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**DAVID SHEAR**

*Interviewed by: W. Haven North  
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## INTERVIEW

*Q: How long did you serve in AID?*

SHEAR: For 22 years, from May 1961 until January 4, 1984.

*Q: Let's start off with your early years: where you are from, where you grew up, your education, and anything that suggests how or why you became interested in international development work.*

### Early Years, Education and Work Experience

SHEAR: I was born in New York City, in the Bronx, in 1932, and then moved to Bergen County, New Jersey, when I was five years old because my mother could no longer take care of my brother and me. My brother went to a welfare home and I was placed with my mother's sister and brother-in-law. That was a wonderful opportunity for me, although I didn't realize it at the time. It allowed me to grow up in an environment which was largely rural, but close enough to New York City to take advantage of both the sports and the culture of the city, and to experience a great deal of freedom of movement.

*Q: What town was this?*

SHEAR: Ramsey, New Jersey, which is about 30 miles from New York City. Ramsey was tucked up next to the Ramapo Mountains, so right behind the town there was a fairly substantial wilderness. As I grew up, I was able to enjoy a good deal of fishing, and even supported myself with a trap line for three years. I had to go to work when I was 13, and so early on I began to develop both a fairly strong work ethic and substantial energy in that direction. What was initially a requirement later became a pattern of life. It must have been then that I began to appreciate the importance of trying to help people out of poverty. When I was 17, I took off to travel around the country. We were gone for six months, leaving in June and returning in time for Thanksgiving.

*Q: "We?" This was your family?*

SHEAR: No, I was with a friend who had just graduated from high school. I was between my junior and senior years. On that trip we worked with migrant workers in California and Oregon, and we also had jobs in a lumber camp.

For two weeks I worked as a short-order cook in New Mexico, and it was some of the best management training I ever had. During that time, despite my own sense of being somewhat deprived in my background, I came to realize that I was really fortunate. Many around me had much less. Working with those Mexican migrants, I felt strongly the importance of family and culture. Until then I had carried around a lot of personal hostility toward the world, but that experience did a great deal to mute it. I began to appreciate the dignity of people living with the scourge of poverty, enduring stress and very difficult circumstances, with little prospect of change or progress. And so, I guess I developed a sense of purpose, even though I could not have defined it at that time. I worked the year after I graduated from Ramsey High School, because my family did not have funds for me to go to college. I held down two full-time jobs for six months; one in the town in which I grew up and the other in Passaic, New Jersey. Including the commute, it took up to 18 hours a day. I managed to save a fair amount of money, but I also ran myself into the ground. Then I switched to one full-time job in Ramsey and worked part time in a nearby factory.

*Q: What did these jobs entail?*

SHEAR: The full-time job was cutting sweatbands for men's hats. I was a leather cutter in the factory, and during that time invented an automatic sweatband-cutting machine. I got some extra money from the owner of the company for that, and I was also sweeping factory floors in the evening. I saved enough money to go to New York University. I had applied to Rutgers only to learn that my high school grades (about a B-minus average) were not good enough, but NYU would take anybody in at that point in time, although they flunked you just as quickly. Once I entered NYU and got into a college environment, the whole world seemed to turn over for me. I found the instructors much more sympathetic than my high school teachers; I had always read a great deal, and that enrichment I had undertaken on my own in high school stood me in good stead. By the beginning of the second term of my first year, I was on partial scholarship. By the time I was a sophomore, I was on full scholarship, and I ended up getting honors in philosophy, English and history.

In my senior year, I married Barbara, who had grown up in the same town that I did; she had graduated a year before from Cooper Union, which had a three-year program. We set up housekeeping in the lower east side of New York City right near Greenwich Village, where Barbara worked as a commercial artist and provided most of our income. I was then fortunate enough to get a Woodrow Wilson National fellowship, which permitted me to go to any graduate school in the country that would accept me. Then undertaking renaissance and medieval studies, I thought I would become a university professor, as this scholarship was intended to encourage people to go into teaching. The program, well funded by the Mellon Foundation, was just getting under way. I was one of ten national recipients of the scholarship, and mine was from the mid-Atlantic area. I went to Harvard.

The first three of my next six years at Harvard were serious in terms of my graduate studies. I then became less and less interested, until I realized, first with a great deal of

discomfort and much later with some understanding, that I was not intended to be a dedicated researcher. I missed the company of people. I missed the interchange of ideas. And I didn't enjoy the solitary life of a scholar.

During my fifth year in graduate school, two outside activities had a significant effect upon me. For one, I became an advisor to a small company in Newton, Massachusetts, which was developing a line of camping foods. I had always enjoyed the out-of-doors and had worked as a counselor in a number of camps, for the most part in the camp craft and nature areas. I would often negotiate to design an entire nature or camping program so I could earn more than just the rate paid to be a counselor. Even then I had some kind of entrepreneurial sense, and that stood me in good stead with this small company that supplied dehydrated food to the military. I helped them to develop a line of special dried foods for sale to summer camps. The enterprise was successful, and I ended up supervising 27 part-time salesmen from St. Louis to the East Coast.

*Q: What year was this?*

SHEAR: That was in 1959 and 1960. I worked at that part time while going to graduate school. I had completed my general exams, but was still writing my dissertation when I got an opportunity to work with the African Studies Program at Boston University. There I had the good fortune to encounter some exceptional teachers in modern European history, and had already shifted my interest from the medieval and renaissance period to more modern times, which led me into the history of imperialism and, subsequently, Africa.

*Q: Who were these professors? Can you remember their names?*

SHEAR: There was a professor by the name of Frank Beal from the University of London, who was a visiting professor at Harvard. He had a very strong influence in terms of turning my interest from European diplomacy and the intellectual history to the diplomacy of imperialism in Africa. Another was Rupert Emerson of Harvard, one of the preeminent scholars on the history of imperialism. While I didn't work directly with him, I certainly got encouragement from his presence at the campus.

*Q: Why Africa? Why not somewhere else?*

SHEAR: In my very early reading, I had been absorbed with history and had a very strong interest in natural history. I was a very lonely little boy in a small town, but I came to be influenced by people from the city. I encountered Roy Chapman Andrews, who was the curator of the Museum of Natural History in New York City. Carl Lutz was the curator of entomology, and there was a third person whose name I can't recall who worked at the museum as arachnid curator. Every once in awhile on Saturdays they would suggest I come into New York from Ramsey. I had the privilege of being with them in the working rooms in the Museum of Natural History, and that stimulated my interest in both natural history and Africa, because much of what we dealt with was African.

In my town there was also a man who took me under his wing; I always had a facility for finding father substitutes. Mr. Rouse had a barn with about 3,000 volumes in it; he was a retired engineer from AT&T who had grown up out west and had a very strong sense of natural history. He also had a very large library of Africana, and so early on I was exposed to Livingston's *Journals* and a wealth of other information about the continent. I enjoyed adventure writing, too, like Martin Johnson and that kind of thing. This all came together in an opportunity to work for the African Studies Program at Boston University, which was then conducting an assessment, or long-term research program, on the nature of British Colonial Administration from 1810 to 1910, and the period immediately following the Boer War. I became deeply engaged in the nature of imperialism and colonial administration, and worked on that project for a year and a half.

*Q: Who was the head of the African Studies Program?*

SHEAR: Bill Brown was in charge, and Jeff Butler was the person with whom I was working directly. An Englishman, he was an Africanist as well; he led the research effort and I was his research assistant. During that time, as you know, AID began to express interest in Africa, and the African Studies Program at Boston University was the venue for some orientation programs. My fascination with Africa was becoming more and more focused on contemporary issues. I had an opportunity through the Foreign Affairs Council in Boston to meet Tom Mboya and Julius Nyerere. They further stimulated me, along with the events surrounding the beginnings of independence. This was in 1960 and 1961.

### **Participation in First USAID Orientation Program for New Field Staff: 1960**

Interest in Africa then led me to participate marginally in a briefing at BU of one of the first AID groups going out to Africa. One member of that AID group was to be responsible for recruiting interns for AID, a chap by the name Ernie Ladenheim, who was more of an observer of how the BU orientation program was going. Even though I had but a modest role in that briefing, I had done a good deal of public speaking and made presentations while at Harvard. I participated as the African specialist in two international seminars which Henry Kissinger ran while he was Deputy Director of the Institute for International Studies under William Yandell Elliot. I also undertook some speaking engagements for the League of Women Voters during the McCarthy period, tackling civil liberties issues, particularly in the Concord-Lexington area, a wonderfully symbolic environment in which to discuss such important ideas.

Anyway, my brief exposure to AID was sufficient to become noticed, I guess. At their suggestion, I submitted an application for Federal employment. I heard nothing, though, and literally forgot about it. Then one Saturday morning about six months after submitting the application, I got a telephone call. Barbara and I had just moved into a new apartment and we were putting up bookshelves when the call came. A voice said, "My name is Ernie Ladenheim, and I'm from AID. Would you be interested in being an AID intern and working in Africa?"

I didn't know what an AID intern was, I didn't know what the salary was, I had no idea where in Africa I would be, but I said yes. Both my wife and I had become somewhat uneasy with the comfortable life we were living in Cambridge, and I felt growing concern about my lack of direction. We were aware that many around us were quite stimulated by John Kennedy's having been elected President, and there was a great sense of social purpose in the air. All around Harvard could be heard, "We're just waiting for the telephone call to go down to Washington." Some of them actually did get the telephone call, although most did not, but this was the conversation at most parties we attended. In effect, Ernie Ladenheim was my call from John F. Kennedy.

Learning more details about the program, I found that the salary would be less than I was making in the Cambridge area from my position as sales manager with the camping foods company and my summer jobs put together. And Barbara's income was then fairly substantial; she was a well paid commercial artist with an advertising agency. Even so, we both felt this was a wonderful opportunity. We also had just found that Barbara was pregnant, but that didn't deter us, although it certainly caused her mother some concern. I began my AID career on May 1, 1961, as an overseas intern.

### **Becoming an Intern at USAID; Assignment in Nigeria: 1961**

*Q: This was in the IDI program?*

SHEAR: Yes, the International Development Intern program. I spent the next six months in Washington undergoing orientation.

*Q: What kind of an orientation did you get?*

SHEAR: Very mixed. Six months was really much too long for the substance of what we were being exposed to. We were sat down in some offices and told to read the manual orders, which we did. I also spent time in the AID message center, I remember, where we were told to look at the mail coming down the chute that was the *heart*, the nerve center of AID. Nevertheless, it was extremely useful to see the whole range of AID offices, to talk to people at all levels, and then to spend about three months on the Nigeria Desk. That was during the summer of 1961. I was scheduled to go to Nigeria in November, and our first child, Elizabeth, was born in October.

And to Nigeria I did go. Vince Brown was the desk officer; he was excellent at it, and he gave me a good opportunity to become active on the desk. I also found, to my pleasure, that working on the desk combined a lot of - I can't use the word talents, but perhaps competencies - I had developed. I liked to follow things through. I liked to write. I liked interacting with others. I liked to make presentations and to brief people. The desk was to me the nexus of interesting people absorbed in examining Nigeria as the recipient of a multi-year commitment. Arnold Rifkin, a figure at MIT, was one of the external principals in getting approval for that \$225 million U.S. commitment to Nigeria's first

five-year plan. During that time I had the opportunity to meet with AID Director Joel Bernstein, and also with Haven North, who was the program officer.

*Q: What was your impression of AID at that time?*

SHEAR: I thought AID was probably establishing too many constraints on itself to be effective. It was really a fairly incoherent idea, but one which became increasingly clear after I got on the ground.

*Q: What do you mean by that?*

SHEAR: Except for providing capital goods through loans, AID's initial internal policies, if not regulations, kept it from providing any substantial commodities on a grant basis. As a result, it was very difficult to have the desired impact in terms of designing projects. The guidelines clearly allowed us to provide commodities that were essentially demonstration, but we could not cover recurring costs. Grants funded technical assistance in the classical sense, and training. We didn't have a full appreciation then of the importance of sustaining these efforts through some form of direct or indirect budgetary support which could be commodities, and not necessarily cash. Also, the 12-month program cycle - geared to the U.S. fiscal year - was too short, which bothered me for years in AID. It was very difficult to get technicians especially to focus on longer term planning and to look at root core problems. Even at that early time, these were not very clear ideas, but they troubled me.

*Q: Did you have an impression of a specific AID development policy or strategy at that time, or was it just "anything goes?"*

SHEAR: It's interesting that you mention that, because I find it hard to call up a development strategy other than to focus on certain sectors of interest (not in the way we think of it now. We had sectors of interest: education, agriculture and, to a more limited degree, health. But there was no clear strategic framework in which we were operating. And that may have been one of the problems that we had in Nigeria. Thinking back, the USAID Nigeria Mission probably had about as competent a group of people as I ever worked with in AID. Certainly this applies to Joel Bernstein and Bill Kontos in the director's office, and Haven North and others in the program office. In the education sector we had some quite outstanding people, but we were somewhat weaker in the agricultural area. There was at the same time a major, almost psychologically imposed, constraint. And linked to that was the belief that we as Americans could solve Africa's problems quickly; that they were essentially managerial and technical constraints. We had very little appreciation of the underlying political circumstances in Africa - cultural ones, which were such fundamental constraints. And we also didn't understand quite clearly - and one can't be too critical of this - the different characteristics of the physical environment in Africa; how fundamentally different those soils were in responding to various inputs for agriculture production. And we certainly didn't understand the depth of the ethnic differences that existed in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa. We came in during the flush of Kennedy optimism, thinking that some money but mostly the technical

application of our managerial skills could solve a lot of things. Conventional wisdom said that all Africa really needed was to be unleashed from the shackles of colonialism and it would just take off.

*Q: We'll go into that in more detail later. What was the situation in Nigeria when you arrived?*

SHEAR: Things were already quite tense. It was about six months after I arrived that Chief Awolowo, who was one of the leaders in Western Nigeria and a Yoruba political leader, was arrested. It was found that he had been receiving both money and arms from Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana. Early on the situation turned into a constitutional crisis of great proportions, and during that time the riots began in Lagos. I remember coming out of the Ministry for Finance one day after getting a project agreement signed, only to hear loud thumping on the roof of the car. We had inadvertently driven into the middle of a rock-throwing melee between some rioters and the police, and had to drive straight across a park area in order to escape it. It was clear that there was a lot more tension than we had been initially aware of. I also think that the AID mission was somewhat insulated from Nigeria's political realities, and this may have been a fault of how the U.S. mission was run. It didn't seem to me, at least at my level, that we were sufficiently informed. It may have been different at more senior levels, but certainly we who were working in areas like project planning felt we did not have access to very good political information.

At the same time, the environment within the society of Nigeria was really fascinating. I also taught an evening course at the USIS on American history. My students were a really terrific group of young Nigerians who were terribly interested in American history, consumed with America. So there was a lot of pro-Americanism, and the firm belief that if Nigeria could emulate the American model rather than the British model, they could advance more rapidly.

*Q: What was your position and assigned function?*

SHEAR: My position was a very modest one; I was an intern and then program analyst. My main function was really budget analysis and management. I was given some specific projects to oversee, but for the most part I worked on the overall structure of the budget, working with Don Miller, the assistant program officer, drafting agreements and seeing that they were executed within the constraints of our budget year. During that time I had an opportunity to travel to just about every corner of Nigeria (an enormously important experience for me). It gave me an appreciation of its diverse culture, which was wonderfully stimulating. Being in Nigeria, I described at that time, was like working in a "black Europe." The cultural differences were profound, and the background of the North quite different from the East or the Middle Belt, each having very strong values and the sense of their own historical culture. The art (both traditional and contemporary) was also very exciting. My wife, being an artist, gave us insights and access to elements of Nigeria's society that we might not have otherwise realized. Also, I thought that Ambassador Joe Palmer was exceptionally good. He displayed a very welcoming personality. I have no idea how effective were his analytical skills or even his ultimate



diplomatic skills, but in terms of making those of us fairly low down in seniority at the mission feel welcome, both he and his wife were superb. During that time there was a visit by the first American astronauts to Nigeria, under USIS auspices. My wife Barbara helped mount the USIS exhibition. There was a general feeling that this was a new age dawning for both the United States and Africa, and as a consequence, a strong sense of optimism on the part of many people at fairly modest levels in the Nigerian society.

*Q: You talked about a Rivkin Initiative. What was the United States trying to do vis-(a-vis) Nigeria? What was our world policy or strategy?*

SHEAR: The strategy was, if I understood it, to show very strong support for Nigeria's five-year plan, and by doing so to show strong support for Balewa, the first President. He was a northerner and a Muslim in a country that was largely Muslim but with very large Christian and animist populations, so it was thought that he stood a good chance of keeping these diverse groups together. It was also an early opportunity to demonstrate a major transfer of U.S. resources to a newly independent African country. Under the old Development Loan Fund a major loan had been made to the Akosombo Dam in Ghana, just a year before Nigeria's independence. Ghana had achieved independence four years earlier. The Akosombo Dam was the first manifestation under the Kennedy Administration of strong support for African independence and related economic development. A major political message was clear: the United States was prepared to continue solidly promoting the decolonization of Africa and the birth of independent states.

*Q: What about the program itself? What were we doing?*

SHEAR: The program was essentially focused, and I think in many ways correctly so, on education and training. We helped to begin new faculties. I recall the University of Nigeria at Nsukka in the Eastern Region; the University of Lagos (education); Ahmadou Bello University at Kaduna (agriculture, veterinary medicine, and public administration) in the Northern Region; and the University of Ife (agriculture) in the Western Region. The emphasis on education was well placed. A very large participant training program to send Nigerians to the United States was initiated, and I think that also proved to be extremely successful. We were much less successful in the area of agricultural development. In my role as a budget analyst (and indirectly an allocator of funds), time and time again I ran up against projects that sought to transfer American technology and practices to the agricultural sector to Nigeria, many forms of which I considered inappropriate.

*Q: Do you remember any examples?*

SHEAR: Yes, I do. There is a project in Bornu Province, in the north, for drilling bore hole wells for cattle. There is an artesian aquifer underneath the province, much of which is fed by underground water systems from Lake Chad, which it borders. The boreholes were placed without any due regard for the environmental impact, the movement of cattle or the number of animals that would be using them. In effect, we created a substantial desert north of Maiduguri and between it and Lake Chad.

*Q: How so?*

SHEAR: There was no system for controlling the cattle coming in. The bore holes, because they were artesian, just kept flowing, and so there was no way of controlling the flow of water to move the cattle from borehole to borehole, and no way of shutting off the water. As a result, multitudes of cattle flooded the area, and disrupted their normal patterns of migration and grazing. Because of the year-round availability of water, the foliage and grasslands were soon destroyed.

There were also attempts to bring in very large agricultural machinery, although I did manage to block a number of those initiatives. They just could not have been maintained in those environments. There was no local ability to service them. Many of the American agriculturalists who came to Nigeria had no tropical experience whatsoever, much less African experience.

We were more successful in the area of education because we were dealing with more traditional forms - business education, public administration and management, and the general administration of a university and its finances, students and faculty. There, obviously, a lot of our ideas (particularly those linked to land grant universities) were more appropriate. It was also significant that although we had the Development Loan Fund, I recall only one loan made in the two years I was in Nigeria (\$3 million for rails for the railroad in a northern part of the country). This, despite the fact that a very large amount of money was potentially available. It was difficult to frame a loan under the existing regulations. The Nigerians, probably wisely, did not want to incur a lot of debt, but it was probably less than the tangle of onerous and lengthy loan procedures.

One of the things that struck me then about Nigeria, in addition to the vitality and energy of its people, particularly in the south, was the agricultural richness of the country. One would travel in the southern regions of the country and see enormous forests, huge rubber plantations and extensive evidence of palm oil production. Nigeria at the time was the world's largest exporter of palm oil. The country later became one of the largest importers, if not *the* largest importer of edible oils in Africa. The whole agricultural sector, it seemed, could be the basis for a great deal of national development. The discovery of oil in Nigeria was in a sense a misfortune, because it really undercut some remarkable people, people like Bukar Shaib, who was the Minister for Agriculture. He later became Lake Chad Basin Commissioner. Even when I was there, just the beginning influx of oil probably began to undercut commitment to the honest delivery of public services. Corruption, which had been clearly an element in society, became more rampant and much more accepted. But I just saw the beginnings of that.

### **First Tour in USAID/Tanzania: 1963**

SHEAR: I left Lagos in 1963. I had a euphemistic 22-month mid-tour transfer to from Nigeria to Tanzania, where I was to be Assistant Program Officer.

*Q: What brought that about?*

SHEAR: Don Gardner, who was backstopping our Capital Projects in Washington for the program in Nigeria, put my name forward when he learned that the position was open in Tanzania and they were having difficulty filling it. He knew of my background and interest in East Africa because of my work with the African Studies Program at Boston University, and he was aware that I had gotten to know Tom Mboya and Julius Nyerere. I was thrilled with the prospect of moving up within the system from being an intern and program analyst and to move to another part of Africa. At the same time, my wife and I had developed a number of good friendships in Nigeria, some of which we still maintain, and we felt it was a remarkably rich experience. It was a wonderful first post. And I was also fortunate, in retrospect, in working with the people I knew there. Haven North, Don Miller and Burt Gould, who was the program economist, were all exceptionally bright and competent, so I learned a great deal from them. I also gained a lot from traveling around the country, interacting with both the Nigerians and some of our more competent technical people.

*Q: So you moved on to Tanzania in...?*

SHEAR: It was in 1963 that I became the assistant program officer there. Tanzania presented a profoundly different environment in many ways. In Nigeria, we had a very large mission, in some ways perhaps even too large, and we had a very large headquarters staff. I don't remember exactly, but our administrative budget was in excess of \$3 million, which at that point in time was quite large in Africa. And our presence in Lagos numbered probably over 100 Americans.

In Tanzania, in contrast, there was a government imposed ceiling of 10 Americans in the AID mission. And we were required then to both use and develop local staff, a number of whom were Asians who became Tanzanian citizens, and also a lot of African Tanzanians. It was a much smaller program; I had moved from an environment of \$225 million to a commitment of \$10 million, which had been made by President Kennedy to Tanzania at independence, just the year before I arrived there. This was a much poorer country in terms of natural resources, but it fascinated me because of its abundance of animals, and had a much more healthy and pleasant climate than Nigeria. Its proximity to Zanzibar. A much different set of cultures. Nigeria, with very large tribes and rich cultures, was quite different from Tanzania, which was almost bereft of culture in a traditional sense. None of the tribes had great populations, the largest one being the Waskuma, by Lake Victoria, numbering about a million people. All the other tribes had less than a quarter of a million members. There were over 200 languages spoken in Tanzania, and some of the tribes comprised only 10,000 to 12,000 people. So tribalism *per se* was not a major issue.

*Q: That's interesting. What characteristic of Tanzania to you stands out in comparison to other African countries?*

SHEAR: I think one should read Sonya Cole's *Prehistory of Africa* and study the movement of African peoples. Tanzania in many ways was a less hospitable

environment. For example, the great population movements that came from the north across the desert into northern Nigeria and northern Ghana, bringing a lot of Arabic culture and even some indirect European influences (although not perceived as such), did not occur in that part of East Africa. The Arab influence occurred along the east coast, essentially due to slavery. The interior of Tanzania was impacted very, very heavily because of Arab slavers. And probably, unlike the Yoruba in Nigeria who lived in large villages (actually cities), the Tanzanians avoided large encampments that made them more vulnerable. There are probably much more subtle and scientific reasons for that, it's my impression. Along the coast Swahili was developing as a *lingua franca*, but the first Swahili grammar wasn't published until about 1886. Tanzania could be considered less advanced culturally, in a traditional sense, than Nigeria. But in some ways it was much more open because there was not the issue of tribalism.

*Q: What was the economic situation like? The development situation?*

SHEAR: It was quite different from Nigeria because Tanzania had so few resources. Agriculture (mostly cotton) was largely confined along Lake Victoria. In the northern highlands near Kenya there was coffee, along the coast some tropical products, and some hides and skins in the interior. There were no significant mineral resources known at that time. Nigeria had been a major exporter of tin for 30 years prior to independence, but here there were no major industrialized agricultural products like rubber and palm oil. But although Tanzania had a much poorer economy, it bore a much more distinct stamp of the colonial past than Nigeria, where under the principle of Lord Lugard, the first British Governor General, the British used indirect rule operating through local chiefs, leaving them in place. Tanzania had 50,000 or 60,000 English settlers living in the Iringa highlands in the southern central part of the country and in the north near Kenya. Most of the economy was derived from those richer, more experienced farmers. Tanzania was for the most part a subsistence economy, except for cotton and coffee.

*Q: What was the nature of the program in that context? What were we trying to do with our \$10 million?*

SHEAR: The program was in some way structured by our having to undertake projects with a minimum of direct hire staff. We didn't have constraints in terms of bringing in university or private sector contractors, but there was much less managerial capacity in the government of Tanzania. Our program had initially three components. One was to provide Americans as operating personnel within the Tanzanian government, essentially within the Ministry for Public Works. And we had a large contract that annually supplied up to 18 Americans as operational personnel. The \$10 million was not a total budget, but a capital program that was pledged. Those capital projects were focused on roads, water systems and technical and agricultural education.

*Q: Before we go to that, what about the operating personnel? What kind of positions did they fill?*

SHEAR: The U.S. operating personnel in government positions worked surprisingly well because they were not anomalies. A lot of British were carried over in their positions, so they didn't present as Wazungu (white men, an anomaly) in the Tanzanian Civil Service, although the number of British was declining. In truth, some Americans just replaced the Brits. They were focused in some fairly crucial areas such as transportation, both roads and airports, and they worked very effectively in upgrading the airports. They brought in safety control systems, and certainly modernized the airport in Dar es Salaam. The other projects were in the educational area, and they were reasonably successful. There was an agriculture college in Morogoro, which is very important in Tanzania to this day. And there were educational projects at the university level.

*Q: The Agriculture College. Who was working on that?*

SHEAR: We had the University of West Virginia working on that, and there was a low level experimental farm and then a high altitude farm. The agricultural college had the advantage of being on the edge of the Uluguru Mountains, so they could farm both at sea level and at 5,000 feet. Another program funded out of the \$10 million was essentially for farm-to-market and feeder roads. We also had a tourist road system which included the Serengeti Park. That gave me a wonderful travel opportunity; it was thrilling to fly over the entire Serengeti in a little chartered airplane from Arusha and land in Seronera in the middle. John Owen, then director of the national parks, had what the Brits call a sundowner: I enjoyed drinks the evening of my first visit with the park personnel, set up on a plain trestle table by a big fire in this encampment in the Serengeti. All around us we could hear the wonderful rolling roar of lions hunting at night.

*Q: What we were trying to do with the park?*

SHEAR: What we were trying to do, and succeeded quite well, was to build roads on which people could not drive more than 30 miles per hour because of the way they were engineered and graded. Some of the funds were also used for water catchments for the animals. For a fairly modest amount of money (I don't recall the total), we built several hundred miles of tourist roads to access certain areas of the park. We also had a very interesting program there - one of the first joint AID-Peace Corps programs, I think - in which we imported about a million and a half dollars worth of road culverting. We used Peace Corps volunteers to work with local villagers in installing the culverts in critical areas. We used some of the OPEC civil engineers that were assigned to PWD to site the culverts and train Peace Corps members in how they were fit together and laid out. Then Peace Corps volunteers worked with the local people. Some eight or nine thousand miles of roads were improved through the installation of these culverts. The balance of the capital funds applied to really quite good projects, which included putting in water systems for the seven principal Tanzanian towns. As I recall, only two towns had central water systems at that time: Dar es Salaam and Arusha. The others were all local systems. We put in seven water systems at low cost that functioned fairly effectively. We had, on a working level, really excellent relationships with our Tanzanian counterparts. We found the Tanzanians good to work with; they were competent and extremely open to ideas. Such was not the case, though, with the overall political environment. Julius Nyerere

viewed the United States with a good deal of suspicion. Many of his principal advisors early on were East Germans, and he found this very, very comforting to his own sense of Fabian Socialism, which rapidly came to be a form of African Marxist Socialism. The Chinese opened a very large embassy there and had a very large aid program focusing mostly on agriculture and rice production.

At that point in time it was Tanganyika, not Tanzania. Tanganyika and Zanzibar were two distinct states. Both of them were established in 1963 as independent countries. Zanzibar inherited a constitution which was untenable. The Arab minority was given control of the Zanzibar Parliament, and that was indeed a very small minority, comprising only about 15 or 20 percent of the population of the island. There was a great deal of anti-Arab sentiment on the part of the African population there because Zanzibar had been the center of slaving for the entire coast. The last slave sold at market in Zanzibar Town was late in the 1880s.

On a Sunday morning in January 1964, the Africans acted on an established plot to overthrow the government. They did so in a very violent and bloody fashion, driving all the Arab inhabitants from Zanzibar Town, which is the old town, into the harbor where they massacred them. Eight to ten thousand people were killed that Sunday, almost all with knives and machetes. It was a dreadful experience. The American Consulate faced the harbor and the American Consular officer who was there rushed out, tried to help the people and suffered a nervous breakdown. This was a terrible experience for him. The government of Zanzibar was overthrown and a revolutionary council established. That “initiative” was then copied by the armed forces of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. Within two weeks there was a mutiny in each of those countries inspired by the events in Zanzibar. They were not funded by any outside source that we knew of, certainly at that time. What were exhibited were strictly local uprisings that caught fire throughout East Africa. All three governments were on the edge of being toppled. At that point, the British, at the invitation of the three chiefs of state, intervened and within 48 hours put down the mutiny.

*Q: Did we have a program in Zanzibar at that time?*

SHEAR: Not at that time. We had a cultural exchange program.

*Q: Are there other activities that you recall from that period? You went back to Tanzania later.*

SHEAR: Later. Much later.

### **Tanzania Revisited: 1994**

*Q: Much later, but it might be useful for the continuity of this history to cover that period now.*

SHEAR: I'll be happy to. In order to give a fuller picture, I'd like to mention something that occurred in Zanzibar at that time. We wanted to establish a program there despite the

Revolutionary Council. About a year after the establishment of the Revolutionary Council, Nyerere negotiated the union between the mainland and Zanzibar. Tanganyika became Tanzania. That gave us leave to establish an assistance program in Zanzibar under the “patronage” of Nyerere.

*Q: Why did we want to have a program in Zanzibar?*

SHEAR: We wanted some way of combating, if you will, the very 19th century Marxism rampant there. The early advisors to the Zanzibari Revolutionary Council were East Germans and Chinese; not Russians. At that time, we had diplomatic presence there; Frank Carlucci was our Consul General. A message he sent back to the embassy on the mainland dealt with the annual Fourth of July celebration. However, it was taped by the East Germans on the island and modified to appear that he was talking about the importation of arms from the mainland to Zanzibar, and he was declared *persona non grata*. Just the week before, when he was on the mainland, he had invited me to come to Zanzibar in my little fishing boat. When I asked about gaining entry to the port, he said, “Don't worry, I have a terrific relationship with the government.”

*Q: What kind of activities were we carrying out?*

SHEAR: We were looking at what we could do for Zanzibar that would benefit the population and also have a long-term effect. Our education officer, John Rensinbrink, developed the idea of a technical and vocational school. The Zanzibaris desperately needed to improve their skills because the Arabs had carried on most of the trade and made up most of the artisans and the mechanics on the island. So we negotiated a grant agreement with the government on the mainland and designed a technical school to be located right outside of Zanzibar Town. Construction was begun using a Pakistani contractor from the mainland. However, the Zanzibaris, citing the fact that these were non-Africans, harassed the contractor and workers, finally expelling them all from the site. The project came to a standstill. But then I had the thought of sending one of our own engineers (we had two staff engineers on contract) to Ghana to recruit a Ghanaian firm, because they were then dedicated Marxists. If we could import a good Marxist firm to work on Zanzibar, it would be very difficult for the Zanzibaris to protest. So, using about 40 Ghanaian workers, we completed the school in about a year. Of course, we used local labor as well, but most of the skilled work was provided by Ghanians and one of their own contractors.

