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SAMUEL S. REA

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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is April 24, 1998, and an interview with Sam Rea, who served with AID for how many years?

REA: For thirty years, from 1966-1997. This includes 18 months away to finish graduate school.

Preparation: Early years and education

Q: Well, let's start off with where you are from, where you grew up, education, and anything that would indicate how you got into international development rather than something else.

REA: I joined AID to work on Africa. The question, I guess, is: why Africa?

Q: Well, let's go back to where you were born and where you grew up.

REA: I was born in New York City in 1938. After the War, when my father came back from the Navy, we moved to Pittsburgh, the family seat, where he had grown up. I went to Shady Side Academy locally from third through ninth grade. I then moved on to spend four years at Andover, north of Boston. There I was fortunate to be chosen for an English Speaking Union fellowship for a year at a "public school" in England. I came back in 1957 to take four years at Princeton, and then went immediately on to graduate school in African studies.

Q: Anything in those early years beyond your time in England, that would suggest why you were interested in international affairs, world affairs and so on?

REA: I've often wondered why the travel bug bites one person and leaves others alone, even close siblings. In my case, the bug bit. My family's overseas experience was contagious. Both my father and mother, and close relatives on both sides of the family, loved to explore far-off places. My parents had first met in Beirut and following their engagement there, had traveled to East Africa. At college my role model was my great uncle, then a man of about 70 years old, who had retired to Princeton. He was an Arabist, and had served as the president of the American University of Beirut for a quarter century between 1923-1948.

Q: What was his name?

REA: Bayard Dodge. Uncle Bayard was a delightful man, and we had time to talk and take long walks together. My sense was that it was not in the cards for me to work as he had done in the Middle East. My Arabic was nil, and he reckoned that it took the average person 12 years to speak Arabic perfectly. I was too impatient for that! But I did have some grounding in French. As it happened, 1960, my junior year at college, was the big year of African independence. Few Americans then, as now, knew much about Sub-Saharan Africa, and the needs there were enormous. So it seemed to me, equipped as I was with only English and French, that my opportunity to make an international contribution was in Africa.

Q: Was there anything in the Princeton experience that pointed you toward development in Africa?

REA: I came to Princeton with the idea of joining the Woodrow Wilson School in my junior year and studying public affairs. But after my first history course as a freshman, I decided to major in Modern European and American history. The history department then, as now, was one of the best in the country. R.R. Palmer was my professor on the French Revolution and was then half way through writing his two volume study, The Age of the Democratic Revolution. His course helped reinforce in my mind some of the events of my year in England, especially Ghana's Independence celebration, the first in Sub-Saharan Africa. I also took Fred Harbison's course on economic development.

Q: He was on the Nigeria manpower mission?

REA: That's right. Harbison had been a member of the Ashby Commission in Nigeria, and had prepared a manpower plan which was at the time the state of the art. He was a very contagious person and an enthusiastic advocate for whatever he did. Princeton requires every senior to write a thesis, and at the time he came back from Nigeria I was looking for a topic to write about. I wanted something at the near end of the historical spectrum which would permit me to use original source materials and which was related to Africa. I finally ended up writing about British education policy in the Gold Coast as an aspect of imperialism. The source material I found at Teachers College Columbia University, which carried a full file of all the British Colonial Office education reports going back to the beginning of colonization there. My thesis advisor was Gordon Craig, professor of European diplomacy, known particularly for his work on German history. In 1960-61, Professor Craig came nearest to an African expert of anybody then serving on the Princeton faculty.

Q: Why Africa? Why not some other part of the world?

REA: Post-independence Africa was where the line was thinnest. It was the area of the world at the time with the greatest need and the fewest knowledgeable people to help.

In my senior year I began to prepare quite deliberately for my Africa career. I applied to graduate school at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (S.A.I.S.) in Washington. S.A.I.S. was at the time one of the first and among the few schools to offer African studies at the post-graduate level. But I wanted to experience at least a piece of Africa on the ground before starting to study Africa from books. One day when I was doing research at Teachers College for my thesis, I was thinking about how I could manage this. An item on the T.C. bulletin board caught my attention and I walked down the hill to James Robinson's Church of the Master in Harlem. There I signed up to participate in Operations Crossroads Africa, Robinson's summer work program then entering its third year. I spent that summer after graduation, 1961, with a twelve person group of college students. We traveled widely in Mali before joining with Senegalese and Gambian university students to lay the foundations of a primary school at Popenguine, a pretty coastal village south of Dakar. Weeks after returning I enrolled at S.A.I.S. in September, 1961. There I spent my next two years studying Africa, along with various required courses in economics and international law.

Q: Any particular major?

REA: I majored in African studies. S.A.I.S. permitted a major in a geographic area of interest. We looked at Sub-Saharan Africa from an interdisciplinary perspective: history and anthropology (with Robert Lystad), diplomacy (Vernon McKay), and country and regional politics (with, for example, the State Department's expert on West Africa, Robert Baum). In addition to the area studies, I took courses in complementary subjects such as development economics (with Isaiah Frank), trade and commerce, international law, and U.S. diplomatic history. I also satisfied the foreign language requirement in French.

Q: Did you write a thesis then, too?

REA: S.A.I.S. required second-year students, then as now, to do a long paper of 75-100 pages. I wrote mine on the foreign policy of Senegal, as the African country I then knew best. I should also mention that between my first and second year at S.A.I.S., I spent the summer at American University writing the "government and politics" chapters for the Department of Defense's Area Handbook on the Ivory Coast.

By the time I had completed my Master's degree in June 1963, I had been in school for 18 straight years. I had decided to go on to a Ph.D., but felt that I needed to clear my mind before I continued with an even more demanding course of study. Since childhood I had had a special admiration for the Marine Corps. I joined the U.S.M.C. Reserve program straight out of S.A.I.S. and spent that summer at Parris Island, South Carolina. Three months of Marine boot camp had the desired effect, showing me a new and different view of the world. Parris Island was followed by three months of basic infantry school at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. By December 1963, I could hardly wait to get back to school. I was married on December 28, and my wife and I moved to Morningside Heights, New York City.

Q: You were a regular Marine then.

REA: I was a member of the Marine Reserves. But the Reserve program began with the six months active duty training which all Marines received, both Reserves and Regulars together. No distinction at all was made between us during this training period. Following these six months in active service, June to December, 1963, I joined the Marine Reserve unit nearest to Columbia University, where I went for my Ph.D. I met my unit, a communications battalion, for a weekend a month at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and spent two weeks in summer training with the Reserves in each of the two years I was at Columbia. The first summer we took amphibious training at Little Creek near Norfolk. The next year we were given communications training at the Marine base in San Diego. That was in 1965, at the moment President Johnson took the fateful decision not to send the Marine Reserves to Vietnam. We were all packed and ready to go straight to Vietnam from San Diego. Fortunately, we were spared that experience.

Q: Do you know why you didn't go?

REA: I think it was because of the heavy losses that Army reserve units had suffered when they were deployed to join the Korean conflict fifteen years before. The President reckoned that the political costs of large casualties at the time in Vietnam would be unacceptable.

Q: You were never a long term Marine?

REA: That's correct. The Marines I saw then as a needed break – a sort of recess period between my M.A. and Ph.D programs. My two years at S.A.I.S. had given me a broad exposure to Africa and "a view of the U.S. in a changing world environment," as one of our courses was titled. But the program was not designed to prepare students for teaching, with the depth and concentration one would need to teach well. I realize I had a double desire at the time: to teach and also to practice in the most helpful way, not necessarily in that sequence. I decided to take my degree in political science, a degree which I thought was more in keeping with my practical bent than one in history. Columbia offered a program which would permit me to continue with my interest in Africa and which also would give me credit for the work I had done at S.A.I.S. This meant that I would have to do only three more semesters of classwork before studying for my comprehensive oral exam. In addition, Columbia's political science program was historically oriented, in contrast to the more quantitative-based, statistical approach to politics elsewhere -- at Yale and Berkeley, for example.

I majored in comparative government (Britain, France, and "Africa"), with a minor in political theory. L. Gray Cowan was the chief Africanist in the department and became my supervisor. For the two languages which the Ph.D. required, I qualified in French with no further study required, and in Swahili. Because Swahili is one of Africa's most widely spoken languages, it qualified me to apply for a National Defense Foreign Language (NDFL) scholarship. I began Swahili with an intensive course offered at Pittsburgh's Duquesne University in the summer of 1964, and I continued to study Swahili at Columbia for another year after that. The NDFL paid my college tuition, and the language was very useful to me in my field research a few years later.

In addition to these courses at Columbia, I also took a seminar next door at Teachers College on education and politics in Africa, taught jointly by Cowan and David Scanlon. The interaction of politics and education had interested me ever since my thesis work at Princeton. It was a theme I brought with me to AID and one which, in a very broad sense, I suppose, defined my career in foreign assistance.

Joins USAID in Tanzania as Education Program Officer – 1966-1968

Q: You wrote a thesis for your doctorate?

REA: I had to write a dissertation, yes, and I wanted to use it to explore further the politics of education. But before that there were the course requirements to complete and an oral exam to pass. All this occupied my time between January 1964, just after leaving Marine active service, and the Spring of 1966. Then, on a particularly memorable Friday in March I passed the orals, we packed up our VW Beetle, drove to Washington, and I joined AID on the following Monday.

Q You completed your doctorate after you joined AID.

REA: Yes -- some time after. After a year or so at Columbia I was completely satisfied that I was not primarily suited for an academic career. But I wanted very much to complete my degree, because teaching was a strong secondary interest of mine and one I expected to pursue later on. In these circumstances, it seemed best to write a dissertation on a contemporary subject based on first hand field research. I knew very well that this route was bound to take longer than if I were do all my research in libraries in close touch with my dissertation committee. Field research was also a good deal riskier. Whichever route one took, I knew that only about half of Ph.D. candidates in those days ever finished their dissertations and got their degrees.

In the mid-Sixties, Tanzania seemed the most exciting African country to study. Remember the appeal of Nyerere’s Arusha Declaration, with those who were calling him Africa’s philosopher king? My problem was how best to get there and do my research, at a time when grants to do this sort of thing were still hard to come by. By good fortune, there was a visiting professor at Teachers College at this time, John Cameron. He had served prominently in the British Colonial Service in Tanganyika in charge of education up until Independence a few years years before. Cameron was admired by his African colleagues and still maintained contact with a number of them. When I explained my problem to him, he wrote on my behalf to Augustine Mwingira, the Director of Planning in the Ministry of Education. Mwingira turned the letter over to the AID Education Advisor at the time, “Windy” Niblow. By remarkable coincidence, AID had been trying for nine months to recruit someone qualified to work in the Education Ministry as a direct-hire program officer, someone who could help Niblow to build up AID’s education assistance program.

This was just the opportunity I was looking for. The position would pay my way. At the same time it would give me the chance to learn about the education system from the inside. The Mission Director, Sam Butterfield, interviewed me when he came to Washington. On the strength of that and the quality of my application letter, which he noted approvingly, he asked AID/W to sign me up. I made it clear from the start that at the end of two years I would request a leave of absence to write up my dissertation. Sam approved. In this way, inconceivably simple by today’s standards, I went directly from graduate school to AID as a direct hire Foreign Service officer.

Q: What were you doing while you were working in the Ministry there for that two year period?

REA: I was to spend half my time at a desk provided for me by the Ministry’s Department of Planning and the other half at a desk in USAID/Tanzania, as part of the program office. Although I had had some formal orientation before leaving Washington, the first thing I had to do when we reached Dar es Salaam was to figure out how the Mission worked. To help with this, the Executive Officer, John Garney, left a full shelf of manual orders on my desk to greet me on my first day at the office. I hardly had room to sit down. Garney said he expected I would have them read by the end of the week. I didn't realize he was joking!

Q: You hadn't had much orientation.

REA: AID/W had given me a general orientation from mid-March to mid-April, but we didn't much cover Mission operations. When my wife and I got to Tanzania after an all-night flight from Paris, Windy Niblow was there at the airport to meet us. It was 2:00 pm on a sweltering day, a Saturday. The first thing Windy did was to hand me a softball mitt and his first words were: "Welcome to USAID/Tanzania. The game starts at three; you're playing center field." We went from the airport to the hotel, I dropped my bags, and I was in center field by 3:00 pm.

That was my introduction to a very close and high-spirited mission. We worked very well with the Embassy, the Peace Corps, and private sector individuals of all types. Sam Butterfield, as I said, was Director, John Hummon was his chief Program Officer, and Dave Shear the Deputy Program Officer. Each year while John and Dave were there, the USAID had put on the "Country Capers," a musical satire aimed at everybody, the Ambassador included. I arrived just as Dave and John were leaving. But under Sam Butterfield, a model Director, I learned a lot about AID policy and operations in general, about the education sector in particular, and, as part of the program office, a great deal about how projects of many different kinds should work. Education then was the prime emphasis of the Mission. I don't have a record of our total mission budget, but I do know that USAID/T obligated $2 million a year on the education program alone.

Q: What were we doing?

REA: First, I'll say what we were not doing. In those days, AID stayed clear of direct involvement in primary education. I only discovered the reason for this a few years later, in 1972, when John Hannah visited us in Botswana. He had just left his post as the Administrator of AID and was traveling for the Rockefeller Foundation. Hannah told me that primary education was considered too sensitive politically in the post-Independence era for the U.S. to be directly influencing policy or content for primary schools. Instead, when I joined AID in 1966, the educators put prime emphasis on "human capital formation" and "training trainers". For us in Tanzania, this meant mostly constructing and equipping colleges at the post-secondary level to prepare Tanzanians for careers in agriculture, engineering, and teaching.

As a junior program officer for a major sector -- education -- I think I had the ideal "first job" in AID. It permitted me to get involved at first hand with all the basic AID operations at the time. These included such activities as procurement for equipping the technical college we had built on Zanzibar. Here, by the way, we came to know Tom

Pickering, who was the U.S. Consul there at the time, before he became the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy in Dar. Tom learned Swahili so well that he was able to give the memorial oration for Dr. Martin Luther King at the Anglican Church in Dar largely in that language, to an overflow congregation of Tanzanians. Today Tom is the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, our leading career diplomat. I have been unusually fortunate in the high caliber of State Department officers with whom I have served.

But to get back to what we were doing in Dar. Another one of our projects stocked the library at the University College of Dar es Salaam. Also, I got involved in loan negotiations, for building a teacher training college at Iringa, in the center of the country. I helped in the planning of capital projects, especially phase III of the University College construction. A big part of my job was managing contracts. At one point we had 49 contract Americans in the country. I dealt directly with the Chiefs of Party of big teams from several U.S. universities. West Virginia State was helping to create the national agriculture college at Morogoro, west of Dar es Salaam. A team from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo was helping to establish a technical college in Dar itself. Teachers College Columbia was running a very large regional project for East Africa, from the project headquarters at Makerere College in Kampala, Uganda. That project had begun its second phase, training the trainers of primary school teachers. Not only was I just involved in all these operations, but the Mission gave me a great deal of responsibility, as well. For example, I served as acting Education Officer for five months shortly after I arrived, between the time that Niblo left and Noel Myers arrived to replace him. Dr. Myers also delegated a great deal to me.

Q: You were there for three years?

REA: Yes, we were in Tanzania for just over three years. In July 1968 I left the Mission, followed by a third year in-country gathering data for my dissertation. But in this regard things did not work out exactly as planned. The Government of Tanzania had soured a bit on the U.S. by then on account of Vietnam and a number of other events. The GOT did not want someone who was officially connected to our government roaming around Tanzania doing research. I'm quite certain that if I hadn't developed a relation of trust with my colleagues in the Ministry of Education, where I worked for a part of every day for over two years, the GOT would have denied me permission to do research of any kind.

As it was, we arrived at a compromise. I had to resign entirely from AID before the Tanzanian government would give me permission to stay, which I did as a Research Fellow at the University College, unpaid, of course. Most of this third year my wife and I spent in four separate education districts in various parts of the country: in an area south of Lake Victoria around Nzega; at Mwanza, a town on the shore of Lake Victoria; in Moshi, at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro; and in a very poor area, Handeni, north of Dar es Salaam. I had selected these four districts, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education, to be representative of the different ways in which the government of Tanzania financed and controlled primary education.

Q: Did you find reasonable cooperation in getting all the information?

REA: Yes, especially at the district level. Once the central authorities had approved my topic and selection of districts, the District Education Officers cooperated fully. Initially, however, I ran into a big problem. The Tanzanian government refused me permission to pursue my original topic, the one which my thesis committee at Columbia had approved before I left in 1966. I quite naively had proposed to study “the politics of education planning” at the national level. Tanzania in 1968 was drawing up the new five year plan in education. As an aspiring political scientist, I thought that the study of this process would provide an important insight into how politics worked in a newly independent African country. It was a project, of course, which no country in the world at that stage (or probably any stage) would have permitted a student to undertake – much less an American in the late 1960’s under the shadow of the Vietnam war.

So I was obliged to come up with another topic which would get me out of Dar es Salaam to do research. As it turned out when I was all finished, my associates in the Ministry of Education were quite interested in the tabular profile I provided of all the rural and urban education districts in the country, showing the discrepancies between them. These findings were also sensitive, and, to reiterate what I have said before, it was a measure of the trust which my Ministry colleagues, especially Augustine Mwingira, who had moved up to become Permanent Secretary, decided to give me that I was allowed to do what I did at all.

Q: Would you care to summarize what you found out, what you learned from that?

REA: I’ll try. In a broad sense, my topic was the nature of the political relationships which existed between Tanzania’s central and local governments in the post-Independence period, 1962-1969. My particular viewpoint was the issue of primary education, which became perhaps the most important bone of contention between the central government and the local authorities.

Central government began by trying to control the growth of primary education in order to allocate as much money as possible to expand the post-primary education sector. The government’s aim was to train Tanzanian replacements for expatriate personnel and so to reduce dependence on the former colonial power as quickly as possible. The way that the central authorities thought the expansion of primary education could be contained was to require the local districts themselves to pay for teachers and other school expenses as much as they could.

This strategy did not work for long. District councils faced a rapidly growing demand for primary schools, which soon became their leading financial concern. Primary school costs grew until they swamped the council budgets. Teachers, a key political group, were not getting paid and some councils were going bankrupt, or at best had insufficient funds for activities related more directly to income and development. Another political problem was that the richer councils could afford school systems which the poorer councils could not. Before long, the inequities became too great for the “nation builders” in the capital to accept.

What also became clear to President Nyerere and his party, TANU, was that they were missing a big opportunity: the reform of primary schools would be a necessary element in the “revolution” of the rural sector. They came to see primary education as a vital part in the creation of attitudes supporting long-term government programs. Evidence of this is Nyerere’s famous tract, “Education for Self-Reliance,” which he wrote in 1967. This was also the time of his interest in Mao’s experience in reaching China’s rural masses. It coincided with Tanzania’s growing ties with Mainland China, as evidenced by China’s building of the Tan-Zam railway. This new perspective on primary education, combined with the virtual breakdown of many district governments, all led to central government’s virtual takeover of the primary school system in 1969.

What I took away from all this was an acute appreciation of primary education as a hot political issue and not just a major administrative and budgetary concern in the growth of a new nation.

Q: So then you left there in 1969, is that it?

REA: Yes. My wife and I left Tanzania in the summer of 1969, traveling by way of the Far East, and we arrived home on the weekend that Armstrong landed on the moon. Unfortunately, men on the moon was not all that was new. I also came back to find that Columbia University had been deeply shaken by Mark Rudd’s Vietnam-era student riots the year before. Naturally, the politics department had been a special target of the strikers. Symbolically, the Department of “Public Law and Government” had changed its name to “Political Science.”

But far more important for me, all the faculty members who had made up my thesis committee had either left the University or were on their way out. The new committee did not accept the draft I submitted in January, 1970. Their judgement was that it was too much concerned with education and not enough with politics. One member of the committee facetiously suggested that I cross the street and get my Ph.D from Teachers College! Of course, for me this was out of the question. I had not trained for a degree in education, and at that point certainly had no desire to do so. My only recourse was to start all over, completely from scratch, reconfiguring the data I had gathered in the field to rewrite the thesis to the new specifications of the new committee under a new supervisor.

Q: How did you get all the data for that?

REA: Fortunately, I had all the data I needed. It just took a bit of ingenuity, and a lot of time, to organize it in another way. But the final topic I ended up with, as I’ve just described, was not nearly as interesting as my original topic on the politics of education planning. That, I suppose, was my main disappointment.

Q: Yes, and of more current interest now, I think.

REA: Now, as well as then! During the time I was researching and writing the thesis, I had, you'll recall, resigned from AID. I had no obligation to return to AID, and the Agency had no obligation to take me back. This left me in a particularly good position to consider all my options for what I wanted to do next. Of course, I did go back to AID. But it's interesting that I never thought, until probably the late 1980s, of spending my entire career with AID. I had imagined doing good things with AID but then going on and building on this experience in other ways, especially in teaching. So every time I was up for reassignment, every three or four years over the next two decades, I would ask myself what I really wanted to do next. As it turned out each time, the thing I decided I wanted to do most was the thing AID gave me the opportunity to do. Looking back now, I see a remarkable congruence of interests – my own and the Agency's – which lasted up until the very end, with one exception in 1988, which we'll get to. And even that turned out well.

Q: So what did you do next?

Returns to USAID/W and the AID/State Nigeria program – 1970-1971

REA: By January 1970, when the new committee turned down my thesis, we had been living off savings for a year and a half. With our first child on the way, I needed to get back to work even as I rewrote my dissertation. At that time, for an Africanist with a political science background and a penchant for development work, one challenge stood out in bold letters: Nigerian reconstruction. Nigeria's two and a half year civil war ended that month. I learned that a joint State/AID desk, on the model used then for our Latin American operations, was being set up to manage our post-war program for Nigeria. As it happened, AID was recruiting for a GS assistant desk officer who had had some economics training. While I am no economist, I was able to point to seven semester courses of economics which I had taken at Princeton and S.A.I.S., and this was enough to satisfy the requirement. So AID reinducted me as an "International Relations Officer" stationed in Washington to help with Nigerian post-war reconstruction.

Q: What did that involve?

REA: That involved a lot of worry about how I was going to do my job and still get my thesis written! From the time I came back to AID in the summer of 1970 until the time Columbia University finally accepted my thesis, about a year later, my preoccupation was not first with Nigeria, I'll readily confess. My obsession was getting this all-important academic requirement out of the way. I was commuting in from Columbia, Maryland, about three hours round trip each day.

Q: Do you recall what was going on about Nigeria at that time?

REA: Well, I had primary responsibility on the Desk for backstopping education and manpower projects. We put together teams to review the post-war situation and to give us recommendations on how AID could be most helpful. Wolfgang Stolper, founder and head of Michigan's Center for Research on Economic Development (CRED), then famous for his book Planning Without Facts, led one of these teams. AID had invested heavily after Independence in 1960 in building post-secondary education infrastructure, together with large technical assistance teams – Michigan State's effort at Nsukka University in Eastern Nigeria was perhaps the outstanding example. But after the civil war we had to fundamentally reassess all these programs. We needed a new approach and a new policy.

My role, of course, was definitely at the grunt level, working on PROP reviews and contractor selection panels, monitoring allotments, writing OYB and Congressional statements -- that sort of thing. In fact, I felt with the thesis hanging over me that the less visibility I had, the better. For my first six months I worked under Don Miller who, despite his drill instructor mannerisms, was very understanding about my thesis requirement. Don allowed me to cobble together long weekends from official holidays and from my annual leave allotment, enough to give me the patches of continuous time I needed to reorganize my data and to write the new draft. Miller saw a long-term advantage to the Agency in my getting the degree, and he offered me gruff encouragement, for which I'll be eternally grateful.

Q: Well, after you finished your thesis?

Undertakes the formation of USAID/Botswana – 1971-1974

REA: On December 5, 1971, two days after I had submitted the approved draft of my dissertation to Columbia University, my wife and I with our 16 month old son, Bayard, and our Brittany spaniel climbed on the plane for Botswana. I was assigned to be AID's first resident officer in the capital, Gaborone. Charles (Carlos) Nelson had recruited me just after he had been named the first U.S. ambassador to the BLS countries (Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland) earlier that year. He and I had first met after he succeeded Sam Butterfield as our Director in Tanzania, during the year I was gathering information for my dissertation. Ambassador Nelson had decided to make the Embassy in Gaborone his resident post, while traveling to Lesotho and Swaziland on a regular basis. Concurrent with that and at his request, our Office of Southern Africa Regional Affairs Coordination (OSARAC) established an Assistant Program Officer position in Gaborone. This is the position I was to hold for almost two and a half years, before we left at the end of March, 1974 to return home for family reasons.

Q: What was your function? What were you doing?

REA: The short answer is that I was expected to organize the AID program in Botswana. This meant establishing the resident AID presence there. The Embassy gave us two rooms on the top (third) floor and we employed Dorothy Dambe, who became the vivacious mainstay of the office, as my Assistant. We began to pull together the threads of the regional projects which pertained to Botswana. We created a day-to-day working relationship with the host government (GOB) and donor agencies, and we began to plan future activities. It was a very exciting opportunity for me, but it entailed a certain risk. The risk was that I was working with an Ambassador who was a career AID officer with very determined views, while at the same time working for the Program Officer at OSARAC, located in Mbabane, over 400 miles away! Fortunately, for the most part, we all made a go of it, thanks to Ambassador Nelson's sound professional judgement and to the skills of Roy Stacy (to whom I reported, later George Eaton) and especially of Charley Ward, the Director of OSARAC, who had the Ambassador's full confidence. There was a lot to do.

