never. I worked in the Mekong Valley, which is where the population was where the royal Lao government ruled and had control of the country. Northern Laos is where the Hmong population is fighting the North Vietnamese, then they're getting assistance from the CIA, they're getting assistance from the State Department and they're getting assistance from AID. So a lot of people that one might know from Laos, many of them spent their time working up in Northern Laos. They were called refugee relief officers. There was a relief

effort because you were needed to feed the entire population up there, because of the disruptions of the war.

Laos is a very rugged country. It's a beautiful country, with mountains that start right when you cross the Mekong. There were three big agricultural plains. There's the Vientiane plain, which is a big agricultural area, there's the Plain of Jars, which had been taken over by the North Vietnamese and was the arena in the fighting. It's called the Plain of Jars because they had these gigantic multi-ton huge jars up there, and nobody knows what they are. Anthropologists today still haven't figured out who brought all these big, gigantic jars up to the Plain of Jars. But they're maybe ten, fifteen feet. They could be ten to twelve to fifteen feet tall and weigh several tons. Then there's big agriculture in southern Laos.

So when I arrived there, that's what's going on. We don't have any security. This is interesting. As compared to today, what happens if you go to Afghanistan or Iraq or Syria or any of these places. We were civilians, trying to work in a district like I did, in Khammouane province, or in Vientiane. We traveled around, we had no security. All we had was advice every day about what roads were dangerous. Where had there been some type of a military incident, and what to stay away from. The other rule was that when you left, you told AID when you left, and you told them when you got there. And the other rule that you kind of learned was that if you went someplace, don't tell them you're coming and don't tell them when you're going to leave. So you'd never go to a village and say, “I'm coming here and staying all night” or something like that. I had broken that, I didn't know that. I had been admonished by one of the people I was working with because I had participated in an effort to buy buffalo from traditional villages. This is an early ADO project. Buy buffalo–surplus buffalo–from existing villages, and give those to refugees coming out of Eastern Laos, where the North Vietnamese came in and out of. We went out and did this and we stayed in these villages for about four days. And I had money, I had a big bag of money because we were paying for the purchase of these buffalo. Don't do that. So you learn, basically, these things of how to try to work and keep alive. The first year I was there, two IVS volunteers were killed. They went places they probably shouldn't have gone. There were people who were killed in aircraft accidents. It was a civilian effort.

There were two ways in which you got in trouble. Aircraft, Air America, Continental Air Services, Arizona helicopters, those were the ways in which you traveled around the country if you couldn't drive. Most of where I worked you could drive. Infrequently I would have to go someplace you'd have to go on a helicopter or they used mostly single engine small aircraft. That's how you got around the country. But you kind of had to internalize these rules about how to stay safe. Some people didn't follow those things and they got in big trouble. So there was a war going on and the security is diminishing nearby. So what happened in 1967? '68 it's getting worse. '68 it's getting worse. '69 it's getting worse. Places you could drive in 1967 you couldn't drive so easily 1969, you had to be more careful. Maybe you wouldn't go to that place. Maybe in our ADO work we'd have only our Lao employees go. So that was the circumstances we were working under.

I had a very good friend. I had my own experience, a bad one I'll call that. Art Stillman was a Peace Corps volunteer who was in two groups before me and he was in northeastern Thailand. He was a very charismatic volunteer. He was kind of advanced as a Peace Corps volunteer. Had done wonderful things in rural development in the area he was working in northeastern Thailand. Art, wound up being the deputy head of the IVS [International Voluntary Service] team in Laos. They had about one hundred and twenty-five IVS volunteers there. Most of them were out working in rural development. They were living in villages. They were interested in helping us with ADO in the effort to introduce irrigation. We did that by using these pumps that came from Britain, these big Ruston pumps you put on a barge you pump through the Mekong. In Paksane Province, which was southeast of Vientiane, it was perfect. These villages were right on the riverbank and you could put a pump in there or two pumps and you could irrigate twenty, forty, fifty hectares of land. So the way AID did this, we had a public works department. They sent engineers down, they put in the canals, they put it in the basin, they put it in the way you deliver the water from the pump up into the canals and into the fields. That was a very popular project for IVS volunteers because it was something concrete they could do. I had worked very closely in that province, because I was responsible in '68 and '69 for that area of the ADO program, I was in the main ADO office for Vientiane and went out to the ADO provincial offices for Vientiane, Paksane and Vang Vieng.

There were three IVS volunteers I was working with, one was named Dennis Mummert. Dennis was a wonderful young guy from Illinois. He had put two of these systems in the village he lived in and the one next to it. So by the time we get to '69, ADO has introduced improved varieties of rice. I had mentioned they didn't work. We got rid of that. We went to Thailand and Thailand had developed an improved variety of glutinous rice called sanpatong. So we brought that in and used that because IR 8 did not work. We'll use the sanpatong so we can triple the yield. You can go from one ton per hectare to about three, and we can double profit. So we introduced an improved variety. The package was improved variety, fertilizer, pesticide and water. That was your package for what fueled the green revolution around the world. So Dennis Mummert was working with that. We had a rice support program and a rice buying program. So what we did is that we were buying rice from farmers at a support price that was a little bit below the market price. So that protected them or we bought at the market price. ADO then took the rice we bought and we milled it and we sold it to AID and they used it in the relief programs in Northern Laos. They mostly used it in these airdrop programs. Almost all the rice in Northern Laos was kicked out of the back of an airplane and dropped down and into a village. So that was the way that system was working in terms of AID viewed as farmers in Laos improving their production of rice. Farmers in Laos were getting paid cash they never had seen before from growing rice. We're now able to buy that rice here instead of buying it in Thailand and we're using that to feed refugees in Northern Laos. So it was kind of a win-win deal in a way in their mind. This area became very productive.

As a rice marketing advisor, I had gone to look at it many times in addition to working there. In March of 1969, we finished buying a huge amount of rice down there. So we went down to pay them and the Lao staff wanted me to go with them because it was a

huge amount of money. The way we transported money around in Laos was in a big mail bag we borrowed from the APO [Army Postal Office]. The largest denomination of Lao currency was a 500 Kip bill, which meant the largest bill they had was a one dollar bill. So we owed about 1,000,000 or 1,500,000 Kip to farmers down there. The way we did this is the Americans didn't touch the money when it was handed to a Lao. We didn't do that. That was kind of a we're not going to be seen as some type of imperialistic force by giving them some money. But the idea was that the Lao employees of ADO pay the farmers. They had books and accounts and things that they were using. It was a pretty good, simple system.

So we went down to do that in early March. One of the other things you relied on was your intuition. I guess that learning about intuition from that professional poker player helped out. He said, "Trust it. Your gut is going to tell you." What he would do is you were looking at a situation as this war is going on, and you're trying to figure out, am I safe? So it's one of those things if I'm driving down a rural road, and I don't see anybody, I'm gonna start not feeling good. I'm gonna look around, do I see any dogs, do I see anybody walking in the fields? If I pass by a village, do I see any women out doing things? And if I don't, then I'm probably getting some real danger symptoms. We went to this village on the Mekong River where Dennis had worked to make these payments. The one bad thing is we had to tell them that we were coming, so those farmers could get paid. So the Lao had told them, "We're coming down, and we're gonna make the payments for this rice." Route 13 is a major highway, or you'd call it the major road that goes the length of Laos, from Luang Prabang in northern Laos down to Cambodia. So you go down to Route 13 and then you go off to the right to the Mekong. So you're going off the big road Route 13, you're driving five kilometers, maybe ten, to get to the village on the Mekong. We turn in, we drive in there, we don't see anybody. Don't see anybody out in the fields, you don't see anybody out doing anything, nobody's walking along the road. Our driver says this is not good. So we get a little bit further on and we don't see any women. He said, "This is not good. We need to turn back." We went a little bit further and we got almost to the edge of the village and you can't see anybody. Everybody's in their house so we turned around and left.

August of 1979, Art Stillman and Dennis Mummert are gonna go over and look at the pumping project. They told them that they were coming, and they told them they were going to stay that night. The following morning, they were killed. They were ambushed and killed. They were waiting for them. That was the moment when I said, "Why am I here?" This was a good friend from Thailand and a very close person I've been working with in IVS. We sat around for a couple of days at ADO wondering, "Were we involved in something that was the right thing? Is it right for these IVS volunteers to be out there on behalf of the United States, kind of the tip of the spear out in the rural development areas?" So we thought about that a lot. Maybe we concluded the wrong way, but we concluded that we're doing our job to help Laos. It's interesting because I was thinking about this last night. We never used the phrase "winning the hearts and minds," that phrase of Vietnam. The United States came into Laos in the 1950s and everything from the beginning had an effort that was trying to improve the life of the rural Lao. The United States introduced self funding. The United States built schools. The United States

built roads, road wells. A lot of the basic things that villages needed at that time, that was a big part of what was done, at least the AID part of what we were doing in central Laos. So there's kind of, we're not doing something that is evil, and we're not doing something that is harmful. We're trying to do something that is helping this population that is extremely poor.

I guess the other thing that impacted what I did later in life is that during those three and a half years, we were not part of AID. We were outside of AID. We were in a separate organization. Our offices were outside of AID. We were one American with maybe several Lao we've worked with. The provincial chief of agriculture was our co-manager for the provincial level who we worked with. We were supposed to be not doing things unless he agreed. So you had to do a lot of working and you learned a lot about negotiating. I think that was one of the things that I was thinking about. What did I learn here that helped? One was negotiating because you're constantly needing their agreement to do something. So we were not part of the American establishment, except to the extent that we were supported by AID. We were part of an AID program. We used the commissary and all that kind of stuff. But your daily work life in Lao–was outside of the USAID Mission. You were basically speaking Lao all the time. When I entered the IDI program, I tested at the FSI and I had a three plus reading in Lao. I was really surprised I didn't realize that I had learned that much Lao, but I guess, if you're using Lao every day, as I had to, your Lao capacity becomes pretty good.

I spent a huge amount of time in Lao villages, looking at agriculture and trying to understand what these farmers were doing, trying to get them to participate in irrigation, trying to get them to accept the new variety of rice, use fertilizer, these kinds of things. It was a simple thing. No matter where a farmer is, I've learned no matter what their educational level is, they'll know how to count. They'll know how to count whether it's a good deal to them or not. We had problems with farmers accepting these new inputs to produce more rice, and we had some places in which they never did it. Because they didn't want to depart from the traditional way because they knew it worked. They knew that the risk was low. So therefore they didn't do it.

Q: How many people were in similar jobs to yours?

DOUGLAS: Let's see.

Q: How many of them ended up staying with AID?

DOUGLAS: Okay, so there was Paksane, Savannakhet, Thakhek, Luang Prabong, Sayboury, Pakse and Vientiane. So there were seven and they turned over the American co-manager frequently. A lot of people came to us and did a personal services contract for one year and left. There were some that stayed for quite some time. So what really happened was nobody came into AID. Except me. There were people who had many careers in Laos. They came here in 1967, they worked for ADO and then they moved on and did something else in the AID mission but they did it as a PSC [Personal Services

Contract]. I don't think anybody else, no. Wayne Johnson has remained as a good friend even till today. Wayne was there for eight years and he wound up being a refugee relief officer in Northern Laos. He went to Ban Houie Sai which is in the Golden Triangle area of Laos and Burma and Thailand. But I don't know, I think no one did.

Q: I was gonna ask about–there's a recent book that I've come across, a certain compilation of stories from IVS volunteers around the world. Have you seen that?

DOUGLAS: That's the book that Jerry Alex helped write?

Q: Yes.

DOUGLAS: I haven't seen it yet but I know about it, yes.

Q: Many of them were in Laos. Were they doing similar work?

DOUGLAS: Yes. There were two big groups of IVS volunteers in Laos. There were the people who worked in rural development. Then there was a big group who worked in education. Laos did not have a university. It had a teacher training college called Dong Dok. It was further out, it was about ten kilometers out of Vientiane. One of your most famous IVS volunteers in Laos is Wendy Chamberlin, the former assistant administrator of AID for Asia and the Middle East, and former Ambassador to Pakistan and Laos. She was an IVS volunteer. There were many faraway that started off as IVS volunteers in Laos. So I think, not coming out of my ADO experience, but coming out of my field experience, is at any one time, you might have had forty or fifty people on PSC contracts. So you had people that came. Paul White went from IVS into AID. Bob Dakan came from PSC and AID. Ernie Kuhn the same way. They're probably some other ones that worked in northern Laos that might have, I don't recall any others. The people with IVS, did anybody else come into AID? The only one I can recall is Gary Alex..

Q: Okay, well, we don't need to dwell on that. Anything else in terms of summary of what you accomplished and before you came back to the States?

DOUGLAS: When I left, I think that the agriculture development organization got bigger. It lasted till 1975 when the AID program ended. It moved on into a lot of other things over those five years after I left. I think it was a reasonably successful effort. The model that had been used in Taiwan and Latin America worked, they were able to get it established and work. It was not a bureaucratic entity. Its purpose was to get things done and to pursue opportunities. And we could because AID gave it a tremendous amount of flexibility. It was a part of the effort around the world to introduce improved productivity of rice, with the package of an improved seed, fertilizer, pesticide, and water. So irrigation was introduced. There were no traditional irrigation systems in Laos. Other countries like the Philippines, Indonesia and northern Thailand have a long tradition of communal irrigation and Laos did not have that. So introducing irrigation was one of the outcomes that happened.

Tony Babb, who was a mentor of mine in many respects, gave me my first chance when I moved to Vientiane and gave me my second chance to be the rice marketing advisor. He certainly had a hand in my getting in the IDI group which was back in Washington in the Lao desk. He started off as a community development advisor in central Laos, which was east of Savannakhet going towards Vietnam. Tony, I first met him because he wanted to rush the delivery of a Ruston pump for his area. I'd been in Laos for about four weeks, and I was acting co-manager for Savannakhet province, waiting for an IVS volunteer to finish to take over Savannakhet. He came up to Savannakhet, he came up there running around saying, "Where's that ADOo guy because I want my pump and I don't see my pump showing up." And I said, "Well I'm the ADO guy." He said, "Well where's my pump?" So everything about it was all fine. Anyway, that's how I first met him. He went back to Laos with his wife some time laters.. His wife had a pet water buffalo. She went back to see the third generation of that water buffalo about fifteen years ago or so, or maybe around 2000, maybe late 90s, and that pump was still there. It was being used except it had changed from being a diesel operated pump. Electricity had been extended out to that part of the province and now it was run by electricity. People remembered that pump that had come in the late 1960s and it was still there and still being used.

Q: That's amazing.

DOUGLAS: The rice production of the country did increase during that period. So what AID was interested in, those kinds of things were happening.

Q: Right. Okay, let's move on. You were surprised to find you were going to be accepted into an IDI program?

DOUGLAS: Yeah, I sure was.

Q: Thirteen people, including myself. We were all surprised to be there I think. I'm happy. Let's go on from there.

DOUGLAS: I'm in the United States, it's July of 1970, and I got this offer and so I accept it. We started in October of 1970. There was nothing to do so I gotta wait. ADO agreed through use of unused leave to keep me as an employee until the end of August. So I had to wait until October. Then the State Department came and they said, "It's required that any spouse accompanying a foreign service officer has to be an American citizen. So you won't be able to go back to Laos until your wife becomes an American citizen." She came to the United States on a tourist visa. I don't think what I'm going to tell you can happen today. In fact, I'm listening to Bob Dakan tell me about foreign service officers today and they have enormous problems getting foreign spouses citizenship. He has one person he's coaching now. His wife is a lawyer in Thailand and his story about getting citizenship is difficult.

Mine wasn't. So they said, "She came on a tourist visa, okay. So we gotta get her a green card. We have to get an immigrant visa and then a green card, and then she can go and get her citizenship." So we start doing documents. There was a provision that basically said if

you are a foreign service officer with a foreign spouse, and you've been assigned overseas, the five year waiting requirement for citizenship is waived. That's the first thing. They said, “We'll get that waiver for you,” and they did. Then I am applying for an immigrant visa. We start working on this in probably early September. By the end of October, we have an immigrant visa. By the middle of November, we have a green card, and by early January, she's sworn in as a citizen. She got her naturalized citizenship and she got her official passport. If you remember, at that time, we didn't have diplomatic passports. We had the red official passport. She was able to go through that and get that.

When I was in my IDI training, my wife Pahn didn't speak English when we were married. So she's learning English. Marcia Babb, Tony Babb’s wife taught her English in Laos and she helped look after her first son, as a young baby. She had some English background but then when I went to IDI training in Washington, she took intensive language. There was an international language institute up in northwest Washington, near Columbia Road, and she studied eight hours a day over there. She loved the Hot Shopee cafeterias because you could go to that and point to what you wanted to eat if you didn't know the word for the food. You just go there and point, and they'd give you the food on a plate and you could eat lunch. She's studying English because she does have to take the citizenship exam. Because of the circumstances, I think the exam was pretty light. She passed it, and she became an American citizen.

So then I have a small problem because I'm applying for a passport with the State Department and they notice that my name is wrong. What happened is that when I was born, my birth certificate says Douglas J. Durning. When my mother remarried, and I was adopted by John Clark, it was spelled Douglas J-A-Y Clark. My high school diploma and my college diploma at the University of Denver were all Douglas J-A-Y Clark. But now I'm going to get an official passport and they're looking very carefully and they wouldn't accept the birth certificate issued at the time of my adoption in 1954. They said, “We have to see your original birth certificate to issue you an official passport.” So I had to go back to Oregon and get it. They said, “Your name is not Jay, it's only an initial.” So I went and asked my mother. I said, “Do I have a middle name J-A-Y? Or do I have an initial? Because I'm having a problem getting a passport.” She said, “It's an initial.” Then she told me the story that she didn't like middle names and so I was named Douglas Clark. She didn't like middle names because of her older brother, Benjamin Ralph Eastridge. Because his father was Benjamin, they used his middle name Ralph. She said, “I don't like middle names. I didn't have one.” Then the State said, “You got to fill that box. There has to be something.” She said, “Can it be an initial?” They said yes so she put in the initial. So the passport I got to go in the Peace Corps, they didn't pay attention to that. So I have a regular passport I used for the Peace Corps and I had the J-A-Y name. I had to go back. That took me about as long to get that fixed as it took Pan to get her green card. So we got all that done and now we have our official passports and we're able to go back to Laos. Because that was the one agreement that was a condition for entering our IDI class. That I would go back to Laos. That's okay. Now, my training was three months. We left in the middle of January to go back to Laos.

Q: You certainly didn't need language training.

DOUGLAS: No, the only thing I remember from my training in Washington is the training at Syracuse University. At that time, Syracuse University had that thirty-day intercultural training program for AID foreign service officers run by the Maxwell School. We took something like the ten or fifteen day version. We went up to Syracuse and took that and then came back. That was the one thing that I remember because it really helped me understand better how to interact with other cultures. I learned that on my own in Laos, but that was the one part of the training that I can recall helping me get ready to go back and go into the Foreign Service and go back to Laos and other countries.

Q: It's interesting, I don't remember that. But I was with you.

DOUGLAS: Well that was the course that Marcus Ingle, who was in our class, took. That's why Marcus became intoxicated with this idea of organizational dynamics and understanding how organizations work and he quit a couple years later and went back and got a PhD at Syracuse.

Q: That's right, you're right. Yeah. All right, let's move ahead. Two months in IDI training, and you're shipped off back to–immediately, directly back to Laos.

DOUGLAS: Yes.

Q: Tell us about that.

DOUGLAS: Okay, so if you remember the IDI program–international development intern program–was a two-year training program with automatic promotion after one year, automatic promotion after the second year and you get tenure. So it was a good program. Then when you went back to the mission, you had a training program and you had rotations to the mission. One thing about the IDI program, I don't know if you remember, Jerry Woods was the coordinator of our IDI program. Jerry Woods was a very famous Peace Corps volunteer in Thailand. He spoke absolutely fluent Thai to the extent he could tell better jokes in Thai than the Thai could. But Jerry had been involved in–and he extended for one year–something that comes up later in my life in Thailand. He'd been involved as a volunteer in the establishment of a district officer training academy. It's called the Nai Ampur Academy. That was a big effort by AID towards working towards decentralization. If we had better district officers, then we could do something on decentralization. When I came back to Thailand, twenty years later with AID, he was still fondly remembered for the work he did there. So he was the coordinator of our group.

Going back to Laos, I'm an agriculture IDI. So I'm assigned to the Office of Agriculture. The first thing they asked me to do is–if you remember at that time, we had proags–project agreements–that were signed with the government. Everything that you did, they had the three Ps, the PIOT, the PIOP and the PIOC. One for technical assistance, one for training and one for commodities. No one had–and we had several programs, we had a livestock program, an extension program, the

ADO program and irrigation program. Nobody had paid attention to these documents. So the first thing that the director of the office–that would have been Leroy Rasmussen–said was, “You're a smart guy, figure out what all we agreed to anyway and what all has been signed with the government.” I said, “What about the program office?” He said, “No, it's decentralized, we have to take care of that ourselves. But the person you're going to replace here–the Assistant Program Officer–fell asleep at the switch and I don't have any idea what we signed, and what has been committed for money.” So I went and did that. It was pretty straightforward. Just tracking and figuring it out.

In the course of that, I participated in an effort–we had a support project that paid for all Mission staff and their costs because there was no operating expense money at that time in AID, it was all one big bucket. All the money was in one. So if you paid for direct hire staff for example, it came out of what was called general technical support. So the mission had a general technical support project and that paid for all the staff in the AID mission, it paid for all their costs. So he said, “You need to participate in this effort, because we have to figure out what all of our costs are for our staff.” And I did that. I always remember, because I'm thinking about localization, I'm thinking about how much money really hits the ground even today. That AID mission spent about 60 million per year or something like that and about 15 million went to these costs. So actual money being spent to do things in Laos was about 45 million. That meant the cost of doing business was around 25 percent and the cost of what we did on the ground was about 75 percent. Now that didn't count because I never–I don't know how they did this. But there was cost sharing for all the use of aircraft. So I don't know if that was paid some other way. It wasn't paid out of that budget, in which AID paid for a share of using Air America Continental Air Services, and Arizona helicopter, which is the way you got around the country.

When my son was born in 1971, I was assigned to work with a humongous GAO [Government Accountability Office] team of about fifteen people. I was their coordinator and organizer in the AID mission. They had been ordered out there by Senator Ted Kennedy who said, “I want to know what all this refugee program is. How can you have refugees? Where are these refugees coming from? What are they?” What was actually happening was in Northern Laos the refugee program was providing support to the dependents of the Hmong who were fighting, essentially. They were displaced because they were moving from place to place all the time. So in the dry season, the Vietnamese pushed way down and then in the wet season the RLG pushed them back. So we had this constant territory being taken over and so people had to move. You may have had villagers who had to move out and move out quickly to get out of the way of the Vietnamese coming in. So they had this team that came in and they needed somebody. So the Mission Director Charles Mann said, “You're the person. Go over and work with these guys and keep them happy.” It was very interesting. I didn't know anything about the GAO. I knew nothing about congressional-ordered investigation. So I learned a lot from that. It was very helpful seeing that Congress is interested, that Congress believes they have a right to know and they're using the GAO as their means of learning. It came out okay in terms of understanding, at least, the Senator understood what was going on.

At that time, this was 1971, still, there's not a lot known about what's going on in this secret war that's really being conducted in Northern Laos.

So there has been a long tradition of the State Department assigning young foreign service officers to work in AID and AID didn't like it. There are these smart, young foreign service guys at the State Department that are messing around in our business, putting their spoon in our chili over here but we don't get to do that ourselves. Charles Mann–the Ambassador was McMurtrie Godley–he was known as the field marshal because the ambassadors in Laos controlled the bombing targeting. There's a novel written about the bombing officer. That bombing officer actually existed in the American Embassy. I'm gonna get to that in a minute because I'm going to meet him. So Charles Mann said, “If you're going to have this new foreign service office work in Northern Laos, why are you inviting young foreign service officers from AID to come into the embassy?” Godley said, “Good idea. If you have somebody who can speak Lao, and is a new foreign service officer, send them down next week because I want to have somebody work on the National Assembly elections of 1972.” So Charles Mann came back from this discussion and he said, “You're the one and you're gonna go down to the embassy, you're going to work in the political section.” There were general assembly elections, which were going to be the first big test of having elections in Laos in recent history. Those were going to be conducted in February of 1972. So I went to the embassy and started working on that.

For whatever reason, they had something called the great families airgram series. Now, if you remember, at that time, we don't have faxes, we don't have emails, everything comes by cable. Laos is highly classified. Everything coming in is classified. Strategy was classified. All the things you did were classified, basically. The airgram was basically written and put into a pouch then sent back to Washington. It was called the airgram because it was slow and went by pouch. That's why they were carrying all those pouches around, I guess. So they said, “We'd like to have you work on the great family airgram series while you're covering elections with us and learning about the candidates and things.” Laos was run by families, big families. There were three branches of the royal family so some of them were royalty-based and others were regionally-based.

There was the commercial family, the Sananikone family. They said, “We want you to write the airgram on this Sananikone family.” So I did. I went to work on that. Here's where I meet my college classmate, Manorak, because he is a part of the extended Sananikone family clan and his wife is a Sananikone. That's where I meet Phuangpahn Sananikone who was–AID sent four or five Lao off to get PhDs and he was one of them. So I spent my time understanding this family, what they did, what their political presence was. They were more interested in what the business parts of the family were. They ran Pepsi Cola bottling, they ran the ferry. They ran the ferry system that went across the Mekong and in and out of Laos to Thailand. Their enterprises included textiles, tobacco and many other enterprises across the economy, every major enterprise, they were involved in it. So I did that, it took a couple months to do it.

The interesting thing is that they gave me access to anything I wanted in the embassy about anybody. I learned about the way the embassy tracks people and learned about people. They had a card system that was like the dewey decimal card system in a library. These were drawers upon drawers upon drawers. Every time there was a new entry, you'd go back, there was a number and I went back, this is a known Sananikone, okay put that one known. You had this chronological series of bits of information that had been accumulated about people. I had developed my ability to read Lao, and for Charles Mann, the mission director, I read two Lao newspapers a day. These newspapers were like four pages, they were pretty scanty newspapers, but you could fan through them and see what was going on, at least what the Lao press was saying. I could look at some of the things they had in Lao also. I was impressed with what political officers did at that time, and how they were trying to understand the people that they were interacting with, whether it was in the government or outside the government. That was a lot of the material I used in doing this airgram report on the Sananikone family. I remember it was quite long, it took a long time to write it.

I got that finished and I helped on the elections. The elections went fine. It wasn't one of those 99 percent ones–there were hotly contested races in some of these places, like people going to the National Assembly. I finished that. I was probably there for four months maybe, I don't remember. Then my next assignment was to work in the program office. Here's where I meet a mentor named Gordon Ramsay. Gordon Ramsay was the associate mission director for program and policy. So he's the number three guy in the mission. He asked for me to come and help him do what was called the dry season review. The dry season review was done because any construction activity, the big work on the ground in the country, was done during the dry season. I must have finished in the embassy by January. The dry season it's mostly February, March, April, and maybe the end of May. The idea was that AID had several hundred pieces of heavy equipment, construction equipment, people, material, and how could they match all this up? Because what was coming out of the field were these activity proposals. Little short "we want to build a clinic, we want to extend the road by two kilometers, we want to build a school, we want to drill a well." So you had all these activity proposals that came in, and now you got to try to match it up. Where's the equipment located around Laos? We were using IBM, the punch card system, to prepare these massive computer reports. So we took everything and there was a way to organize it and then put it into the computer system where all we had and where the mismatches were. The job of the program office was to take the mismatches and figure out what to do. If they needed a bunch of bulldozers over there and you didn't have it, what did you do? If everybody's wanting wells drilled in southern Laos with the well rig and the rigs were up in northern Laos, what did you do? So that was what I did during that was to try to reconcile all of those differences.

Ramsay thought it was one of the best jobs that had been done and he said, "I think you should be a program officer, nevermind that agriculture thing." He said, "In fact, at AID, if you get stuck with those guys, you'll go no place. But if you want to go someplace in AID, the path is through the program office, because we're the people that do strategies. We're the people that allocate the budget. We're the people who see the overall program." He said, "I think you're very good about looking at all the pieces together. I would

suggest you think about that, let's talk about that." So just as we're finishing that, the first IDI group provided to Laos, a guy named Bob Aslan. Bob Aslan was out of the blue offered an assignment to DAC because spoke fluent French and said, "Would you like to come to Paris and work for DAC [Development Advisory Committee]?

Q: Development Advisory Council on the committee.

DOUGLAS: Ramsay said, "You need to go yesterday. This is a position you'll never–this is so rare to get this that you need to go now." So the solution was, well, what are we going to do about what he does, and he was the assistant program officer for regional affairs. That job worked with the regional economic development program in Bangkok, it was called R-E-D, RED. The genesis of RED was in 1966 or so President Johnson said, "If we can have peace in Vietnam, and peace in Indochina, I'm going to put up a billion dollars to further regional cooperation and investment." So they set up RED as that was going to be the home to do this. Laos was a participant. The big piece that was being done was with the Mekong committee. So this job is now empty. Ramsay went to the mission director, Charles Mann, and said, "I got the perfect candidate, Doug Clark, and forget about going up there and working in agriculture, he can come out and work with me. He can do this job and we'll stop his IDI program right now. Just assign him to this as his permanent job." So I never completed the full IDI training program because I stopped in the spring about six months short of the end of the program which should have been in October 1972. So that is the job. That's the position I had beginning in probably early 1972, maybe March. That's the position I had until I left Laos in June of 1975.