*Q: Fascinating.*

SHEAR: Tom Pickering had taken Carlucci's place on the island and I flew over to Zanzibar on a monthly basis to inspect the school construction.

*Q: This was while you were assistant program officer?*

SHEAR: Right. Tom would have to come out to the airport to meet me because the Zanzibaris did not want to let me into the country. Each time there was a hassle, and he

had to repeatedly negotiate my entry into Zanzibar as if it were a foreign country, even though it was supposed to be part of Tanzania. It was worth it, though. After I left Tanzania, the technical school became operational and is functioning to this day.

*Q: Who was operating it then? Who was providing technical assistance?*

SHEAR: Six or eight Ghanians stayed on, liaising with our American contractor in Dar for technical knowledge and input. American technicians were not allowed in country to help install the machinery. It became a fairly successful institution.

*Q: Do you remember its name?*

SHEAR: Yes, it was Zanzibar Technical College. In 1994 I had the opportunity to return to Tanzania for the first time since my departure in 1966. The private company that I'm now with was invited by UNDP to emulate an employment generation program I had started also in the private sector in Senegal. That's a different story, but it explains numerous visits I made in 1994-95, when I had an opportunity to visit Zanzibar and also travel extensively within Tanzania. The contrast in Zanzibar could not be more striking. Liberalization of trade, the removal of government controls, the release of the entrepreneurial spirit which had existed there for centuries was made manifest. Zanzibar is again the bustling port that it was in the 19th century.

*Q: What was the motivation for the United States having a program in Tanzania at that time?*

SHEAR: There were strong political reasons. Nyerere had been a strong supporter of the anti-apartheid insurgency in South Africa, which was then at a very low level. He gave both material and political support to many refugees coming out of South Africa to the degree that he could, and also granted asylum to the Mozambique revolutionaries. Roberto Monolane, who was the head of FRELIMO, the Mozambique independence movement, was resident in Dar es Salaam. I got to know him and his American wife while we were there. The United States also had, under the aegis of the USAID program, a secondary school at Msasani for education of South African refugees. So Tanzania was a very active center of the freedom movements for Mozambique and for South Africa. It was later to become also a center for Rhodesian freedom fighters after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). That occurred while I was in Tanzania.

The U.S. government mounted in Tanzania an airlift to Broken Hill, Zambia, which permitted the movement of commodities into Zambia, then cut off from oil because of the UDI and the embargo laid on in Rhodesia. Improvements we had put into the Dar es Salaam airport proved invaluable for landing 707s and transporting oil. Daily flights were moving out of Dar es Salaam and into Zambia.

We also began surveying for the Dar es Salaam to Zambia highway. At that time, the Chinese made a commitment to the Dar es Salaam/Zambia railroad (TANZAM). I happened to be in the office of my friend, the Principal Secretary for Public Works, when



he received word that the Chinese Ambassador had just informed President Nyerere that the Chinese had approved a massive program to build the railroad. This was seen as a huge coup for the Chinese, and of tremendous economic benefit to the Tanzanians. They did not know at that time, however, that some 12,000 Chinese were to arrive in Tanzania to do most of the work, and there was initially very little economic benefit. Mr. M'suya, the Principal Secretary, informed me quite openly of this development that day, so I was the first American to inform the Embassy, which then notified the State Department in Washington.

The government from time to time would also mount anti-American campaigns. Nyerere would take to the radio, accusing missionaries of plotting to overthrow the government and the Peace Corps of being in cahoots with them. On two occasions, there were actually U.S. naval vessels off the coast ready to take us off if conditions got worse. Those were very tense times. Tanzanian friends would say to us "We've been told not to have anything to do with you socially. If we don't acknowledge you on the street, it's not because we don't like you." There were informers everywhere. It was the beginning of a very subtle kind of police state by Nyerere. It was really very repressive in terms of any real civil liberties and freedom of speech.

*Q: But we were maintaining a program?*

SHEAR: We were maintaining a program, a fairly modest one with two modified objectives. One was to maintain a presence - exhibiting development value - within the country. The other was to provide a political beachhead in a relatively hostile political environment. We also saw Tanzania as important to the East African Federation.

You may recall that at this time, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania shared common services - telephone, telegraph, postal, railroad and airline. East African Airways was probably the only airline in all of Africa making a profit; it was well run. Much of our program was designed to support the federation. We had a substantial program at Makerere University, Uganda, which was the largest of the universities in East Africa. Each of those institutions had many components that were regional in nature, but were tied into one another. We supported the East African common services with administration and management, and some of the regional telecommunications and transport services.

Unfortunately, we encouraged the East African Union to move toward further regionalizing other functions. The East African Union finally broke apart over an issue which we strongly supported, erroneously, which was to bring about some kind of rationalization of foreign investment, so that Uganda would receive one kind of investment, Kenya another and Tanzania yet another. It became a wedge in what was a reasonably well functioning set of services between the three states. That was another reason why we had a program in each of those countries. We saw the three countries as being important as a southern bulwark with Ethiopia, as a way of damping the radical fervor in Tanzania, and as a means of providing stability for southern African liberation movements.

*Q: Why was it a wedge in the regional cooperation?*

SHEAR: Because it became a very divisive element. The governments could not agree on selecting certain sectors in industrial development for themselves. They all wanted everything. And so, except for Kenya, all got very little.

*Q: But we were pushing that idea?*

SHEAR: We were pushing that idea very strongly. We also, in a programmatic sense, shot ourselves in the foot (although that's a terrible metaphor), because, at that point in 1966, the last year I was there, we came forward with two major constraints to operating the AID program. One was that a special letter of credit had to be issued for funding local costs. All such expenditures had to be offset by documentation relating to importing goods from the United States.

*Q: Why was that?*

SHEAR: Because of concern on the part of the Johnson Administration with the balance of payments in the United States. The administration imposed a number of restrictions, trying to constrain the outflow of U.S. dollars.

*Q: Didn't you meet Nyerere at about that time? What was your impression?*

SHEAR: I had met him before, and while I found him to be enormously charismatic, I became increasingly disenchanted with him as a political leader. I always had very affable meetings with him. Among his political counselors was an exceptional English woman - a true Fabian Socialist of the 19th century. When we talked I was very careful not to talk about the political context of the program.

*Q: What could you garner about his views from that these meetings?*

SHEAR: My encounters with him were not long discussions, but it was quite clear from my conversations with him and then from his policies that he had an enormous mistrust of the private sector. In capitalism he saw reflections of the colonial past. To him the path of independence, true independence, was really along Socialist lines. He began to organize all the food stores as national outlets, tried to discourage the foreign merchant population and forced a lot of Indians to move, although publicly espousing Indians as citizens of Tanzania should they desire to become so. He made it extremely difficult for them and forced many out. There was one extraordinarily competent Indian, Eihir Jamal, who was a very effective Minister for Finance, but then became increasingly constrained in that role and took instead an Ambassadorship. Nyerere was also very much preoccupied by Zanzibar. He had taken Zanzibar into his fold as a way of controlling the revolutionary fervor there, but the island was always a thorn in his side.

*Q: Did you see any evidence of the ideas that came out of the Arusha Declaration and the consolidation activities?*

SHEAR: Yes, it was evident in the concept of “Ujamaa.” Ujamaa was discussed before the Arusha Declaration.

*Q: What is Ujamaa?*

SHEAR: Ujamaa is essentially the sharing of all property so that no one person should own property as such. It is an attempt to have a wholly proletarian society, without any class distinctions whatsoever. It denies the validity of personal property, which is only a manifestation of greed. Perhaps I'm overstating it, but not by much. It was a profoundly idealistic and unrealistic view of society. African societies are usually built around modestly materialistic and strong spiritual belief systems. Even within a deeply spiritual culture, there was nothing in most African societies that denied the importance of material possessions.

*Q: Wasn't the property common, under the control of the chief, or is that not that pattern there?*

SHEAR: The access to land was under the control of the chief. So in that sense property was communally held. However, all women when they got married had their own shamba, which is Swahili for farm. So they had access to resources, and that was very important for them. After the Arusha Declaration their access to these independent farms was denied. So, ironically, the position of women declined substantially in the society, and they became much more susceptible to the whims of their husbands. Having their own shamba at the time of their marriage had been part of their wedding agreement, their dowry. Ujamaa also limited the influence of the coastal Arabs, who were traders in a long historical pattern. It was a way of trying to make Tanzania more African and less Arabic.

Nyerere moved people out of the city and back to their villages in a most brutal manner. People would be rounded up by the police, loaded in trucks and driven back to where they had come from - often a couple hundred miles. Still, the idea of a people being moved to different sites for settlement was not an obvious one when I was there.

*Q: Any other observations on Tanzania at that time?*

SHEAR: Part of the anti-American feeling fostered by Nyerere was related to U.S. activities in Vietnam, which were then growing in scope. Nyerere viewed this as U.S. imperialism, and I sensed real mistrust of our motives in Africa. That mistrust of capitalism in the private sector was exacerbated by U.S. military interventions in Southeast Asia. Nyerere also had a very close association at that time with the president of Algeria. The Algerians exerted a lot of influence on Nyerere. Dar es Salaam was a passage point for many South Africans moving to Algeria for both training and more regular forms of education.

*Q: This was all before Nyerere became a favorite African leader among the donor community.*

SHEAR: The Swedes were just beginning activities in Tanzania; the Nordic countries had substantial rural development programs, but they were in the very early stages.

*Q: You finished up in Tanzania in what year?*

SHEAR: I left Tanzania in 1966.

### **USAID/Washington - Congo Operations: 1966**

I then moved back to Washington, after being in the field for five years. While both assignments were wonderful in many ways, I had not progressed very much in terms of my career. I had entered government service as an FSR-7, and was an FSR-5 when I left Tanzania five years later, somewhat disappointed with the promotion system. Despite five extraordinary years which I never could have foreseen in my life, I was contemplating leaving the Foreign Service because I felt I might be doing better than my superiors thought. I had very good performance evaluation reports during that time, but my career was not moving ahead rapidly. When I moved back to Washington, I became the assistant desk officer in charge for (then) Congo, Rwanda and Burundi with the understanding that when Burt Gould, the desk officer, moved on the following year I would take over that job. It was a good job, so I looked forward to that opportunity.

*Q: What were you working on at that time?*

SHEAR: In Congo there was a great deal happening.

*Q: It became Zaire and then went back to Congo?*

SHEAR: Yes. It was Congo then, in 1966-67. We had a large PL 480 program for the importation of wheat. But Congo had been wracked by civil war almost from the beginning of its independence. So a good deal of our program was assistance to Mobutu's army provided through the U.S. military. Emergency food aid was sent to support and shore up his regime, which was then just beginning. On December 31, 1966, shortly after arriving in Washington, I was sent on an orientation visit to Congo. Mobutu had seized the copper mines in Katanga, plunging the country into crisis. Albert N'dele was then Governor of the Central Bank. We had at that time a joint mission; a State Department officer, Joe Minses, who was a very good economist, was head of the AID mission. He was also Economic Counselor in the Embassy, but he spent the bulk of his time on the AID program.

Joe asked me to go see Albert N'dele to discuss with him the freezing of Congo's exports and the foreign exchange crisis resulting from that. I was not a professional economist, but I had a sense of what was going to happen, so I had brought along three books on economics that I started poring over very quickly. For some reason, Albert N'dele and I, despite my very poor French and his beginning English, hit it off very well. I suggested some ways he could preserve what little foreign exchange he had in terms of a licensing system. He liked that and called up Joe Minses. I was then invited to stay on for a month to work this through. Initially I was also to fill in on some operational activities in place

of the program officer, Sarah Jane Littlefield, who was on home leave. It was an opportunity for me to develop an insight into both Congo and the economics of a crisis, both extremely important. I also was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time with an idea that was useful. Joe Minses' acumen in economics meant that he could take ideas and make them functional and operational. During that period I was able to see the enormous disquiet within Congo. There were literally no goods in stores except for what was brought in under the U.S. commodity import program, and that consisted mostly of tinned fish. Joe Minses was also a good, sensitive politician. When we learned that there was a PL480 shipment of flour (10,000 to 12,000 tons) coming in to Matadi, the port which serves Kinshasa, we saw to it that this was announced in the newspaper, and that reduced fears of bread riots in Kinshasa. Within about 48 hours the flour began to appear as loaves of bread on the shelves of bakeries. There were long lines of people to get the bread, but nevertheless, the bread was there for people to eat. It was a way also of sustaining the Mobutu regime because this was a time, of course, of great contest between East and West. Mobutu was our man.

*Q: He had nationalized Gecamines and the copper mines. We were trying to counter that, I suppose?*

SHEAR: The alternative was Moise Tshombe, who was much more unreliable. He might have done that and much more. On my arrival in Kinshasa there was a good deal of discussion within the U.S. mission as to whether or not Mobutu should be supported or whether we should shift to another leader such as Tshombe. It was decided to go with Mobutu. Little did we realize at that point that we were starting on a path that would last for over 20 years.

*Q: Why were we having a different feeling about Mobutu; was it because of the Gecamine issue or general uncertainty?*

SHEAR: There was no clear sense that he would necessarily be our person for very long. Clearly the CIA and others had gotten to him and he was in the U.S. camp. He was anticommunist, and that was very important.

*Q: Tshombe was less certain?*

SHEAR: Less certain. He was by no means a Communist, but he had not made public utterances against the East. Mobutu came down firmly, squarely as a Western supporter. Of course copper was seen as a strategic mineral. Molybdenum, diamonds and gold were abundant in Congo, so it was strategically important to the United States. Bear in mind that the Vietnam War was at its height, giving these minerals critical importance.

*Q: Apart from the PL 480 food, were we doing anything else with the program?*

SHEAR: The program comprised largely military and financial support. It was then, in my first visit to Congo, that Joe Minses and I began to discuss a large economic infusion to convince Mobutu not to take a radical direction, which the seizure of Gecamine had

indicated. Perhaps Mobutu could settle the Gecamine issue to the satisfaction of the Belgium interests. Some U.S. money was involved, American Metals Climax was a part owner, and Maurice Templeton was very much involved in the picture. If we could induce Mobutu to take a more moderate path, bring about some reforms in the foreign exchange regime and bring about an overall stabilization effort, we could perhaps raise substantial funds. Efforts were therefore directed toward major economic reform rather than technical assistance. Technical assistance was seen as very difficult in Zaire (Congo) because of the low level of existing training, the need to prepare people at virtually every level and the scope of that task were probably beyond U.S. capacities. The two areas in which we really could have a comparative advantage would be military assistance and finance policy reform.

*Q: Was that when we were supporting a large UN staffing of government position?*

SHEAR: Yes, your memory is better in that than mine. There were many UN personnel operating within the government, which incorporated many Belgians.

*Q: Weren't you also a desk officer for other countries?*

SHEAR: Yes, Burundi and Rwanda, for two, Rwanda at that time undergoing an economic reform and stabilization program. I will want to come back to the program in Zaire - how we designed that, how we worked with the Belgians and the IMF with Lamberto Dini, who later became the president of Italy. To describe Rwanda, I should step back a few years. One of my first jobs in Tanzania (then Tanganyika) was to assist in a relief settlement program for Tutsis who had fled Burundi at independence. Some 30,000 or 40,000 of them were headed for the substantial open spaces of western Tanzania. I traveled out to the borders of Burundi and assisted in designing a program for the settlement of the Burundi Tutsi refugees within Tanzania.

*Q: What year was that?*

SHEAR: That was in 1964. I had known Burundi and Rwanda both from an historian's point of view and later from a Tanzanian perspective. During that time I traveled extensively in both countries. We had a very modest program of road rehabilitation in Burundi with the Organization for Rehabilitation and Training (ORT) involving a number of French speakers and people who were prepared to live close to the land. In Rwanda we had very little activity initially except a floundering commodity import program in support of a monetary reform and stabilization effort run by the IMF. The IMF put an extraordinary person in there as Minister for Finance: a Japanese central banker named Mosia Hatori. Hatori actually ran the entire nation's budget of \$12.6 million from his office in the Ministry for Finance.

We had pledged an independence gift of building the country's first paved road in the capital of Kigali. We agreed on putting in a central street with some side roads off of it. I recall a most irate cable from the U.S. ambassador because his street was not included, while the Russian ambassador's, just by chance, was going to be paved along with the

main street of the town. We were also putting in a water system for Kigali, but a planned a vocational education program did not materialize because of opposition from the Catholic Church.

The program in Burundi was even more modest. It was focused on an urban water system and putting in feeder farm-to-market roads. We did have, however, a modest \$2 million for each country in a commodity import program. Since there were very few things they could import from the United States, I worked at getting a waiver to let them import various commodities from Pakistan and India which were more appropriate for their economies. Early on we recognized that population growth was a formidable problem in both countries. A person flying from one border to the other would see only two cities - Kigali and Bujumbura, on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Everything else was a series of contiguous farms. Even in the 1960s there was evidence of enormous stress to the land. Deforestation had already taken place, with the exception of one small national park in northern Rwanda. Erosion was rife and there was an affection for cattle, so all of the elements were primed for an environmental disaster. And when we proposed family planning programs for Rwanda and Burundi, both were rejected. Two years later when I was in a position to control the budget more directly as the head of the Africa Bureau Development Planning office, we suspended AID programs for those two countries.

*Q: Why did they reject family planning?*

SHEAR: In large measure because we could not convincingly describe the benefits of it; they saw it as undermining some of their fundamental cultural values. Probably more important, the Catholic Church was violently opposed to it. The Church was quite influential and was for the most part controlled by Burundians and Rwandans. Further, a large number of Canadian Catholic dissidents from Quebec had been placed in Rwanda and Burundi, and they reinforced the government's opposition to any form of family planning or birth control. So AID had very modest programs in two countries that were ethnically very volatile and in a physical environment which was perilous, to say the least.

*Q: You were in this position for how long?*

SHEAR: I was there for three years, and it was stimulating in many ways.

*Q: Did you have any other tasks or assignments?*

SHEAR: Yes. One of the most interesting involved working on the monetary reform and stabilization program for Congo. Over two years, I designed and wrote two \$50 million loan papers which were approved by the U.S. Treasury and AID to support the effort. It was most interesting to work with the Central Bank in Belgium, the U.S. Treasury and the International Monetary Fund in putting this package together. The conditions and the prescriptions were for reforms in the agricultural sector that would create much greater incentives, particularly in food production. Rice production had collapsed from the civil disruptions following independence. Prices were depressed and measures had to be taken

to encourage farming output. Food shortages were rampant, not because the country couldn't produce food, but because most of it was consumed locally and wasn't finding the way into commercial channels. Internal transport was ineffective due to myriad problems, and there were still large regions that were markets unto themselves.

Looking to Zaire, you would see that Kivu in the northeast was a very substantial market, Katanga another, and a third in the eastern part of the country. These markets at least had reasonable transportation systems which could create an internal market and demand. But first a number of disincentives in terms of taxation had to be removed, as well as controls on prices. I was working with a very bright Central Banker from Brussels named DeGroute, and Lamberto Dini of the IMF. We were under the close scrutiny of the U.S. Treasury, which was instructive in that they looked at the loan papers as I wrote them, and Haven North also helped me in putting together reasonable documents to justify a \$50 million loan. The conditionality in those loans was, I think, pretty clear. It was striking that only one year after the first loan was made and the reforms put in place, the response from Congolese farming communities was extraordinary. Production of rice jumped from 30,000 tons to almost 100,000 tons, and maize production increased tremendously. This was made manifest also in commercialization of these products. It looked as if this voluntary reform was working well enough that a second tranche of \$50 million was made available. I don't remember what the amounts from Belgium and the IMF were, but they were substantial, at least as large.

At the same time that the second loan was going forward, copper prices were on the rise. When the value of copper exceeded \$2,000 per ton, Mobutu decided he really didn't need this reform program. He reimposed the taxes, damped the agricultural production effect and decided to live off the proceeds from the copper and other mineral exports.

Then began a downward swing which continued for twenty years. Not that such reform would have solved everything by any means, but it was very positive step in the right direction, and in the middle of all of this came the second Katanga Rebellion. We thought that Mobutu would use that as an excuse to dump the monetary reform, but to our surprise he did not; copper prices had not yet reached a point yet where he felt safe to do so. I happened to be in Eastern Congo at a point outside of Bukavu when the rebels took over the town, and we fled by car into Rwanda. Richard Nule was then the AID representative in Kigali. I had visited him regarding that program just a week before, and didn't realize I would be returning quite so quickly. If I may share an anecdote?

*Q: Of course.*

SHEAR: After leaving Bukavu in a car riddled by bullets, I was with Richard for about a week. I cabled the AID mission in Kinshasa and the Ambassador advised against my flying there because of problems with local security and security of air transport across Congo. I had been in the field for about two weeks and had a suitcase full of dirty shirts, which I washed at Richard's house. They were on the line when we received a message that there was a plane going from Kigali to Nairobi and I could get a place on it. I hurriedly picked up all my wet laundry, stuck it in my suitcase, and for four days readied myself for flights that were repeatedly canceled at the last minute. I ended up with about



a dozen wet shirts in my suitcase for a week, but I finally got out on a charter, accompanying a *Time* magazine correspondent from Kigali to Nairobi. Nairobi airport was closed to commercial aircraft because of the rebellion in Eastern Congo. I found extraordinary the circumstance of landing in a small plane in Nairobi airport to see it virtually blacked out. The repercussions of this moved very rapidly, with tremendous impact on Congo and Central Africa.

The plane I was to have taken earlier that week from Goma (on the Rwandan-Congo border) to Kinshasa was shot down by rebels. I had been forewarned by the CIA station chief that day that rebels were approaching the airport and to stay away. It was very good advice indeed.

*Q: Were you aware of the counterpart funds that were generated by the response?*

SHEAR: Yes, and they were substantial. That counterpart was used initially for agricultural research, agricultural investment and road rehabilitation. One large import component of that \$25 million was for the purchase of several thousand trucks to move agricultural products. General Motors had promised USAID, in its tender, that it would provide maintenance, set up repair facilities and train local dealers. In the next two years I don't think one of those trucks was operational and on the road. The dealerships never came to be, and our disillusionment with U.S. suppliers, of course, increased.

*Q: Any other dimensions of your work on the desk?*

SHEAR: A couple of observations might be useful. Because the State Department and the White House were preoccupied with Vietnam, we in the Africa Bureau had a lot of freedom for innovations in the policy area. The policies that we fashioned were obviously in the interest of the United States, but also very African centered. Perhaps with a little more White House scrutiny we would not have had that kind of freedom.

I had a general sense that we could allocate, for example, \$100 million over two years for economic reforms, quite a substantial amount for the United States to provide for Zaire. That was really the hardest venture. While we were supporting Mobutu there was nothing that certain at all about those two loans of \$50 million. Normally a commodity loan of that size would have to pass through the National Security Council.

*Q: What was the driving motive behind such large funding?*

SHEAR: The motive was clearly political - to sustain Zaire and also realize substantial economic benefit.

*Q: What were we afraid of?*

SHEAR: We were afraid of the Russians and afraid of the destabilization of the Congo Basin.

*Q: Was there a clear threat? Did you perceive an actual risk of that?*

SHEAR: No. I think it was a straw man, one which we did not dispel on our side because it was also an inducement to get more resources for Africa. What was real was the destabilization of the Congo and the fact that it borders on nine other African countries. Countries like Angola and Mozambique are very sensitive and obviously affect the whole Southern African situation.

As a result, Congo was clearly perceived as important, but maybe not to the extent of \$100 million. Also, it was significant that someone at my level could actually terminate the AID programs for two African countries, Rwanda and Burundi, for nonperformance.

*Q: You moved from that desk to the Africa Bureau program office?*

SHEAR: Yes; that proved to be my big career break. I mentioned earlier that I had been rather stuck at my professional grade, but I certainly received valuable recognition when I was on the Congo-Rwanda-Burundi desk. For the last year and a half of that assignment I was also given responsibility for Ghana.

*Q: Why did that happen?*

SHEAR: There was a commodity import program in Ghana that had been stuck - a \$20 million loan that I managed to get unstuck and moving. I was scheduled, after a visit to Ghana, to go to there as Assistant Director for Program. It seemed to be a very attractive assignment. Dick Cashen was then the AID Director, and we got on very well. After I had accepted the assignment, the Ghanaian Ambassador had actually given a dinner for me in Washington (about 100 people, mostly his friends, very few of whom I knew, using it to discharge his social obligations). But then came the opportunity to move into what was then the number three position in the Africa Bureau, Director for the Office of Program Planning.

*Q: But before we go to that, how about more on the Ghana efforts?*

SHEAR: Ghana was a fascinating country to become engaged with because one saw the aftermath of Nkrumah's legacy. He had created an enormous debt based on very poor investments. Ghana had earned almost \$2 billion in foreign exchange reserves as the result of the high commodity prices associated with the Korean War. Almost all those reserves were drawn down and substantial indebtedness was incurred. The total debt was over \$1.5 billion invested in really foolish projects. A lot of them were prestige projects; some of them were just examples of poor design. For example, NKRUMAH decided he was going to create at the port of Takoradi the largest cocoa storage facility in the world. It was a facility that would store thousands and thousands of tons of cocoa to control the world price. Well, a building of such dimension would in effect destroy its contents because of the heat generated and the fact that it couldn't be properly ventilated. The result was an enormous empty facility that was unusable for technical reasons.

Ghana was another fascinating experiment in African socialism that Nyerere (on the other side of the continent) obviously did not read very well. His policies were different in

many ways, but still emphasized state control of enterprises. An earlier U.S. loan project that was succeeding very well was the Akosombo Dam. The dam was being used not for irrigation, but for power. It was the site of a very large smelter to which bauxite was brought from the Caribbean because of the cheap power and smeltered into aluminum, earning the government very substantial foreign exchange. So it was really a very good investment. I don't really recall the details except that we had a large PL 480 program, a commodity import program that also covered some of the local costs.

*Q: You were involved with the debt rescheduling, I believe?*

SHEAR: Yes, that was a really interesting experience because there was a large component comprising both short- and medium-term debt. It was in excess of \$800 million. The U.S. Treasury representative to the debt rescheduling meetings in London for some reason could not make it. I was to be a delegate, and I ended up being head of delegation. We entered into six days of an international poker game in which the British, the Japanese, the Germans and the Americans were the major players.

*Q: Where was this located?*

SHEAR: The debt rescheduling took place in a structure that had been designed by Christopher Wren on the grounds of Buckingham Palace. As a matter of fact, the Queen Mother had used it from time to time as her residence. The dynamics of the meeting were fascinating, especially because we also had in attendance the Minister for Finance from Ghana.

*Q: Mr. Omaboe.*

SHEAR: Chief Omaboe, a very astute, competent negotiator, and his team were excellent. He did very well, but he also needed help. Our percentage of the debt was very small compared to the Japanese, the Germans or the British. But what we had was probably either the largest or the second largest foreign aid program, so our leverage was very substantial. We had to use that leverage in ways that would not alienate other bilateral donors closely associated to us, for a variety of reasons. Hence, supporting the Ghanians was a delicate challenge and a fascinating one. Bob Smith, the Acting Assistant Administrator for Africa at that time, had been and was actually the Deputy. He had the authority to provide guidance. Haven North and he exchanged "immediate" cables with me every night in response to my reporting and directed how to I was to proceed the next day.

When we came down to the final sessions, negotiations completely mired down. Chief Omaboe, under guidance from his government, found himself in an impossible position in respect to the terms of the rescheduling. We had to find some way of restructuring those terms. I remember sitting with Chief Omaboe and his two principal aides in what had been the Queen Mother's bedroom. As he became more and more energized and excited, he began to bounce up and down on the royal bed he was sitting on. I had worked out a formula to sell to him, the details of which I don't clearly remember now,

but he finally bought it. We had declared a recess for the day, and he presented that plan the next morning during negotiations. Obviously, I spent the balance of that afternoon and evening lobbying with the other bilateral donors to sell them on the major components of it without giving away the whole package.

*Q: This was, of course, in the days prior to the Paris Club's rescheduling.*

SHEAR: Yes; *ad hoc*, if you will, although it was quite clear the United States had a whole series of positions with respect to debt rescheduling. It wasn't as though we were doing anything novel, but it was *ad hoc*.

*Q: I vaguely remember your telling me that, at some point in the negotiations with Omaboe, he was so upset that he wept. Do you remember?*

SHEAR: I do recall that now. It was when he felt that his government would go under if he could not reschedule the debt. Much of the debt was ethically questionable. One huge section of over a quarter of a billion dollars, called the Dreviche Debt, was a series of short-term credits from German financiers. It was clear that most of that money was never applied to projects but went into the pockets of NKRUMAH and other government officials. So Chief Omaboe felt that he was negotiating in good faith and, while the donors might have been negotiating in good faith, he sensed a crisis looming. I think he saw his government coming down if he could not get a solution, and his frustration was overwhelming. During an earlier visit I had made to Ghana we had developed a friendship, so I sat down with him following the most difficult session before my personal session with him, and he wept out of frustration and anger. He clearly felt that Ghana had been duped by these foreign entrepreneurs and that this was terribly unjust.

*Q: Most interesting. And then they went on from there, with more rescheduling. Any other dimensions worth relating?*

SHEAR: I think it was interesting to gain insight into the position of some of the other donors. The Japanese wanted a temporizing stand. They were a major creditor and not prepared to take the Draconian position, but their position at the same time was absolutely rigid. Their Treasury representative had his instructions and, unlike ours, could not move from them. His position as stated on the first day would not change until the last day, and then with just minor modification. The British I felt were extremely skillful. Their Treasury representative was obviously a seasoned negotiator as well as a good financier and economist. The major burden was on them, and it was his job to move the creditors in ways that would benefit the Ghanians but would also be relevant to the exchequer. The Germans were more difficult and the Italians were loquacious and not very helpful.

*Q: Do you remember French participation?*

SHEAR: I don't remember the French participation well at all. I'm not sure whether the French debt was all that significant.

*Q: No. Generally they were trying to resist any reform because of reverberations.*

SHEAR: In Francophone Africa?

*Q: In Francophone Africa. Well, after your West Africa desk experience what happened?*

### **Promotion to Director of Development Planning in USAID Africa Bureau: 1970**

SHEAR: The West Africa desk was very important for my career because I could obviously become better known in Washington than when working in the field. Fortunately for me, I was given the number three position in the Bureau in terms of overall structure: Director for the Office of Development Planning. The ODP had several functions. It oversaw budget formulation for the entire bureau, controlled the budget and then formulated it to be presented to Congress.

The ODP managed the whole congressional presentation process, which is extremely elaborate, time consuming, expensive and requiring the mobilization of all geographic offices in the Bureau. The office also backstops the Assistant Administrator and the Deputy Assistant Administrator in their congressional liaison and testimony, general coordination and oversight of policy. The position offers the opportunity to initiate significant policy.

I was very fortunate to work with Dr. Samuel Adams, an ex-senior AID official who was called in from his post as U.S. Ambassador to Morocco, and his deputy, Philip Bernbaum. For six months prior to that time I had worked with Robert Smith, the Deputy Assistant Administrator and then Acting Assistant Administrator. It was thanks to him that I got such a significant career break. At the time I believe I was two grades beneath the position of Development Planning Director. To this day I am grateful for the confidence shown in me.