Botswana had won Independence only five years before. The country, which is almost the size of Texas, had a population then of perhaps 750,000, little infrastructure and very few trained people. By the time I got there, two sizeable AID capital projects were already underway. The first was a $6.4 million loan for a water pipeline. The pipeline formed part of an intricate multi-donor package in support of the $300 million Shashe copper-nickle mining development in the Francistown area, in the northeast. Our understanding with the government was that with the increased export earnings from the mine, Botswana would invest in building roads and expanding health and education programs, which were also minimal.

The second capital project which had started by the time I arrived was the construction of a 230 mile gravel surfaced road to the northwest of Francistown, financed with a $16.6 million loan. The road was designed to link the Francistown spur with the Botswana-Rhodesia border on the Zambezi River in the extreme north.

Later we engaged in planning to construct a small abattoir in the north-central region. The abattoir was under study as part of a strategy to improve cattle management and off-take, so as to improve returns to small producers. Finally on the capital side, we made grants to the Gaborone campus of the University of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland (UBLS), which later broke up into three national institutions.

Q: But the campus became the University of Botswana.

REA: Yes, perhaps by 1980. As they had done with the University of East Africa and its three campuses at Dar es Salaam, Makerere, and Nairobi, the British had invested a great deal of effort in establishing a regional institution, with three national branches, for Southern Africa, as well. This approach made a lot of sense but ultimately it could not stand up to nationalist pressures, nor even to regional pressures, as we saw later in the case of Nigeria. Each country wanted its own university. But regardless of how UBLS was configured, our main interest was in helping the institution change the kind of education it provided. We strongly favored a shift away from the classical "Oxbridge" tradition to one consistent with employment demands, along the lines of the U.S. community college model. In the 1969-72 period we provided the Botswana branch of UBLS with a six person team from Cal Poly. We continued to supply faculty under an OPEX arrangement for a time after that. With the teachers we included a small grant program for the construction on the Gaborone campus of offices and housing.

Q: Were you able to complete those projects? Let's take the road. Why were you building a road?

REA: In part the road was needed to connect the northern part of the country with the rest. The north was an area which at the time could only be reached by Landrover over cross country trails. This was the primary motivation, and one that had become more urgent as the refugee population increased along the Rhodesia border in the course of the nationalist struggle for independence throughout the 1970’s. The line of the road, from Nata to Kazungula, was intended to run parallel to the border and thus could also provide access to that refugee population. Left unspoken was Botswana’s security interest in defending against potential incursions by Rhodesian forces at any point along that border.

Q: Was this the time when they had front-line states?

REA: Formally, yes, after 1969 when the Lusaka Manifesto was adopted. The movement developed, no doubt, in talks between Presidents Seretse Khama of Botswana, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, and Nyerere. When Mugabe came to power in the new country of Zimbabwe in 1980, then the front-line concept took more institutional form in the founding of SADCC, the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference, which we supported very actively.

Q: But there was a concern over South Africa's incursion and control.

REA: Yes, from almost every direction. Security was only one aspect of Botswana’s general concern about the sorry state of the national infrastructure. The roads were almost all dirt roads, including the roads into Gaborone, the capital. The Kasane area in the far north, as I’ve said, was entirely cut off from the rest of the country. So as a way of unifying the country, and for the other reasons I have mentioned, the Nata-Kazungula road was a key project. It received a great deal of attention from the REDSO/EA engineers and from the East Africa Loan Office. We enjoyed a stream of visitors from Nairobi.

Q: Did it get done?

REA: Yes, it did. By the time I left, construction was well underway, and talks had already begun for a Phase II, to harden the surface.

Q: Then what about this slaughterhouse, a curious thing for AID to be involved in?

REA: Although we carried out a feasibility study in 1972, I'm not sure the satellite abattoir ever got built. The abattoir was under review as one way we might assist small cattle producers in the north-central area, between Francistown in the east and Maun on the edge of the Okavango in the west. These small producers were disadvantaged by the fact that Botswana’s only abattoir at the time was located in Lobatse in the southeastern corner of the country. Their cattle had to be trekked in to Lobatse over hundreds of miles, and naturally the animals lost much of their weight and value. Experience in our own country had demonstrated that it was more efficient for us to locate an abattoir in proximity to the cattle than it was for us to transport the cattle long distances to a central hub for slaughter.

Because cattle production in central Botswana was the work of small-holders, the idea for this project grew in part out of the equity concern for "the poorest of the poor" which had begun to take hold in the early Seventies. But beef was also one of Botswana's leading exports, and the European market was becoming more accessible. The hooker in all this, and one objection which may have doomed the project after I left, was that cattle raised on the central plain were susceptible to infections spread by wild animals. The disease risk was of special concern to the Europeans, as it continues to be -- witness the "mad cow" episode a few years ago.

But planning for the abattoir was only part of a larger concern we had for agriculture and range management as a whole. We saw a definite shift in the period I was there from capital projects to technical assistance. The TA was designed to address Botswana's severe shortage of trained people. We recognized that here was the heart of the dependancy problem – leaving aside Botswana's situation as a land-locked state. Only political change in South Africa, Rhodesia, and South West Africa could help to remedy that, and this process was to take another 15-20 years.

Q: How far did we get in our assistance while you were there?

REA: The technical assistance portion of the program grew quickly. We contracted some individuals individually to fill established positions, under an OPEX arrangement. We were helped in deciding where to place our people by the Ford Foundation representative in Botswana, Frank Glynn. An Englishman, Glynn worked in the President's Office as director of the GOB's manpower plan. This was the very same function Frank had played in Tanzania, where he and I had known each other well just a few years before. Our OPEX program placed experts, as part of our agriculture/range management strategy, in such key positions as the Deputy PermSec (Technical) for Agriculture, in posts in the Planning and Training division of that Ministry, and in a lecturer position at the Botswana Agriculture College, then a secondary level institution. As I was leaving Botswana in 1974, a five person team arrived to plan a project which would provide six additional persons for range and livestock management purposes, along with the short and long term training of Botswana to replace them. Training was a staple of all our technical assistance projects.

The previous year we had introduced staff in two new areas, as well. One team of four, recruited by our Internal Revenue Service, helped the government to frame and implement the new income tax law, while training replacements. The IRS team was very effective, and was partly responsible for the fact that tax revenues doubled in the time the team was there. The second new area was health. We brought in three public health nurses, a health educator, and an administrator. This team gave a big boost to Botswana's Maternal Child Health (MCH) program. The team was also instrumental in starting an organized approach to family planning in Botswana.

Q: How did you find working with the Botswana?

REA: Very productive. Gaborone was a small, comparatively simple place in the early Seventies. Sir Seretse Khama as President set the tone of integrity and clear thinking. His Vice President who later succeeded him, Quett Masire, doubled as Minister of Finance and was similarly direct and informal. I remember his arriving one evening for a reception at our house, driving his own pick-up truck. Masire's Director of Planning, Festus Mogai, who is today President, was my chief contact person in the government. I met with him regularly. These were exceptional men, smart and dedicated, with their feet on the ground.

But because there were relatively few trained Botswana on the job at the time, the government had to place great reliance on expatriates. The fact was that Botswana attracted some of the very best, just as Tanzania had done in the Sixties; in fact, some were the very same people. The PermSec in Finance, with whom we met frequently, was South African born Quill Hermans, a highly intelligent and capable economist. Later, in the 1980s, Quill took leave to work at the World Bank before returning to Botswana where he is a citizen. Pierre (Peter) Landell-Mills and Mike Stevens, both British, both had worked in Tanzania, both served under Mogai in the Planning Office, and both went on to careers at the World Bank.

Q: Botswana now has a reputation of being very independent minded in terms of foreign assistance. Did you find that characteristic then? They knew what they wanted compared to many other countries.

REA: Indeed, yes. The Botswana, from Seretse Khama down, had a clear and reasonable plan for exploiting their mineral and other assets, caring for their people, and achieving the greatest measure of independence possible from their neighbors, South Africa and Rhodesia. And the expatriate staff served them very well. Their plan was a plan which AID could buy into and their needs matched some of our comparative strengths. For me it was an outstanding time for learning about development broadly and about how AID could best respond. In addition to this, the general environment there on the edge of the Kalahari prepared me well for what turned out, very inadvertently, to be the next chapter of my AID career.

Q: Then you finished up in Botswana and then what happened?

REA: For family reasons, as I mentioned, it was time to go home. After returning from Tanzania in 1969, my wife and I had met Jim Rouse, the founding father of Columbia, Md., and we had bought a town house there in 1970. While we were in Botswana, Rouse had been struck with another inspiration – the Dag Hammarskjold College. It was located in Columbia and was designed to offer a world-oriented curriculum to a student body consisting 50% of students from abroad. The College was just getting underway in 1974. The president of the college asked me to join the faculty to teach and to help develop their curriculum.

I found the offer very appealing, especially as it would allow me more time close to my family, which had now grown by the birth of our second son, Ben, in Southern Africa. Fortunately, George Eaton, who had replaced Roy Stacy, and Charley Ward both had urged me to apply to AID for a leave of absence, which AID/W granted. I say fortunately, because in my first month there the College went bankrupt, and I was able to return to AID without any delay. Sam Butterfield was on assignment in Washington at the time. He offered to keep me busy until the Africa Bureau could find me a regular assignment.

This happened almost immediately. David Shear had just been called back from Abidjan, where he had set up and directed REDSO/WA. His new assignment was to create and manage AID's response to the multi-year drought which had ravaged the huge region of West Africa on the southern border of the Sahara Desert. Dave urgently needed another pair of hands. When he learned that I was available, he asked me to join him on the strength of our brief working relationship in Dar es Salaam. This entire turn of events was entirely fortuitous and unplanned, but for me it was momentous. I began work with Dave in June, 1974, on a venture which was to consume the next 10 years of my life -- from three different vantage points: from AID/W in the 1974-78 period; at our Embassy in Paris for sixteen months, 1978-80; and then as a member of USAID/ Senegal, again under Dave's direction, 1980-84.

Assists the Formation of USAID's Sahel Development Program - 1974-1978

Q: Ten years. Let's talk about the first four years. Where was your function there?

REA: Generally speaking, I had two functions during these years in the Sahel Office. For the first two years I reported to Dave's Deputy, Irv Coker, to shape the field studies and the overall plan which culminated in our Report to the Congress of April, 1976. This report was the basis for the legislation which created the Sahel Development Program, or SDP, with its own line item appropriation in the years that followed. From April 1976 until I left for my next assignment in September 1978, I reported directly to Dave Shear. From that point on, I was charged with formulating and overseeing our human resources development (HRD) strategy for the Sahel. HRD was a part of the comprehensive, multi-donor approach which Dave and others conceived for helping the Sahel area over time to become self-sufficient in food.

Q: Let's talk about the strategy. What was the strategy?

REA: Our goal, as I've just said, was food self-sufficiency in the Sahel -- the eight-country region which reached from the Cape Verde Islands in the west to Chad in the east, a band about 3000 miles in length with about 27 million population. Tens of thousands had died in the 1969-1973 Sahel drought. At that time it was known as one of the great natural disasters of the twentieth century. Memory of the multi-donor relief program, 1972-1973, was very fresh at the time I started work with Dave a year later. The emergency had cost the donors a total of a billion dollars, of which the U.S. had contributed a quarter. We had even used the Air Force to deliver food to remote areas of Mali and Chad. And the threat was always hanging over us that the drought could return any year. So we felt we had to work fast.

By the time I joined the program we were in the middle of the 1973-1974 post-emergency, or relief and rehabilitation, phase. Up until the emergency AID had only two offices in the region, at Dakar and Niamey. To handle all the increased activity, we were now setting up small offices in each of the six countries where we had had no representative. We allocated $2-3 million to each of the eight offices for quick-disbursing, short term activities. Also in that year, 1974, we designed and began work on medium-term projects. These were directed at improving agriculture and health, and we created one or two such projects per country for most of the eight. I think nearly all of the agriculture projects we mounted then were designed to help national parastatal agencies get more seed and fertilizers to the farmers. These inputs seemed to be the most pressing need over the so-called medium term, three–five year period.

At the same time as all of this was happening, in the Fall of 1974, we fielded three teams to the region, each covering two or three countries, for the purpose of exploring the potential for development and to recommend longer term projects. The findings of these teams were written up and presented in a total of 1100 pages, the so-called “Development Assistance Program (DAP)-substitutes”. The DAP conclusions, together with the main findings of major diagnostic studies funded by AID and other donors, formed the basis of our Sahel Development proposal. This proposal is what we sent to the Congress, over Secretary Kissinger’s signature, in April 1976. It was the document upon which our long term program was to rest.

We qualified “food self-sufficiency,” our goal, in some important ways. These affected how our strategy was designed. We stated up front that this was a long-term goal, 20-30 years in the future, and we insisted that no quick fixes were in order. On the contrary, we were clear that only a transformation of production systems would do the job. Also, we saw food self-sufficiency not as a country-by-country goal but as a regional one, encouraging trade between Sahelian countries and the coastal countries to the south. We further envisioned food self-sufficiency as necessarily entailing environmental stability. Fuelwood and reforestation became important concerns. Finally, we believed that food self-sufficiency could be durable only if it were achieved in the context of self-sustaining economic growth.

Conceived in this way, our strategy showed in a matrix form that the factors making for food self-sufficiency were all related to one another. We used this grid, or matrix, as a simple illustration of what we intended to be a comprehensive approach to the problems of the region.

Q: What were the components?

REA: The matrix, as you would imagine, consisted of a series of vertical columns intersected by horizontal columns. The vertical columns represented the main sectors of food production: dry-land agriculture, irrigated agriculture, livestock, and fisheries, although fisheries did not receive much attention. The horizontal columns represented categories of actions which were essential to the improvement of food production across all sectors, actions such as HRD and health, ecology and forestry, and transportation.

We added horizontal columns for at least two special concerns which first surfaced in 1977 as a result of two major, ground breaking studies which we funded. The first of these had to do with "cereals policy," as it became known. Elliot Berg, who had by then replaced Wolfgang Stolper as the Director of Michigan's Center for Research on Economic Development (CRED), directed a review of the most important policies with a bearing on food production in the Sahel. Price policy was foremost, but policies related to land tenure, storage, and food donations like our PL 480 program were also significant. Singly and taken together, these policies as devised at the time in all the Sahel countries, Berg showed, amounted to a huge disincentive to farmers. It became apparent to all sides over about two years that unless the Sahel governments adjusted these policies, our common goal of food self-sufficiency would be forever out of reach. Despite the political sensitivity of these policies, the Club/CILSS (which I'll get to in a minute) organized a series of meetings to address the policies issue directly. These meetings helped our country Missions to a significant extent in their talks with each of the Sahel governments. The other special concern which became important to all of our production programs, and which was therefore also represented in the matrix by a horizontal column, was recurrent costs. Like the policy issue, the recurrent cost consideration was as novel for donors in the mid-Seventies as it is boilerplate and standard today. This issue came to the fore soon after the drought had ended, when the Sahelian countries presented the donors with a list of projects estimated to cost, according to one account, around $3 billion total. The donors were ready to fund the majority of these projects plus others which the donors had identified themselves. But the donors made the proviso that the host governments must agree to assume the recurrent costs of the donor-funded projects after a stipulated number of years, say, five to ten. We feared – and this was one of Dave's biggest worries – that without careful planning and restraint at the outset, the Sahelian governments would sink under the weight of the recurrent expenses of all these projects when the 5-10 year period was up.

The matrix, then, represented the mix of disciplines which the Sahelians and donors proposed to use to put the region on a firm footing.

By 1976, we – the donors and the Sahelians – were loosely organized at three levels to work towards food self-sufficiency. The Sahelians were engaged through an organization known as the CILSS, a French acronym for the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel. The Sahelian states formed the CILSS in September 1973 to speak with a common voice vis-a-vis the donor community for the help which the Sahelians urgently needed. On the donor side, at our urging in partnership with the French, the OECD in Paris agreed to shelter a small, unofficial office which became known as the Club du Sahel. The Club was inaugurated in March 1976 to work with the CILSS in coordinating donor efforts. The Club also served as a forum for joint study and dialogue between donors and Sahelians. As the Club insisted, this arrangement was no luxury – it was indispensable, in fact – for work in an area which we outsiders needed to understand very much better than we did in the mid-Seventies.

The Club/CILSS represented the top level of organization. Below that, there were a series of large committees belonging to a Working Group of donors and Sahelians. There was one such committee for each of the vertical and horizontal sectors shown on the matrix. I represented AID on the HRD committee. Our job, typical of the others in their respective disciplines, was to recommend a strategy, or approach, to breaking the education and training bottlenecks which we all determined had to be eliminated if food self-sufficiency was to be achieved.

The third and final level of organization was at the country level where, of course, most of the action took place after our Missions were set up and staffed, in the second half of the Seventies.

The entire complex of actions undertaken between 1974-1976 – including the staffing of new field offices, the organizing of the Club/CILSS superstructure, the planning for Congress – was orchestrated on our side by Dave Shear and Don Brown, the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa. They worked under the gun of the Secretary of State and ultimately of the White House, to establish a program designed to avert another costly humanitarian emergency in the Sahel. The Congress, strongly influenced by the Black Caucus which had asked for a plan in the first place, bought the plan and supported it. For all of us who worked to set up the Sahel Development Program, the experience was as exhilarating as it was exhausting. It is represented in my mind by the lively planning sessions which we held at Dave's hospital bedside each time his back went out.

Q: This strategy was quite region wide, it wasn't country focused?

REA: Yes, the SDP was regionally oriented, especially in the beginning. In fact, the title of the strategy which we sent to the Congress in April 1976 was "A Proposal for a Long-Term Comprehensive Development Program in the Sahel." We were seeking, and achieved, a line-item appropriation for the Sahel as a whole. This was to protect funding for the many years we knew it would take to make the fundamental changes necessary to achieve the goal. We saw the 1969-73 disaster as a Sahel-wide failure; therefore, we believed the remedy needed to be region-wide, as well. In our view, the countries shared more similarities than differences, and we wanted to encourage joint approaches to common problems. This is the main reason that we resisted requests by other countries adjoining but not part of the region, like Guinea and the Cameroun, for inclusion in the program.

In one major way, we could see the wisdom of this regional approach even at the outset. As I've said, the Club/CILSS organized many fora to bring Sahel and donor reps together to discuss problems which were common to each of the countries in the region. We found that it helped a great deal to discuss sensitive issues such as cereals policies as a general problem first, because this established a certain commonality and reduced the defensiveness of the individual governments when we would approach them at the country level later on. Straight dialogue at the country level came much more naturally after the subject had been discussed regionally.

Of course, the regional strategy began to accommodate the country strategies which we developed by the early 1980's, as our country missions got staffed up. I was part of this myself when I joined our Senegal office in 1980. But our effort in the mid-seventies was to create a model which would bring donors and Sahelians together in a systematic way to deal on a long-term basis with the common problems of the region. After that, we were better set to plan for country-specific issues.

Q: This model, can you elaborate on it a little more? How did you convert it into a program? You had a framework with certain sectors selected and certain issues?

REA: Yes. This question begins to get at the 1976-78 period in my story. After the Congress approved the general concept of the SDP by mid-1976, we began the detailed planning for programs which could bring about the fundamental changes in production systems and supporting activities – like education and training – which we knew would be necessary for the Sahel to become food self-sufficient.

In the first two years I had been operating for the most part under my program officer hat. I had been very much involved in the DAP exercise: designing instructions for the three DAP teams before they went out, rewriting and editing their reports into a final summary version, and boiling this down into the Congressional Overview presentation and the Special Report to Congress, and so forth. But I had also participated in my human resources function on two of the DAP teams. One of these, led by Princeton Lyman, went to Senegal, Mauritania, and Mali in September-October, 1974. John Pielemeier led another DAP team to Chad a few months later. For both reports I wrote the analysis and project recommendations for the human resources sector.

So the shift to becoming the HRD person on the Sahel Development Program Team (SDPT) was a very natural one. Dave constituted the team in May 1976, with the express intention that the SDPT mirror the composition of the Club/CILSS Working Group. He named one individual on the team for each of the elements of the matrix. All of our members were not located in AID/W, and each of us had other assignments besides the time we spent with our respective committees of the Working Group. For example, our team member who represented AID on the livestock team was Howard Helman. He was located in the Economic Section of our Embassy in Paris. Roy Stacy had also moved to Paris, to the OECD, where he served as Deputy to the remarkable Director of the Club Secretariat, Anne de Lattre, a French citizen. Anne and Roy started the Club du Sahel which, as I've said, was formally launched at Daker in March, 1976. The Club and CILSS in conjunction supported the Working Group and all its sector teams, including the HRD team, or committee.

I had other tasks, as well, during this period. For example, I wrote the original AID grants to the Club and to the CILSS, the grant to Michigan State to establish a Sahel Documentation Center, and many other things of this sort which were "program" work. But my main job in these two years, from mid-1976 until I left the Office in mid-1978, was to develop AID policy in the HRD sector for the Sahel and to begin the design of projects to put the policy into effect. This entailed a great deal of coordination – with the donor/Sahelian HRD team, with our own Missions which were beginning to grow in all eight countries, and with our own U.S. community of academicians and consultants who had special expertise and interest in the area. I should add, we defined HRD broadly. While education and training were at the heart of it, we also included communication and information networks, as well as activities related to public participation in development, such as the study of migration patterns.

The matrix model was meant to be suggestive of the main factors we needed to take account of in planning our programs and projects. This is how it was meant to work, at all levels. But as our Missions grew up, of which the one in Dakar was the first and largest, some of them perceived the matrix and the SDPT as a central planning body with the potential, at least, of interfering with their own ideas of what should and should not be done in their countries. For example, our Director in Senegal, Norm Schoonover, a very experienced man and totally fluent in French, was especially sensitive to this. He believed we did not give enough credence to his judgement of how to handle the country program for which he was primarily responsible. He may have been right. The matrix framework may have driven, instead of just guided, what we recommended.

Q: Too top down?

REA: Sometimes too heavy, yes. The comprehensive character of the model was compelling. But in the effort to cover all the bases in planning our programs we may not have prioritized accurately enough what we could and should achieve. We may not have listened closely enough to what our people stationed in the Missions were beginning to tell us. But I think this was an inevitable part of the transition from a program which had to originate in Washington, since in the beginning there were no Missions, to a program where the Missions, once they were up and running, had to call the shots. It was not a problem of the model, per se, in my view, but of the process.

Q: How much of the model was based on an understanding of the situation in the area?

REA: By mid-1976, as I've suggested, we had gone through a succession of overlapping phases, each designed to do different things: the response to the emergency, the actions belonging to relief and rehabilitation, the design of medium-term projects. We hear talk today of the "disaster-to-development continuum" – here was a text book model! And concurrent with the last two of these phases, the donors and Sahelians had begun to study the area for long-term solutions. Not only on the U.S. side, but the French and multi-laterals were turning out studies which we in our busy office hardly had time to keep up with – even if we had had the French capability to do so. Our DAP studies which I've mentioned were designed to capture all this information and analysis, while – most importantly – giving us an on-the-ground view by our own people. Most of the first-hand knowledge which went into the Sahel Development Program as authorized by the Congress came from the three DAP missions.

Q: What did you do on those missions? How did you get some sense of what was *required?*

REA: These teams prefigured the Club/CILSS Working Group to the extent that we included a specialist on each DAP team for each of the sectors of the matrix – agriculture, livestock, HRD, etc. The big difference, of course, was that the DAP teams were almost entirely American, each led by the best person Dave and Don Brown could find in AID. The first team, as I mentioned, was led by Princeton Lyman. At that time Princeton was Chief of the Project Design Office in the Africa Bureau. He later went on to a great career, serving as our Ambassador to Nigeria, then to South Africa, and ultimately as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs. But in the Fall of 1974 our assignment was to visit and report on the potential for development in Senegal, Mauritania, and Mali, and to make recommendations for what AID should do in our respective sectors over the next five years, and more generally in the longer term.

Lyman's DAP team numbered about twelve, as I recall. We set out in September 1974, passing through Paris for a briefing by the Cooperation Ministry, before arriving in Dakar. In each of the three countries we began by meeting with the AID/Embassy people and with the host government. Then we would all fan out to follow our own leads in our respective fields of interest. I had not spoken French outside of the classroom since my experience with Operation Crossroads in Senegal and Mali in 1961. Even so, I probably spoke French more fluently than most of my colleagues. Each of us talked with whomever we could, mostly host government officials but also with Peace Corps volunteers and the representatives of private voluntary organizations. We visited potential project sites. Although we were limited to about a week in each country, we nonetheless brought back first-hand impressions which helped us interpret critically the documents we collected on the ground and received later on.

From all of this, our main task was to describe the dimensions of the problems and recommend what we should do to tackle them in the medium and long term. Obviously, this exercise was intended to be a first crack, not the last word, but even so, the decisions taken on the basis of our recommendations often had long-lasting effects. In my area, human resources, for example, the Government of Senegal asked us to support the reform of the formal school system. My recommendation was that we should not do so until the GOS had demonstrated that they really meant business. This is a judgement that has held up until now, some twenty years later.

Q: Why?

REA: This is a good example of the importance of the field visits which our DAP teams performed. Anything we could have read in Washington would have told us that Senegal's school system was in terrible condition. Illiteracy was on the order of 85-90%, despite the fact that the government was allocating over a quarter of the annual recurrent budget to education. About 60% of that went for primary schools. Money wasn't the prime problem. But it was abundantly clear from what we saw when we visited Senegal that the education system was dominated by the French heritage and that there was little will among the ruling elite to change matters. The French cultural ascendancy was symbolized by the literary eminence of then-President Senghor. His government was French educated. Even 14 years after Independence, in 1974, French was still the language of instruction in every primary school throughout the country.