I'm working with the director of RED, Lee St. Lawrence. His deputy is a guy named Harry Petroquin, and the program officer is a guy named Bob Halligan. Halligan and Petroquin all wind up being mission directors and having pretty good AID careers. So that's what I started doing. Now I'm starting to move away from the AID mission. I'm not too much involved in the AID bilateral program. I start to be focused on these regional organizations they're trying to set up. I kind of lose an understanding of what's really going on in Laos to the extent I knew up until that time because I'm working with a much narrower part of Laos. I'm working with the Lao who are basically representatives to the Mekong committee because that was the big push, the Mekong committee. But RED was groundwork for this if this ever happened, of the billion dollars if it ever happened with the peace.

We're setting up these regional organizations. The first one I worked with was the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization. They set up SEATAC [Southeast Asia Transportation and Communication Organization]. Then they said they set up an agriculture one–the acronym of which I forgot–which was in the Philippines. The idea was that they'd set these up and they'd be headquartered in the different–basically what became later ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] countries. So there was one in the Philippines, there was one in Thailand, there was one in Singapore, there was one in Malaysia and there was the Mekong Committee, which at that time was only Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. But there had been a longtime proposal to put a mainstream dam across the Mekong north of Vientiane in a place called Pamong.

The United States, in those dollars at that time, had invested about forty million dollars in feasibility studies. They were down to the last feasibility studies. There were two and these were the ones I worked with. They had one on resettlement, because there was going to be a big reservoir created in Laos and then over in Thailand across the Mekong. That was something that needed to be done. Then they wanted to do a fishery study so that one had to be done. So there are two studies we started. Those were mostly based out of Laos. But the big thing I inherited and worked with was that through the RED–through the regional program–there had been a consortium put together to build the first hydropower project in Laos. That was at a place called Nam Ngum, which is up at the top of the Vientiane plain. The United States had asked–the Asian Development Bank was like a year old or maybe two years old–and they were asked to manage a fund that was going to finance this dam. The United States put in 50 percent and the remaining 50 percent came from the ADB [Asian Development Bank], the French and the British. When I became the regional program officer, that project was coming to a conclusion. They had finished a power selling agreement to Thailand. 85 percent of power or something like that was going to be sold to Thailand. The remainder was used in Vientiane on the Vientiane plain. So that was a big piece of what the AID mission in Laos was concerned about getting done.

The construction was being done by a Japanese construction company, Nippon Koi. They had a Japanese consulting engineer and then the United States to be sure that everybody was doing the right thing and hired their own consulting company to sit on top of everything, if it was an international company, Acres International, Canadian. That's why I worked with representing the AID mission, just is it proceeding okay. The guy - Gus Meirer - was the project manager for Acres International in Vientiane, he came over every single day to drink coffee and tell us what was going on–this is what's happened since yesterday–as we got this dam done. That's what I basically did for those next three and a half years.

We did a ferry ramp project upgrade. There had been a big issue about the proposals to build a bridge across the Mekong going from Nong Khai–which I mentioned was the exit point and going to Laos from Thailand and the entry point into Laos was at Tha Deauand to extend the Thai railway spur into Laos. The United States opposed it and the Japanese favored it. The opposition came from AID Washington because they kept doing economic benefit analysis. They didn't see it working out. So we would demand another cost benefit study. I think we did many of them. For my time I think we did two. We kept saying if you upgraded ferry ramps, it would be better, cost less and the Japanese wanted to build the bridge.. We never built it. Of course now there's something like four or five bridges across the Mekong all over the place. But at that time, there was great opposition by the U.S. and that caused some friction with the Japanese.

The other thing I did was with Charles Mann who said, “Okay, what I'd like to do since you're talking to all these organizations, I'd like you to also take on and understand what the other donors are doing here. So spend some time figuring out what all they do and what their programs are.” So I spent time and I did reporting telegrams and the like on the

French, British, the Asia Foundation, Canadians and Australians. So I did that. Obviously we were the major donor and the rest of them were very small donors. Those were the things that I worked with. The Nam Ngiep dam was commissioned in 1973. We began working on an expansion because it had far greater capacity to produce hydropower than the initial hundred and five megawatts of power produced. We started working on an expansion proposal to add another thirty megawatts and went back to the ADB and asked them to be the manager of a fund again. The United States decides that we're going to show that Laos is a responsible country and we're going to lend them our share, we're not going to grant it. So we're going to do a development loan, the first ever development loan to Laos, five million dollars. That's how our contribution was going to be made. So we negotiated it. We did a pretend negotiation. There weren't many things to negotiate. We signed a five million dollar loan in 1974.

On the political side in Laos, what is happening is that there's the Paris Peace Accords of 1973. That was laid out for Peace to be established in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. The Mekong Committee is having its annual meeting in Saigon, known as Ho Chi Minh City now. That's the only time I went to Vietnam. I went to that meeting in January of 1973. We're there when the Paris Peace Accords are signed. My understanding of the history is that the United States negotiated terms that they didn't share with the Vietnamese. The provisions about the Vietnamese were not ones that they had been privy to. There was instantaneous outrage and anger. The Vietnamese delegation at this Mekong committee just went berserk. Because you had representatives from other member countries, but also the donors, plus the ADB, plus the U.S. from regional economic development. I was there from Laos, they had three or four people from Bangkok led by Lee St. Lawrence, the Director of RED But in that Paris Peace Accords is a provision to set up provisional governments that the transition towards peace and towards a stable government would be to go through a process of a provisional government.

At this meeting were three alumni from DU - myself with the US delegation. My Lao friend Manorak with the Lao delegation. And a member of the Cambodian delegation - can not recall his name. We were at DU at the same time in the early 1960s

There's a guy who wrote a book called “Decent Interval.” He's a former CIA guy in Vietnam. That book was the one that went to the Supreme Court. Because he, in an unauthorized way, used classified material, he lost all of his royalties. He had to pay back all of his royalties to the federal government. I bought the book. It's banned, you can't get it. But in that book, he wrote that Kissinger wanted a decent interval for the United States to get out of Indochina. Not saying have things collapse at their feet. But there will be a decent interval between the departure of the US and the collapse of the governments we supported in Indochina -and these provisional governments would provide that.

The only place that did it was Laos. So in Laos, there's a ceasefire in 1973 and it's kind of calming down but there's still land grabbing by the North Vietnamese. The patriotic forces are called the Pathet Lao, and behind the Pathet Lao is the Communist Party of Laos. So it's like in Vietnam, you gotta have a soft front, the Vietcong. In Laos, you had the Pathet Lao and behind those you had hardcore Communist Party. The negotiation

started in Vientiane to set up the Provisional Government of National Union. The first thing they want to do is to neutralize the capital cities. Laos has two capital cities, it has the administrative capital in Vientiane and has the royal capital in Luang Prabang. In Luang Prabang is where the monarchy is traditionally located. So they start to negotiate the establishment of the Provisional Government of the National Union, and how are they going to share power and how are they going to neutralize the two capital cities. So they reach an agreement that there'll be a joint police force of the Pathet Lao, the communists, and the Royal Lao Government. They agree that there'll be a joint military, again, split between the two. The government cabinet will be split between the two. But Souvanna Phouma–who was a neutralist back in the beginning of the 1950s while the United States was worried about it going communist–will remain as the prime minister. This was established in the spring of 1974.

It doesn't affect the AID work, it doesn't affect the work I'm working with, the ferry ramps. We're going to upgrade the ferry ramps that's happening. The continued studies for the Pamong dam are happening. Michigan State University received the contract for the resettlement work that was ongoing, started in 1973. The fisheries were also going to be done by Michigan State, but that was being organized. The work was not–it didn't impact the things I was doing. After the peace accord in 1973, RED organized a gigantic effort to further U.S. investment in Indochina. The President of Bendix Corporation–I think they were formed in Indiana in fact, at that time–was the head of this. It was CEOs of big companies, including Boeing. I coordinated that visit. We brought these thirty or thirty-five CEOs to Laos to look at possible investment opportunities in Laos. They went to Vietnam and they went to Cambodia also. So interesting things were going on, on the assumption that there was going to be some type of peace established.

I read a lot about this since I left. I've thought a lot about it and those hardcore communists were not going to have peace. They were going to win. All you had to do was look at what's happening in Vietnam. You asked me the question about Vietnam, John, and I've thought a lot about it. I am unusual from the standpoint that I went to Thailand in September of 1964 as the Vietnam war started. I left Laos in June of 1975 and it's over. During that period of time, I have not been in the United States. I've been in these two countries, Thailand and Laos. I looked up last night and said, “I wonder where I was on the Vietnam Memorial wall?” If I look at September of 1964, there have been three hundred fifty Americans killed in Vietnam over the period 1956 to 1964. So the war is not in anybody's mind, really. At least in the United States because not much has happened yet. Except that we're starting to do some things that the American public hasn't seen. Then it builds up after that. You see that by the presence in Thailand of 60,000 troops. I read an article yesterday that said of the 3,000 days in which you could do bombing, we bombed for about 2,400. During that year, the bombing between 1964 and 1973–I didn't see the impact on bombing in Laos. I have friends that said we bombed a lot of dirt there, that we bombed where there was nothing there. There was always a big debate about were people leaving the area next to Vietnam because of the Vietnamese taking over? Or were they leaving because of the bombing? It was probably both. My earliest interaction was very limited in central Laos as people left because the Vietnamese were coming in and taking over their villages and taking everything. But the bombing

becomes more ferocious as time passes. I didn't see, as you saw maybe from the United States–I'm looking at the very limited end and maybe the wrong end of what was happening in Vietnam and I only went there once at this meeting in 1973. But you can see that by what's been written since that time that there was no way that you were going to overcome the commitment these communist individuals had.

Kaysone was the leader of the Communist Party for Laos. It was very clear, whatever it took, they would do it to prevail in the end. So we have a provisional government being established. The agreements have been made. Now we as Americans are sitting there in Vientiane and we're watching this unfold. The first thing you notice is nobody's counting all these people coming in. Probably they brought in more troops and more "police" into Vientiane than the agreement allowed. Because all of a sudden, these joint forces are present. Did they bother us? No, did they harass us? No. Life kind of goes on as normal. We're pretending like things are okay I guess. Were our families bothered? No, because in Laos, there never was a ban that your family couldn't be there. So if you were married and had children, you could be there. We wound up living in the Kilometer Six compound, which is where the American School was. It had about 140 houses there. It was good for small kids. You could play with other–there were a lot of small children that you could play with. But the security has deteriorated a lot. There's a lot of places in the country you can't go to. The Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao are not really respecting the ceasefire and things like that. So that didn't impede what I worked on.

We get into late 1974, early 1975–and I started working on an interesting project. The Mekong committee had an agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey. They were doing surveys of the mineral resources in Laos, which is a very resource-rich country. There's a mountain that is probably as high a percentage of iron ore you can get. When planes fly over, their compasses and all their electronic systems go out. Coal, all kinds of things. But there had been a study done by happenstance of well drilling in Thailand. They had looked at the drilling cores for these wells that were drilled under the USAID Accelerated Development Program. . A guy named–I remember, always gonna remember his name - Bob Hite - looked at these drilling cores and he said, "You know I'm seeing potash in these drilling cores. Where did you get these?" So they told him, and it was up in northeastern Thailand on the Khorat Plateau. He said, "If this is true, this is amazing, because it's so close to the surface." Most potash is deep below the surface, several hundred meters. This would have been within a hundred meters of the surface. He said, "Could we do some drilling trials on the Vientiane plain and up in northeastern Thailand?" So he came to Laos and asked us if we could help them. We said, "We don't know," because we haven't done something like that. So we went and talked to the well drilling people. We had two or three people do well drilling, Americans that worked for AID and they had drilling rigs. They said, "We can convert one of these drilling rigs and get these cores for you. Just tell us where you want to go." So we did that program.

The end of the story is at the end of 1975, this is where things are collapsing, they find that they've got a gigantic find of potash in the Vientiane plain. That is about eighty or hundred meters below the surface, which is very shallow and can be easily mined.

Things are starting to get bad. People are starting to get worried. I know we had discussions about how quickly we could draw down AID. We didn't. It became kind of–I wouldn't say a panic, but people started shipping a lot of stuff off to the APO in early 1975. Vietnam falls in April of 1975. The only impact on Laos is that there is an increased number of flights that are going into Saigon taking gold down to Saigon because people are needing gold to pay to get their way out.

As a side comment, another thing I did when I was an IDI is that I did a study of commercial aviation in Laos. Charles Mann, the director, said, “Why are there so many airlines? And why are there so many airlines that have charters that don't even have any airplanes?” So I looked at it and it was true. They had a lot of incorporated airlines that had licenses to do business but weren't flying. There had been all kinds of wild proposals to fly gold from South Africa to Laos because Laos did not have an import tax on gold and didn't have export restrictions. So it was a gigantic smuggling point into Thailand and Vietnam. As things are starting to get bad in 1975 in Laos, there's a lot of gold that seems to be moving down to Vietnam and who knows what that's being used for except maybe to get out.

In April of 1975, the AID mission director Charles Mann leaves. He's been appointed the assistant administrator of AID for management. Charles Whitehouse is the Ambassador. He's the father of Sheldon Whitehouse, the senator from Rhode Island of today. He is leaving because he's been assigned to be the Ambassador to Thailand. If you remember this name, Alexis Johnson was some type of towering figure of the political establishment of the State Department in the 1950s or19 60s. His son is a political officer, and he's in Laos. He's saying, “State Department, are you thinking about the signal you're sending? Because you've got your two most powerful heads of the U.S. in Laos leading at the same time?” They said “No, no, no, don't worry about that.” Vietnam falls a couple weeks later.

So in early May, obviously it's clear to the Lao that they're not going to last long. So Lao slowly or I don't know maybe it was rapid, Royal Lao Government–the people that the United States supported–started to leave. They start to leave to Thailand, they start to leave to go to France and do we stop doing things? No. But we don't–the people we're working with they're not there. By around May 17, we woke up, our compound was surrounded at Kilometer Six, that compound where AID is located has been taken. The People's Revolutionary government has taken over. So we're stuck momentarily. The compound where AID was was about half a mile around it and inside it were several buildings. There was a USAID headquarters, a two-storey building, windowless for rocket attack. Next to us was the defense attaché's office. Across from that was the Research Management Bureau, which belonged to another agency. Then there were several offices where the technical parts of AID were located. There was a swimming pool, there was a commissary, there was a gas station, there was a club, all that stuff in that–and that compound was taken. The AID office and the attaché office had marine guards that were in those buildings. They had big steel doors you could roll down and then the building was supposed to be one you could defend. They rolled down the doors and they stayed in there for what turned out to be a week before there was an agreement for how we're going to leave Laos.

So we're out at Kilometer Six. We're not allowed to leave. We're in the compound. There's no security. We had a guard that was kind of like a guard at a shopping center, a security guy with no gun standing at a little gate. A little up and down armed gate that went out of the housing compound. They closed that off. So we couldn't leave. We had our own phone system. So everybody had a telephone that was hooked in. It was an AID telephone system. It was run by Thai third country national employees. There was a building down inside the compound where this was operated from. It had no windows–in fact, you wouldn't even know it was a building people would be in. You'd think it was kind of an air conditioning building or something. They locked themselves in that building and kept the phone system working so that we could stay in communication. So the calls were made. This group saved us in a way because we could stay in communication across all buildings and houses in the embassy system.

Here's what's happened. Stay calm, stay in the compound. We'll just wait and see what happens. The Chargé Christian Chaplain had been called, therefore, to a meeting with this People's Revolutionary group at the Ministry of Education. After fourteen hours of being held there, he signed the Treaty of Vientiane. Which you can't have a treaty because that's gotta be signed by the U.S., it's gotta be passed by the U.S. Senate in theory. It basically said that AID had to abolish its mission by June 30 of 1975. There could be an orderly departure of Americans and those Americans had to leave with appropriate travel documents and permanent visas through immigration checkpoints. That was what the treaty did, it applied to us. We had a big third-country national workforce in Laos. I wrote this note last year about what life was like and I said, “There were probably two to three hundred direct-hire foreign service, about three hundred third-country nationals and over 2,000 Foreign Service national staff in Laos at that time.” We had Taiwanese, we had South Vietnamese, we had Thai and we had Iranians that were third-country nationals. I would say that I was not worried about it for some reason. I don't know why.

But inside the U.S. embassy, now you'd go back and say they were worried because they were slowly taking those third-country nationals out of it. The Thai could easily get across the border. In fact most lived in Thailand and commuted into Laos each day and then back home at night. But all the non-Thai, they were slowly taking them out. They had what they call black flights and all of the aircraft the embassy and all of the agencies used came in and out of Udorn in Thailand. It was a big air base, Udorn. All these Air America aircraft were parked over there at nighttime. So they were going back and forth, back and forth and they weren't checking in and checking out. We had Mr. Lin, who was one of our program office employees. In fact, he wound up coming back and working at PPC in Washington. But he was Taiwanese and all of a sudden he just wasn't there. Then here's the Iranian guys who run the supply and warehousing system. They aren't there, they're gone. They were slowly getting these people out over March and April. So that's diminished.

With the signing of the agreement we can move around and can move out of K-6.. Gordon Ramsay is the acting mission director. He asked a group of us who spoke Lao toe to coordinate the evacuation of the Americans that were there. So we have to get them

out through immigration checkpoints and that's basically the airport. So the embassy charters–Royal Lao has one jet aircraft, an old British Comet. Now we're going to start to organize the people on those flights and send them to Bangkok. I think that's probably about the 24th or 25th of May, something like that. We can now start to do that.

Right away, as you can imagine, there's a lot of problems. We don't have access back into the compound and for safekeeping, people have kept their passports in their desk. They don't have a passport but they gotta have a travel document before we can get out. Now we find that there are a number of relationships that have never been codified into a marriage. Is that spouse going to qualify to get out or not? Because they're not seen as a part of the American presence. There are children born in these relationships. What about those children? They don't even have a travel document. We have several problems that are cropping up for what we can do. There was one famous case of a family with five or six children. He had just had a child born and they had that child's passport. So the embassy put everybody else on that passport. He had one passport with about eight people on it because you could do it at that time. You could add people to a passport in some way.

So we started figuring out how we're going to start to get people out and get to the aircraft. We can leave the K-6 compound but we gotta check through the guard, who's got a North Vietnamese advisor with him, to get out of that compound. In the week before, we've got people that are patrolling outside, and we are patrolling inside ourselves. I have to say we were probably nuts, because we would tell these Pathet Lao communist soldiers that were armed while we're standing on the other side of a fence with no weapons, “You can't come in here. Don't try to step across that line.” We were nuts. But anyway, we did that. And they did not bother us or try to come into the compound.

That's where I had my favorite story. I met a Pathet Lao soldier who was just standing out there guarding. I started talking to him. We learned that a lot of these soldiers were from the northern Laos hill tribe group called the Lao Thung. And he was. I said, “Why don't you like America?” He said, “You know this guy, Max Lenin?” I said, “No, I don't know Max Lenin.” So he's saying Marxist Leninism. And he's saying, “You know Max Lenin?” I said, “No, I don't know Max Lenin.” He said, “Well, we learned about that because we have classes and we're taught. What we're taught was that Max Lenin doesn't like bombing and you've been bombing us. We can't go anywhere and we can't grow anything. We don't like that. The Americans have been very bad and that's why we don't like Americans. You've come and you've taken all of our rice. You've taken all of our food. The Lao in the villages don't have anything to eat.” I was in Lao and we were buying their rice. Yeah, maybe there was–who knows what they're talking about. “That's why we don't like the Americans, and we want the Americans to leave. We want Lao to run Laos.” That was his mindset.

So they kept us surrounded. Then we're organizing in Kilometer Six for who's going to go. So obviously it's women and children. In the first group, we identify fourteen mothers and forty-six children that would be in the first group that would go, that would be sixty people. So we had a school bus that was at the American school. We got the school bus,

got somebody to drive it and we got organized to go. We were called and said you can leave for Wattay airport, and we'll be in maybe the second charter flight, I don't recall. So we do that and we get to the gate and they won't let us leave. So I called back. There's a phone I can get to call back to the embassy at the front gate guard post. Why can't we leave? They said, “The agreement is you can leave.” So I asked them why and they said, “We want to see each person's bag.” Each person could take one bag. They said, “No, that's not the rule.” They said, “Go back and tell them that's not the rule.” I said, “That's not the rule.” The guy raised his gun and said, “Don't ask the rules, because we're making the rules here.” So I said, “Let me call back at the embassy.” Luckily, at the embassy was somebody from the new foreign minister or the acting foreign minister who was actually a neutralist, so he wasn't a hardcore communist and wanted this thing to end. He got on the phone and said, “Let them go. You don't have to inspect the bags. We're agreeing that these people can leave.” So after about another hour of standing there, they let us leave.

Now we're gonna go to the airport. I didn't know that the 700 or 1,000 security guards that worked for AID at the embassy had gone on strike because they wanted a bigger severance package. They had blocked the road going from Kilometer Six out to the airport. I was trying to figure out how we can get to the airport. There was a way we could go back around the backside of Vientiane and get there on a rutted road. It was May. It was muddy. We got stuck a couple of times, but we finally got out to the airport, and that group of people got to leave. Bob Dakan was the guy who went with a duffel bag and scooped up as much local currency as he could because he needed some facilitation money. He was working at the airport trying to get people through so that they could pass through the customs. Some people we sent down to the border with Thailand at Nongkhai and they went across by land. Some people were still flown out on the black flights. I think that evacuation was about seven hundred people out of the embassy–including the embassy and USAID. The biggest problem we had at the end of the day were pets and they wouldn't let pets go. People were trying to smuggle pets in their suitcases and in their purses and all kinds of things to get them out. Some people succeeded, some didn't. That was probably the saddest part because you've had this big issue just recently in the state department of not being able to move animals around because of COVID. So we had that same issue there. So the evacuation ended. Now we're going back to the compound. Gordon Ramsay probably has about fifteen to twenty of us that stayed after the evacuation is over.

Q: Has your wife already departed?

DOUGLAS: Yeah, my wife and son had left. They were in that bus load of women and children. Yes. That was pretty traumatic for her. Obviously for any family it was pretty traumatic because who knew what was going to happen? And we were going to stay. We went back–I was still at Kilometer Six. So we have this house full of stuff–cars and all kinds of things. So we decide to bet that we can save something we're going to–this is before people leave. You could take personal belongings and put them in a pile with your name on them at the American school gym. In the end most of the belongings taken to the gym did get to the US and their owners.

Now people have left, the evacuation is over and the People's Revolutionary Government said, “It's now time to talk about the provision of the 1973 peace accords that talks about healing the wounds of the war.” That's the phrase. What's been interpreted since that was signed were reparations. They want to talk about the turnover of the program and healing the wounds of the war. We're given back the compound. We go back. There's maybe fifteen of us, I think, that stayed with Gordon Ramsay, maybe more than that. But there was a core group of us of about fifteen. We set up and get ready to talk to representatives of the Revolutionary People's Government about turning over the program and about reparations. So we went to the American Community Association restaurant and we set up a meeting. We turned the big restaurant into a conference room. We have all the documents all organized by all the different projects we had. We had a project and everything, and what the assets were and we're going to have this meeting.

In the meantime, we have these residences out in the city that people have been living in, in addition to our Kilometer Six compound. They say all the stuff in those houses belong to us because you paid for it out of money you were supposed to give to us. Here's where an inventory system works. We had a bin card inventory system. We did buy furniture and all kinds of stuff from those houses that came out of that general technical support project that I mentioned earlier. He said, “You got this concept of public property and private property.” We'll go to these homes and we'll take the bin cards. That is, what is in that home that belongs to you and the rest of it is private property belonging to them and they agree. So he goes and it was kind of sorted out that way. End of the story is we did get personal belongings over to Thailand and back to the U.S. and people got maybe 80 percent of what they put into those piles of what was in their house for personal belongings. Some things were lost, or some things were stolen along the way.

There were people who had packed up to leave because their tours were over and they left in advance of this. Their household goods were sitting at Wattay airport waiting to be flown to Udorn. Bob Dakan went down to try to negotiate with the Pathet Lao for getting that done. He said that the crates had kind of already left Laos really because they were at the airport and didn't belong to you. So they did get those out.

When we went back to the compound, they said, “What is this post office here?” It was full, it was just jammed with stuff people were mailing out. Bob Dakan was at this one also and said something to the effect of “You can't touch that.” They said, “Why not?” They said, “Because it's already in the Swiss postal system. Once it comes into this building, we can't touch it. It left Laos.” And they agreed. All that stuff was sent away.

When they gave us back the compound, they said, “You need to inspect it. We'd like to have somebody go with us to be sure that we're giving the compound back to you in a proper way.” So we go building by building, there's the AID building, here's attaché building, here's the restaurant, here's all these other buildings we had in there that are technical. We have one building–Research Management Bureau–and they've already written in gigantic letters painted on a building: “This is the headquarters of the CIA” in Lao. Gordon Ramsay was saying, “If we have to go into that building, we're in big

trouble." He walked over with him. I wasn't with him. We walked by that building and he said, "Oh, we don't need to look at that building. That's okay. Just leave that alone." So we didn't.

I took a Pathet Lao general, to go to the American Community Association restaurant. I'd been the chairman of the American Community Association Board which ran a restaurant, a movie theater, a gas station and a commissary. So you want to look at all of this, and at the commissary and they were very puzzled because the power had not been shut off and all the frozen stuff was still there. He said, "What is this?" He picked it up. It's hard. It's frozen. They said, "Aha! We always wondered how you'd eat." I said, "Yeah, this is all frozen food that people buy and they cook it and they eat it." He said, "We always wondered how you eat because we're watching you." We learned long after this that in Kilometer Six, we had these bungalow style California houses built there. One story, maybe 1500 square feet, couple bedrooms. We had a big piece of land and we landscaped it. You could beautifully landscape this because you were in the tropics and everybody had a gardener. There was a Pathet Lao intelligence colonel, who was out there that ran all these gardeners. That's how they watched us. He said, "We could see what you eat. We couldn't figure out where it's coming from." He picked this thing up–I don't know what it was–he just kept picking up and looking at it and touching it and looking at it. He was amazed. That's how we existed and how we ate. That was it.

So we have 2,000 plus Lao employees. They haven't come to talk to us about that yet. We still have our cars and we can drive around Vientiane.

We can drive our cars. We decided that we better get the personal files of all Lao staff out of that AID building and take them down to the embassy. Now the Marine who was in there for one week had burned all the classified material. The classified material that was used in AID was so huge, that the safe was probably as big as a living room in a large home. It was probably about thirty feet by twenty feet. I didn't have anything done and all my things I did with the regional economic development, everything was classified. He burned everything in that room on the roof of the building. But we also had personnel files for all the Lao employees. So we decided we better do something about that. We started to put these under the mats of our trunks and drive down to the embassy. Then they turned over and they burned them or I don't know if they burned them or kept them. So we kept wondering, "When are they going to come in here and look at this? So we got them all out. All the files, we got out of that building of the FSN [Foreign Service National] employees.

We had an agreement from Washington to pay them severance pay. I don't remember what it was, three months maybe. Representatives show up one morning and say, "They closed the gate to the compound after we arrived there and said that the severance pay is not enough." I think it was another three months they wanted but we didn't have the money for that. So they come in. There were two AID employees. One was an irrigation engineer and one was a public works civil engineer that worked for AID and were the leaders of the People's Revolutionary government to talk to AID. So they were inside AID all this time as FSNs, and now they're leaders of the People's Revolutionary

government, coming in and talking to us. We didn't know that. Should have surmised that some time ago, but I don't think anybody did. They asked for the extra money. They said, “You're not leaving until you give us the extra money.” I always remember, the one guy t said, “You can use that phone right there. You can call Washington just like when you called them up and said, 'bomb over here, bomb over there.' You call them up and say, 'we want this money.' You call up the Secretary of State and say, 'I want this money.' And nobody's leaving this building until you do it.”

We had this foreign exchange program in which we provided foreign currency to Laos. It was called the Foreign Exchange Operations Fund. It was funded by the French, the British and the United States. We had the biggest share. So that generated local currency and local currency was “sterilized” in the central bank. So Ramsay's saying, “You know what we're going to do? We're just going to pay this out and who cares what happens. But if we're ever asked to explain it, we say, ‘We're just going to desterilize some of that money sitting in the central bank in our account. That we've sterilized the result of injecting the foreign currency into the economy.’” So we did. So we just pretended like calling up and begging, and this and that. They said, “Yeah, they're going to agree.” So we paid them the extra money and that ended that crisis. We were there for about fourteen hours. They kept us in the building and wouldn't let us leave.

Then the next episode is now to talk about the turnover of the programs. We had a big meeting, made sure everything was there. What they discover, there's no cash. It's stuff only. We got vehicles, we got equipment, we've got supplies, we have a gigantic warehousing information system that's got huge inventories of tin roofing sheets. Any kind of commodity used to build something, we had it. They were looking for cash. So that meeting stalled and we were kept there for a while longer. At the end of that, I began to think about leaving. There was not much else to do and there would be no turn over agreement. Bob Dakan, Win McKeithen and I went to Gordon Ramsay and we said, “We know we have to leave by the 30th of June. But there doesn't seem to be any reason for us to stay here any longer because there's nothing yet to resolve. We've done everything we can possibly do and we should just all leave. There's nothing left to do.” This is around the middle of June, maybe two weeks ago, maybe more than that. Ambassador Habib would come as a special Emissary of the Secretary of State. He had said, “Leave as soon as you can. Be responsible.” There had been no request to close the embassy. In fact, the embassy stayed open. It never closed like it did in Vietnam and Cambodia. They pulled down to about six State Department Foreign Service but they never closed.