Because Dr. Adams had a great understanding of and a certain affinity for the French, we attempted early on to coordinate for the first time with the French in West Africa. What made that possible was the death of Charles De Gaulle. The French, now more cooperative, saw the need and desirability of having the United States share its aid burden in West Africa, provided it could be done in such a way as not to infringe upon their policy and their political prerogatives. We, of course, had an agenda that was not terribly challenging to the French; we wanted to be engaged in West Africa for basically humanitarian reasons. There were some Cold War overtones to the relationship with Senegal and the U.S. interest in maintaining some form of surveillance, with French assistance, over the so-called Atlantic Narrows through which Russian submarines passed into the Southern Atlantic and then into the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The strategic interests were actually modest, so the French did not perceive us as any major threat. De Gaulle, though, had been so adamant about the hegemony of France in West Africa that he would not tolerate any cooperation with the United States or any other donors. I was, therefore, extremely fortunate to accompany Sam Adams to France for initial meetings

between the U.S. and French governments on any form of cooperation other than military in the post-De Gaulle period.

*Q: This was in what year?*

SHEAR: This was in the latter part of 1970. We prepared very carefully for the talks, wanting to draw out the French with respect to their major programs. We had very little hard information on what the French were doing because our embassies and our AID offices had very little contact with the French in the field, and the U.S. Embassy in Paris was not very well connected with the French foreign aid agencies. Their agency for technical assistance is called the Ministry of Cooperation, and the Caisse Centrale/Minister of Finance is their capital development and lending agency. Both of these were under the very firm control of the French Presidency; they were juridically associated with the Foreign Office, but Africa was really handled by the senior advisors to the President of the Republic. The normalization that occurred after De Gaulle's death permitted the French Foreign Office to become more engaged, allowing us to deal with a broader bureaucracy and lower level French civil servants. We were also fortunate in that Sam Adams' counterpart was a very open minded and very astute Frenchman named Jean Audibert; the two got along extremely well.

I recall clearly the first encounter with the French in a very elaborate and grand meeting room into which Sam Adams walked, introduced himself and began to speak impeccable French. Here was the son of a chauffeur from the West Texas plains who had earned a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and a master's degree from the University of London, setting the French back on their heels with his mastery of their language and his own diplomatic poise.

Clearly the first meetings were exploratory ones, which pleased the French because it was also clear that we had no fixed agenda other than to open up a series of discussions and to see how we might cooperate. That led to annual meetings with the French that continued far beyond Dr. Adams' departure as Assistant Administrator for Africa. It also opened up areas of cooperation with other donors, especially the British and the Dutch. Shortly thereafter, we entered into bilateral discussions at the Assistant Administrator level with both of those bilateral organizations. The British, of course, were also very pleased (much more openly than the French) at our offer of cooperation.

When we first initiated our programs in Africa in 1960 we worked under the various accords the British government had with the newly independent Anglophone states. During the decade between then and our opening up discussions with the other donors, the U.S. executed a number of bilateral agreements under which its own AID programs could operate. But although we had a very amicable relationship with the English and found them quite easy to deal with, their programs were something else again. The programs tended to be fragmented, their projects quite small and mostly worked through a series of small grants. Our concepts of "projects" - investment in resources with specific predictable outputs, specific inputs, investments, targets that could be tracked in the course of a project and formative evaluation systems that allowed us ongoing

assessments of a given activity - were unknown to them. They were rather fascinated by the structured approach of the United States and showed some admiration for it. At that time, many their programs were highly politicized, and therefore the fairly small reactive and opportunistic projects that they had suited their foreign policy quite well.

*Q: What was the view about programs in Africa at that time in this country, particularly in relation to Congress? In the Planning Office, wasn't there some connection with Congress?*

SHEAR: Yes, shortly before that, a study undertaken by Ambassador Korry, the American Ambassador to Ethiopia, reflected dissatisfaction with the first seven or eight years of U.S. assistance to Africa. Our programs in West and East Africa had been singularly unsuccessful, especially in Francophone West Africa. Indeed, the French had gone out of their way in terms of the more ambitious projects that we tried to undertake. They actually managed to sabotage a number of them because their senior technical assistance personnel situated in key ministers' offices could both block incoming correspondence and influence the ministers' policy decisions.

*Q: Was this view different in Africa than in the French capitol? You sound as if the capitol was more pro-cooperation than the field level.*

SHEAR: I'm talking here about the period when De Gaulle was in power. The collaboration followed his death, and that really opened up the diplomatic channels. Prior to that time, though, where the United States had gone into Africa in the early days of the Kennedy Administration, there was a sense (such as in Nigeria), that we could solve virtually all problems with American management, American technology and American dollars. The French took great umbrage at this, managing to mitigate any beneficial effects that our programs might have. As a result, there was in Congress and within the Administration a growing sense of frustration about our inability to make a positive impact upon African development. This in many ways mirrored our naiveté concerning Africa. It seems we thought that African governments, because they were now independent, would choose rational and positive economic policies and that the enormous energy released with respect to nation building would have a beneficial impact upon the populations at large.

What we didn't realize was that for the most part, whether Francophone or Anglophone, the ruling individuals and indeed the ruling parties were largely a reflection of the colonial past. Their principal task was to remain in power. To remain in power, they had a very centrist view of their societies and their bodies politic, and they knew much better than the peasants did what was good for them. They inherited the colonial mantle and they really accepted the colonial means of administration - operating from the center. African growth started off quickly and expanded by four percent over the first three or four post-independence years before it began to decline. Liberalization of some of their exports and the fact that they could increase prices for them contributed to that growth. They also benefitted from worldwide high commodity prices following the Korean War. When that began to flatten out, however, it was apparent that African governments'

policies were not necessarily supportive of economic growth or equitable distribution of the benefits of independence.

Ambassador Korry led a small task force to reexamine assistance to Africa. One of the conclusions he and his group drew was that we were providing assistance to a number of countries that probably could not utilize the aid adequately; hence he recommended a group of so-called concentration countries. U.S. assistance would go to ten “countries of emphasis” in Africa - countries like Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana and Morocco. Where we did not have programs in countries of emphasis, our bilateral programs were cut back and were forced to fit within a multi-country, regional mold wherever possible. If projects could be given a regional goal, they would go forward in the Tanzanias, the Ugandas and the Kenyas. As a result, of course, a lot of projects were given a regional mantle and a regional title, but they were in reality bilateral. Many African countries, as I mentioned earlier in East Africa, were forced into counterproductive cooperation. It appeared to interfere with the internal process of these countries to try to regress into a colonial mode in which they had experienced forced cooperation for shared services. We met with a good deal of resistance.

The Korry Report received considerable acceptance within Congress, and our assistance then concentrated on about ten countries. One effect of this, though, was a fairly dramatic reduction in the overall budget for Africa. Two years before I went into the Office of Development Planning, the budget for Africa had been slightly over \$200 million. When I went in, that figure had shrunk to \$125 million. We had to try to rebuild that budget and find rationales for doing so. One of my tasks in working with the front office (the Assistant Administrator and the Deputy Assistant Administrator) was to develop formulas related to regain funds, and some of them certainly got a positive response from the Congress. My first year in DP we managed to raise the U.S. overall budget for Africa back over \$160 million, and by the next year we finally got over \$200 million again. One way was to look toward much larger projects that could demonstrate a significant impact and be framed within a reasonable sector analysis.

For the first time within Africa we began to do analysis on a sectoral basis. We would look at agriculture or education, examine the major constraints within those sectors and see what kinds of policy initiatives we could financially support. Doing so also meant that we could cooperate more effectively with other donors, making more manifest the impact of that assistance. As a result, we increased the budget and brought about a fair amount of concentration of both programs and countries so that mission directors and program officers in the field were forced to focus their energies. We were fairly ruthless in terminating projects that were clearly unsuccessful, and we forced missions to undergo evaluations. It didn't make me the most popular person in the bureau, but it was effective in bringing some rationalization to the programming, the planning and the project design process, and also had a beneficial effect in increasing the resources. We began to have a more effective dialogue with the donors because our resources were increasing.

I'd like to dwell briefly on the whole process of Congressional presentations. Each year the Agency for International Development, as with almost all U.S. Government agencies,



has to present an annual budget to the Congress. Unlike many agencies, though, AID, which operates frequently in a very difficult and obviously a very foreign environment, used to plan its projects over a time frame of anywhere from four to six years. Unfortunately, the annual obligation process in many ways limited both the imagination and the scope of the design in the planning stages. An awful lot of projects were incrementally funded and they tended to be smaller in size than they might otherwise be. The annual budget process also gave Congress an opportunity though to look at, in detail, the nature of the budget request going forward. We had some Congressional Chairmen opposed to foreign aid, such as Representative Otto Passman of Louisiana, who had been on the House Foreign Appropriations Committee for many years. Perhaps I should say that he used foreign aid to his own political ends; I think he probably didn't care one way or the other but it was obviously an opportunity for personal posturing. Coming from a rice producing state, he was always in favor of PL 480 U.S. food aid programs if they had a rice component.

I accompanied Dr. Adams to the first of our budget hearings with Otto Passman. Representative Passman had not realized that Dr. Adams was black, and when we walked into the room he literally did a double take. From across a table about four feet wide, he looked at Sam Adams and said, "Welcome, Reverend. I look forward to these budget hearings," whereupon Sam Adams visibly stiffened and was about to make a strong response. I remember grabbing him right above the knee and squeezing his leg as hard as I could to get his attention, and he subsided. But Passman, for the next six hours, preceded every one of his questions or attached to every comment the term "Reverend." Extremely disrespectful, he was also very well prepared. He had good staff and his staff had managed to comb through the AID documentation, even obtaining all the audit reports. We, too, were extremely well prepared. Anticipating that Dr. Adams in his first budget appearance would be under great pressure, we had grilled him every afternoon for two weeks beforehand, going through every one of the projects in our project portfolio and actually holding "hearings" in the Africa Bureau. During at least ten three-hour sessions, we ran through every one of the projects and grilled him and grilled him and grilled him. I had gone over testimonies from prior years, so we had a pretty good sense as to the character of the questioning, which we knew would be quite rigorous, to say the least.

*Q: How did events come out?*

SHEAR: Very well. Sam Adams responded well, and got to be very astute at listening to my talking in his ear while at the same time responding to questions or comments. I had an excellent staff very diligently prepared, and they sat behind us covering virtually every question asked of us.

*Q: Passman didn't take exception to that?*

SHEAR: No, he did not. He did not at all. When we could not find the answer immediately, we said we would supply it for the record. That would annoy him more than our taking time to shape the response. So one had maybe ten or twelve opportunities in

the course of a whole day of testimony. I personally found the process of testifying exhausting. So much nervous energy goes into it and trying to be on point at every single moment is incredibly demanding. But I must say that Sam Adams did extremely well in his first hearings. After six hours of very close questioning, we adjourned for lunch and then came back. We were both drained, but also feeling really good about our first exposure to gunfire, as it were. We came out pretty well.

*Q: Did Passman try to put you down when you were able to answer a question, or did he try to divert you and go on to something else because he thought you knew the answer?*

SHEAR: He wouldn't divert one so much as he would say, "All right," and this would cut you off. Obviously if he was not going to get you on a question, he'd just go on to the next one. I wondered also where he and his staff got some of the information, because some of it was of a confidential nature dealing with some audits and so on. Obviously they had assistance from within the Bureau.

*Q: What was the general attitude of Congress (beyond Passman) about African programs and so on?*

SHEAR: The Senate side was almost totally disinterested in the African program of USAID, primarily because the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, William Fulbright, was at war with the President over Vietnam. Therefore, there was little oversight and the hearings were really perfunctory. The White House preoccupation with Vietnam at this time was so complete and so overwhelming that we in Africa experienced a good deal of freedom in the creation of policy. We had an excellent relationship with the State Department, thanks to Sam Adams' prior role as an ambassador, and took pains to keep them very much involved. In certain instances, such as Zaire, which I mentioned earlier, we were able to deliver very large amounts of money to support political objectives, even though we tried also to put an economic development spin on them.

*Q: Do you recall any projects that were being initiated at that time? Did we have an overall development strategy or a foreign development policy?*

SHEAR: I can't say that we had an overall development strategy for Africa as such. We were focusing a great deal of our attention and resources on rural development, based on agricultural production. There was an extremely large and expensive program on child measles and smallpox vaccinations run by the Communicable Disease Center (CDC) in Atlanta. We did an evaluation of the measles program and found that it was largely ineffective because the cold chain could not be maintained, the vaccine became ineffective and statistics showed that as many children contracted measles in areas where inoculations were administered as not. We continued the smallpox program but, based on our evaluation, we terminated the measles program. That caused an enormous furor within the Congress; the CDC charged that we were killing children, which we were not. In truth, we were wasting about \$16 million a year on the measles part of that program, and built a strong case to terminate it.

Another area that we were focusing on, especially in East Africa, was education - particularly in secondary schools. We had put forth efforts in secondary and vocational education throughout East Africa and Ethiopia, as well as programs at the university level. The latter gave us a very strong constituency in U.S. higher education circles for the AID program in Africa. Indeed, the Central Planning Bureau set up a series of grants to bring U.S. universities into the USAID program on a highly subsidized basis. Universities could thus build up faculties with African expertise and development expertise beyond Africa, and I think in large measure it was a very good move. The programs were beginning to move solidly into large reforestation and some land reclamation projects, particularly in some of the more arid zones in Africa. Crop production efforts proved successful, ultimately linking Zimbabwe and Kenya and the Shaba province of (then) Congo in a strong corn production program.

While we engaged many U.S. universities in the process of development in Africa and elsewhere, one group was not participating: the predominately black universities and colleges. Sam Adams, as an African-American and head of the Bureau, was very sensitive to this and attempted to remedy it. At a meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, to which we invited the presidents of 40 or 50 predominantly black universities and colleges, there was a universal uproar of protests. Every one of the presidents insisted on standing up and denouncing the U.S. government for failing to help prepare them for working internationally. The meeting was a complete failure in the sense that we were unable to establish communication with these officials and their various university councils. It was a sobering experience because of the degree of their frustration and anger with the government. Later, back in Washington, we were counseled that the most instructive thing we could do would be to help these educators organize themselves effectively to deal with us. As a result, I helped put together a contract with the Triangle Research Institute at the University of North Carolina. They became for us, in effect, a secretariat to work with the black universities and colleges. We then carefully planned and held a second conference to address a series of substantive issues. With a very structured agenda, we launched a very interesting alliance between these institutions and a number of 1860 land grant state universities (largely white) to work internationally. This became the Southeastern Consortium for International Development (including many northern colleges, even Yale). We ended up with 40 or 45 land grant colleges, some private universities such as Yale, and about 20 predominantly black schools. The Consortium was then given the professional resources to bid more effectively on AID projects, a necessary process because there were no such things then as set-aside programs or projects. And bid they did, quite successfully. They rapidly built up a cadre of professionals who worked overseas and had an annual revenue after about three years of about \$10 million. Not significant by today's standards, but then most impressive, and it gave many faculty and staff members international exposure that they hadn't had before. I think this was one of Sam Adams' best achievements, and to the degree that I helped, I feel very good about it.

*Q: That was one of his first initiatives; later there were other developments?*

SHEAR: Yes. One of the things we did, in addition to introducing sector analysis to the Africa Bureau (which had been done for many years in Latin America) was to completely reshape something called “the self-help fund.” About \$100,000 was provided to each AID mission director in the field to be used more or less at will for small self-help projects. When I had been responsible for that fund in Tanzania as the assistant program officer, I felt that it was essentially a distraction and wasn't real development. Sam Adams termed it “walking around” money, and we decided that rather than the mission directors having it, it would be more effective if used by the U.S. ambassadors. That way, they could respond to short-term political initiatives without necessarily getting in the middle of long-term efforts to design AID projects in greater dimensions and substance. So we turned the entire program over to the State Department with an annual budget allocated by country. We had an officer in the State Department who reported back to us, and each ambassador was responsible for his fund. The effect pleased State, and we no longer fooled ourselves that we were providing development with small amounts of money that served only to distract AID staffs overseas.

I gained valuable experience in the Development Planning Office by working with large numbers of people and assuming more substantial managerial responsibilities. This I enjoyed enormously. I moved into an office that had been troubled with a certain amount of racial tension, and further, I was in the awkward position of having been brought in from the outside to an office where the deputy had not been made the director. He was a very competent more senior AID officer with whom it was a pleasure to work, and we got on pretty well. That position gave me the opportunity to make a practical application of the knowledge I had gained about Africa through both academic training and personal reading and research.

*Q: What was the condition of the Bureau at that time? How was it structured?*

SHEAR: The Africa Bureau then was really a reflection of the amalgam of ICA (the original AID agency) and the Development Loan Fund, brought together into AID. One large, influential area in the bureau, the Capital Development Office, was always headed by a very senior officer. Projects designed by that office were useful but conventional capital projects, and we were beginning then to strive for much more integrated kinds of activities within the bureau. Often capital projects required, as well as money and design, technical assistance and training to operate and sustain them. So we initiated efforts to convince these very competent capital development project officers to utilize technical assistance and training more. They resisted, considering this to be “diluting” the purity of the infrastructure activities that they had so rigidly designed in the classic manner. In the African context, I believe we were absolutely correct in pursuing change. Increasingly we managed to design capital projects with substantial components of technical assistance, even mixing capital loan funds and grant funds. Before long, particularly with the experience I had on the Ghana debt rescheduling, it became apparent that the United States should not be lending money, even in very concessional (i.e., 40-year) terms, to African countries that were building up substantial public sector debts. So I proposed to Dr. Adams that we eliminate lending from our portfolio and that all capital projects be made on a grant basis. Since 1972, the Africa Bureau has operated under that policy.

*Q: There was no opposition to that on the Hill? Or elsewhere?*

SHEAR: Surprisingly, no static from the Hill. We sent a notification to Congress, but I don't even think we had a hearing, although we had developed a very strong rationale. We presented the realities of the debt burden and indicated that it would not be appropriate for the United States to be part of that. Also, an aid level of about \$200 million didn't pose any huge threat in terms of U.S. balance of payments or the outlay of funds on a short-term basis. The result was surprisingly easy; we managed to change the entire USAID program for Africa to funding on a grant basis, where it remains to this day.

*Q: We were still doing capital projects?*

SHEAR: Still doing capital projects, although they diminished in number and certainly in size. One reason was that the World Bank was moving heavily into capital lending to Africa and was rapidly building up a correspondingly large annual budget. Under McNamara, the Bank's lending increased substantially, and Bank offices were under pressure to move very large amounts of money. The European Development Fund, as it was then called, was also making very large sums of money available to Africa at highly concessional rates - 40- and 50-year loans - so we were gradually shifting from capital projects to more technical assistance and training.

I worked as the head of Development Planning for Africa for close to three years. In terms of my career that was the most significant single jump I made. I'm very appreciative of the help I got from Bob Smith, who agreed to the appointment. Fred Hahn, the sometimes contentious head of the management office in the Africa Bureau, was also instrumental in my being considered for that position. At that time, as my tenure as head of Development Planning came to its normal conclusion, AID directorships in the field (all political appointments) had to be approved in the White House - often a tortuous and difficult process.

### **A Sabbatical at the Senior Seminar: 1972**

It was in 1972 that Sam Adams suggested that I take a year out - in effect, a sabbatical - and that he would nominate me for a program called the "Senior Seminar." The Senior Seminar is the highest level training program in the U.S. Government. It is *the* training platform for future ambassadors, top military officers and the most senior appointees within the foreign service. It is usually limited to 24 or 25 people, about half of whom are from the State Department, along with one or two from AID, usually one from Treasury and one each from the intelligence agencies and armed services. I will be forever grateful to Sam Adams for nominating me; it proved to be one of the most extraordinary years of my life in terms of what I learned about myself, about the United States and about the world at large.

The Senior Seminar is an extraordinary institution, now in its fourth decade. I was in the 14th seminar, and I was the youngest person in the group - I turned 40 that year. It was a wonderful opportunity to enrich myself intellectually and to get a better understanding of what the world was about generally. My colleagues in the Senior Seminar were a very interesting group, because without exception they were extremely competent and, almost without exception, quite conservative. So there I was, not only the youngest attendee, but also without question the most radical. Those were the days when the women's liberation movement was getting off to a strong start, and we had guest speakers like Betty Friedan, who more than raised the eyebrows of those staid senior civil servants and foreign service officers and made them shift uncomfortably in their seats.

We had an opportunity to meet with every single Cabinet officer, including the Secretary of State, and traveled throughout the country for almost a month reviewing national security - everything from minuteman missile silos in Wyoming to SAC headquarters in Colorado to nuclear submarines. That's sort of the fun part of it, but the serious part was an opportunity to review with the Joint Chiefs of Staff the whole gamut of the nation's security structures and to meet with General Westmoreland, who had just come out of Vietnam. We all felt that he had made a very inadequate defense of the U.S. position there, which caused even the more conservative members of the State Department to become increasingly disillusioned. The Seminar offered the opportunity to view our society in a way that would have been very difficult otherwise.

*Q: What was your impression of what you saw in society?*

SHEAR: My impression of our society was that it was really quite remarkable. Remarkable in the intellectual and technical depth that it had, remarkable in its diversity, extremely encouraging in some of the grassroots activities we saw. We saw Jessie Jackson in his early days in Chicago with his self-help group. He clearly was a person of remarkable force and talent. We also saw Marion Barry, who at that time was leading a self-help group in Washington. More important, I think, we gained an appreciation of the diversity of the country and some of the profound racial issues that exist to this day. That was very discouraging.

We had an opportunity to spend a week in Chicago, a week in New York City and three days on an Indian reservation in the southwest (Four Corners), as well as to travel to Alaska to look at what was happening with the "modernization" of the Eskimos and the Aleuts. What we saw in many ways was the breakup of family structures and the questioning of a lot of initiatives within the whole prospect of urban decline. It was also quite remarkable to see the contrast between cities. Daley was still Chicago's mayor, and despite obvious presence of a long-term political machine, there was a tremendous sense of vitality in the private sector. Its business community had a great deal of optimism, as did the private sector in Atlanta. We spent three or four days in Atlanta. The black community there was just beginning to feel economically powerful; we met with some of the younger black bankers. New York, by contrast, was then in a period of decline and almost helplessness. Their financial crisis would occur a few years later, but certainly one could see the city in a substantial decline. While in New York we were able to witness

the Editorial Board of *The New York Times* putting together an issue of the paper, deciding what would go on the front page and the placement of other articles. Intellectually we were stimulated by sessions focusing on areas such as the new science, the new math, the latest composers and what was behind the sounds of contemporary music. It was for almost 10 months a wonderfully rich adventure.

*Q: What were your impressions of the foreign policy process and dimensions?*

SHEAR: We were asked to develop a couple of papers on foreign policy subjects, and one that we chose was U.S. policy with respect to Cuba. My group recommended that the United States recognize Cuba. We felt that it was not in the best interests of U.S. foreign policy to keep Cuba quarantined, and we thought we made a fairly compelling case as to why. William Rogers was then Secretary of State, and I don't quite know how he learned about this paper, but the six of us who put it together were summoned to his office to defend it. We thought he really wanted to be challenged on this; he was very upset by the fact that people in the pay of the U.S. Government would take this position. We gave him our rationale, but he obviously disagreed with it very strongly, and forcefully argued with us.

*Q: Your whole group had this view?*

SHEAR: Not everybody, but it was a majority view, clearly a majority. Then after about five minutes of his response and discussion, Secretary Rogers harrumphed, got up and walked out of his conference room.

*Q: Do you remember any specifics about the line that you were taking?*

SHEAR: Yes, we thought that by isolating Cuba we really were encouraging Cuba to continue as really a servant state of Russia. We were also encouraging Cuba with Russia's help to undermine the countries of Central America - particularly the Pacific countries of Latin America. Since that island is less than 100 miles off the U.S. coast, we felt that it was very important to normalize relationships with Cuba rather than have a state of near war. We also felt that Cuba's threat to the United States, particularly if we could begin to neutralize the Russian influence, would be minimal and that we would have very little to fear. The continuing hostility toward Cuba really forced Castro; we believed that revolutions need demons and we were continuing to demonize ourselves. It was fascinating to witness how absolutely irate Secretary Rogers was when he heard us elaborate these points.

*Q: Did you go into other parts of foreign policy dimensions?*

SHEAR: We looked a lot, of course, at the East-West confrontation. There were some very good European and Soviet experts in the group. I was struck by the uniform view that they held: Russia as a monolith, that the only way to manage foreign policy with Russia was still by containment. And indeed, I must say that I concurred; Russia seemed extremely hostile and intractable. Where we had some differences was where that conflict

took place in the third world. Africa, we thought, was an unfortunate battleground. For the most part, we considered the presence of Cuban troops in Mozambique and Angola and Ethiopia a product of that conflict, and that was not in our best interest. Certain elements of the way we were conducting ourselves in Africa were viewed as purposefully antagonistic toward Russia. My own experience then in Tanzania, working with Chinese, East Germans and even Algerians who were strongly communist, was that they could more effectively undermine what we were doing than we could undermine them.

*Q: You had to write a paper, I assume?*

SHEAR: Oh, yes. One of the many wonderful things about the Senior Seminar was that we could write on any subject of our choice. One of my colleagues, for example, selected the current situation in the London theater community. He went to London for three weeks, probably attended the theater every night, and presented a very interesting, well researched paper. Other subjects delved into national security issues, trade policy and domestic policy.

From my experience as head of development planning for Africa it seemed a good chance for me to take what we were doing in development planning to its next step. I felt that one of the constraints to reforming our program was the way in which our field offices were structured. Offices tended to be extremely small, with very little capacity to undertake projects of high impact and substantial dimension. So I put together the outline of a paper that I showed to Dr. Adams, who was still head of the Bureau. "This is what I would like to do; what do you think about it?"

He was enthusiastic about my idea to see firsthand how we were organized and then make recommendations about how we might reorganize our field structure. So strong was his support that he supplemented my travel authorization from the Senior Seminar, allowing me to have a chartered airplane at my disposal for almost three weeks. I traveled throughout west and central Africa, visited every post, talked with every ambassador and senior AID officer and went out in the field to look at a lot of our projects. I came away then with a very clear impression of what I thought we could do in terms of reorganization. Obviously there were real constraints. We couldn't create 20-person posts where we then had a staff of only three or four. We couldn't eliminate posts because of the opposition of the State Department. But we could provide significant additional support by establishing a large, centrally located, well staffed field office with good communications and substantial authority. Thus, the focus of responsibility and the authority and approval process could move from Washington to be much closer and more responsive to the field. Many offices in Washington were staffed by those not experienced in working overseas, but this office would be staffed by professionals.

The result of my research was a case study that is still used by the Senior Seminar when people attack the process. There are times when we come forward with something extremely useful, and useful this was. In this instance I was asked to take the report, which of course I circulated within the Bureau, and develop a proposal covering what we might specifically do in West Africa. We came up with the idea of central offices in both



Abidjan and in Nairobi, with considerable delegation of authority and staffed with high quality professionals. We struggled with a name, because we foresaw a great deal of bureaucratic indigestion with the installation of large posts with unique authority on either side of the continent. So Sam Adams, correctly, insisted on the term "service" - the West Africa Regional Development Service Office. That name - REDSO - remained until 1999 when that structure was abolished.

*Q: The one in West Africa was abolished?*

SHEAR: Yes, as well as the one in East Africa, as part of the cutback in AID resources going to Africa. But my sense is that they will be at least partly reestablished in the next two to three years, for reasons I will go into later.

It was quite a personal sensation to help prepare the authorizing message to the field establishing this post. In those days we could communicate both by cable and by "airgrams" which, because they were mailed, could be more complete documents. My recommendations in the form of an airgram cleared by the general counsel's office, provided field officers with a delegation that included authority over contracting and a degree of project approval. The delegations did not cover personnel, but certainly were very strong on the project and on the program sides.

Sam Adams then said, "Now why don't you go out, set up this office and run it."

*Q: Before you go on, have you any more observations on the Senior Seminar?*

SHEAR: It is a remarkable institution, one that may not be unique in terms of world foreign services, but is certainly unique in the U.S. Government. It is a rich, rich opportunity for enhancing the knowledge and capacities of senior officers. It is extremely expensive. My guess would be well over \$100,000 per person, on top of their salaries.

*Q: The group didn't do any international travel?*

SHEAR: Yes, we did. As a group we went to Alaska, and there was an attempt to go to Panama, but negotiations were then underway on the Panama Treaty. However, the whole focus was really to look inside the United States with "foreign" eyes to strengthen understanding and appreciation of our own country.

*Q: After the Senior Seminar you went back to the Bureau to discuss your future?*

**Director of Regional Economic Development Service Office in Abidjan (REDSO):  
1972**

SHEAR: Yes. We had decided before the Senior Seminar was over in August that I would become the first director of the regional office in Abidjan. Although directors' positions were still being approved in the White House, this job was brand new, so Sam could appoint me to it directly.

One of the problems in moving to Abidjan was that there was no adequate schooling for American personnel. The U.S. ambassador was sending his four children to a French school and was opposed to establishing an international school. But clearly some arrangements had to be made if we were to attract the level of young talent that I wanted. I also had a strong personal interest; I hoped that our two young children would have an opportunity to learn French but also study within an English language environment. The result was, through the efforts of Irv Rosenthal of my staff, a small international school that started with eight students in accommodations provided to us by the U.S. Information Service. By year two, that school was renting its own facility and had 80 students, half of whom were Americans. It turned out to be an excellent educational opportunity for my own kids because they were with children of the Ghanaian ambassador, the Korean ambassador and some of the foreign businessmen who were Anglophone.

As part of my assignment to REDSO, I also served as the U.S. representative to the African Development Bank. That was important to me because having some responsibility for 19 or 20 countries receiving U.S. foreign aid, I had no counterpart government, no counterpart country to work with. The Ivory Coast, where the regional office resided, was receiving virtually no U.S. assistance because of its level of per capita income and where it stood on the scale of poverty. As a result, the African Development Bank received a good deal of my attention. The first task, however, was to organize this new office with a sense of mission to serve and support other posts. A second responsibility was to allay concerns and fears from these other posts that a "super office" was being established that would impinge upon their own responsibilities and authorities. So, within about a month after my arrival, we hired some very good consultants whom I had known for some time, and invited all the regional directors to come to Abidjan to discuss how this office could best serve them. That was extremely useful, I think. It by no means removed all the problems, but it went a long way in letting people vent their concerns and let me and my staff try to respond to them.

Within a month after my arrival, I also experienced first hand the role of U.S. ambassadors in some of these smaller posts. I got an almost unintelligible telephone call one afternoon from Bamako, Mali - which at that time had to go through Paris - and it was a very poor connection, but I could tell that there was a very irate gentleman at the other end of the line. It turned out to be Ambassador Bob Blake in Mali, screaming at me that the autoclave had exploded the night before and demanding to know what I was going to do about it. I had not the faintest idea what an autoclave was. One of the engineers on my staff who had just come back from Mali reported that it was part of a large veterinary laboratory that had been built outside of Bamako. The lab, it seems, was really a white elephant that had been designed inappropriately for the environment, and the autoclave (very important for the making of vaccines) was a very sensitive piece of machinery that wasn't built to the right specifications for that part of the world. I guess the fluctuations in current, which were not defended against properly, were such that indeed it did explode. I had no idea what to do about it except put someone on an airplane for a firsthand look. Bob Blake later became and is to this day a very good friend of mine.

We still talk with some amusement about how it took me by surprise when the ambassador called screaming at me to do something about his autoclave. That project was also very useful as a lesson in inappropriate design.