True, the GOS saw that change had to happen. In 1971 the GOS had even passed an “Education Orientation Act” to say as much. Nyerere’s “Education for Self-Reliance” had an effect on thinking even in Senegal, across the continent and the language barrier. But my clear sense when I went back there was that the political will was not yet behind education reform in Senegal as it had been in Tanzania. Senegal’s formal education system was not yet ripe for fundamental change. And even if the GOS had been committed, education reform there would have constituted a huge task over many years – a job for which AID would not have had as strong a voice as other donors such as the French themselves and the World Bank. Unless we were all speaking with one voice, it would not have worked.

Q: What did you recommend?

REA: We were very apprehensive that the rains could fail again any season. Food production was emerging as our principal focus. So I preferred a pragmatic approach. In our report I recommended that AID should help establish an effective and efficient rural education system, one which would include elements of non-formal training institutions, post-secondary professional schools, and ag extension organizations. Rather than doing this country wide, at least in the beginning, I recommended that we should help improve these elements and step up what they could do for farmers and their families in the geographic areas where we were already supporting agriculture programs, such as the mid-term production projects.

For example, in Senegal we were committed to helping SODEVA, the parastatal agency responsible for agriculture in the Peanut Basin. I recommended that we work in that area through the government non-formal education agency, Promotion Humaine, to deliver literacy and skills training to farmers and their families. This training would be designed to enhance their ability to absorb new methods and, at the same time, to take greater responsibility for improving village life. I further recommended that we support the work of ENEA, the government school for training rural planners and administrators. For the longer term, I proposed that we carefully monitor the effectiveness of this training in order to help formulate an eventual program to improve rural education more generally in Senegal. This approach, it seemed to me, would make for a more coherent assistance package and would lead us by stages into a solid long-term program.

Q: Then you said you shifted for the second two years working on the human resources. What was your strategy there?

REA: Essentially, our HRD strategy for the Sahel as a whole was an extension of the approach we adopted for Senegal. If Senegal, the most advanced of the former French colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa, was in this much difficulty with education, you can imagine the state of affairs in the rest of the Sahel.

In December, 1976, the HRD team which had been formed under Club/CILSS auspices met for the first time, in Ouagadougou. As for all the other sector teams, our Chair was a Sahelian and the members were a mix of donors and Sahelians. More than anything, this team became an information gathering engine and soon we were swamped with lists, requests for aid, and the like. The team process did not open up any very clear avenue of approach. But the information we collected certainly confirmed the dire state of affairs of education/training institutions and systems in the region. The systems were expensive, their coverage was inadequate, and their orientation was skewed and inappropriate. Worst of all was the condition of the primary school systems. More than half of Sahelian students dropped out before attaining basic literacy, and perhaps only a quarter of the age group even entered school at all.

In preparation for the December 1976 Ouaga meeting, we at AID had reviewed the education/training systems in each of the eight countries. We also had reviewed all the parts of our agriculture, health, and other programs in which we had committed funding for HRD activities, such as participant training. I asked Norm Rifkin to join me at the Ouaga meeting from his post as HRD officer with REDSO/WA in Abidjan. Norm had just joined AID and became my most valued human resources partner, both then and later. He was a professional educator, which I was not, and he spoke French more fluently. Together we listened to the lists of requests from the Sahelians and we heard the project ideas from other donors, all mixed up in a mind-boggling brew out of which some sort of strategy, or sense of priorities, would have to be distilled.

Directly on the heels of the Ouaga meeting I had my first crack at drafting the HRD strategy for our Sahel program as a whole. This came in the form of the human resources section of our Congressional Presentation for FY 1978. The statement I wrote was supposed to reflect the best judgement of our field missions, the SDP team, other branches of AID/W, and the best lights of our growing collection of outside experts. In the few paragraphs allotted, the “strategy” conceded that the human resources requirements of the region were so daunting that education and training could be justified at every level and in all sectors of our program. But as food production was our chief objective, the HRD strategy came down most heavily on skills training to improve the yields of the agriculture sector and to improve the life of the rural poor. We made special mention of the needs of women, who, among other roles, were the chief farm producers in the Sahel.

The main emphasis of the HRD strategy was on training at middle levels to ease the transfer of new technologies. These applied both to farm and off-farm populations, in agriculture production but also in health, nutrition, and cooperative management. The strategy recognized functional literacy as a constant need throughout. At higher levels, the strategy prescribed training and retraining in such skills as planning, evaluation, and finance for the general management of rural programs. The HRD strategy said less about livestock and fisheries than it did about irrigated agriculture and dry-land production, which were a more important concern for the SDP plan overall. The higher level training part of the strategy bore fruit later on in several ways, most notably in the design and approval of the Sahel Manpower Development Project (SMDP) which I worked on for four months towards the end of my AID/W assignment. The SMDP was to provide long and short-term professional training, to be given in the Sahel and outside, for many hundreds of Sahelians. SMDP training was additional to the participant training which we provided under all our regular projects. In 1983 alone, after the SMDP hit its stride, the project funded 300 students.

The connection between the kind of thinking which had guided our DAP recommendations in 1975 and the HRD strategy two years later is pretty obvious. In March 1977, Dave sent me to join the small committee of the Sahel HRD team which had been tasked with developing the overall HRD strategy for the Club/CILSS. We worked for two weeks at offices at UNESCO in Paris, with the notable help of Dr. Eugene Staley, a well-known authority on human resource planning, whom we provided. Essentially, the group adopted the skills approach taken in our Congressional Presentation, expanded it, and presented it to the total HRD team which met in Dakar at the end of March 1977. There the strategy was accepted. I doubt that the HRD strategy had much influence in and of itself. The importance of the exercise, I think, lay much more in the general familiarization we members gained with each other, Sahelians and donors. Norm Rifkin joined me again at the Dakar meeting and we continued to work closely, until Norm came to replace me in AID/W when I left for my next assignment in September, 1978.

Q: What were some of the other areas of innovation in the region as a whole?

REA: That's a big question. There were a great many. Most important, I think, was the construction of the Club/CILSS framework because it set the tone of more frank and positive talk between all parties, donors and Sahelians, on the whole range of issues and activities before us. This spirit, and the long-range vision we shared, encouraged substantial funding from a wide range of sources on a sustained basis, much beyond what we would have ordinarily expected. This context for our work stimulated the creation of new programs and institutions and brought existing ones back to life. These included the River Basin Commissions for the Senegal and Niger, Agrymet for regional weather forecasting, the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS), a renewed and refurbished pest and locust control program, the integrated pest management program for on-farm, non-pesticide control, new approaches to forestry like agro-forestry and village wood-lots, new approaches to village hydraulics – on and on.

Q: What about some of the other agriculture projects?

REA: Our thinking in agriculture – which, after all, was the heart of the program – evolved quite a bit as we learned more about the Sahel region. The mid-term projects which we launched in 1974-75, as I said, aimed at strengthening the parastatal agriculture organizations which most countries had in place. They were charged, along with many other things, with getting seed and fertilizer out to the farmers. In the beginning we felt delivering inputs would be the surest approach to raising production in the short term But it didn't take the agronomists long to see that the extension packages themselves needed a lot of improvement. After that, while continuing our support to extension, we turned more of our attention to the research systems.

We did this through two channels concurrently. One channel was direct support for the international crop research agencies, especially ICRISAT, which developed improved dry-land varieties of grains like millet and sorghum. These new varieties then needed to be adapted to local conditions. And so our second channel was support for the national research organizations in each of the Sahelian countries. Here, it became clear that the national research centers had to carry out more on-farm research if they were to ensure that farmers used in an optimal way the improved seeds, fertilizer, and techniques which were the result of the research. Also, of course, the on-farm research tended to improve the relevancy of the work in the national research centers.

At about the same time we realized that the way in which the extension systems were organized – the parastatals themselves – were an inefficient way of servicing the farmers. Our experience elsewhere indicated that the private sector might support farmers at much less cost to the governments than the parastatals were doing, and faster and better, as well. Elliot Berg's work on cereals policy was another important conceptual innovation, as I mentioned. His insight into this general problem in the Sahel, by the way, became the heart of the World Bank's famous and (at the time it appeared in 1981) controversial Report on Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. Berg left CRED to direct this seminal study, for which he was primarily responsible.

Perhaps we could also use the word "innovation" to describe the big integrated development programs which we designed in the five largest countries of the region. They resembled the integrated nature of the SDP in general and were open to the same criticism -- that in trying to be comprehensive, they were too complicated. I think we all agreed later, after a few years experience with them, that simpler was better, given AID's rigid rules about project design and implementation, rules which made it impossible to easily change and adapt our projects to unforeseen circumstances. Simpler was better, too, for the host countries, which did not yet have the trained management to handle these big projects. But I'm getting ahead of ourselves into the critique of the program, and that's not what you asked.

While talking about agriculture, we should also say something about livestock. Here we had some successes, notably in the improvement of watering points and in animal health. We spun a great many wheels, however, in the attempt to improve the transport and marketing of Sahelian animals into the coastal states. As I suspect was the case in Botswana, our efforts in the livestock sector probably did not pay off substantially.

In the area of forestry, we introduced a natural forest management approach which worked well in some places. One big problem we faced in developing new-growth woodlots and forests was finding a good, fast growing species for Sahelian conditions. In parallel with our efforts to increase the amount of fuelwood commonly available, we tried out various sources of alternative energy. These ranged from a sophisticated, high-tech solar energy installation in Bakel in far eastern Senegal, which proved to be uneconomic and overly complicated, to very low-tech models of heat efficient cooking stoves, which made much more sense, and other ideas in between. None of these met with rip-roaring success, at least not in the first ten years of the program.

But the fuelwood/energy question was a crucial part of the food problem in the Sahel, since the most available foods -- millet, rice, sorghum -- were inedible unless they were cooked. Almost all of the fuel used for cooking was firewood, and since the population was growing, it was easy to see that the region would turn into an even hungrier place unless our energy/forestry efforts and our agronomic work went hand in hand.

Q: What about the health area? Anything you recall about that?

REA: We might begin with the large program to eradicate river blindness, or onchocerciasis, in Upper Volta, now Burkina Faso. We took this on with the World Bank and a consortium of other donors. The River Blindness program became a very successful regional disease control operation. In addition, anticipating the construction of the large dams at Manantali and Saint Louis, AID was the leading donor in studying the likely effects on health which large-scale irrigation projects would have in the Senegal River basin.

But our most important contribution in health was our effort to get the Sahel countries to do more about primary health care and rural public health services. Typically, most of the health budgets went to keeping up the central hospitals in the capital cities. Much more needed to be done to bring health care to the rural majorities. The outstanding figure in introducing this new approach was Dr. Mike White, who served as the Club/CILSS health advisor in Ouagadougou, 1978-1980. Mike then joined our Mission in Senegal, a few months after I got there in 1980. Connected with primary health care was the introduction of MCH/FP -- family planning -- which we saw as indispensable if the region was to become food self-sufficient over the long term. Mike understood, however, that a traditional society, perhaps especially a Muslim society as found in the Sahel, would not even consider family planning unless primary health care was assured beforehand. Mike saw that family planning and health care services could work best and most naturally if offered in the same facilities.

Q: Okay. So after the first four years what was your overall impression of that experience?

REA: Professionally, after the country-specific work I had done in Tanzania and Botswana, the Sahel program was a mountain-top experience. The Club/CILSS comprehensive vision of “development” brought together all the various elements which we must deal with – the various sectors, the technologies, the policies, the donors and recipients – and integrated them into one long-term, regional program with a common goal (food self –sufficiency) and a common, phased strategy: short, medium, long-term.

The SDP experience trained me, and I think all of us who worked with it closely, to think comprehensively, to see the inter-connections between most of the things we do as an Agency, and to take account of all the connections we ought to make as a donor/recipient community. I think the SDP experience taught us to relate to our host government colleagues as our superiors in the knowledge of their region, because our ignorance, while understandable, was profound. I know we learned a spirit of humility, but I fear we did not learn as fast as we should have. Much of what we thought would work, in practice did not.

For me, one of the big question marks in all of this was the role of the French. France, of course, had been the dominant outside influence in the region for a hundred years. How much did France support the Club/CILSS approach in reality? I asked myself this in spite of the work of one of the most impressive development professionals I have met, Anne de Lattre, the founder and Director of the Club du Sahel and a chief architect of the SDP approach, along with Dave Shear and others. Anyone interested in this whole approach, by the way, should read the 100 page booklet Anne prepared with Art Fell, who replaced Roy Stacy at the Club. It's entitled "The Club du Sahel: An Experiment in International Co-operation" and it came out under OECD auspices in 1984. The booklet is a concise, candid review of the Sahel program overall and the lessons we took away from that experience.

Q: On the French specifically, did you find them cooperative in the field?

REA: Personally, I found the French cooperative, but they did not always follow through in the way I expected they would. I enjoyed being with their technical people, since they knew the region firsthand. Many were people who had spent their whole professional lives working in those areas. How willing they were to think and act in some of the new ways I've mentioned is really my question. As I found out in my next post, France's Africa policy generally is something of a mystery even for informed French people: who designs it, how does it actually work? But I was also going to say in connection with the Club du Sahel that the World Bank's non- participation was a big gap.

Q: Do you know why?

REA: I have no first hand knowledge of that, but I think the Bank in those days really preferred to deal on a country by country basis rather than with a region as a whole. I think they felt responsibility to their Board of Directors at that time to be in control of whatever programs they undertook, rather than doing what they could do to help a joint communal effort. The Bank may have shied away from the predictions we were making when we set 2000 AD as a target for food self-sufficiency. It also may have been that Anne de Lattre simply did not want the World Bank to come into this common effort unless they were willing to come in as equal partners, with no inordinate compulsion to insist on their way of doing things.

Q: Were there any other aspects of this first four years? We can go on with the Sahel from another perspective.

REA: Lots of other perspectives! Your interviews in this oral history series with Dave Shear, Art Fell, and Roy Stacy, just to name the three most knowledgeable, are "must" reading for folks who want other points of view.

But I can't leave the SDP without commenting on three other aspects. One I want to underscore was the outside attention the program attracted. This came from first class individuals like Elliot Berg and two of the scholars who worked on the recurrent cost problem, William Beazer of the University of Virginia and Clive Gray at Harvard. Interest also came from world class institutions, like the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Academy of Sciences, NOAA, and M.I.T. We never hesitated to go after the best talent we could find, and the drama of the drought moved people and organizations to seek us out, join in and help. AID had a great deal to learn about the region, and we got the best help around.

A second noteworthy point: with a clear eye to learning about the region, Dave contracted with Michigan State to establish a section of the MSU library as a repository for all the information we would be collecting on the Sahel, including all the reports by other donors and institutions which could be obtained. Once the MSU center got going, we provided funds to the Sahel Institute in Bamako, founded in December 1977, to create a documentation center of its own, with help from MSU. We also set up a documentary center in our own AID/W office as a working collection. When Dave and I got to Dakar together in 1980, we did the same thing in our Mission. That center is still very much alive today – an excellent resource, according to a colleague who just returned from Senegal. Documentation, I think, must be part of any well-devised long-term program. These days, of course, documentation may be much more easily organized electronically, without taking up physical shelf space, and much more easily accessed.

One last comment: I was worried at the time about the difficulty we were having in locating French-speaking officers to staff our missions and teams in the region. Still harder was it to find anyone with Sahel experience. I proposed that we set up a fund which would provide partial scholarships to Peace Corps volunteers who had a good track record in the Sahel, who wanted to return to grad studies in areas consistent with our needs, and who would be willing to join our program on completion of their studies. Though Dave supported the idea, we failed to get AID approval. But Carl Eicher, head of MSU's agriculture economics department, had the same thought. We made an initial grant to MSU to get the program started. MSU in this way produced some outstanding graduates, several of whom worked with us during the time we were in Dakar.

Q: Do you know any individual that went through that program?

REA: Chris Delgado, who was a Peace Corps volunteer in Chad when I first met him, was one. Chris is now a senior staff member of IFPRI, the International Food Policy Research Institute here in Washington. I think Tom Zalla, who worked with us in Senegal, was another. Marty Makinnen, who helped our program in Madagascar, was a third, I believe. Carl Eicher would know all of them. His graduates worked all across the region and were prized for their experience and training and their French-speaking abilities in the Sahel and elsewhere, later on.

Q: Well, after your four years you went back overseas?

Acts as USAID Liaison Officer, U.S. Embassy/Paris – 1978-1980

REA: Marvelously, without my lobbying for the job at all, I was assigned to the one single post which AID held at the time at our Embassy in Paris. The post was located in the General Economic Policy section and was established there in 1974 to assure a measure of coordination with the French on our assistance programs to Sub-Saharan Africa. My predecessor was Howard Helman, who, as I mentioned, had been conducting our business very vigorously with the Club/CILSS livestock team. When I got to the Embassy in September, 1978, my State Department supervisor, Bob Duncan, took me aside and made clear that the Ambassador, Arthur Hartman, had agreed to continue the AID position I was about to fill on the express condition that the next incumbent, namely me, should not serve as a livestock specialist!

Rather, as the Embassy's "overseas development coordinator," my job, Duncan emphasized, was to analyze and report on the full gamut of issues connected with French economic assistance. Duncan introduced me to the individual down the hall who represented the U.S. Treasury in the Embassy – Bob Gelbard, who is today serving as the President Clinton's Representative to Bosnia – and encouraged us to work towards a comprehensive understanding of the structure of French assistance. Although Gelbard had many other things to do, that became my mission, and I'm pleased that I have something to show for it after the 16 months I was there.

Although I was the sole AID officer in the Embassy, we did have other officers in Paris – one at UNESCO and several at the OECD, which now sheltered the Club du Sahel. At the same time as I arrived in town, Art Fell came to replace Roy Stacy as Deputy to Anne de Lattre. In the first few months Art (who was bilingual in French) and I teamed up to make a series of day-long visits to several of the most important component agencies of the French assistance program. Later, I made many more visits on my own. After the end of my tour in Paris, I put together all I had learned about the French aid program to Tropical Africa in a 33 page airgram. It was a labor of love which I finally completed in Dakar in July 1980. Bob Duncan in the Paris Embassy cleared my airgram and sent it out to a wide number of posts, including all our Africa Missions. Embassy/Paris also distributed my message to our embassies in the four other capitals (London, Bonn, Brussels, and Ottawa) which along with Washington had agreed to join in the "Giscard Initiative." This was an idea of the French president to encourage joint project funding in Africa.

The airgram represented, I think, and Bob Duncan would agree, the most complete report we had up to that time on French assistance overall. I had had to start from scratch because we knew so little. This report was the main thing I had to show as evidence of my 16 months in Paris, since the representational nature of the job didn't encourage visible results. Norm Schoonover, our Director in Dakar, came up to replace me and I left Paris to become the Program Officer in USAID/Senegal.

Q: What can you recall about what you wrote about how French cooperation worked?

REA: The first thing that struck me was the size and complexity of the French program. In volume of assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa, France was the Number One bilateral donor -- $1.5 billion of ODA in the year I was writing, 1980. I wrote the airgram as a guide for development people like myself who had been asked to work with the French more closely, but who found they knew next to nothing about the purpose and instruments, with all the acronyms, of the French aid program: who did what, and why, and how much -- that sort of thing.

There were two other interesting characteristics of the program. First, its centerpiece was technical assistance. France had 11,600 “cooperants” in Tropical Africa at the time. About three-quarters of them were teachers. According to OECD, France was, not surprisingly, the leading bilateral donor in aid to education, accounting for over half of all education aid by the DAC countries combined. Most of these “cooperant” teachers were posted in secondary schools or secondary-level institutions. Along with the cooperant program went a very large French investment in training, on the level of well over 5,000 scholarships and training grants each year, for courses both in France and Africa, of both long and short term duration.

The second characteristic which interested me about French aid was its emphasis on research. About two-thirds of all the research assistance given by the EEC in these years was French. And the agencies which carried out this research were quite specialized and were state-supported. My airgram went into the broad lines of policy, but in it I also catalogued the various institutions which made up the French program, perhaps in more detail than many busy AID officers in the field wanted to read. I intended the airgram to be a reference document. I imagine it may still have some currency today as it describes the basic agencies and institutions of French aid, although I’m sure the program has gone through many changes over the past 15 years.

Q: Maybe we can even use the airgram as an attachment if it is not too much.

REA: That will be fine, if the scanner will work on the copy I have, which is a bit faded.

Q: That is very important history.

REA: Yes, given the sheer size of the French program, if for no other reason. Of course, French aid was concentrated pretty much on the former French colonies, and most particularly on five countries: Senegal, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Gabon, and Madagascar. Also, the nature of the program was quite different from ours. In the way it was organized, under the watchful eye of the Presidency (the Elysée), France’s aid program was a model of close articulation between foreign policy, trade policy, economic assistance, and internal economic policy, all set within the workings of the franc zone. Still, French assistance had a very human face and this was the cooperant, mostly teachers, as I’ve said.

Q: Were the cooperants also just people, staffing?

REA: Yes, the other quarter of the 11,600 cooperants then serving in Sub-Saharan Africa were the so-called "technicians." About 1500 of these were in health services, and the balance, some 2000, were in miscellaneous fields like administration, utilities, agriculture, and industry.

Q: In positions in government?

REA: Yes, very often. Perhaps the ones we most think of in this regard were those in administration. They were often very influential – legal, economic, and cultural counselors in presidential and ministerial offices, magistrates, internal security and military advisors, and communications people. No wonder it was said that the French technical assistance program represented the "transmission belt" of French policy in Africa. But that's a bit of an overstatement, since they were concentrated in the five countries I've mentioned. Also, compared with 1960, the proportions were reversed. Twenty years before, at the time of Independence, the "technicians" were three-quarters of the total number of cooperants and held positions in the government, and only one quarter in 1960 were teachers. So the French program had changed with the times.

Q: Well, it would be interesting to see what you wrote at that time. So, you didn't stay working in Paris very long. How did you find working in Paris compared to the SDP in Washington?

REA: My four years helping the Sahel Program to get up and running had been very intense. Sadly, my wife and I separated towards the end of that period. The Paris assignment was just what I needed to regain a larger perspective and take a few deep breaths. Our Paris Embassy was second to Bonn at that time as the largest U.S. embassy anywhere in the world. All the U.S. agencies were represented, and we were proud to be led by a distinguished career diplomat, Arthur Hartman, who went from Paris to become our ambassador to the Soviet Union. I found a ground floor apartment on the Seine across from the Eiffel Tower and I could walk to work every morning. Life was so good in that sort of way that within only a few months I realized I would be lost to development if I did not get out at the first good opportunity. I did not have long to wait.

Q: Did you have any other functions other than doing this study, so to speak?

REA: You bet! In fact, the study took the least official time -- it was the product of late nights and weekends -- even though reporting was supposed to be the main result of all I did. As the AID man in the Embassy, I spent a great deal of time, as you can imagine, supporting visitors, briefing them, setting up meetings and accompanying them. Fortunately, I had a crackerjack secretary, Jacquie L'Huillier, who had worked for years in the Embassy and performed the routine jobs with great zest. She was known to all our regular visitors. I also got involved in several projects, such as a remote sensing center in Ouagadougou, and in various activities, like supplying Rwanda during a war with Uganda. But I did not have any responsibility for these activities other than "coordinating," and I soon discovered that that kind of work, without any responsibility for programs, is profoundly unsatisfying in the long run. The good thing was that by means of all these meetings I got to see the French system in action, and this provided much of the insight I needed to write my final report, the airgram.

Q: Were you working on Club du Sahel matters?

REA: No, Art Fell was managing all of our interests at the Club. I always needed to know what the Club was doing to factor that into the larger picture of Franco-American coordination. Both France and the U.S. were members of the Club. But from my position I was interested in what the French themselves were doing, not only in the Sahel but in other places in Africa, as well, in order to orient others to the total French program. Still, the Sahel region was where the U.S. and France were doing the most together. I came to believe that in an age of shrinking budgets for personnel, if I were running AID, the position I occupied in the Embassy would be hard to justify. It made me feel uneasy to be in that kind of slot.

Q: Right. Were there any particular cooperative programs with the U.S. that you were working on?

REA: Yes, the "Giscard Initiative" which I've mentioned was the most important. It had a formal title, something like CADA, Concerted Action for Development in Africa. I was involved in the first two rounds of talks which involved senior people from AID/W and the other capitals. The meetings took place, as I recall, in the building which had served as the secret meeting place for U.S. negotiations with the North Vietnamese five or six years before. It was a grand old building on a tree-lined avenue in the area of the Arc de Triomphe. But I don't know what became of the CADA initiative, since I left Paris just at the time it began to gather some steam. The fact that Norm Schoonover, our most experienced French-speaking Mission Director, replaced me at the Embassy was taken by the French as a sign, I think, that the U.S. was taking Giscard's idea seriously. You were involved in one or both of these initial meetings. Whatever became of CADA?

Q: It petered out, but it got some things started. It is another story.

REA: It had the potential of being the most significant thing I was involved with in Paris.

Q: But you don't know much about it.

REA: No. I helped to get the six partners in the same room and they looked at possibilities for joint funding some projects, but after a couple of meetings Norm Schoonover took over. He arrived and I departed in January 1980.

Q: That's right. Well then of two years in Paris you had a year and a quarter, so what happened then?

Serves as Program Officer in USAID/Senegal – 1980-1984

REA: Seven or eight months after I got to Paris in September 1978, Dave Shear was named the next USAID Director in Senegal. He was to begin there in November, 1979. Sometime in late Spring 1980 Dave asked me to consider joining him in Dakar as his Program Officer. Even by then I had already decided that I needed to get back to the field, and I jumped at the chance. Professionally, I was eager to apply some of the concepts we had developed under the Sahel Development Program. I also considered Senegal as my African home, ever since my experience there in 1961 and several visits back during my work with the SDP. Most of all, Dave and I worked together in a very creative way, and I knew no one with his degree of energy and vision.