That was not a topic during the end of the American presidents supporting the royal Lao government. But the dissent channel, we know the dissent channel in the State Department, right. So in Bangkok, is the USAID Laos liaison office. I don't remember the guy's name because I got a blank and probably for a reason why. He submitted a dissent telegram and said that the Americans in Laos, negotiating the departure of AID were irresponsible and derelict in their duties by not trying to negotiate withdrawal of all of our assets there and that was going to cost the American taxpayer millions of dollars. We heard about this thing and said, “Wow, that's nuts.” So Habib comes out, and he said, “Don't pay attention to that. Whatever you have to do to leave, just do it.” So that was the

first thing we bumped into. There's a view in the American government that is nuts. We bump into it in another way. It was a disappointing part of my AID career.

We're in Laos, we've evacuated our wives and children. Bob Dakan, my good friend, you know him well. He has two daughters and his wife, Maya. They go to Bangkok and they're on a different flight than my wife. My wife shows up in Bangkok, has a young son, and the Embassy in Bangkok said, “These people can't stay in Thailand. They have to leave. It's a bad signal to the Thai government.” So we're saying, “Wait a minute. We're gonna stay here and our wives are gonna go someplace? Where are they gonna go?” So we went back to Ramsay and he said, “This is crazy. Why is the Embassy in Bangkok doing this? Any hippie backpacker can show up at the airport in Bangkok, and get a thirty-day entry permit with no questions asked. Why is the embassy telling us to send”--so we had a big fight about that. They said, “All they can stay is fourteen days. It's not a Thai policy. It's a Bangkok embassy policy. Because we don't want the people from Laos hanging around here in Bangkok. They should immediately move on.” I don't recall the word they used. They basically said, “We don't want to cause any problems with the Thai by having all these USAID Laos people or embassy Laos people in Bangkok.” He relented that you could stay for fourteen days or whatever it was. This is '75 so there's a couple of big hotels that are U.S. military hotels for people that are on temporary duty, those kinds of things. That's where our wives and children stayed while we were staying for another three weeks or so. So we went to Gordon Ramsay and we said, this is what we think we should do. He said, “I think I'm gonna stay till the thirtieth. But you guys, why don't you leave? You're right. There's nothing more we can do.” So we left in the middle of June. That was the end of our assignments in Laos. That was the end of it.

Q: That's probably the most detailed discussion of the departure scenario that will be in any oral history.

DOUGLAS: I don't know if you've talked to other people. Some of them–a lot of them have died since that time. But it's an interesting phenomenon that happens to you. I had this happen to me in Laos. I had it happen to me in the Philippines during the People's Power Revolution, because we were there for that. I had it happen to me in Egypt during the invasion of Kuwait in the Gulf War. For some reason, you're not impacted–at least I wasn't–by what was going on around me because you're just trying to do something. Maybe that's what compartmentalizing did. But during that period, we're just trying to do things and there wasn't really a stopping to see is this the right thing to do or not? Is this dangerous? Whatever it is. I just kept trying to get what we thought we needed to do done. Things popped up with surprises. There were other problems in other parts of the country because you had all these–John Tucker was a foreign service officer in Savannakhet and he got held for about three days. Mike Rogell, who I mentioned, was a finance officer in the AID controller's office. Ramsey said, “You're done, Mike. We've got everything set up to pay off these FSNs, you can go.” So he went to the airport and they said, “No, you can't leave yet. You can't leave until everybody's actually been paid.” So they knew enough to know that Mike was associated with the paying and he had to wait another day or two before he could leave.

Bea Perez was the secretary to the Mission Director. I know she stayed until the end. Mac Thompson, it was a refugee relief officer and he stayed to the end. I think there were three people who stayed till the thirtieth and then they left. So in the meantime, we're sitting around laughing and joking at night. We were sitting in Bob Dakan's house and Bob got a globe on his coffee table. Bob says, “You know what? When we finish here, we're gonna get the worst assignment that AIDS has left if they got any.” There was not a big RIF, by the way, that was the interesting thing. Out of all of Vietnam and Cambodia and Laos, there were one or two people who got RIFed out of that whole thing. Everybody else was absorbed back in or whatever or were left on their own volition, which was kind of amazing. The people left very early, like in three to four weeks before we did. They were getting assignments as they came back to Washington. Most of the assignments were because of the big crisis at that time, which was in the Sahel. So people were getting assigned to West Africa by and large. So Bob says, “I'm pretty sure we're not going to get good assignments out of this thing. Whatever's left is what we're going to get.” That's true because I got Chad and he got Upper Volta. Those were our assignments when we left. As soon as we showed up in the United States that's what–I think they let us enjoy our coming back cause we went to Hong Kong and Tokyo and Hawaii and then came back after that. I will say that once I left Thailand and got to Hong Kong, I didn't realize how tired I was. I was mentally and physically exhausted. There was no question about that.

Q: We're at twelve o'clock. I think we should cut off. We've covered a tremendous amount of interesting material.

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Q: Hello, this is John Pielemeier on November 28th along with Doug Clark. We're doing our third interview in his oral history. We have come back, and we've just closed the AID [United States Agency for International Development] mission in Laos in amazing fashion. Doug is assigned and brought back to Washington and going into French language training. Doug we will let you take it from there.

CLARK: Okay, I think I get my direct assignment to Chad before I get back but I'm on home leave in Colorado that's where my parents are living. I got the assignment, and I'm supposed to report to Washington—I think it was the end of August, 1st of September for French language training—It was scheduled for sixteen weeks and to get a FSI two level in French. So come back to Washington, rent a house temporarily in Falls Church, and start French language training.

So now I'm meeting the real AID Washington, something I didn't know about. I've come back from eleven years of being overseas in two countries as a Peace Corps volunteer in AID [United States Agency for International Development], PSC [Personal Service Contractors], then Foreign Service. Those eleven years are all doing things on the ground. The first thing I learned through a friend is that I actually was asked to be sent on a directed assignment to the regional economic development office in Bangkok, who I'd

worked with, and personnel turned that down because at that time, there still was a Cold War policy in effect, mostly in Eastern Europe, that you couldn't be assigned to the country of the birth of your wife. So they nixed that assignment, but that's how I got thrown in to go to Chad.

So the next thing that happens is kind of—here we go with the process—is that all of us—our wives waited for us in Bangkok, while we were finishing up in Laos, and it was about three weeks with our children. The Lao Desk said, "File a travel voucher for the expenses while you're in Bangkok." So we did and several others did. Sometime not too soon after that, we got denied because we had not gone to the directed evacuation point. So because we didn't go to the directed evacuation point, which was the United States, we had made our choice, and therefore we had to pay for it. There was a guy who was in the finance office, I forgot his name, who filed a grievance. Two or three years later, they turned it down. So nobody got paid for putting their wives and children in Bangkok.

So anyway, I see Washington is a different place. I better start learning about this because this process is different from what I had known from working with AID. Before I started French language training at the FSI—and I have to say that my AID career had very few bad points in it, but this was one of them. I thought the French language instruction at the FSI was terrible. From this standpoint—because I had learned Lao. I had learned Thai. I was watching what was happening with the groups around me at FSI, who were learning languages, and the instructors were enthusiastic. They were telling you about what was behind the language because behind language is culture and those kinds of things. And these instructors were just there clocking in and clocking out and cashing a paycheck. They just weren't interested. So you did your drills and you went home and you came back and you did more drills, but there wasn't anything behind it except that. We had one instructor who was Belgian and wasn't French. He was kind of looked down upon by other French instructors. Now this guy was really interesting because he was retired from the French Foreign Legion. He would take that language and kind of bring it alive in the way in which we used it. So we plodded along in French, and I finally finished. I had to take French for like four more weeks, or something like that because I wasn't a good student in French. I think I finished French in maybe January of 1976.

In the meantime, there were two of us studying French from Laos, Bob McCroskey, who was a livestock advisor and was the last executive director of the Agriculture Development Organization in Laos. His son Del McCroskey served in the Foreign Service—had a very good career in AID—retired fifteen twenty years ago or something like that. So Bob McCroskey and I are assigned to Chad. The mission director is a guy named John Lundgren, who dresses in black and is a martial arts guy. You may know him, John.

Q: I know him. He's also a theater specialist. He's an actor.

CLARK: He was going to put in place this massive, integrated rural development project in Chad. It was going to have a large number of Americans out working as advisors over in Chad and things like that. We thought this program was crazy, Bob and I did. I always

remember that on Halloween of 1975, John Lundgren had learned that we weren't too interested in going to Chad. So he was on a TDY [Temporary Duty Assignment] and he asked to have a meeting. We said, well, we could be there for a little bit, but it was Halloween. I had a young son, and Bob had his kids. We went to a meeting with John Lundgren that lasted from, I don't know, right after we studied French, till into the evening that night when he was trying to sell us on going to Chad. And the more he talked about this program, the more we thought it was crazy. So Bob McCroskey basically said, I'm old enough, I joined the AID from the faculty at Oregon State University, I can go back, and if I can't find something else to do, besides going to Chad, I'll just leave AID. He was kind of shocked by that. So he made his pitch.

In the meantime, when I would go over to main State, which is where AID was, I run into people who say, "what are you doing?" I said, "I'm going to Chad," and they say "That's nuts. Why do you want to go to Chad?" I said, "Because they told me I need to go to Chad." So Harry Petroquin who had been the deputy director of the RED program [Regional English Development Program] in Bangkok. Harry was trying to find where I was, and he found I was in French language training so he asked me to come over and see him. He basically said the best job for you is to go with me to Senegal because as a part of this massive effort to respond to the Sahel crisis in West Africa, AID was going to begin the establishment of the Senegal River Basin committee. It would mirror kind of the Mekong committee. You would have three countries Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal. He said, "I think you'd be perfect to come with me to Senegal."

Now Harry had been assigned already, so he was working from Washington before he went out to Senegal. The reason why he wasn't going yet is because there was a big dispute about who he was going to work for. In the regional economic development program in Southeast Asia, the director did not work for any Ambassador in Southeast Asia. They worked for the assistant administrator for Asia on the basis that I can't work for a single embassy because then I look like I'm leaning towards an embassy—It's not nonpartisan, so to speak. So Harry was waiting for that decision to be made, but the Ambassador in Senegal wasn't buying it. He said, "anybody in Senegal works for me." So there was a dispute there, and Harry basically said, I'm not going to go until this dispute has been resolved. But he said, "anyway, we'll get there, and I'll get your assignment changed," and he did. I got changed from Chad, to go to Senegal in early 1976 or so. So now we're not having an agreement for how the structure is going to be set up. The Ambassador won't approve my assignment until this is resolved. So I'm sitting in the Africa Bureau in the office run by a very powerful person at that time, David Shear.

Q: David's memorial service was two weeks ago.

CLARK: I saw that. So David was kind of the architect of ramping up this gigantic effort to try to respond to that crisis in the Sahel starting in the early 70s. It was interesting, as they're trying to start up a program and I worked—did this and that—but I had no assignment. Basically I was just whatever I could do informally. So I did that for several months. I kept having people say, "What are you doing? Why don't you want to do

something different?" What's interesting was I had an offer from the State Department with a former councilor of administration in Vientiane in Laos named Roger Provencher.

Roger had known me because I was the chairman of the American Community Association in Laos. So for two years, I ran the board that ran the commissary, the PX [Post Exchange], the gas station, all that stuff. Roger, I guess, liked what I did, because I had to work very closely with him at the embassy because a lot of what we did depended upon direct support from the embassy. He said, "I'm looking for smart young guys to go with me to Iran. Would you be interested in transferring to the State Department? However, if you do that, you're going to have to change your aspirations in life and go into the management column." There were two people that he liked from Laos, another guy who was named Joe Chudzick, who worked for AID as an assistant program officer. And Joe went, and I said, I don't think I want to do that. I don't think I want to be—my aspiration is to be in international development. That's what I've done for eleven years. I want a career in that, and I'm not wanting to go to Iran. I'm not wanting to transfer to the State Department. Actually we'd had a very big presence there at that time, and so that was phasing out.

So I mentioned I did running, and I'm sitting there saying well I'm back in the United States, but I'm from Colorado, I did a lot of running at altitude. I liked it. And I'm thinking about competing and things. I'm thinking about the fact that the Marine Corps Marathon is gonna have its first running in October 1976. So I'm starting to think I'm gonna start training for this, and I did. I had a medical problem that got me in the hospital. I was in Fairfax County Hospital in the spring or maybe towards December of 1976. I was in the hospital. I get a call from personnel and they say, "Is this Doug Clark? We're trying to track you down." I say, "You tracked me down but I'm in the hospital today." They say "Okay, could we talk to you?" And that was an offer to go to Panama. And I said, no, I don't speak Spanish. I just finished speaking French, so I'm not going to be too helpful to you in Panama, so I turned that away.

So Harry said, let's go to Senegal and try to get this program launched. They've got this structure set up, they're legally established, and they got their first staff. The deputy director was going to be one of the people we worked with who was a representative to the Mekong committee from Vietnam. He had been one of the early people out of Vietnam, and so they hired him, while they were waiting to figure out how they were going to appoint a deputy from the three countries. Harry said, "we're gonna go out." At that time, if you remember, John, we had a structure of program development. We did as a first step a PIP. So Harry said, we're gonna go and we're gonna write several PIPs. So we're gonna go for a month, in July. So I went.

We wrote about ten, twelve, fifteen PIPs. All we did is we copied all of what we've done at the Mekong committee, a hydrological survey, a fishery survey, look at the Manantali Dam that had been built in Mali by the Chinese and do a technical assessment of that. So we set up several things, and we're looking to work back with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Department of Interior, things like that. We got all these pieces ready for AID Washington to look at, and Harry still hadn't been approved. I came back and they told

me, "We don't know how long this is going to take to get your assignment approved. Do you want to wait or do you want to look for another assignment?" I said, "I don't think I want to wait." At that time, about the next day, one of our IDI [International Development Intern] group classmates, David Mein, found me. He said, would you like to be the program officer in the Office of Agriculture in the Technical Assistance Bureau because the program officer who is a GS employee is retiring.

David was the head of the management part of the technical assistance bureau. I took that assignment and started in August or so of 1976. That was a different assignment than I had in the past. That's okay, let's learn. There were three assistant program officers that worked for me, and they were assigned out to the divisions. They had several divisions in the Office of Agriculture. I worked for the person who had been looking for someone from the Foreign Service because he was Foreign Service himself, who was the director of the offices, Leon Hester. Leon Hester was a very senior agriculture specialist. I think he was a PhD. His was in one of the crop specialties. He had just come back a year or so before from successfully establishing a gigantic program in Pakistan. It was very well respected in the agency, and it was very well respected outside of AID. That's the kind of person I like to work for because hopefully I can learn a lot by working for him.

We worked together very well while I was there. That office had probably a hundred projects. Most of them were research projects. They had a few predating the IDIQ [indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity] and the IQC [Indefinite Quantity Contract]. They had these mission support projects where you did a BP [Blanket Purchasing Orders] or something like that. But the mission was to get thirty days or forty-five days of technical support, and then after that, they had to go on their own, pay for themselves, and set up a project of some kind. But most of it was research projects that were basically conducted by the land grant universities. They had a group that worked on grains, a group that worked on soils management, and on irrigation. The largest program was providing grant support to the international research centers. The interesting thing was that most of the heads of these divisions came from the land grant universities under the Inter Personnel Act where the government could borrow staff from other parts, local government, state government, and land grant university. So a lot of the division heads were from the land grants.

The person I came to like a lot —I have no idea what happened to this guy—but Earl Leng came from Nebraska. He was a good old farm boy, and he got a PhD in grains. And he ran that division, and he was really good. He knew the technical topic of grains, but he also knew how to run an organization. His projects were the best ones in terms of how they were designed, how they got implemented, and what they produced.

So that's what that assignment started off to be. They needed help because they had so many projects. They were always trying to figure out what they had for pipelines, how much they needed to obligate, and things like that. But the biggest piece of what they were doing was support to the international agricultural research system, called the CGIAR, the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research. At that time, the United States was contributing 25 percent of its total budget. It wasn't done by, here,

CGIAR, in a big lump of money, but it was done by individual agreements with each of the centers. So when we made our 25 percent, we had to go and look at the Rice Research Institute or the Wheat Research Institute or the Tropical Research Institute and see what their budget was, and then determine what our 25 percent would be. I worked a lot on that.

The guy that ran that had come in from the Rockefeller Foundation. His name was Guy Baird. He really knew what he was doing and understood the structure of the CGIAR and what we were trying to do. So those were interesting times. I was learning—I had seen agriculture down at the lowest level farmers in Laos getting seeds for the first time from IRRI [International Rice Research Institute] and getting fertilizer for the first time. Now I was seeing what was happening in terms of much higher level institutional development and much higher level research.

There was an agricultural economics team there. Iowa State at that time was the big place where agricultural economics was supported by AID, and Dan Bromley was the head of that. There was a young guy—I forgot his name—from Iowa State. He was a runner, so we started running at lunchtime getting ready for the marathon. And of course, we're talking, we're running, I learned a tremendous amount from him. That's where I really learned about this issue which was a big issue in AID for a long time: what you get from research. It's a long-term investment, but what kind of returns do you get from it? All the studies show you get a pretty hefty return from investment in agricultural research. I kind of—that guy's name was Whitney Hicks—I learned that from what he was doing.

The one comment I'd make about this experience and looking back from years later. The United States and AID really deserved credit for what they did to support those international centers in their early years and being sure they were getting stable in life because those centers had not been in business too long. They were the key piece of the Green Revolution. What was missing was the development of the research and extension systems in the countries that could receive what was coming out of the international centers. That solution never was really found and was hit and miss, because it was dependent upon what missions were doing in their programs.

One thing that I saw that was interesting because it comes up later and was among the things that you didn't have in the Philippines and Thailand was this was the beginning of the thinking about farming systems research and development. In fact, they had a couple of small contracts. Some of these contracts weren't too big, that's why there were a hundred of them but others were pretty big. It was thinking of a different way to understand what the research needs were of a farmer. There was a big debate going on with the top down and researchers sitting in research institutes determining what the research agenda would be, or should it be driven by some understanding on what farmers were facing, and there had been this big debate. This was an effort to try to put that together, and the one thing I always remember about that one is that all of these projects had to go through a peer reviewed research process—What would you call that? A guy named Mike Reichzegal ran that—But it was in the Technical Assistance Bureau. It was basically a peer-reviewed research selection process. So they had a panel or they had a

board of outside people that looked at all—it could have been from health, too—It could have been from any place in that technical assistance field—But they looked at what was proposed to receive funding for research, and most of these projects were considered to be research. This was one that had a hard time because it had both some social aspects to it and some technical aspects to it. Most of the others were just straight technical. We're going to try to figure out something about tropical soils, and then try to figure out how to fix nitrogen in soils. But this one kind of combined, and they had a hard time but they finally got it approved. They had to keep working and working with that one to get it approved.

I started in the Technical Assistance Bureau beginning in about August or September of '76. There was an election in 1976. Jimmy Carter gets elected. He's appointing a new administrator of AID and he appoints the former governor of Ohio, John Gilligan, but he went by Jack. Jack Gilligan, who had been defeated in 1975 in his run for a second term in Ohio. So he was appointed administrator of AID. He comes in February—this is back in a different era where people get confirmed real quick. So all these people you would nominate, confirm, start your responsibilities to a new position. Gilligan is coming in sometime in February of 1977 or maybe March somewhere.

He is run into this blast from Senator Inouye from Hawaii, who is the chairman of the subcommittee that oversees AID. Senator Inouye had a really tough senior staffer in Bill Jerden who oversees AID. They're on him right away with what kind of an agency are you running anyway? You have 3,600 Foreign Service officers and 900 are overseas and 2,700 are here. And more so, you got a couple of hundred people who are at the FS-01, FS-02. That would be Senior Foreign Service today, but before the establishment of the Senior Foreign Service, FSR, foreign service reserve one and foreign service reserve two, were the highest ranks. They said you've got a couple of hundred people that have been in Washington at this rank for more than ten years. In fact, they've made their careers in Washington and gotten promoted in Washington and that's not what the Foreign Service is supposed to do. You've got to figure out your agency. The Vietnam War is over, Indo-China is over, the supporting assistance bureau ought to go away, which is where the ESF monies today—Economic Support Fund monies today—you've got to really look at your agency and start to make this thing work in a very changed environment.

Gilligan is looking for—well I need some help to do this. He gets some advice, that what he should do is go and hire a former AID guy who had worked on the McGovern campaign and had worked on the Carter campaign named Tony Babb, who I worked for for two years when he was the executive director of the Agriculture Development Organization in Laos. Tony agrees to do that. He's gonna come back to AID. So he came back into AID probably in May of 1977. He had left AID to work for the McGovern campaign in 1972. After the elections went to the FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization] and the World Bank. He's on a kind of medium-term assignment with the World Bank. I'm in Washington, and he's up at the World Bank. He said, come over and see me for a coffee. I did and he said, "I've been asked to do this reorganization thing, and Gilligan is going to set up a reorganization Task Force. I trust that you can help me do this. When I come into AID, I'm going to ask that they let me have you temporarily. Is

that going to be okay? Is that going to be a problem?" I said, "I don't know, but I'll go and talk to Leon Hestern once you get to AID." So out of that, I joined him. There's a reorganization task force set up under Gilligan; it's Tony Babb and it's Bob Byrd, who ended up being the head of evaluation of AID. He left later on. Mary Kilgore, who ended up becoming a mission director and deputy mission director. Then at that time, there was an entity under management called the Operation Appraisal Group.

Their job was to assess the performance of AID missions. There was a guy named Don Finberg who headed it. They said you can take these people because they've got Foreign Service—It's like, inspections of embassies which the State Department had, and AID had that at that time—So you take Don and his group. They can bring to you all what they've done in recent assessments of AID missions and they can do anything else you want to have looked at. So that starts to work in June, and a first set of ideas is supposed to be ready by the summer. It's almost summer, so we get to work. In talking about how we're going to approach this and how we're going to do it. Somehow out of this came the idea of let's look at all the previous foreign affairs assessments and studies that have been done to see what they look like. Gilligan is under great pressure from Inouye to do this. There was no pressure inside the agency to do this. It's all coming from Congress.

So out of that, we were talking about it one day and I'm talking about how do you reorganize, how do you work with an organization, how do you understand. And I said, "Well, we got this guy in my lDI group named Marcus Engel. He's up at Syracuse University right now." Tony says, "Bring him down, and let's talk to him, maybe he can help us out." So what Marcus did was he said, I can look at all these previous studies and assessments that have been done, and then come back and tell you what happened from those. Because you can do a study, you can do an assessment, and it goes no place because you're missing the whole topic of how to get it accepted. Usually, technical people go to work, and they say here's the problem, here's the ten things you need to do, and none of them get accepted because nobody's talking about how do I get these things accepted in the end. How do I get buy-in for it? So Marcus—I think this is the right memory—Marcus looked at all these, and they go back like forty-fifty years. He said, I've looked at all these, there's one conclusion that comes out of this. No single recommendation is accepted the first time it's made. The best study ever of the State Department was the Wriston_Commission which built off of all the previous things that had been done and offered about nothing new of its own, but just looked at these made sense and how did these make sense. So we kept that in mind, about looking at AID and how to organize it.

So the structure came out: regional bureaus stayed, missions stayed. Right away the basic asset that AID had that nobody else had was a field mission. The field mission, we're not going to question that. How do you make it stronger? Regional bureaus are the Washington face of the field missions and so the question becomes where do you put technical expertise, do you have it in regional bureaus, do you have it in central bureau? Those kinds of issues come up all the time.

But what was found kind of in looking at it from an organizational dynamics point of view was that there were extremely powerful offices in the regional bureaus, and those offices were powerful—Project Development Program Office—because all decisions on projects were made in Washington. Mission directors had no authority to approve anything at a field mission. Once that kind of came out, it was discovered, that kind of came to pass where Tony went. He said, what they're talking about, what Inouye is talking about and what makes sense and what I, as a former field guy, would say, we need to move some things out of Washington. Once that topic is raised, now we're in that world of we for sure are going to have things that aren't going to be accepted. But we went down the path of beginning to figure out how to propose that mission directors would have some level of authority to approve programs.

It came out that we quote, "Do an experiment." Because there were people who fought like nobody's business on this thing, and the level was five million. That's five million that you could delegate to a mission director to approve in the field. There was always this doom and gloom of they won't even have a project paper, they'll put out the worst thing in the world, they'll just throw money at their favorite ministries, their favorite, whatever, it'll be chaos. But it was approved, and it was implemented.

About as a side note to that. This became effective in like 1978 and about six years later, a very respected guy who ran the office of technical resources in the Asia Bureau, Tom Arndt, was asked to look at a universe of projects approved in the field and compare it against what had been approved in Washington. There were about five or so that had to be approved in Washington. Tom concluded there was no difference. He said, people didn't think about the fact that because we were putting more foreign service officers out in the field, that we had beefed up the capacity for missions to do this, and that they were professional, project development people. Whether they were in Washington, or whether in the mission they do a good job. That's how that came out.

They renamed some bureaus. The Development Support Bureau is one, that's where Tony went. He was the deputy assistant administrator for Food and Nutrition. They set up a Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance and Population and that was set up by Sandy Levin, and when Gilligan was getting beat, running for governor in Ohio, Sandy Levin was getting beat running for Governor of Michigan. He's the brother of Carl Levin. Sandy Levin, after Reagan was elected president, he had to quit. He got elected to Congress. He was in Congress for about eighteen or nineteen terms till he retired a couple of terms ago. He headed the bureau that was humanitarian assistance and population, which had been kind of its own bureau on just population at that time. So that's kind of how that came out.

In terms of, did it move people to the field too much? It was an interesting experiment. Gilligan said, I was the governor, and I know how clever those bureaucrats are. What I want to know is what has happened with the population of people who work for AID? Have we reduced staff like we think we have? Do we have more Americans? What is our story? Someone said, so here's what you need to do is take a census. We'll declare on this day that every single person who's being paid to work forty hours a week for AID will be

counted, and let's see what kind of changes have happened. Because the Foreign Service size had gone down a little bit, they sent some out to the field, and as I recall, the way that came out was that the population was about the same. It hadn't changed a whole lot—If you look back to 1975, after Vietnam. Say sometime around the beginning of 1976 or so—But the composition had changed. There were more contractors. There were more local nationals. There were more third-country nationals, and overall there were fewer Americans, which was interesting. That was probably the first indicator the way in which AID staff itself has been changing and changing for a lot of different reasons.

The reorganization task force began to kind of finish up towards the end of 1977. Leon Hester expected that I'd come back and be his program officer, and then in December of 1977, I went to meet with the executive secretary of the agency, Verne Newton, who worked for Gilligan. He said we're going to establish—but that's not quite right. That doesn't happen that way.

Q: Let me intercede here for a minute. You mentioned somewhere along the line how many foreign service officers there were. Do you remember that number?

CLARK: I think it was 3,600.

Q: Now, AID's half of that. It's 1,800. I had just gotten approval from the hill to move it up to 2,100, but you can see how much the agency's Foreign Service staff has diminished. In fact, the 1,800 was hard to achieve until new hiring had started off with the Biden administration. Under Trump, hiring was frozen, and the numbers went quite below that. So it's an indicator of how big we used to be and how we've had to learn to deal with running programs with much smaller staffs.

CLARK: I think John, I looked at the number because I was there when that census was done in the administrator's office. At the peak of Vietnam, there were 18,000 direct-hire employees working for AID. At that time, Foreign Service nationals were direct-hire employees also. So you had a lot of missions—I mean, in the Asia missions that had a long life. There are many Asian retirees who retired out of the Civil Service Retirement System, and that's because they were direct-hire employees. We had drivers in the Philippines who were direct hire employees. In that number were both FSNs [Foreign Service Nationals] and Americans. I don't remember what the total number would have been, but at the peak in Vietnam, there were over 2,000 Foreign Service officers there. There were probably a huge amount of Foreign Service officers through the 50s and 60s and into the 70s because AID wasn't using contractors either to any great extent. They used federal agencies through PASA [Participating Agency Service Agreements] agreements. In Laos, for example, the Bureau of Public Roads, which became the Federal Highway Administration. They had a team of over twenty people there. They were on a PASA agreement there in Laos. Today we'd hire a contractor to do that, but at that time it was done like that.

Q: Okay, let's go back to talking to Gilligan about running into his front office.

CLARK: Okay, so I don't remember who—maybe it was Tony Babb, who came to me and said that the administrator would like you to take the job of deputy executive secretary that doesn't exist. We're going to establish it. There's going to be a new executive secretary coming in named Verne Newton, and you're going to work with him. Verne had watched the reorganization task force unfold and had been a proponent to bring in Tony amongst other people. They had a very good working relationship, and he followed very carefully what we were doing. He liked the people that had been brought together. The one thing that was interesting about Gilligan and the people around him is that they actually respected what the Foreign Service did and what they could do. It wasn't too politicized yet. In most bureaus, the deputy assistant administrator was a Senior Foreign Service officer in most cases. They said, we'd like you to work with Verne and be deputy executive secretary, and I did. So I started that in December, and Leon Hester was unhappy but he said, that sounds like a good job for you and good luck in working on it.