*Q: What was the project again?*

SHEAR: The project was the building of a very large veterinary laboratory on the outskirts of Bamako, Mali, for the manufacture of livestock vaccines. Those vaccines were without question very badly needed and could be well used by the Mali livestock industry. Migrant herders made up about 30 percent of the population, so it was a very important economic activity. These were knowledgeable herders who well appreciated the importance of health for their animals. The French had for years very substantial health programs for livestock. As a result, I got involved with redesigning parts of that lab and staffing it with two full-time technical assistance people from ORT who were experts in repair and in training. By the time I left REDSO just 22 months later, the laboratory was functioning well and the Malians were running it. It was a good exercise in seeing what one could do to redress a poorly designed project by involving very practical people and a government willing to cooperate in getting the problems corrected. One of the major livelihoods in all of West Africa - then and now - is livestock production. The movement of the herds across the whole Sahelian Zone and down into the coast, to Lagos, to Cote d'Ivoire and to Benin is a major economic phenomenon. AID spent a good deal of effort in trying to build analytical systems to understand the movement of those cattle, how they were marketed, the number of people involved in the transactions and so on. We also then began to evaluate livestock programs that had already been undertaken. One of the things that we found - it is amusing in retrospect, but wasn't at the time - was that of \$125 million worth of livestock projects funded by AID or the World Bank, only two were remotely successful. Those were projects which concentrated on animal health and not animal production and marketing. It was very difficult to get a handle on how these animals were marketed in a way which would modify the traditional practices.

*Q: Could you determine why they were not successful?*

SHEAR: Yes, I think we very clearly understood why, but it was hard to correct in the context of the projects. They did not conform to the traditional husbandry practices of these herders. Very complex activities involving a series of middlemen were commonly accepted, which increased the price of the cattle to a point almost prohibitive in terms of entering into the commercial market. It was cheaper to buy beef along the coast, shipped in from Argentina - probably at some subsidized price - than it was to buy from Mali.

*Q: But these weren't marketed as livestock?*

SHEAR: They were marketed, and the constraint was not a Masai East African kind of problem where the people were reluctant to sell their cattle. The prices they had to charge were very high in relation to the quality of the animals. The marketing system was so

complex and so embedded within society that at each step of the way a certain incremental cost went into selling a cow.

*Q: Well, was the Entente Fund active at that time?*

SHEAR: Yes, and we were very much involved in it.

*Q: Why were we supporting that? What is the Entente Fund?*

SHEAR: The Entente Fund was established in support of five countries in an attempt to give them greater cohesion under French influence. Those countries were the Ivory Coast, Niger, then Upper Volta, Togo and Benin. Designed to support capital projects and loan programs, it essentially was to be linked to a very senior French technical assistance person who was an advisor to the Africans and directed both the policies and the movement of capital throughout the fund. The fund was very prestigious, and the Entente itself was seen as a politically desirable entity by the heads of state involved. So, with French assistance, there were, in effect, chief of state villages in every one of those five countries, even very poor economies like Niger. Neighboring chiefs of state could visit periodically - usually every two years - and there was a whole infrastructure laid out, with remarkable villas for them to reside in for two days at a time. And they were kept up at great expense.

*Q: I'm curious; why those five countries? Why not some of the other Francophone countries?*

SHEAR: Think of what was around those countries. There was Ghana on one side and Liberia on the other. Guinea, anathema to the French, of course, is west and north along the coast. With the exception of Mali and Chad on the other side, they form not a cohesive but some kind of coherent party politic. They were also at one point a semiautonomous component of the French Equatorial Empire, which was run out of both Brazzaville and Dakar.

*Q: And this arrangement appealed to us because we were then pushing regional programs.*

SHEAR: That's correct. It was a way of aiding the Ivory Coast, which was receiving no U.S. assistance, and Benin and Togo, very small countries for which it was hard to find viable programs other than some capital projects. So we tried to support the Entente Fund and we thought that it could also ameliorate some border tensions between the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta. Upper Volta was relatively very important to the Ivory Coast, because the latter had a great labor shortage and the Upper Voltans supplied much of its farm and plantation workers.

I want to talk about the Ivory Coast a little bit because it was a quite extraordinary economy. The Entente Fund was a mechanism for rationalizing assistance to countries under the terms of the Korry Initiative; this policy did not otherwise provide them with assistance. Sam Adams was very concerned about an \$18 million loan that had been

concluded just before I went out to Abidjan; it was a small-scale entrepreneur development loan fund. The loan had been authorized the year before but had not been signed, so my first task was to negotiate it, get it signed and begin to get it implemented. This was very instructive, because it introduced me to a form of assistance I wasn't familiar with - a development loan fund of itself in the field that called for working with small-scale entrepreneurs and the local banking system. At the same time that that was going on, the French advisor to Paul Kaiya, Secretary General of the Entente Fund, was forced to leave because of illness, and I offered to provide a U.S. senior counselor as his replacement. For that position, we got a very competent ex-AID Director who spoke French well, was a very good economist and knew banking.

That permitted me, an American, to be accepted as I facilitated the negotiation of a very complicated loan agreement. That agreement had been hammered out in Washington and certainly justified the REDSO presence. It was designed without thought of whether the implementing countries could manage all the preconditions to disbursement, special conditions, and so on. It was an amazingly complicated loan, and it took about three months to conclude negotiations and begin implementation. The loan was evaluated about four years later when the funds had been disbursed, and was relatively successful.

*Q: What did it cover?*

SHEAR: It was to support modernization of small-scale enterprise within the five countries. At the same time, the U.S. advisor came up with a brilliant idea to capitalize the loan repayments, so we developed a guarantee fund. That guarantee fund within about five years grew to \$80 million; it probably was as beneficial as the direct loan itself and used for the same purposes - in effect, recycled.

*Q: Were there other projects for the Entente Fund?*

SHEAR: We also then got the African Development Bank interested in co-financing with us within the context of the Entente Fund. We actually built a major highway in Benin, almost the length of the country, with co-financing from the African Development Bank and USAID. Along with the European Development Fund and the African Development Bank we rebuilt the entire port of Cotonou. Inside the port of Cotonou was a very large lagoon which hosted a vitally important shrimp fishery, and we knew that creation of this harbor would pose very substantial environmental problems for the lagoon. We undertook an extensive study that resulted in major breakwaters being placed in the lagoon associated with the port. They proved to be extremely successful and preserved the shrimp fishery, which at that time sustained about 12,000 households. It was a hard project to undertake because of its complications, its environmental implications and the fact that it opened up the port of Cotonou for international trade. I had no way of knowing then that Cotonou would later become a very important point of entry for U.S. emergency assistance. We used that facility for bringing in emergency aid when the drought struck a year and a half later - just good luck.

The period at REDSO was a wonderful experience for me. I learned an awful lot about capital projects and about both the positive aspects and limitations of engineers. We had some pretty competent engineers who needed special training in how to negotiate their way through problems. Most of their approaches to problem solving were essentially mechanistic. In Africa, mechanistic solutions are not solutions. We actually brought in a consultant to work with them on negotiation techniques. I don't think we were very successful, but it was a noble effort. One thing we were accomplishing, though, was to begin building a cadre and a roster of African consultants to work with us. I felt very strongly that assistance being provided by U.S. consultants was expensive and that those individuals were generally not knowledgeable enough about West Africa. Further, as I traveled around West Africa I met many extremely competent people in the local private sector, in universities and in African Foundations that we should use. So we began to build a roster of African consultants and included African consultants in our project design and evaluation extensively.

*Q: What were some main areas that REDSO was supporting in its projects and programs?*

SHEAR: The bulk of our ongoing projects were capital activities. We had a portfolio at any one time of over \$600 million in such projects, ranging from roads such as I earlier described in Benin to bridges like the John F. Kennedy Bridge in Niger, begun years earlier and very important for opening up the southern part of the country. Many of the projects dealt with grain storage as well as transportation. At that time we believed - for the wrong reasons - that we could stabilize prices by establishing grain storage centers. I think that was a misguided regional activity, but we put it in place and put a lot of money into it. We built a number of educational facilities, but probably 50 percent of the money went into transportation and associated projects. It was a very large portfolio, it was very important that we report on it regularly to our clients (as we thought of the AID missions around us). So we published every 60 days a report on the status of every project in our portfolio, which usually numbered between 60 and 80 activities. It meant we had to visit every one of them - part of my strategy to make certain that we traveled - and indeed the staff traveled a great deal.

*Q: How was the morale of the REDSO staff, considering all that traveling?*

SHEAR: I think morale was pretty high, because the staff really felt they were having an impact on the successful execution of projects. Had I stayed longer, I probably would have witnessed some of the wearying effects of that much travel because some of our people were on the road 40 or 50 percent of the time. The downside was that when they weren't traveling they wondered how useful they were. We had to find a different kind of role for them.

*Q: What were the categories of expertise that you had at that time?*

SHEAR: We had a staff of about eight engineers, three full-time contract officers, three full-time procurement officers (very much involved in Food for Peace), two or three PL

480 officers and about 10 project officers. These individuals played significant roles in commodity import programs and balance of payment support, which was becoming an increasingly important component of our foreign aid program.

We also began to build a very strong staff of social scientists. As we became more involved in rural development and the cattle industry, it was obvious that we needed to be familiar with local cultures. I hired the first full-time anthropologist in an AID mission in Africa and the first environmentalist hired in the field. With specialists such as agricultural economists who knew a great deal about Africa and West Africa, we built a very strong staff. That staff would become increasingly important as a devastating phenomenon - an enormous drought - would ravage that part of the world before long. We were asked to handle at the Port of Dakar commodities coming in from the United States for emergency relief. At first they were not substantial amounts, but they were commodities of a nature we hadn't encountered before. I also became aware in my own travels that the crop failures of the year before, because of no rain, were about to be repeated, generating a growing sense of alarm. Such was the seriousness of the problem that the government of the Ivory Coast opened its borders and permitted cattle, migrant cattle ranchers and farmers to move into northern Ivory Coast from both Mali and Upper Volta. Benin and Togo did the same for cattle coming out of Niger, and so began the realization that there was a major crisis occurring, the dimension of which we really didn't yet understand.

*Q: Before we get to that, would you give some more details about the Ivory Coast at that time?*

SHEAR: The only programs we had then with the Ivory Coast were regional; we could have no bilateral activities. The Entente Fund was thus of much interest to us because it permitted us to proceed. The other projects we had were the inoculation program for smallpox and some fairly marginal programs. Our presence in the Ivory Coast was very modest indeed.

*Q: Was that welcomed in the Ivory Coast, the fact that we weren't doing much for them?*

SHEAR: It was always a sensitive issue. When the government would make noises about the number of people I was bringing into REDSO on a permanent basis, we would ask Paul Kaiya to talk to the President about the Entente Fund projects and how they enhanced the prestige of the Ivory Coast in relation to the other four Entente countries. The Ivory Coast was also getting the bulk of the \$18 million dollar loan I discussed earlier, because it was most prepared to use it.

The Ivory Coast was quite different from any other African country that I had been in. For the first time, I encountered extensive industrialized agriculture in Africa - I'd seen attempts at it by the Belgians when I visited Zaire shortly after independence, but they were then in decline. Agriculture in the Ivory Coast was growing, and growing very hopefully. It was developing the way I had anticipated that Nigeria would grow in the agricultural sector before oil was discovered. The Ivorian agricultural economy was built around the concept of the industrialized plantation run by a parastatal - a government-

owned agency - on a very small percentage of the total acreage of any single unit it formed (maybe 10 to 20 percent of a rubber plantation). The remainder was owned by small farmers. The core plantation provided technical assistance and infrastructure and even schooling and health services to the outlying farmers. From the air it looked like one huge plantation, but in reality it might have involve four or five hundred small farmers and one core plantation. They did this with rubber, with palm oil, banana and pineapple, and were extremely successful. It was a very effective way of getting modern agrarian practices to the farmers, providing them with social services and keeping them on the land itself.

*Q: Were these all French run, or were they run by Africans?*

SHEAR: They were almost all French run and partially owned by French companies. They were at the same time extremely effective and very profitable for both the French and the Ivorian participants. There was a certain amount of equity in them; the Ivorian farmers also did extremely well. The problem that emerged then, and since, was that flush with foreign exchange earnings from agricultural commodities, the Ivory Coast began to undertake massive capital projects using short-term borrowing, creating great difficulties with the international creditors. The IMF came in while I was there to bail them out and forced the government into some austerity programs, which they adhered to for a few years until they satisfied the IMF and then embarked upon another binge of borrowing.

But it was a fascinating country. Rural services functioned better than in any other African country I'd worked in, and government stores supplied basic commodities fairly effectively. So the social system, the infrastructure systems and the health systems all worked quite well. We thoroughly enjoyed living there, I must say. It was difficult to get to know the Ivorians. We found it much easier to get to know other Africans, but that may be because the Ivorians tend to be more retiring and I did not have a direct relationship with them.

*Q: What about the African Development Bank?*

SHEAR: The African Development Bank was in essence a REDSO responsibility, and I thoroughly enjoyed working with it. The situation in the Bank at that time was extremely healthy and positive. A very competent Tunisian, Labidi, was the president. I had in effect witnessed the birth of the ADB many years before at a meeting of the DAC in Paris when its chairman took the initiative to help the Africans. The latter did not want any foreign equity ownership in their bank, so it was 100 percent owned by African governments, and suffered in size because of that. The Nigerians were most adamant in wanting to keep it an African institution. One of my tasks was to begin discussions to get the professional leadership of the Bank to acknowledge that it needed outside equity and to make them realize that the U.S. Government was prepared to play a significant role. I was authorized to offer and negotiate a \$10 million bilateral loan to the Bank, despite the fact that we no longer had loan programs on a bilateral basis. This was considered an



exception because it was being made to the Bank, and so the president of the African Development Bank and I negotiated, and I got approval for the \$10 million.

*Q: That's before the Special Fund?*

SHEAR: Yes, but it turned out to be a precursor to the Special Fund. We had a number of joint activities with the Bank and I had arranged for highly competent U.S. professionals to provide technical assistance with project design. Two full-time AID employees were sent to the Bank in that capacity. They were very much appreciated, and both enjoyed their assignments.

Meanwhile, the \$10 million loan approval had to go to the Senate for Congressional notification, but I was unaware of that constraint. I negotiated the loan with the president of the African Development Bank and his senior financial advisor and requested from Washington authorization to finalize the transaction. We waited and waited...and waited. Finally, in frustration, I phoned Al Disdier, the senior officer in the Capital Projects Office of the Bureau, who hemmed and hawed and said the process was underway and I would get the authorization any day.

Not surprisingly, I began to get polite but concerned inquiries from the president of the African Development Bank, as he wanted to make a major ceremony out of this groundbreaking direct loan from the U.S. Government. I learned only then that there was an objection on the part of one of the Senators and that the loan was not to be authorized. It was one of the most difficult situations I encountered in my entire foreign service career.

*Q: Who objected, and why?*

SHEAR: I think it was Senator Percy, but I'm not absolutely certain. For one thing, there was the precedent of the United States providing capital to the African Development Bank. The other objection was more technical in that it had not been thoroughly discussed as a major new initiative. It was not just a normal project that hadn't been presented to Congress; it was a different kind of creature.

*Q: So it never went forward?*

SHEAR: Alas, no. I finally received a cable in which I was in effect asked to stand down. By that time, though, the ADB was planning its annual meeting in East Africa, and the president of the Bank had included on the agenda this "significant achievement." I was scheduled to be present to sign the loan agreement with him. Instead, I had to cable him that it was not going to be authorized. I was so dismayed that I just packed up my family and left on R&R.

*Q: Sounds like somebody in Washington hadn't handled it well.*

SHEAR: That is an understatement. It was a major disappointment and embarrassment. When Labidi came back from the ADB meeting and I met with him, he was extremely

understanding and very gracious about it, but I'm sure he was bitterly disappointed. It was one of many occasions in my career when the U.S. Government was not the most constant of partners. Because of the nature of our governance system, complicating factors arise after commitment to interfere with execution and implementation. Regretfully, this occurred many times.

### **The Early Period of the Sahel Drought and Development Program: 1970s**

*Q: I'd like to move now to the Sahel Development Program, in which you played a central role. What happened that led to that?*

SHEAR: The Sahel Development Program grew out of a natural disaster of extraordinary proportions which was slow in being understood by the donors and in some measure even by the Sahelian countries themselves. In 1970 the rains began to diminish, and by 1971 almost failed completely throughout the entire Sahelian zone. But the drought, which went on for almost three years, followed a decade of much higher than normal rainfall. As a result, nomadic herders, who comprised about 25 percent of the Sahel population, moved increasingly into the edges of the Sahara. There, because of higher rainfall, areas that had not seen grass for a century or more had begun to produce grasses once more. This led to a substantial increase in the number of cattle, sheep and goats making up the nomadic herders' livestock throughout the entire zone. This is a zone of enormous size, stretching from the borders of the Central African Republic to the Atlantic Ocean - an area geographically the size of the United States. The Sahelian Zone is roughly half of that, about 1.5 million square miles. It is rolling grassland, broken with acacia trees and some arabica trees from which gum arabic is derived. But for the most part, it is populated intermittently by large numbers of cattle led by the herders in search of grass and water on a fairly predictable series of grazing patterns. The decade of higher rainfall had led the nomadic herders, who were mostly Fulani, farther and farther north into the semi-desert areas, so the impact of the drought when it arrived was to isolate large numbers of them with their cattle. They were cut off from their normal grazing patterns and normal sources of water, making conditions desperate.

So great were the dimensions of the disaster that over 25 million people were directly affected, losing all or a significant amount of their crops so that they could no longer sustain themselves. Eight million of them were forced to leave their homes and move into areas of food availability - higher rainfall and some water. The number of people lost to the drought is unknown, but it is estimated conservatively that at least 100,000 died. Millions of cattle, sheep and goats did not survive; the Sahelian livestock herds were reduced by about 50 percent. In the decade preceding the drought, however, the numbers of livestock had increased so substantially that even in the normal grazing areas overgrazing was significant. There was very little margin for error, very little cushion with the decline and almost complete cessation of rains for two years.

Foreign assistance in support of this disaster was extremely slow in coming, in large measure because the information was slow in being gathered and understood. To where I sat in REDSO came reports from my staff who were traveling extensively throughout the

Sahel - reports of crop failures, but on a localized basis. We didn't have any idea of the extent of the disaster. There was none of the satellite coverage that we now take for granted (and which exists in some measure because of that drought), so we had to rely on reports from the ground that fell far short of forming an overall picture. Interestingly, the Sahelian States themselves were beginning to mobilize in support of the disaster. They were beginning to see on a nation-by-nation basis the extent of the impact of the drought.

*Q: Let's review the chronology. This early period was when?*

SHEAR: The rains began to fail in 1969. From 1970 through part of 1972, precipitation continued to diminish. That is to say, it rained everywhere to a certain degree, but for the most part no more than about 10 inches per year. At least 12 to 14 inches of rain fairly concentrated over a 90- to 120-day period is required for the successful production of the principal crops of millet and sorghum. So the drought that really lasted intensively over three rainy seasons took its toll over a four-year period.

By 1972, the Sahelian States had themselves - well before the external world and the donor community - realized the extent of the problem and began to organize an interstate committee headquartered in Ouagadougou, the capital of then Upper Volta. The Comité Permanent Inter-Etat de Lutte Contre La Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS) was formed to gather data on the drought and then try to mobilize the international community to support the Sahelian States. Some had already undertaken extraordinary measures that even reached outside the Sahel itself. For example, the Ivory Coast opened its northern borders to Mali and Upper Volta (its northern neighbors), as well as Niger. Herders and their livestock from these three countries were allowed to enter into the Ivory Coast, which is a coastal zone with higher rainfall. Likewise, Senegal, although also severely hit by the drought, opened its borders to Mali and to Mauritania. Cattle by the tens of thousands moved across the Senegal River - which was then almost dry - south into some of Senegal's higher rainfall areas. One of the problems associated with the movement of cattle though into Senegal, the Ivory Coast and then into Ghana, was the fact that these cattle were unable to resist the tsetse fly. The herds were further decimated by trypanosomiasis, a form of bovine sleeping sickness. The drought also wiped out over time almost all the development efforts in that zone, with the exception of roads and basic infrastructure projects. The resources that governments would normally apply to assistance projects were not available, and almost all of the management and limited governance of these countries was directed toward trying to bring some kind of support to their own populations. In response, the CILSS issued desperate calls for international aid, which were only slowly heeded and understood by the donors themselves, but food began to flow in substantial measure by 1972.

There was, however, no logistical means of coordinating the growing flood of assistance, so that the ports of Abidjan and Dakar and the recently constructed port of Cotonou (in which U.S. aid had played a part) were quickly glutted. Food piled up in extraordinary amounts on the docks, and much of it became spoiled. In response to the impact of the drought, a special meeting was held in Washington to deal with both the short-term emergency and the long-term implications.

*Q: What was the reaction in the United States and in Congress about this earlier period?*

SHEAR: There began to emerge a tremendous public response, because for the first time television presented to all Americans a view of mothers and children starving and dying of hunger. The impact on the U.S. consciousness was extraordinary. Never before had the public seen in their own living rooms the immediate impact of natural disaster in Africa. While images of war had for years appeared on television, natural disasters were something largely unknown, particularly of this dimension. The public outcry for action on the part of the U.S. Government was rapid and very substantial. Church and community groups mobilized in support of providing more U.S. assistance, and there was heightened concern on the part of the Administration about how to deal with the crisis. Congress became increasingly engaged, organizing hearings and raising questions virtually on a daily basis with AID and the Department of State about dealing with what was becoming a national issue. The newspapers also picked it up, and headlines appeared in *The Washington Post* and *The Boston Globe*, among others.

The conference in Washington called by the Africa Bureau was a very high profile one. I was at that time still the REDSO Director. We received about a month's advance notice about the conference, and from my excellent staff we assembled representative sociologists, agronomists and program planners to address a long-term way of dealing with the consequences of the crisis. The drought was a fact we had to deal with not only as an emergency but also in the longer term, addressing development problems and symptoms thus revealed. The result was a report generated by me and my staff that I brought along when I was summoned to Washington. The paper outlined the background of the Sahel where, unlike many areas of Africa, many characteristics were, if not uniform, very similar. In addition to a common historical and cultural background, empires like those in Ghana and Mali had substantial contact with the Arab world and almost none with Europe, and they had highly developed educational institutions such as the University of Timbuktu, established in the tenth century. Here were countries with a strong sense of history, although their modern independence started only in the 1960s. They also shared the heritage of the French Colonial Period, which lasted for slightly more than a century. That brought about a strong sense of allegiance to France and a strong identification with Francophone culture. The Sahel countries were characterized by an elitist governance where a small number of people - almost all of whom had been trained in France - had ruled in some measure with disdain for the peasantry, as the French did. But they could hardly ignore the tragedies that were unfolding before them.

*Q: The French were still pretty influential in managing and running the countries, weren't they?*

SHEAR: The French were extremely strong in the areas of security, overall policy and education. Their role in agriculture, while it had a strong research base such as the institutes based in Montpellier, was diminishing, and Sahelian States were looking for new technologies. The attachment to France was strengthened in the security area, as there were French military forces positioned in almost every one of those countries. The

strongest presence was in Senegal, where there was a regional base. But although the French for the most part were considered very important, the Sahelians were already seeking alternative sources of both financial assistance and technology. They were beginning to look to the Scandinavian countries and the United States; the Japanese at this time had not yet begun a major aid effort. Obviously, it was important that any assistance we provided be coordinated with the French. Fortunately, since the death of De Gaulle in 1969, there had begun to emerge a pattern of coordination with the French. Annual joint meetings were extremely useful in terms of programming, but perhaps even more helpful as a forum where we could get together around major issues and exchange information. We began to diffuse suspicions about motives on both sides.

The legacy of French colonial rule was an important factor in the Sahel. Unlike Nigeria, where the British governed through strong local, traditional organizations (e.g., chieftainships, emirates), the French had a more direct hand. Over time, they gained increasing respect for the strength of Sahelians within their own cultures, but that did not really directly impact upon the nature of their governance. French governance was much more centralized and directive than the British, and in many ways much more resistant to change. As a result, African public service was much thinner in the Francophone states than in the Anglophone states of Africa, and the government's ability to respond to the drought was somewhat more limited by weak local delivery systems and local governance.

The Sahelian States share certain commonalities in geography. From Chad to Senegal they stretch in an arch of almost 3,000 miles, basically at the same latitude so that as the drought would hit one country, it would hit them all to varying degrees. Mauritania was the most vulnerable, since it was the farthest north. The annual rains throughout this part of Africa usually moved north out of the Congo Basin in a fairly predictable way, petering out and stopping just north of the Senegal River. The drought hit Mauritania hardest, but all the Sahelian States were almost as negatively affected. As I mentioned, 25 percent of the population on average was engaged in raising livestock, for the most part migratory. Except for those who lived in the cities, most others were engaged in cash agriculture involving cotton, ground nuts or subsistence crops of millet and sorghum, with small amounts of rice being grown in the river basins.

Among the most striking features of the Sahel are these river basins. The Sahel is coursed by three significant river systems: the Volta, the Niger and the Senegal. As we were undertaking our analysis in REDSO prior to my bringing the strategy paper to Washington, we realized that in a macro-geographic way, the Sahel probably had sufficient water and land to produce crops to feed itself and perhaps even export. The Sahel need not therefore be a food deficit area, and we should be able over time to design production systems that, if not drought-proof, would certainly be drought-resistant. We had people on staff who had some experience in the U.S. Agricultural Service, and together we explored what had occurred in the States following the great dust-bowl disasters in the 1920s and the 1930s. Because a national effort resulted in the creation of a series of windbreaks that essentially changed the natural cover in almost all of the Great Plains, when droughts of equal or greater severity than those earlier in the century hit in

the 1950s, the impact was minimized. There were no great dust storms, there was no great loss of soil cover and the impact on crops was not nearly so significant.

That awareness gave us hope that the technologies were available. The critical factor would be to mobilize the human and financial resources to deal with this and to develop an understanding of the soil and water systems in the affected area. So I would bring to the conference at least the beginning of ideas on the need for an integrated approach of a dimension much larger and more extensive than anything envisaged before in Africa. The natural conclusion was that this could not work without continued, well-coordinated cooperation among the French and the Americans (the two principal donors), other bilateral donors, multilateral development agencies and the Sahelian States. Not an easy task, and we were just beginning to have an idea of how to approach it. I sent a copy of the paper to Washington about a week in advance of my arrival so it could be circulated, and it was extremely well received at a time when the Africa Bureau was in substantial disarray. The State Department had been highly critical of the Africa Bureau and of AID generally. Henry Kissinger was then the Secretary of State, with Joe Sisco as his Deputy. Sisco was calling meetings every week for reports from AID on the drought emergency and disaster relief because of increasing pressure from the newspapers, Congress, television and the public.

I returned to the Ivory Coast after the conference, and within a week I received a call from Sam Adams, head of the Africa Bureau, reporting on a telephone call from Henry Kissinger. He told Dr. Adams that he would like me to come back to Washington to take on mobilizing efforts for the drought emergency and also to work on a longer term. I had known Henry Kissinger slightly during my days in graduate school, working with him directly and fairly intensely on two international seminars he was conducting for the Harvard Center for International Affairs, of which he was then Deputy Director. I'm sure he didn't remember me, but Dan Parker, the recently appointed AID Administrator, had visited Abidjan at REDSO, and we had an opportunity to discuss early on the policy paper which we were beginning to draft. Aware of my work history and philosophy and the quality of my staff and our approach, it was he who suggested that Kissinger, through the Bureau, approach me. I hadn't even completed my first tour in Abidjan and had been approved to return for a second tour, so it was with some reluctance that my family and I returned to Washington. I was fully aware that it would be a very intense and difficult time.

Prior to returning, though, I wanted to have a look first hand at what was happening in the Sahel. So I chartered an aircraft, and my wife, Barbara, and I, along with two of my staff, traveled throughout the area for 10 days. We went from N'djamena in Chad all the way to the Atlantic Ocean in Dakar and then back down the coast to see what was happening in the ports. In that ten-day period, we put together quite a remarkable picture of what was transpiring. Much of what we saw was appalling - large numbers of people brought together in camps so they could be provided with some kind of coordinated feeding and medical care. Some refugee camps in Chad and Niger served as many as 30,000 people. When we landed in Dakar and got out of the airplane, the first sensation

was the smell of fermenting grain permeating the atmosphere. We went directly to the port, where tens of thousands of tons of grain rotted in great heaps on the docks.

*Q: Where had it come from?*

SHEAR: From all sources - from the United States, from the European Community, from other bilateral donors and the World Food Program. During a brief stop in Nouakchott, we had visited its port, where several thousand tons of dried milk was spoiling, all of it from the European Union. I visited officials at the office of the European Union, which was then the European Development Fund, and they just shrugged off responsibility, saying that they didn't have sufficient staff for the inspections and that the Mauritanian Government should move any food arriving at the port. I was appalled both by their indifference and the inability of the Mauritanian Government to move the commodities. Dakar was an even larger disaster, and even at the port in Abidjan, which was much more efficient than Dakar, close inspection revealed large warehouses filled with grain that was spoiling. The awful truth was that global assistance in the form of thousands of tons of grain had made it to the coast, but was not getting into the interior. With that image in my mind, I returned to Washington to take up my new assignment.

*Q: When did you take over that position?*

SHEAR: It was late 1972 or the beginning of 1973. The first day I was in the office I received a call from an African-American news network wanting to know what was being done about this great disaster. They implied that the U.S. Government was ignoring the plight of hundreds of thousands of Africans. Obviously I was very careful in response, but after that initial contact they began to call me regularly, so two or three times a week I had a "progress" report going out through a black news network airing across the country. It was certainly a dramatic indication of the degree of public interest in responding to this crisis. A box was set up in my office for my review of hundreds of letters from people throughout the country asking if they could go to Africa, if they could help and how best to provide financial support. Many included scientific and technical suggestions for solving the problem of drought, some of which were quite inventive, such as placing thousands of very large black posts throughout the Sahel to attract rainfall. There were dozens and dozens of ideas (many, of course, not feasible), an unprecedented expression of concern from ordinary citizens who wanted to respond to disaster on the other side of the globe.

The second day I was in my new position, Dr. Adams asked me to accompany him to a meeting with Deputy Secretary of State Joe Sisco. He welcomed me and immediately wanted to know what I was doing about the situation. It was a vivid reminder of the enormous pressure that I was to be under. That began six months of working long hours seven days a week, almost to the point of exhaustion. It paid off, however, and we did manage to get on top of the drought emergency.

I recruited about half a dozen extraordinarily competent AID officers (Jim Kelly is a good example), posted them in each of the Sahelian capitals and delegated to them

substantial authority to help coordinate the movement of commodities once they arrived in country. A number of procurement experts were assigned to the ports, to report directly to me and the field officers. I gave each of them an independent budget and authority to enter into contracts locally for the movement of commodities both in country and away from the ports. We then set up an emergency office where all of the food moving from Cotonou, Abidjan and Dakar into Mali could be coordinated. This came about by an extraordinary action on the part of the U.S. Congress. Without any formal request from the Administration, they passed an emergency assistance bill which contained \$110 million in cash and an additional \$100 million for Food for Peace (Public Law 480) commodities for the area. Our problem thus became not want of food and money, but the application of that assistance.

That first six months also gave us an opportunity to recruit over 150 Peace Corps volunteers within the countries where we were operating. We trained them become food monitors and auditors for the final disposition of commodities. There were over 150 full-time volunteers working with us on the delivery of food, in large measure because of their availability. The villages they had earlier been working in were deserted, and due to the drought various projects they had worked on were in many instances no longer functional.