Q: When did you move there?

REA I arrived in Dakar on January 10, 1980 to replace Gene Chiavarolli, one of the Africa Bureau's most outstanding field officers, then and later. Although Gene had moved on, I had been fortunate to travel to Dakar from Paris for a few days the previous October to talk with him, so we had some face-to-face continuity.

Q: Well, what was the situation in Senegal at that time?

REA: For a number of reasons, the U.S. looked on Senegal then as a key African ally. This had to do principally, I think, with Prime Minister -- later, after 1981, President -- Abdou Diouf's influence in the U.N. and with the relatively democratic way in which he managed the government. But we all recognized that Senegal was in rough shape economically. The country required both short and long term assistance, far more than we could provide alone on a bilateral basis.

Senegal was the Sahel in microcosm, except that it had direct access to the sea. In the short-term, Senegal's balance of payments was in dangerous imbalance. As I recall, the debt service payments as a percentage of export earnings had grown from 5% to nearly 25% in the four previous years alone. The Government of Senegal (GOS) had been locked in discussions with the IMF, the World Bank, and France during 1979 to come up with a rescue plan. Behind this budget crisis, of course, was a long-term productivity problem which grew out of a stagnating rural economy. So the rescue plan had to correct the budget imbalance as soon as possible, but at the same time it had to identify means of expanding agricultural production. These were the very questions we had dealt with in framing the Sahel Development Plan for the region as a whole. For this reason, Dave was up to speed on the day he arrived.

Q: What happened?

REA: As an outcome of the consultations with the Bank, the Fund, and the French, Prime Minister Diouf presented to his National Assembly his Reform Plan, the Plan de Redressement. He had done this only two or three weeks before I arrived. The Plan laid out in a general way a two-step approach to stabilize and then stimulate the economy. Naturally, donor support would be crucial to the success of the Plan. Dave agreed wholeheartedly with the approach. We enthusiastically adopted the Plan as our platform for working with the GOS and with the other donors, with the aim of getting Senegal's economy moving decisively.

Shortly after he had arrived, with Ambassador Hank Cohen's endorsement Dave made a proposal to Senegal's Minister of Plan and Cooperation. This was that the U.S. and Senegal carry out a joint assessment of the AID program as it had developed in the period since the drought, 1974-1979. The Minister agreed. Dave further proposed, and the Minister accepted, that we follow the assessment with a revision of AID's program plan for the period 1983-1987. This revision would incorporate the lessons to come out of the assessment. It would also make sure that our future program worked in close support of the new Plan de Redressement.

The GOS accepted the proposal. The joint assessment would last six months and would consist of three parts: first, an evaluation of four major AID projects, selected to represent the four categories of work in which our program was engaged (rain fed crops, irrigated agriculture, livestock, and village health); second, a beneficiary study to be carried out by ENEA (the National School of Applied Economics), to talk with the people in the field affected by these four projects; and third, an analysis of the entire economic context, to be performed by Elliot Berg. Both sides understood that this six month review would be followed by the joint planning of AID's next five year program. The GOS also accepted Dave's proposal that both the assessment and the planning phases would be supervised by a joint management committee co-chaired by the Minister and the U.S. Ambassador.

Where I came in was, again, along the lines of what I had done in forming the Sahel Development Program, to direct this twelve month exercise under Dave's supervision and to pull the results together into a Country Development Strategy Statement (CDSS) for the next five year period. All this accomplished, we submitted our strategy to AID/W in January 1981. As you can imagine, 1980 was a most intensive year, involving the best advisors we could find plus as much of the U.S. and Senegalese community as we could bring in to critique our assistance program and to help us reshape it.

Q: How long had we been involved in Senegal before you got there? Did you remember reviewing any of the old programs?

REA: AID had operated in Senegal at a low level and in a general sort of way from 1961, the year after Independence, right through the great drought. In 1962 we had made a $2 million grant for secondary schools, although I don't know the details about that. For each year after that our program totaled $300,000 or less, for studies connected with agriculture – water resources, seed improvement, and so forth – and for self-help projects and tech support. We seem to have had a special interest in the Casamance region, the portion of Senegal lying south of The Gambia. I didn't see the traces of any old projects.

In the pre-drought era our Dakar office was responsible for the region which included Mali and Guinea, as well as The Gambia and Mauritania. Capital projects, especially roads and dams, were a priority then. But with the exception perhaps of a regional training program and the rice research conducted by WARDA, whose headquarters were in Liberia, I can't think of any significant regional project which included Senegal itself. So it was not until 1973, with the drought emergency relief effort, that AID got busy in Senegal per se in a large way. By 1975 our Dakar regional office had been converted into a regular country Mission for Senegal.

Q: So you had a major collaborative program exercise with the government. Was the Senegalese government really participating, were they part of it?

REA: Yes, they were, at all levels, as much as their time would allow. The trouble with collaboration, of course, is that it requires so much time! This time constraint applied to the Senegalese in spades, since they had every other donor at their door, along with ourselves. But at the top levels we kept the GOS up on all we were doing, what we were finding out, and what we were considering it would be best to do, and we received their input and consent. At the middle levels, we included Senegalese officials on all our evaluation teams. And at the grassroots, as I've mentioned, ENEA was interviewing "clients" to find out what these beneficiaries of our projects felt about how useful they were. This all fed into the redesign of the projects. I should add that we also made an effort to get the point of view of PVOs and Peace Corps volunteers working in the same areas as our projects.

Q: Were they coming up with any grand new ideas or proposals on this?

REA: I must say, it was very hard to tell. Remember, we were working with the GOS in the larger context of the IMF stand-by agreement and the Bank's structural adjustment program, plus whatever else the French may have been counseling. These conversations had been going on for much of 1979, before our evaluation began. As a consequence, Diouf's Reform Plan laid out some fundamental changes, such as the gradual replacement of the agriculture parastatal supply and marketing agencies – which were the prime beneficiaries of our program – with private traders and producer groups. Decentralization, a greater role for the private sector, the closer involvement of the grassroots population in planning and managing activities – these were the big ideas involved. It's questionable that much of the initiative to go in these new directions came from the GOS, or from our evaluation exercise taken by itself. Our program enthusiastically accepted these new directions and designed ways to help the GOS to adopt them. But we did add one big new idea of our own. This was an activity in family planning, which we saw as essential to stabilizing the population growth rate. And as I've said, we linked this activity to the effort to improve village health and nutrition services.

Q: How did you find working with the Senegalese?

REA: French-educated Senegalese, which include all the officials we worked with, are excellent diplomats, charming, evenly courtly, with a flair for formal meetings and elegant turns of phrase. They are accustomed to dealing with the West. More basic than manners, however, Senegalese are born traders, and they understand they must give a little to achieve their main agenda. Consequently, it was not easy to discern from their words and actions if they were convinced by our findings or only saying what they knew we wanted to hear. There was also the "10 percent" factor, where some individuals were interested in their own gain. But dealing with the Senegalese was very pleasant and our work there had at least the illusion of progress. Perhaps some of that was real. Time will tell.

Q: Did you get anything done?

REA: In the short term, at least, yes. In the review and redesign of our program, I think we met each other half way. The GOS got what they needed most urgently, namely, help with their budget crisis, and we got their consent to try some new approaches, particularly in agriculture and health. The long term is another matter. I don't hear encouraging words from the folks that know Senegal well today. But our joint lack of success in achieving the results we expected to see by now may stem less from the GOS's lack of political will (although that was certainly a factor) than from Senegal's social inertia – 70% illiteracy, 45 year life expectancy, and so on. In fact, we declared in our Strategy that we saw the sorry state of the population to be the number one obstacle to reform.

Q: What difference did this planning exercise make?

REA: Maybe the best way to answer that is to contrast the program we designed and began to implement with the program we inherited from the 1974-1979 period. There were four major differences, I think. First, non-project assistance (NPA) played a greater role in our new program. This form of assistance financed necessary imports and helped to ease the balance of payments crisis The NPA program also generated local currencies which we used for projects, as well as for paying the local costs of policy studies. These studies, in turn, provided us with good material for our so-called policy dialogue with the government. In our FY 1982 budget for Senegal, reflecting the old program, NPA accounted for about $17 million of the $35 million total. By FY 1984, NPA was up to $32 million of the total $54 million.

A second way in which our program changed after the evaluations was to place much greater emphasis on building up local producer groups and off-farm private sector entrepreneurs. The big increase in local currencies from our larger NPA program helped with this. Third, and I've talked about this, we stressed collaboration with other donors based on the IMF/World Bank program which had not been available in the past. Beginning with the donors conference at the Bank's headquarters in Paris in October 1981, we had one or two donor get-togethers each year. I remember best the meeting in April 1983, held in Dakar with Club/CILSS support, at which we donors went over with the Government of Senegal the entire agriculture sector reform plan.

Fourth and finally, following the evaluation we did our best to consolidate all our efforts from six areas of the country into three, those with the best prospects for agriculture production. This clustering represented more than just an administrative decision in favor of greater efficiency. It was really a determination to do what we could to maximize yields, and as such it was a reversal of the humanitarian relief policy which we had adopted after the drought. Earlier we had gone after the hardest case areas, like Bakel, in the far east of the country on the border with Mali.

Q: Why did you take on the hardest cases?

REA: This was part of the disaster mentality which ruled in the early to mid-Seventies in the Sahel. We were afraid that the rains could fail again in any year. The people in these remote areas were the most vulnerable, and reaching them with food was the most arduous and expensive. For these reasons, the extreme cases got the most attention. When our emergency frame of mind relaxed a bit, the natural next step was to build on the relief programs in the places with which we were by then familiar. As a result, to stay with the Bakel example, project design teams sent out from Washington in 1975 designed in Bakel an irrigated perimeter project, a range management/livestock project, and even that experimental solar power facility I mentioned a while ago. I recall from my position on the SDP team in AID/W that when Norm Schoonover arrived as Director in Dakar in 1975 he cautioned strongly against this scale of effort in such a remote outpost. But by then the projects had already been approved. Norm had recommended that we take the most promising areas and build on them. This is the approach we finally adopted in 1980.

Q: This is the philosophy of the poorest of the poor versus the poor majority conflict in AID. That experience?

REA: At least a variant of that, yes. After 1980 in Bakel we got out of the solar energy project when an evaluation exposed it as a white elephant. We also wound down the range management/livestock program which proved to be too difficult to administer properly at that distance. We moved the irrigation project out of our bilateral program and into the Senegal River Basin (OMVS) office. This office, which came to be led by Vito Stagliano, was located in the same building in Dakar as our bilateral mission but was answerable to a council composed of the three Mission Directors for Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal.

Q: Did the perimeter approach work?

REA: We were able to increase yields significantly but the effects were quite localized. Also, we always had to question whether the cost of better pumps, for example, would be covered by the value of the higher yields. The perimeter approach contrasted with the plans for year-round farming which the large-scale development of the Senegal Valley would permit. This approach required that two large dams be built, one at Manantali in the east and the second at Diama at the mouth of the river at Saint-Louis. That great scheme was the concern of our OMVS office and was, as you say, another story.

Q: What were some of the other programs?

REA: To answer that, let me back up a minute and set the context. Our goal – food self-sufficiency – was the same goal as we had set for the Sahel Development Program as a whole. We believed that this goal demanded a two track approach. It meant, first, a concentration on increasing agricultural production in ways which favored the maximum participation of the population, with care given to soil regeneration and fuelwood concerns. Second, this goal called for an important effort to improve the health and to upgrade the skills of the population, the producers themselves. This second track included setting in place a means for reducing the rate of population increase. By reducing the number of zones in which we worked, our expectation was that the two tracks would work together with the same beneficiary groups and reinforce each other.

The Senegal program doubled in size in the time I was there and became one of the largest AID country programs in Africa. As Director, Dave Shear was nothing if not resourceful, and the Senegal program famously came to incorporate the entire inventory of AID's funding spigots available at the time. We even helped open some new ones. For example, we launched the first PL-480 Title III program in Africa. Under this arrangement, Senegal accepted a loan for the purchase of U.S. food and we agreed to forgive the loan to the extent that Senegal took the local currencies which resulted from the sale of the food and then used them to support development projects which we and the GOS agreed on together. Also for the first time in Africa we married a Commodity Import Program (CIP) to an agriculture sector grant. The CIP generated the local currencies needed to pay in-country costs of the activities which the dollar grant initiated.

A further example of innovation, not of spigots but of programs: we designed the first Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) sector grant to be approved by the Africa Bureau. Our object was to train entrepreneurs and organize farmer groups at local levels, and thereby support the policy to decentralize the agriculture sector. A final example of program innovation would be our introduction into the Sahel area of family planning and nutrition programs linked to village health.

I remember thinking at the time that our Agency did not have a single fund or type of program available to Africa which we did not make use of – and this included, of course, the panoply of central programs administered by the (then) Science and Technology Bureau. There may have been one or two we missed, but our programming was certainly "creative" in this regard.

Now to come closer to your question about our other programs. Beginning with the agriculture track, I have to reiterate that we tried to support the Reform Plan as well as we could. The IMF/World Bank adjustment program called for four essential rural reforms: in agriculture extension practices, in the way farmers were supplied with fertilizers and seeds, in the old, state-run "cooperatives" by replacing many of their functions with farmer organizations, and in the way credit was provided to rural producers. All four reforms were intended to work together in the same direction, towards the progressive decontrol and commercialization of rural production. The results of our evaluation, not surprisingly, corroborated the wisdom of this shift in policy. So we modified our projects and designed new ones to support the Reform Plan along these lines.

Of the program we inherited, the most important part was our support to Senegal's three largest Rural Development Agencies (RDAs) – SAED in the Senegal River Basin, SODEVA in the Peanut Basin, and SOMIVAC in the Casamance. Because AID was a major supporter of the RDAs, we found ourselves in the thick of the reform. As I said before, these three RDAs in the mid-Seventies represented the best means available of increasing production quickly. But now it was time to transform them, if possible, from organizations which controlled inputs and set conditions, to what might be called enabling or extension agencies, pure and simple.

So we designed ways to activate farmers groups in these three geographic areas, while attempting to streamline the three RDAs to become effective extension agencies in support of these farmers groups. At the same time, we also sought to build up the agriculture research agency, ISRA, to introduce more effective farm practices, with an emphasis on farming systems research. We designed ways to improve soil and water management using, for example, agro-forestry techniques. In addition, we worked to increase Senegal's cultivated land area, especially in the Senegal Valley, as I've mentioned, but above all in the Casamance, where water was also relatively plentiful.

Unfortunately, the major project we mounted there – the Casamance Integrated Development Project – under the able direction of U.S. project managers resident in the Casamance, Charley Steedman and then Bob McAllister, became a classic example of the inherent weakness of the integrated project approach. The many facets of the project, which all had to be coordinated to achieve the desired effect, overwhelmed the limited host-country management capacity. I must say, it also taxed greatly our own ability to provide inputs on time, as needed.

Q: Were there some aspects of the integrated project approach that you recall that worked?

REA: Yes, quite a few. In the Casamance, for example, our project helped establish links between the rice research station at Djibelor and WARDA's principal station in Monrovia. The project's introduction of research packages and water control measures raised rice and corn yields dramatically. In the Senegal Basin, our integrated project with the OMVS regional commission introduced incentives for private firms and operators to replace SAED in providing services like pump repair and in processing produce from some of the irrigated perimeters.

But even after listing these and other successes, we must recognize that our integrated projects were aiming much higher. We were really attempting through these many-sided projects to cultivate among the Senegalese a comprehensive way of looking at the potential of a given region and to help them arrive at a long-term plan for bringing the potential to fruition. This expectation certainly was not met, even though certain elements worked pretty well. But given how difficult it is for us ourselves to come up with a plan for the Greater Washington, DC area, maybe the thinking behind our integrated projects was, shall we say, futuristic.

Q: You mentioned a PVO project. How did that work? What was the motivation behind that?

REA: Well, as I've said, we were trying to come up with a way to shift away from the support we had been giving since 1975 to the parastatal organizations and the centralized state system of agriculture production which they represented. The GOS Reform Plan sought, among other things, to encourage the building up of local producer groups and private sector service providers to replace the RDAs, except in their function as extension agencies. In this vein, our PVO Community and Enterprise project was directed at developing village level producer groups in the Sine-Saloum area. Here, underground water reserves were satisfactory and so farm production was more promising than elsewhere in the Peanut Basin.

The project aimed at enabling Senegalese private voluntary organizations, freestanding from the government, not only to assist with the training and equipping of these local farmer groups, but also to help the growth of small off-farm artisan enterprises to service these groups. As I've said, we planned to use local currencies generated by the Ag Decentralization and Credit project to cover the local costs of the PVO project. Another part of the Credit project was, at the same time, to strengthen the CNCA, Senegal's new private credit institution. In these ways the two projects, one for PVOs, the other for credit, worked together.

We sent the PVO project plan to AID/W for approval in January 1983. Washington took some time to review this new concept. And in the meantime, the GOS, which initially had accepted the plan in principle, began to have second thoughts when it became generally understood that several million dollars in aid money was designated for private groups outside government control. At that time AID funding for local PVOs, as contrasted with funding for international PVOs working locally, was a new concept both in AID/W and in the field. Today it is practiced widely.

Q: You mentioned the Sine-Saloum. Was this the time of the Sine-Saloum Health project?

REA: Yes. This was the centerpiece, really, of the second track I mentioned a few minutes ago. While working to introduce ways to increase agriculture production, we were also attempting to improve the health and skills of the producers themselves and their families. We laid out our health and training strategies in a formal submission to AID/W. This was the January 1982 supplement to the main CDSS strategy which we had submitted a year earlier.

Our conviction was that it made no sense to talk about increasing farm production if we were not prepared to help deal with the widespread debilitation of the producers themselves, from infectious and diarrheal disease and malaria and malnutrition. We could demonstrate that illness peaked in the rainy season just prior to the annual harvests, thus weakening the labor force at a critical time. Caloric intake was only 50% of adequate levels during the pre-harvest period.

Also relating to our goal of increasing per capita food production, we saw that population growth rates unless diminished would double Senegal's population to 11,000,000 by about 2005. This increase threatened to nullify any gains in productivity which could be made. To make matters worse, the urbanization rate in Senegal was particularly high. Our forecast was that at rates current then, 40% of Senegal's population would be living in the Dakar-Thies region by 2005. This would have the double whammy effect of further increasing the imports of foods like rice, which were favored by city-dwellers but were not widely grown in Senegal itself. At the same time, urbanization would reduce the rural labor force available to food production.

So what we proposed to do was to take about 6% of our program budget, not including PL 480 programs, and create prototype health activities which would address these problems at a cost which the GOS could support after we withdrew. The most important of these health activities was the Sine-Saloum health care program.

Mike White, who I mentioned was the advisor to the CILSS in introducing the village health approach to the Sahel program, came over from Ouagadougou to take charge of our health/pop portfolio. The Sine-Saloum was his particular pet concern. Following the evaluation we did of the rural health care program which we had started in the Sine-Saloum in 1977, Mike reorganized the program to place much more emphasis on the training of village committees and rural health workers. He also championed the introduction of new elements – malaria control, nutrition surveillance and education, oral rehydration therapy (ORT), and immunization against measles, tetanus, and whooping cough. Under the revised program, we also provided U.S. health and nutrition advisers at the regional and central levels.

Regarding the population "arm" of our program, Mike recommended that we begin in urban clinics and health centers where family planning practices were apt to be more readily accepted. So we started population activities under a separate project labeled "Family Health," with the expectation that later on, under Phase II of the project, contraception devices would be distributed through pharmacies and community health workers trained under the Sine-Saloum Rural Health project at the village level.

We systematically included health activities as elements of our irrigated perimeter projects, as well. These supported surveillance and control of vector born diseases, especially schistosomiasis. Altogether, in the Sine-Saloum and elsewhere, our aim was to help the government create a self-sustaining rural health care delivery system by establishing prototype activities from which we could learn the most effective way to achieve rural health coverage.

Q: What about the education area which was one of your interests?

REA: When we got there and took a second look, we found that the formal education system had changed very little since the time of our appraisal five years before. The coverage was inadequate, the orientation was skewed away from what Nyerere had called "education for self-reliance," and the system was in need of a total overhaul. But we continued to believe that this was not about to happen.. The French had 1,000 teachers in the secondary and post-secondary levels. The World Bank avoided reform and was funding a $6 million program for the construction of primary schools. And the GOS and other French-educated elites showed no serious resolve to reform the school system. We persisted in the conviction that until they did, and until the donors most heavily involved in supporting the school system organized behind a sound, long-term reform strategy, AID's best course was to fund training programs related to increasing agriculture production and improving health practices.

We supported four categories of training: first, training through state agencies like the extension services of the RDAs; second, training through community based organizations and PVOs; third, training through national training organizations, like ENEA for rural officials, and also the school for livestock agents; and finally, training through our regional programs like the Sahel Manpower Development Program (SMDP). All of this supplemented the training we routinely provided under our bilateral and regional projects to prepare Senegalese to replace U.S. technical assistance personnel.

The kinds of training we provided in these ways differed, of course – functional literacy at the producer level, and so forth, depending on the need. Through ENEA we were keen on providing rural officers with the basic tools of management training, specifically project and financial management fundamentals. And we made an effort -- I'm not sure how successful it finally turned out to be -- to revive Senegal's rural radio programming for distance learning. But our contact with the formal school system was limited to the training of education planners at advanced degree levels, in anticipation of the day when the GOS would get serious about systemic education reform. From what I can tell, even today the GOS is still not at that point.

Q: Training was both inside and outside the country?

REA: The SMDP-funded training for about 30 Senegalese each year was done by and large in the U.S. Advanced management training, for example, took place for the most part at the University of Pittsburgh's summer francophone management course led so energetically there by Professor David Gould.

But the large majority of the training we funded was in-country, even local. Our larger goal was to build Senegal's capacity to offer better training itself. The best example of this was our program with ENEA. Under their strong and articulate Director, Cheikh Tidiane Sy, ENEA was a government school set up to train rural development officers, such as cooperative agents. We allocated local currencies to recondition ENEA's classes and offices, and we helped introduce training in project management, as I've mentioned. This included project identification, design, implementation, and evaluation techniques. Another of our efforts to build training capacity in Senegal was the grant we made to ORT International for the building and equipping of a technical school in Dakar. And I must add, and not to appear politically correct, that we very consciously emphasized the training of women in each and every one of these programs, from the SMDP down to courses, or "stages," at the most local levels in such things as revenue producing activities of all kinds and the use of fuel-efficient cookstoves.

Q: One of the recent criticisms of the Sahel program was that it didn't put enough *emphasis on institutional development (I.D.), on human resource development, and therefore the sustainability of the program by the Sahelian peoples and governments was a problem. What was your view on I.D.? Some people say it is a great thing; others pooh-pooh it. At that time creating and strengthening institutions, was that a major concern?*

REA: It was with us, most definitely. From my point of view, I cannot think of a single thing we tried to do in Senegal which was not connected with the development of a means to sustain that activity. And that meant, of course, strengthening some sort of Senegalese institution, or helping to build a new one. Of course, we may not have entirely succeeded. It was often very difficult to find Senegalese candidates who were prepared and available for training, and this was true at every level, not just with advanced training programs. But despite the difficulties, the building of institutions to carry on the reforms we helped to introduce was always in the front of our minds. As we saw it, the development of effective Senegalese institutions was just the flip side of policy reform and technology transfer.

I think our commitment to I.D. is evident from what we've been talking about until now. In our work to help decentralize the ag production system, for example, I mentioned that we used whatever leverage we had to streamline the RDAs as extension agencies. We helped to fund the private credit institution, CNCA, and put that on the map. Through a Title XII arrangement with Michigan State, we helped to restructure ISRA, the agriculture research institution, to decentralize research and introduce a farm systems perspective. We gave help to develop village level producer groups.

It was the same on the health track. There, for example, we helped in the Sine-Saloum to establish a system of village health huts and village committees to manage them. As part of our population program, we helped ASBEF become a private indigenous institution for the purpose of developing a public consensus for family planning practices.

The list of examples is a long one. When we developed a national plan for land use in Senegal, we helped at the same time through another Title XII university, South Dakota State, to create an institutional base at the University of Dakar for updating the plan. When we introduced the mud and sand, ban ak souf, cookstove for fuel efficiency, we did so under a renewable energy project administered through CERER, the applied energy institute, also connected with the University of Dakar. I could go on and on through every program we supported.

I should add that we applied this principle, especially, within our Mission. I saw as one of my most important tasks in the Program Office, for example, the on-the-job training of our very able Senegalese Program Assistants, Sedou Cisse and Massar Beye, and of Mamadou Jallow before he left for long-term training in the United States. Barbara Howard, who came in as my Deputy, and our excellent French secretary, Monique Cressot, saw things exactly the same way. From all the reports I get, Sedou and Massar are the absolute stalwarts of USAID/Senegal today, ensuring the continuity of our program through all the comings and goings of U.S. personnel.

Whether or not we succeeded in building strong and enduring institutions, however, I have my doubts for the most part. It was tough. Either the candidates for training were not available, or we trained them and they were not used, or host country funding was not provided after we withdrew, or else the institutions we worked with were politically unsuccessful and failed. Growing institutions in Senegal was a little like growing trees. The climate was harsh and the varieties not always adapted to the conditions. But I can say that we tried, from start to finish.