So for me, I had only supervised Lao. In what I'd been doing. I'd never supervised an American. So now I'm given the executive secretariat, which is five people, five women, five African American women, and I'm given three young women who are political appointees. So I have eight people that are working with me. I have—not a supervisory relationship, but just kind of being we're in the same space together—with George Wing. George Wing had been brought in by Gilligan to evaluate AID missions. What Gilligan had done was to follow what Sergeant Shriver had done in the Peace Corps. Shriver had set up an evaluation system for his Peace Corps programs, and I don't remember the name of the person who worked for him. The way he did it was to look at a Peace Corps program, come back, don't write a report, come and talk to me about it. When you talk to me about it, tell me what I need to do to make it better. And that's what George Wing did for Gilligan. He was from the business school at Notre Dame, and so he was kind of—he was older than me and he was a good confidant to have around to try to figure out some of these things. And certainly, to understand, Jack Gilligan because there have been—the first executive secretary had been a political appointee and had abysmally failed. So there was a little bit of chaos, and so let's kind of straighten out the chaos, make it work better. That's kind of what my brief was, as I went into that position in December of 1977.

Q: Doug, I think many people who were really gonna read this oral history won't know what an executive secretary office does. Would you take a minute to talk about that?

CLARK: As near as I can figure, every department and agency has an executive secretary of the agency. When I went there the executive secretary of the State Department was Peter Turnov. Basically, you're running the operations of the head of that agency or that department, you're managing their documents, you're managing the decision-making process, you're managing their travel, you're managing anything they want to do. The way I would look at it is that you're managing the official decision-making process, the official information flow process. In parallel to that you have special assistants. In the case of AID, the administrator had two of them, and the deputy administrator, Bob Nooter, had one special assistant. Executive secretary is managing all of that formal decision-making and information full process. Special assistants are running the informal

information and influencing process. So you're doing anything that the administrator needs to have done. So you can be turned to for about anything under the sun. But you got that core job. . That is where your documents are managed, and that's where all these laws about retaining and archiving documents happen. So that you get everything, that they can keep it, that you do the things you're supposed to do, under the various laws that pertain to the U.S. government records. So they do that, but they're also in the processing business. If there's a decision being sought, then a decision document comes. That's the process by which you look at it. Have the right people seen it and have the right people had a chance to express a view on it if there's dissent. If there's dissent, try to manage getting that dissent cleared out in some way before you go to the administrator for a decision. It's a lot of operational documentation work. When I got there—and then you're working with all the people you are going to see and don't have appointments and everybody's knocking on your door for something.

The secretary to the administrator is key in the process of both the formal and informal systems in the administrator's office. The secretary to the administrator was named Margaret. I don't remember her last name. She had been the secretary to every AID administrator since AID had been established in 1961. She was tough. You had to be tough because otherwise, everybody gets through the door: You got special assistants that want to have this person in to see the administrator, you want to have this assistant administrator who wants to have this person come in to see the administrator. But she was really tough about who got it and who got to see the administrator and why. Every day throughout the government whoever the leader of an agency or department is they're getting a briefing book. If you're the President, you're getting that highly-held intelligence briefing every day. That is pretty thick. Well, the administrator got a briefing book every night of documents that have come in—because there's a lot of things coming in from other places that aren't really about making a decision, or from inside the agency, but it's information that's needed for their participation and other things.

At that time, the administrator of AID was going to the weekly State Department meetings that the secretary of state had. Maybe you had things that—I don't know if the administrator was on the OPEC board or not—I can't remember, but you had a flow of documents that came in from all kinds of other places. You're looking through all these. What does he need to have in his briefing book every day? Key in that book is to have any correspondence that's come in from the chairman of a committee overseeing AID. There's a tough rule, and the reason why the political appointee who came in with Gilligan as first executive secretary had gotten in trouble, was that no matter how tiny the issue is, if the chairman of your subcommittee or the chairman of your committee overseeing AID—that has to come back to the administrator, you can't farm that out to somebody else. They could be asking you a question that says how many people are in the Philippine mission? And you say, logically, we'll ask the assistant administrator for Asia to answer that question, no. That would have to come back to the administrator. That first person didn't understand that rule and had farmed these things out to the different assistant administrators. Inouye got really annoyed. At some point, he said, well, Gilligan, I can't have any meetings with you. I can't have any hearings with you until you start answering my mail. So you got to be very careful about that, because sometimes

people wanted to go off and make their own representation to the committee chair, which they could do, if you'd figured it out with Legislative Affairs and you figured it out with the administrator's office.

Later just to show you the volume of that. I asked the question one time with my really good staff. The five women that ran that executive secretary were really good. They were professionals. They knew what they were doing. They had been there for a long time. They'd been promoted up a little bit, but they didn't go someplace else in the agency because it was a unique job. They stayed there. A woman named Angie Green was the head of the executive secretary and she was a really fine woman, and she was just crackerjack efficient, and knew exactly what to do in all these bad situations because they'd seen it. They'd seen these things before. I had the three young politically appointed women. One of them was to be a scheduler, but that conflicted with Margaret, the secretary. They kind of eliminated her job, and she left and went to another agency. The other two worked on almost all the briefing materials that were sent to the administrator. Then one became the right arm of George Wing, and she got reassigned to work with George Wing. You would have met her later because her name was Tish Kelly Butler. She was Tish Kelly at that time, and her career started off by being the staff person that worked with George Wing on these assessments. She was really good at that. They liked what she did, and she came in not knowing too much, but she learned quickly. She was very effective at that job.

I asked one time, do we have any idea how many decisions get made per year by the administrator? Nobody knew. I said how could we track this? So the first thing we did was that in the administrator's office, which is just the administrator, and the deputy administrator, there's a tremendous flow of documents going on. Because let's say that you say I want this project approved for Senegal, it's a fifty million dollar project. I'm gonna look at it, the staff is going to look at it, the executive secretary may look at it. A special assistant may look at it. Deputy administrator, Bob Nooter, looked at everything that the administrator approved before it went to Gilligan. There's many stops where this document could be. So people would ask, where's my action ? What happened to it? The answer was it's in the administrator's office. I don't recall which assistant administrator it was, but that's not good enough. I'd like to know exactly where it is, and if it's stuck, that I get a chance to intervene and try to see what the issue is. Although that was part of our job to see if there were issues and then try to get those resolved.

So we set up a system. I'd worked with a couple of people—we set up a system where we could track each day, and each day we had kind of a flowchart. This is before computers, this is before spreadsheets, so it's done by hand. But we figured out how to do it and set up a flowchart of where each of these documents was. The first thing we discovered to everyone's amazement, is that we had anywhere from 100 to 150 documents moving around every day. That was far more than anybody thought. Then we said, how many decisions are made per year? We started thinking about that. Then we said, okay, well, we got to remove the autopen ones.

So every—to digress for one minute. Every administrator has an autopen, which means that's an automatic pen that signs for you. When you come in as administrator, it's a piece of equipment, and you sign on a plate, and then they engrave that plate and use that plate, and you actually use pens, you have to use a pen, the same pen that the administrator would use if they actually signed it themselves. So that pen and its nib have to be exactly the same, the ink has to be exactly the same, and the signature will be a perfect image, which doesn't happen when you're doing it by yourself. We say okay, all the ones that use the autopen we will remove those. We won't include those in the decision because, in many of those cases, we're just doing that on behalf of the administrator. A common thing would be if you received a training certificate from AID signed by the administrator, that autopen signed it. So we took all those away. Maybe we used the autopens to turn down requests to attend meetings and things like that. Some NGO was having a meeting and you write a little message or something and then use the autopen.

Anyway, we find out that the number of decisions is about nine to ten thousand per year, which is a pretty big volume. That means that the Administrator signed something that indicated they'd made a decision to tell Inouye this about his question regarding why the budget level was this in a country. That's a decision that's conscious, we're communicating something. It was about eight to nine thousand decisions per year.

So we worked for Gilligan. Then he was fired in 1979 by the Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance. I just came to work one day and Gilligan is gone, he's been fired. The issue apparently was about food aid to Eastern Africa. There was a crisis in the Sahel, there was a crisis in East Africa. Governor Gilligan had always called that East Africa as the beginning of the crumbling croissant. If there was this arc it started around Kenya or so and arced up through over into Pakistan. That's where all these food problems were as you came up through that arc through all of those countries. There were these serious food issues and he was a humanitarian. He was a liberal. I think what happened is that they ran into a discussion of political considerations. Gilligan was basically saying as I recall—and I'm hearing the second hand now—that food aid is not something we can have a political consideration about. If there isn't food and we're facing a famine, we've got to feed and we got to get the food there.

He gets fired and they need an administrator quickly. In the process of a person being nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate, you can move them to another position without having to reconfirm them. That's how they find Doug Bennett. Doug Bennett is the assistant secretary of state for Legislative and Public Affairs in the State Department. His deputy is a man we'd meet later at AID, Brian Atwood. Bennett comes over to become the administrator of AID and Atwood moves up to become assistant secretary in the State Department. So now things begin to change somewhat because you've got people that came with Gilligan and now he's left. His primary special assistant, David Raymond, was totally a Gilligan guy and he left right away. Verne Newton had been brought in, and they said for ease of transition purposes, Verne would stay as executive secretary for some time. Basically our structure stayed about the same with Bennett. Except that Verne started to do less with Bennett, and I started to do more with Bennett.

The first thing we did was, I remember that very early he came in, and he said, "I need to go and talk to as many AID employees as I can, and they need to see my face. How can we do this?" At that time, AID had people at Universal North, up in the northwestern part of DC, people over in Rosslyn Plaza, some people down at L'Enfant Plaza, and they had people in the State Department where we were located. We set up a system—he actually wanted it, it was almost like going to an outdoor run—this was in May of 1979. . So we went to these places over several days to meet staff and talk to them as he got into his job as AID administrator.

Margaret left. He bought his own secretary from the State Department with him. So the question of how we're going to work is maybe changing a little bit. I would say that Gilligan was not a hands-on administrator, and Doug Bennett decided he was going to be a hands-on administrator. He wanted to talk to a lot more people inside the agency. He would just say, "Who can I talk to who can explain this to me?" So our job kind of became an informal transition briefing process there for a while. "I don't understand this project development system. Let's do a review of it." So he said, "I want to have this all laid out in a way, so I can understand that. So get some people together, lay out how this is all done in a way that I can go through it, and in maybe a couple of days I'll be very happy to read wherever you want me to read." I said, "Would you read a full document?" He said, "Yeah." I said, okay, in this process you'll be reading a project identification document, you'll be reading a project paper, and you'll see how all these things work. "If that's fine, just bring all these people in, and they can explain it to me"—that worked with us every day. We did things like that as he was getting started up as administrator.

At the same time, what's happening on the legislative side is this idea of IDCA, International Development Cooperation Agency. That was the one in which everything was going to come together in the AID administrator, that there would be the—OPIC would be under the AID administrator. Several pieces would be under the AID administrator's direction.

The one thing that got set up in the change back to the reorganization of the AID was a bureau that had never existed, which was the Inter-governmental and International Affairs Bureau. That's where Malcom Butler started off, who became mission director in AID later on. That was trying to understand how AID could play a better role in all the places in which they were cooperating with or hoping to cooperate with other parts of the federal government that had an international development responsibility. A lot of these other places didn't want to cooperate with AID, because we were kind of seen as a stepchild of the State Department. My experience had been that there were a lot of views that AID was a temporary agency. It had been established under an executive order. It was not really a part of the State Department. It was under the State Department foreign policy umbrella, but then it had its own authorities in the Foreign Assistance Act. So there was maybe a view these guys are of lesser stature of lesser permanency, than the rest of us.

That legislation had started under Gilligan, and I always remember that Gilligan was a very different person—I'd never met a governor of a state—and some of the things he saw he was really astute in a way. He was very much in favor of the IDCA legislation for a legislative reason. He said one of the problems we have at AID—and I think it exists today—is that members of Congress want to say something about a foreign policy issue or an international issue or an international problem, and it's a strange thing because they don't have any vehicle to do that through legislation. Every other department does. When you're appropriating and authorizing for every other department, you'd have a chance to do that. And it is what they say about DOD and things like that. He says, so what happens is they look around, and we can't get that on the State Department appropriation, because that's just paying rent on their buildings and their salaries. They're not going to hold that up. So the handy place to hang all this on is the Foreign Assistance Act. He said that's why we got this Christmas tree. It's a tree thought that is on its way to collapse every Christmas and fall over on its sides because they've loaded up with so much stuff—that was a very astute observation and even continues today. So his thought was that IDCA might relieve some of that pressure on AID. IDCA is a high-level entity responsible for all of the U.S. government's participation in international development affairs and activities. That would relieve the pressure on that.

That legislation is starting to move on. What happens is that Verne Newton kind of moves away—because he was a Gilligan guy brought in by Gilligan—moves away from being too much operational with Doug Bennet and becomes more interested in this IDCA matter. It kind of is convenient because they need some way to be watching that and kind of looking over from the administrator's perspective what happens with IDCA. I work with Verne, and so he left—he said, I think I just want to work with IDCA. IDCA had finally got set up. I don't recall what his role was, but by the end of 1979, he's basically not doing too much as executive secretary, but he still has the title. I wind up doing most of what the executive secretary does. Then Bennett appointed me as executive secretary in the spring of 1980. Then Verne kind of phases out, and I don't think he went to IDCA but now IDCA comes into existence. That kind of becomes a problem because now AID is working for somebody other than the State Department with the establishment of IDCA.

Things don't change too much. They didn't change the assistant administrators when Bennett became administrator of AID. But they did change Bob Nooter. He decided to leave or he was pushed out, I don't know which it was. But he had been the deputy administrator, and up until that time, every single deputy administrator of AID had been career, so they appointed Joe Wheeler, who had been the assistant administrator for the Near East Bureau. Joe came in early in 1979 not too long after Bennett came in. Bob Nooter had an interesting career because he never served at a level below deputy assistant administrator. AID over time has done some innovative things in its early history. There was a program to go out and look at entrepreneurs and bring them into AID. Like Bob Nooter. He ran—I don't know what they manufactured—but there was a company called Nooter Industries in St. Louis, Missouri and that's where he came from. He came from running a big business. There had been an effort to try to find executive officers in the early 1960s. So they went out and found city managers. City managers ought to be able to

manage a whole lot of different kinds of things as existed in big AID missions and go and hire from those places. So Bob Nooter was always an assistant administrator or a deputy assistant administrator and then became deputy administrator. He had an interesting career during those seventeen or eighteen years at AID. Then he went off to the World Bank, and Joe Wheeler came in.

That was a good team. Joe Wheeler was really experienced and grounded in the work of AID—He had been mission director in Pakistan for seven or eight years, and came in to be assistant administrator of the Near East Bureau. He had worked at the senior leadership level in the field, knew how to work with embassies, knew how to work with the State Department. It was a really good team I thought between Joe Wheeler and Doug Bennett. I worked as the executive secretary. I didn't have a deputy. I didn't need one. I'd been brought in to help Verne because he needed help. As a personal bias, I never liked deputies, so every place I went, if there were deputies, I got rid of them. I found in most missions and places, if they had deputies, it would be better if you just worked directly with the people who are in the head of a group of people that reported to you.

So Bennett was administrator for about twenty-one months and didn't have enough time to do much of anything except keep it going pretty well with the State Department, working with this new IDCA that had gotten in place, which was kind of silly, in one respect. IDCA had a very limited staff. I don't think it was more than fifty or one hundred. But yet they were supposed to review whatever the presentation was made to Congress for the AID budget. I think they did the first one in 1980. Bennet would say okay, so what we got, is we got some GS-14 program people, or an IDCA, reviewing what my entire agency has done for a congressional presentation and I have GS-13, GS-14 people critiquing me as a presidentially appointed administrator of an agency. It was kind of—people shook it off, but it was kind of strange, that relationship between AID and IDCA, because the other entities that were supposed to work with IDCA in the final legislation got watered down. The saying around where I was sitting at that time was sometimes no loaf is better than half a loaf. That's what they got in IDCA.

I was trying to think if there was any other large issue that came out. No, that was a very good assignment. I learned an awful lot. My experience in AID Washington was I came from the field and working with that group in West Africa, trying to put together that, I learned an awful lot about AID bureaucracy and how you had to do things at that time to get monies committed because you were in competition with other people. I went to this reorganization task force and learned a lot about an agency I didn't know much about when I started off. Then I worked in the administrator's office for administrators Gilligan and Bennett and Peter McPerson. I am probably the only person who worked in the ES role for three administrators. That was a tremendous learning process about how to supervise people and how to work with diverse backgrounds that people brought to the job. I liked it a lot.

I was running that day. I did run the Marine Corps Marathon 1976. I ran it again in19'77. I ran it for the third time in 1978. I kind of made an agreement that I would have two work days so I came in a little after seven in the morning and I worked till noon then I ran

at lunchtime. They had a good workout room down in the basement of the State Department. They had lockers. You could shower. You could lift weights, but most people ran. You could run at lunchtime. That's what I basically did. Unless there was something that I needed to do or attend something with the administrator. I said, will this work? If you're having political lunches anyway and I'm not going to while you are out working your network at lunchtime. You are up on the hill or something like that. So I'll work from after seven till noon, and I'll go and run and come back at one thirty and I will stay till six thirty, seven o'clock at night. It worked pretty good. Then on the days that you had to go beyond that, and there were many of those days, my wife would come down route 50 route from Fairfax City down to the State Department to pick me up. That was sometimes nine, ten, eleven o'clock at night depending on what was happening. This was a frequent occurrence so my two day work day was expanded for the"second half". Herb Beckington and I had offices close to each other and became morning coffee drinking friends. He also worked late and we would frequently be the only two at work in that part of the administrator's office.

Q: Now I have a question about the role of the executive secretary during this era. These days, the agency is part of the National Security Council. This is for the first time, but also, for years, there's been a lot of discussion about being involved with the quote, "interagency" being involved with interagency meetings, including the State Department and other agencies, was the executive secretary involved in that process?

CLARK: No. When I was there, that was mostly in the hands of special assistants. At that time, I think, if there was any involvement in national security, I'm gonna guess that the deputy administrator and their special assistant primary did that. We might have had some briefing memorandums on that, but not to any great degree. . That would have been right that the administrator participated in some things himself. That would have been what happened under IDCA, if the full legislation would have been passed, a lot of things would have been coming underneath the administrator. So there would have been an expansion of his role —Actually, the answer to that question would be what probably most of this was done under the bureau for intergovernmental and international affairs—David Bronstein and Malcolm Butler. I think to the extent that people were out, that was a place that was happening, not around the administrator. They were reporting directly to the administrator, and they were interacting directly with the deputy administrator, but I'm gonna guess most of that thinking back was probably in meetings. We're not running the meeting process. We may learn what happens in meetings. We're running more of the formal—executive secretaries running the more formal information flow and decision-making process flow. To the extent that people are meeting with the administrator and assistant administrator around an issue, we may be there, or we may not be there. It depends. I'm gonna guess that during that time that is probably where the interagency things were being done under Gilligan and Bennett at that time. That was a very small bureau.

Q: You have been in the executive secretary's office for four years, five years.

CLARK: Let's see, it was December 1977 to July 1981. By the time the election of 1980 happens, I've been there for almost three years.

Q: Okay. All right. You eventually went off to long term training, right?

CLARK: I didn't go to long-term training yet. So I'm still there. I applied for long-term training in 1976, when I was hanging around the African Bureau, and I actually got selected. I was assigned as special assistant to the Administrator in the summer of 1977 to work on the reorganization task. As I start the ES role and am processing the nominations for long term training, my name is on it. I'm shocked. Verne says, no, you can't go now just put this off. We'll just defer this and whenever you finish here you go to long term training. Okay, that was a deal made. Gordon Ramsay was head of personnel then. He'd been the deputy mission director in Laos and then the acting mission director when we left. So he saw my name and then he called me up and he said, "You saw your name on there, but I know you're not going, so as soon as you finish your assignment there, that'll be the next place you go.

So the election happens, and Carter gets beat. Now we're gonna have a transition. Bennett appointed me as the agency transition coordinator. That's pretty much what my full-time job was until January 20th. Right after the election starts, just before Thanksgiving, we decide—and this supposedly comes out of PPC [Policy and Program Coordination]—we have to put together some briefing books. So people start working on briefing books and getting ready. Then we get space ready in the State Department. As I said, we're in the old building of the State Department. That building was the Department of War during World War Two. It's said that the deputy administrator's office in AID at that time had been occupied by Douglas MacArthur at one point. That's interesting historically. That was a beautiful building and the offices we had on the fifth floor had beautiful wood molding and inlays and all kinds of things. That suite of offices we had with the assistant administrator were beautiful offices. They kept those as they had been built in the 1940s with just a nice historical ambiance around it. Every day I went to work I said, Gee, at one point, this is where George C. Marshall sat and Douglas MacArthur, so it's an interesting history around that. We got some office space close to the administrator's office, and we started preparing. Then we get the team announced. The team for international affairs is going to be run by a guy named Frank Shakespeare. He winds up under Reagan being appointed to head the United States Information Service. The people who did the actual work, in working with AID, are Elliott Abrams, who winds up later on being known for several things and in foreign affairs under Reagan. He's a neocon guy, neo-conservative. Then we have—he worked almost full time on it—then we have Edwin ‘Feulner who founded the Heritage Foundation.. He kind of was in and out because he was looking at the State Department and USIS along with what became in 1979 from the reimbursable development program, the Trade Development Agency.

The Trade Development Agency was born out of the provision of the Foreign Assistance Act, and the provision for reimbursable development assistance. They'd decided to take things and move it over to TDA. There had been a large program—the largest in the world would have been with Saudi Arabia. During the 1960s and 1970s, the reimbursable

development program was used to build up a lot of Saudi Arabia across everything. Almost all of that was done by that time of engaging the agencies of the United States government to PASA agreements. When the Saudis wanted to build up their air traffic control system, they went to the FAA. There was a commission that ran that, and there was a Senior Foreign Service officer with the chairman of that commission that oversaw how we provide assistance to Saudi Arabia. Somewhere along that they said this is not really the core of what AID does. This is something very different, and so the idea came on to the setup TDA. I think what that team was looking at was the State Department, United States Information Service, AID, and TDA. That's what they were looking at. Feulner, I think, had the State Department, Shakespeare had everything, and Elliott Abrams had AID. Then they get to work around Thanksgiving maybe. There was a lot to do between then and January 20th.

The next person that comes is Tom Rollis. He is an executive at GM, General Motors, but more important, he was Peter McPherson's—who was going to be nominated as administrator of AID—he was his college roommate. Tom Rollis was a Notre Dame guy, too. He was a real management guy, and had been at the senior management level in general motors. He was not looking at this whole thing politically as Abrams and Shakespeare and Feulner were. He was looking at it about what we need to take over the management of this big enterprise. McPherson had been nominated real quick to be administrator of AID. The story there, John, goes this way. Peter McPherson represented a small law firm from Ohio. He was their partner in Washington, D.C., or whatever they were doing on lobbying or representation. He was a moderate Republican. And so he starts to work for Ronald Reagan. He meets a compatriot who is an extremely conservative Republican in Maryland, Peter is living in Virginia, named John Bolton. These two guys are working for Reagan and his campaign. At about the time of the convention, Peter writes a twenty-page paper to Reagan about what to do with the Foreign Assistance Program, double spaced. I still have a copy, maybe someplace. Double-spaced copy of what Reagan should do with the Foreign Assistance Program. That's where the four pillars that he then embedded in AID during his time as administrator emerged. As soon as Reagan takes a look at it he says, great, Peter, you told us what to do now how about you go over and do it. I've seen some reports here and there that actually McPherson could have had something much higher, and he'd wind up being deputy secretary of Treasury at the end of the Reagan administration, but he wanted to do AID. He'd been a Peace Corps volunteer in Peru. One of my fraternity brothers at the University of Denver was in his group. When he learned that Peter McPherson had been nominated to be the administrator, he called me up and he said, "isn't that where you work? Don't you work with that funny thing, what is it called anyway? USAID" He said, "that's where my good friend Peter McPherson is going. I've known him all my life. He's a good guy." So we start to work and we have these briefing books and we deliver them and we start talking about things. We learn that isn't what they're really interested in. What they're interested in beginning is people. The first thing they say is that every assistant administrator has to resign. We went back and said, there'll be an interim period this year, so somebody has to hold the authorities of the AID administrator, who was that going to be? They said, how many do we need? Then we say, well, one, but if you get hit by a bus, then you're in trouble so you probably need two. So they said, the political

people have to go. Who is a person who is basically a career Foreign Service officer? We said, there's Joe Wheeler, who's the deputy administrator and there's Genta Hawkins. She had come over from the State Department with Doug Bennett and she became the assistant administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs. She had worked for Doug Bennett and Brian Atwood in that part of the State Department. They said, okay, those two people can carry over, everybody else has to resign.

Then they were interested to know, how many people can we appoint? We don't care about—put those briefing books aside, we'll look at them but projects and programs and countries and all that kind of thing, we'll learn about that. Well, now what we want to learn about is how are people appointed in AID and who can we appoint? So they're looking at political appointees. The first thing is the AID administrator has unique authority to appoint 110 administratively determined appointments, called AD appointments. I think, if you look at the history, the idea was that AID would use these appointments to appoint highly technical people who would come into the agency. It was without competition and you could pay him up to a GS-15 salary. There were all kinds of reasons for why people were AD appointees in AID. But there were a few who were these very senior technical people, a good example of this is Dick Blue who came in to set up the development studies programs. They said, "One hundred and ten appointees, wow." Then we had a handful of scheduled C appointments. Those are confidential assistant appointments that are non-competitive. We had maybe ten, fifteen or so. The Senior Executive Service was set up in 1979. In the Senior Executive Service, 25 percent of your positions are non-career, so you can fire those people and then you can bring in your own people. That was about ten or twelve, something like that.

So they looked at those kinds of positions. Then they asked about, well what about the Foreign Service? The answer was you can make limited appointments. There's a panel process that selects but you can appoint a limited person which means they are not in the Career Service yet and you can terminate them. So they calculated very quickly that there were probably around two hundred appointments they could make using these different appointment authorities, which is what they were interested in.

I always remember a meeting with Elliott Abrams, who said, "The way we're looking at this is, we're not looking from the ground up like you are. Here's our programs, here are our missions, here are our overall agency objectives that these all contribute to, here are legislative objectives that all these are contributing to"—like, this was the era of the basic human needs the poorest majorities coming out of the 1973 revamp of the Foreign Assistance Act—he said, "You're coming up that way we're coming the other way, which is if we have the right people in place, they'll be sure that we get the right policies in place, and then the right programs will flow from that. That's how we're looking at starting. So we want all of the assistant administrator positions open because we want to start at that level, getting people with our philosophy and our approach in those positions."

To me, one of the most revealing aspects of politics at this level of a transition happening, of a new administration taking over the federal government, was a meeting we had at the

White House. Not in the White House itself over in the executive management building. It was all the transition coordinators from all agencies and departments. At that meeting, Reagan's right arm, Lynn Nofzinger who's now passed away, made the following statement, "We're going to be nominating people. You're going to have problems with these people because you're wondering about how they are qualified to do this job we are nominating them for, and you're going to see them. Many of these obviously are not going to be presidentially appointed, confirmed by the Senate positions. There are all these other positions that we have available to appoint people into agencies. You need to know one thing. If you believe in the Reagan philosophy, you can do any job in the federal government. When we nominate, we're going to be nominating people who are believers in the Reagan philosophy. That idea was well don't question this, which was contrary to the way the Carter administration worked.

The Carter White House was very kind in that respect . We're not going to just push political people on you because we want you to give them the job. They kind of sorted them out. First, be kind enough to give this person an interview, if the interview works out, it may be of interest to you, then pursue it as it might work out. Second, the hire of this person really needs to have a careful look. We think that there's something here, we think there could be something of benefit, so have a careful look, and have a lot of people consider what the person might do. The third one was a must place. This person will be working for you. You find a place where they work. Now, there are very few of those latter ones during my time, but they kind of helped sort it out. One of the jobs that Verne Newton had, that I didn't have because I wasn't a political executive secretary, was that he was a liaison with the White House. The White House would nominate people for positions at AID. I think probably amongst young people you work on campaigns and win, and here's my chance to work internationally. I can really do something and make a contribution—this tremendous enthusiasm and you saw tremendous enthusiasm and wanting to do something good for their country. Even more interesting would be to do something international and work with AID, work with the State Department. There were a lot of people constantly using their connections with the White House, who wanted to try to find a position.

I think the Reagan transition in the Reagan administration had a little different view. Right about the end, as we're moving toward the end of the transition, John Bolton is getting ready to be appointed as general counsel cause he came in within a couple of days after January 20th. As did Tom Rollis, but the transition kind of kept active. I think probably into February or something like that.