A series of Congressional hearings shortly after my arrival revealed the insecurity of our own system within AID with respect to information. I remember once appearing before Senator Kennedy's Refugee Committee with testimony that I had had typed up that very morning. The session was at 11 o'clock in the morning, and my statement was finished at about 9:30. When I faced the Committee, before I could even finish reading my statement, Kennedy started asking me questions that were clearly based on what was in it. It was obvious that someone of my own staff had a channel directly into Senator Kennedy's office. He had a very effective information channel within the Bureau. We had nothing to hide, but it was sobering - and an important caution to be very careful with the way we communicated and the nature of the information we were pulling together.

Within about 10 months we managed to unblock the ports, in large measure through the agreement of governments and the assignment by CILSS of disaster coordinators to work with us. Each of the latter was a national of the country where we were operating, and this facilitated enormously our own work as we cleared not only U.S. commodities but those of most other donors as well. The United States played a very important and significant role in unblocking the ports and getting supplies to where they would do the most good.

*Q: Where were the French?*

SHEAR: The French at this time were engaging their military in assisting with the delivery of some of the commodities. The Sahelian States viewed this with some suspicion, despite their long association and closeness with France. Meanwhile, in some of the more remote areas of the Sahel we were forced to use U.S. military aircraft to drop supplies. We tried to limit this method, though, because the cost of such a delivery using



a C-130 was about \$1,000 a ton - virtually prohibitive except *in extremis*. It also caused many problems with hungry people on the ground when the sacks would break open. The aircraft would drop them on special sleds from perhaps 50 feet above the ground, and if they broke open upon impact, conflict would result among those trying to retrieve the food. Because it was very ineffective and costly, we tried to minimize the number of C-130 flights.

Overall, the French response was not very effective. Their aid organization was large in numbers of people, but most of them were at opposite ends of the spectrum. They were either relatively inexperienced young people engaged as teachers or were senior people working within the government. Collectively they had difficulty in organizing their efforts around project activities. The United States, because of its long history of PL 480 and food aid, was much more effective in moving new commodities into the area - taking fewer than 100 days between the ordering of commodities in the States and deliveries to ports. European Union and Common Market assistance required over a year for the same process. We obviously were doing a pretty good job.

The food we delivered ourselves over a year and a half exceeded 500,000 tons. The food was frequently delivered where there were virtually no roads, and later when the rains began to reappear, what roads there were became impassable. Creative Peace Corps volunteers worked to devise ways to continue transporting food over rivers by covering truck motors so that they could be under water for brief periods of time and still function. Before long we decided to seek more effective ways of dealing with the short-term project requirements. Roads had to be rebuilt, wells had to be reopened, boreholes had to be reestablished, engines to pump water from deep under ground had to be repaired or replaced, and bridges had to be reconstructed. The result was the Accelerated Impact Project (AIP), a plan we devised so that the people we were assigning to each of the capitals would have authority to approve projects up to \$250,000. These were small activities based on criteria we considered crucial for bridging the gaps and requirements in permitting food to get through and to allow for the return to some form of normalcy. We used \$30 to \$40 million in this fashion. Maury Williams (the AID Deputy Administrator) was extremely concerned about audits of these projects because they were obviously not handled by AID methods, so we went to fairly extensive lengths to insure financial accountability. In the end, the projects also served a very important function on a political level in the Sahelian States. The quantity of the food aid we delivered and the way we delivered it were impressive, and the accelerated impact projects gave AID a reputation for resourcefulness that we had not previously enjoyed in these countries.

While this emergency assistance was flowing from the United States, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized an extraordinary conference in Geneva of all the donors and UN agencies, including the World Bank, to explore UNDP's coordinating relief efforts. It had very little experience in delivering emergency assistance, but because of UNDP's ability to convene all the donors, the conference was seen by the United States as potentially significant. I attended with Roy Stacy and others who were beginning to work on the longer-term aspects of drought recovery. Brad Morse, a former Republican Congressional Representative from Massachusetts, attended as the U.S. candidate to be Administrator of UNDP when there would be an election for

that position. He was there essentially to recruit support from the African governments, but when we met with him, this good politician said in effect, "I'll make a deal with you. The U.S. Government and you as individuals have a lot of credibility with the Africans who are here. Help me in my campaign and I can assure you of my cooperation with UNDP afterward." It seemed like a pretty good proposal to us, so we did help him, and indeed shortly thereafter he was selected, with very strong African support, to the position of UNDP Administrator. While he remained a good friend following that, he also started his own office of Sahelian operations, which was in conflict with some of the goals we were establishing with the CILSS for African leadership of the recovery effort. The UNDP's Sahelian office over time would be counter to the Sahel Development Program, which we wanted to be truly an international effort encompassing the assistance of UN agencies - but more of this later. During this period, Maury Williams left his position as Deputy Administrator of AID and moved to Paris to chair the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. This was fortuitous for us, because he was then in a position to facilitate our putting together a coordinated international effort.

I must mention through all of this the extraordinary leadership and support of Sam Adams, then Assistant Administrator for AID. During a visit from Maury Williams shortly after he became DAC chairman, Sam informed him that the only way that a long-term assistance effort in the Sahel would succeed would be to form an international consortium around the effort, because of its large dimension. He turned to me in the meeting and said, "And it's David's responsibility to put that together for AID, but we certainly will want and need your support and advice as we further develop the planning for this." Maury was extremely interested because he had been intimately involved and very concerned with the ability of the Africa Bureau to deliver the assistance and account for funding that Congress was providing. He felt responsible and, I think, probably a little bit vulnerable, so he felt obliged to be of assistance as well as performing on a thoroughly professional level. The result was our having a colleague and ally in Paris who would prove extremely important.

While this was going on - in early 1974 - we had sent a request to Congress for special funds to help with planning for the Sahel Program. We wanted to signal Congress that while their support during the drought emergency was extremely important, a longer-term effort was needed that would require even more substantial funds. We then began to put forward a basic framework - but not much more than that - of a long-term effort in which the CILSS (Comité Internationale pour la Lutte Sahel Sécheresse) would play an important central role and the United States would coordinate with other donors. Hubert Humphrey, who was then Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with Dick McCall as his Chief of Staff, was extremely supportive, and in one of the hearings he suggested a special appropriation for AID for planning a long-term effort. This was passed by both Houses, giving us \$10 million completely unrestricted by normal AID regulations - an amount critical in mobilizing talent outside of the U.S. Government for support.

I knew from my work in REDSO in Abidjan that there was very little expertise available to us about Sahelian Africa. To be seriously engaged in the long term, we would need a

multidimensional approach: mobilize expertise on technology applied to arid areas of the United States that could potentially apply to Africa, and develop a large cadre of Sahelian experts to work with us. Through a number of university contracts we funded, we were able to support more than 500 Ph.D.s who would be devoted to various aspects of the Sahelian world and environment.

*Q: Which institutions were primary involved?*

SHEAR: One of the lead institutions was Michigan State University, with whom we had a million-dollar contract for continuing assistance to us with our work in the Sahel. Essentially it was in agricultural economics, and we early on established a special fund to train Sahelians in that field. We also put together a consortium of arid land universities, involving institutions in Arizona, Colorado, Washington and several campuses of the University of California. This was centered initially at the Arid Lands Institute at the University of Arizona in Tucson, and there we assembled experts in American arid land agriculture and African geography to explore applications to the Sahel.

The Center for Research in Economic Development at the University of Michigan was also part of the effort, and we hired one of its senior professionals, Elliot Berg, to analyze the economic consequences of the drought, which he did in a brilliant fashion. This helped us to mobilize support from both Congress and from the nation's academic community. Using some of the \$10 million, we contracted with the National Academy of Sciences to bring together some of the best talent and expertise in this field outside of the university system. All of this would support a small group I had put together in the Africa Bureau: a Special Sahel Development Planning Team.

*Q: Was this the time of the MIT study?*

SHEAR: Our work began shortly thereafter. A year earlier MIT had completed a report initiated before my return to Washington, and it was published about six months after I assumed responsibilities for the Sahel and West Africa. The report cost almost a million dollars and was in large measure a disaster. It focused upon the Sahel in terms of its potential for industrial development and the movements of populations. Led by an Indian economist from MIT, those who contributed to the report were very knowledgeable about economic development everywhere in the world except Africa, so that many area-specific factors were not considered. For example, there was no appreciation of the importance of the nomadic livestock industry or the Sahel's river basin systems. One or two people of extraordinary competence did come forward, and we used them later because they were well experienced in water related agricultural development. These were people who had been closely involved with the development of the Punjab in India and irrigation systems associated with it.

*Q: Weren't they involved in the question of whether the desertification was increasing, or was that somebody else?*

SHEAR: That was I think a separate analysis, not part of the MIT report. The contract for the MIT study called for a master plan for development in the Sahel that was very unrealistic. During its preparation there was almost no consultation with the Sahelians and virtually none with AID. As a result, it was stillborn. This was of great concern because of potential Congressional criticism that almost a million dollars had been spent to no effect. To avoid a repeat of the unitary way in which that piece of work was put together, I was determined to engage as many people as possible in planning for the Sahel Development Program so that we wouldn't have to sell it after it was done. I must also give credit to a brilliant graphic artist who had a great sense of management and helped me put together a series of visuals that could be adapted as people became progressively more engaged in the planning for the Sahel. It was in this manner that the AID Administrator became in effect a participant on the Sahel Development Planning Team. The Deputy Administrator at the time, who was essentially a controller and a financial specialist, had grave doubts about our ability to make long-term plans effective - especially in Africa - and was even more skeptical when we began to calculate the costs of such a large effort.

*Q: This Deputy Administrator was Johnny Murphy?*

SHEAR: Yes, it was; he was very skeptical and quietly opposed to this. I say “quietly” because the Administrator was so sold on it that Johnny had to be careful about how he expressed his opposition. He clearly was not one to support us. At the same time we began to engage staff members of related Congressional Committees in the planning process. We had meetings with key staffers, got their input, and began to see evolving a plan in which many people felt a great sense of ownership. The visuals I mentioned earlier were used to demonstrate, as the planning process became clearer, how such a complex program could fit together. The charts describing the process were most helpful for our own internal use - they became an instrument of our own planning group - and also became a valuable tool in externalizing the process. Incorporating them, we also began to see the overall dimensions of the effort and were better able to cost it out. We had estimated needing approximately a billion dollars a year for this effort over a ten-year period. Initially focusing on agricultural development (both livestock and rain-fed agriculture), we would also look at the adaptation of technology for reforestation, investment in human resources (essentially focusing on literacy and health), a major emphasis upon transportation, and uniting the Sahel region for the marketing of commodities. There would be a fairly substantial emphasis on cereals, price and livestock policies. We sought to strengthen regional organizations within the Sahel. The Entente Fund, which included two Sahelian States - Upper Volta and Niger - helped to establish a livestock commission in Upper Volta, and we used that to assist us with some of the livestock strategy. We focused on cattle production, rain-fed agriculture and, to a certain degree, fisheries, and then began to evolve a strategy for the development of the river basins with irrigated agriculture. We used as our model concept for a regional organization, the Senegal River Basin Commission, which comprised three Sahelian States: Senegal, Mali and Mauritania. The Commission had been established in the late 1960s to attract as much international support as possible for the development of dams along the Senegal River and some of its

major tributaries. The Senegal River was annually flooded, and flood recession agriculture was a necessary part of the food systems in the area. It was important for us to understand the nature of those production systems and learn how to harness the river so that irrigation could be practiced regularly. That was to become a significant part of plans for the future of the Sahel.

*Q: What countries were included in the Sahel Program as it was evolving at that point?*

SHEAR: We were uncertain at that point in time, except for the French. I was then virtually commuting back and forth to Paris for planning with the French and getting them very much engaged. Maury Williams, you recall, had moved to the Development Assistance Committee, so we had the idea of using his help as a way of mobilizing the support of other donors. He accepted our proposal to chair a conference on the future of the Sahel during which we would present the concept of a long-term Sahel Development Program in partnership with the African members of the CILSS. By that means we would generate support from the other donors. We felt we needed more than just French and U.S. support for such a meeting, and so we began informal consultations with both the Canadians and the Dutch, who bought into the idea. The Canadians were especially strong in support of the CILSS. We thought we needed to be a little more cautious than the Canadians because we understood its administrative weaknesses and the fact that they needed to be strengthened. The Dutch were very much interested in two of the Sahelian States, Mali and Upper Volta. So we went into the conference with the strong support of three other donors. We had attempted to involve the World Bank (which was not a member of the OECD) in support of the effort. The World Bank, because it would not have ownership, became an interested, cooperative partner but was not prepared to directly finance any of the activities. The Bank had its own agenda and it was incumbent on us, we thought, to make sure that that agenda was at least compatible with what we wanted to do. So, while extensive consultations continued, the World Bank was but a limited participant in plans for the Sahel Development Program.

*Q: The Bank's orientation was to individual countries, not to regions.*

SHEAR: That's a very important point. The Bank's orientation made funding regional activities very difficult. Our strategy, though, placed strong emphasis on bilateral assistance so that one could go with projects that were compatible with the regional effort but were not strictly regional.

*Q: What Sahelian States were included?*

SHEAR: The Sahelian States that were part of the effort and members of the CILSS were Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Upper Volta, Chad and the Cape Verde Islands. The Cape Verde Islands were arid, poor ex-Portuguese islands 600 miles off the coast of Senegal that very much wanted an African identification, and this offered an opportunity for them to participate in a larger program.

*Q: Was there some discussion about Cameroon and Nigeria, some of the northern parts of the coastal states?*

SHEAR: Yes; in fact, Cameroon indicated a strong interest in joining. When the program began to evolve and it became evident that substantial resources were being mobilized, then the Gambia, Guinea and Cameroon came forward and suggested partnership. The Gambia was brought in as a partner and participant in the Sahelian States, and became a member of the CILSS about three years after the latter's inception. This occurred in large measure because Senegal's President Leopold Senghor did not want this country, which was completely surrounded by Senegal, left out. It was essentially more for political than economic development reasons. The leadership of the effort really came from President Leopold Senghor and President Moktar Ould Daddah from Mauritania. The other presidents were strongly supportive of these two heads of state when they took the leadership role.

Our paper was to be put forward at the DAC conference in Paris by Dr. Adams and Stuart van Dyke, the U.S. representative to the DAC. Prior to that time, Maury Williams and Bradford Morris, along with Anne De Lattre, a French civil servant who had been involved in Sahelian development for many years, consulted with Presidents Senghor and Ould Daddah to make sure they were on board. Both presidents expressed strong support for the effort and pledged to make certain that the CILSS cooperated with any donor efforts that would contribute to a coordinated approach to the Sahel. Maury Williams in his opening statement would make reference to this. As for other conference attendees, the Germans expressed strong skepticism, and I don't recall which, but one of the Scandinavian countries was opposed to the effort. Part of the proposal that we made was that the DAC should establish a small secretariat within the OECD for the coordination of donor assistance, and this was the basis of the Germans' objections.

*Q: They didn't think the DAC should have an operational role?*

SHEAR: They objected to the DAC having any operational role and did not want to see "another bureaucracy" established within the OECD. The meeting was a precarious one. Several times when objections were raised we feared that the donors would back away. However, the United States, the French and to a lesser degree the Canadians, were very effective during the luncheon break in lobbying the other participants in the DAC. We ended up with a resolution which, while substantially watered down, left open the opportunity to place the plan within the OECD after another DAC meeting when it would be further developed. We were not totally pleased with the outcome, but at least we hadn't lost.

*Q: What exactly were we proposing?*

SHEAR: We were proposing to establish within the OECD (not necessarily the DAC) a small secretariat in which donors would fund their own participation, so there would be no charge to the OECD budget. The only thing the OECD would do would be to make space available, but even that would be paid for by participating donors. This in large measure would be an interface with the CILSS so that there would be a means of

coordination from the OECD member states to the African states in some coherent fashion. We consciously indicated in only general terms the areas on which the aid would concentrate. We carefully avoided articulating this in great detail; first, because we were not that sure of our own planning yet, and second, because we felt we did not have the argumentation to support it should we be challenged by some of the donors.

*Q: Why the OECD? That doesn't seem a likely choice. Weren't there any other options?*

SHEAR: That is a very good point. One option was to have the World Bank chair it, as it had served as a consultant for group meetings, but those at the Bank were reluctant to do so. Roger Chauformier, the Vice President for Africa, was very helpful in explaining the difficulty the Bank would have in chairing a long-term coordinating effort such as this. The Bank was used to chairing annual meetings but this was something far beyond their norm, and would mean a major policy change. Also, going back to your earlier question, the programs we were contemplating were truly regional in character, particularly the development of the river basins, and the Bank would have difficulty in relating to that.

*Q: What about UNDP?*

SHEAR: We had given that a lot of thought, but the French were strongly opposed, considering the UNDP to have neither the capacity nor the political sagacity to manage such a program. Another possibility was the African Development Bank, but we all agreed that it did not have the administrative capacity. Also, the ADB, because of the nature of its own constituency, would probably find it difficult to say no to certain programs we might not consider viable.

The Sahelian States, while all of this was going on, were very much aware of the extent of the donor interest and were beginning to consult with them on what a long-term program would include. They began to mobilize support at the ministerial level for such an effort. So began a series of consultations with the chairman of the CILSS, whose position was of ministerial status and rotated on an annual - and later biannual - basis among the states. In each instance, the Minister for Rural Development chaired the CILSS and proved to be an effective interlocutor with the other Sahelian countries.

I should also mention here the changes that were taking place in how AID was being organized and administered throughout the Sahel. We had begun to establish individual offices in the Sahel, whereas before we had just one or two AID representatives associated with an embassy. These were supported by my REDSO operation or large regional offices such as those in Dakar. But they had no delegation of authority, had very little control over budget, had minimal staff to do effective planning and had even fewer personnel to undertake project implementation. In beginning to reorganize, we created what we then called Country Development Offices, with the thought that over time they would become full-fledged missions with the full delegated authority of mission directors. We sought to do this in a way that permitted us to both frame the program and begin to build a competent staff. It proved harder than I thought, because the Sahel was not an attractive place in which to live. We were looking for people with a strong

development background, if possible a solid knowledge of Africa, and the physical stamina to deal with harsh conditions where they would move and operate.

*Q: And familiarity with the French?*

SHEAR: Yes; thank you for the reminder. It was hard to find such people. We found a number of recruits from the Vietnam operation, which was then phasing down, and some were very strong on logistics (an asset in the drought emergency period) but were much less effective as we moved into long-term planning efforts. We made a number of staff changes and began to assemble senior staff in the field who were quite competent, albeit of mixed abilities. Even as these people became effective as Country Development Officers, bilateralism at many AID missions (evidenced by an AID director's wanting the AID program to reflect his ideas about development) was antithetic to the concept of a regional plan. So we had increasing concern about the need to control the planning process from Washington, even though we appreciated that implementation should take place in the field. This was a very difficult policy and management dilemma to deal with. We developed the AID Country Directors Committee (that I chaired) that met twice a year to help coordinate their efforts, and it was very important that any residual budget from the special AID appropriation for disaster be targeted toward the concept of the overall program.

It was then that we also began to formulate in more detail the nature of the effort and the cost involved. In doing so, we engaged the Hill substantially, initially requesting \$200 million as a special appropriation. We would establish a budget separate from the normal AID budget. These would be no-year funds - that is, the money would be available until expended - and doing so would permit us a much longer period of time to work on projects that had previously been considered too large for the Sahel. The countries involved were so poor that they could not afford the recurrent costs of projects, so we included ways to maintain funding for roads and other infrastructure. Though contrary to AID conventional wisdom, we considered this essential if we were to overcome the hurdle of poverty.

The Sahel Development legislation we proposed to Congress contained special provisions for no-year funds to allow extreme planning flexibility, and also we could purchase goods and services anywhere in the world. This caused some difficulty in the Congressional hearings because of the desire to maintain close procurement ties to the United States. I remember one especially difficult hearing before the House Subcommittee on Africa when a representative from Florida challenged me on why we needed to hire French technicians to work on our program when thousands of Americans knew French. He was absolutely incensed to think that we did not have enough qualified Americans to undertake this task. We were also pressed very hard on our projection of the total cost and urged to take steps so that it wouldn't be an open-ended effort. In our naiveté (and perhaps our eagerness to sell the program), we thought that we could probably achieve the basic goals over a 10-year period and that the total funds required from all sources would be around \$10 billion. In reality the period of time was too short and the funding needed would be double that amount.



*Q: From all sources.*

SHEAR: From all sources, and the funding required was more. As I'll come to later on, we were indeed able to achieve many objectives of that program, only it took 20 years under somewhat different circumstances than we had originally envisaged.

*Q: How much was the initial U.S. share requested?*

SHEAR: An initial request of \$200 million would be dispersed over a two to three years. We were looking for \$1 billion from the United States over a ten-year period; we would be funding approximately 10 percent of the total effort. Approximately 15 to 20 percent was expected from the French, and we came up with a chart (which I don't recall in detail) on which we indicated other sources, including the World Bank and the African Development Bank. We deemed it important not only to note funding coming from bilateral donors but from all sources because we thought, not inappropriately, that we could effect in some measure the coordination of all funds. Critical to this was the support and coordination role of the CILSS, moving it from a political arena (in terms of publicizing the emerging needs of the Sahel) into a longer-term planning unit. Each of the Sahelian countries would provide the CILSS with sector experts. We requested authorization of \$200 million to be available until expended, and then annual appropriations as projects were identified.

*Q: And the result was a special account of \$50 million.*

SHEAR: Initially we received an allocation of \$50 million within the umbrella of the \$200 million. Key here were the Chairman of the African Subcommittee, Charles Diggs from Detroit, and Senator Hubert Humphrey, then Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Both of them were strongly supportive, but this was also very much a bipartisan effort. I remember that Senator Jacob Javitz of New York traveled to the Sahel in the latter stages of the emergency so he could see firsthand what the United States was doing. He returned much impressed by the quality of our effort and the enormity of the need, becoming a very strong spokesman on our behalf.

At just about that time we also had a change in the leadership of the Africa Bureau. Dr. Adams was removed by the White House as head of the Bureau because the Africa staff person on the National Security Council indicated that he would like to be Assistant Administrator for Africa, and he was given the job.

Don Brown, then Deputy Assistant Administrator, had been a very important interlocutor with me in both the formulation of the Sahel development strategy and in the reorganization of the field posts. He and Dr. Adams were extremely close and had formed a very good partnership. I distinctly remember the morning Don called the half dozen or so Office Directors into his office to inform us that Dr. Adams was no longer the head of the Bureau. While on vacation, Sam had been notified the afternoon before by the White House that he was being removed from that position. He returned from vacation

profoundly upset by what had transpired, and in a very moving ceremony bade farewell to the assembled Africa Bureau. He came to our office with tears in his eyes to thank us for our effort and to say goodbye. He then retired and at the age of 57 and left public service. Sam Adams was a remarkable person, an individual of great vision. Fortunately, Don Brown stayed on, and Stan Scott, the person who took Dr. Adams place, was a very decent person who strongly backed all our efforts. Clearly, though, he did not have the international knowledge of Dr. Adams, nor his wisdom in dealing with these profoundly important issues.

I should mention here the role of Secretary of State Kissinger in this process. Dr. Kissinger was attempting to mediate an end to the unilateral declaration of independence in Rhodesia. His goal was to secure a role for the Africans in Rhodesia vis-à-vis their isolation because of the UN international embargo in response to independence efforts under Ian Smith. Kissinger was less concerned with the fate of Rhodesia than that the country was a source of support for apartheid in South Africa. He felt that if we could achieve normalization in Rhodesia - that is, a role of true independence and a voice for the Africans - apartheid would be weakened in South Africa. At that time there was also trouble in Angola and in Mozambique, where a large force of Cuban troops was undermining these regimes and fomenting conflict with South Africa. This encouraged South Africans to take more direct military action against neighboring states, including bombing raids on Gaborone, the capital of Botswana. An increasingly unstable situation was developing within the entire southern Africa area.

Kissinger needed, after failing in his interventions in southern Africa, some statement of U.S. support for larger African aspirations. We found that he was going to go to Dakar and was looking for some theme to establish there a U.S. initiative in Africa, since the initiative he had proposed for Rhodesia was not to come to fruition. We therefore put together an extensive decision memorandum for the AID Administrator was to send to him. That was typical of the way Dr. Kissinger worked. He wanted decision memoranda - we saw many of those when he was in the National Security Council - and so we put together a 10- or 12-page document outlining the problems in the Sahel and how we wanted to mobilize support to respond to them, requesting his help. He agreed and, thanks to his backing, we got strong State Department support for the initiative. We then helped draft a statement that he made in Dakar, Senegal, proposing a long-term international effort and calling for aid from the international community toward reconstruction of the Sahelian States after the ruinous drought. He set an excellent tone and was extremely helpful. This was followed by a Tidewater meeting, where Maury Williams was to propose after the initial DAC meeting further elaboration on the Sahel development efforts.

*Q: Who participates in a Tidewater meeting?*

SHEAR: This extraordinary annual meeting is attended by the Ministers of Development from all the industrial countries, including some from outside of the OECD. Participants include 30 or 40 of the most senior development administrators and Ministers of Cooperation and Development, and in some instances Ministers of Foreign Affairs from countries that do not have separate AID agencies.

*Q: Were there any developing country representatives?*

SHEAR: No. It was strictly a meeting of the donor countries. The idea was well enough received that Maury felt that he could then report back to President Senghor that he had secured the support of the international community for this. At Maury's suggestion, President Senghor then summoned the chiefs of state of the CILSS countries to a conference in Dakar in which the concept of the Sahel Development Program would be put forward jointly by the CILSS. The Chairman of the CILSS at that time was Mauritania's President Ould Daddah. At the conference all bilateral and multinational donors were represented, as were many of the larger NGOs and all of the Sahelian States. This enormous gathering was somewhat intimidating in size and because it was potentially very unwieldy.

Don Brown and I represented USAID. Don, because of his excellent French, could intervene directly in the discussion. Strongly held opinions at times brought discussions to the edge of disaster, only to be resurrected by the Sahelians themselves as we met with them over the course of three days. We ended up with a very strong resolution that supported the concept of a long-term coordinated development effort for the Sahel.

*Q: What were the issues? What were the concerns?*

SHEAR: For one thing, there was some reluctance from the Sahelian States related to the degree to which the donors would be engaged in their national planning. So while one recognized support, a certain reticence came out in the context of the discussions. There was also concern on the donor side about the ability of the Sahel to absorb so much substantial aid. Accountability, long-term funding and recurring costs were quite legitimate concerns. There was very little argument about the substance of the program; that is, the need to focus on food production and long-term economic self-sufficiency in the Sahel as a whole based upon rain-fed and irrigated agriculture. But the magnitude of the program caused a number of countries, including Japan, major concerns and reservations. The Germans were not very helpful, and in general throughout the conference were very vociferous. In spite of the difficulties, by late afternoon of the third day we had drafted in committee a resolution in support of the Sahel Development Program and of an extraordinary partnership between some of the world's most advanced countries and some of its poorest. The resolution passed. Don Brown and I walked out of the meeting feeling enormously elated and held a brief press conference. Then just the two of us went off to a little restaurant at Les Almandes, the westernmost point in Africa. Looking out at the ocean, we sat quietly enjoying a drink and a meal, somewhat awed at what we had accomplished.

*Q: When was that meeting?*

SHEAR: It was at the end of 1976. Following the plenary sessions, President Senghor the next day convoked the entire diplomatic community of Dakar at the fairgrounds outside of the city. All delegates to the conference were invited, as were all of the political

leaders of the country. Gathered in this very large conference hall were over three thousand people. In the center were representatives of the diplomatic community and attendees of the conference. From where I sat in the back of the hall I had a good view of a most remarkable sight. All those in the middle were dressed for the most part in European, fairly dark-colored clothes. They were flanked by Senegalese political leaders and party members - an enormous, elegant and colorful aggregation on either side of the rather gray diplomatic community.

*Q: And the leaders were there, dressed in their robes?*

SHEAR: Yes. And Ould Daddah of Mauritania and Mali's President Konate were on stage when Senghor announced the launching of a most extraordinary partnership between the industrialized world and the Sahel States. Before this unique gathering of colorful individuals and groups in a very striking environment, President Senghor made a stirring speech in which he invoked the whole concept of negritude and his own sense of African destiny. It was a most remarkable event.

Despite our elation at having put forward the concept and getting it approved, there were still enormous difficulties to overcome. Coordinating the U.S. Government entities of USAID, State, Treasury and Congress with bilateral and multilateral donors, recipients and NGOs would be complex. I had hung on my office wall a big pert chart that someone from the management planning office of AID would help me to update - it was vital to keep track of all the things that were going on at any one time. We were occupied with problems of staffing the field and their coordination, getting the buy-in of our own people for a sustained effort, dealing with constraints from the AID General Counsel's office (which was very reluctant to give us the full measure of the liberal aspects of the legislation passed by Congress) and having to keep Congress closely informed. In Abidjan, my successor in REDSO was very skeptical about this program and did not choose to play a role in its planning, but clearly he was obliged to do so with respect to its implementation. Dan Parker left AID with the election of Jimmy Carter as President, and the ex-governor of Ohio became the AID Administrator.

*Q: Was that John Gilligan?*

SHEAR: Yes, and when he appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as part of the AID budget process (which we knew would focus on the Sahel Development Program), we arranged for Senator Humphrey to ask him if he had ever been to Africa. Learning that he had not, Humphrey recommended that he go to the Sahel as soon as possible to see for himself what was transpiring there. At that time also, because of the change in administrations, Golar Butcher left her job as chief of staff of Congressman Diggs' House subcommittee on Africa and became Assistant Administrator for Africa. In her new role, she accompanied Governor Gilligan and me on a trip to show him what the Sahel Development Program was about.

*Q: Hadn't Ms. Butcher been a prime mover of the Sahel Program on Congressman Diggs' staff?*

SHEAR: Absolutely. She had been the senior staff person on that subcommittee. When she was on the Hill, she was someone with whom we had dealt very effectively, so we were delighted with her appointment. When she and the incoming AID Administrator joined me on the trip to Africa, our first stop was in Abidjan to attend a meeting of the Chiefs of Missions (U.S. ambassadors from all of Africa) convened by the State Department. It was a good opportunity for Governor Gilligan to put forth some of his ideas as AID Administrator. He was a very effective and amusing speaker, engaging the ambassadors very effectively, explaining that he was there at Senator Humphrey's behest to learn for himself about the Sahel Development Program. Don Miller, one of my earliest colleagues in AID and then Deputy Director in REDSO, warned me that the head of REDSO, Miles Wedeman, was going to give Governor Gilligan a very negative view of the Program, that it was an enormous waste of taxpayer's money and doomed to failure. And sure enough, Wedeman and two of his economists poured out a host of reasons why the program could not succeed and should not go forward. This made Golar Butcher understandably upset, and Governor Gilligan showed signs of being extremely wary about the nature of the program.

*Q: What were the pros and cons brought up?*

SHEAR: They put forward the issue that the Sahel by itself could not be a viable series of national economies. At no time had we ever indicated that the Sahel would be sufficient unto itself. We emphasized the importance of its relationship with the coastal states, and that historically there had been extensive trade between the interior and the coastal countries that should be encouraged. Indeed, the Sahel Program, while focusing on eight African countries in the interior and Senegal and Mauritania, clearly foresaw the need for expanding relationships and economic development with the coast. On the technical side, there was considerable skepticism on the part of some of the REDSO staff about the ability to develop the river basins because of the cost, about problems experienced with irrigation elsewhere in the world and about the nomadic system for effective production of livestock. These were all legitimate concerns.