Q: Well, you were there implementing the Sahel Development Program. How did you see this vis à vis the French strategy and the Club and all that when you looked at it from a country point of view?

REA: Our work in building the program in Senegal was at least as all-consuming as the effort we put into creating the Sahel Development Program in the 1974-1978 period. From my stand point, the Senegal effort was even more demanding. Maybe for this reason I lost some of my objectivity, but I think by the early Eighties that the Club/CILSS framework had served its most important function. This was to open up major policy issues, and especially the sensitive ones like price policy, to public discussion and to continuing private dialogue -- which, naturally, could and should take place at the country level. Of course, the Club/CILSS deserved to continue, but from my vantage point in Senegal their principal function thereafter was to keep the flag flying which we had worked so hard to hoist, the flag of donor/beneficiary cooperation, the long view and the big picture. We really had very little to do in Dakar with the Club/CILSS system after 1980 while I was there. The important thing was that the Club/CILSS were keeping the needs of the region as a whole before the general donor public, including our Congress, and were informing the technical and scientific communities which were the source of our best advisors. In this way more than any other the Club/CILSS continued to be valuable.

Q: Otherwise you were operating quite independently of the Club. We had a Washington Sahel unit. Dave was no longer there, but we had the structure and the concept. What happened to that?

REA: The Sahel Desk was very important to us. It was our pipeline into the Africa Bureau especially, and into the Agency generally. Jim Kelly was Director for much of this time and did a fine job in getting us the resources we needed and in keeping us in the Sahel loop. Now that the general directions had been set and the country programs were in full operation, program implementation was the name of the game. Unavoidably, most of the implementation work had to be done at the country level, with whatever resources we could get. The amplitude of our resources depended on how well the Sahel Office and Club/CILSS could keep our objectives clearly before the eyes of the Agency and the Congress. In addition to this, the Sahel Office had responsibility for some large regional programs, to be sure, and some of these affected Senegal directly. But the Club/CILSS Working Group meetings subsided once they had proposed the projects and strategies to follow. The spotlight shifted to project selection, funding, and implementation. These activities took place mostly at the country level.

Q: Why didn't they work? It seems like a good coordinating mechanism.

REA: From my perspective, the Club/CILSS mechanism worked extremely well to get the ball rolling and to make sure that it continued to roll. We were ready to deal by then with the problems they had identified – storage, fuelwood, pricing, recurrent costs, and so on – but the dealing had to be done primarily in each of the eight countries. And with this many countries in the region, the Club/CILSS were not prepared to coordinate very much at that "retail" level. Only in the one big donor meeting I mentioned, the one in 1983 to review the GOS agriculture sector reform program, do I recall the Club/CILSS playing a direct role in Senegal. Let's not forget that the Club, especially, was set up to be a "light" organization with no permanent staff, perhaps only five or six officers seconded from donor organizations like ours.

Q: I see, so the action just sort of moved to a country level. First of all, it got started and the resources got mobilized and then it became a country program. But the regional concept was that the program was to have major region-wide projects with country-wide components. Is that correct?

REA: There were important region-wide projects with country components, that's correct. The river basin development commissions for the Senegal and Niger Rivers, for example, were intended to work this way. So was the weather forecasting service, Agrymet, the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS), and the pests and locust program, as well, because each of these dealt with cross-border phenomena. Our work with ICRISAT, the world-wide dry lands ag research group with headquarters in Hyderabad, India, is another case in point. ICRISAT established a sub-station in Niger for the Sahel. But even here, their genetic improvements at a regional level had to be modified to country and even local level specifications. Also, there were some instances like the SMDP training program where we within AID organized regional accounts for simplicity sake. It was more efficient for us to have a single advanced training account with eight sub-accounts, for example, than to have eight separate projects for the same kind of training.

But the heart of the matter was always increased agriculture productivity, and this meant the adoption of policies and approaches which would transform the way agriculture was carried out in specific locations. Farming methods often differed from area to area, even within countries. So the adoption of new approaches went back, inevitably, to the governments and institutions of individual countries – to decentralize and privatize and so forth. Change could only come through the member states themselves. The Sahel Program umbrella did its best work, I thought, in making respectable the open discussion of sensitive and important problems.

After this, the Club/CILSS continued to make possible common approaches to common problems. I understand that in the early Nineties, for example, the mechanism was very helpful in securing a Food Aid Charter protocol among donors, which resulted in a significant reduction of the amount of food aid required in the region. The Club/CILSS served, too, as a transmission belt for sharing between countries new and better ways of doing things. So, yes, the regional approach continued to be useful even after the most important action moved to the country level.

Q: Well, anything else, you were there what, four years?

REA: Yes, four and a half years, from January 1980 to July 1984. Dave had arrived as Director two months before I joined the Mission, and left about six months earlier than I. This means that including the time we had spent in Washington, Dave and I worked closely together for a total of eight years. That may be something of a record for collaboration in AID's foreign service. I consider myself remarkably fortunate.

Q: How did you find program work?

REA: Generally speaking, I felt more at home in the program office than I did wearing my education/training hat. What most appealed to me about program work was the view it allowed of the whole picture in a country, and the opportunity it gave to do strategic planning. My academic preparation, after all, had been in history and politics and in African area studies. I had no professional degrees or formal training in education. It's just that from the start, even as an undergraduate, I came to see education as the most important single key to development, especially in Africa, and so I partly gravitated in that direction.

As for prior program experience by this time, I had had an excellent dose of program work in setting up the Botswana program and in framing the Sahel Development Program, as well as in my liaison capacity in Paris. And even in the four years of education work I had done with AID - two years in Tanzania and two years on the SDP team after it was created in Washington - I was seen as an "education program officer," a hybrid animal. Remember, too, that my starting point before I came to AID had been "the politics of education," a hybrid topic.

In any case, my next position after Senegal was pure program work – in fact, a program officer's dream assignment. From the time I joined AID, this was the only job which I ever wrote a letter and applied for.

Q: Well, you finished up in Senegal when?

Directs the formation of USAID/Madagascar – 1984-1988

REA: I left Dakar on June 30, 1984. About a year before this, when I began to think about what to do next, I had had a hunch that AID might be getting ready to open a new program on Madagascar, "the Great Red Island" in the Indian Ocean. In December 1983, I took the unusual step for me of writing the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa at the time, Ray Love, to apply for a job – but it was a job that did not yet exist: to "help put together an expanded program in Madagascar," as I think I put it. Ray forwarded my request to John Koehring, the REDSO Director in East Africa, who had responsibility for

Madagascar as part of the regional program there.

Though I did not know it at the time, John had just taken as his Deputy Art Fell, who must have put in a good word for me based on our collaboration in Paris. John and Art had, in fact, been tasked with starting new activities in Madagascar and were looking for an officer who would be permanently stationed in the capital, Antananarivo (Antan, for short). The leading candidate for the job, REDSO's chief Program Officer, Jim Graham, declined the offer. Jim was the natural choice because he had directed the preparatory work and exploratory study required before a resident officer could be assigned there. So in the Spring of 1984, John invited me to fill the new position of REDSO's "Program Officer for Madagascar," resident in Antan and responsible to John himself as REDSO Director. I was to be the first representative of AID resident in Madagascar since our previous bilateral mission had closed there in 1972.

To repeat, I saw this as the dream assignment. Responsibility for developing a Madagascar program from nearly scratch as the "AID man in Antan" gave me a great sense of challenge and adventure. It also provided me with the best support group I could possibly have asked for – the multidisciplinary REDSO team in Nairobi led by John, Art, and Jim and, at a second echelon, the Science and Technology Bureau in AID/W. My assignment to begin with was two-fold: First, I was to direct a program of short-term help and exploration; and second, concurrent with that, I was to prepare a program of long-term assistance which AID could implement at such time as the U.S. was convinced that the Government of Madagascar (the GDRM) was truly committed to policies of economic liberalization and reform. If this were to happen, AID would then be prepared to move ahead quickly with long-term development assistance at higher funding levels.

Q: What was the situation when you got there?

REA: Madagascar's situation was dismal. AID/W, then REDSO, briefed me on the Malagasy economy on my way out to Antan. As I read and heard about it, the situation appeared similar to the one we had faced in Senegal four years before. An economic emergency marked by the hemorrhaging of foreign exchange, an avalanche of debt, and a crisis of credit-worthiness had forced the government to negotiate a stand-by agreement with the IMF and a structural adjustment program with the World Bank. The other strong similarity with Senegal was that France was an important player here, as well. Madagascar was, in fact, France's second largest recipient of foreign aid after Senegal. So the main features of the situation appeared very familiar.

What I found puzzling at first – and a source of frustration later – was the lack of an apparent cause for such dire circumstances. Years of drought preceded our rescue effort in Senegal and the Sahel, but the reasons for Madagascar's crisis did not lie on the surface. The island was just as poor in terms of GNP/capita as Sahelian countries. Yet with the exception of the extreme south it was well-watered. Education statistics for Madagascar were much better than for the Senegalese. Remember, too, that Madagascar is very sizeable, the fourth largest island on earth (after Greenland, Borneo, and New Guinea), with an area larger than France, with good harbors, ample natural resources, and a long history of exposure to the West. At first, all this just didn't seem to jibe with the situation I saw when I arrived.

My initial impression of the country is still vivid. I had caught an early morning flight from Nairobi after my REDSO briefing. We crossed the Mozambique Channel an hour after dawn. I recall my astonishment as I looked out the plane window on the land between the coast and Antan and I remember thinking to myself: "What is this – the surface of the moon?" On the ground during my first few days I was shocked by the clusters of beggars, most of them children, clamoring for hand-outs in the streets. Clearly, the national situation called for vigorous action.

By contrast, my work situation was very positive. The Embassy, led at the time by Ambassador Robert Keating and his admirable DCM, Dave Rawson, who were my day-to-day supervisors, had set aside two rooms on the ground floor for our AID offices. REDSO had recruited a Malagasy business woman, Agnes Rakotomalala, as my Administrative Assistant – a brilliant choice – and she was already at work. REDSO had also lined up a house which was soon ready for me and my new bride, AID education officer Julie Owen, to move in. And there were a great deal of introductions to be made in the GDRM and the donor community.

The program situation when I arrived reflected REDSO's careful preparation. Beginning the summer before, Jim Graham, Stu Callison (the REDSO economist), and many others had visited the island and put together a "preliminary" CDSS strategy, finally dated May 1984. This included a thick annex with the information they had collected on Madagascar's society, economy, agriculture and transport sectors. It was a good tentative plan for what should be done in the near term, until we could learn more. It highlighted the right areas and pointed in the right directions. REDSO's 1984 plan was the groundwork for the foundation we were to build over the next four years, before my departure in the summer of 1988. AID's current program in Madagascar today has been built squarely on that foundation.

Q: You said we had a Mission in Madagascar in 1972, what happened?

REA: A violent uprising that year overthrew the government which had ruled Madagascar since Independence in 1960. The outgoing government had been virtually a continuation of French colonialism under ruling local elites. The gulf between haves and have-nots had widened until the social situation had become intolerable. The 1972 uprising began the socialist revolution which Didier Ratsiraka consolidated when he became President in 1975.

Initially, AID had supervised activities in Madagascar from Nairobi. Then in 1966 a Mission was established at Antan. Since an American presence was not welcome after the 1972 riots, we closed the Mission. But despite some 20 years of active interest there before 1981, AID had not been a key player in Madagascar. Our total assistance between 1962 and 1978 amounted to only $20 million. Half of this had been devoted to a Food for Peace PL 480 Title II program, managed locally by Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

When program management moved back to Nairobi in 1972, AID stopped making grants but continued humanitarian assistance through CRS. Our multi-year loans for capital projects in railways and telecommunications also continued but they were supervised from Nairobi by REDSO personnel on short visits to the island.

The loans were not renewed, however, when Ratsiraka in 1977 embarked on an all-out public investment program. The GDRM decided to take out high-cost foreign loans to pay for non-productive capital projects. The government did so just at the time when the world terms of trade were turning against Malagasy exports. Because this course of action seemed doomed to failure, the U.S. cut off all aid at that point, save always for the CRS food aid. Other Western donors did likewise. The Socialist countries saw an opportunity and moved in. But soon, by 1980, Madagascar was flat broke. President Ratsiraka was obliged to change policies abruptly and to come to terms with the IMF/World Bank.

Naturally, before reopening a development assistance program in Madagascar we wanted to make reasonably sure (a) that the GDRM meant what it said about economic reform and (b) that the GDRM was ready and able to bear the political costs of economic reform. If the answer to both questions turned out to be positive, we wanted to be in a position at that point to move quickly to implement a sound, long-term development program.

Q: What did you do?

REA: Washington had been alarmed by the anti-Western stance of the Ratsiraka government. Our concern had particularly to do with Madagascar's strategic location on the major shipping lane through the Mozambique Channel. So as soon as Ratsiraka declared that he was willing to deal again with the West and consider economic reform, we had a strong incentive to offer renewed short-term help. We provided this help in 1981 in the form of a $5 million PL 480 Title I program. The commodity was rice, which became the centerpiece of our program throughout the entire decade to follow.

Why rice? Rice is the staple food of the Malagasy, who were said at the time to consume more rice per capita than any people on earth.—three heaping platefuls apiece, when it could be had, morning, noon, and night. Madagascar up until the revolution had exported a very high quality rice, but for a number of policy reasons found itself by the end of the Seventies a net importer. In 1980, with their foreign exchange reserves very low, the GDRM welcomed the Title I program. We repeated the program again in 1982 at the same level, and in 1983 increased the program to $8 million, including this time some vegetable oil which had by then become a nutritional necessity. When I arrived in 1984, REDSO was negotiating a repeat of the 1983 program. All four of these Title I programs involved the allocation of counterpart funds to specified local capital development activities.

REDSO saw the supervision of the Title I counterpart program as one of my main tasks. This involved the selection with the GDRM of worthwhile local projects and the monitoring of their progress. At the same time, as I've said, REDSO wanted to design a program to position us so that, if the GDRM demonstrated its commitment to new reform policies, we would be able to step in quickly with appropriate long-term development support. My overall assignment was to establish a presence for AID in the country and, in day-to-day touch with the GDRM, with the other donors and private groups, to guide the evolution of a multi-year AID Program.

Q: How did the program evolve, in what directions? Where did you come out?

REA: As we had in Senegal in a similar economic emergency, the U.S. supported the IMF/World Bank policy reform package. But, as I've said, unlike our Senegal program, the U.S. was not yet ready in Madagascar in 1984 to commit fully to a sustained, long-term effort. REDSO and the Embassy saw our immediate objectives in Madagascar in different but complementary ways. In the Embassy's view, the AID program should demonstrate visible and timely support of the GDRM's opening to the West and to market reform. AID's preoccupation at first was with Basic Human Needs and with responding to urgent economic requirements.

Within these parameters, REDSO's preliminary CDSS of 1984 focused our assistance on the agriculture sector -- where 85% of Malagasy were employed and where private, small-holder production prevailed. REDSO's plan was to continue our balance of payments support under PL 480 Title I. We would use the counterpart funds to pay local costs to rehabilitate feeder roads and dikes, which were vital to production and which were in deplorable shape. The preliminary CDSS also directed us within the agriculture sector to pay special attention to rice production, for the reasons I've given. Included in this was financing for the first resident team in the sub-Saharan region from IRRI – the International Rice Research Institute, headquartered in the Philippines. Added to agriculture, the 1984 CDSS also included a note of concern over the absence of any family planning program in a country whose population growth was far outstripping economic growth.

That is where my four year tour began. On paper my reporting responsibilities looked a great deal the same as they did when I worked in Botswana to open that program some twelve years before. My AID supervisor was located in another country while my Ambassador was, almost literally, in the next office. But the ambassadorial personalities and backgrounds were very different. In Gaborone, Ambassador Nelson had been a former AID Director who instinctively viewed diplomacy through the lense of economic development. By contrast, Ambassador Keating, who remained at the Embassy's helm for my first two years or so, was an Annapolis graduate and political appointee with some relevant World Bank experience. His most important moments, as he saw it, were his private discussions with President Ratsiraka (another former naval officer) about the global big-picture.

Whenever Ambassador Keating thought about the AID program, his principal interest was that it should be highly visible. He wanted to demonstrate with headlines and in pictures the concern of the American people for the distress of the Malagasy. He repeated to me often that what he wanted was a "Rapid Rea Ready Reaction" program, specially keyed to food imports, hurricane disaster aid (which was required after the cyclones each Spring), and to ribbon-cutting and flag-planting activities. An example was the Bailey bridge which the Ambassador insisted that AID should finance to replace a washed out structure in the Namakia area of NW Madagascar. After much hassle, the bridge was ceremonially opened just after I got to post.

I have little doubt that if it had not been for the stout presence of REDSO, which had the responsibility for aid to Madagascar, and for the quasi-autonomy of AID itself, that our work on the island might have amounted to a well-publicized relief and rehabilitation program. We would probably not have tackled the root problems of low agricultural production, environmental degradation, and surging population growth. I think of that keenly today when I see evidence of our Agency slipping closer to absorption into the State Department and to becoming the main manager of Presidential Initiatives in developing countries.

But as it was, I think we laid the foundations in 1984-88 for a balanced, effective long-term development program. I'll try to outline what it looked like without too much detail. Madagascar was a stand-alone program, after all, unlike what we did in Senegal under the Sahel Development Program. Senegal was part of a larger scheme of things and therefore, perhaps, of greater interest. Also, regrettably, our Madagascar program has suffered from subsequent political paralysis on the island, most acutely in 1991. The GDRM's political gridlock has partially prevented the program, at least so far, from becoming as effective as it might have been. Nevertheless, the Madagascar program is worth attention because it became something of a model for what our Africa Bureau as a whole was attempting to do at the time.

Stated briefly, the increased production of higher quality rice became our main focus, with two supporting program elements: family planning and, almost entirely missing from the initial 1984 plan, conservation of Madagascar's unique bio-diversity. These three elements fit together well and were, in the longer term, interdependent.

Our initial approach in 1984 was to learn as much as we could about agriculture on the island. This approach was embodied in the Madagascar Agriculture Rehabilitation and Support (MARS) project, signed in 1985 and amended in 1987. Deliberately designed as a "smorgasbord" program, MARS provided a total of $7.5 million for training, technical assistance, and policy studies in virtually all areas of the agriculture sector, and it also helped with the import of critical commodities. MARS was designed to give us broad knowledge of the agriculture sector, so that later we could select the portion most conducive to long-term concentration. But rice production quickly emerged as the area in which AID could have the greatest long-term effect. We saw very soon that we could be useful there in two principal ways.

Our intervention through IRRI was designed to make a vital contribution: to improve the varieties of rice and the technical packages available to Malagasy farmers. Over the years since Independence, Madagascar had prohibited the import of the improved rice varieties developed at IRRI and elsewhere which had figured so prominently in Asia's Green

Revolution. Our IRRI activity was implemented by means of a two man team resident in Madagascar, backed up by training and expertise at IRRI headquarters. In close collaboration with their Malagasy counterparts, IRRI aimed at carrying out a classic sequence of activities: to select from the world seed bank those rice varieties with characteristics most germane to conditions in Madagascar, to import these varieties, cross them with local varieties to make them more hardy, test them on station and in farmers' fields, then to make them available for wide distribution to farmers together with the most appropriate fertilizers, also as tested. At the same time, of course, IRRI would be making a concerted effort to prepare Malagasy research and technical staff and institutions to take entire responsibility for the rice program when IRRI departed. To accomplish all this in a reasonable span of time -- a decade or so -- given all the resistence built into the Malagasy research and production system, was a stiff challenge.

But our second contribution to rice production, an essential one, was even more ambitious. Looming over the failure of the rice sector in the years since 1972 was the policy question -- the set of policies by which the GDRM under Ratsiraka had kept careful control over the price of rice in urban markets, thereby creating price disincentives to Madagascar's rice producers. A further effect of these market controls was to encourage rice traders on the island to hold their stocks in an attempt to force up consumer prices.

The World Bank's VP for African operations, Kim Jaycox, came to Antan shortly after I arrived. His prime mission was to reach agreement with President Ratsiraka on a way to free up the market price of rice. The stakes were high on both sides. The Bank and the rest of the donor community realized that market liberalization reforms, essential to increasing agriculture production, would go nowhere if rice, the key staple, was left out of the program. The President saw just as clearly that to remove price controls on rice without absolute assurance that adequate rice stocks would be available in the event of a poor harvest could result in a rocketing of rice prices, public outrage, and the end of his government.

Ambassador Keating was invited to attend these discussions, and AID played a key part in the solution which emerged. Under the brand new PL 480 Food For Progress program, which Keating himself had helped devise even while he was Ambassador to Madagascar, the U.S. promised to provide a buffer stock of rice for each of three consecutive years until domestic rice production, in response to free market price incentives, could increase sufficiently to guarantee ample domestic supplies. As a respected, neutral observer to help determine if the program was working as planned, we invited Elliot Berg to come out for two or three visits and report on the progress, or lack of progress, of the program.

In early 1987 we delivered 30,000 metric tons of rice, the first tranche of the FFP program, to constitute a reserve stock as a complement to the April rice harvest. The GDRM decontrolled prices. Elliot came in June to inspect the results and file a report. His findings confirmed that the program was on the right track. His analysis ended with the comment that this event was probably the first time that an indirect policy instrument – the use of the market instead of direct controls – had "shown its power". We experienced many frustrations with the GDRM over this program but we had no doubt after 1987 that we were headed in the right direction.

After research and policy reform, the third element of our rice production strategy, as I said a while ago, was repairing local infrastructure. As the economy had worsened, rural roads and water control dikes and the terracing necessary for rice production and marketing had suffered serious neglect. To help “fix what was broke” at local levels, we allocated a portion of the local currencies which accrued from the sale of the commodities which had been imported since 1981 under the PL 480 Title I program, under the MARS project, and from other activities of ours. These funds totaled over $65 million by June 1988.

This was a considerable sum, and I should say here that we made two evaluations of the counterpart program. The first evaluation reported that the 166 local projects (dams, roads, etc.) we had completed by December 1987, with 200 more still on-going, had generated enormous good will for the U.S. at local levels. That was the good news. The second evaluation looked at the program from an economic angle and judged that these 166 projects, by and large, had done little to increase production – at least, not yet.

In either case, the process by which our counterpart funds were allocated needed to be adjusted. Reviewing and approving projects from extensive lists submitted each year by 13 different GDRM agencies was time consuming. The actual GDRM transfer of these funds to the project accounts was often and inexplicably delayed, in some cases by as much as two years. By the time I left we had reorganized the program to allocate the majority of our counterpart funds to a few, much larger projects which supported our overall program. These projects included, for example, the rehabilitation of rice research stations associated with IRRI and the repair of feeder roads under the multi-year World Bank Highway project. Also included were two or three other projects in the areas of family health and the environment, which I’ll get to in a minute. But in addition to making the allocation process much simpler, we also came to agreement with the GDRM that our counterpart funds would be placed “on budget,” that is, the funds would be part of the regular, publically voted annual budget where they could be “found” and transferred in much more timely fashion.

After rice production, the second of the three major components of the Madagascar program by the time I left in July 1988 was the conservation of the environment. Conservancy went hand-in-hand with our work in agriculture. The moonscape which greeted me on the morning I first flew into Antan had been the result of many years of over-grazing and slash-and-burn production techniques. Obviously, we needed to work out ways in which the local populations would see their interests best served by protecting their unique environment, at the same time as they were enabled to farm more intensively on adjacent areas.

Bio-diversity was not part of the original REDSO game plan when I arrived. But its importance grew clearer to us, and to the international community, very quickly. World Wildlife and many other groups listed Madagascar and the Brazilian rainforest together at the top of their global conservation "watch lists." Madagascar as the world's most exotic "living laboratory" of unique species was shrinking before our eyes.

Our initial approach, made on a low-cost, pilot basis, was to select several of the highest priority ecological areas on the island and then to arrange and support collaborative ventures in each of them between the local inhabitants and a Malagasy PVO, with the expert help of an international PVO. Their joint objective was to work out sustainable ways to conserve bio-diversity while at the same time achieving a satisfactory level of agriculture production or other means of supporting the local population.

We began by assisting the project which Allison Richards of Yale University had already started in the southwest at Beza Mahafaly in conjunction with the University of Madagascar. In June 1987 Donna Stauffer joined me as the second Direct Hire officer in the office. Donna had great enthusiasm for this environmental work, although she also had across-the-board responsibility for all our project design and management. Before I left we had arranged a combination of dollar grants and counterpart funding to support two more environmental pilot projects.

The first, located in the north at Amber Mountain, combined World Wildlife International and the local CRS organization in Madagascar. The second, in the island's largest remaining virgin rain forest, the Masoala Peninsula on the northeast shore, supported collaboration between Missouri Botanical Gardens and the Madagascar Lutheran Church. In addition to these location-specific activities we pledged major support using our counterpart funds to cover local costs of the World Bank-assisted Environmental Action Plan process, which began in March 1987. Donna was particularly convinced of the importance of building collaborative relationships in the environmental area. She was largely responsible for carrying this work forward in a more consolidated projectized form after I left.

The third and final component of our program in Madagascar was family planning. The need for this was stark. As I've suggested, Madagascar's population growth rate was one of the highest in the world, estimated at over 3% per annum. In 1975 an uncompleted census indicated that there were 7.5 million Malagasy; in the mid-1980's the total was estimated at about 10.5 million; and the latest figures I've seen put today's population at some 14 million. These figures represent a doubling of population in 20 years. Add to this, that only about 15% of the land area of the Great Red Island is considered arable, with topsoil being washed into the sea – you've seen the satellite pictures – in spectacular quantities each year. The traditional Malagasy marriage blessing was "May you have seven sons and seven daughters." Contraceptive use was among the lowest in the world. The World Bank called this high population growth rate Madagascar's most important long term issue.