So Peter McPherson came in, and he asked me what I did, so I explained what I did. He said, well just keep doing it for me. And so I stayed as executive secretary for Peter McPherson until July of 1981. He started, right away, probably in early February or something like that. He was waiting to get his confirmation. So we did a lot of work on helping him get ready for his confirmation hearing. That's why I wound up working for three administrators and being executive secretary for two. Peter was—I had to cut back on the running agreement because he was working almost twenty-four-seven. There was so much he wanted to do. The first thing he had to overcome was this idea of being

accepted in the Reagan political world. As nominations are being considered for who's going to come to AID, he started to run into some problems. Tom Rollis never passes. He's not accepted. What his politics were, I don't have any idea. But this is how a position that exists till today was invented, assistant to the administrator. Tom Rollis became the first one to run a bureau as assistant to the administrator, instead of an assistant administrator confirmed by the Senate. They let them do that, that's fine. You can do that, but we want to reserve the assistant administrators, for people, I guess you'd say, for people who represent the political face of Reagan. Tom Rollis is the first one that is an assistant to the administrator.

One of the big directions of Peter McPherson is going to be science and technology. We're gonna put together the Science and Technology Bureau. What Peter did is that he had to fight a bit, but he said I got to have at least fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five of those AD positions because I got to bring in renowned, respected science and technology people in that bureau to make it work. His pick to run the Science and Technology Bureau is Nyle Brady. He had been the longtime director at the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines. He was a famous soil scientist from Cornell. And he ran into a little bump on that because he had to be an assistant administrator and he had to get nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. They had to work and Peter's a politician so he just works it and works it and works it but it took a lot of effort to get Nyle Brady accepted into an assistant administrator position.

Q: As I understand, Doug, he had to be more than just an assistant administrator, he had to be the most senior assistant administrator or something along those lines.

CLARK: He wanted to have that access, yes to the administrator to kind of clear off the barnacles of the bureaucracy.

Then everything was set. I was sad in a way. I stayed there that night. He stayed in his office till probably ten o'clock that night on January 19th. They wanted everybody out of the building by that night. So that on January 20th when it started off we had set it up so that Joe Wheeler was the acting administrator effective on January 20th. We had to leave that night. He had his family there with him. We were sitting—you know his son is the senator from Colorado. Michael Bennet is his son. He was probably about fourteen years old, maybe at that time, maybe fifteen. He enjoyed being administrator. He liked what AID was trying to do deeply, and he had very great respect for whether it was a GS [General Schedule] side or the Foreign Service side, just like in the State Department. It's an organization of extremely committed people. And whoever is the president, they're going to try and do the best they can for that president. They may have differences of opinion, and sometimes these will be worked out and sometimes they won't.

So he leaves, and I start working for Peter McPherson. It's really stressful because he's trying to do so much every day. I don't know if you've ever been in the AID administrator's office. It's a huge office. It's massive. It's got tall ceilings. Well, Peter was involved in everything in getting his team started. We had so many action memos that there were no tables, and we moved the conference table away and we started lining them

all up on the floor in logical order. Then you go in every day and you say, Peter, we need to have you look at this one and we would try to get him to approve some of these things. But he was so engaged with trying to get things started lobbying Congress talking about his four pillars. That was a very interesting time for me because I'd never seen this type of thing before. A leader from the political dimension, so to speak, has in mind a vision of what he's going to do. He's trying to get that in Washington started as quickly as he can.

I think they set up the Bureau for Private Enterprise pretty quick. I think the first assistant administrator was Elise du Pont, They got the Bureau for Science and Technology launched. Now there were people who carried over, who were political, and they were political from the orientation of what they had done like with Tony Babb, but because of their very various associations with AID, when the Senior Executive Service was established, AID decided that a few no matter what your status was, at that moment, if you've ever had career status, at anytime with AID, you would get a Senior Executive Service career appointment, which Tony Babb did. He stayed in that Bureau for Science and Technology when Peter came in, and when Nyle Brady came in. Then he left in the summer of 1980 on this big dispute about the position the United States would take on the infant formula proposition—that the United States decided to abstain—and Tony had been the advocate of yes, cause that was under his part of what he did under food and nutrition. He resigned and left. He'd come back in 1977, and he left in 1981. There were a few people who, like Steve Joseph, who was the head of the health part of the old Development Support Bureau hadn't been reorganized into this Science and Technology Bureau yet. He also left and he had been the same way in that he got this career SES [Senior Executive Service] appointment.

So I started to phase out in about June. Jerry Pagano has been selected to replace me as executive secretary. He had been the head of the executive placement process called EPAP, executive advisory panel replacement or something like that. Anyway, that would appoint mission directors and deputy mission directors and Jerry Pagano had done that forever over in personnel. That's who Peter selected to be executive secretary. That's interesting, because that means he is interested in having the right people be assigned out of this Foreign Service and do mission director jobs, which I think Peter did over his time. I like working for him very much. I liked working for Bennett very much. They were different people politically, but they kind of thought the same thing about AID and what it should be. What it should be doing in a little bit different way. Doug Bennet at the end was thinking very much about how do we partner with the private sector. In fact, he had been anticipating that he would be there—he wasn't—and he was anticipating trying to do a kind of preliminary effort in South Africa. Of course, that never happened, but he was thinking the same way that we need to be—these basic human needs we're not working with in the right parts of the country. If we're just solely focused on the poor majority, we can help the poor majority, but a lot of other things need to happen in the country, and if we don't get something going with economic growth then they will be the poor majority forever. How do we do that? We've got to look at how AID begins to more productively partner with the private sector. Of course, Peter comes in and that's one of

his pillars, the private sector. At that time, both of these people are kind of thinking in the same way.

Q: Interesting. When you learn that you are going to be replaced, what was on your mind about doing next?

CLARK: Go to long-term training.

Q: And that was I'll set up right and ready for you?

CLARK: So in the spring of 1981. Pagano is going to come over, but he's going to come over in the summer to replace me. Jerry said, "What would you like to do? Tell me where you want to go. You want to be a deputy mission director you want to be—what do you want to do?" I said, Jerry, "What I want to do is long-term training. I'm not super interested in being a mission director. I would like to really spend the rest of my career working technically. I don't aspire to be a mission director really right now. I think what I've learned, what I've done, and now I'm five years away from it of what I did when I was in Laos, and what I've learned and what I saw, and what I was very interested in working with, I've got to get some formal training." While I had applied—my application in '76, was to go to Harvard. Harvard had that school at the John F. Kennedy School. I said I don't think I want to do that. I think what I want to do is go to Cornell. At that time, the long-term academic training program at AID was something like twenty or twenty-five people per year, and Cornell was a place where they had sent quite a few participants. One of the people who went there was Dick Cobb, who was in the Africa Bureau. He had said that it was one of the best experiences that he had ever had in AID. He said the year he spent there was just so mind-opening, and it helped him figure out what he wanted to do over the rest of his career with AID, and really prepared him to do that. So I went to Cornell, and talked with him. Wound up going. Since AID was sending three or four people per year there, getting into there was not an issue. I went to Cornell, and at that time, kind of the rules for long-term training were, you got twelve months. Whatever you can get done in twelve months, you get what you get, if you can get a master's degree out of it, great. Spend the twelve months on a master's degree, if you can't, you can't.

So at Cornell, the mid-career students were treated a little bit differently than those who weren't. This was for a Master's of Professional Study. Cornell had a residence requirement. You had to be there for three semesters to qualify to get a master's of Professional Studies. For a student coming out of let's say, if I was a former Peace Corps volunteer who came down and is twenty-five years old, I'm going to be there for two years, because the residence requirement will be three, then you'll do your master's project which will take a fourth semester. If you were a mid-career student, like from AID, they waive that. So what they did is they basically said, if you will go two semesters, plus the summer, shortened semester,we will count the shortened summer semester for your residence requirements. So those will be your three semesters. But you're going to have to start your project at the beginning of the second semester and it's going to be on top of taking your courses. So you're going to have to figure out if you can

take that burden because you're going to have to get your project done, you're going to need that semester plus the summer semester to get it done. That was the deal. We had to take the full course load. I opted for going back to being a geography major and studying man in the environment, which is a pretty broad topic. I don't want to say just agriculture. I don't want to take something that narrow. They said then do your degree in regional planning. A regional planning degree has the least required courses so you can pretty much put a program together around that. The difference was that regional planning was in the School of Architecture and Regional Planning, which was different from the international agricultural program. I started off in August of 1981. We were assigned a little cubby hole office over in the Center for International Studies. There were five of us that went that year. My officemate was a guy named Dennis Wendle. He got the academic bug, and went on on his own and got a PhD from CSU [Colorado State University] in irrigation. He became very focused on irrigation and the organizational institutional aspects of irrigation. I took a set of courses around agriculture. At that time, Randy Barker was the guru of rice for the United States. The biggest thing going on at Cornell at that time was they had a cooperative agreement with AID that was working on local organizations and participation. It was led by Norman Leboff.

Q: I was gonna ask about him.

CLARK: He was my advisor, Norman Uphoff. He was the chairman of my committee that looked at my project. I put together a program with him. I did some work with agriculture, with Randy Barker. I did some work with irrigation. At that time, Cornell was testing interdisciplinary teaching so they had a course on irrigation management. They had an engineer, the guy who was at the engineering department, they had sociologists, they had economists, they had political science like Norman Uphoff, and they had this course that was in huge demand on irrigation management. It was the only course they had there that kind of had this interdisciplinary thing and they taught it at night. The first thing he said is that the reason why we're teaching at night is because in irrigation systems around the world, this is when water is stolen. We're going to figure out why this happens. That's our quest in this class. So I did that one, and then I took a couple of regional planning courses. I took a set of courses on economics.

That was one of the most interesting learning experiences I've had. They had a course at Cornell for comparative economics. It was taught by a guy named Tom Viatorich, who was a Hungarian communist, who taught at the New School in New York City, and came up to Cornell every two weeks on Saturday, and you went to class all day Saturday. He was an avowed communist. He was teaching the communist, Marxist economic philosophy. I said, wow. Anyways, he had two levels, and I took both levels of that. Then they assigned to my committee, one of his colleagues that taught at Cornell a guy named Porus Opadwalla who was Indian. He was an avowed Marxist. He became a good friend and he said, "Just remember, when you present your project, I'm looking through the Marxist lens in your project. Those other people are going to be looking at some other lens than mine. I took that course just to hear and understand what people who believed in the Marxist, communist philosophy, what it was. I found it quite interesting. That class was small, but it had a lot of discussion—always people trying to poke holes in their

thinking. I was given a reading list of about, I would say, thirty books. I read them all. Nobody's ever done that. He was astonished. I said that's because I don't understand this. I've got to really get deep into it. I normally wouldn't, but that was the best course I took at Cornell.

Q: Just a little aside. Norman Uphoff was hired by AID along with others from Cornell to do a number of consultancies. I happened to run into him in Madagascar after I had retired from AID. I remember he was going out on field trips, and he had a young person with him and he had a tape recorder. He did this two-week field trip. He would just talk into the tape recorder as he went, and he was very verbose and he had lots of long tapes. Then when we asked for his final report, he said, "Just take my tapes. Type them up and that's my report. I'm not going to spend any more time on this." And that's what he did.

CLARK: Wow. So the participation project had some interesting people working on it, and they were working mostly in Yemen, with local organizations. There's a lot—I'm thinking about AID localization policy today—people were thinking about those kinds of things a long time ago. Communal irrigation was another thing that Cornell was looking at very carefully because that was a historical way organizations had managed and organized themselves to manage a water resource. That was one they were looking at which was interesting.

That was the year in which I was lucky because I didn't have an assignment when I went to Cornell. Lou Read, who became the Mission Director later in USAID Asian Environmental Partnership program, called me up and he said, "Would you come down and be my deputy for technical resources in the Asia bureau?" I said, Lou, I'm a Foreign Service Officer. I came to Washington in 1975. It's now 1981. I'm one of those people who Senator Inouye criticized there are here in Washington in the Foreign Service, but they're always over here they're not over there. I said I don't think I want to do that. He said, "No, no, I can control that, don't worry about it. We'll get you all the waivers. Peter McPherson, he knows you, he'll give you a waiver." I said no, I'm not going to do that. So then I got a call from Tony Schwartzwalter. He said, will you come to the Manila mission? I have an Office of Rural Development and Agriculture that's run by a guy named Jerry Edwards. He's going to retire as soon as he hits fifty. That means that he'll be gone about a year and a half after you get here. I'd like you to come and be the deputy and take over this office, because this is the biggest office in the mission.

It plays a big piece in what our new strategy is going to be all about. So I said okay, I'll go to the Philippines. Sounds good to me. I liked what they were doing because they had planned this first big rain-fed resources development project that AID was going to watch. It also happened to be that this was the year at the International Center that focused on the Philippines. And they had a Jesuit priest, who was there from Ateneo, University of Manila, kind of the resource person for this focus. I said well that is perfect for me because if I'm going to do a project on the Philippines, it would be nice if I have somebody who has been in the Philippines since the 1940s. So that made Cornell a better year, a more interesting year.

So I did my project on various alternatives to develop employment in the rural economy in the Philippines. At that time, the mission strategy was aimed at the 40 percent of the Philippine population who were below the absolute poverty line. Some of those were in cities, some of those were in rural areas. While I started off thinking about the rural economy, I quickly saw that there was as much poverty in the urban areas, but still I focused mostly on the rural economy. It was not a field-based project. We just researched what materials you could get, kind of a desk project, but I did have my Jesuit priest colleague who helped me a lot in understanding some of the things about the Philippines and directed me to things that helped me understand how people worked in the rural economy. A concept that he said that turned out to be a linchpin piece of the AID strategy, which was when looking at these 40 percent of people below the absolute poverty line, how did they survive? What was their survival strategy? In a household that was at that level of income, how did they survive in life? That became a big piece of what AID was doing in its strategy. To understand this.

I finally got there, in August or so of 1982. I was able to get my project done, I was able to get a degree. But my wife will always remind me that she was the one who took care of our two children because I didn't have any time basically, because of the intensity of trying to do that project and doing the coursework at the same time. I have to say, it was a fabulous year. I learned so much to help what I did over my next three assignments in the Philippines, Thailand, and Egypt.

Q: That's a great example of good use of that kind of training. Your family moved up to Ithaca with you?

CLARK: Yes, my son learned how to play hockey. He learned how to play lacrosse. He was in fifth grade. My daughter was in—Michelle was four, so she was in preschool.

Q: So they were happy to go overseas again to the Philippines?

CLARK: My children kind of didn't know what was happening. We're going someplace. My wife was okay with it that we were going to have to—we knew we were going to be going someplace because my time was up to stay in Washington. So the Philippines was in Asia. That's where, since we'd been married, that's where we had lived, in Asia, six years after we were married. I'd been there for four years before we were married. Our son was born in Bangkok. So going to Asia wasn't going to be even that difficult as opposed to going to a totally new continent. Like if we've gone to Africa, which would have been a very much different experience of having to learn a whole lot of things fresh from a new continent and new experience.

Q: Let's move on to your period in the Philippines. Let's try to go through this in this session if we can.

CLARK: Ok. I'm there as the deputy office director for rural development and agriculture. They have a portfolio of projects that are ongoing. We had a rural development finance project. We had one working with municipalities. Municipalities in

the Philippines are gigantic land areas. There can be an urban area with a vast rural area around them. AID was kind of working with urban-rural linkages—I had just finished studying that that was interesting—and one on finance. But the big thing in the Philippines was the remnant of the Bicol Integrated Rural Development Program. The Bicol region was one of the poorest regions in the Philippines, down at the bottom of Luzon. Bicol was a big river. They had three big irrigation programs there that were at various points of completion. Rural roads program, public health program—it was big enough that they assigned a Foreign Service Officer full time, David Heeson was there. That was the big piece of what we were trying to finish up.

The strategy was considered to be innovative. Tony Schwartzwalter had put together when he went as Mission Director a little think tank that was helping him think what should come next in the Philippines based on what we've done, and where they were in poverty. There were four pieces to the strategy: family planning, public health, small-medium enterprise development, rain-fed resources development, which basically was anything from the top of the peak of a mountain down to the end of the artisanal fishing off the coast, which was about seven to ten kilometers and then local resources management, which was a continuation of the decentralization of provisional governments which had started in the 1970s. The latter two are just getting started for this office I'm in.

There is fifty million dollars for the Development Assistance Program, and there's a special fifty million dollar Economic Support Fund assistance for access to the bases. Clark Air Force Base, two big naval bases and there's about another twenty-eight facilities around the Philippines. That was run separately. With Imelda Marcos was at the side. That was highly political. It was supposed to be a benefit primarily around the two big bases.

I didn't have anything to do with that when I got there. I did a little bit later. So we're trying to get these two new activities started. We're working with the Ministry of Agriculture, working with the Ministry of Natural Resources, and we're working with the Ministry of Local Government. The Ministry of Local Government loves AID because we've been working with them since the 1970s. That was one of the first big efforts of decentralization to the provincial level in Asia. Started under the then Mission Director Tom Niblock. So we're now going to approach it in a different way. We're going to use some of the organizations. We're not going to use any outside organizations. We're going to use Philippine NGOs. We're going to use them to help us understand how these households survive. What are their survival strategies? Of course, we learned some very interesting things that AID didn't know. That actually, a rural household has periods of surplus and a period of deficit of money. It depends on what time of the year and what kind of economic activities they are associated with. We set up a fund and that fund we had—I don't remember how many four or five provinces were working as trials—and that fund would finance a special chapter in their development plans aimed at alleviating poverty, and what they learned from these survival strategies. That was the way that was constructed.

The first year and a half was trying to get this thing started. Of course, a procurement using NGOs. We've picked a few that—there was an entity called the Rural Reconstruction Institute. It came from what was done in Taiwan after World War Two. A couple of people who had been associated with that came to the Philippines and set up a mirror of that. There was an organization called Philippine Business for Social Progress. They were an NGO which was very interesting, because they were financed by the member companies which gave them 1 percent of their gross profit. That's how they were financed. Then we had another—I forgot their name—but each one kind of had a development approach for how to work at the local level. For getting that project started.

Rainfed resources development is AID is recognizing that most of the agriculture around the world is rain-fed, not irrigated. And while there had been this big effort down the Bicol to build these irrigation systems, that had a limit. It had a financing limit and an organizational limit. So we then decided we got to look at the rainfed part of agriculture and we got to look at what's happening in the destruction of the forests and we got to look at what's happening in the destruction of the soils, that some of these mountains that were almost barren of soil, how they've been exploited over time. Then you obviously had an integration because once you started studying these survival strategies, these people that were growing coconuts over here, some rice over there, and down fishing over here. So that was the first kind of, wow, we got to look at the farming systems approach. Now that farming systems approach I mentioned, back when I was working in Washington with the Office of Agriculture it's now coming into existence.

So we do a contract and it's going to try out farming systems research and development in the Bicol region. We picked that because we'd had such a long presence and we knew a lot about the Bicol region that could provide a lot of platforms to work from. Then the rest of it was with the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Natural Resources, particularly around forestry, around soil management, around the fisheries aspect of it. We're getting those things launched. That's what we're doing.

Most places I've gone, I've always been asked, can you help do this? Can you help do that? Back to when AFSA became a union in Laos. They said who can be an AFSA rep out here. So I did it with anotherUSAID/Laos colleague, John Woods, where they asked who can run this commissary board in Laos. Nobody wants to do that, so I did that. In the Philippines, they had a guy named David Korten, who was a part-time PSC [Personal Service Contractor] with a mission. His wife Franz Korten was with the Ford Foundation and she was studying all about communal irrigation, which is really rich in the Philippines, for how they've managed historically small-scale irrigation. David Korten is there as a part of a program that was going to introduce the case study system, or business schools that Harvard follows at the Asian Institute of Management, which was in Manila. But David is interested in our organization and what we know.

In Asia we had—every two years—we had—it was large enough then it wouldn't ever happen in AID today probably. Well, we had an agriculture development officers conference every two years. So they had one in 1983, and the deputy assistant administrator for Asia was a guy named Rocky Staples who was coming from the Ford

Foundation. His question at this meeting was AID is in a transition from doing a lot of it themselves, to contracting it out or using other agreements to have other entities work at the community level and my question is, can AID work at the community level? Could you help me figure this out? So what was proposed was, let's take three missions, Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand. Let's pick two projects per mission that are working on at the community level and let's see what we can learn. What AID can do at that level and how much we should be investing that with other organizations or local organizations. He said David Korten, we're going to hire his other half from working with AIM and he's going to work in the Philippine mission. Then they said could you be the coordinator of this? So I said I would do that. So from 1983, until I went to Thailand, probably from 1983 to 1986, we had this Community Development Network that we're working with. We have meetings in the region every six months or so and we have a mix of rural development, agriculture, health, and economic growth. We had a mix of the kinds of projects we're looking at, and we do that and the conclusion is we can't. AID cannot change the way missions are constructed, the process going for what they're going to have for direct hire staff and even FSN staff, we will not be able to work at the community level. We've got to reach out and vet this with local partners that can work at the local level for us.

Korten he's looking at all these things. He came up with—In fact, he wrote a book called *The Fourth Generation NGO*. He's looking at this and comes up with a very simple thought, or approach to something that AID ought to think about in terms of localization today. What he discovered or what he advanced was—because he was supposed to be our guru, and thinker on organizational aspects—was that we need organizations that can partner with AID. First of all, they have their own approach to develop. They've got their own vision of how development unfolds. They've tested it, and they can do it. Second thing is they need to be able to mobilize resources, more than just from AID. AID just says be okay to get our money, but it will fail because at some point AID won't have any money for it. So they need to have the ability to capture and mobilize resources from various places. Third, they need to have a system of accountability and measurement of what they do. Fourth, they need to be able to hire, train and teach. Korten said if we can find organizations that do these things that we're looking at, that will be a good partner for us to work at the community level.

So we did that and that kind of folded up and ended. Korten went to Indonesia to work with the Ford Foundation. It was interesting—I'm glad I went to Cornell because there were all these things about participation. I learned these things and talked to a lot of people about how organizations work. One footnote to Cornell. There was a huge participant training group from Tanzania because that was the apex of the Arusha program. The Arusha experiment of rural development, and they had a big, integrated rural development project in Arusha supported by AID. We probably had fifteen Tanzanians there. We used to spend a lot of time and coffee time just talking to these guys about what they thought because they were outside their governments. and they weren't guarded about what they could tell you. They weren't sitting in their official position, so to speak. So that had been a great learning experience, kind of carried over into this network thing we worked with.

Things in the Philippines—we've got a strategy, we're working on a strategy. We're so close to Marcos. Regan has hugged him. He's our buddy, forever, we're joined at the hip, but the strategy had no policy dimension. That was deliberate because the embassy had told AID we're not going to disturb things by getting engaged in difficult sensitive policy things. For example, the Philippines consumes a lot of wheat. They have a little roll called a pandesal. It's like a little parker roll, or parker house roll, and that's eaten all over the place as a staple for breakfast and things like this. So wheat imports are big in the Philippines. They don't produce any wheat at all. They have millers and they have got a milling association. They've got a vibrant sector of bakeries and ways in which wheat products are baked and distributed. But the National Food Authority under Marcos had been given the monopoly to import wheat. Then they resold that to millers to mill and then they bought it back and then they distributed it to all the bakers. Each place along the way, the NFA [National Food Authority] was taking a cut. That was financing part of the Marcos political machine. That would have been a policy issue, for example, you'd like to have done something about but that couldn't be done. It would be later but it couldn't be done at that time. So we're stuck. In a way, the mission is in its box and they've got this fifty million, that's going out very political - until the summer of 1983 when Aquino was assassinated at the Manila International Airport.

Now the United States has got a big problem. We are so intertwined with the Marcoses that how are we going to get some space and distance away from them? That becomes a gigantic problem. The ambassador who was there had left—I forgot his name—but Bosworth came in as Ambassador. I have to say within the next five minutes of this story, I've never seen the level of effective, on the same page, strategic thinking, cooperation between the embassy and AID as I saw there. Political section, the economic section, the Ambassador, the mission director, and the people who were running the programs, the AID mission, all kind of synced together.

But at the same time, now we've got another problem. There's an insurgency starting with the New People's Army, almost all that poverty out there is festering away and you got the rise of the New People's Army, which is a heavy insurgency. In the Philippines when this reduction of poverty approach started, the country was split up. Mindanao, the southernmost island, and the islands around Mindanao was where the World Bank was. Northern Luzon is where the Asian Development Bank worked and we had the middle of the Philippines which is called the Bicol and Visayas regions, which is where the poorest part of the population is located. That is where the insurgency starts in the island of Samar and that is its home base kind of. Now we have a problem, you got this gigantic political problem and now we have the beginning of this insurgency with the New People's Army. So we're trying to figure out what we can do. We start to look around to people we haven't worked with before too intensively. I started working out of my group in agriculture. We say, AID has financed under participant training a whole group of Filipinos to get PhDs in various agricultural disciplines, including agricultural economics. They're sitting down at the University of the Philippines Los Baños and they're not doing much. There are two young Americans, almost post PhD status from University of Illinois—I don't know what we call them, maybe they were associates or whatever. We

are down working under a grant from the Agriculture Development Council, which became later a part of Winrock with this group. But they're getting no traction because nobody wants to listen about agriculture policy. There's a lot of problems with agriculture products in the Philippines. I go down with a couple of people and started talking to them, and we saw that what they needed was some money. So we gave them a grant. We started working with them on what the agriculture politics would be.

I had met a woman named Tina David who was the chief economist at IRRI [International Rice Research Institute] because I used to go down and represent AID at IRRI board meetings because nobody would come from Washington. I just kind of sit there as a reporter and listen. Tina David was a Filipina and she had been an economist and she had been working on a whole range of policy issues around Philippine agriculture. So I said, Okay, let's see if we can get this thinking machine, so to speak, working on policy issues in the Philippines. So we can at some point, start to introduce that into moving away from Marcos, who was refusing to do much of anything.

We then found a group called CRB and they were a think tank. They were an anti-Marcos think tank. The guy who ran it was a guy named Bernie Villegas. They were doing some things, but not a lot. They were worried about elections in the Philippines. They later on got very active in the elections that happened in 1985. But we're trying to find places that we've never worked with before, who we could begin to work with. One of the groups that have always come to AID—they'd come to AID and asked for help—was the Philippine Wheat Owners Association. So we started to work with them. I spent a lot of time with them, over 1983-84: what we could try to do, what we could do, and we got lucky. Sometimes in policy work, you get lucky, and some things are ready to step off the cliff and you can introduce something and maybe get a reform.

I became the head of this office in 1984. Sometime in late 1984, early 1985, the Philippines started to face a rice shortage. They've always been a rice importer, but at a pretty low level. Now they have to import a pretty hefty level of rice, and they're strapped because they don't have foreign exchange to do it. The bottom line on that one is that we offered them title one. We give food assistance, but you have to have a policy measure involved. We've got a policy measure that is have the NFA start to move away from its controls on importing wheat so that millers can import the wheat, mill it, and then sell it. As I recall, the millers said that to show our commitment to doing this. Once this has happened, we'll guarantee that there will be a reduction in the consumer price which happened. So we're spending '84, '85, and '86 trying to pull away from Marcos and trying to get ready or begin to do some things that will deal with this tremendous number of policy problems they had in the Philippines. And then they had the snap election in '85 and Marcos was beaten by Mrs. Aquino.

That starts a whole different change. Tony Schwartzwalter retired as mission director and Fred Check took over who later became deputy administrator of AID. He was there as mission director beginning in '84. So when most of these things are happening, he's there as Mission Director, and he was the right person to be there, in terms of being able to see

all these political and economic issues and help pull them together. He was a big factor in the effectiveness we had of AID working with the Embassy on these things.

So I went to a worldwide meeting on rural finance enrollment, IFAD the International Food and Agriculture Development. I go through Bangkok to get to Rome. When I'm in Rome, I get a message from a friend of mine, John Greenough. Who'd been in Laos, longtime friend, and he was the executive officer of USAID Thailand. This was in the summer of 1985. He said, I tried to contact you in the Philippines, they said, You're in Rome. If you're coming to Bangkok, on a date, just stop and come and see us at the AID mission. So I did on the way back from Rome and I met the Thailand Deputy Director who asked me if I would be interested in coming to Thailand. I said, yes, I would love to come back to the country I started in. And he said, "What we're going to do is that Thailand is an emerging technical newly industrial country strategy then, but now we call it an emerging middle-income country. We've got a strategy we're going to be putting in place. We're going to have to totally reorganize the AID mission and we will be closing out our historical program and moving to this middle-income strategy. Would you like to come and be a part of this? I'm going to set up and we're going to boil this mission down into two offices. We're going to have an office of technical resources, which is going to have every technical program in the mission. I want you to come and run this, because most of the new strategy is going to be housed in that division. I said, "I'd be very interested to do that." I went back to the mission and I told Fred Schieck. I was gonna do this. He said, "That's fine. Your tour is up next year. That sounds like a good opportunity to me." They said, "Are you sure you don't want to be a mission director? I said no, I don't want to be a mission director. I like what I'm doing technically, and I think I can make a better contribution there. I enjoy it and this constant learning process. I like it. He said, okay. Then this is what I did.

The problem then though, is that after the snap election, now his thinking is changing. Peter McPherson came to the Philippines right before the election. Probably in the fall just before the election was called. He'd been in the Philippines, and he met the mission and what we're doing and the amount of money for the bases had been increased from fifty to ninety million. When Mrs. Aquino was elected, McPherson asked Fred Schieck, what do you need to run this mission? David Meinn was there, he was the executive officer. So he was in the Philippine mission at the same time. He came two years after I did. I had also taken over the energy programs because the person that had run the energy programs had left, Lawrence Irvin, and they never found anybody to replace him. I took over the energy programs also so I had rural development, agriculture, and energy. Fred said, well, Doug has started a lot of the stuff on policy. We've been working with a school down in Los Baños. He'd been working with the group from IRRI. There already was Mrs. Aquino being elected. They're doing a green paper of what we should be doing in agriculture. I like him. He's on my list to stay. I'd already been assigned to Thailand and so I said well, I want to go to Thailand and I forgot the name of the guy, Charlie Green the assistant administrator for Asia.