*Q: Did they have a counter proposal?*

SHEAR: They had no counter proposal, and so we concentrated on the effect of the drought and the need for a coordinated approach. We might not have all the answers, but we would put in place a planning system and mechanisms to give us answers over time. It was impossible to predict outcomes over an area the size of the United States, as vulnerable as the Sahel was, but we could judge the negative aspects if a major effort were not put forward. The cost of the drought relief effort was almost a billion dollars from all sources, and we stressed that this money could best be used for long-term development efforts. We spoke of the extraordinary cooperation from the Sahelian States themselves and coordination with the French, something extremely important for the United States politically in the post-Vietnam period within Europe. Governor Gilligan went away from this tense meeting obviously concerned.

Our tour next included a city in Mali called Mopti. Mopti is on the Niger River, where over a million acres flood annually to form an interior delta before slowly dissipating. It is a very effective natural means of flood control in an area where hundreds of thousands of heads of cattle come to graze, and a lot of agriculture is developed. We wanted to demonstrate the resourcefulness of these people, the multiple uses of the land, how flood recession agriculture worked and, as an example, the sorghum crop that was then growing after being planted as the flood receded.

As Governor Gilligan got out of our chartered airplane, he looked around and then said to Ron Levin, the Mali AID Director, "This doesn't look anything like Ohio." I thought, of course, of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. But we were not Toto; we were threatened AID officials. Golar Butcher was extremely worried about the negative reaction of the Governor to the harsh environment he saw in the Sahel. And that was the image he carried with him throughout the rest of the trip. I really had not anticipated that he would see only negative, and not positive, aspects. The local province governor received us graciously and was, we thought, a very effective spokesman for African development. But Gilligan remained unmoved and darkly thoughtful, turning to me once to remark, "Shear, I think you have perpetrated an enormous hoax on the U.S. taxpayer."

*Q: I'll be darned.*

SHEAR: That made me feel, of course, enormously uneasy, and gave Golar Butcher great pause. As we continued four days of travel throughout the Sahel, the trip went consistently downhill. He found fault with the AID officers. Found fault with the reception given to him in Bamako. Was appalled at what he considered the inappropriateness of AID senior officials having swimming pools and serving more than one kind of wine. To a degree he had a point, but he had no appreciation of the diplomatic functions surrounding entertaining - coordinating with other donors and receiving senior government officials in one's home. When he returned he gave a blistering report to the senior staff. Golar Butcher and I were clearly under fire.

Golar felt that she needed to gain much more control over the program. She then moved to take away some of the special authority I had been delegated by the previous AID Administrator. I had had unprecedented total control of contracts and the management of funds.

After about six months of considerable tension, Golar and I emerged as close colleagues. She became a very strong supporter of the program and of me personally. We could not have predicted what would follow my invitation through Senator Humphrey to the AID Administrator to travel to the Sahel for a firsthand look.

We did, however, have strong support from Deputy Administrator Bob Nooter, a long-term AID professional who had been very much involved in Vietnam. He was, I think, relieved to move into a position where he could see what was happening in Africa. When we held the second Sahel Development Conference (hosted by the Canadians in Ottawa), Bob Nooter led the U.S. delegation along with Golar Butcher. Nooter saw for himself

over three extraordinary days the degree of Sahelian commitment to the process and the level of the Sahelian expertise being applied to sectoral issues such as rain-fed agriculture, irrigated agriculture and livestock. He listened with interest to explanations of how they were to be coordinated and candidly expressed surprise at the technical knowledge shown by the Sahelians, as well as the way they stood their ground before the donors and engaged in debate over the nature of the programs.

*Q: How did the name “Club du Sahel” come to be used?*

SHEAR: The Sahel Development Program was the name given to the organization created under the direction of Anne De Lattre, who accompanied Maury Williams and Brad Morse on their trip to the Sahel. Set up in the OECD, it was called the Club des Amies du Sahel - the Club of the Friends of the Sahel. It was Sam Adams’ counterpart in the French Ministry for Cooperation, Jean Audibert, who came up initially with the name. The Canadians, I think appropriately, took strong exception, considering that a rather patronizing title for the organization. Since this would be an organization of peers and of equals or between the industrialized countries and the Sahelian States, it should more fittingly be The Club of the Sahel (Club du Sahel), which would engage the Sahelians and donors as well. The Canadians were right and we did change the name, with the blessing of the French.

The extent of the program, its far-reaching vision and the need to coordinate as many components as it did, made it potentially cumbersome. The Club’s Secretariat was formally set up in Paris following the meeting in Ottawa. It was to be headed up by Anne De Lattre, a French national with very close ties to the French power structure surrounding the French Ministry for Cooperation in the Foreign Office and the presidency. Roy Stacy, who had been the head of my planning office in REDSO, became the U.S. delegate, and the Canadians and the Dutch assigned personnel as well. The Japanese, the Norwegians, the Swiss and the Germans would also become members.

*Q: How did you structure the content of the program?*

SHEAR: The program was developed in large measure by working groups we established within the CILSS. Each group was chaired by a Sahelian, usually the senior professional in his ministry (e.g., livestock, rain-fed agriculture) and included technical experts provided by each of the donors. The idea was to develop a strategy for each of the key sectors that would be multinational - and regional - in character. We looked at serious policy issues and mobilized external consultants who undertook special studies. For example, we had an excellent alliance between the major French research organization ORSTOM and the University of Michigan on cereals policy. We also began to look at population growth and its relationship to health and mother/child well-being, with a working group delegated, I believe, to the Dutch with some U.S. participation from a major NGO. In each instance the United States was a substantial financial supporter. The livestock group did its work in France, and our representative was Howard Helman, who had worked for me in REDSO. His role as the U.S. representative to the French Ministry

for Cooperation strengthened U.S.-French coordination throughout Africa, especially in the Sahel.

Although we had great expectations for the output of these working groups, the overall effect was disappointing because we found it difficult to plan on a Sahel-wide basis. So we began to disaggregate the program into what turned out to be more realistic components. For example, we took a long look at livestock and livestock trade between the Sahelian States and the coastal states, and did some really important analysis. Some serious Sahel-wide policies were largely accepted and became the basis for cereals production and price policy. Livestock was by far the most difficult. We never did develop a really satisfactory strategy in that regard for the Sahel as a whole, though. After an investment of over \$100 million in livestock activities, an analysis revealed that the only interventions at all successful were in veterinary medicine. Production systems affecting nomadic herds were, for the most part, failures.

Strategies for river basins were of major importance and somewhat intimidating because of the dimensions of the infrastructure necessary to develop them. The Senegal River Basin Commission, as I mentioned earlier, seemed to us a very good bet. Senegal, Mauritania and Mali were cooperating effectively, and so the United States contributed substantially to complete mapping the river basin at a cost of \$12 million. We also underwrote an environmental impact assessment of the impact of two dams: one a saltwater intrusion dam at the mouth of the Senegal River, and the other a high dam in Mali on the Bafing River (a major tributary to the Senegal) for a reservoir to control annual floodwaters and generate power. Here the Sahelian States were most effective in mobilizing international support, especially from the Chinese and the Arab countries (the petroleum exporting countries), who contributed over \$3 billion. While we could not, due to Congressional constraints, contribute capital to the dams, the United States played an important role in influencing the configuration of the dams, their impact and the resulting environmental consequences. This, I think, was an indication of how the program could be successful, because it had originated in the context of the CILSS committee for River Basin development. We decided early on to focus on one river basin as a prototype to see how we could mobilize the resources and analyze downstream development once the dams were completed. This has proven to be a very substantial investment with successful payout.

The World Bank was extremely skeptical based on just straight economic analysis of the dams, which I think describes well the limitations of economic analysis in multi-country planning. Both Senegal's President Senghor and President Ould Daddah of Mauritania felt that the development of the Senegal River Basin was crucial to the long-term economic viability of agriculture, especially in Mauritania. Despite the fact that the internal rate of return would be insufficient by World Bank standards, they urged that work on the dams go forward for long-term survival. While it was unstated, these were loans that would probably never be fully repaid. Also, a fair amount of money was in grants from the Middle Eastern oil-producing states, especially Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia. Chinese funds were on a loan basis. The European Community and the Canadians were also substantial contributors to this infrastructure. I am convinced that this would not have taken place had it not been for an overall plan that the CILSS had put



forward and the fact that we could mobilize resources far beyond conventional sources of funding because of the existence of a comprehensive strategy.

*Q: You approached some other projects from a regional perspective, such as the integrated pest management project, didn't you?*

SHEAR: Yes. We initiated three very large regional projects that I had the opportunity to evaluate prior to going out to my next assignment as Mission Director for Senegal. One was an integrated pest management project in concert with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN, another a meteorological project headquartered in Ouagadougou in Niamey, in which the leadership was provided by the World Meteorological Organization. For this we had funding from half a dozen of the DAC members. We attempted to put in place radar to track the movement of the rainfall systems out of the Congo Basin up through the Sahel. When farmers were informed three or four days before the rains began, they knew when to plant crops. The third was the establishment of an organization in Mali called the Sahel Institute, which would track the demographics of the Sahel. Looking at growth, movements and the composition of populations would later demonstrate to the Sahelian States the importance of being able to limit both the growth of population and where populations resided, including tracking the rapid growth of urban centers.

I evaluated these three projects in 1979 before leaving Washington for Senegal. While I found many problems, the concepts proved extremely valid. The project that seemed most difficult and yet proved most effective was integrated pest management. This was a good example of a regional activity undertaken on a national basis. Although the regional headquarters was in Ouagadougou, there was also a regional center in Dakar for which I was responsible. We found a number of techniques for integrated pest management requiring minimal applications of pesticides - or none at all - and relying on natural counter measures. This has grown into a series of very successful programs extending well beyond the Sahel that now encompasses twelve countries. These three projects were difficult ones to get underway. The meteorological project is still operating at less than peak efficiency because of the difficulty in communicating the findings of the Center to Sahelian farmers. As communications improve, so will the effectiveness of the system.

*Q: What happened to the Sahel Institute?*

SHEAR: After three or four years of inadequate leadership, it has grown into a very important institution. Now the center of demographic planning and population planning for the entire region, it has increased in importance with the growth of cities, becoming a center for urban analysis and studies. When the program started over 20 years ago, the Sahel was largely a rural economy with rural populations, but now more than 50 percent of its citizens live in cities. This presents multiple consequences for development and political growth.

*Q: It has been alleged that the emphasis on developing human resources and creating institutions with Sahelian capacities to carry on the programs themselves had been underestimated. Do you agree?*

SHEAR: It was underestimated. The problem of investing in human resource development was one of the most difficult ones in the Sahel, in large measure because of the dominating French influence. The French were in control of all higher education and almost all curriculum for secondary education. So, in spite of numerous requests from Sahelian governments for assistance in higher education, we reluctantly decided that it was an area in which we could not be effective. We were at odds with the French approach to education, particularly as applied to these rural economies.

*Q: "We" being the United States?*

SHEAR: Yes. Some other donors like the Canadians, however, did enter into technical and tertiary education and clashed head on with the French. The result was the failure of several Canadian initiatives, essentially because the French managed to undercut them within the Ministries of Education. So while ours was a difficult decision, I think it was probably the right one in terms of the allocation of U.S. resources. Where we did put a lot of effort into human resource development was in literacy and numeracy at the village level; we initiated a number of very successful programs in this area. We also put a very heavy emphasis upon training people, as I mentioned earlier, in very specialized disciplines such as agricultural economics. We trained substantial numbers to work in research stations to try to coordinate agricultural research more effectively and have it be adapted locally. And I think this too has resulted in some positive outcomes.

*Q: One of the other topics that kept going around and around was the desertification process. Was it creeping desertification, or was it cyclical? What was happening?*

SHEAR: The advance of the desert can be seen as both reality and myth. During the drought the desert was certainly reclaiming marginal areas. Throughout an earlier decade of high rainfall, much semi-desert had become grasslands. Historically back to the last millennium these had really been part of the desert, too arid for livestock to inhabit. We were able to track through satellite technology the "reoccupying" of desert areas that had only shortly before been grasslands. Desertification was and is occurring in different ways. It's not the advance of the desert, but more because of improper agricultural practices that the soil has been deprived of certain characteristics. Overgrazing, the overproduction of millet and the lack of rotation crops in a number of areas have created desert. Not necessarily on the fringes of the existing desert, it is in some instances hundreds of miles away from that. Through improper use of soil and land, desertification has occurred. This is taking place even in the southwestern United States, where overgrazing has made large areas of public lands desert that were not so even 30 or 40 years ago. So what is happening in Africa is not the advance of the Sahara, but the result of mankind's misuse of the land. Sadly, desertification is almost impossible to reverse, because you're not changing the chemical composition but the physics of the soil, and we don't know scientifically how to reverse that.

*Q: Some say that the rainfall patterns were not cyclical, but determinant.*

SHEAR: This is not at all the case. After a period of relatively high rainfall, we had two major crop failures from severe but shorter-lived droughts. We observed that rainfall patterns have returned to the norm for the last century; our records don't go back much further than that. There was no long-term drought effect that we could determine. What we did see, though, was that in the 1980s two very severe droughts struck East and Southern Africa during which tens of thousands of people were displaced and many people died, requiring enormous relief efforts from industrialized countries. At the same time droughts also struck West Africa, not to the same degree but with substantial intensity. But to our knowledge, no one in the Sahel died from crop failures associated with these droughts. Indeed, many of the crop systems implemented after the earlier severe drought experience survived throughout these periods. Production systems, while diminished in output, survived, and crops were harvested where 20 years earlier they would have failed. These are some of the positive effects of the agricultural systems put into place as a result of the Sahel Development Program. Countries no longer had to import food or seek international assistance. Food was delivered more efficiently than in Eastern and Southern Africa because of management systems that were then absorbed into the economic structure of those countries, and the administrative structure really took hold from the drought experience in distributing food when and where it was needed. So again we see an unanticipated management benefit from lessons learned in dealing with the drought.

*Q: You referred to some results 20 years later. What came out of the discussions about the cereals policy?*

SHEAR: One very significant set of agreements among the Sahelian States and, also important, the donors, was linked to a cereals trade and cereals pricing. This is a very sensitive, politically difficult issue because of the perceived need to provide cereals at relatively low cost for civil servants within the cities. As urban areas grew it became more and more important to feed the population at large, not just civil servants. So the result was inequality in terms of trade between urban and rural areas. Subsidized prices for the sale of the cereals in the city put the farmers at a distinct disadvantage. They had to produce at a low cost and got very low farm-gate prices, receiving far less than fair value for their products and their efforts. Cereals policy reform was addressed during meetings over a period of three years before the Sahelian States adopted uniform protocols.

*Q: Where did this policy come from? What were its origins?*

SHEAR: It came from the Club du Sahel, and is a good example of the Club's engaging in policy dialogue. Elliot Berg worked on it, and Jim Kelly, who was then head of the Sahel office in Washington, was very instrumental in carrying it forward. But it could not have happened without the support of the Sahelian States themselves. While we had very effective U.S. proponents of the program and strong support from the World Bank, the

Sahelian States had reached a point where they could do their own analysis, and they had sufficient technical capacity to analyze the policy and absorb its implications.

Associated with this later was a very important set of the protocols related to food aid. Food aid was often historically used as a means of short-term budget support and for foreign exchange assistance. From time to time emergencies were declared that really were not emergencies of a natural kind, but financial. It was important that the donors agree on a set of criteria against which they would or would not supply food aid. These were extremely sensitive and difficult negotiations that also took several years to accomplish, and were only signed, I think, in 1990 or 1991. Within these protocols were uniform policies on what would trigger the provision of food aid, under what terms it would be given and its cost. It would no longer be free for the asking, but imposed a certain amount of rigor and discipline so that countries would be more careful about requesting food aid, and donors much more coordinated in responding to it. In large measure it also depoliticized food aid as a means of political leverage for individual donors who wanted to gain favor by responding to just any request.

*Q: What were some overall effects 20 years later?*

SHEAR: The net result of this extraordinary effort? Clearly we failed to achieve some of the goals. We didn't make the Sahel self-sufficient in food. In retrospect this may have been a useful slogan, but not necessarily a basis for policy. Early on we saw that food self-sufficiency alone wasn't enough in terms of long-term economic growth and we were really talking about sustainability of agricultural systems, including exports. So over time, policy was modified and the systems that we put in place for planning and coordination were flexible enough to change.

The Sahel Development Program and the Club du Sahel became more adaptable in response to the realization that it was harder to control overall program planning and project design for all of the Sahel. Increasingly donors became part of the Club process. If they did not have staff in Paris as part of the Club, they contributed to its budget and to the CILSS itself. The CILSS over time became a bloated bureaucracy that had to be reduced. Two very difficult evaluations were conducted of the CILSS; some of its financial practices have had to be cleaned up. Most important, though, has been the effect of CILSS and the program on the Sahel and its people. Development efforts accelerated on behalf of the Sahel after the creation of the Sahel Development Program and the Club du Sahel. Before that time, annual assistance averaged between \$600 million and \$700 million for eight (now nine) Sahelian States. After 1976 with the creation of the Club, aid more than doubled, reaching \$2 billion annually, and it has not dropped below that level to this day.

Considering the poverty of the countries and a lack of political importance to the donors, this level of continued assistance has been extraordinary. The funding has covered recurrent costs involved in the maintenance of infrastructure, which would not have been possible otherwise. It enabled the creation of successful dams along the Senegal River Basin, which we believe are environmentally sustainable, in large measure because of a

U.S. investment of \$4 million for an environmental impact assessment. Very importantly, agricultural production systems now in place are much more resilient - not drought-proof by any means, but much more resistant to drought. Efforts to improve the nutrition and health of the Sahelian populations have improved and have become diversified; they are no longer solely dependent upon sorghum, millet or rice. Market gardening has expanded to an extraordinary degree, and fresh vegetables are now a substantial, normal part of the Sahelian diet. Sahelian farmers are also engaged in cash crops, and cotton is once again a major crop in Mali, Senegal and Chad. Further, the growth of cities has created new markets for farmers' products, since almost 50 percent of the Sahelian people now live in urban areas.

Significant too, is the growth of community responsibility, an extraordinary phenomenon throughout the Sahel hinging on the areas of human resource development and education. Sahelian citizens, particularly in rural areas, are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the national educational process. In a number of instances (Chad and Mali), they have initiated their own local educational systems, not unlike the United States. Communities have taken responsibility for raising school taxes, hiring teachers and in effect directing local education efforts. And while standards are still enforced from the capital, the latter is losing influence in that regard, and more formal education now exists at the local level. This is a vivid reflection of increased responsibility on the part of rural populations and communities. Part of that is the decentralization associated with structural adjustment reforms, but it is also the reassertion of the historical pattern of strong local governance and the strength of village populations as the instrument for developing local will. Democratization is occurring throughout the Sahel, not uniformly but significantly in every country. While the central government is still enormously important, people are accepting more responsibility for their own economic well-being, their own education systems and their place within the political system. This is true even in places like Mauritania, which has traditionally been extremely hierarchical. There one sees increasingly, particularly along the Senegal River Basin, communities organizing to govern themselves.

*Q: To what extent do you think the Sahel Development Program and the Club du Sahel are a factor in this?*

SHEAR: We like to believe they've been quite important. The growth of village systems was stimulated by a number of seminars and committees organized by the Club some ten years ago to address local development and the need for decentralization. We've had some extraordinary meetings where ministers have met with farmers and nomadic herders who stood up to them and made their needs known. Similarly, the needs of women have been made much more verbal, making them much more politically powerful throughout the Sahel. We have witnessed a tremendous resurgence of popular initiatives throughout the area. I say "resurgence" because traditionally villages have been extremely important. They were suppressed during the colonial period, and even during the first 15 or 20 years of independence. But these people are again expressing their wills very effectively at time when the whole world is moving toward greater democratization and greater decentralization. I think that without question the Club can take a certain

amount of credit for releasing the enormous energy and competencies that lay dormant at the local level.

*Q: What was the total investment of the U.S. in the program?*

SHEAR: I don't know precisely. The total investment in aid to the Sahel during the 22-year period was slightly in excess of \$40 billion. It was an enormous sum.

*Q: Let's pick up the rest of your story on the Sahel.*

SHEAR: Twenty-two years after the initiation of the program, an assessment was undertaken by the Club du Sahel and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) at the OECD on the effectiveness of the overall effort. Some aspects of the effectiveness are a little bit hard to attribute to the Sahel program. At the same time, the coordination of assistance redirected a great amount of the resources into key areas. We think we can trace some of the progress in the Sahel to these efforts.

Despite the droughts that have occurred over the last 10 to 12 years throughout Africa, there has been no significant loss of life in the Sahel, while there has been a terrible toll and great human suffering in eastern Africa, in the Horn and in southern Africa. The Sahel has been spared in large measure because its governments have learned how to manage disasters and near disasters, how to move food, how to protect the crops and how to distribute food purchased for needy families. Production systems have changed for the better because of different cultivation and marketing practices. Production practices especially are based both for rain and irrigation on shorter-term maturing varieties of sorghum, maize and millet, with less emphasis on rice. But where rice has been successful (and it is increasingly so in the Senegal Valley), it is based on small-scale perimeters and not the large perimeters funded by the World Bank and the European Union. This is based to some degree on work by AID in Senegal during the time I was USAID Director. Bakel and Matam comprised probably 40 or 50 villages, each of which had responsibility for an irrigated perimeter never larger than about 40 hectares, so it was quite manageable.

One really impressive factor for measuring the progress of agriculture is caloric intake. Caloric intake in the Sahel has now risen well above the FAO minimum limits, whereas it averaged about 20 per cent less than that beforehand. Health has improved greatly in other places in Africa, too, but less than the Sahel. It's been quite dramatic; life expectancy has increased by about a decade in the last 22 years. With that, obviously, has been a concomitant increase in population, and over the last six to ten years significant advances have been made in maternal and child health. We're beginning to see, if not a flattening, a modification of the population growth curve. Population growth, which ranged from 2.5 to 2.8 percent in most Sahelian states, is now well below 2.4 and approaching 2 percent. Associated with this progress is the education of women and young girls, although the Sahel Development Program cannot take credit for that. The devaluation of the CFA within this decade has made a tremendous difference in the ability of the area to respond economically. Continuing trade growth and slow but

significant beginnings of economic integration with the rest of West Africa are also very important. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for the first time in 20 years, is really beginning to function as a trading zone, reflected in the fact that ECOWAS travelers' checks are now being honored in some 12 states in West Africa. Trade barriers are beginning to be modified, making trade much easier among states.

We certainly did not anticipate the degree to which urbanization would change the Sahel. Fraught with many, many issues, especially with respect to pollution, the cities have become a very important additional engine of growth. During this period we consciously addressed the terms of trade between urban and rural areas, and had a very positive impact on the relationship between the two. We saw the importance of reversing the terms of trade between the cities and the rural areas so the farmers would have a real incentive to produce rather than respond to disincentives reflecting government subsidies for cheap grain for city dwellers. The removal of the subsidies changed trade between rural and urban areas for the better, and production has increased tremendously.

*Q: How did you go about changing the policy on subsidies?*

SHEAR: First of all, we had a series of policy studies done on the impact of grain subsidies on production and the cost to government, since governments were in very difficult straits in terms of their budget issues. We got significant help from the World Bank and the IMF in pushing the macroeconomic reforms that were being urged on these countries. In our corner, if you will, was ammunition from the agriculture sector to provide the Bank and the Fund with specific examples of how these changes in pricing policy and foreign exchange régimes, even in monetary policy, would affect rural production.

*Q: Was this the time of Elliot Berg's involvement in the seminars and the workshops?*

SHEAR: Yes, Elliot Berg, the economist, and Jim Kelly, who was then Director of the program. This was after I left Washington and was in Senegal, and so I was on the overseas side of it. The Club du Sahel sponsored a whole series of seminars on grain stabilization, grain prices and subsidies, and the governments were pushed to remove some of the power of the parastatal organizations. We were already beginning to reduce the subsidies for grain. And ironically, the price of grain over a five-year period in the cities didn't increase very much because production went up.

*Q: But there must have been a fair degree of resistance to making this change. You weren't directly involved at that time, but did you see any evidence in Senegal?*

SHEAR: I did see evidence in Senegal because we sponsored one of the cereals price policy seminars. It was multinational and Sahel-wide. I was very much involved in that seminar. The papers that were presented were created by the CILSS with some help from the Americans, the French and others. The French were really cooperating in this area, whereas earlier they had resisted. And this, I think, again illustrates the effectiveness of the Club, creating an environment that allowed us to work cooperatively with the French

in a very sensitive area. The significant leverage for structural adjustment was the great amount of resources being provided by the Bank and the IMF.

*Q: I see. Any other thoughts about the Sahel? I think we're at the end of the time you spent in creating the program and carrying it out.*

SHEAR: I'd like to talk about my work on implementing a bilateral program in the context of the Sahel program and policy. But first, I should cover the year before I went on to Senegal. I had a sabbatical year.

### **A Year's Sabbatical: 1979**

I should briefly go back to 1976 when Don Brown and I, for our work on putting together the Sahel Development Program, received the Rockefeller National Public Service Award. The Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton was administering the award, and did so until the death of Winthrop Rockefeller, its sponsor. As a result, I got to know the dean of the Woodrow Wilson School, and gave a couple of lectures related to the Sahel and African development. As a result, when my sabbatical year came up in 1979, I was asked if I could put on a seminar with Henry Bienan, who was then working on various aspects of African development, including African military régimes. The latter didn't interest me that much, but Henry was a good colleague with whom to organize such presentations. As a result, half of my second sabbatical year was spent in Princeton at the Woodrow Wilson School putting on a seminar dealing with African economic development and African politics.

*Q: Graduate level?*

SHEAR: Yes, a graduate seminar. I was also a visiting fellow at the Overseas Development Council. After the seminar was finished, I spent most of the remainder of the year at ODC, where I did two things. First, I did an evaluation of the large regional projects that we had started for the Sahel Development Program for the Club du Sahel in Paris. Anne De Lattre was the director of the Club at that time, and we perceived a good deal of difficulty in the implementation of these complex projects, which involved multiple donors and multiple countries. I went to the Sahel, funded by the OECD, to undertake an assessment of three of the major projects - a meteorological project headquartered in Niamey, an integrated pest management project headquartered in Dakar, and the Sahel Institute, a Sahel-based study and demographic institute headquartered in Bamako. And so I had an opportunity to return to the Sahel before going back to Senegal. The assessment took about two months.

*Q: Do you remember any of your conclusions or lessons learned from that experience?*

SHEAR: Yes. I concluded that the projects we had designed were probably overly ambitious in their objectives, which is not unusual, and that the Sahelian capacity to carry out projects of that complexity was limited. The Integrated Pest Management project



seemed to have a good, solid scientific base. The issue then was to work at developing a communications system with the relevant divisions of the ministries of agriculture.

*Q: What is integrated pest management?*

SHEAR: Integrated pest management is the control of pests through very limited and even at times the non-use of pesticides and herbicides - pests being defined as not only insects, but weeds as well. Approaching it from a sound ecological view, just as you look for natural predators to deal with pests, you deal also with strains of different kinds of crops to deal with weeds. Let me give you two examples. The first - a very significant problem in West Africa - is a weed called the striga.

*Q: Is that the one nicknamed "witchweed?"*

SHEAR: Yes. Witchweed it will grow around the roots of maize and sorghum and millet and it has a symbiotic relationship with those roots, not only crowding them but also sapping their strength. It's essentially parasitic. There are, however, strains of soy beans and cow peas (a black-eyed pea) that actually encourage the striga seeds to sprout, but because these plants are non-hosts to the striga, the striga cannot thrive, and dies. And so then, when you include those soy beans or cow peas in rotation planting with maize or sorghum or millet, the striga seeds can be largely eliminated. It is a very effective way of controlling a very troublesome weed through new crop strains.

Another example of integrated pest management was how we dealt with a mealy bug that was attacking cassava throughout West Africa all the way down to the Congo basin. It was severely limiting food production of tubers, cassava being one of the principal foodstuffs, particularly of peasants. Cassava is an important crop because it can remain in the ground with no ill effects for up to two years before it is harvested. In the laboratories in Senegal (and I was directly supervising that project later as the Director in Senegal), our project team recommended that we bring in a very small, almost microscopic wasp from Brazil, which attacked the mealy bug. Now I was very concerned about doing this, because worldwide there have been negative consequences of using exotic countermeasures against insects and mammals (e.g., mongooses in the Caribbean). So I insisted on very thorough tests and lots of qualified observers, and we finally assembled a whole commission of scientists to judge the project. If it did go awry, there'd be blame to share. After a good deal of trepidation on my part, we went forward, and it turned out to be an extraordinary success. The wasp in question feeds on the mealy bug in Brazil, which, of course, is the origin of cassava, and without it, it dies. It does not find an alternate host, and this is exactly what happened in our case, and the mealy bug no longer exists in West Africa. We began to breed these little wasps by the millions and flew them to various sites. Along with giving them to other pest management control agencies within governments, we supplied a host of nonprofit organizations and private voluntary agencies, and within a decade, the mealy bug had disappeared. When I revisited this issue at the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture in Ibadan recently, they cited this as one of the extraordinary examples of international cooperation led by AID. It's a great success story.

*Q: And then the wasp disappeared, too, I presume.*

SHEAR: The wasp has disappeared totally from Africa.

*Q: An amazing outcome.*

SHEAR: So these large regional projects did lead to some benefits. Now, the meteorological project is fascinating. We put in some of the first Doppler radar then available all the way from Chad to Dakar to track the advent of the monsoon season with the isohertz from the Congo basin. The installation and tracking went well, but the problem with the project to this day, verified by the recent reassessment of the Sahel Development Program, is in getting this helpful information out to the farmers. Since rainfall can be tracked between three and five days in advance of its arrival, farmers can know when to plant. Sadly, information accessed at the headquarters at Niamey often does not reach the farmers in time for practical application. The infrastructure is still functioning and should be used more.

The Sahel Institute was difficult to deal with because of problems in management. Some very important demographic work has been done which is only now being applied to maternal and child health care for family planning, illustrating how long it sometimes takes to develop these institutions and the kinds of resources and patience that are needed.

*Q: And I presume there were organizational and leadership problems that you had to deal with in trying to build up the capacity of these institutions?*

SHEAR: That's right, and for a lot of that we had to rely, of course, on the AID directors in Mali and in Niger. Sometimes the help was there and sometimes the interest was not very great. It showed, I think, some of the difficulties in supervising the operation of these projects. I want to talk about that a little bit later in the context of the Senegal River basin, where we were challenged by some real issues.

*Q: Of course. You were discussing 1979 and your sabbatical year; any other highlights?*

SHEAR: I undertook to put together a small publication for the Overseas Development Council called "New Directions in Development Cooperation." In it I compared the Sahel Development Program to the Southern African Development Cooperation Committee (SADCC), the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the Mekong Delta, which were all multinational long-term development efforts, regional programs and development efforts.

The conclusions I reached were not very surprising; by and large their success was dependent on the volition of the participating countries. I saw SADCC as having a substantial prospect for success, which seems to have been realized in terms of some of the trade agreements which have been reached. Caribbean Basin and Mekong - Mekong being in a much more politicized environment and the Caribbean Basin Initiative being much more difficult than any of them because of the small scale of the economies and the

dependence on the United States in terms of the openness of our trade. With greater U.S. cooperation, it might have been much more successful.

So I guess there were no universal conclusions coming out of this, no general messages, but it certainly was an interesting piece of work to be involved in. Following that, of course, I went to Senegal.

### **Appointment as USAID Mission Director in Senegal: 1979**

In September 1979 I became Mission Director for the bilateral program in Senegal. I oversaw our efforts in the Gambia as well; the AID representative in the Gambia was theoretically reporting to me. I was also responsible for a number of regional initiatives (i.e., the integrated pest management, the Senegal River Basin Commission, the Gambia River Basin Commission). We also provided, because we had a fairly good communications system, some legal and technical support of programs in the Cape Verde Islands and Guinea Bissau.