Until the time I arrived, there had been no attempt by the government or local leaders to address this problem, although at least one private group was active -- but with little success. The REDSO survey in 1983, however, had detected some further inklings of interest in family planning, if it were introduced discreetly. I was confident from my experience in Senegal that our Agency had the central resources needed to respond in effective ways. Barbara Kennedy, REDSO's population officer, entirely agreed. We began with a population and family health survey which Barbara organized in 1985. Based on the findings of this survey, the RAPID project made an excellent presentation which was attended by a wide selection of national and local leaders. Many of them came away shaking their heads, saying they had never before conceived of the population phenomenon in Madagascar, nor considered its effects on national development ten and twenty years in the future. After this, with the encouragement of Madame Ratsiraka, we were told, the GDRM gave us a cautious green light to proceed.

We knew we would have our hands full, once population activities got underway. We could expect a stream of S&T/POP professional people who would be coming to follow up on the opportunity in conjunction with Malagasy from the private and public arenas. As a full-time coordinator within our office, we were most fortunate to employ Mr. Gerard Rakotondrainibe. He came to us with long experience abroad with UNFPA, as well as experience at home with the Malagasy private group engaged in the field. Gerard became the second Malagasy professional in our office after Agnes. He proved invaluable to us in orienting our outside specialists and linking them up with the right people in country. From 1985 to 1988 we received all the help we needed in working with the GDRM to formulate and draft a national population strategy, to disseminate and explain it, and to keep the plan updated on the basis of good demographic statistics. Our Bureau of the Census gave sound assistance in preparing a new national census. Specialists provided by S&T/POP's OPTIONS and IMPACT projects worked specifically on the development of the population policy and the building of its data base. S&T's FISA program supplied contraceptive materials to Malagasy private sector institutions which wanted to offer family planning services to their employees.

My work with Mike White in Senegal had persuaded me that family planning works best when it is part of a comprehensive program for family health, particularly to include young children. Given AID's "focus and concentrate" directives, it would have been out of the question to open a health program of our own at that time in Madagascar. Fortunately, however, I found a way to team up with UNICEF, which in 1987 was preparing to design with the Ministry of Health a five year child support program. This program would provide ORT/immunization services to at least 80% of all Malagasy children on a phased basis, taking on a different section of the country in each successive year. At our request, S&T/Health provided a planner who had a strong track record with UNICEF, and he was most helpful in designing a practical plan which we all could support. We then pledged $2.2 million in counterpart funds to pay the local costs of the program. This was the first time to my knowledge that AID and UNICEF had worked together in this way. I left before the program got underway, but the agreed plan, at least, was that our family planning effort would receive a family health complement, in effect, as the two programs proceeded side by side.

Our program in Madagascar, composed of these three elements – agriculture (with a focus on rice production), environmental protection, and family planning – was in place by 1987. The GDRM had continued to abide by the structural reform program of the

World Bank sufficiently well, and had satisfied each of the annual IMF standby agreements since 1983. In consequence, Madagascar's budget deficit had fallen from 18% of GDP to 4% since the beginning of the decade.

Encouraged by all this, and by our REDSO reports, the AID Administrator acted in May 1987 to upgrade the REDSO program office in Antan to "the Office of the AID Representative in Madagascar." As the AID Rep, I now reported directly to the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa, Larry Saiers, who depended on REDSO for "advice" and on his East African desk in AID/W to give us administrative support. I was asked to revise the 1984 CDSS to offer a long-term strategy. A review of our program was scheduled for the Fall. A small team of impartial observers, led by Jim Kelly, a former Director of the Sahel Program, by then retired, came out to prepare a "concepts paper" to guide the review. The review took place between October 30 – November 18, 1987. Larry Saiers himself led the review, which included top REDSO personnel.

The review confirmed the main lines of the program we had developed and which I've described. In February 1988 I went to AID/W to present and defend the new CDSS, which I had prepared containing this plan. Despite a good deal of pressure at the meeting to eliminate one or two of the three elements, in favor of a total concentration on the rice sector, the complete, balanced plan was ultimately approved. Our Office received a clear policy mandate for the 1988-90 period to implement the three-legged program. As a consequence, later in 1988, the Administrator again upgraded the Office another notch to a full USAID Mission. This took effect just after my departure from Antan in July.

Q: How big a Mission was it?

REA: In my view the Mission grew too big after my departure, and this disappointed me. I believe we had a chance to establish a new and better model of doing business, but I think we blew it. I had thoroughly experienced a large mission during my years in Dakar, where we had some 26 US Direct Hire officers, plus contract Americans and Senegalese. I had regretted then how much time we spent just on dealing with our own internal administration. I had often rued in Senegal how difficult it was for me as the Program Officer to get out of the office and into the field to see for myself what was going on. My experience in the small office in Antan, by contrast, was liberating. I was able to travel to every part of the large island, as REDSO encouraged me to do. Also in Antan, dealing closely with the World Bank resident office, I saw how a large program could be steered along by just a few good people, with plenty of help from Washington. Of course, the AID system is constructed to give our Missions more responsibility than the Bank's country offices have. I favor our system. But if the most responsible people in our Missions have trouble getting out to see what is going on, the purpose of our system is compromised. In Antan I was testing just how much we in AID could do with the leanest resident staff possible.

We began in September 1984 with just two full-time professionals, Agnes and me, and a driver.

Three or four months later, REDSO contracted for the half-time services of my wife, Julie Owen Rea. Julie was (and is) a direct hire career officer. She had taken a leave of absence to accompany me to post, where there was no established position apart from mine. Julie, who reported to REDSO, turned out to be a life-saver. Her experience in preparing the implementation (PIO) documents for the technical services, commodities and training under the MARS project was just what we needed to start the program quickly. In addition, we contracted locally with another American, Janet Crosthwaite, the wife of a British officer in the European Development Fund (FED). Janet served as our part-time administrative officer and received solid support and supervision from our regional controller's office in Nairobi, as well as from the Executive Officer in the Embassy, of which we were a part. The Embassy built an addition and we took one floor for our offices, including space for our TDY visitors. In the three years following, 1985-88, we added only one Direct Hire officer in addition to myself, Donna Stauffer, one Malagasy professional, Gerard, and two support people – a secretary and a second driver.

In this way we grew from a total of four to a total of eight full time equivalent (FTE) staff in 1988, including support staff. Our total annual program, meanwhile, increased from $11 million in 1984 to $28 million by 1986. The program leveled off at about this figure, not counting the counterpart funds which we supervised. This, I think, was the lowest ratio of USDH staff to total budget (OYB) in the Africa region. We could only do this, of course, thanks to the outstanding support we received from REDSO and AID/W. But the ratio was a bit too low, since the strain on REDSO and our office was showing. So before I left, the Ambassador, then Patricia Gates Lynch, and I recommended the addition of just two more Direct Hire officers: an economist to coordinate with the IMF/World Bank/GDRM on structural adjustment, and an agriculturalist to track our large sector program. I wrote the SPARS for these positions and worked with an architect and builder to provide the necessary additional office space. All was ready when I left.

By 1988 I felt we had a solid program in Madagascar, both in content and in staffing. Our Administrator apparently shared this view. In his annual March budget request to the House Appropriations Committee, the Administrator described the Madagascar program at length as a leading example of how AID intended to use the new Development Fund for Africa which he was proposing. The Congress accepted and passed the DFA into legislation that year. The DFA itself, incidentally, was partially modeled on the Sahel Development Program.

I believed our Madagascar Office also provided a model for how a country program could be structured and managed, to use a minimum of Direct Hire personnel supplemented by local hire expatriates and host country nationals, and backed up by a REDSO regional office and AID/W. Ambassador Lynch and I resisted as strongly as we could a pell-mell increase in USDH staffing. We did so in the interest of economy, security, and most of all, from my stand point, to free up Direct Hire managers from a preoccupation with internal housekeeping so that they could concentrate on the assistance program itself, outside the confines of the office walls .

But I'm sorry to say that we were overruled by AID regulations. These stipulated that an

AID Mission, once designated as such, must be staffed in a certain prescribed manner, to include a Director, a Deputy Director, a Program Officer, a Controller, a Management Officer, and so forth. As a result, I learned later that the staff at AID/Madagascar mushroomed within a year or two. This growth, in turn, required the arrangement of new and more spacious office facilities and the securing of more official residences. I did not envy my successors, especially in 1991, when the paralysis of the GDRM left them with a large staff and premises and a partial suspension of our program activities, with little to do.

Q: How did you find the Malagasy people in the government to work with, compared to the Tanzanians and Senegalese?

REA: The Malagasy were the most talented and, at the same time, the most conflicted people of any I have worked with. I remember talking with a former Executive Officer for the State Department, who made his living after retirement by pinch-hitting in embassies all over Africa. He told me that of all the local hire embassy staffs he knew in the African region, two stood head and shoulders above the rest in hard work and competence: those in Ethiopia and Madagascar. Agnes was an outstanding example of the intelligence and diligence of Malagasy staff, but there were also others with whom we worked in the GDRM and the Embassy who were remarkably disciplined and quick to learn.

On the other hand, the proliferation of factions in Malagasy society along lines of family cliques, ethnic groups, and political persuasions tended towards gridlock, and the uncompromising toughness of the people made the gridlock nearly intractable. At the same time, language also made it more difficult for us. The fact that Malagasy all speak with each other in Malagasy, a language which takes the American missionaries, for example, six years to learn, separated us further, even if we were able to do reasonably well in French. And certainly the insular island mentality and the suspicion the GDRM had of the U.S., even among folks disposed to trust us personally, did not help. Despite all this, we formed some very productive personal relationships with a few key members of the GDRM, particularly in the Planning Ministry.

Q: Anything more on your experience there?

REA: My four years in Madagascar, I feel sure, were the most instructive and, at the same time, the most baffling of my career. I learned an enormous amount about the operation of an AID program in the field and about our organization itself in all its parts and people -- from a field perspective. And I learned this from soup to nuts, from the details of building an office and ordering equipment up to all the things that went into and could go wrong with a structural adjustment program. Learning-by-doing taught me a great deal. I was also fortunate to be involved with some areas in which our Agency as a whole did not have much experience: in working in Madagascar itself, of course, but also in taking part in launching the first Food For Progress program, in the auctioning (not just selling) of PL 480 imports for the first time, and in organizing local community participation in environmental programs through support to local and foreign PVOs. And, again, I can't stress too much the marvelous support we received from Nairobi and Washington.

But also it was in some ways a tortuous experience. We were dealing with a government which had led its people in one direction and now was in the process of renouncing its former principles to lead them back in the other direction, like a person trying to go both ways at once in a revolving door. This, plus the many conflicts within the Malagasy society, made for blockages and delays for no apparent reason and even led to under-the-table dealings against the terms of formal, signed agreements which we had reached with the GDRM. The President regularly used the economic arm of his Party, for example, to import rice and undercut the freeing up of the rice market. State production parastatals and the State controlled banking community crowded out other market reforms and retarded the growth of the private sector. Ratsiraka's leadership made for many contradictions which came to a head several years after I left.

What remains with me is the bizarre contrast between Madagascar's talented people and well-watered countryside on the one hand and, on the other, the stark poverty, desperation, even starvation of the poor, never far from view in town or country. This standing contradiction was before the eyes of all of us who worked there at that time. I was not reluctant to leave Madagascar by the time our four year tour ended. And I was more than ready at that time in my career to take a step back and try to form a larger view of our Agency and its worldwide operations, and to gain an overview of the international development effort as a whole.

Q: Well, then you moved on after four years.

Return to AID/W in Program Policy Coordination – 1988-1990

REA: Yes, back to AID/W. By 1988, I had served 10 years continuously in the field. Though it was not my intention, my work for the Africa Bureau, except for several months in 1994-95, was over. And for a combination of reasons, also contrary to plan, I was to serve the last ten years of my AID career in Washington.

Q: What was your next post?

REA: I came back to fill a brand new position as PPC's Assistant Budget Director. My work began in August, 1988. Given my sense of fatigue at the time and my desire to step back and see the big picture, it's apparent in retrospect that this posting was providential. But it came about in an unexpected way.

The assignment panel a year before had officially named me to be the director of strategy development for the Africa Bureau, with an office in AFR/DP. My supervisor-to-be, DP's Deputy Director, Jim Govan, had met me then in Nairobi and had told me that my assignment was approved. But shortly after that, as I learned later, the new Assistant Administrator for Africa, Chuck Gladson, read a line in a cable I had written from Antan. He misinterpreted it to mean that I opposed his prime policy, private sector development.

Since Gladson had apparently decided anyways that he wanted an economist for the job in which I had been confirmed, he never bothered to say a word to me. Larry Saiers, Gladson's Deputy AA, said that he was willing to lead an appeal to uphold my assignment. But it was apparent to both of us that even if my protest prevailed, Gladson would most likely refuse to work closely with me, to the detriment of good forward planning. In any case, my replacement, Emmy Simmons, was an excellent choice for the job. And (as I thought at the time) a short break from Africa in the central Budget Office – the heart of Agency operations – was exactly what I needed to gain the big picture perspective of AID operations which I very much desired. But I must say, I was also disappointed at the way things had been managed.

Q: What was your PPC job all about?

REA: Well, of course, the PPC Bureau did what its name implied. It served to coordinate all of the Agency's policies and programs, and the budget office was in the center of the action. Historically, PPC under a strong Administrator was feared and respected, and often resented. The Bureau acted as the Administrator's program office. PPC was his right arm in running the Agency and enforcing policies which the Regional Bureaus, like Africa, did not always believe applied to them. So for me to move from the field to Washington, and from AFR to PPC, required a total readjustment. But it was one I welcomed, for as a vantage point on AID's policy and practice worldwide, there was no better place to work than the office I now joined, PPC/PB, planning and budget.

PB was then directed by George Hill, a sharp, experienced foreign service officer, and his exemplary deputy, Jim Painter, a GS officer. The office was divided into two equal parts of about 15 persons each. The branch I headed was responsible for the coordination and analysis of Agency programs in all the separate bureaus. The other branch, led by Ken Milow, dealt with the allocation of the budget, a very technical and painstaking line of work. My section had the job of making sure that the Administrator's policies were understood and implemented by the rest of the Agency, and my people were known as the "coordinators". Each of them was assigned to cover one or more Bureaus. They did so principally by working with the Director of the DP Office and his or her staff in the Bureau(s) which they were assigned to cover, and by attending their weekly staff meetings and all their budget and project reviews.

Before the new position which I was selected to fill was created a few months before, the coordinators had all dealt directly with George and/or Jim. This caused Jim a severe span of control problem, since he had to supervise both divisions, and especially since he had to deal with the seven chief coordinators, some of whom had deputies. Although my new position made sense on paper, in practice – given the high velocity budget process and the need of the coordinators to get instant decisions from Jim and George – I quickly saw that I was in danger of creating a new layer of bureaucracy between the front office and the coordinators, and might end up doing more harm than good.

Q: You were coordinating the coordinators?

REA: Exactly. And these were first rate people, several of whom went on quickly to become Mission Directors, as Mike Rugh did when he left us to direct USAID/Somalia. The coordinators did not require much supervision. I did my best to be helpful to Jim without getting in the way, but I did not think that what I did justified the salary I was paid. I certainly learned a great amount about the budget process and about the work of the Agency, but what I was able to do, in my view, was of marginal utility.

Q: What was your view of working in PPC generally?

REA: I came to know PPC quite well, with all its various offices and people. I was invited to sit in on the weekly senior staff meetings led by our Assistant Administrator, Rich Bissell. These meetings were attended by George Hill and the other heads of office. We met in a distinguished old paneled room to hear each of them report, usually in very abbreviated form, on the latest news regarding whatever hot topic with which he or she was dealing. It was like a weekly state-of-the-Agency bulletin in short-hand, since they used acronyms and the latest terms and expressions wherever possible. It took me months to figure out all they were saying. But I was impressed at every meeting by the wide range of issues involved, all the way from the state of legislation on the Hill down to niggling operational problems affecting the Agency as a whole.

Q: Were there any major policy interests or areas that you were doing?

REA: The 18 months I spent in PPC – August 1988 to February 1990 – was an elating, watershed period in the outside world, with Bush's election and the fall of the Berlin Wall. But it was a tough time in AID, particularly in PPC. Our able young Administrator, Allan Woods, after only a short time on the job, died slowly of cancer, leaving an inevitable vacuum of leadership. This coincided with an effort which had begun before Woods, to decentralize the Agency and to give more authority to the Regional Bureaus. Many questions went unresolved. Outside the Agency, there was a bigger than usual public debate going on about the mission of AID, particularly with regard to the private sector's role in development. Inside the Agency, decentralization had already eroded the authority of PPC, and the Bureau's authority was further weakened by the absence of the Administrator.

Q: Were there any particular policy interests being pushed at that time or was it just chaos?

REA: "Chaos," never. Congress micro-manages the AID budget too closely, and our budget process with the inspectors from the Office of Management and Budget is too other-directed to allow for chaos. "Soul-searching" would be a more accurate description of PPC, if not the Agency as a whole, at the time. The Bureau held a retreat at Airlie House in Virginia for a couple of days in September, 1988. Two topics were paramount. The chief question we discussed was this: after agreeing that AID's overall goal was "broad-based sustainable economic growth," just what were the Agency's priorities? Some political appointees of the new Bush administration believed strongly that private sector development should lead the rest. And the second big question we faced was how to restructure the Agency. These two issues underlay strenuous attempts in the months that followed to redraft our basic legislation, the Foreign Assistance Act, an effort in which George Hill was heavily involved. But unfortunately, all this work came to very little. The fact that the foreign aid budget dropped off precipitously in the 1990-95 period fueled even more controversy over priorities.

Q: All right, that was a short term effort. You moved on from there.

Provides Leadership in Education Program Development – 1990-1994

REA: Yes, and in accord with my recommendation I was not replaced in PPC/PB until my job was reconfigured sometime later. My plan all along, as I had shared with George and Jim, was to move back to the field in Africa during the summer of 1990. But in June 1989 and again that Fall I ran into a health problem which put our overseas ventures on hold for the 1990 assignment cycle. There were no opportunities for me in the Africa Bureau in Washington, and I didn't feel very useful staying on in PB. So I was wondering: what to do?

Just at this time in late 1989, I began to get frequent calls from a former colleague, Antonio Gayoso, who was now the Agency Director for Human Resources in the Science and Technology Bureau (S&T). It happened that a dozen years before, when I was preparing the human resources development plan for the Sahel, Tony had been my key clearance contact for AFR/DR and so had known all about our Sahel strategy. Tony now was very anxious to find someone, preferably a foreign service officer, to head the Office of Education (one of the two offices he supervised), which had gone without a confirmed Director for all of 1989.

I was initially cautious about moving to S&T. After a year in AID/W, I knew that the Bureau's reputation was, shall we say, mixed. Especially at a time of declining Agency budgets, rival bureaus like PPC and AFR perceived S&T as too big and bloated. From a field perspective, since few of the staff at S&T were foreign service officers, that Bureau was often perceived as rather academic and other-worldly. I had a more positive view of the Bureau than some because the excellent support S&T had given us in Madagascar was still fresh in my mind. It didn't take me long to see that at a time when all the doors were shut for me to work directly with Africa -- the geographic region I believed most needed our support -- now at least I was being given a chance to reconnect with the technical area which, I thought, delivered the support most needed.

By then in late 1989 it was known that Rich Bissell, whom I had come to like and admire, was leaving PPC to become the new Assistant Administrator of S&T sometime in the Spring. Before accepting Tony's offer, I made doubly sure through Brad Langmaid, the Bureau's veteran Deputy AA, that Rich personally wanted me, and not someone else, to direct the Education Office. This confirmed, I accepted Tony's invitation. My first day in my new job was February 12, 1990.

Q: What was your function there?

REA: S&T/ED, as it was known then – the Bureau's name changed from Science and Technology to Research and Development (R&D) soon after, and I'll be using the two names somewhat interchangeably – the Education Office was the smallest of the Bureau's eight technical offices. It seemed to me that we were the smallest office with the most to do and the farthest to go. This was because, regrettably, the Agency had left education in comparative neglect after the 1960s, despite the fact that education was essential to sustainable programs and to development of any kind. The Agency's large contribution to education in the Sixties had concentrated on developing post-secondary institutions, as we had done in Tanzania, for example. In the Seventies, when we turned our emphasis towards the rural poor, AID allowed formal education to languish, and turned to literacy. Part of the reason for this neglect of the schools, as I knew too well myself from Senegal and the Sahel, was due to the fact that the countries with whom we worked were themselves not yet ready to reform their school systems with the degree of commitment required. Not until the mid-1980s did AID begin to give basic education the attention it deserved.

Whatever the reasons, there was now much to be done. A hiring freeze meant that we were permitted to fill only 7.8 out of ten of the full time equivalent (FTE) positions approved for our office. This included two administrative assistants which we later reduced to one, our indomitable Barbara Adams. The Office managed a dozen middle-aged to old projects. We had responsibility for an annual budget of about $15 million, which included our core budget of $6 million plus $9 million provided by the Regional Bureaus to pay for the services which our projects provided them.

On the face of it, compared to the ratio of staff to budget which we achieved in Madagascar, it is easy to see why a Regional Bureau might have thought S&T/ED was over-staffed. But it was immediately clear to me that our job was much more than directing a few central projects. Our larger responsibility was to anticipate the kind of expertise our Regional Bureaus and field missions would require two or three years ahead, and then to devise projects and to support coalitions which would be necessary to meet these needs. At the time I arrived in S&T/ED in February 1990, we had good reason to believe that the Agency's requirements in education would be growing and changing in exciting ways.

Q: What was the situation?

REA: There were two sides to the overall situation, the domestic and the international. You'll recall that here in the U.S. concern had been building throughout the 1980's about the "second-rate" quality of education which our children were subjected to, compared with, say, German and Japanese children. Leading voices in our business community especially became more insistent that our young people were too poorly educated to meet the growing fierce challenge of international competition. This insistence was swept up into national politics by the end of the decade. In the Fall of 1989, you'll remember, the National Governors' Association, featuring Bill Clinton, met with President Bush in the "education summit" at Charlottesville, Va. Out of this meeting came the Ten Goals, which evolved into the "Education 2000" legislation under the Clinton Administration several years later.

At the same time, this domestic fervor for education reform was reflected in U.S. foreign assistance. At the insistence of Senator Hatfield and a few members on the House side, the Congress in 1988 wrote an earmark into our aid appropriation to require the Agency to work harder to improve basic education. In actual fact, the education reform movement had affected our program even earlier than this. Hoping to avoid the earmark, AID had begun to pick up the pace two years before on its own, but the Congress insisted we do even more. As a result, every year since 1988 the Agency has had to obligate some $130 million (the 1990-94 average) for "basic education" programs, two-thirds of them in Sub-Saharan Africa.

That was the domestic situation. Internationally, interest was also on the rise for education, or more exactly, for "basic" education. This term refers, for the most part, to primary school systems, although our Congressional earmark expanded the intent in the early 1990s to include early childhood education and literacy training, among other things. In any case, interest in education was surging abroad for the same main reason as it was here at home – international competition.

Stepping back into the HRD field after about ten years away, I was struck by the change. It was clear that a consensus had finally coalesced around solid evidence, based on years of investigation. General agreement was emerging that sound basic education is the foundation for sustained success in a range of areas: family planning, child health, farmer productivity, and the extension of pluralist systems, just to name the fields where the evidence was strongest. Particularly influential, I think, were the reports of economists who had studied the causes for the rapid rise of the "Asian Tigers". These reports all underscored the finding that the steps the "Tigers" had taken to invest in basic education had been even more decisive than their investment in higher education. Other studies – in areas of Nigeria, for example -- demonstrated the remarkable degree to which an effective basic education program served to enhance the success of other sector specific programs, such as child health and on-farm production. Frequently cited at the time was the conclusion written by Larry Summers in his role as Chief Economist at the World Bank, summarizing a multi-year study by the Bank, that "educating girls quite likely yields a higher rate of return than any other investment available in the developing world."

Acting on all this evidence, the World Bank along with UNICEF and UNESCO organized an extraordinary conference which took place in Jomtien, Thailand in March, 1990. This World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) was the first of the series of world conventions which marked the 1990-96 period. The Education Conference was followed, and its conclusions reaffirmed, by the Environment Conference in Rio (1992), the Population Conference in Cairo (1994), and the conferences in Beijing on women and in Denmark on social development, both in 1995. The World Food Conference followed in 1996. World Conference fatigue set in after that, but WCEFA was the first of the remarkable series. The Education for All conference drew minister-level representation from 150 countries, rich and poor. Significantly, the official delegations were matched by an even greater number of private organizations, and these were given an equal voice with the officials – a first for international conferences and replicated at those which followed.

The U.S. played a big supporting role in WCEFA. AID was the first bilateral donor organization to co-sponsor the conference. The American delegation was led by Gov. Tom Kean of New Jersey, one of the leading governors for education reform in this period. The Department of Education sent representatives, along with a host of groups in the public and private sectors. AID sent three reps, including Cliff Block from S&T/ED who had been the Acting Director of the Office throughout 1989, and Frank Method from PPC, who joined our office after Cliff retired in 1991. As a late-comer to the field, I did not ask to go to Jomtien since the number of representatives AID could send was strictly limited and my colleagues had made the preparations.

After days of meeting, the Jomtien Conference set two main goals: first, that by the year 2000, 80% of all children would receive an acceptable level of education and, second, that by the same year adult illiteracy would be cut in half. Six months later, in September, 1980, these goals were ratified by the world's Heads of State, including President Bush, who came together in New York at the event called the World Summit for Children.