Q: Yeah, Charlie, I'm not remembering either. But I know him.

CLARK: He called me up and he said, "I would like you to go to Thailand, I think you're going to be more helpful there. I don't like the administrator messing around with my personnel to begin with, so we made decisions where we think people ought to go. I don't think we're going to have a problem replacing you in the Philippines, and I would like you to go to Thailand. I'll go and talk to Fred Check about it and he will talk to Peter McPherson." And he did, and I went to Thailand. I stayed in the Philippines until the summer of 1986.

The Philippine experience. That's my first real mission. That's the Lao's experience, it is an aberration, it's in war, it's a sideshow to South Vietnam, propping up a government to keep it in existence. We were trying to help Lao improve their well-being doing that. So it was a different story. Now I'm in more of a traditional AID mission. In fact, I think even today, that's probably the longest continuous program in the world, because assistance was started in 1946. At least from a development perspective, in the mission, it was really a fine experience.

Filipino FSNs, Tony Schwartz Walter had started a program of we're going to start hiring younger, well educated Filipino FSN staff, we're going to empower them, we're going to reduce, I want to reduce the American presence here. I think it's time to do it. It's 1982. We've been here for thirty-six years now. I think we ought to show that Filipinos can begin to run their own development efforts with our funding, with our guidance and with our behind the curtain support. That's what we should be trying to do, which is kind of what AID is talking about doing today. It was a good experience because you were able to get a group of really good Filipinos working for the part of the mission that I was responsible for. The programs were very complicated and very challenging. But you had committed Filipinos that were your counterparts at all levels that were really trying to do something even though above it, you had this rotten political Marcos system overseeing it all.

I left the Philippines with a really fine experience that I had. My family enjoyed it. My son learned how to play tennis. We lived right next to the tennis court in Maga;;anes Village where all the Americans lived. My daughter started competitive swimming when she was in kindergarten in Manila, and with a good school, it was a good family place.

Q: Good. Let's break now.

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Q: This is John Pielmeier and this is our fourth interview with Doug Clark, on his excellent career. And we're going to cover a couple of points on the Philippines mission where he served and move on to Thailand and Egypt before his retirement. So Doug, do you want us to go back to the Philippines?

CLARK: Okay, let's finish up. 1986 was my final year of assignment I left in the summer of 1986. The beginning of 1986, though, another huge political event happens, like what happened at the end of Laos. President Marcos called for a snap election, he called for a

snap election on Larry King Live show, we're gonna have an election for president. And he did in February of 1986. AID and the embassy, as I've mentioned, work closely together. In 1984, there was a conference held in a Clark Air Force Base amongst AID and embassy staff from the political and economic section about the emerging insurgency, the New People's Army. There was also a depression occurring after the assassination of Aquino, the economy just going in the tank. So the idea was AID had projects in the central part of the country, where most of the poverty was and most of the insurgency was operating. The idea came up that AID staff working on projects would kind of become regional coordinators and the eyes and ears for the overall U.S. presence and help the reporting of the Embassy on what was going on. And we did that. So we have the election, the embassy says, hey, those people being those regional coordinators, could they go on to be poll watchers. So they did. So there was an effort to try and look at what was happening with the election. The election occurred. There were two ways in which the results were counted. There was the quick return count, run by Marcos at a big arena in Manila. Then there was a bring it in from the provinces count, which was very slow. And within a day or so he declared himself a winner on the quick count. But then when the slow count was done, Mrs. Aquino was the winner. So now we have a big problem.And Marcos is staying in power. And about two weeks later, maybe at the end of February. That's when the people's power revolution happened, in which about two million Filipinos began to turn out in Manila to protest against the Marcos regime and the fraudulent presidential elections. That was also called the EDSA revolution because EDSA was a superhighway that went from Manila Bay and took you out of the city going south. And that entire superhighway became a venue for this protest in Manila. So we're all there. Most of us are living in Magallanes village, which is a big gated community of several hundred homes, we are a tiny part of the population, most of the population are Filipino, middle class, and we have a very good radio system that the Embassy has for security purposes. And they kept me well informed about what was going on. And basically said, Don't go out. People did want to watch it. There's a phenomenon so people did say nevermind, I'm gonna go out and watch it because it wasn't really dangerous. But it was just as massive a demonstration against Marcos. And regimes fall apart quickly, usually at the end of them. And this began to fall apart quickly when the secretary of defense refused to endorse him. The head of the army, Ramos refused to let the military be engaged to do anything. The police likewise. So Marcos comes down with nobody left. Then the challenge to the United States is to get him out. And he's in Malacañang which is the Philippine White House. And they start to work to get him out. And they finally do and he leaves with U.S. assistance. And at one point he's taken to I guess his first point out of Malacañang was the helicopter landing pad at the U.S. Embassy, which our office building overlooked, at the Magsaysay center. So we weren't going to work and we weren't able to watch any of that. But that's what happened to Marcos. And Mrs. Aquino came in. That's when the AID, now we can start to interact as we normally would with huge development challenges. And that's what happened over the remainder of my time there. And the assistance went from ninety million to four hundred fifty million real quick. Coming in with everything they needed humanitarian assistance and every part of the economy needed help. I worked on that until I left to go to Thailand. The Philippines was also another place where they said, we need an AFSA rep. And so I was AFSA rep there also, like I was in Laos and AID needed a representative on the on the United States

Employees Association, USEA, which ran this complex of the normal and a big mission, a commissary, a gas station, a swimming pool, tennis courts, a baseball field, and a big clubhouse. Probably the most beautiful U.S. facility I've ever seen, which was right on Manila Bay, Sea Front, it was called. I wound up being the chair of the board for two years.

They needed a volunteer to be the USAID rep. And I was finally elected chairman of that. And I ran that for two years. Like I did in Laos, which was an interesting experience, AFSA rep was basically meeting with a DCM, like in Laos about every quarter. And it was, well, what's the pulse of the people? How are people feeling in the embassy, and AID whatever. You had no power, you're just kind of a voice if people had a concern. I'd say in the Philippines, maybe two or three people explored grievances. You get that assistance from AFSA. But overall, in both posts, I served as AFSA rep, the concern was housing. How do you get better housing, that was about it. I stayed until we left in July of '86, on direct transfer to Thailand. I was kind of torn. Did I want to stay? Did I want to go? But there were two people back when we were trying to figure out how to talk and work with people outside of the government. I met two young business guys. They have a big agribusiness complex. And I don't remember the name of the one I spent a lot of time talking with about how they look at agriculture. But anyway, he wound up being the Deputy Minister of Agriculture. And he begged me to stay and I said, No, I can't, you'll be fine. There's going to be good people coming from AID. You're going to get a lot of assistance. All this stuff doesn't depend on one person, you need to figure out how to work with all of AID. And AID, it'll have a big presence here and they'll be providing the assistance you need, which was true.

The last thing we did before I left is that I mentioned Tina David is the Filipina chief economist at IRRI. And I worked with her, we did a green paper, which laid out all of the changes and reforms that were needed in the agriculture sector. And the last major thing that I worked on in the Philippines in agriculture was the director of the International Rice Research Institute Dr. Swaminathan came to AID and he said I need your help. The Filipinos have slowly and slowly and slowly become dependent on us. They're investing nothing in agricultural research and rice themselves. They don't have any capacity. They've let all that capacity decline and dribble away and we can't do that. We can't be a fire station to solve their pest management problem when something outbreaks. Can you help us? Try to figure out how we could get a Philippine rice research institute started. I can get you people that will be planning. I will give you people that can think on what they need, but I don't have any money. I can't put something into investing in a facility. At AID we thought about it for a while. And then we said well we got an old pile of local currency someplace and it was decided that we would take that money and join with IRRI and establish this Philippine Rice Research Institute. That's kind of the last thing that happened before I left and they built up a pretty good facility that still exists today. I like that kind of part of concluding my work in the Philippines, how that happened.

Q: Very impressive. Yeah.

CLARK: Okay, so now we're going to Thailand on a direct transfer. And I went back to the country I served as a Peace Corps volunteer and finished in 1967. I'm coming back like nineteen years later. And Thailand now I'm going to a totally different environment. Thailand is in the minds of AID, using a term that didn't last too long, a newly industrialized country, they were a NIC, they would call them a middle income country. And the mission in Thailand was in the midst of a transition. And the transition was from a portfolio of projects that primarily had been rural development based agriculture to a program that would be supportive of Thailand's emergence as a NIC. Lee Twentyman was the deputy director. And he had asked me to come to help reform. We've restructured the mission, they basically had a structure of offices, and staffing that reflect that their old strategy. And some of these were one person offices, because there wasn't much left from the old strategy. And they were shifting to a new strategy. And in that strategy, there would be a focus on science and technology. And there will be a big focus on natural resources management, mostly around the development of tourism. And then there was always on the side narcotics, because of the opium production up in the northwest in Northern Thailand in the Golden Triangle area of Burma, Laos, and Thailand. And then there was a private sector emphasis. And there was an NGO emphasis. Now my office took everything except the NGO, and the private sector. A guy named Jeff Evans ran that. And so we got two big offices that we formed in the mission. And I had two of the pieces of the new strategy. Jeff had two pieces, and I also focused on the transitions out of the old pieces. And so I had health. I had science and technology, I had rural development, I had agriculture, and irrigation. I had natural resources management, and I had narcotics. What is it John?

Q: I just said, my goodness, that's quite a portfolio.

CLARK: And a lot of these were, for example, public health was mostly focused on family planning. It was an interesting phenomenon, because Lee Twentyman was exasperated, because he was trying to phase out family planning. And the U.S. side that had provided the assistance of family planning didn't want to do that. I continued to want to work in Thailand. And he kept saying with the population growth rate at 1.7 percent. The fertility rate is at about two point two. Let's say we were highly successful and go home. And they were highly successful as compared to what was happening in the Philippines. In the Philippines, the Catholic Church became a dominant force against family planning. And as a result, today, two countries were about the same in 1982, when we were doing our comparative strategy, where between Thailand and the Philippines, each had about sixty-two to sixty-three million people. The Philippines has over a hundred million people today; Thailand at about seventy million. That's a difference of what happens in a family planning program. Anyway, we work on phasing that out, and finally get it done. The Thai only wanted continued access to family planning technology at Johns Hopkins University. The rest of the AID support coming from other US family planning organizations was no longer needed.

This by the way becomes a Thai concern about this new strategy that was trying to get traction. So we're spending a lot of time talking to the Thai about it. And the one thing I came through, there was a discussion. We had a retreat, we had many discussions about

what did the Thai want? And they basically want access to sophisticated, let's say information. They viewed the United States as being a font of information to help them with this new phase of development. And there have been discussions about let's close the USAID Mission. And of course, he said, they didn't want to do that, because they viewed the relationship between the United States and Thailand like a rope, it was a thick rope made up of many strands. And one of the strands was development cooperation. Even as of today, our oldest diplomatic relationship in the world is Thailand. And during the Civil War, the King of Thailand offered Abraham Lincoln elephants if he thought it might help him win the Civil War. So it goes back a long time. And when I arrived, the AID program had been established in 1952. So it was established under the predecessor entity of the AID International Cooperation Agency, ICA and ICA set up missions over the World, and they were called a USOM (United States Overseas Mission). And USOM because of the presence of AID all through the country, particularly in the 50s and 60s when they were in a massive accelerated little development program. The acronym USOM meant something, it was a, I guess, today we'd say it was a very well known brand. And AID mission in Thailand got an exception, not to call themselves USAID. But they continue to call themselves USOM.

So if you were in Bangkok, and you wanted to get in a cab and go to USOM, they knew exactly where to go, like you said, USAID they have no idea what you're talking about. So that's so that brand is stuck. So we're working on trying to get the Science and Technology program launched. We're in the process of thinking about the natural resources management program. And an old colleague I'd met five years, four years ago or so, Will Knowland was a PSC advisor in the Mission. And he had been working in a regional environmental program out of Jakarta. And the Thai mission said he's really good. He was the first person that was working on trying to develop this natural resources management program. And it was an idea. All we had from the Thai was, we see development really rushing towards us in our economy. And we don't want to repeat what happened in Taiwan, where that massive amount of industrial development caused huge environmental issues. And then they cleaned it up, and we hopefully can avoid that. In 1986, if you looked around the city of Bangkok, you lived in an apartment in the middle of the Sukhumvit area which is kind of the business area, but also an expatriate area. You thought there was a flock of cranes flying around birds because those cranes were everywhere building something, and it was reputed that there was an assembly plant opening every day, massive Japanese investment was coming in. Massive Korean and Taiwanese investment was coming in. And so that was their hope that you can help us avoid these severe environmental problems that didn't happen when industrialization happens fast. They were concerned and the United States was concerned that there wasn't the scientific capacity, or the technical capacity to support all of what was needed as this industrialization growth started off. I think it's from about 1984 to 1997. The Thai economy was the fastest growing economy in the world. It was somewhere over 10 percent 11 percent, maybe formally, and then if you count the informal economy, maybe it was 14 percent or 15 percent. It was a booming economy. A lot of it was around assembly. So these companies are coming in and they're assembling in Thailand. Products that were then exported out.

They had a big export processing zone down in the Gulf of Siam, in Sattahip. And today, that is the largest assembly point in the world for pickup trucks. So we're trying to help with those things of how to change and what was needed for capacity. The Thai counterparts we worked with were in a unit within the Prime Minister's Office that the United States set up to coordinate foreign assistance called the department for economic and technical cooperation, DETEC. And when I got there, the relationships with DETEC were in the minds of the mission weren't as good as they should be. And I was asked to work on that because I spoke Thai. And I had a young agriculture Officer David Delgado who had just come out of working up in Northern Thailand, he was probably the last person in AID assigned into the field in Thailand. As his assignment. He was working on a watershed project in Mae Chaem to develop an alternative to growing opium. So we spent a lot of time talking to DETEC as they were the point of negotiation for project activities of all donors. And it's our closest counterpart. And then we had the national economic social development board, which was the apex planning entity. And I would say they were populated by very well qualified people. That's what we're working with trying to get this program launched.

But we're starting to work on the new NIC program. We also needed to be aware of the way the Thai worked with foreign donors.. We would need to operate with very few contractors in Thailand. And in the AID program, there was an insistence that if we had PSC Americans, that they'd be host country, personal services, contractors working for them. So localization is the topic of today, they were already thinking about this thing. They wanted to have control of that. But then if you stopped and thought about it for a moment, Thailand has spent its modern history protecting sovereignty, it was never colonized, it came close. And they had to make arrangements with the British and the French to avoid it, but they did. So one thing is behind a lot of their thinking is not allowing any encroachment on their sovereignty, and controlling their affairs. I learned this concept when we're talking about scientific technology development. And in the design of this natural resource management program, they had a concept called net grant. So if you came to them with a suggestion that AID is going to have this great program. And we're going to give you fifty million dollars.

And then say, what is it that fifty million dollars, and how much is really going to come to us. And so what we're interested in is in that net number, if you give the U.S. contractor nothing that helps us out, really. So overhead costs, or whatever they are, but they went through this process. And what they were asked for was kind of a concept of how much you're hitting the ground to help them.. And that was an interesting concept that I learned there. And it came up in negotiations in Egypt, and it came up a lot like when I was later working for Winrock in energy but that was one of the things that you had to work with them on, because they were after what is really going to benefit our country. And in the course of implementation, they will look at that because they were very engaged with you as a partner, which was also an exception because that the planning entities in a lot of countries were never there when it came time to implement. It was left up to the technical ministry, so to speak, but the Thai didn't do that. So a science and technology development project is getting launched. John Erickson is the mission director. And he's kind of the perfect mission director because John's a macro economist.

He was the chief economist of AID and was the director in Thailand, when you got this big economic expansion happening in the economy. And his counterpart is an economist with a PhD from Columbia University. Dr. Snoh the head of NESDB and they're looking at these, what can we do to really help Thailand, as this happens? Obviously, a lot of critics about this program, probably. There are people who wonder why don't we just phase out Thailand and declare success because there was at that time, the middle 50s. We've heard it in Thailand and sort of, where's the next graduate? We're tired of just saying Taiwan graduated. We're tired of just saying South Korea graduated. Where's the next one? And there was a lot of pressure from Congress, aren't you going out of business, going to a country, you provide assistance, you get into a certain level of social economic development, and then we go home. And so there was kind of that pressure there.

It showed up in Thailand in a really interesting way. We had one big contract. That was back to the farming systems discussion I had about working in the technical assistance Bureau, but there was a very significant farming systems project in northeastern Thailand. It's called NERAD. And NERAD is where I now meet people who I had taught during the Peace Corps. So the first time I went to see this project which is located in Khon Kaen Thailand, where my wife is from, that's where the big Northeastern agricultural research center is located.

The agriculture of northeastern Thailand is poor, very bad soils, limited water, limited capacity to irrigate. AID mission had a relationship with the University of Kentucky for well over twenty years and tried to help them do that. The contract to support this farming system projects, NERAD has people from the University of Kentucky. So I go up there, and I meet Dr. Utai Kittipong who's the director of the center. And I go to a couple NERAD meetings and are introduced. Here is the new AID guy going to be overlooking us And they didn't know I spoke Thai. When I was introduced, I did a little five minute reading in Thai. And when I finished, Dr. Utai came over and he said, There's something about me, there's something about you, I met you before. I don't know what it is that you do. I can't say you look that way, but or just speak, but you speak Thai. And there's something that I just remembered about that. What did you do? I said while I was in the Peace Corps. And he said, What did you teach? I told him, I said, and I had this unique experience where I taught in the crash English program at Kasetsart university, where they pick forty students, ten from each class that had the highest potential to go abroad and study. And he said, I was in that program.

Q: Oh, really.

CLARK: And I was a junior. And I wound up going to University of Kentucky and getting a PhD. And he said, Have you gotten to the Ministry of Agriculture yet? I said, No. I'm just here as my early weeks and months. And he said, well, the director general of fisheries is Dr. Plodprasop and he also was a student in the crash English program. So when you go to see him, we should talk about the crash English program. And we had a small project with him, and I did wind up seeing him several months later. And then I saw on TV, my former AFS student Dr. So I went to find him. He had as a result of his

AFS experience won a scholarship to the University of New Delhi and completed his BA and Masters and a PhD at Pennsylvania. He observed US news media and came back to Thailand intent on introducing a Walter Cronkite form of delivering the news in Thailand. That was a nice heartwarming kind of, wow. There were people that I never figured I'd ever see again, what they would do. So that was really, really nice.

Anyway, back to science and technology, the Mission before I arrived had started off by saying, let's get the Thais involved in some international science cooperation. This Israeli science program that was basically between Israel and Egypt, and it was expanded out to the rest of the world, and it was competitive. So the AID mission, hired a Thai from one of the, I think, probably Mahidol University, that's the scientific University. And they started putting big effort into the proposals that Thai scientists would submit. And they've been doing this only for about two years now. We're winning 25 percent of the competitions. So they built up this little interesting, clever little base of getting Thai used to working internationally with the scientific community. And that led them to, when we did the science and technology program, we really wanted to have a relationship with the National Academy of Sciences, which we did. That's how that is getting started.

At that time 1987 King Bhumibol was the most popular King in modern Thai history and was about to reach the fifth cycle of his life.. And in Thai culture, Asian culture, you have the twelve years of the horoscope, and that's called a cycle. And so the third cycle would be thirty-six years and you have celebrations or cycles. This cycle was a big deal for life. If you can make it to sixty years old. They've gone on to have a big celebration. And they did. And one of the things we did was we had a, the king's youngest daughter was a PhD chemist from a German university. And her thing in life was natural pharmaceutical products. She was keen on biodiversity. And we helped sponsor this gigantic program, gigantic convention, or preference on natural pharmaceutical products. And that was another part of trying to build a base for what we were going to do with the Science and Technology program there.

We finally got that launched, and set up an entity called the STBD Science and Technology Board for Development, which was kind of a coordinating entity for science and technology investments. So there was no basic research for the sake of research. But it was more applied research to support what was called the productive sector, meaning agriculture, meaning industry. And that was it

We had narcotics, we were always part of the narcotics program in Thailand. AID was, and there was a narcotics entity in the Thai government that we worked with. There was an interagency narcotics group in Thailand. And in the embassy in Thailand, I participated in that. The major thing we did was trying to find alternative activities from going over opium. Probably back to my Lao experience, because I didn't tell you when I was in IDI, I worked for about two months on an assessment of alternative livelihoods for opium producers. They brought in a team from the United States, an interdisciplinary team, and we went and looked all through Laos and came back and the Ambassador asked for a briefing on what this team had found. And the team leader, I forgot who his name was said, Mr. Ambassador, we came over, we spent out of what it was six weeks

doing an assessment, we have only one conclusion.. And he said, What is it? He says, Well, you guys asked us to find the Lost Dutchman's gold mine. And we didn't find it. And we don't have an answer, except that Opium is a perfect product for these areas in terms of what can be produced and how you transport things like that.

In Northern Thailand, most of the opium was produced in hill tribe areas, hilltribe, people were not seen in Thai cities as they couldn't get an ID card. So right away, you're in trouble, because ID card in most countries, but certainly in Thailand, you gotta have it to do about anything, you want to go to school, you want to get a driver's license, you want to have a bank account, you want to borrow money, all those kinds of things. So the idea of USAID project, which had long been in place, by the time I got there was to develop an area of land that would be irrigated, in which the whole tribe, people in that area of northern Thailand could truly develop another agricultural product. AID had included a condition precedent for the project, you don't hear about AID doing that much anymore. But the condition precedent meant that before the project could start, the Thai government had to do something. In this case, what they had to do was they had to issue a kind of complicated land title that comes with agricultural land. And on that land title on the back of the land title hilltribe landowner would get title to a piece of land. Now on the back of that title would be the one that couldn't be transferred. And two, that they would promise to not produce any opium or illicit crops on that land. That was the condition precedent. And it took three years to get that done, the Thais were very reluctant to want to have a qualified land deed. And finally, in the end, they did. And the project turned out to be a very successful project. David Delgado, who worked for me later, but had been up there working for two years on that project. He said, I had a very simple indicator, whether there was success, how many pickup trucks were these people buying? Buying a lot of pickup trucks because they needed it for what they were doing. And it worked out to be a pretty successful product.

Q: This was a demonstration area?

CLARK: That was a big project. No, it was not a pilot. I guess it could be a pilot if seen as could you do this? Could you get people, if you put them on a secure piece of land? Would they invest in that land? That has always been a theory of land planting or land development, if a farmer had security over their land, they would invest in it, they would take care of it and they would stay with it. If they had any kind of temporary access to a piece of land, then they would behave in a different way. And you see that all through that area in the western agriculture, slash and burn agriculture, which still exists today. If you go to Northern Thailand today, right now, you better take a mask with you because you're gonna have massive particulate matter base pollution, air pollution. And that's all burning off in southern China, North Western Laos, and Burma. And it's still done today. But the idea was to stop them doing that, and give them a permanent piece of land and they would behave differently. And that pretty much seems to be correct. Let's see. So about halfway through projects were bringing them to a conclusion. We've got several interesting projects, we had one agriculture technology transfer in which we're trying to develop products that can be exported. And in Thailand, out of that project, we did it. And we had a retired USDA [United States Department of Agriculture] guy, Bob Ralston,

who had come to Thailand in retirement, because he loved Thailand, and he's done and was hired as a PSC by DTEC.

When I got to Thailand he had been there for ten years working on agriculture, in retirement. He's working full time. But he looked at these, it was a competitive process. We had an interesting time, it was competitive. And the proposals had to show promise for exporting a product. And around exporting that product would be a growth of agribusiness enterprises and agribusiness employment. One of the most successful projects was surimi production. And surimi, when you buy crab meat at your US grocery store it may not be a real crab. It may be fish protein has been processed, and then colored and then it has been flavored. So it tastes like crab. But it's not. That's what surimi is. Thailand became the world's largest exporter of that. You use it in various fish products, and huge growth in agribusiness and jobs around that happened as a result of the project..

That project was a question mark for staying in the new strategy or going away. And there were people who, both in AID Mission and in Washington who kind of think anything that's got the old name goes, agriculture is out, rural developments out, irrigation is out. And so that project ended finally. But then we came into an interesting example of how this transition, things you thought were going to be used one way they're going to be used a different way. So we were closing out the Northeast Lam Nam Oon irrigation program. And it had been built to support dry season rice production. But the water flow was not sufficient for a good crop. The farmers shifted to the production of vegetable seeds as agribusiness was beginning to take off in the vegetable and fruit sectors. The end story is that Thailand becomes the center of the production of vegetable seeds for all of Southeast Asia. So what looked like a loser was adapted to be a winner so to speak.

So agribusiness in Thailand is two big companies, Charoen Pokphand, which is a huge multinational company now, they are doing things that are expanding significantly and quickly in agriculture. You need water. Some of these municipalities up in northeastern Thailand, start to take water from these AID built small scale irrigation projects that are going to irrigate rice, and they're putting it into their municipal systems, because they need it for Agribusiness. Now, we have a water conflict that nobody ever thought about. And so it kind of got resolved, it was left up to the municipalities to figure that out. And we did our project planning and the final thing I'd say about a project, and I got to thinking about Thailand is that Thailand is like many countries that has a very centralized administrative system. They have, they have provinces, they have districts within provinces. It's all run out of the Ministry of Interior. They're all appointed, governors and district offices are appointed. But beginning back with accelerated rural development of the 1960s AID in Thailand had always been moving as much as they could towards decentralization, trying to move towards decentralization. And I inherited a decentralization project. It was done with the prime minister's office and had been put in place by our IDI coordinator, Jerry Woods. And it had a cash transfer aspect to it, if they made progress on moving some things to the provincial government that they would get a cash transfer, there was limited progress under that, I would say.

I also inherited a project that was funded from a development loan. And at that time, there were still development loans in Thailand. It was one of the countries that got a development loan middle 1980s. It was working with the Prime Minister's Office and they wanted to improve planning at the provincial level. And that project was stuck. And nobody could come up with a way to use the loan that satisfied the Ministry of Finance. They had an agreement. The Finance was worried about wasting loan funds that the country had to pay back and as a result the project never went anywhere. And so the job in our group was what can we do to use this loan and encourage the Ministry of Finance to use the funds. So we finally said, Let's try the emerging computer technology, maybe let's not try to insist on a planning outcome, let's maybe look at the process. And since a personal desktop computer from IBM was just showing up in the AID mission and was available, so why don't we see if we could use this as a process to improve their planning? The Thais loved that. Okay, we're gonna get two computers to every province, that you might use up a huge amount of money, because computers are really expensive then. And we'll have them do certain things for us. And then the innovative partner was an advisor, an American advisor forgot his name, but let's them have some freedom to use that for their own purposes. And as they see that there are things that can help them and their own management of the province, or the district helping them to plan. So we did that. And then they did all kinds of interesting things. They put their payroll on the computers, they put vehicle registrations on the computer. They put the tax collections on the computers, a lot of interesting things you could see. They liked the idea of moving from paper to a computer.

So as the mission is thinking, John Erickson is thinking about the mission and says we're gonna do a strategy modification. And John is thinking that project assistance to Thailand was a way of assistance that ought to go away. It's an old way of doing business. And you'll hear me talking about this later. We need to move the relationship to something different. And so he looked at Taiwan and Portugal which had development foundations. They were up with US help. He said, let's think about a foundation. And so we started thinking about our foundation. We had a couple of retreats about it. And the idea would be that Thailand had some old development loans that had not been fully repaid. The repayment period was 30 years. So the idea that came up was to take the total value of the loans outstanding, and just discount them the current value. And that would be the U.S. contribution.

That core funding for a foundation, I don't remember it came down to twenty, twenty-five million dollars, something like that. And that the United States would provide a sum per year of an annual budget, but it wouldn't be an AID mission any longer, there'd be a foundation. And then the Thai would put in bought monies, and we put into our monies that could cover the Thai dollar costs. The proposal was generally accepted in Washington, but finally died when OMB nixed the idea because it would be off budget and then were against funding entities in this way.

So we looked at other areas where we could work in a non traditional AID project way. In the mid 80s, before I got there, AID and Canada joined together to provide the seed

capital to help establish the Thai Development Research Institute, which was think tank, So USOM decided to fund two of the major programs at TDRI - macro economic and environmental and natural resources programs on an annual grant basis, They did excellent work.. And they helped us a lot in the development of our NIC strategy.

Then we had set up Rural Research Institute and Khon Kaen University in northeastern Thailand, Japan and Canada. It was focused on rural development issues, social and economic. And again, that was a two million dollar project, we're putting like 500,000 dollars a year from our side, and the Japanese were putting in a larger amount because they like to build facilities and provide equipment. As a side note AID quit buying vehicles in Thailand quite some time ago. And they would just say to DTEC get the vehicles from the Japanese because we're not going to buy them

We went back to the foundation idea again. The assistant administrator for ANE supports it but it dies because OMB and Treasury are not interested in the discounting of the loan and having what they call off budget resources. Peter MacPherson at that time is now what the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury and the mission director talks with Peter and Peter says, no, I can't help you. That is a strict government policy. And there's nothing we can do about that.