The program in Senegal had essentially gone through three phases. The first phase was from 1961 to 1972, when Senegal and most of the countries of ex-Francophone West Africa were really run out of the Senegal and West Africa Regional Office. It was administered from Washington, and there was minimal representation in the field. There were AID representatives in places like Niger, Bamako and Dakar, but only limited field staff, and the program was very modest in size. The operation was very inefficient to run out of Washington, and it showed, for example, the difficulty of writing implementation orders. AID uses PIO-Ts, PIO-Cs and PIO-Ps, which are Project Implementation Orders for Technical Services (that is, contracts), for Commodities and for Training. Prepared in Washington, these had to be sent to the field for review and negotiation and then sent back to Washington. All the financial controls were in Washington, and all project agreements had to be written there as well. It was an enormously cumbersome system, and as a result, not a lot happened. There was a high degree of dissatisfaction on the part of the recipients because implementation was so slow, and in many ways Washington was perceived as being non-responsive to their needs and their changing requirements. The period from 1973 to 1980 saw significant changes.

In 1973 I had been brought back to Washington by Sam Adams (then head of the Africa Bureau) and Dan Parker (head of the Agency) to take on the drought emergency. We have already talked about my role in helping create the Club du Sahel. During that time we also reorganized management of our field activities, putting what we termed "Country Development Offices" (with less than mission directors' delegations of authority) in posts from Mauritania to Chad as a way of getting some management in all the Sahelian states. These were very difficult positions to fill, with very few amenities for families and working conditions still in the throes of the drought. These officers initially had to manage drought emergency efforts and later were charged with developing a Relief Rehabilitation Program supported by Congress with a substantial \$110 million appropriation. Maurice Williams, the Deputy Administrator of AID, was very nervous

about that effort, fearing loss of funds and miscalculations of what would be an effective project in a very difficult environment. But we were very careful in deciding how projects would be approved and details of their criteria and financing. Our efforts turned out to be remarkably successful. Projects costing less than \$500,000 were designed to go forward very rapidly for the rehabilitation of boreholes and the rebuilding of damaged bridges, school buildings, administrative centers and grain storage centers. They were very specific, finite activities to reconnect the Sahelian States among themselves and then with their neighbors.

After using about \$70 million for this most successful effort, we got authority to devote the remainder into a longer-term effort. And establishing the Country Development Offices proved to be a very effective way to interact with governments that saw the value of having the AID officers there. The level of cooperation increased significantly. What we had done was to move substantial authority from Washington to the field.

From 1980 on there was significant growth of the Senegal program as a bilateral effort connected more to policy reform. It was just before that time, in 1978, that we moved from Country Development Offices to Mission Directors, increasing delegation of approval authority to the field and establishing larger and more self-contained posts.

When I arrived in Senegal, I was fortunate to have two Senegalese friends who were influential within the government. One was Jacques Diouf, who was the Minister for Science and Research and also responsible for agricultural research. When I was Regional Director in Abidjan, Jacques was the head of WARDA (West African Rice Development Agency) in Monrovia, and I spent a fair amount of time with him trying to unravel implementation problems of this curious organization being run from Washington. He experienced a high level of frustration, and REDSO was able to bring him considerable relief, I think, and in so doing we became good friends. The second person was Tidian Sy, the head of the National School of Applied Economics in Dakar who had worked with me earlier in Washington, representing the Sahelian interests in fashioning the Sahel Development Program. With the two of them helping me make appointments with others at their level, it was much easier for me to gain entrée into the government. They were enormously helpful.

I had obviously been aware of the program, having been Director for Central and West Africa in Washington. But when I got to Senegal, I found that that the theory of management at the Dakar Mission was to let the government be responsible for all or most of the running of the program. In theory that sounds very attractive, but in reality the program was lagging in execution. The AID officers who were in Dakar stayed in Dakar; they didn't travel to review their respective projects. The USAID ceded responsibility to host government project managers for virtually all aspects of the project implementation. Most of the USAID managers knew not nearly enough about their activities to be effective, so I decided to visit each of the projects every 60 days, asking the Senegalese director of the national service responsible for that project to accompany me. I found that in more than half the cases the head of the service had never been to the area where the projects were underway, was essentially trained in Paris, lived in Dakar,

and didn't want to travel in the rest of the country. There was no valid excuse, because compared to a lot of other African countries, Senegal was small and had a relatively decent road system - you could get just about anywhere in a day or a day and a half with minimum discomfort. So we began to directly engage the interest of the directors of the services, whether it was in health or agriculture, and thus they better understood what was happening. We were able to correct other impediments, and implementation showed improvement fairly rapidly, energizing the AID staff and their personnel. I insisted that they not just wait for my visits but that they spend a good deal of time at the project site. Moving AID officers into the ministries for which they were responsible reduced the number of people in the AID mission itself by probably over 40 percent. When I forced them into the government offices where they were supposed to be working with their counterparts, there was obviously a good deal of resistance; some unhappy people didn't stay.

We needed a much more logical and rational way to assess the effectiveness of what we were doing, and we needed government at a high level to share this evaluation with us. So we developed what was in French a *plan de redressement*, that is, a joint plan of assessment and modification. I engaged the Minister for Plan in the process, and got the U.S. Ambassador, Henry Cohen, to participate. I also got Prime Minister Abdou Diouf interested in the process of donors working more effectively and cooperatively with the government, and so we took our time on the joint assessment. Over a six-month period we evaluated each of the significant projects which we had, probably fifteen. We brought in people who were highly skilled in evaluation to work with both my own staff and some excellent Senegalese staff, and as they reviewed the projects they also trained the latter in evaluation techniques and methodologies - to everyone's satisfaction.

That program evaluation culminated in a three-day seminar in which we reviewed each of the activities. We engaged the ministers - the Minister for Plan and the U.S. Ambassador presiding over many of the reviews - and it was an extremely effective technique for sharing responsibility for issues relating to these projects. Because we then had the basis of joint planning, we carefully spent the next six months developing the next phase of the program.

One advantage of committing to a long period of time in a post - I would spend at least two tours there - was seeing things in a different perspective. Doing so also gave me an opportunity to bring together some really wonderful people I had known elsewhere and to replace some less effective staff with more energized, sometimes younger people, people who spoke French and people who were deeply interested in Africa and Sahelian development. An exemplary staff was assembled by the time we started redesigning the program.

We also had the opportunity to upgrade the Senegalese staff, who were really fine people but needed additional training. I established a staff development and training program, budgeted for \$150,000 to \$200,000 a year, which allowed for sending some of them to the States for training. Most, however, were trained in place or went to countries other than the United States. We hired a full-time Senegalese staff development officer, and

brought in U.S. trainers to help frame the program, the methodology and the personnel evaluation system, and it worked wonderfully well. It increased the capacity of USAID enormously and made us less reliant on Americans over time - replacing three American positions with Senegalese. This made the Americans uneasy, of course, but also gained us enormous political credit as what we were doing became more widely known. Relations with the government became much closer, in part because of this.

*Q: What were some of those projects that you were reviewing?*

SHEAR: One of the major activities we were undertaking was a rural development program for health delivery systems. The project director was a Belgian doctor, and there was nothing wrong with his being non-American, but he was not terribly sympathetic to the Senegalese. At CILSS at that time was a remarkable American health officer, Michael White, who, when I was in Washington, had asked me to hire him to work with the Sahelians in planning the CILSS health programs. He'd done a wonderful job there, being fluent in French, a superb public health physician and very sympathetic with the Sahelians. After having spent two years in Ouagadougou, Mike and his family came to Dakar, and we evaluated the project. He became head of our health office as part of the joint assessment, first on TDY (temporary duty) and then full time. When we redesigned that project, which was headquartered in Kaolak, we gave a lot of responsibility for its day-to-day local execution to village elders. These villages were very hierarchical, with the elders having a great deal of authority. Earlier a lot of the funds earmarked for local health clinics disappeared, most likely stolen by those who were supposed to be implementing the activity. Motorcycles issued to the local health people either didn't work or were sold because there were no means to maintain them. It was extremely difficult to find American AID people to work in some of the more remote and difficult areas, so we began to engage Peace Corps volunteers as outriders of this project - the health extension people, if you will. Over time there would be more than 80 Peace Corps volunteers working on AID projects in Senegal, to the great satisfaction of both organizations.

In redesigning the delivery system for health services, we had to seek national legislation to change the policy context of the project. The Senegal government had promised national health care at no cost, and therefore there was no health care. We were behind legislation enacted to permit authorities in local *préfétures* (counties) to charge for health services and local physicians to charge for health services. Our growing relationship with then Prime Minister Abdou Diouf contributed to his endorsement of these policies. In the end we developed a list of 18 basic medicines to be stocked in the local clinics by pharmacists trained by us. Within two years, in each of almost 1,000 villages there was a pharmacist, a first aid person and a midwife. These people received compensation for services from the villagers on a fixed-fee schedule we devised. The village was responsible for the accounting, but one of the three people, depending on their education, "kept the books." The elders were ultimately responsible, and if there was a loss of revenue or resources, they were under contract to make it up. They took this responsibility very seriously, and the project was highly effective, becoming a national

program the year after I left Senegal and in use to this day. It has now made its way into Mali and several of the surrounding states.

*Q: And the core of the program was these modest health and pharmacy centers?*

SHEAR: Yes. They also permitted us insight into family planning and maternal and child health, areas we had found most difficult to penetrate. By becoming more familiar with local attitudes, we were able to deliver better health services and to introduce family planning practices, which over time have become increasingly successful. Incidentally, there was also resistance during the first two years when some religious leaders in Senegal thought that the Koran did not permit this. So we sponsored a national seminar on maternal and child health (we didn't call it family planning) and its relationship to the Koran. In attendance were these *marabouts* (religious leaders) and also some Koranic scholars, who presented a series of papers, and the conclusion was that the Koran stressed the importance of good health and its benefits to one's family. The responsibility of the husband, whether he has one or four wives, is their health and well being, and while it didn't come out with a positive specific recommendation, there was nothing negative about moving toward the spacing of children. It was really a rather interesting outcome that got a lot of national publicity.

The health program was also, I think, very important to our attempt to increase productivity at the farm level. Expanding efforts to maintain good health for workers during the time of year when they usually were the sickest was obviously very important. The people were most likely weakest when food was short, just before the rains. With the rains came malaria. Diarrheal diseases were rampant, sapping people's energy. Ensuring a means to deliver malaria drugs and provide first aid and guidance for various illnesses and injuries at the village level, we believed, would increase farm productivity.

*Q: Right.*

SHEAR: Clearly the morbidity lessened substantially. We did some assessments, but it was awfully hard to link cause and effect. The Sine Saloum health project has become the model for a whole series of health projects in Africa, and the way we used and learned from evaluations when we designed the project has also been used in a number of instances.

Another project I want to mention is related to agricultural production. Before I arrived in Senegal, quasi-government organizations called parastatals carried out the programs for agricultural extension and production. We found in assessing the programs that almost 50 percent of AID's resources went into salaries and personnel costs related to those within the parastatals, and very little got to the farmers themselves. To alleviate this situation, we began to work through local farmers' associations, and over time got the government to reduce support of the parastatals. Obviously this was very difficult because of the reluctance of the bureaucracy to find alternate jobs. I would have to say that redesign in this area was less successful than our health efforts (and much more difficult), but over time I think some real progress was made.

Activities in small, irrigated perimeters in the Bakel area near the Mauritanian border were extremely successful, because they relied primarily on local organizations and villagers for their execution. Some direct technical assistance was provided by parastatals and from a number of extraordinarily fine Vietnamese agronomists (who had green cards and after their work on the program would ultimately become American citizens). They brought with them grassroots knowledge of working at the local level and lived in Bakel (one of the hottest places in Senegal), doing very well under quite difficult circumstances.

A very large project we had in the Casamance, which was severely hampered by government bureaucracy, was a \$27 million integrated rural development effort focused on agriculture. We recast it, too, to rely on local organizations and communities to work on water control in an area that was increasingly salinized. These efforts were not nearly so successful because of the need to deal with government bureaucracy and the reluctance of the government to reduce those salaried positions.

We continued heavy emphasis on program implementation, so that by the beginning of the third year I was in Senegal, financial obligations were at the same level as disbursements. This was most unusual for AID programs, which usually had very large pipelines (undisbursed funds). By the time I left Senegal, we had reduced the pipeline from 300 percent of the annual obligations to the same amount committed annually. I considered that real progress. Obviously, this is but a crude measure of implementation effectiveness, but at least we were disbursing funds and moving things. The project managers were on site, and I then visited them about every six months. We conducted reviews of every project involving the head of service, and if there were major issues, we solved them as promptly as possible, usually on the spot. I enjoyed that aspect of my job enormously.

The other component of the program that I wanted to mention was moving to non-project assistance. As Senegal began to respond to the recommendations of the Elliot Berg report and as the Bank was mobilizing for macroeconomic restructuring within Africa, Senegal was a target country. Within the context of the Bank's push for economic structural reform, we had approved a PL 480 Title III program.

Concerning Title III, PL 480, the proposed agreement and the negotiating instructions were so onerous and complex that Ambassador Cohen thought we should not go forward with it. He felt Washington was just trying to kill the effort. However, I convinced him to allow me to lay out some negotiating guidelines for sitting down with the government, fully aware of the difficulty of changing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's instructions, as these tend to be written in concrete, if not steel. The subsequent negotiations were grueling, but they were successful. We actually did negotiate an agreement of \$21 million for disbursement over a three-year period.

*Q: What was so difficult about it? What was the Department of Agriculture pushing for?*



SHEAR: First of all, the agreement had four or five preambles requiring certifications that were almost embarrassing to request related to the legitimacy of the government. They covered authority to utilize the funds properly and their accounting systems - things that taken alone might not seem so onerous, but collectively took on an aura of negotiating with criminals or with a company of some dubious history, not with a sovereign government. Further, reporting and labeling was extremely complex and difficult. For example, all bags delivered had to be labeled "From the people of the United States to the people of Senegal," even though they would be sold through commercial markets, and this created a good deal of confusion. I can't remember all the details, but overall the restrictions we had to enforce were quite absurd and demeaning.

*Q: There were a number of self-help provisions, weren't there?*

SHEAR: Yes, a lot of them geared toward agricultural production, which was helpful. Those made up the smallest portion of the instructions, for they were general guidelines that left details to be specifically articulated by us. We then had to go back to Washington for approval, but that was a useful part of the dialogue with the government about policy modification.

Setting up the financial accounting was extremely complicated. Fortunately, we had technical assistance funds and flexibility in training Senegalese government accountants and project managers. Without those the government never would have been able to satisfy the reporting requirements for the agreement. In the end it turned out to be a very successful agreement, and the government organized, per the instructions of negotiation, a committee to manage it. We also worked closely with the committee, and much of the effort devolved on local committees. For example, about \$6 million was used to stabilize coastal dunes from Dakar all the way north to the Mauritanian border. Local villagers were used in the effort, so we created short-term but significant employment and nurseries to grow cassarina trees for planting along the coast. Now when you fly along the edge of the Atlantic up to the Mauritanian border, you see a swath of green about 300 meters wide for 125 kilometers - one result of the Title III project.

*Q: There were some issues over the kinds of rice, weren't there?*

SHEAR: Yes. The Senegalese prefer broken rice, which was imported at relatively modest cost per ton from Thailand, the world's largest rice exporter. The rice they had to import from the United States was long grain, and was sold much more to the middle class. Although we have broken rice in the United States, it's all bought by the beer industry. We had a visit from the U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, who negotiated with the new prime minister, Habib Thiam, and guaranteed supplying U.S.-produced broken rice, but when he returned home to fulfill the agreement, he was roundly defeated by members of Congress representing the beer lobbies. So Anheuser-Busch and similar "needy" organizations got the broken rice but the Senegalese did not. The Senegalese then consumed such large amounts of rice that \$10 million worth a year could be absorbed within the urban market without too much difficulty.

Indeed, Senegal's import bill for rice was equal to their import bill for petroleum. That meant about a \$300 million a year to support dependence on what is in a sense a luxury commodity. Rice can be considered a "convenience" food that can be prepared within 45 minutes. Millet and sorghum, on the other hand, need to be pounded and processed. Hence, rice was certainly the preferred food of the urban dwellers. There was then an impetus for the Senegalese to push for their own rice production (which I supported), but it turned out in the long term not to be very economical. Senegal produces a fair amount of rice now, but Mali produces more, and more economically as well. Mali sells rice to Senegal these days, and that reduces the amount imported from Thailand.

*Q: At that time was it irrigated rice that they were trying to produce?*

SHEAR: Yes, and irrigated rice, even in low-cost, smaller perimeters, was still substantially more expensive than imported Thai rice.

*Q: Rice production was part of the Casamance Program, wasn't it?*

SHEAR: To some degree, but the Program was more focused on water control and growing vegetables and other grains. The major effort on the rice production was along the Senegal River. Rain-fed rice was a traditional crop in the Casamance, but it was mostly consumed locally.

*Q: Did you provide any budget support, balance-of- payments assistance or support funds as part of the economic structural reform program?*

SHEAR: Yes; that was a very important additional component of our program. We had, over a three-year period, \$10 million annually in structural adjustment funds, non-project assistance. To help us design the program, we engaged the person for whom I first worked in AID, Vince Brown, who had been the Nigeria Desk Officer when I was an intern. Vince had retired but came to Senegal to help us put together the program, and actually wrote the basic documentation. We also had exceptionally good assistance with conditionality requirements from the Minister for Plan, Mamadou Toure, who had been a senior official with the IMF and later head of the Africa Division of the IMF. Now retired, he remains a good friend. When we first started discussing the prospect of non-project assistance, he said very directly, "Well, tell me the terms of the conditionality," which was very unusual. He was a very sophisticated person to deal with and very knowledgeable. That first program approval was extremely important to the Senegalese government, because it required a certain level of foreign exchange availabilities for the IMF program to go forward. I had forgotten about this until recently, when over lunch Mamadou Toure reminded me that the Senegalese government was going to fall about \$8 million short equivalent of the foreign exchange needed for the IMF program to go forward (\$40 or \$50 million a year for the first *tranche*). I was able to accelerate the approval of the U.S. \$10 million non-project package by going to Washington and then hand-carrying the approval back with me. Mamadou Toure then could show the approval documents to the IMF, allowing the whole program to proceed. So the U.S. Government played a very useful role, not only with the money itself but also in leveraging IMF assistance.

*Q: What happened to the reforms that went with such funding?*

SHEAR: The reforms were not nearly as successful as we had hoped over the longer term, and indeed Senegal is still lagging behind some of its Sahelian neighbors in the reform process. I think part of it relates to the success of the Senegalese in generating foreign assistance. The Senegalese are very sophisticated and charming, and very skilled in dealing with donor agencies. And while Mamadou Toure was very sincere, he sometimes placed himself at risk in the role he took on when he became Minister for Finance. Despite his efforts, the established bureaucracy was so strong in Senegal that it was very difficult, for example, to reduce the number of government employees. Other hindrances were the entrenched power of religious leaders called *marabouts*, and strong commercial interests tied to France that in some instances did not necessarily favor economic reforms. So Senegal, time and time again, would get very large structural adjustment loans from the World Bank and renegotiate the IMF programs, only to fail meeting the performance criteria.

*Q: I have the impression that Senegal had a very rigid structure of government and parastatals and labor laws in this regard.*

SHEAR: Very rigid, because the whole industrial régime was built around a sort of French mercantilist model, so there was very little flexibility. And it relied greatly on government subsidies and its relationships with major industries, the bureaucracy and the public service as a whole.

Also the unions in Senegal were extremely strong, particularly for an African country, and many were leaders within the whole independence movement. Senghor, the first president of Senegal, came out of the union movement. He had been a union leader, even though an intellectual, and he led one of the first major strikes. An extraordinary novel, *God's Bits of Wood*, which was about the railway strike in the 1940s, was written by the man who later became the Minister for Industry. The unions were very strong and resisted change, and since there was a very strong teachers' union as well, it was difficult to bring about educational reform. But other Sahelian countries with the same structure have managed to bring about reform, essentially because they've had strong enough leadership to force it through. I think Mali is a very good example, and Burkina Faso, too, where as the result of several revolutions, significant reforms have been instituted. A related fact is that Senegal has a self-imposed restraint, which is the respect for law. The judiciary in Senegal is extremely strong, and where Mali and Burkina Faso have had revolutions and *coups d'état*, Senegal has not. The very process that has given it much of its strength - the process of peaceful change - has been a major constraint to revolutionary economic restructuring. Politics in Senegal have become much more like the politics of Cook County, Illinois. President Diouf is now saying he will run for a fourth term, which, I think, is uncalled for and unfortunate. Power does corrupt, and so Abdou Diouf, who as a younger man and even as Prime Minister was a very important force for reform, has become a force for the retention of the status quo.

*Q: And then there was the non-modern sector, the ground nut program, which involved the majority of the population - an area of extreme poverty. It was difficult to address, wasn't it?*

SHEAR: Because Senegal was not that large an area, I think we knew the constraints to change in the non-modern sector, and sometimes we addressed them through health programs and some of the agricultural production programs. One challenge came from local religious leaders, the *marabouts*. Their followers, the *talibous*, who made up a large portion of the population, were obliged to provide the *marabouts* with a portion of their harvests each year. Anything that would change such a production system was seen as potentially a threat to the *marabouts*, so they were reluctant to support new agricultural practices. But despite their opposition, agricultural practices have indeed changed substantially. For example, the ground nut basin in central Senegal, the area around Kaolak, had been undergoing the mining of its soils, but we've seen much of that arrested because of changing patterns of agricultural production. But it takes a long time for this kind of change to take place. Modifying the power of the *marabouts* took 20 to 25 years. In AID we tend to think in much shorter periods of time, in terms of project or budget cycles.

I failed to mention another important aspect of the reconfiguration of the program: the concentration of projects. When I arrived in Senegal, we had 30 separate projects in a portfolio of about \$25 million a year. We increased the aid level to over \$50 million a year by the time I had been there four years, but reduced the number of projects from 30 to 15 (and ultimately to nine) bilateral activities. This gave us much better units of management, allowing more focused attention of resources and, in the end, more leverage in bringing about needed policy changes.

An important component of the agricultural program was development in two river basins, one very large, one modest in size. The Gambia River Basin Commission was part of our responsibility, as was the Senegal River Basin Commission. I set up a separate office within USAID to deal with these because we needed different sets of technical skills, such as water engineering. There had been initiated, before my time, two excellent projects that were assisting with the OMVS. The OMVS was a regional organization comprising Senegal, Mali and Mauritania, headquartered in Dakar. It had authority for development within the entire Senegal River Basin and is comparable to the Tennessee Valley Authority in that it had responsibility for power, navigation and agriculture.

One earlier undertaking with the OMVS was the topographic mapping project of the entire Senegal basin, performed with great skill by an American company, Teledyne. However, this was very costly because it was a Department of Defense-type contract, which was cost plus. So Teledyne left behind some most expensive equipment. This was a huge embarrassment, but what they had accomplished was extraordinarily good. We even found that the Manantali Dam was being misplaced by 45 feet. That doesn't seem like very much, but it was a significant factor in an almost \$2 billion structure. The second project was an environmental impact assessment of the entire régime of the dam. Two dams on the Senegal River were being put in - one at Manantali, which is on the

Bafing (a major tributary in Mali) and the other, the Diama Dam, at the mouth of the Senegal River. The goal for the Diama Dam was to prevent saltwater intrusion, because the river has such a gradual rate of descent. That dam was only 20 kilometers from the ocean, just above the mouth of the river. The environmental impact assessment AID funded was extremely well done. I personally conducted reviews of all its components - seven or eight very large volumes, each dealing with a different aspect, from fisheries to health to flood recession agriculture. Overall, it was extremely thorough and very important for the planning of water flows in the river and how the dams would be regulated. The Manantali Dam, a very large structure, would cost \$1.8 billion. The United States was precluded from contributing to the capital costs of the dam by Congress and also by the reality of budget constraints. However, because of the nature of our support for these two activities, because we provided staff training and support for the OMVS itself, and because it was headquartered in Dakar, we had a close working relationship with the organization and its High Commissioner. We also played a significant role in donor meetings convened from time to time to generate funds for both the Diama and the Manantali Dams.

*Q: Weren't there some real questions, though, about the economic feasibility of these dams?*

SHEAR: Correct. The World Bank was strongly opposed to these structures, considering them uneconomical. The Bank instead favored pump irrigation directly from the river. Of course, one of the benefits of the Manantali Dam was the power to be generated by four large turbines to be installed. We believed that these turbines would provide cheaper irrigation because we could turn to electric pumps rather than the diesel ones being used at the time. We also saw (never a concern of the World Bank) the political importance of the dams as instruments of cooperation between the three governments. And indeed, as the dam resources began to be mobilized, we were asked to provide technical help such as legal advice on the uses of the water and help with negotiating water agreements among the three states. We brought in one of the world's premier legal experts in this area to draft the necessary legislation, which was then passed by the three governments. At that time there was a civil war going on in the northern part of Mauritania and southern Morocco. Qadhafi was also making incursions into northern Mali as well as infiltrating the higher echelons of the government in Mauritania. For the U.S. Government, unlike the World Bank, the dams had importance for both developmental and political purposes. So despite the World Bank and well-known economists like Elliot Berg saying these were not economical and the United States shouldn't support them, we did, and strongly. I also saw the need for much more resilient agricultural production systems and therefore the utility of some forms of irrigation in the basin. The long-term result has been a lot of spontaneous development since the change in the water régime, the availability of the water and the growing accessibility of electric motors in the valley itself. One of the generators is now on line and the electrical system goes down along the Mauritanian side and then across into the Senegal side, so that some areas can now be irrigated much more cheaply.

*Q: As I recall, you had proposed a substantial agricultural development project for the area.*

SHEAR: Yes, and it illustrates the difficulty of even the U.S. Government recommending its own regional projects, as this activity required cooperation of the three USAID missions and American embassies in Senegal, Mauritania and Mali. It was a project I generated that was designed to increase U.S. participation through irrigation and to provide environmental safeguards through local health programs (building on our success in the Sine Saloum health project). Further, it was designed to help leverage other reforms within the policy constraints of pricing and trade still in place, particularly in Mali and Mauritania. We felt that by generating a project of substantial dimension (around \$12 million), we could both affect policies and foster agricultural production in the valley. We also sought to build on our success with small-scale perimeters in Matam and Bakel in northern Senegal. Charles Bray, then U.S. Ambassador to Senegal, was strongly supportive, and the two of us visited the other two embassies and missions and got verbal support from the ambassadors and mission directors - they could hardly withhold it. But they really dragged their feet and the project never went forward, essentially due to lack of cooperation on the part of our American colleagues.

*Q: What was the reason? Did you understand it?*

SHEAR: One reason was that this was a difficult period in U.S. relationships with Mauritania. The U.S. ambassador was at odds with the government over some (to me, nonessential) political issues which dealt more with his personality than with U.S. policy. Nonetheless, he was not in a position to push for reforms. In Mali, I thought it was more the attitude of a mission director who did not want any external interference. He saw the regional project as impinging on his authority, which was most unfortunate.

*Q: Where was Guinea in this? They were part of the OMVS, weren't they?*

SHEAR: The main headwaters of the Senegal River are in the mountains of Guinea. Guinea applied for a membership in the OMVS on two occasions, and when finally brought in, also applied to the CILSS for membership in the Sahel consortium. They were turned down, mainly because they were totally non-Sahelian and Guinea-Bissau would then have to be brought in too, and Guinea-Bissau was not Sahelian either. Cape Verde was a member, because it also had Sahelian-type climate. This was an object lesson for me in the difficulties of getting a large regional project under way, even though rationally it made a lot of sense. Looking at what we could have done differently, we might have moved more slowly in preparing our colleagues in Mauritania and Mali. We did have meetings before the project was presented to Congress, and we got their support for it. Indeed, there was enough interest in it that Ray Love, the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Africa Bureau, when on a visit to West Africa, came to specifically look at that project. He went back in support of it, I believe, but it still never went forward.

*Q: You spoke about the studies that were done initially, but what were the investments you had envisioned, apart from the dam itself?*

SHEAR: We thought that we could, over time, assist in the electrification of the valley, and I thought we could probably engage some aspects of the U.S. private sector in that, too. I had read about what had been done in the Philippines in terms of rural electrification, and I saw it as a wonderful opportunity. One had only to travel along the valley to see not only the poverty but also the potential.

*Q: What about roads and resettlements and things like that?*

SHEAR: Resettlements were something I did not want us to be involved in. There was a large project in Mali for the resettlement of 30,000 people at Manantali, and the AID mission in Mali was pursuing that. I don't believe the United States actually became part of it; the demographics and the political liabilities were so difficult that we decided not to participate.

*Q: But there were some initiatives in rice production and food production in the flood-recession irrigation process. Was that something we were involved in?*

SHEAR: We were involved in flood-recession agriculture associated with some of the small-scale irrigated perimeters. It was a good opportunity to introduce some of the more rapid growing sorghums for the flood-recession agriculture. The Senegalese in general were quite resourceful, having already used millet and sorghum in flood-recession agriculture for probably a thousand years. We developed some improved strains for them, but we were more deeply engaged in the environmental consequences of the dams. For example, we put in a thousand piezometers throughout the valley to measure the changes in the water régime and the underground water in order to determine the effect of the dams on movements of the subterranean water systems.

There was another project we wanted to undertake, which I still think is very exciting. In an area just south of the Senegal River in Senegal there's a river that has been dry for about 50 years because of a series of droughts. When visiting some of the remote villages in that area, I was told by some of the older people about crocodiles along that river, which is now just a sandy bed. A whole series of dunes were built up around where the mouth of the river was, where it used to join the Senegal River. Well, there's a lake called Richard-Toll south of the Senegal River that provides the city of Dakar with its drinking water. The level of that lake would rise by about six feet with the construction of the Diama Dam at the mouth of the river, so it would be possible to direct some of the water from the Richard-Toll back into this river, changing its flow and renewing an area about 120 miles long for agricultural use. We had an environmental impact study done, and it showed a minimal amount of malaria risk, because it would feed back into underground water systems. It was a very exciting project, but it, too, never went forward.

*Q: Sounds fascinating.*

SHEAR: I think probably the most satisfying part of my career with AID was as Mission Director in Senegal because it was there that I was able to apply much of what I had learned over a lifetime. And we had resources to do some interesting things. Because of

the way AID is organized to operate, we had to rely a great deal on contractors, consultants and others sent from Washington to help us with our work. When they arrived, they first had to be introduced to the operating systems of AID in general and to our specific mission. So we hired Booz-Allen, the consulting firm, to develop an operations manual for us. That way, people coming into the mission would know how to go to the controller to get an advance of funds, how local staff operated, their relationships with the embassy, how to deal with the government - every aspect of the AID operation laid out in a handbook. It was extremely effective, and AID thought it was such a good idea that they distributed it to the rest of the AID missions in Africa in the hope that it would stimulate them to do something similar. Obviously it had to be tailored for each mission, and we had it updated once while I was there. It was an enjoyable undertaking, and we were fortunate to have the resources to do such things on the management side.

I also set up a staff development and training program which proved to be enormously successful. As a result, we upgraded the capacities of that mission tremendously. We were also the first mission in Africa to introduce automated data management and computers, which we trained about 20 Senegalese secretaries to use. Thanks to Spell check, our Francophones could correct their English spelling, and it worked very, very well. The Senegalese were thrilled to be engaged in that, and because of power outages we put in a battery room to give us some grace time when the system was threatened. In retrospect it was just a wonderful experience, and a really positive one for my wife, Barbara, who was the community liaison officer in the embassy for over three years and contributed substantially to our success there as well.