With all this, I considered that S&T/ED had received its mandate. Our task, as my colleagues and I saw it, was to tap into this surge of public support for basic education, at home and abroad, and to devise ways for the Agency to use the basic education earmark for maximum effect. As Director of the Office, but not a career specialist in education myself, my role as I saw it was to do what a program officer – a good generalist – could do best: to ensure that we kept our eyes on the big picture of opportunity, that we set priorities in a collegial way to guide our work, and that we worked out a rational, well-organized approach which could be easily understood by all the people inside and outside AID with whom our Office would need to work to meet our goals. I should add, that my four years in the education trenches, two with the Sahel program at home and two abroad in Tanzania, were very important for guiding my generalist instincts at S&T/ED.

Q: What kind of projects were you using?

REA: Our Office managed two categories of projects. The first, which took the bulk of our time and attention, were projects designed to improve basic education systems. I stress basic ed because until 1994, when we created the Human Resources Development Center, S&T/ED was distinct and separate from the Bureau's University Center, which handled higher education. Our Office's second category of projects had to do with that interesting field known as "development communication". This involved the application of behavioral science and social marketing techniques – Madison Avenue kinds of expertise – to areas of special concern for development. A successful example of this had been the joint project we had done with S&T/Health to help countries design campaigns to induce mothers to use oral rehydration therapy (ORT) techniques for children who were suffering and in danger of dying from severe diarrhea.

But your question is to the kinds of projects we designed and managed within these two broad categories. Before answering, I need to explain that our so-called "central" projects (as contrasted with the activities which our regional bureaus were responsible for) all had to meet one key test. S&T projects had to offer services which the regional bureaus were willing to pay for from the accounts allocated to them. The funds allocated directly to us, S&T/ED's core funds, only went far enough to design the projects and to pay the costs which a contractor charged for maintaining an office and a minimum staff. After that, we depended on our Regional Bureaus and our country Missions to "buy in" to our projects to pay the actual costs of the services which the contractor provided them. This is the system I was referring to when I said that S&T/ED's annual budget was about $6 million in "core" funds and $9 million in "buy-in" funds.

In order to make sure that we and the other S&T technical offices did not waste money designing and managing projects which the regional bureaus would not use, the Agency introduced a rating system in the early Nineties which required the regional bureaus to rank each of our projects each year. Those projects not considered "important" did not receive funding – it was as simple as that. It almost went without saying that unless our projects offered exceptional expertise of a kind that an individual mission might have difficulty contracting for itself, we would not get their business and our projects would fold. This requirement generally meant that we had to succeed in connecting the Agency with areas in which the U.S. had acknowledged leadership. We had to tap those sources in which U.S. expertise was considered world class.

Q: How did this affect the education area? I recall during McPherson's time in the mid-Eighties that the view was hostile toward doing anything in education. The opinion was that the U.S. had no competence in this area. We had nothing to offer.

REA: Right. And this was the same perception -- the poor quality of our schools -- that fueled the U.S. education reform movement which we've spoken about. It took a huge, broadbrush emotional appeal to galvanize the country's support for reform, and this distorted the true picture. When the experts stopped to examine the problem and to look at the different parts of our 50 state system more closely, it became apparent that our most important deficiencies were at the secondary school level. The research showed that when they emerged from primary school, U.S. students compared favorably with our world competitors. Where our students fell behind was in the secondary system, grades 7-12. Even if this had not been the case generally, however, the U.S. education system was so diversified that it was easy to find shining exceptions to the general average. It has been from these "best practices" that the U.S. education reform movement, as well as our AID program in basic education, has drawn its life.

Nevertheless, you are perfectly correct that reservations did persist in AID/W from the Hanna era through McPherson's about AID's role in primary education, though not always for the same reasons. Our field missions, as well, were often reluctant to engage in formal schooling, as I knew from my own experience. All these doubts notwithstanding, I was pleased to find that S&T/ED had been able to do some pioneering work in primary education during the 1980s, particularly in two fields.

The first of these fields might be labeled "technology," although it went a good deal further than that. Our Education Office had been a leader in developing a technique for using radio in the classroom to reinforce the role of teachers, particularly in language and math instruction. This so-called "Interactive Radio Instruction" (IRI) technique required very carefully scripted lessons, which posed questions and left time in the transmission for students to provide answers as each lesson progressed, thus "interactive". Once teachers learned that the radio programs were designed to help, and not replace, them, teachers used IRI to stimulate their pupils, who usually had become accustomed to passive rote learning. Students in the IRI English classes I observed in the Johannesburg area during my visit there in 1993, for example, were highly enthusiastic.

By the early 1990s AID had helped establish these interactive radio education programs in perhaps a dozen countries, as diverse as Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica. Cliff Block and Jim Hoxeng in S&T/ED were among the most knowledgeable people on earth in this field. What was more, the Office had funded a small documentation center to keep track of the experience which we and others had accumulated in using the technique. Other donors including the World Bank, UNESCO, and some of the bilateral agencies were picking up on IRI and funding these programs themselves. According to one report, "IRI yielded the largest and most cost-effective gains of any (education) intervention in the developing world." For various reasons, IRI is still underutilized. The programs must be prepared with painstaking care. But IRI has great potential.

S&T/ED had made a solid contribution to basic education in a second area, as well, more important than the first. This was the development of a systems approach to the design and management of primary and secondary school programs. At the heart of the systems approach was the so-called EMIS, the education management information system. This enabled managers to keep up-to-date information on all elements of a school system: teachers, students, materials, buildings, budgets and the state of readiness of these components. The EMIS could be computerized, but did not have to be. The essential thing was that the EMIS represented a way of looking at and monitoring a collection of education components as an interrelated system.

As of 1990, S&T/ED had over a decade of experience in combining EMIS together with monitoring and evaluation systems, and operational research. The Office had helped Regional Bureaus to plan and manage large education sector programs in Indonesia, Egypt, Pakistan, El Salvador and a host of smaller countries like Somalia and Liberia. Florida State University, the chief contractor for our IEES project (Improving the Efficiency of Education Systems), was pulling together the lessons they had learned in designing education systems in a dozen countries. Meanwhile, Harvard University, chief contractor for our BRIDGES project, had developed an outstanding series of training modules for education planners, also based on the systems approach. Thanks to these two activities, we not only had valuable experience ready to use and share in reforming primary education systems, but we also had the means of teaching the experience to education planners – as more and more countries became seriously interested in improving their basic education programs.

So our Office had a good track record built up through the years of Front Office scepticism and the reserve on the part of some (but by no means all) of our Missions. Thanks in large measure to the Congressional earmark, AID by 1990 was the world's largest bilateral donor in basic education. We managed programs in some 24 countries. Whether our Agency's leadership liked it or not, the basic education program in S&T and the Regional Bureaus had a solid mandate -- read "earmark" -- from the Hill. And momentum was building to do even more. The U.S. delegation, and AID in particular, had played a very constructive role at the World Conference in Jomtien. Domestic energies for education reform were high. As good fortune would have it, I felt I had become the Director of S&T/ED at the best possible time.

Q: What did you do specifically?

REA: Specifically? Since we'll be talking about a period of over four years, February 1990 until May 1994, I'll try to stick to the main lines of what we were doing. I'll have to skip lots of names and details, I'm afraid, to keep this account within a reasonable compass.

The most important thing I thought we had to do to catch the winds of education reform in the U.S. was to keep together the coalition which had prepared the U.S. participation in the Jomtien Conference. This group of public and private organizations had played a large hand in setting the two goals set by the World Education Conference which we've talked about: 80% of the world's children to receive an acceptable level of education, and adult illiteracy to be cut in half – both by the year 2000. These goals were vague and the timing improbable, it's true, but they helped us in R&D/ED to see where we needed to adjust our program. This was especially true when we took these goals in conjunction with three other outcomes of the World Conference. We knew we would need outside partners if we were to make satisfactory progress in the directions agreed upon.

The first of these three other outcomes at Jomtien was the general agreement among the conferees that those countries most in need of education progress would, with donor assistance, as required, develop "national plans of action" to reform their education systems. As I've said, we at AID had some extensive experience in designing and managing primary school systems and we had developed some excellent tools, even though we knew we had a lot more to learn from partners involved in our own domestic reform movement.

Second, the conferees at Jomtien also generally agreed that basic education systems should take account (somehow) of what was needed to prepare children for school in the first place, including health and nutrition elements. "Early childhood development" was of great interest to various private voluntary organizations, especially. We knew that improvement in this area would depend primarily on the PVOs, since governments already had their hands full with improving the schools themselves.

The third area which received great support at Jomtien went beyond improving school systems merely by achieving better efficiency and wider access. The quality of education provided in the schools was also of greater interest than ever before. The conferees understood that unless the learning that went on within the schools improved, universal literacy and numeracy would forever remain beyond reach. In fact, it was by then the experience of many countries that where schools were ineffective, students dropped out and enrollments declined. Thus, improved quality and wider access were linked. Finding ways to improve the quality of basic education was another area, we believed, in which collaboration with partners which were part of the U.S. education reform movement could help us in an important way.

So, in answer to your question, here are some specifics on what we did.

First, to tap into the domestic reform energies, S&T/ED became the major source of support for the network which had served to bring public and private organizations together to prepare for, and represent the U.S. at, the Jomtien conference. This network was USCEFA, the U.S. Coalition for Education for All. Our purpose in helping to keep this coalition together, and encouraging it grow, was to assist the Agency in developing the most appropriate agenda in basic education and to provide us with strong partners for public-private programs in this area. We hoped to be as successful as S&T/Health, which had helped to form a similar coalition ten years before, with outstanding benefits for the Agency's health programs.

Let me illustrate for you what USCEFA was capable of doing. The Coalition's first annual conference following Jomtien took place in Alexandria, Virginia on October 30 – November 1, 1991. The theme was "Learning for All: Bridging Domestic and International Education." Panels were formed to discuss three themes: restructuring basic education, launching early childhood development, and mobilizing the media. Barbara Bush accepted to be the honorary Chairperson. Jim Grant, Director of UNICEF, served as the keynote speaker. Al Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers gave a lunchtime address. David Kearns of the Xerox Corporation, one of the business community's strongest voices for education reform, also spoke. Elena Lanskaya, the leading figure of Russia's Ministry of Education, was an outstanding participant. Over 300 people attended from 28 countries. USCEFA's Board of Directors included business groups like Apple Computer, PVOs like Save the Children, and leading NGO organizations like the Academy for Educational Development (represented by its President and CEO, Steve Moseley) and the Education Development Center (represented by its President, Janet Whitla).

While R&D/ED was the major funder of USCEFA and of this conference, we took pains to keep a low profile and we limited our funding to cover only essential core costs. We did this for two reasons. First and foremost, we wanted to encourage the organization to take off on its own. The other side of this was our very proper apprehension that should USCEFA become AID-dependent, it would be perceived as a self-serving lobbying group on behalf of our basic education earmark. USCEFA held two more major conferences and did some groundbreaking work on the applications to development of mass media and education.

After I left, in 1996, USCEFA disbanded and, with no AID support, some 60 NGOs led by AED and EDC formed the International Education and Training Coalition, an advocacy group for increased U.S. assistance to education in developing countries. Despite the change of character, the Coalition still serves some of the purpose for which USCEFA was created. I was delighted to hear that the group was represented at the meeting called recently by the National Security Council to help shape President Clinton's education initiative for Africa.

A second specific thing we did was to design a new project, "Improving Educational Quality," to address the widespread concern expressed at Jomtien that primary schools must engender better learning. Cliff Block led this design effort before he retired from AID in September 1991. The IEQ project, which straight off became active in Central America and Africa, sought to improve the quality of basic education in three ways.

First and foremost, IEQ worked to prepare host countries with the capacity to assess the progress of learning at the classroom level and to estimate the comparative effectiveness on increased student learning of new initiatives which these countries might undertake, such as curriculum reform or teacher training.

Second, to assist with this, the project was designed to provide matching funds to encourage select institutions from the U.S. Department of Education's Regional Centers and Labs to work directly with our host country partners on ways of improving learning in their classrooms. I must say, however, that as promising as this approach may be for the future, this element of the project was unsuccessful. In part, this was because the interests of the premier U.S. education research organizations and those of the majority of AID's host countries did not match up sufficiently well for our Centers and Labs to justify their part of the expense involved. But a larger part of the reason was that, somehow, AID's share of the funding for this portion of the project never made it through the IEQ approval/contracting process.

Third, and this was more successful, IEQ provided funding for initiatives, largely if not entirely through PVOs, in favor of early childhood education. This became an important element of the IEQ project in South Africa, where strong local PVOs abound. As intended, this portion of the project was given a boost by our national success with the Headstart program. Richard Pelczar, a professional educator who worked on our staff as an administrative appointee until he left for a position with the Inter-American Development Bank, guided the early stages of our work in the early childhood area. Then, when Frank Method moved over to our Office from PPC after Cliff and Richard had departed, he brought to the management of the IEQ project his years of experience as one of the international development pioneers in the field of early childhood development.

Still with the intent to open our doors and windows more widely to the currents of education reform, and to complement what we were doing in this regard through

USCEFA and the IEQ project, we negotiated a time-sharing arrangement with the U.S. Department of Education (USED) for the part-time services of one of their senior officers who had special experience in international education. Bob Leestma attended our weekly staff meetings and took on special assignments for us. He represented an effort by both sides to build a partnership which would outlast our work together in preparation for the Jomtien conference. But again, as we found with USED's Regional Centers and Labs, despite Bob's best efforts, the primary interests of USED did not coincide closely enough with R&D/ED's to make a lasting relationship worthwhile at that time.

Much closer and more valuable to our thinking, however, was the twice-yearly conference we initiated with UNICEF's education office under the leadership of Aklilu Habte. We also kept up our regular meetings with the World Bank and, annually, with a special group of the leading thinkers on basic education, drawn from the major bilateral and multilateral donors. Frank Method represented our office, and the Agency, on this group.

None of this, I'm confident in saying, was collaboration for its own sake. Our Regional Bureaus, with their ability to cut off their funding if they did not find our projects sufficiently useful to them, constantly kept our attention on where it should be: on results in the field.

So that we could respond more effectively to the field's requests for services, we streamlined our management to some degree. We simplified our project portfolio over time, reducing the number of projects we managed from twelve to six. We combined into a single ongoing project, ABEL, the lessons we had learned about designing more efficient education systems, along with the teaching modules we had developed to train planners in designing better systems. ABEL was intended to make use of and disseminate these products. Mainly, the project prepared and provided teams to design new basic education activities for AID worldwide. Africa was the largest beneficiary of this activity.

At Jomtien, as I mentioned before, countries had agreed to design "national action plans" for basic ed, with donor assistance where needed. To this end, both just before and after Jomtien, R&D/ED helped our Africa Bureau design new country programs in Mali, Guinea (Conakry), Ghana, Benin, South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia, Malawi and elsewhere. In 1990, the Africa Bureau, particularly, adopted the "non-project assistance," or NPA, style of programming. In the education area, NPA lent itself perfectly to the systems approach which we in R&D/ED had developed and had now concentrated under ABEL. The education management information system (EMIS), which was at the core of our sector approach, was especially suited to NPA, since the information system helped provide a means of tracking U.S. block grant funding.

Jim Hoxeng, who was particularly known for his ability to collaborate closely with the field, directed ABEL. Jim also brought to this project his special interest in non-formal education. Based on successful experience he had had in Ecuador and Lesotho, Jim devised a method for creating self-supporting "service agencies" in host countries. These were fee-charging agencies which could contract with local PVOs and public institutions to train their members to carry out non-formal education activities, especially literacy programs, at the grassroots level. We tucked funding into ABEL for creating service agencies. In other ways we funded a link to the U.S. Center for Literacy at the University of Pennsylvania whose director, Dan Wagner, had personal experience and interest in Africa.

Our purpose in both actions was to give the Agency the capability to design and carry out literacy programs at the request of our host countries, and in response to the new mandate from Congress. Following Jomtien, the Hill expanded our earmark's definition of basic education, making literacy and early childhood education specific elements. So by adding a capability to design early childhood and literacy programs to our already well-practiced approach to designing more efficient education systems, we were in a strong position to respond to the field. This new capability, at the same time, enabled the Agency to meet the full requirements of the Congress's basic education earmark and to support fully the Jomtien resolutions which President Bush had publicly and officially supported at the Child Summit in September, 1990.

Since the Agency was accountable to the Congress for making progress in meeting the mandate of the basic education earmark, which had been with us each year since 1988, I was concerned that at any time the Hill might ask us what we had done with well over half a billion dollars which they had appropriated for this purpose. It also seemed to me that we should provide the answer before it was asked. But related to that, I felt at the time I came into S&T/ED -- later renamed, R&D/ED -- that the Agency needed some set of guidelines to help the Agency, both in the field and in Washington, to determine which countries we should assist in education and to help us decide on the most effective use of our education funds in those countries. Later, it appeared to me appropriate to combine the two concerns and to include the guidelines in the report to Congress.

I discussed this idea with Rich Bissell, who concurred. Each month I had been convening an Education Sector Council to bring R&D/ED together with the chief education officers from the rest of the Agency. Parenthetically, the education officer representing the Africa Bureau on the Council was Julie Owen Rea, who had been serving as only one of two education officers in AFR since our return from Madagascar in 1988. With the full participation of the Council members we issued a report entitled "AID's Investment in Basic Education". This first appeared in January 1993, with a second printing in May to improve the reproduction of the photographs. We distributed the report widely, to the Hill, throughout the Agency in Washington and the field, to our USCEFA partners and among the other donors.

Prepared principally by Ash Hartwell through a contract with AED, the report under my supervision developed an approach initiated earlier by Frank Method before he moved from PPC to our Office in 1992. The paper grouped the developing countries in a matrix format, ranked by quantitative need (high, medium, and low) and by policy environment (favorable, possible, and unfavorable). The report demonstrated that of the eight countries cited in the world which maintained both a high level of need and a favorable policy environment, AID education programs were already at work in six. The report further showed that fully 70% of AID's basic education funds were invested in 13 of the 41 "Low Income Countries" classified by the World Bank as having an annual per capita GNP below $640.

The report served two principal audiences, AID and the Congress. The main purpose of the document was to guide the Agency in improving our allocation of basic ed funds to the truly neediest, best risk countries. We were already not doing badly with that. But whether or not our paper influenced the Regional Bureaus in the programming of future funds, the report apparently did meet its secondary purpose. At a minimum, it served to satisfy the Congress enough to stave off any hostile questioning, at least until the time I left a year and a half later.

It was good to have a kit full of tools and a clear idea of the job we had to do. But without the skilled direct hire professionals we needed to guide and direct the Agency's work in education, we knew we would be in trouble sooner or later, no matter how many contract employees we might be able to employ to carry out the work. I was very concerned that our direct hire ranks were thinning rapidly, as old pros like Cliff Block retired and the hiring of younger officers to replace them was frozen.

For this reason we cooperated closely with the Workforce Planning Group which the Management Bureau formed under John Hummon's direction in 1991-92. The purpose of the Group was to give AID Senior Management the clearest possible picture of what the Agency's staffing needs would be to direct AID's programs in the coming years. John's group asked us for our estimates in the education (Backstop 60) area. We projected the number of trained education officers who would be needed at home and in the field to supervise our growing number of programs, then subtracted the number of officers who could be expected to retire or switch to other professional areas.

After consultations with our colleagues in the Education Sector Council over an extended period and using the best information the Agency had available, we reported to the Hummon task force that AID's cadre of direct hire education officers was declining rapidly. Five excellent mid-career officers had been brought on board in 1990 before the hiring freeze took effect. All five were assigned to the new education programs starting up in Africa at the time. This was a step in the right direction. But according to our estimates, the Agency's education portfolio would be severely understaffed by the end of the decade. It was imperative, we declared, that new officers should be recruited and trained, beginning pronto.

The Workforce Planning Group made formal recommendations which incorporated our findings in 1992. But after three interns were recruited, the Agency took no further action. In fact, to make matters even worse, the notorious Reduction In Force (RIF) which occurred in 1996 affected the education cadre disproportionately. Education lost 35% of its remaining BS-60 officers, including all five of the mid-career officers inducted in 1990 and serving in Africa, in spite of the fact that the education earmark was still firmly in place. By the mid-Nineties, the Agency's basic education portfolio was continuing each year at a level well over $125 million. Apparently the scepticism with which the Agency's front office had viewed basic education over the nearly thirty years of AID's existence before 1990 still prevailed, in the face of all that was happening at home and abroad to stimulate commitment to basic education.

One last particular on what we did in the basic education category of R&D/ED projects at the end of my period there: recall Larry Summers' summary of the World Bank's findings on the high value of investments in education for girls and women. We had been active in this area for some time. Under the ABEL project we commissioned through Creative Associates some very useful studies on how best to design girls' and women's education projects, based on all the available experience at AID and elsewhere. With the evidence we had and with the demand which we knew was certain to follow, we decided that a separate program was called for.

Ann Van Dusen and Duff Gillespie, who had headed the R&D Bureau's Health and Population Offices, respectively, had become by 1993, following Rich Bissell's departure, our Acting Assistant Administrator and Acting Deputy AA. Even at a time when very few new projects were funded, they firmly encouraged the design of a new program for girls' and women's education. So with the help of Creative Associates, especially May Rihani, and with the in-house assistance of a capable AAAS Fellow, Linda Padgett, who joined us from the Health Office for this purpose, I personally took on the task of outlining the project and mustering higher and wider support. On the basis of this outline, we won the green light from the Education Sector Council and from Agency top management to begin full scale, detailed project design. Just at this time, my tour came to an end and I left for other things. But the Girls' and Women's Education Project (GWED) was approved not long after, along the lines we had traced. One of the Agency's most successful field practitioners of women's education, Suzie Clay, agreed to come in from USAID/Guatemala to manage the new operation.

This list of particulars would not be adequate without a short account of our work in development communication, the other portion of R&D/ED's total portfolio. To an unusual degree, this area of AID activity was associated with the work of one individual, Tony Meyer. But Tony, while based in R&D/ED, typically shared management responsibilities with some other R&D technical office for each project he designed, since development communication is, at base, an applied specialty. As the manager of various contracts, most often with the Academy for Educational Development, Tony had worked with collaborators in the appropriate technical offices, which changed depending on the nature of the program. He did this with S&T/ Health, for example, to promote the use of oral rehydration therapy, as I've mentioned, and with the Agency's AIDS office to urge specific behaviors to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Shortly after he came to R&D/ED, Rich Bissell expressed a lively interest in development communication. As a very effective communicator himself, Rich wanted to know more about AID's experience with the art and how the Agency might make more and better use of a discipline in which AID, in the development community, was already the leading practitioner. So in due course he gave me a very interesting assignment. This was to chair a group consisting of Tony Meyer and all those others in the R&D Bureau and across the Agency who had had first hand experience in the use of this technique. Bissell charged the group with reflecting on what had worked and what had not, and with recommending to him ways in which the Agency could employ "devcom" more systematically in AID's operations.

Fortunately, for a number of years, as I mentioned earlier, S&T/ED had created and regularly funded a Clearinghouse of Development Communication, managed under contract by the Institute for International Research. The Clearinghouse put out a quarterly report on devcom issues and innovations and maintained an information service, including a document collection. To make full use of the resource, we invited Mike Laflin to serve as secretary to our committee. Mike was a professional in the field and was thoroughly familiar with the Clearinghouse and with AID operations.

The committee met at least once a month in the period April 1991 to March 1992. We systematically reviewed, one after another, each of our current and past activities in development communication. After we had made our reviews, we pulled together the major lessons we had learned. Our report in booklet form, entitled "The Substance Behind the Images: AID and Development Communication," provided a neat, readable summary of an area which AID had pioneered. We gave the booklet wide circulation throughout the Agency, the USCEFA family, and the donor community.

At the same time we gave Rich Bissell a set of recommendations for how the Agency could take fuller advantage of the Agency's expertise in this field. We recommended that AID should provide briefings and training of current personnel in the art of devcom, recruit new personnel with this specialty, and, most of all, we should design new activities which utilized this experience. Bissell signed off on many or all of these recommendations and sent them up to the Administrator.

Little did we expect that AID, along with most of the federal government, was to freeze new hiring throughout the rest of the decade. But we proceeded nonetheless, with Tony Meyer leading the way, to apply the art and science of development communication to the environmental sector. We nicknamed the new project GreenCOM. Tony, as usual, managed the project from our Office but the core costs were funded largely by R&D's Environmental Office. The project has received enthusiastic reception and support by our missions, especially those throughout Latin America and Africa.

Q: You were also involved in the Women in Development Office and the University Center. What were you trying to do with those?

REA: Yes. Well, I'm sorry to say that these were both 911, emergency rescue operations. I was called in to direct both offices after they had suffered serious accidents and required an ambulance driver.

Regarding the Women in Development (WID) Office, the political appointee who had directed the Office resigned suddenly over Thanksgiving weekend, 1992. Rich Bissell asked me, while continuing as Director of R&D/ED, to take the position for "a couple of months" until a permanent new Director could be found for WID. These events did not come as a total surprise. The previous June, Bissell had appointed me the co-Chair, along with the WID Director, of the Bureau's WID Action Group. This committee was comprised of the Directors of all the Offices in the R&D Bureau. Our task was to design a plan for making women's activities an integrated part of all our programs. This, plus the fact that my co-Chair was too busy to attend any of our committee meetings, gave me a general familiarity with the WID arena. Also, we in R&D/ED had worked closely with the WID Office, especially in the area of early childhood development. We had heard rumors of discontent in the WID ranks. But I had no idea of how bad things had become until I got there.