In 1989, there's a new assistant administrator Carol Edelman. And Carol Edelman looks at Thailand and says, I don't see why we should have a mission there unless we can really shift this over to a robustly private sector based program. And working with the government isn't something that we're interested in doing. And that's coming just as we're finishing the design for the natural resources management project. And it was the biggest project of that size in Asia up till that point. It's about a forty-five million project. So we worked with the private sector, the Federation of Thai industries. We work with the park system. We work with coastal resources management. The island of Phuket was a major place that we chose to work on coastal resources management. And at that time, there was limited investment. By the time I leave, two years after we start working with a pilot with university Rhode Island that started off. The amount of buildings in Phuket is just enormous. And it causes some real serious environmental problems. There was a tsunami of investment from the Japanese, and from the Koreans was the Japanese. And that was badly hit by the tsunami 2004. A lot of that was destroyed. The Federation of Thai Industries was interested in the big industrial base south of Bangkok. Most of that was with serious water pollution, and some air pollution. But they were eager to get assistance, because they saw the bad news that was coming with increased industrial pollution. It was an element in this new program.

The assistance to the park system was very interesting. There was great opposition in AID Washington, why would you do that. Why are you working in these parks? What does the National Park Service, United States help with, and the Thai concept was very simple. As incomes increase, as the benefits from the economic growth and expansion occurs, Thais are going to want to travel in their own country. They're going to want to see their country, they're going to want to see some of these beautiful areas we have in this country. That wildlife, forest, waterfowl, all kinds of things. Khao Yai was the

biggest national park. And why would you do that? While it was a long term idea, and this is where we bumped into-we had a guy from OMB come out and look at our program. And one of our discussions. Someone said the wrong thing in a way, but it was the right thing. And that really causes problems later on, in that most of what we're doing is laying the groundwork for what is going to happen in the future. And probably we're going to see very little during the life of the programs we're supporting. But you're going to see a lot of things happen after we're done. And that's the way development works. Since it's drawn to work that way. OMB guys just appalled to hear that, that we're not focusing on getting something now. And he said we're talking like United States. So why do we need to give these people assistance? And he came back, he went back with pretty negative impressions. And that kind of spoke to the round over to the new AA Carol Edelman. But it came through because if you go to Thailand today, their national park system is like our national park system. It is really widely used by Thai. Thai are constantly going to these parks that they set up. They have a couple of big ones we worked with, during the AID mission time. And then there have been some since then.

Q: It's very interesting. And it reminds me of a colleague of yours and mine, who set up a similar park system in Bangladesh, which is one of the most heavily populated countries in the world. And the question is, do they have room for park systems? Why do they want parks, because they want some places they can go and be alone. They want some air and they want to be in the green space. And there once again, it's been very successful.

CLARK: Yeah. We get towards my last year there 1989 coming into 1990. I found a home when you saw my tour should end in 1991. And now there's just real significant pressure coming from AID Washington, Carol Edeleman is insistent that we need to shift this strategy and make it a far more robustly private sector base. And we meet her special assistant who comes out a couple times. And a special assistant as Liz Cheney. She's a nice person at that time working with her but we're constantly being pushed by Carol Edelman to change the program. They want to do it unilaterally. So the deputy mission director at that time Steve Mintz is kind of given the job of how are we going to radically restructure the AID program and kind of do it unilaterally. So he goes over to DETEC and says, We need to restructure this program and they say why everything's in place. We're moving forward. We've got these pieces going. And he said no, we need to redo the strategy. I wasn't involved in the conversation at that time. Mitz then advises DTEC that we write a white paper. And the Thai say that every time a white paper gets written, it's bad for us. I said, why don't you write a blue paper, don't call it a white paper, and get colored blue paper.

And AID did and it was kind of unilateral. We want to change this, we want to change that. And it was responding to this pressure from Washington. They were called every day from AID Washington, about what are you doing? It was a really phenomenal way. I didn't think that it was appropriate to try to do a unilateral decision making process. My part of the mission was seen as being recalcitrant by the Deputy Director, we weren't enthusiastically joining into change all these projects, were trying to phase them out orderly, the ones that were not going to stay, and we're trying to move into the ones that were going to be the core of the new strategy. And we run into another personality, you

may know John Blackman. And John Blackman and I'm not sure when he was back in Washington, but he decided to get involved in a way because he was concerned about the natural resources management program design.. And he said, there's a piece that he wrote, that basically said, We shouldn't be concerned about what happens to water in watershed, we're only concerned about water when it comes off those watersheds and fuels economic growth in the urban and industrial areas. And that kind of was a strange concept. But it gained some traction, because you had somebody saying, we're not going to be concerned about those forests, we're not going to be concerned about those watersheds unless that's gonna have something to do with urbanization and industrialization.

We got people pushing for certain directions. And of course, you have people working on the design of the program who are saying a watershed is the source of the water for industrialization downstream, you should be concerned about that watershed a whole lot, even maybe even more, so, to ensure that that water supply is going to be provided. The blue paper was the cause of a lot of consternation by DETEC. The outcome started to appear as 1989 ends.

I had a very interesting experience. So my tour is going to end in 1991. As I went on, normally. I had a very good colleague who worked for me in the Philippines, a wonderful guy, George Flores. And George ran most of our rural development program under me and Philippines. And George sent me a Christmas card. And he said, I'm sorry, I won't be here. You're gonna love it in Cairo. Kids will love the school. And I went to see John Erickson. He said, I don't know what this is. And then I called up the head of EMS of the Asia Bureau, Jerry Jordan. And she said, Oh, you didn't know? The administrator assigned you to be the associate mission director for agricultural resources in Egypt. And I said, when am I going? She said, this summer in 1990. I have no idea what happened. But I called up and that was the story. I was asked to go in 1988 after I got to Thailand. And I said, it's too early in my assignment. I don't want to go. . Buster Brown was the mission director when I went. So I'm done in Thailand a year early.

Some of the things I talked about got started, but I was not there to participate in much more than getting started. That was a good experience. I didn't do any extra work. I didn't serve on the boards or anything except for one. In my second year, I raised my hand. They said who can run for the school board. So I ran for the school board in 1988. What happened is that school board elections are kinda like primary elections in areas in which is the primary for political party, maybe 10 percent of people show up to vote. And what happened is that the UN organizations were unhappy about a potential big increase in costs because the proposal was to build a new school. The International School of Bangkok in the 1950s. It was crap. And the proposal was to build a new school on a new campus on the outskirts of Bangkok at that time, and they opposed that, because there will be an added cost to them. And the UN educational allowance was not enough and they had to pay out of pocket.. Whereas if you're an embassy that's paid for it. And that was it. At that meeting you could see these UN people were organized. They came, there were two empty board seats they wanted to win and they made it very clear that we're going to be opposed to the new school. There were seven seats on the board. And the

following year, another two seats would be up for election. So the DCM, Joe Winder, got together a small group and said, these guys are dangerous. Next year, we have to beat them to keep those two seats, so that we can get approval to build the new school. And he said, so therefore, we're gonna practice precinct level politics. And I want you to be my right hand on this one. What we're going to do, every American is going to vote if they can't go to the meeting, they will do a proxy. Every American that can go to a meeting is going to have to go because we want to show that we're strong. So we're going to organize the embassy shuttle bus system, we're going to organize the USAID the shuttle bus system. And we're going to take people to the meeting. And we're going to vote. We were only about a third of the population in school. So he said the second highest, the second largest number of students were Japanese. And so he said, we're gonna go and talk to the Japanese. And we're going to get them to come on board because they never come to these meetings anyway. And so he went over and talked to his counterpart in the Japanese Embassy. And they said, our policy is never get involved in these things. We don't want to be seen as being in any kind of role, or any kind of confrontation around the schools in any of the things that we were a part of, as a member of the diplomatic community. So when they said, No, we said you guys got to come out and help us. So they talked about it, and they finally said, we'll do it. We're organized to get all the Japanese families out as well. And so the next year comes around. And it's this massive turnout from the U.S. There's this massive turnout from the Japanese, it was really easy for Joe Winder to get a massive turnout from all the European countries. So they won the two seats.

One of the things that was interesting was that we found out that this is from the UN candidates, and he had a large turn out because there's a lot of UN regional organizations in Bangkok, and a big population of people there that were sending their kids to school. But the one thing somebody found out and was introduced when they got up and spoke before the election was that while they may not get as much for secondary education, they do get an allowance to send their kids to college. And nobody knew that and that you every single Embassies are saying, we'll support your child through high school then you're on your own. And kind of once that was learned that sealed the win for the side that wanted the new school. The new school was approved and construction started before I left and it's still there. It's got a beautiful campus out there.

One final comment on the unilateral strategy - blue paper - story. The USOM Deputy Director did head the completion of a unilateral paper. That he gave to the DTEC leadership as a gift at the annual USOM Christmas party at the Ambassador Hotel. Nuff said as they say.
Q: Let's move on to Egypt if we can.

CLARK: Okay, let's go to Egypt. I went on a direct transfer to Egypt. And I actually really was there at the end of I guess the end of July in 1991. A direct flight. We're going to travel to Egypt. And we are taking a small dog. So there's only one airline that will take an animal that's Japan Airlines. So we took Japan Airlines. We stopped in Kuwait City on the way we're going to have an eight hour stopover. And my son who's going to college at Roger Williams College in Rhode Island has a classmate who lives in Kuwait.

Oh, he's gonna go and see his classmate for a couple of hours. He's gonna come to the airport and see him. The plane was a seven forty-seven I think. We pulled in, and we got off the plane. And the Kuwait airport at that time was actually a big museum. They said, take your time, go get a coffee here, just check this and that. About thirty minutes later, they're running around like crazy to get back on the plane, we're leaving. This was about thirty-six hours before Iraq invaded Kuwait. And they had somebody who knew something. I don't know what it was, we know that it's seven forty-seven. I'm pretty sure a British Airways seven forty-seven got trapp, that couldn't get out. That was our first hour in the Middle East. We arrived in Cairo about six hours early. And nobody knows that we're there six hours early.

Q: Welcome to the Middle East.

CLARK: So anyway, John Foti was my Mission sponsor when we got there. I'd been assigned as associate mission director in the Cairo mission. Mission was organized when it became a big mission into six directorates - like small missions. That was how to manage the budget of $815 million per year. And the six associate mission directors, they were all Senior Foreign Service officers or former mission directors, you might have piled up that kind of structure. So for a usual mission the funding level and program scope of a directorate was about that size. But this was a kind of another executive level that had significant delegations to the associate mission directors. I had an office of agriculture, an office of water resources and irrigation. And I had an office of agriculture policy. The office of agriculture basically was running a research project. And the agriculture policy office was running a policy reform/ cash transfer program. So basically, I had three projects worth about one point one billion. But each of these projects, if you looked inside them, was the equivalent of like the irrigation project was like three hundred forty or three hundred fifty million dollars. But if you look inside, it was about ten thirty forty fifty million dollar projects. And if you looked inside the agricultural research project, that was a three hundred million dollar project. And again, it had pieces that look like individual projects, if you'd have been in a regular mission.

That's what we started with. I had a pretty big staff of Americans and FSN. I faced a real cultural change from the culture of the Philippines and certainly Thailand and Laos. They are very calm, non confrontational, quiet. If you ever shouted at a Thai, they would never talk to you again. If you ever got in a loud argument, or confrontation, you would be persona non grata, USAID Thailand was a very different culture than what I met when I went to Egypt. Egypt, they're arguing and shoving all the time. And then your buddies again tomorrow. I guess the best example was if there was an automobile accident, and a fender bender in Egypt. In two cars, there will be thirty or forty people just like a snap of a finger arguing about everything about that action, and even though they had nothing to do with it. So that was the first thing that I learned. For Thailand I did not have a cultural orientation program. The Philippines didn't either. But Egypt did that for about a one week orientation. It was also meant to explain the culture and how you needed to operate. So for example, this argumentative aspect is something that might happen. The rule was, if you were driving your car, and you bumped into anybody, or you had a fender bender or whatever, Don't stop, keep going to the nearest military base, police station or back to

the embassy don't stop because that could boil into something that would be very bad. So okay, in Thailand, you just sign up and the police would come in and look at your passport and say, go on your diplomatic. Have a nice day. That wasn't what we had there.

The big issue I got during my time in Egypt, I designed no new programs, I basically implemented three big ones. At the time I was in Egypt. We thought about follow on programs. But basically, it's an $815 million annual program. And there was an inclination more to put added money into existing programs and than to try to do new ones. Although they did some new ones, when they were sent back on the environment side, because basically, this was different for me, because every place I had been, it was a combination of thinking and old portfolio, manage that portfolio to the end, the same time transitioning into the next phase where you're going to do and that wasn't what I did in Egypt. It was almost purely a strategic thinking and operating challenge., because these projects were relatively open ended. And the Egyptians were ready to negotiate about anything. But when I got there, the first big problem I had was with this agriculture project. It was a three hundred million dollar project, the largest agricultural research project, probably ever done in USAID history. And it provided basic assistance to the Agricultural Research Center. And the Agricultural Research Center had probably twelve different institutes. It was the same with the Water Research Center, which we provided assistance. It had about fourteen institutes inside it.

They're very complicated big organizations. And in the case of agricultural research, it was going to provide support across all institutes. . There was a big CID contract with New Mexico State University, I don't know twelve fifteen people Americans there. But Leahy had hearings on this project he didn't like. And he didn't like it, because there had been an audit. And Beckington was the inspector general. And drew a line on host country contributions. And he believed that we're double counting. And he believed that they needed to be additive, not counting what you have already, So there was a big, gigantic argument about this and Leahy basically came down on the side of Beckington, and didn't want to obligate any more money into the program. It is a $300 million project of which about $100 million had been obligated. This is a serious problem.

Dr. Youssef Wali the Minister of Agriculture. And one of the first people I went to see when I arrived in Cairo.. I'm going to be working with him on both the agriculture research program and the agriculture policy program.., Yusuff Ali. I'm not sure what his agricultural discipline was, but his PhD was from University of California, I think at Berkeley. So he's Western educated, very smart guy.

But in Egypt, as opposed to most countries. The Ministry of Agriculture is very powerful. As I've seen these ratings in embassies of A, B and C level ministries and agriculture was usually at the C level, being down at the bottom, whatever that is. And then an A ministry is being kind of finance, defense interior. But in Egypt, the Ministry of Agriculture was very powerful. Wali was Deputy Prime Minister. He was chairman of Mubarak's political parties. But most important is that the constitution of Egypt reserved a certain number of seats in the People's Assembly to be farmers. It's pretty significant. And so the Wali’s job was to be sure that that block is going to be from Mubarak's political party. He was so

powerful in terms of what he did that he had Ministry of agricultural representatives in key embassies around the world basically functioning as agricultural political people. So we go and talk to Dr. Wali because he's got to know about this problem we've got at a political level with the Agricultural Research Program. In Egypt, most discussions, and most negotiations take place at night. Because nothing is delegated in Egypt I could figure so all day long, you went to see a minister, there's people running around in his office, little pieces of paper, he's looking at signing and just constantly, because he's approving something like a vehicle or gas or buying some small thing He was an insomniac. So therefore, certain meetings like at ten eleven o'clock at night, and they're going to one or two or three o'clock in the morning. And in my case, he asked me to come over at like six o'clock in the morning, the first time I met him about this problem, and we're going to need some help. And he was very kind, all my predecessors had a good relationship with them. Of course, we were providing a lot of assistance to his ministry also.

So the solution was, let's do an evaluation. Let's do an ad hoc assessment of this program, and see what we can learn from it and see if we can allay some of the things that they brought up. But other things stuck there. It was a hard one to work with. And that hung around for about, I want to say more than a year over into '91. It was one of those it was taking the administrator and it was one of those issues where there was basically no resolution, because the parties couldn't agree. I don't think it was uncommon, that when countries were counting their 25 percent contribution to a project or program who is required, if that was other donor money, they would count that if it was Japanese money, they would count that as a contribution.

The policy program is another area needing strong focus. There's been a big study by E.T. York in the mid 1980s, he was a former head of BIFAD [Board for International Food and Agricultural Development], he was the former chancellor of the Florida university system. At that time in the 1970s and 1980s he was kind of a guru of agricultural development.. And he did assessment in the middle 1980s. And basically said, the Nile Valley is very much like the Imperial Valley of California. The agronomics of both of these areas of the world are about the same.

But the productivity is wildly different over what we're producing in the Imperial Valley of California, and what is being produced in Egypt. It's because of policy constraints. That's what he laid out. So that sat there and simmered for a long time. In about 1988, about a year and a half before I got there. USAID and the GOE reached agreement for an agricultural policy reform program. It would have two hundred fifty million dollar cash transfers. And they would set up a series of five tranches. Each tranche had a defined set of policy reform objectives. And there was a very detailed strict methodology for assessment for accomplishing the benchmarks. If you met the metric, then a cash transfer went into the principal bank for agricultural developed agricultural credit PBDAC. Which was the apex, agriculture, development bank lending entity in Egypt. So we've worked with the chairman of the Board of PBDAC as was our counterpart. They happened to be right across the street from the AID mission.

I got there and they had finished the first tranche, which was the easiest one, that was to take on price controls on fruits and vegetables. The focus of this program was around cotton. An Egyptian farmer was receiving something like 30 or 35 percent of the world market price at the farm gate, and 65 percent was being taken by the rest of the cotton marketing system in Egypt.. And the farmer wasn't benefiting. The World Bank had a parallel project that had the same thing, the same objective as we did on cotton, and that was about let's say, maybe a little bit more than ours, maybe three hundred million. So we had to work with the World Bank, also, to a certain extent. I got there, and we went over and started talking and meeting and greeting and who they are and who I am. And one of my FSNs, a guy named Ali Kamel, was one of the best FSN that worked for me. He was a master's ag-economist from U.S.. He was an FSN working in the policy program. He said that we can actually get a lot more on this program, if we negotiate harder. And if we bring evidence that this will be a benefit to the Egyptian farmer. Egypt had an Economic Council that was composed of the ministers of economic ministries with the Ministry of Finance, a Ministry of Supply, Ministry of something else, and the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Water. And their criteria is very simple. Is this a benefit to theEgyptian farmers or not? And if it isn't, then we're not going to do it. Very simple.

And so the idea is that, if we wanted to add to the tranches, or if we wanted to expand the tranches, then we'd have to show its benefit to the Egyptian farmer. This is where if we are in Thailand, once those tranches were defined, that was it, there'll be no further negotiation, there will be no further discussion. The Thai would perform and we would give them the cash. In Egypt, the Middle East is a different story. They're negotiating everything, all the time. So we started to talk about this tranche, could we do more, do wheat. Why aren't you doing this? So we started a process of constant negotiation. And we got way beyond just the cotton. And so we're starting to look at what kinds of things the government is doing that are inappropriate. They don't make sense economically, or anything. So the first thing we looked at, which was fertilizer. The government had a monopoly on fertilizer. They imported all the fertilizer, and they distributed all the fertilizer. And so we started talking about bringing this into the program. And they did. We got the government totally out of the fertilizer importation and distribution in the end. The GOE monopoly resulted in bad product - it hardened over time and bad timing in that farmers could not count on getting fertilizer when they needed it. But what happened was that if we started talking, and if we started bringing good analysis, I had three good USAID FSO agriculture economists working on this program. We did that and we went over talking to them probably three to four times a week. I was probably seeing the Chairman of PBDAC maybe two times a month. So it was constant. You had to constantly negotiate and talk and show up and bring analysis. I had policy programs at every mission I was in. Philippines of some kind and Thailand And I always had somebody, we engaged in some ways that could come in every three or four months. The idea is, you're zooming way out? How's it look? And so we did the same thing. I mentioned Dan Bromly when he came and worked with us, while I was in Washington at the Office of Agriculture in TAB. . He'd come maybe every six months, and we say what does it look like Dan? Are we going the right way? Are we gonna get an outcome that we think we're gonna get from what we want to include in this next tranche. And he'd give us good advice seen from a different lens.

I always thought that was good. I tried to do that everywhere I was. I had an excellent outside monitor of our programs in the Philippines from the East West Center who was wired with all of the key agriculture policy players in the Philippines. Bruce Koppel.The Deputy Mission Director fired him because he didn't like that Bruce went against what he was thinking. In most cases it worked out pretty good.

The end of Egypt agriculture policy reform story is that we expanded that program out to seven tranches. We got fertilizer included. We got seeds included, we got warehousing space included, because one of the reasons why they had these monopolies on buying output and selling inputs was they had the biggest warehousing system in Egypt, even bigger than the national railway system. So we were trying to get them to divest. It was partially successful, what they owned, they didn't want to give up or what they rented, they were able to give up. I think they were probably on the sixth tranche. And we've added about forty million out of the research project. So we'll flip back to that for a minute.

Hank Bassford arrived as the new Mission Director in 1991 replacing Buster Brown. And I always remember this conversation. We went over to Youseff Wali late one night. Hank says, I got a very simple view of development. It's like a funnel, you got a big top, and we're pouring stuff in. And we've got a little part of the funnel down at the bottom. I want that piece down at the bottom to be as big as possible. And I think this agricultural research project has got the biggest top of my funnel I've ever seen and the littlest at the bottom, I've ever seen. What I want to do is I want to reduce the overall funding for this research program. I just don't think we're going to get effective outcomes if we try to spend three hundred million. I'm asking my associate mission director to start talking to your director of the Research Institute, on how to do that. And this is followed right after a huge scandal that almost killed us. The team that was from New Mexico State of twelve, people had done some very fraudulent things and they were caught. There was a long term advisor from Winrock that was on the team. It all turned on importing cars. And it's a long story. This was fraud about importing cars that came to light and that caused an investigation by AID, including this one individual running a wiretap. We learned all these things. And on Christmas Eve in 1991 it's brought to our attention. We immediately call Youseff Wali and Ali says. I already know this. Because Egypt’s internal security is pretty good. It's one of the biggest. It is as big as the army watching everybody doing everything. So we went over to see him and he immediately sealed the offices where the New Mexico team worked. He fired the Director of the Agricultural Research Institute. The USAID IG are starting to try to figure out what all happened. There's a big investigation, but it's a bad episode. Key staff on the New Mexico State contract are fired. New Mexico State was replaced by the University of Arizona. This was a CID contract and we let them continue with the change in university managing the contract. Wali appointed a new director of the Agriculture Research Institute. Adel el Beltagy. He became the longtime director of the ICARDA, one of the international research centers a couple years later. So Dr. Beltagy becomes my “best friend” as we meet at least once a week on downsizing the agricultural research program - called NARP - from $300 million to something closer to $175 million. These were 3 to 4 hours of intense

discussion - alway starting with coffee and “warm up” chatting for 30 minutes or so. These discussions went on from early 1992 up until my departure from Cairo into retirement in March 1994.

So that is even more why we need to reduce the amount of this agricultural research project. And one final chapter in this story. The GOE plan for NARP was to build this massive cotton ginning, foundation seed, cotton mill project. And that had been there for quite some time. It had gone through several points of design processes. It would have been a host country contract; contracting was getting prepared. And we were talking about reduction. This is the one where one of the people in the economic affairs office and AID said, we're trying to privatize things. Why are we putting these people into the seed business by giving them thirty-five to forty million dollars to build this government complex? And which will put them back into the cotton seed business - which we already got them out of.

The mission said, we're playing against ourselves. Because we're trying to privatize. You got the Agricultural Policy Program over here, privatizing things and getting the government out and then opening up research projects, to try to get them deeper into the seed business. The cost is crazy. So what we did is we said, okay, let's marshall some type of an argument to the government. And we'll bring in the Pima cotton producers from Arizona, to come and look at this, and come in and give a viewpoint about what should be the government and what should be the private sector? And we did that. And they basically said, that forty-five million dollar or whatever it was forty or forty-five million dollar proposal, that's cost should be no more than about twenty eight. So it's way over cost, and we looked at it, and it's a gold plated version. That was always a fear in Egypt. You've got eight hundred fifty million dollars. You have to spend the money, whatever you want to buy. I will digress for a minute. When I first arrived in Egypt, I asked the Mission Director Buster Brown, I said, is it my job to spend money and get this money out the door. So that Egypt and Israel are on par with spending their money or it is my job to get a double bang, in other words, contribute to the foreign policy objectives, why Egypt is receiving eight hundred fifty million dollars, at the same time, get as much development bang as I can. He said, it's the latter. I don't want you to feel that you got pressure on you to spend money just to be spending the pipeline down. We've got to get a development story out of this too. And so therefore, yes, if you think that spending is going to be slow for development purposes, that's okay. If you think something shouldn't be spent, that's okay. Don't respond to those pressures. That was heartening, because there was always this pressure, spend the money, spend the money.

And when the Arizona cotton group finished up their work, they also had a very good discussion with Dr. Wali, about what the private sector should be doing in cotton seed. And this is what the public sector should be doing. And most of what you proposed here, is just not appropriate. So we were all kind of stuck here because the head of the Cotton Research Institute was quite a powerful figure in the Agricultural Research Center. . So Hank Bassford and I, before we went to see Dr. Wali we agreed, if we reach a point where there is opposition to this, or there's this great plea to build this, let's offer that

we're not going to take the money away from you. We're going to take the forty million for this e facility, and we're going to put it into the agriculture policy program. And once he said that it was done, because Wali was, I think, more interested in the policy program, than he was the cotton seed complex that the Agricultural Research Institute wanted.

So the rest of my time in Egypt, which ended when I retired in March of 1994, was spent on that. I spent a huge amount of time on NARP trying to negotiate it down. So we came up with a term we wanted to “focus” the project. I had mentioned earlier the “warm up” to our meetings with Dr. Beltagy and all Egyptians when meeting with them. Drinking tea and coffee and chatting

After I left AID and moved to being an implementing partner I noticed as time passed that USAID became a transaction oriented organization. Too many people are believing you just go over there, get something signed and come back home and are too quick. I've seen that over and over and over again in recent years. They are not understanding, you've got to invest a lot of time, but they don't have that time, I guess for all the demands on them. But you gotta have that time to get warmed up and spend time with your counterpart.

The biggest problem we had, we had to schedule when we ate because Egyptians don't eat lunch. So you could go to our meeting at ten o'clock and finish at four o'clock and you'll be full of coffee or tea. By the time you leave. So you basically consumed a lot of sugar, but you won't break to have lunch. Anyway, that consumes a lot of time to do that. He'd make jokes, I remember going over for one thing and he says, we're going to focus this project, right? He brought a big microscope and said, Let's dial this down to what the focus is going to be, how much it's going to be, I want to see it under a microscope. So we're gonna look at this seed. And you dial it to where you think we're going to do. Things like that happened to make life fun and enjoyable. And that happened a lot during my career in AID.

The $340 million irrigation project was of no controversy, the ministry liked working with us. It was the oldest ministry in the government. They were very proud of that. And it was called the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation. And I spent quite a bit of time with them. Because we were interested in decentralizing water management. And we were interested in the system. They had this concept that had come from Colorado State, because Colorado State or the on farm water management people that worked with AID for a long time. We used to have these Kansas State did post harvest and Auburn did aquaculture and Mississippi did seeds and Colorado State did on farm water management. And their thing was always to find ways to save water on farms and use it someplace else. So the Egyptians had this concept. They liked this concept, because what they were doing was that because of population growth, they were wanting to save water on farms and move it off to develop new land out in the desert. This was one thing that was probably said to me, every second or third meeting, they were very unhappy that the United States did not endorse the new lands program. There had been a study done in the late 1980s that basically, it said that it was a negative economic benefit. And so therefore, moving water off into the desert for development didn't make any sense. So we did not

participate in that. And they were always after us to do that. So that was our concept. They were messing around with Water Users Association to the smallest field. I got there in 1990 and they're still doing pilots from 1976. They had a famous, what's called a mesa which is the lowest level of the irrigation system. That's where the water finally reaches the fields. And they were doing water user associations at that level. And still piloting it. And we were trying to work with them on water user associations as a way to decentralize. Ford Foundation came to us maybe 1992, they said we'd like to do a roundtable on water management in Egypt. And there's some interesting thinking, that's coming from people like David Seckler, who was at Winrock. And we'd like to have him come. We'd like AID to co sponsor this with us, because he's looked at the Egyptian system. And he sees that the on farm water management concept doesn't work. Because it's a closed system, which means that water comes into it, and that's what you got. And so if I'm saving water from this field, it's going to the next so you're constantly reusing water coming down through the system.. So drainage water isn't wasted, it's pumped back in and reused. So this is a system that has a high level of the efficiency of the use of water because of the fact it's a closed system of water on the Nile Basin coming out of Lake Aswan.