The WID Office was larger than our Education Office, with at that time about 20 staff, mostly contract, and a core annual budget which had just been doubled to $10 million. With the energetic direct hire Deputy Director, Martin Hewitt, we worked for weeks to restore team spirit in the Office and months more to schedule the allocation of our funds with the Regional Bureaus. Together, we brought the WID agenda back into focus. Not until August 1993 was another direct hire employee, Kathy Blakeslee, found to replace me as Acting Director. It took a good deal longer after that to find a permanent Director. In the time I was with WID, I think our only new initiative was a program to support the Latin American countries in their preparations for the World Conference on Women, scheduled for Beijing in 1995. This initiative we coordinated with the State Department, which was given the lead in developing the U.S. position and in organizing the U.S. delegation for the Beijing Conference.

Q: And the University Center. What happened there? What was proposed?

REA: Before I can answer that, I need to recall briefly the context. The last year of my tour with R&D/ED was a time of more than usual tumult for the Agency. Bill Clinton was elected President in November, 1992 and rapidly made known who our new Administrator was to be. Upon taking office in January, Brian Atwood relieved Rich Bissell of his duties straight away. But the new Assistant Administrator for our R&D Bureau (soon to be renamed, the Global Bureau) was not appointed and confirmed for a year and a half, in May, 1994. The Clinton Administration firmly believed that the Congress would abolish AID unless the Agency was thoroughly "re-engineered" along lines which Atwood provided. So we spent over a year from the Winter of 1993 until Spring of 1994 reinventing and "right-sizing" ourselves. This exercise combined the usual house cleaning which follows every presidential election with significant alterations to the house itself.

As I've said before, Ann Van Dusen, who served as Rich Bissell's Deputy for a year or so before he left, became the Acting AA. She brought Duff Gillespie over from the Population Office as her Acting Deputy. Their charge was to consolidate R&D's dozen Offices into five "Centers" to form a new "Global" Bureau. To begin the process, they regrouped the Offices into five "Clusters" which were each asked to prepare detailed plans for what the future Centers would do and how they would be staffed. Each Cluster was helped by a corresponding Agency work group. Thanks to this help, we Cluster people managed to get some regular work done while all the reshuffling was going on.

In this way, from November, 1993 through March of the next year, I became the head of the Human Resources Cluster, which grouped the Offices of Education, International Training, Research, and the University Center. To add a dash of spice to the general stew of confusion, the combined budget of the four offices which constituted our Cluster was reduced from $29 million to $8 million in a single year. This ignited exceptional anxiety among our staff, and we had as a result in our Cluster 29 direct hire employees all wondering at once what they would end up doing.

This was the context in which I became directly involved with the University Center. But the Center was undergoing its own identity crisis, only made more difficult by the context I've just described. The Center's crisis was the result of a battle fought at the end of the Ronald Roskens era, before the new Administrator took charge.

U.S. colleges and universities, remember, played a large role in the early years of American foreign assistance. By the Nineties they wanted to continue to do more in developing countries than just to educate and train foreign students on their home campuses. Some very good U.S. higher educational institutions were willing to put up their own funds to share with AID the costs of creating long term "linkages" with universities in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Near East.

To devise a program which could leverage these funds, Roskens brought to AID, as Director of the University Center, one of the best people he could have found. This was Ralph Smuckler, a Dean at Michigan State University who had a long history of involvement with foreign assistance and an inside knowledge of U.S. land grand institutions. Dean Smuckler designed the university linkage program in masterful fashion.

But when he presented his program for approval, the Regional Bureaus, which, as I've said, had a vote on the utility of R&D programs, opposed it vehemently. So far as I know, Administrator Roskens did little to support Smuckler's program. Certainly the Administrator understood the Regional Bureaus' complaint: that as AID funding levels dropped and as Congressional earmarks on remaining funds persisted, very little discretionary funding was available to our field missions to use for programs which they viewed as truly important. From the standpoint of our field missions, the Smuckler program was just another attempt by the U.S. higher education lobby to raid the small amount of funds still available in the Agency to do what the Missions themselves saw needed to be done. In any case, Dean Smuckler's program was shot down and he resigned.

When the new Administrator took office, diminished funding left him with at least two questions regarding the University Center, questions which were really political in nature and had to be resolved at his level. First, Atwood needed to decide what to do about the BIFAD program, which brought together the Title XII land grant institutions in association with AID. Second, his decision was also required on how to manage AID's relationship with the historically black colleges and universities – the HCBUs. These institutions up to this time had received Agency grants each year to fund their unsolicited proposals and to build their home campus capacity to deal with issues which interested AID. The Administrator and his Counsel, Kelly Kammerer, dealt with these funding decisions personally because they involved important constituents of the aid program.

In the meantime, at the day-to-day level, my main concern at the Center was to meet regularly with a staff which had no idea of whether or not the ongoing programs they managed would survive. Even more preoccupying, the Center staff had no idea of where, if anywhere, they would find themselves in the new Center being planned.

At the same time, I was wrestling with two other matters. First, the core budget for the operations of the Office of International Training had not been reduced -- it had been completely eliminated. This left the Training Office totally dependent on funding from the Regional Bureaus, and some arrangement had to be made fast if we were to save the training programs planned for the fiscal year about to begin. My second concern, for the Office of Research, also part of my cluster, was to find final funding for two major Agency research programs, which had suddenly been marked for termination.

Fortunately, for most of this period, November 1993 to March 1994, I was working with my old colleague Norm Rifkin, who always seemed to turn up at the right time. Norm had just come in from our Mission in Indonesia, where he had been our Chief Education Advisor. He now was assigned to lead the work group which would help us design our new Center for Human Capacity Development.

We had not only to come up with a plan for the Center, but we were also asked to present a rationale for why education should have its own, separate Center rather than becoming part of one of the others – the Economic Growth Center, for example -- as many were arguing should happen. Ultimately, our rationale and our plan both won favor thanks in large measure to Norm's strong political instincts. I became the Acting Director of the new HRDC Center in March, 1994 and helped to prepare the newly designated Assistant Administrator, Sally Shelton-Colby, for her confirmation hearings on the Hill. My four year tour having officially ended in February, Sally approved my request to leave the Bureau on June 1 for a new assignment. She also approved Norm as my replacement as Acting Director. All was finally in order and Norm was all set to take over when on May 21st I suffered a light heart attack and had to withdraw for several weeks to recover – fully and without damage, I'm happy to say. The work of the new Center never missed a beat. Norm arrived fully briefed, became Acting Director on schedule, and the transition occurred without a hitch.

When I came back to work full time, at the end of July, I found myself again temporarily ineligible for an overseas assignment, and again for health reasons. This time, the Africa Bureau asked me to lend a hand with organizing the new Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHAI), under the leadership of one of the Agency's most renowned remaining veterans, Ted Morse. I served as Ted's Deputy for five interesting months.

Q: On the Greater Horn initiative, what were you trying to do?

REA: The Greater Horn of Africa was a Presidential Initiative to encourage a more comprehensive approach to the problems of, arguably, the world's most distressed region. The initiative was an interagency affair, led by our Administrator, but closely followed, as Presidential Initiatives always are, by the National Security Council. Ted and I, as the two direct hire officers involved, led a small and dedicated core staff of six full-time specialists. Together with representatives of offices from across the Agency, we formed a working group which met regularly and reported to the Assistant Administrator for Africa, John Hicks.

Our general charge was to develop a plan to deal with, as our mission statement read, the root causes and short term consequences of chronic instability in northeastern Africa, the area from the Red Sea to Tanzania. The "Greater Horn" referred to a group of ten countries which included, in the northern tier, the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia, and in the south, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Formally, Rwanda and Burundi were part of this region, as well, but for practical purposes they were managed separately owing to the atrocities earlier that year (1994) and the involvement of eastern Zaire. Our immediate task was to draft a "concepts paper" which would serve as a framework for a long term strategic plan to achieve "food security and crisis prevention" in the region. We presented this paper to various audiences, using expertly designed visual overheads, and secured approval in November 1994 to move ahead to develop a first year budget. This was approved and the Agency allocated a modest amount, $15 million for each of FY '95 and '96, for activities we proposed. These funds were "new money," over and above the amounts allocated to our several missions in the same region.

Clearly, there were some parallels between the Greater Horn initiative and the Sahel program which I had helped to mount and manage two decades before. But despite heroic efforts by Ted and his chief technical expert, Christy Cook, the GHAI did not receive nearly the degree of AID or donor support we had enjoyed earlier for the Sahel. The Administrator was severely constrained in the new funding he could allocate without the special support of the Congress. Our Missions in the area and REDSO/EA all were already managing on-going programs and were not convinced that a new initiative could greatly improve upon their efforts. In fact, they were naturally nervous that their budgets might be reduced to make room for this new presidential brainchild. The other donors reacted coolly, anticipating that this plan might be a ploy to extract from them funding for an international program for which the U.S. would then take credit. Despite all this, the Greater Horn was certainly deserving of all the attention we could give it. We got the GHAI funded and off to as good a start as we could expect under the circumstances.

Just at this point, in January 1995, the Management Bureau made an enthusiastic appeal for my help. John Hummon, who had been the Program Officer in Tanzania when I first arrived there in 1966, and Irv Coker, the Deputy Director of the Sahel Program to whom I had reported in the 1974-76 period and who was now a private consultant, asked if I would be willing to serve as the Chair of a new Agency personnel panel. Normally, I would not have found this request compelling. But this panel was different. It had just been created to help select AID's first major intake of direct hire officers in a number of years, a subject I felt was of vital importance. Also, I had just finished doing what I thought I could do best with and for Ted Morse on the Greater Horn, and Ted consented to my transfer.

My only apprehension in taking on the new assignment was that it might prove futile. I feared that the Agency's operating expenditures (OE) account would not be adequate to enable us to bring on the new officers we so badly needed. So before accepting the assignment I made known my concern about the potential shortage of OE funding. In response, I was told that the Administrator had assured Management that the Agency needed the new recruits so badly that he was prepared to sacrifice elsewhere, if necessary, to make room for them. With this assurance, I enthusiastically accepted.

On February 8, 1995, I joined the selection panel and we began the interviews. A long period of pre-selection had already taken place, in which technical panels for each of the major skills areas – health, education, agriculture, and so on – had sifted through literally thousands of applications to identify the 220 technically best qualified candidates for the 70 positions available, 40 at mid-level and 30 intern positions.

Our panel was established as an innovation in the selection process. We were to interview each of the 220 finalists and to select the 70 distributed among the various technical specialties with the best interpersonal and management skills. Irv Coker had done a great deal of work to give us the standard questions we would ask and the procedures we needed to make the selection, and he joined me and two others on the panel. The other members were Barbara Howard, my former Deputy Program Officer in Senegal, and Mary Huntington, both veteran officers with long AID experience in the field.

Our panel met day in and day out from February 8 through May 17 interviewing each of the 220 candidates. We then ran final selection panels with representatives of each of the technical panels, which included specialists from the Regional Bureaus and the Global Bureau, to come up with our final choices. We were all very impressed by the high quality of men and women whom we interviewed. They were so eager to join our Agency on a career basis that they paid their own way to an hour's interview with us. Some came from across the country and others from across the sea. One flew in from Nepal. Their enthusiasm was extremely gratifying to all of us. Despite the long hours together, for over three months, our panel worked very constructively together. John Hummon and his Deputy, Pam White, were very pleased with the results, and our technical colleagues, especially so.

Regrettably, the entire exercise turned out to be a complete waste of time. The Agency hired just a very few, a handful, of the candidates, including some we had not even recommended. I learned this later from my position at the National Defense University.

Q: What happened?

REA: Our worst fear: in the end, despite the assurances we had received, the OE funding did not materialize. This disappointment was compounded soon after, in 1996, when the infamous Reduction in Force (RIF) exercise flushed out over 90 of the Agency's best mid-career Foreign Service officers. The one consolation in retrospect, I suppose, is that if the Agency had hired the 70 candidates whom we recommended, they all would have been fired the very next year.

Q: What about the National Defense University? What were you doing there?

Teaches at ICAF – 1995-1997

REA: I accepted an assignment to the faculty at ICAF, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, where I served my final two years as an AID employee as the AID Chair and led seminars in political science, African area studies, and in the ICAF signature course, the "Elements of National Power."

By Spring 1995 I had two years to go until my Time In Class (TIC) ran out. An overseas assignment for this brief period was out of the question. The person responsible for "executive management" assignments, Bob McDonald, told me that AID had a position at ICAF which he had not been able to fill for two or three years. Bob and his Deputy, Carla Royalty, saw a good fit for me there and suggested I take the job.

Recall that at this time, after Management had made sharp cuts in training for AID personnel (including the most regrettable deep-sixing of the Development Studies Program), the only long term training opportunities which the Agency still offered its employees were the ten month programs at ICAF and the National War College. Both Colleges are situated side by side on the campus of the National Defense University, which is located at Ft. McNair in South West Washington, D.C. near the point where the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers come together. AID maintained one position for an instructor at each of the Colleges, in return for which each school accepted, tuition free, one or two AID officers every year for the August to June training course.

When Bob first suggested to me teaching at ICAF I was interested but cautious, since I wasn't drawn to "industrial" studies, as ICAF's name implied. Since nobody was around at AID who was teaching or had taught at ICAF, I went over to Ft. McNair to talk with AID's current instructor at the War College, a former Assistant Administrator whom I had much admired, Mary Kilgour. I also spoke with the AID Officer then in training at ICAF, Richard Byess, an experienced field officer whom I had known when he served in Mali. Both assured me that a tour at ICAF would be two of the best years of my career. They urged me to accept the assignment. I did. They were right.

I won't say much about ICAF, since my time there would not shed much light on the history of AID operations. But I do have a couple of comments which may be relevant.

The first is that the quality of the AID officers who trained at ICAF made me very proud. Nearly every year, as I learned from the plaques on the walls, and as I observed during my two years there, an AID officer ranked in ICAF's top ten per cent of graduates, the honor roll. This was not easily done, since ICAF and the War College both trained some of the best mid-career officers in the U.S. foreign affairs agencies. These included the five military services, the State Department, USIA, and the CIA. Moreover, I saw that even those of our people who were not ranked in the top 10% of their class were accustomed to dealing with the really large world issues of our time: population growth, environmental degradation, food and water supply, illiteracy, disease, poverty, and human rights. My fellow instructors were invariably delighted to have an AID officer assigned to their seminars because, as they frequently told me, the AID people stirred up many of the most useful discussions.

Despite the high quality of our officers, however, my other observation was sobering. AID's profile was nearly invisible for the vast majority of our students. In the two years I taught at ICAF, not a single student in any of my seminars initiated a comment about U.S. foreign assistance, pro or con. Except among our State Department brethren, it was assumed, where AID was recognized at all, that we had more or less merged into State as USIA was doing or, to the less well informed, that AID had somehow become a kind of adjunct to the World Bank.

The one area in which the work of our Agency had clear definition was in our disaster assistance role. Here we often worked closely with Air Force transport personnel and Army engineers. But I noted that even this function, administered by our Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), nearly always turned up in the press without any recognition that OFDA was a part of AID. So I was left with the impression that by the second half of the 1990s, if not before, AID had almost entirely disappeared off the public and professional radar. As our military colleagues might have said in the lingo of the day, AID by this time had gone "stealthy."

Q: Well, some final comments. Looking back over your career, what is your feeling about U.S. foreign assistance in international development? Has it made a difference?

Concluding Observations

REA: My feeling, despite the management problems I experienced at the end, is very positive. Overall, I believe that the U.S. foreign assistance program has made a constructive difference in doing what we set out to do: to improve the conditions of life in the societies with which we have worked, and to expand the range of choices for individuals within those societies in a sustainable fashion. We've done so directly, through our own programs, but perhaps even more so indirectly, by our support of donor partners of all stripes, public and private. We've made many mistakes, but I believe that we have learned from them. We've sown a great deal of seed, and much has fallen on rocky ground. But some, too, has multiplied a thousandfold. At the same time, I have the sense that the U.S. foreign assistance chapter is closing, at least in terms of "development." I hope I'm wrong, but it appears to me that AID is becoming more closely allied with the short-term goals of U.S. foreign policy, including Presidential Initiatives. AID appears to be more than ever responsive to the many humanitarian and development interests, praiseworthy as they all may be, upon which we depend for support in the Congress. AID seems to be, to coin a word, disaggregating.

While we all may have our own special feelings about AID, I think everyone who has worked with the Agency agree on a few things about the climate, or context, in which we work: that AID is too bureaucratic, our contracting too slow and restrictive, our programming too rigid. Congress micromanages us too much, State deflects too many resources from developmental purposes. The American public is in the dark about what we do and how much we spend. It's easy to talk about the context in ways like this. But AID is itself the proverbial elephant and more difficult to describe. It is nearly 40 years old. It is large and lumbering – but also contains much more intelligence than it may look at first appearance. And our only real knowledge of AID depends for each of us, as for the equally proverbial blind man, on the areas of the beast we each have touched personally.

As my account bears out, I've touched AID at two main points: at the African point, both from the Washington and the field ends, and at the global point, in the R&D Bureau. At both points my work has been almost entirely concerned with the side of AID which deals with development, as contrasted with disaster assistance or "security" motivated programming. I'm very grateful to have avoided some of the great sink-holes of AID's history – Vietnam, for example, and the waste of our efforts in the Cold War African extravagances of Liberia, Zaire, the Sudan, and Somalia. These four country programs ate up a fifth of the $22 billion we have put into Africa in the fifty years since 1945. So I've been one of the fortunate ones, and the nature of my experience with AID must color my positive feelings about U.S. foreign assistance generally.

But I have a good deal of evidence to support these positive feelings. The other day I had a chance to go over the account which the Africa Bureau put out in 1996, "Making a Difference." The report, among other things, lists some of the results which our African programs have achieved over the years. I took notes on the results of some of the programs on which I have worked at first hand. I'd like to cite just a few of these to give you a better sense of why I am positive about what we have done.

According to the 1996 Report:

• In Madagascar, our partnership with IRRI and the Malagasy Agriculture Research Institute has produced new rice varieties that double yields without fertilizer and achieve 300% to 400% increases with fertilizer. Nine varieties of rice suited for various situations were released in 1995 alone.

• In South Africa, we assisted a program of interactive radio lessons called "English in Action." The radio lessons and companion classroom materials are produced by the Open Learning Systems Educational Trust for pilot programs in four provinces. Students now using the daily lesson have tested significantly higher on skills tests than students in comparison groups. A teacher spoke for her colleagues in saying that in over 30 years of teaching, she "had never come across something as good as this."

• In Senegal, anti-salt and water retention dikes have led to a 20% increase in cultivated land in the Casamance region of the south. In the north, encroaching sand dunes have been stabilized through tree-planting funded with Title III resources. Other donors expanded on our success so that, today, the entire northern coast covering 4000 hectares has been reforested and is now Senegal's primary vegetable production zone.

•Botswana in September 1995 became AID's first African "graduate" country, our first host-country in Africa to achieve a sustainable level of development. In addition, the report lists our ten year basic education program there as one of the most important of our contributions. The S&T/ED office helped to design this program and we continued to backstop the program after I came to the ED Office. The Botswana basic education program was one of our most comprehensive undertakings. As the AFR report points out, it centered on the development of a new curriculum and was coupled with the training of 80% of the country's primary and secondary school teachers. This training took place at various teacher colleges which AID constructed and equipped. The most important of these was the new education department of the University of Botswana, which has now become a regional center, as well. During the 10 years of the project, the number of primary schools in Botswana increased by 40% and enrollment expanded by 60%. Today, primary and junior secondary school enrollment in Botswana is above 90% and adult literacy is over 80%, much higher than in any other African country.

• In the Sahel region as a whole, African states and donors organized a famine early warning system (FEWS), developed more drought resistant grains and liberalized agricultural markets. These investments have helped avert disaster in the Sahel in the two decades since. What is more, the approach taken in the Sahel was adapted to Southern Africa after the 1991-92 drought disaster there, when AID provided that region with $800 million in relief. Using the Sahel Program experience, farmers in the region planted the drought resistant varieties of maize, millet, and sorghum AID had helped develop. Governments in the region adopted the open agriculture market policies which we encouraged. So when drought of a similar magnitude returned to Southern Africa a couple of years later, no emergency donor food aid was required at all. (Ted Morse, who had been the USAID Director in Zimbabwe during that time, was immensely pleased with this result. He was hard at work applying these lessons to the Greater Horn region at the time he asked me to assist him with that Initiative.)

These are all examples of where AID has made a difference. I have chosen from the Report only the examples which grew out of work which I have had a hand in doing. But the Report gives many other examples. And these, let's remember, are all drawn from what our Africa Bureau likes to call the "final frontier" of development, Sub-Saharan Africa, collectively recognized as the Agency's hardest case countries. It's not hard to think of the even greater success which U.S. foreign assistance has enjoyed worldwide in such countries as Turkey, Taiwan, Thailand, and South Korea, some of our other "graduates." We have helped to plant the seeds of development. Most of our discouragement comes, I think, when we do not look at our work in a large enough perspective, or with too short a time line. This is particularly true in Africa.

Q: In what areas do you think AID or the foreign assistance program has made over the *years the most significant contributions?*

REA: From what I've seen and learned, AID's most important work overall has been in the three major areas of food production, family planning, and health and child survival.

A great deal has been written about our role in South Asia, particularly, in fostering the Green Revolution. The agriculture research stations represented by the CGIAR (the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research), which AID with the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations did so much to establish, have done outstanding work with each of the major food crops upon which the human race depends. At the same time, we've also learned and transmitted a great deal about the kinds of infrastructure and agricultural policies which are equally essential to major advances in food production.

In family planning AID is credited with having the most expertise of any development agency, and we have provided half the international funding for this world-wide effort.

Our leadership and support in health and child survival, especially with the "twin motors" of oral rehydration practices and inoculation campaigns, have been exemplary. More recently, we have been a leader in the HIV/AIDS arena.

More intangible, but I think just as evident, has been the influence of our thinking in extremely important areas of development such as the environment, women in development, and good governance.

I would also maintain that AID has played an important role in formal education. The Agency made very significant contributions to higher education in the 1960's with capital funds and technical assistance to build up post-secondary institutions. This work included the introduction of our land grant college model, which combined education with research and extension services -- even though host countries did not always apply the concept as intended. Since the mid-1980s, we have made very constructive contributions in basic education using our systems approach, sometimes combined with technology.

It's true that we haven't contributed nearly as much funding and person power in these latter areas as we have in agriculture, family planning, and health. But what we have done, and especially the way in which we have configured our programs to ensure that environmental impact and gender equity issues are always accounted for in everything we do, has been widely noted and adopted by the donor community. Thanks largely to our example and our influence on the World Bank and other donor organizations, our environmental and gender equity practices have been accepted as integral and necessary parts of any responsible approach to sustainable development. Also, at the present time we may be ploughing new ground in the promotion of democratic practices.

But I would hope that anyone interested in the answer to your question would refer to Joe Wheeler's reply, which I trust is part of this oral history series. As a former Deputy Administrator of AID who went on to Chair the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, and as one who was a chief organizer of the World Conference on the

Environment and Development at Rio in 1992, Mr. Wheeler is one of the few former AID foreign service officers of whom I am aware -- you, Ray Love and Art Fell are three others because of the work you have done since leaving AID -- with the large perspective which is needed to do complete justice to your question.

If you asked me to tell you in one word what I believe to be AID's most significant achievement, I think that word would be "education" – education in the widest, historic sense. "Education" interpreted broadly has been the common denominator in all of our programs, everywhere. I'm not just thinking of the many thousands of men and women whom we have trained in long and short term courses and as counterparts on the job, or of the children and young people enrolled in formal education programs we have supported. But in everything we have done, even in the failures where our time and money may seem to have been entirely wasted, our efforts at development have conveyed a set of attitudes: that problems can be solved, change can be directed, technologies matter, policies are important, free market democracy is a goal worth striving for, and that you can get there from here. Whatever else we have done, our foreign assistance program has been a powerful agent for education in this sense, although we have made a greater impact in some societies, at different levels, and during certain times than others.

Q: Well, what about your own views and your experience overall?

REA: If we can, I suppose we all choose the career which will teach us the most about what chiefly interests us and which offers us at the same time a chance to make a difference. For anyone attracted by what it is that makes countries grow and flourish, and for anyone who wants to help large groups of people to get a handle on a better life, I would certainly recommend a career in foreign assistance. For me, AID all by itself has been a liberal education. My colleagues have come from every specialty and background. Our host country national colleagues have taught me much more than I have them. The opportunity to work and live and travel in the major regions of Sub-Saharan Africa – East, South, West, and the Indian Ocean – has been the adventure of a lifetime.

Q: If some young person came up to you and said I'm looking for a career, would you recommend a career in this business in AID?

REA: Yes. I tell everyone the same thing, I must admit. Here, I'm confident I know the best route to take. I recommend that undergraduates test their interest in our kind of work by getting experience in a developing region, either in the Peace Corps or in some other way. Next, assuming this test was positive, I advise that he or she take an M.A. or equivalent in a professional program with a strong international component, including some grounding in economics and another language. I do recommend that they apply to AID directly, but I would insist that they apply at the same time to all the AID contractors in their professional field. I don't encourage young people to expect a career with AID. There are too many signals lately that the Agency which we have known, oriented towards long-term growth and development, is evolving into something else. Meanwhile, NGOs like the Carter Center are more important, autonomous channels than before. Of course, there are all the multilaterals, as well. And many other avenues for encouraging growth abroad are emerging, especially in trade and investment.

Q: Let's stop at that point. Thanks for the excellent interview.

REA: You are most welcome. Thank you for the opportunity.

End of interview