Egypt did not have an agreement with Ethiopia, but an agreement with Sudan, that they give something like fifty-five billion cubic meters a year. So this is a brand new concept, which means that there isn't extra water to send off for new land development. That's what it basically means. So we did this conference that was mind blowing to the Egyptians. And then they had to think about that, because what it meant was that their real concern, therefore, was water quality. This is because the water is passing down through the system. If it's being contaminated with sewage, if it's becoming saline, which water will if it's being reused, that's their biggest challenge. When I first got to Egypt, Dr Abu Zeid was the head of the Water Research Institute, he later became Minister for about nine years. And I worked with them after I left AID, with several contracts working in Egypt. And I asked him about water quality, they weren't paying attention at all, basically, in 1990. So we're bringing that back into our project. Implementation doesn't have any issues, just do the thing that we said we're going to do in our agreements. But now we've got these new issues. And we're trying to bring them into what we're doing. I would say that it was working with engineers, all the ministry is populated by civil engineers. And that's linear thinking. Engineers think in a linear way, and they sure did. And so we laid out steps for how we're going to help them. We did a lot of rebuilding the system, it was going into decline during the time we're receiving assistance from anybody, but a big part of what we did was rebuilding parts of the system. And they weren't too inclined, but we got a little bit of traction, but not a lot. I liked the project because you can always go on a nice field visit and see something. For AID purposes in Egypt, it was a good project, because you always got to have a photo op, you got to show visitors to something that's been done, it benefits a farmer, you can see it. And it's done well. So it was a nice project to that extent. But that effort to try to decentralize the effort to try and move water user associations as a part of that. That was just moving at a snail's pace. We didn't get much done during that time that I was there. So I retired in March of 1994. My time in the senior foreign services is up. I've actually got a one year extension

as my TIC was up in 1993. And I got a one year extension from AID administrator, which was allowed me to continue until March 1994’

Q: You say your time was up for you? Were you ticed out? Were you at retirement age? Why was your time up?

CLARK: I'm part of that group of fifty Senior Foreign Service officers that went out as a result of not providing limited career extensions in 1992. That was the group that were pushed out. If AID followed its rules, I would have been given a limited career extension at the end of my tour which would have been to September of 1995. But in 1992, Reggie Brown, the Assistant Administrator, called me up in August of 1992. I always remember because it was my son's birthday, and he was there visiting us from college. He called me and said that I had not received the limited career extension. There were fifty-five Senior Foreign Service officers who were eligible and only five received it. So fifty were out. That had been a huge change over the history of what AID had done with limited career extensions to the Senior Foreign Service. Because normally if you were in a senior management position, SMG position, you got an extension until the end of your assignment. But there are a couple of things going on at that time. Jesse Helms from North Carolina, who didn't like AID at all, had put ceilings on how many foreign service officers there could be. So that was a pressure in terms of the numbers that you got to have in the Senior Foreign Service but AID basically did not follow its own rule on limited career extensions and as a result they were sued and there was a settlement and six people got 180,000 dollars or something like that, because it was shown that AID set a rule and then did not follow it. So that was a shock, and a shock in Egypt and other places. One of my later IDI colleagues in Laos - Kevin Kelly. He was the mission director in Panama. He was forty-three years old. He was out.

Q: And I also was part of that group two years later. I retired before I was fifty.

CLARK: Yea Kevin Kelly was forty-three. So when did you retire?

Q: '94.

CLARK: . So I retired in19'94. March 31, 1994. I got a one year extension from the administrator. So the Ambassador said, this is crazy. What can we do? And the answer was almost nothing except we can get a one year extension. And that's what they did. I left Egypt in 1994. My family went to Egypt. And it turned out to be one of the best assignments we had. Living in Cairo was a wonderful experience. It's a city that has a population of about twenty million people in the daytime and about five at night, because there's a huge commuting out of the city. Egypt is obviously a fascinating country. When I traveled with my family, we were able to see everything in Egypt while we were there. And I think it was very rewarding. As I mentioned, we did our negotiations on the agriculture policy program with an avowed socialist - Adel Ezzy who was the Chairman of PBDAC. He'd come up with Nasser, so to speak. And so we're talking about privatizing, we're talking about incentives, we're talking about an open economy, we're talking about all things that are not things that he's believed in or learned. And he retired.

In Egypt you have to retire at sixty, he got an extension. So he got a couple of extensions. He's like sixty-three or sixty-four. And he had to retire just about not too long before I was leaving. And so the mission director, we had a nice lunch with him. And during lunch, he said, I have to say, he had tears in his eyes. I had always believed in socialism, my mind wasn't open to much of anything else. And you helped me see the world in a different way. And I saw the world in a different way, and it didn't compromise helping Egyptian farmers, which has been what my life has been dedicated to. That was a nice little ending in Egypt.

Q: Yeah, that's great. Do you have a job waiting for you after you left AID?

CLARK: Yes. So what happened is that once I know, I'm going to leave. First thing, I didn't tell any Egyptians because I knew that when they knew I was leaving that I would be worthless. So they were shocked because I told them the last month I was there, but I knew I was leaving, beginning in the fall, I think in 1992. I started looking.

I decided that of the organizations I worked with, over time, I think and I've given a lot of advice to former Foreign Service officers and I think that if you want to stay involved in international development, there are two ways to do it. Way number one is to try to continue to work with AID in some way, become a PSC and become a serial PSC and work around becoming a person who does short term, long term. Staying basically inside AID. And I'll come back to my former colleague and friend, David Delgado, that's what he did after he retired, or you can go out into the world of the implementing partners of AID and work with them. So there's kind of two, I thought, at that time, the core decision you have to make, where do you think you'd like to go? So I said, there are some organizations I've worked with I like a lot. And so I'm going to talk to them. So Winrock, DAI, and Development Associates were the places I was thinking about. Then I thought that I guess I better talk to a lawyer first. Because I want to be looking for employment. While at the same time I'm continuing to work in a pretty responsible position. So I have to be mindful of the restriction laws, which I don't know what they are. So I went to see the AID RLAin Cairo. And we talked about what we need to do. And he said, Well, if you're going to talk to companies, let's put that on paper, you got to talk to those three. Those are ones you're not going to be involved in any matters in Egypt.

Development Associates and DAI did not work in Egypt at that time. Winrock had a subcontract under this University of Arizona, the contract for the research project. And there was a contract on environmental policy and training that Winrock had. And they were going to do a buy-in that provided some help on strategic planning for the water ministry. The RLA said, okay, just be sure that you're not involved in AID discussions, you don't meet with them. And then you don't get involved if they buy into this contract. And that's all you need to do. And if you interview within these companies, just be sure you memorialize it with a memorandum when you did, when you did it, and what transpired in that interview. And you're allowed to do that. So I did that with him. And then I started to approach people and followed what was advised. Sometime in the spring of '93 or so Winrock contacted me about replacing the Chief of Party for the worldwide Environmental Policy and Training contract with USAID. EPAT it was called. They

asked me to come for an interview in Washington. I went to the interview, and then they made me an offer, that, could you be the Chief of Party, this contract. Kind of the first place, I really applied to something, I got an offer, as Chief of Party. They asked if I could start yesterday and I said, No, I really can't start yesterday. And I went back to my East West Center, when they gave me a grant. I said, I can't go yet because I just completed an agreement with AID to stay for the extension year.
The Ambassador made a very special effort to get the one year extension to stay in Egypt, and help on programs I've been working on. And I really felt like that under that commitment. I can't take off early. And so therefore, is it possible to come on after March 1994' or seven months from now? And after talking with AID and the people running that contract said, Fine, we think you'd be a perfect Chief of Party, we'll wait, and put somebody in the interim in the meantime, they did a guy named Mike Rock, he was an economist. And so that's how I wound up in Winrock. I retired on March 31. And started with Winrock in the middle of April.

Q: But you were living in Washington rather than in Arkansas?

CLARK: No, it was in Washington because they had a base in Washington, DC. And Dick Cobb had retired from AID a couple months earlier than I did. And he was the vice president for programs. And that was always in Washington, DC. And when Winrock was established, because they had such a big portfolio of energy and agriculture programs in AID that always had an office in Washington, DC. This contract was formed in Washington DC. It was one of those core contracts where you could do task orders under it. So we had about six core staff. The idea was to be thinking about innovative ways to analyze environmental and natural resources problems, and then come up with training support programs for AID also. That's why I started off in the consulting world.

Q: So don't you spend time with Winrock? How many years were you there? And then you moved over to the IRG International Resources Group?

CLARK: Yes. So let's see Winrock, I was there, I was a Winrock employee until the end of 1998.

Q: Four years.

CLARK: Yes. And one of the early EPAT activities got me back working in Egypt.. We received a buy-in to support the Gore-Mubarak initiative under the Clinton administration. And I wound up almost being back in AID by being the head of the secretariat of the Gore-Mubarak initiative relationship . I have contracts under both Winrock and later IRG that keep me involved in Egypt from 1994 until 2011. So I ended up working almost continuously in Egypt for twenty-one years. And I get to see the story of getting to see irrigation decentralization by virtue of a series contracts. The first one starts with Winrock and then the others are with IRG. We're working worldwide doing a lot of interesting things. That time green accounting was a very hot topic. We do a lot of work and we have a really good Consortium. WRI is a member of our consortium, for example, New York University is with their international economics group. We did a lot

of work on green accounting, and things like that, and did some work on eco tourism. And the first work under the Gore-Mubarak commission comes up under that contract, which is a presidential initiative. And he isn't doing anything. And somebody comes over and knocks on their door and says, the Vice President's wondering what you guys are doing in Egypt, or where are you going to get started? Frank Miller, who is the Director of the Office of Egypt affairs, said, can we come to your contract and use it? Because we're going to do two things, sustainable tourism on the Red Sea, and lead abatement in the air and Cairo? We want you guys to help us on the Red Sea. So we sent a guy over there, David Smith, long term, it was the first long term person under contract like that.

Q: Doug, I want to just not spend too much time on your consulting work. But twenty-one years in Egypt is a tremendous amount of time. Do you feel comfortable with what had been accomplished during that period in Egypt?

CLARK: Oh, yes - the agriculture policy program that I left behind ended as a very successful program And farmers did receive more at the farmgate from their cotton production. The decentralization of irrigation did happen for about a third of the irrigated area (over 3 million acres and 1 million farmers). We did an environmental policy program under one of the programs I led at IRG. After Winrock I joined IRG - actually moving from Winrock to IRG during a joining venture with them for Environmental Institutional Strengthening IQC we operated from 1996 to 2003 I became a vice president at IRG and became responsible for their environmental natural resources, economic growth and training practice. And did a couple hundred contracts with AID.

Q: A couple of hundred did you say?

CLARK: Oh, yeah. I say between two to three hundred contracts total.

Q: Wow!

CLARK: Most of these were task order contracts that arose under five IDIQ contracts that I managed at Winrock and IRG. IRG was sold to L-3 Communications, a defense contractor as a part of the soft power initiative of the 2005 to 2010 time or so.. And it was a great concept. And they used it inside the government. But it didn't result in contract work for the consulting world. So we wound up being an outlier in the L3 defense ;world - sitting within a fourteen billion dollar company. Until IRG was divested from L3 with other low margin technical services into Engility. I decided to phase out in 2013 as a corporate officer of IRG but stayed as a senior advisor to the president of IRG. I was at IRG for about nineteen years.

Quick about Egypt. It showed that development can be a long trudge, sometimes it takes a long time. And the end of the story with water management decentralization is that we got the government to agree to branch canal water user association, which is the highest level in the system coming off of the Nile river. We were able to establish twelve hundred of them. Over about one third of the land area in the Nile Valley with about a million and a half farmers and consolidated units that worked at the local level, at a drainage entity,

irrigation entity, and a groundwater entity into one decentralized authority'. And that worked. Most of the policy outcomes stuck. Some there was regression.

In Thailand there was a retired AID economist named Bob Muscat. He went to Thailand as a young Foreign Service officer and Assistant Program economist in the 1950s and retired as the chief economist of AID. In retirement went back to Thailand, and was an advisor to Dr. Snoh at the National Economic and Social Development Board, because they'd gotten their PhDs together at Columbia. And he wrote a book about assistance in Thailand during this time he was working as an AID funded advisor And it was all based on what the Thais thought were the highest impact programs. Was it the rice program, family planning program, rural development, irrigation or health. And the consensus was, all that stuff was interesting. Your investment in human capacity development was the game changer. You bought us 11,000 master's degrees and PhDs. These 11,000 people saw the rest of the world and opened up their eyes. And in 1988, when that assessment was done, about 30 percent of the highest rank positions in the Thai government were occupied by people who've been trained by AID. Today, you can do self training and things like that as self training. You don't know the fact that the same thing you need to do runs on all these programs, these big programs, there was a lot of training. At one time, there's a special fund that financed training about 1,000 Egyptians who went to the United States for graduate training each year. This is we have always heard from former USAID Peter McPherson that long term participant training is one of the best things we do,

Q: Oh my goodness, wow.

CLARK: That's probably legacy.

Q: Right. As you look back over this period, you've been retired now for a few years, after twelve years in the field before you retired, an extraordinarily unusual career in from Peace Corps to Laos and back to Laos. working right in the center of AID as executive secretary for three administrators. What are your feelings about? You decided to stay as a technical officer rather than move up into the Senior Foreign Service as a deputy director, what is your feeling about what you feel you've accomplished?

CLARK: I talked to my closest friends about this a lot, and or have. And the one thing we all conclude is if we were born at the right time, international development and going into the Peace Corps, or having some type of experience like being an IVS in Latin America. It was the right time for participating in international development because of where these countries were and what you could do, and how dynamic all that process was. And it was all still very early in trying to figure out how to do these things. And there was a lot unknown. I remember working with family planning programs and found how sophisticated it was. At that time, Johns Hopkins University could do with technology, thinking back to the beginning, in the 1960s, when AID just beginning to start going to family planning, they believed there was a pent up demand. And I've met that myself as a Peace Corps volunteer in Thailand. I recall going to a provincial teachers conference with another new volunteer and were introduced and told we would answer any questions they

had on their minds So they started asking questions. And I was stuck. Because the women were saying, "How is it that American women can have so few children?" We don't know how to do that. But we're having four to five children, and it's more than we want. And then we're the family in which the mother of the family is having a child every two years. And she had four children. And she is trying to teach. But nobody knew what to do. They were looking to us as the outsiders to have the answer. And by the way Thailand had the most effective family planning program in the developing world by the middle 1980.

I'm saying that the other day, it was a perfect time.. All these things were whether it was an approach to agricultural research or irrigation, all that was happening. And we all conclude that we were lucky that this we were able to be Peace Corps volunteers early in the history of the Peace Corps, many of us being the first volunteers ever to go to someplace in the world in my case, joining AID, when AID is young, I mean, I joined when it was twenty six years old, right? It's big, it's all over the place. It has got enough money that it can make a difference in many countries. We will conclude that we were very lucky that we were able to start our careers and pursue most of our careers during a very dynamic time in which it was just fortunate to be a participant. A part of it, AID did a lot of good things. But that's the part of learning and doing things. And while AID is always talking about taking risks, it's actually a risk averse organization. Today, there certainly are, but in the early years, it's like my experience for Laos. Let's go and try the Chinese system of buying rice when the shoots are green called the Green rice buying program. That's going to run on figuring out how rice marketing is done. I don't think people do that today. It's always trying to figure things out and learn about things. I would say that every place I went to in the AID, we had a very strong history of coordinating missions. I mean, people liked being there. They liked working with each other. They like going out into the country. If I try to understand what was going on, and I had been mentored by my first mission director, Charles Mann, you got to understand what's going on. And I expect it to be of course, I was outside the country in many ways. Still the Philippines, Egypt, Thailand were missions that I finished up with. all of those missions, wanted people out, interacting with their counterparts, or stakeholders within everybody, beneficiaries, whomever. That was really rewarding to be able to do that. You never know who you're going to meet, you never know who you're going to partner with. Fabulous people who had capacity well beyond what AID might have ever imagined, like creativity and can do things that were just so helpful to what we were trying to do in the AID mission that made the reward, that we're all rewarding and interesting.

I look back on my career, I only had one moment when it was not as rewarding as I thought and that's when I was stuck in the Africa bureau between that assignment to Chad and going to work in the technical assistance field but that happens to people in their careers, get stuck somehow in the assignment process you can be but that was a time when I didn't do much of anything. But otherwise everything else was very rewarding. My family was in every posting I did; my family went with literally every assignment. My daughter never went to school in the United States, she started kindergarten in the Philippines and graduated from high school in Cairo. And in between went to school in Bangkok. My son graduated from high school in Bangkok. So he spent his education in

Bangkok. And that was a benefit that I still talk about with friends. That was a profound benefit that the U.S. government gave me. They let my children go to private, good international schools.. As a benefit to me, the education they got in the schools was very good. My daughter went to New York University. After her second year, or her third year, she dropped out. But she didn't tell me. I never got a bill for the tuition. And so I called and said, What's the story with Michelle and she decided to take a semester off. I called her and I said, Michelle, why are you taking him this semester? She said, I'm burned out. I said, burned out from what? Burned out from all these years of study. I said, Well, what do you mean all these years? Dad, you don't understand how demanding it was in these international schools. And that's very true. In particular, in Bangkok, and Manila, we had Japanese students who study forty-five hours a day. And so I'm grateful to the experience my family, and my children had by attending international schools, they all enjoyed what we were. My wife was very apprehensive about Egypt. That turned out for her to be one of the best countries she was able to live in. One small part of that when I left the Senior Foreign Service in 1994, My daughter had a year and a half to go to graduate from the Cairo American College and receive her diploma at the feet of the Great Pyramid of Giza.

So when I came back from Winrock, my wife stayed in Cairo with Michelle so she could finish high school. And that's where I discovered I didn't know this around all these schools are mothers who are staying with children because something's happened with their spouse's employment status. And the spouse had to leave. Some of her kids can finish high school. So in Cairo, there were about six mothers who were there because their children, in one case, they had been there for two years, my wife was there for about a little over a year and three months or something like that. So I'm really happy with myself for not going to the East West Center and doing something else. I probably would have liked to stay in AID further, I liked the idea that when I was there it was a good organization. I thought I worked with awesome AID mission directors, Buster Brown, Hank Bassford, John Erickson, Charles Mann, Tony Schwartzwalter, Fred Shieck, and they don't have people of their caliber running missions anymore. I honestly stayed involved with AID after my retirement because it's been my life. I know it's changed. But I'm just still interested about where they're going and what they're doing. You see that revisiting issues that are somebody forty years old. Localization is a prime example of that. I had a good career, had a great career. And I enjoyed all that, except that one little blip.

Q: Let me ask you a follow up question. If you were talking to young people today who were coming out of grad school or out of Peace Corps, and have had some involvement with international work, they would ask you, where should I look for employment? Where should I look for my career or part of the career? What would you tell them now?

CLARK: AID wouldn't be first on my list, unfortunately. That question has been asked of me by young people who I have worked with particularly at IRG. The first answer I'll actually give them is that it happened with a young woman who worked with me at IRG. She asked after working in a support role for us, what should I do? I said, if you don't have a master's degree, go and get it in another country, don't do the United States, or someplace else. It's got international development studies or something, Foreign Affairs

studies. Well, she went to South Africa, where she went and got a master's degree there. The other thing I'll say is that, I would probably not start off from the government side. Because the AID does not really work on the ground anymore. And I'll give you some thoughts about what I think about international development in our last couple of minutes. But if you want to really get the experience of being in the middle of development, I think you've got to work for an organization that is implementing in the field - rural or urban. Your learning process is going to be very powerful, because you're going to be in it. And I'm asking, Well, how do I find those kinds of jobs? And I said, Well, I think you got to take a little bit of a risk. Because I think those jobs mostly exist in humanitarian assistance. They mostly exist in crisis countries, I may be able to find something in other places, that's out of the question. But you may have to be looking at something like that. And I tested that idea, a little bit with a colleague that worked for me at IRG, Charlie Benjamin, and Charlie Benjamin left to be the president, CEO of the Near East Foundation, about 2010. And they spent most of their big programs up in northern Syria, Iraq, wherever there's a big crisis, in the Near East, at least, that's where we are. And he agreed that there's a lot of opportunity, there's a tremendous amount of learning opportunity, if you can, there is a risk. We're in that kind of an organization. My advice is, I always start off with, if you really want to stay inside the government or being in the government, then try to get into AID. There are other ways to work with AID, you can be a PSC, and work on support contracts. To get into Foreign Service, you have to be extremely competitive. And you may want to try that also. But I don't really come up with AID being my first recommendation, I think, or go and work for the big one of the big implementing partners, because everybody there is actually doing the development work. And if you're going into AID, it's going to be very limited what you can do, what my experience was.

Q: About two other questions, and then I'll let you do your summary. You had a number of opportunities where you worked closely with the embassy, and with the ambassadors and the DCMs. Any recommendations on how to make that work well?

CLARK: Let's see. I started off by being in the political section as an IDI one of the I think, and I don't know what the story is today, one of the tensions when I was in missions overseas, is there was an idea that the State Department viewed AID as a lowered level citizen of the Foreign Affairs community, and you didn't have the same standing or respect, as you did with the embassy. I didn't find that to be true. But some people are apprehensive to work with the embassy. Some people thought they were getting into something that was outside of development, they were compromising themselves. I didn't find that at all. In fact, if I were in an embassy, if I were an AID mission, I would encourage people to develop relationships with the economic and political sections in the embassy. Because you learn a lot. I'm always trying to learn something or be where I can learn something. And I found that by having relationships, talking and doing things with the embassy helped me out a lot. It's very easy as just some of my interactions in the embassy, John, is just because I volunteered to do something when no one else was interested. And doing these kinds of things help build relationships. And I think that is like anything that had happened in the work I did for AID, is that there's a formal part of the relationship. And then there's the informal part, and you gotta

work hard on the informal part. And if you work on that, that'll make whatever you do in the formal part, easier to do, and probably more effective. And once again, if you have a transaction mindset, I'm just gonna go on and talk to someone in the economic section, and then when I get some data or something and leave, that's not going to be very fruitful. And you won't have a reason to follow up too much on that. It doesn't mean you've got to go to every diplomatic reception or something like that. There are ways to do this in embassies, and I'm thinking that probably is easier to do, because most of the AID missions are inside embassies now. And when I was at AID, we were outside embassies. I never was at a post inside the embassy.

Q: I asked one more question. You became a manager whether you wanted to or not. I mean, you started as a technical officer, what have you learned about what you found to be management styles that you wanted to emulate? from other people? And what was your management style?

CLARK: Okay, so let's see, I never thought about it really, I guess. Probably the thing that I read later on, and was something I was doing is the walk around management staff.

I believed in constantly walking around where I was, if I was on AID mission, I was all over the place. I was dropping in on colleagues from time to time, , I talked to a controller, I had no problem. I was talking to everybody in the mission for a couple of minutes to stop and say, oh, have a cup of coffee, and do it all through the mission. But certainly with my own staff. And someplace I'd read this article.I guess it was influenced by things that I read or heard. That's like learning how to fly an airplane, you have to accumulate numbers of hours in a cockpit. And I'm gonna hear a minute there in five minutes, it all adds up in terms of, you're building a relationship with your, the people you're working with, or the people that you're managing over time. And the more you do that, the more effective your relationship is going to be. I think that's the one thing I followed was, I had an open door, I never shut my door in my office ever unless I had something really sensitive. That was either being talked about, or I was getting a phone call about it. Everything that we're doing, there are problems. There are issues that happen that are causing us to not be able to do what we want to do. All we got was personnel, we got some kinds of problems with people working together. I always thought that I didn't want to see that problem early. I was hopeful that people would figure out how to take care of it. And I was going to be involved with something that became acute in some way. And so I'm the kind of person, I was always a proponent of empowerment and evolution. I like the word decentralization because that means you could call it the word devolution handing over to you. You're just responsible for that. Many of the employees that worked for me, John, asked them to draft their own evaluations and then we would go over it. You're far more honest, and less over the top when you get to write your own. It happened to me. Now, if I had a problem with an employee, which I did from time to time, I would write that EER, those others, I let them write the draft of their EER, then I polished it up. And it was a fair and good EER. I empowered them, telling me what they thought about themselves, and what they thought they had done. Kind of in my theme of empowerment.

When I retired from IRG in 2013, I had lunch with all the people I supervised and the president. And that was brought up in the meeting, all of them you always let us think about how to solve our own problems. And most of us did. And you'd be astonished at how bad some of these problems were. And if you'd heard these problems early on, you probably thought the world was going to end, but we figured out how to solve it. And we never had to come and talk to you. I think that I found that if you were honest, and forthright, it was your best friend. I found that if you always thought, ethically, that was your best friend. And that if you paid attention to your moral compass, it has served us really well. And so those are kind of some of the things that were on my mind as a manager.

I never personally tried to take advantage of AID, I've never personally tried to take advantage of any benefits. I thought that was a good example to show. Because a lot of people didn't, they were always trying to max out what they could get from the government. And I didn't like that. And I had an employee every now and then that was focused on that. And sometimes you had some discussions right there, I did read that book, The One Minute Manager. Some time ago, I read in Search of Excellence. And all of those things stayed with me. In AID, particularly in managing people, the idea that you would rise to your level of incompetence, which is the theory of in search of excellence. r. And I found that to be true. And so you had to figure out where people fit best for them, as well as for what you were trying to accomplish. That was on my mind. And so every now and then it was rare. You'd have to say, I can't support you for that. I know you want that assignment, but I don't think that's something that you can really take on. And just being honest about it. Like that happened a couple of times during my career.

I thought the last thing I'd say is, even as today, I hate long documents. I'm not like Ronald Reagan who said I want everything on one page. But I like things to the point I thought that when I was trying to communicate something in writing to the people who work for me, I wanted it pretty short and pretty to the point. For example, for a Chief of Party of a contact, I would give them five bullet points. These are things I want you to concentrate on. And we don't always talk about what these are, but it was very clear what they were. So they appreciated the clarity coming to me. And I tried to express that to the people that work for me. I was probably far more verbal. I thought that verbal was better than writing. Because if there was any misunderstanding about something, you're always able to correct that if you're talking but if you're if you're writing you get involved in exchanges that even make it worse.

Q: We've covered a lot of ground here. My last question is always what question should I have asked you that I hadn't?

CLARK: Let's see. This is one of those things, John, I think was pretty good about letting me talk and guiding me a little bit. Because each of these mission stories could be fifty hours on their own. But trying to get it down to the main points, and I think you helped do that. I was gonna mention in terms of AID, there are a couple of things in looking back on my career, and I'll put it forth and what I did what AID does, one thing that AID seems to have left in the dust is really thinking about being transformational. Every mission I was in, we were trying to see what we're thinking about, how are we going to transform something? How are we going to really change something in that country through our programs, and I don't see AID thinking that way too much at all anymore. Maybe it's because programs are small. Maybe it's because it just isn't the way they're thinking strategically. But I don't see too much of that. I think AID is a very changed organization.

But the one thing that hasn't changed, over my career I talk a lot about was that AID is like a company that is making the same cookie every year. The project, that's what rolls off the assembly line in AID, the project. They've been doing it since 1946, when they first started the point four program. And that by itself in today's world just doesn't fit in many respects in my mind about how AID is doing business. It started when I was in Thailand, because we were trying to think of different ways to move away from that, as a relationship being defined something rather than just here's a project, except that and that is like a box, it's that stuff inside, it is going to be used and revealed over the course of three or four or five years. We try hard to try to figure out something different. And we failed. We tried hard to figure something out in the Philippines, that was not project based and all the things when we first put together a new strategy, the mission basically said, this is a twenty year program. We know we're not gonna get twenty years, we will ask for ten, will take seven, and they got seven. But if you go look at all the follow on contracts in fact , they've been at it for over twenty years, maybe focusing a bit differently through the years.

I'm surprised that AID is still doing some things that should have been taken on by counterpart organizations or recipient governments. And the reason why I say that is that, at some point, developing countries have to be responsible for their citizens. When I look at WASHh, for example, they are still working with basic sanitation. And it's seventy years later, and countries still haven't figured out how to do that for their population. I kind of say, Wow, that is almost like a forever never ending entitlement that's gonna come from the international assistance world. And there are other things that you wonder, why is it that AID is still engaged in that and we're insisting in our discussions with these countries, that this is something that you've got to be responsible for, as the government of your citizens. It's amazing. You look at theFeed the Future. And they're still trying to figure out how to get seed to farmers. That was what the Green Revolution was all about fifty years ago, for extension services. So those things were part of what I was concerned with during my career, and I look at it today. I say kind of, there's a lot of lack of progress. And I'm betting that in some of the places I might have been there might have been some regression.

Q: We have covered a lot of ground! Thank you.

End of Interview

POSTSCRIPT. My review of this transcript has been done during February and March 2025. I am finishing up 58 years of continuous work with USAID. 24 inside USAID and 31 outside of USAID as an implementing partner. I have seen USAID over these years from the perspective of a PSC employee working and living at the provincial level in Laos. As a Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service Officer serving in Laos - the Philippines - Thailand - Egypt. I served as Deputy Executive of the Agency for Administrator John Gilligan - Executive Secretary of the Agency for Administrator Doug Bennet - Executive Secretary of the Agency for Administrator Peter McPherson.

And then working at the corporate level for three implementing partners over the past 31 years - Winrock International - International Resources Group - ECODIT (a small business).

It has been a privilege to be a part of the global humanitarian and development assistance ecosystem that the U.S. had developed over the past 65 to 70 years. This ecosystem reaches every corner of the developing world and within which huge goodwill exists with the U.S. as a result. It is so sad to see its ruin.

And now in the final weeks of my time with USAID - to witness and be a part of the fallout of its destruction - is beyond any emotion that can be expressed.

There seems to be a far larger than I ever thought part of our population that does not care about the rest of the world and those who are in need. And that is certainly expressed by the current masters of destruction and the leaders of this group of people - Trump and Musk.

What made this journey so rewarding for myself and my family (who were supportive and key partners in the work that I was engaged with) - were the enormous numbers of people that I met along the way within USAID - within the large development community - and always in the countries where I worked who even in the worst of conditions were a greater positive attitude and commitment that one would hope to find. That made it worth it!