### **Retirement from USAID and Post-Retirement Activities: 1984 - Present**

So that was Senegal. After a three-day retirement from AID, I began a new career with the Organization for Rehabilitation through Training (ORT), which was and is the world's largest nonprofit organization for vocational and technical education. At that time, ORT had about 350,000 students in 44 countries with a professional staff of 7,000 or 8,000. It was a fascinating organization, begun in 1880 in Russia as an emergency-associated undertaking to help Jews fleeing the pogroms in Czarist Russia to immigrate to the United States and to England, essentially by providing them with English-language competency. Over time it became much more than that and offered vocational and technical training for newcomers to those countries. By the time of the First World War, ORT became much more global in its rehabilitation of people, first focusing on Jewish populations and then gradually moving beyond those groups. The staff of ORT - those running the schools, manning the classrooms - did remarkable work. For example, in France, ORT ran three very large training institutes for North Africans, for the most part Muslims looking for employment. ORT helped them enter the French labor market. The French Ministry for Labor and the Ministry for Education entered into a contract with ORT, so that at any given time, ORT was training and retraining about 6,000 North Africans for entry into higher levels of the French labor market.



But the central management of ORT was very hierarchical, very centrist, and very unlike American organizations with which I had worked. There, information in an American culture was to be shared, but in ORT, information was guarded very closely. Information was power, and there was a strong Central European belief that by sharing power you diminish your own influence rather than extending it. I found this hard to deal with, and so after three years of doing some good work with ORT, I terminated my relationship.

However, during my time there, I was provided with an opportunity to do something extremely significant, which was to use ORT as an organization within Interaction (the coordinating body for most U.S. non-profits working overseas) for the creation of new legislation for Africa. This started in a rather casual way. During lunch one day with John Sewell, he remarked to me that he had been increasingly involved with Interaction.

*Q: He was with...?*

SHEAR: John Sewell is the president of the Overseas Development Council (ODC), founded by James Grant, who later became very well known as the head of UNICEF. When Jim Grant left for UNICEF, John Sewell moved up from vice-president to become the ODC president. Anyway, John told me that he had just agreed to chair the policy committee for Interaction and asked if I would work with him on that committee. He thought there were some real opportunities for mobilizing private voluntary agencies in the United States around more coherent aspects of foreign aid reform. Because my ORT responsibilities, while interesting, were not all that pressing, I had more time to offer than I had had while I was with USAID, so I began to put together an outline of what would be a major new initiative for legislation in Africa. In part it was based on the successful experience of the Sahel legislation, but only in part, because unlike working from within the U.S. Government, working within the context of then 156 private voluntary agencies was quite different in terms of organization and management. It provided a fairly broad canvas on which to paint some new policy initiatives.

I had to go to Egypt for ORT, and on the way back I began to consider possible legislation and the work program needed to mobilize Interaction support and build the appropriate kind of associated network. It was a long flight, and by the end of 10 hours I had a pretty extensive schema of what both the legislation and the work program might look like, as well as strategy outline. The result was a strategy paper that was presented to an annual meeting of the directors of the agencies represented in Interaction. We had a discussion lasting several hours around it, and there were many, many concerns. Most of them related to the desire by the nonprofit organizations for as much aid as possible earmarked for their unique interests, whether sectoral, religious or just funds reserved for non-profits in general. Indeed, there was a precedent for the latter within the aid legislation. Something like 10 or 12 percent had to be reserved for use by these types of organizations.

Working through all of that and tackling some fairly petty issues as well, we began to mobilize first our policy committee and then larger groups of Interaction members around the concept of a wholly new approach for Africa and ways to develop a long-term,

sustained source of financing for African initiatives. This was during a time when there was a great deal of American intervention in Central America. The USAID budget for Africa was being raided every year to supplement funds for U.S. security programs for that region.

*Q: And what year was this?*

SHEAR: This was in 1985. I had retired from AID in January 1984, and by 1985 we began to formulate this initiative, using a variety of *fora* to push it forward. Golar Butcher, who had been Assistant Administrator of the Africa Bureau in AID, had returned to Howard Law School and was putting on a policy workshop covering general aspects of development. I spoke with Golar and she invited me to present a paper on this new initiative, which was subsequently published in the *Howard Law Forum*. Representatives of the World Bank and a number of development agencies were there for the presentation. The World Bank was, not surprisingly, extremely dubious - not negative, but very skeptical that something like this could be accomplished. The AID representatives were very cautious in public but very supportive in private, as this was not fully consonant with U.S. official policy which was then focusing enormous resources (hundreds of millions of dollars) upon Central America. And indeed, major portions of the AID budget that year had been reallocated to Central America, which really highlighted the need for something special to be done for Africa. Also, budget levels for Africa had been stable but at a fairly low level of about \$400 million for the previous five years, and raids on that budget (for political purposes in Central America and elsewhere) occurred time and time again. Further, I was very conscious of the time and the cost of preparing an annual justification to Congress for AID budgets, having been part of that as Director of the Office of Development Planning in the Africa Bureau.

I had seen also the impediments to implementing AID programs because of the tying of assistance, and by that I mean restricting procurement to U.S. sources and origin. The whole question of funding, the tying of AID, the restriction we had placed on financing local costs (that is, non-foreign exchange costs of the program) were of major concern. Congress time and time again - and some of the worst offenders were the very agencies with which I was working in Interaction - earmarked funds for everything from child survival to special initiatives. Although many of these were deserving, the result was a tendency to tie up the programming of AID funds around priorities established by Congress.

*Q: These are the "functional accounts?"*

SHEAR: Yes, the so-called functional accounts, which are really sectoral. Also, I had major issues in dealing with the private voluntary agencies (PVOs) because AID was seen as a milk cow, as it were, and the PVOs were really quite parochial. How could we bring them together, and how then develop common themes? As it turned out, the themes that emerged were very powerful. They were, first of all, based on humanitarian concerns about Africa and its special needs. And looking at Africa always required a long-term view. Annual budgets were a challenge and an impediment when the goal was to build

institutions that we had learned might take anywhere from five to 10 or 15 years to establish.

There was also the need to combine emergency aid with long-term aid, because there were still droughts and civil strife occurring in various parts of Africa. We sought to link those relief efforts to longer-term issues wherever possible.

This planning, politicking and building of a network went on for approximately a year. Finally, there was another opportunity to meet with the presidents of all the NGOs around this as a single major issue at the annual meeting. With the presidents of about 80 of these organizations in one room, I made a presentation then got them to vote unanimously in support.

*Q: What were some of the major organizations?*

SHEAR: They were such groups as Lutheran World Relief, Church World Services, CARE (Phil Johnson was a very strong supporter), Save the Children and Bread for the World - most with very disparate objectives that finally came together around these common goals. We then set about, with the consensus of Interaction behind us, to meet informally with key congressional staff members, who brought it to the attention of the right members. Steve Weissman in the House and Frank Ballard in the Senate were key people with whom we worked. Congressman Dante Facell was a strong supporter. We had an extraordinary breakfast meeting in the impressive House Foreign Affairs committee room, at which people like Phil Johnson and other significant presidents of NGOs came forward. I made the major presentation, but the really effective impact came in the exchange around the breakfast tables set up in that remarkable room. By then we had managed to involve Senator Kassenbaum and the Senate Subcommittee on Africa as well. Ted Kennedy, although very much involved in refugees, also extended through his staff very, very strong support.

I would like to mention one extraordinary personal experience related to that time. That breakfast meeting we had on the Hill, which I knew would be a very important one, occurred at eight o'clock in the morning, and because I was very excited about my role in this presentation, I arrived very early. I walked into the rotunda of the Capitol just as sunlight was coming through the rotunda, and sat there by myself. It was a profoundly moving experience for me to reflect a little bit about where I had come from, my own background, where I was at that point in time and the privilege I felt at being charged to represent something so important.

The briefing went very well, and we ended up moving on to a series of more formal hearings in which John Sewell and others participated very effectively. People like Don McHenry, ex-U.S. Representative to the United Nations, also spoke. And we had a full formal hearing before the House Foreign Relations Committee and similarly before the Senate. Nancy Kassebaum chaired the latter and was extremely friendly and helpful.

The characteristics of the proposed legislation were a kind of 20-year planning horizon and a five-year authorization with funds to be available until expended. While using the Sahel Development Program (SDP) as a model, this was much more broadly based. Obviously; it had to be more thematically, rather than geographically, based. All the funds would be untied. That is, procurement could take place anywhere in the world, especially locally to stimulate local commerce and growth. On the substantive side we looked for reforms within the programs, while not wanting to earmark but just emphasize the needs in Africa - small-producer activities in agriculture, the important role of women, maternal and child health care, family planning. And then there was the environmental base for agricultural production to be clearly examined and sustained. So we saw this as a fairly integrated approach to basic rural development around agriculture, enhancing the roles of women and the family, improving health in general and increasing farmer productivity while making it sustainable through sound environmental programs.

We had an extensive debate within Interaction before the legislation came forward on the relationship between the policy context - i.e., non-project aid and project aid. While many of the nonprofit organizations strongly supported policy reform, they had little true understanding of the real role of non-project assistance. Thinking in project terms, their perceptions were in rather limited to very concrete examples. There were also vast differences within Interaction on the effect of policy reform. Bread For The World representatives, for example, thought it was anathema because of its negative effect on poor people. It was at this time that the UNDP was picking this up as a theme, and it turned out to be fairly correct. It was, however, a very difficult theme to deal with because of the lack of understanding by the PVOs.

*Q: It was very controversial in those days.*

SHEAR: Extremely controversial. Issues dealing with debt relief received, of course, a very dim view in the U.S. Treasury, and the opening up of U.S. trade was very controversial for a lot of the labor unions that normally support foreign aid. All of these very complicated facets had to be managed, but in April 1986 we got strong support from the Kassebaum committee. Then, in September of that year, we got backing from Congressman Wolpe, the chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa, and finally we began to mobilize support from the Interaction membership at large. Tens of thousands of letters were written from Interaction members around the country to Congress, and this had a tremendous impact. We then also engaged in an African dialogue. President Diouf of Senegal, a good friend, was then chairman of the OAU and also chaired a special session at the United Nations in New York on Africa. We had an opportunity to meet with him and brief him, and he then brought it before the larger UN audience. We began to build very powerful momentum, and the Reagan Administration was forced to then support the initiative, because it had taken on a life of its own. Ironically, the Administration itself was the last major force to really back it, but back it they finally did. And indeed, it was passed.

*Q: What was it called?*

SHEAR: The legislation was called the African Recovery and Development Act within AID, and within later legislation it was called the DFA, the Development Fund for Africa. There were then, however, many issues associated with its implementation, and this caused us a good deal of concern. Once this became part of AID's bureaucratic structure, it immediately began to be diluted because people within AID found it very difficult to think about the future, to entrust projects with long-term funding. One way of getting at this which AID seized upon and we all welcomed, was the need for evaluation. If you could determine results, that projects and the programs were having some positive and measurable effect, you could more readily justify long-term funding. Regrettably, though, this was taken to almost absurd lengths, so that everything in DFA had to have a verifiable objective. Not only is that difficult to do, it cannot be accomplished within a two- or three-year period.

AID's enthusiasm for pursuing this development by objective was, to a certain degree, self-defeating. Congress required some special reporting with respect to the results of the program, since AID was given tremendous programming flexibility. AID's desire to be responsive led to a set of self-imposed restrictions on the programs over the long term so severe that AID programming became very constrained, increasingly unimaginative - where the intention was for AID to become more imaginative.

*Q: There were some constraints on the functional allocation, were there not? While more liberal than the old traditional functional account, I think there were some percentages you had to have for population and related aspects.*

SHEAR: The only two funding categories earmarked were for population and for child survival. The other more traditional ones were completely removed.

We also had major issues in hearings with the Administration - by that time Interaction was no longer really part of the dialogue - concerning the uses of economic support funds (ESF), and melding them with development grant funding. There were no ESF funds within the Development Fund for Africa; it was all blended into one. What we did secure was a pledge of \$800 million for each of five years. This was a substantial increase in real resources for Africa and permitted - though unforeseen at the time - greater flexibility a few years later when moving massive amounts of money in support of southern African programs. This provided AID with considerable resources in support of the removal of apartheid and the movement toward true independence. However, the passage of the bill by the end of 1986 offered a significant opportunity to advance our work in all of Africa.

About a year later I became increasingly disillusioned with ORT because its resources, while very substantial, were being channeled more and more toward Israel for technical and vocational training there. ORT became an increasingly important actor in the educational sphere in Israel, supplying more than 50 percent of all the technical education in that highly technocentric country. It meant, however, that the kinds of funds that I had had available for pursuing some more imaginative programming were no longer available. It was then that a small company called International Management & Development Group offered me a position as senior vice-president to put meaning behind

the first word of their title: International. At that point in time the firm was doing no international work whatsoever.

*Q: What was the role of this organization domestically?*

SHEAR: Domestically IM&D had essentially two roles, the most important of which then - and probably now as well - was a nonprofit foundation called Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG). JAG is a nonprofit established by Ken Smith about a year after he started up the company. It began in Delaware because Ken had been the director of education for Governor Pete DuPont. Jobs for America's Graduates' mission is to concentrate on at-risk and disadvantaged young people in inner cities, helping them through secondary school, establishing educational and workplace standards, helping students find reasonable jobs and mentoring them in those jobs for up to a year and a half after graduation. That program has grown each year, and now there are over 50,000 young people around the country who benefit every day from professional guidance as they establish themselves in the workforce. JAG operates in over 1,000 high schools in 28 states. On its national board of directors are more than half a dozen governors, several U.S. senators and representatives, CEOs from a number of major companies and representatives of organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Council of La Raza. IM&D raises annually for that organization close to \$50 million from both public and private sources, and it's just extraordinarily successful.

The other aspect of IM&D's growth on the domestic front since I joined them is to assist U.S. companies in understanding the changing nature of their workforces and how they can work with government, both state and federal, to change the structure and the technical capacity of the workforce. Increasingly, in part because of the political connections we have achieved through Jobs for America's Graduates, the federal budget has increased enormously for retraining workers and for assistance to workers being laid off. We entered into contacts with Fortune 500 companies, and helped General Electric, for instance, to reorganize its entire workforce. Over a period of seven years that workforce was reduced by 120,000 people - from about 500,000 to approximately 380,000 - and while doing so, IM&D got GE to develop and accept a socially very responsible process for downsizing. This included the necessity of closing down certain factories and in large measure helping them retrain their workforce to much higher levels of management skill and technicity. Working with Jack Welch, the entire concept of engaging people and giving them more responsibility was very effective, so that GE prospered enormously under such conditions. We prospered with GE. It was for seven or eight years a very attractive contract for us, resulting in a reputation for the ability to work with a number of American companies. By now we've now worked with over 40 major firms (almost all Fortune 100 companies) as they have gone through workplace restructuring. We're working with Bell Atlantic, Siemens, Citibank and others, helping them internationally as well.

On the international side, my job initially focused on how to get the private sector to work more effectively in the international arena in activities that would have a larger public impact and public effect. While concentrating on improving worker performance, we helped companies to understand the importance of participating in some of the larger

social programs in foreign countries. We developed insights into how the private sector could work differently even in more traditional development environments. For example, GE hired us to work with their management team in Hungary on restructuring its largest nonmilitary employer, Tungsram, an electronics manufacturer of light bulbs. Tungsram was a socialist-type organization with a workforce of over 20,000 people. For over three and a half years we helped GE and the Tungsram management to reduce that workforce by 50 percent, working in seven plants in five cities. We helped GE work effectively with the local union, and then brought into the whole process funds from the Hungarian Ministry for Labor, which had access to backing for worker training from the EU and some of the other international development agencies. We helped retrain a large component of that workforce. For many employees who were redundant we found jobs in the agricultural sector, which interested them since they came from agrarian areas. We also helped spin off from Tungsram seven new companies. A credit line was established, lowering Tungsram's costs but also employing workers that were redundant. We set up companies that did everything from packaging for Tungsram to maintenance and provision of food services, and so engaged up to 4500 workers in new enterprises, teaching them both personnel and financial management.

*Q: Who did all this teaching?*

SHEAR: We engaged a splendid local organization called the Erasmus Foundation. Named after Erasmus of Rotterdam and supported by Dutch philanthropists, these people were interested in labor policy but largely unfamiliar with concepts of labor management. So we got them together with people brought from GE's premier management training facility at Crotonville, to learn how to talk to and understand one another. We also engaged union members (some participating as instructors) and we tapped the extraordinary intellectual capital available in Hungary to make it more practical. Bringing together those four elements in facilities where we retrained workers, we also expanded the knowledge of the Ministry for Labor in modern labor techniques. Soon we involved the International Labor Affairs Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, engaged American unions and subsequently developed a powerful set of instruments for reform and retraining.

*Q: But behind this there must be some concept about training and developing workforces that your organization was presenting to the others?*

SHEAR: Yes, and it reflected principles that we observed while interacting with some of America's more enlightened companies. In essence, it encouraged people to take responsibility for their own actions in the workplace, whether on the production line or managing people or services. The idea was to get people to associate their own progress and their own wages with productivity. This was an alien concept after 30 years of socialist management of the economy, even in a place like Hungary, which in many ways was considered more advanced than its neighbors.

*Q: It was more attitudinal than technical?*

SHEAR: It was both. We found that the people had received very good academic training, so on the technical side they were very open and skilled at absorbing new technologies. The attitudinal challenge was by far the more difficult, but there was also a great deal of technical transfer from GE into Hungary.

We took that concept of channeling and challenging workforces to places like China (working with Caterpillar), and then began to marry it more consciously with development agencies. We worked with the Asian Development Bank, for example, in helping them understand what China needed with respect to modern foundry technologies. Caterpillar required very special kinds of steel for its earthmoving equipment, not available in China, and was prepared to train and even invest in the creation of a partnership there to set up a modern foundry. If we could get an organization like the UN or the Asian Development Bank to contribute to it, it would give an international context to this plan by an American capitalist firm, and make it more palatable and less suspect to the Chinese. We considered the Asian Development Bank more likely than the UNDP because of its higher level of sophistication and appreciation of technicity. So, working with the National Bank of China and the Ministry for Labor and the Treasury, we drafted the request from the Chinese government to the Asian Development Bank, having paved the way with the Bank in Manila so we knew they would accept it. Caterpillar was, of course, engaged in the process that moved along a path lasting about six months. The amount of money was not large - less than a million dollars in grant funds from the Asian Development Bank, through one of their grant facilities - but it was routed first to China and then to the joint venture partner to assist in the modernization of the foundry. All the technical know-how and a lot of the training came from Caterpillar, and the foundry is a well functioning enterprise today.

Similarly, in Russia, we helped Caterpillar with the rationalization of a workforce in the largest truck factory in the world, which employed, I recall, 14,000 people under one roof. Most of the workers, unfortunately, were not competent to work in modern technologies, but we trained Caterpillar's Russian supervisors to test for and to understand characteristics that were needed for that workforce, and that, too, is a well-functioning factory now. We have repeated this process in a number of countries in Western Europe and elsewhere.

*Q: Did you ever work with any government organizations, departments?*

SHEAR: Yes; we had substantial success working with governments and development agencies in more conventional ways, also engaging the private sector at large and growing the local private sector. About three years after I joined IM&D, I remember reading in the newspapers about young people rioting in the streets of Senegal because of lack of jobs and lack of opportunity. Such upheavals had been unheard of earlier in Senegal, and so I wrote of my concern to President Diouf and sent him material on Jobs for America's Graduates. He sent a telegram back almost immediately asking me to come to Senegal to meet with him and his cabinet to look at that problem. I did so, and I also met with the head of the World Bank's local office, and with the president's blessing - indeed, encouragement - developed a proposal for the Bank using its project preparation fund, which were grant funds used prior to the actual creation of a loan. We would



design, in effect, a loan program for the employment of young people using the local private sector, and employing these young people for the rehabilitation of infrastructure throughout Senegal, where it was badly needed. It would be done through the creation of local companies, using some of the World Bank money for a credit program and some to hire local institutions to retrain some of those people, applying what I had learned with ORT elsewhere. Fortunately, the regional director for IBM, a very competent Senegalese, was taken by this idea and agreed to participate. He became project manager in the program we designed, and he made extraordinarily effective presentations not only to the World Bank, which was then processing an initial loan of \$10 million, but also to a donor conference we had convened with the help of local representatives in Dakar. Reports of that were so positive that we found ourselves hired by Senegal to put on a donor conference in the World Bank's conference headquarters at Avenue d'Iéna in Paris. That soon raised over \$60 million, and the fund over a four-year period grew to \$102 million and created over 60,000 mostly temporary jobs (about 12,000 of which later became permanent). I thought that we had developed a profitable line of work for our company, but the World Bank liked it so much that they took it as their own and ran with it, which is to their credit. That concept, called the AGETIP Program, has now been replicated in half a dozen other African countries and is being used in Latin America as well.

About two years later, because of the success of that program, we were asked by the UNDP to go to Tanzania, where I had not been for over 20 years, to see how the concept could be applied there. The World Bank had insisted in the program we designed for Senegal that all efforts be urban-based. But Tanzania was not Senegal. Tanzania gave us an opportunity, since we had much more of an open brief, to bring the rural areas and the city areas together. That effort proved to be an important lesson on the imperative for strong local project management. The program for Tanzania probably was better designed, but has not been nearly so well executed as in Senegal because we just did not have a good local management team.

*Q: In that area did you actually provide training to government units? Most of this relates to the private sector.*

SHEAR: What we were seeking to do in both Senegal and Tanzania was to create jobs and then create companies to sustain them. For example, in Tanzania, when I went to the local World Bank headquarters to describe what UNDP had hired us to do, the officials there were terribly skeptical, saying, "There are no Tanzanian construction companies." Well, I knew from 20 years earlier when I lived in Tanzania that indeed there were. They may have consisted of only a couple of trucks, but they were companies. We identified over 20 of them to begin with, and as a result of this effort over 100 companies were created within about five years.

*Q: It's a matter of training them and upgrading them and making them effective contractors.*

SHEAR: That's right, training them as contractors and giving them an initial line of credit. The reimbursement systems we had developed for Senegal and later used in

Tanzania were so effective that the need for credit was minimal, because people were paid so soon after completing their services. We had used a Senegalese computer company to develop project tracking systems for us, and they were most effective in helping us send people into the field to make assessments and authorize payments. It became a very efficient system.

About three years after that, we were asked by CONOCO to go to Congo-Brazzaville under very difficult circumstances to design an employment generation program for them and other oil companies that wanted to participate. The World Bank was curious but somewhat hesitant, and the French government extremely supportive. Unfortunately, a very bloody coup erupted, and the whole effort died aborning. But we have used some of these concepts even recently in Nigeria, looking at how we can bring about a marriage between the oil companies (development responsibility there is long overdue) and government. Because we can point to these past achievements, we have some credibility - and it is to our advantage that we continue to work with American companies and with young people. It's been fascinating to see that through a tiny company such as ours - grossing about \$6 million a year, although quite profitable - we can affect development in countries in ways which large development agencies can not, in large measure because of the flexibility we have.

*Q: Well, you bring a particular orientation and skill that leverages the work of the others and orients these companies into worker-training, worker-attitude and worker development that is less mechanical, more vibrant than before.*

SHEAR: And it's important that they understand that this kind of social responsibility is in the long-term interest of countries. It gives them a kind of political currency that often they don't appreciate sufficiently. It makes them valued.

*Q: Did you have any connection with AID in any of this work?*

SHEAR: No. The AID missions in the countries where we worked had been signally uninterested in what we were doing, regrettably.

*Q: That's curious. I wonder why.*

SHEAR: I think in part because it was so private-sector oriented, even though AID theoretically was engaged in the private sector.

*Q: They're supposed to be doing a lot of private sector work.*

SHEAR: But if AID doesn't have its stamp on it... It's a little bit like the World Bank. If we had initiated this with AID, AID would have probably felt a greater desire to participate, but because we developed it through other international agencies, AID's motivation to cooperate was not very great. It's unfortunate, because in places like Senegal, AID could sit in on the meetings and had the ability to contribute, but did not.

The U.S. government was one of the few major governments not involved. And this was the case in Tanzania as well.

*Q: How did you find working with UN agencies such as UNDP?*

SHEAR: We try not to be a contractor to development agencies because, quite candidly, we make less profit with public agencies. Also, dealing with those bureaucracies tends to be very time-consuming and costly. It's a lot more effective to work with the private sector to accomplish more rapid decision-making. However, I must say that especially the UNDP, outside of New York, has been reasonably responsive to work with. And, important for a private company like ours, they make timely payment - much more prompt than AID, according to some of my friends in consulting firms.

Because of my past associations, our company had a rare opportunity to evaluate FAO at the request of its Director General, Jacques Diouf. So we've had a continuing relationship with some development agencies, which has aided our business because we have kept up on how they work. Even if we don't want to enter into a contract, we want to cooperate with them, and we urge our clients to do the same. Every once in awhile we make direct contract to keep abreast of their current activities and procedures.

*Q: But your funding essentially comes from private companies and international corporations.*

SHEAR: Ninety-five percent of our funding comes from the private sector, by design.

*Q: Well, let's touch some on your current work.*

SHEAR: I retired as president of IM&D two years ago, and am now working about half time. I remain vice chairman of the board and one of the owners, although we're in the process of selling the company. I will continue working within the same context for the new company.

*Q: What's the new company's name?*

SHEAR: The new company is called Frontline, and it was established in 1998 to buy training and human resource development companies, ones that had some synergy. They have now purchased six companies and still are looking to purchase others. IM&D is the most profitable of the six, though by no means the largest, and probably is the most effective in marketing. It is the only company so far acquired by Frontline that has international experience; all the others are domestic. We are being looked to by the new management to take a leadership role in introducing these other companies to the international labor market and international development work - to help them understand how to market in that area and to train some of their staff. It gives us an increased capacity. Our work in Nigeria, for example, will be enriched because of some of the skill areas of our new colleagues.

Some of the more interesting work I'm doing now, though, is outside the private sector. I'm on the board of the Jane Goodall Institute, and Jane and I have become close friends over the last several years. I am designing a challenging project for our organization in the Congo basin to control the hunting of primates for commercial meat purposes. Approximately a hundred lowland gorillas and two to three hundred chimpanzees are being killed each month. Their meat is being sold on the local market and in the markets of the West African cities such as Douala and Yaoundé, and even turns up in Paris and Brussels in some of the more arcane restaurants. I've already traveled to the Congo basin and looked at this first hand and see how we might work through this. It will be a tough, long-term effort, working with the timber companies, which are fortunately under great pressure from the European Union Parliament to restrict the way in which they're cutting in the central forests of the Congo.

What interests me so much in this opportunity is not only working to protect these and other rare species (e.g., okapi), but also using Jane Goodall, to her pleasure, as a well-known image to publicize what is now beginning in the Congo basin and has already done enormous harm in the Amazon basin: deforestation. The Congo basin is literally the engine of weather for all of Africa to the north. If that forest is substantially diminished, droughts will become more and more frequent, and the whole weather pattern all the way to the southern part of the United States will be modified substantially. As a start, we have interest (but no financial support) from the President's science adviser. We have been granted opportunities to speak at a number of world *fora* on this, and Jane is a very effective speaker. Recently the UN Foundation, the Nature Conservancy and the Global Environmental Fund have shown an interest in working with us.

*Q: I'm sure.*

SHEAR: The opportunity to use the skills and knowledge I've acquired over the course of my work with AID and in the private sector and apply them to something like this is exciting, but also daunting. I've also applied some of my experience for eight of the past eleven years in teaching a series of seminars at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University. These are graduate seminars, ranging from project design and implementation to private-public sector partnerships and how to bring them together around specific activities. As recently as this past year I involved my students in working on such issues as the bush meat trade in the Congo basin. Through teaching, I think I have also come to better appreciate what's happening in the world today, the whole business of the globalization of the world economy.

Related to the latter, over the last three and a half years I have had the opportunity to influence the Educational Testing Service at Princeton into a new perception of its role. I have worked with them in developing an international marketing strategy, which is now in full swing. It has really turned around an organization of over 2,000 Ph.D.s who formerly were looking solely at domestic testing issues and now seek to use their talents and methodologies globally, not only in testing but also in providing equal access to education for people globally. In countries like Russia, where the testing process and the whole business of admission to universities is profoundly corrupt, there is an opportunity

to work with international agencies for a higher degree of social equity in accessing higher education. So this has been exciting, and I continue to work with them.

*Q: Good.*

### **Concluding Observations**

SHEAR: In considering undertaking this narrative, I thought of Herbert Mueller, one of America's better historians and author of *The Uses of the Past*, and I pondered how over the last 15 years I have increasingly been able to draw upon my experiences while still continuing to learn. One of the more exciting aspects about work in the international arena is the opportunity to always be learning. The world is ever-changing, and I am impressed at the realization that by being able to apply resources and skills we have acquired we may have directly affected some of that change. And so there's a lecture that I give to a broad audience at Princeton each year, a lecture on principles of management and administration overseas. In essence it is how to work effectively with people - make them appreciate the importance of what they're doing, develop self-respect in themselves and those who work for them, and hold people accountable to clearly defined standards of what is expected. I talk about the importance of both guarding one's time and sharing time in cultures where societal contact is so profoundly important. I stress that you cannot solely manage by objective; you need to do that to a certain degree, but you also need to manage through other people and acceptance of their social values. It's very hard for Americans sometimes; we guard our time jealously.

Being able to bring some of this experience to my students and to do it in a fairly coherent manner is to me extremely important and fulfilling.

With respect to the many years my family lived in Africa, I must consider the importance of what I've been engaged in relative to my wife Barbara and my children. My daughters Jessica and Elizabeth are now mature women in their mid-30s, and we frequently talk about how enriched their lives have been by this whole experience. Occasionally we also touch on their difficulties in returning to the United States and being among contemporaries who didn't understand and didn't want to understand what they'd been about. And there was always the wrench of saying goodbye to friends because of going overseas (which affected all of us). I recall the strain of this on my wife, the challenges in "settling in" the first six months and, once accustomed to a new environment, the difficulty leaving. It was often very hard. But none of this diminishes the richness of our experience. It has been a wonderful privilege to work with AID, to have been able to develop sets of skills in working with extraordinary people, learning from them.

*Q: Is there something you want to add on universal lessons learned?*

SHEAR: Yes. I would probably divide it into two areas: one programmatic, and the other human and personal. The programmatic, obviously, is also deeply human, because individuals are the beneficiaries for the most part. First, a particularly important lesson I've learned from is how to listen - just sit back and concentrate on what people are saying. Second, it's important to have a long view. One advantage of my early training as

a historian was to learn to see things differently - to view the root causes of issues and problems, to examine the strengths of the society in question and long-term implications of our actions. I see also, in a lateral way, some of the influences that are impinging on that society or the objectives you may want to achieve within a program or institutional growth. So that while economic and social change seems to be very complex, the whole historical process helps simplify understanding by placing change in a different kind of perspective. It gives one a greater understanding and even, perhaps, patience. However, this perspective can also be a liability, because frequently your colleagues don't want to think that way. You've got to translate what is in your own mind into a language and an approach that is acceptable within a contemporary society that can't - or won't - see things in very long terms. And people must be considered in terms of their tenure, whether as an AID director or the president of a country. Usually they view their lives in very finite segments, and what they do and are judged by takes place in very limited time periods - making it more difficult for them to do things over the long term, even if they so desired. And so one has to find aspects of that process that offer more immediate benefits to these people and which are also linked to overall ideas and objectives. That's a tough challenge.

Another is the whole concept of cooperation. While in American society we tend to honor competition and people who achieve in a competitive environment, in large measure societies work best in a more cooperative mode. To build cooperation, whether at the village level or at a gathering of international donors, is the essence to creating something sustainable, because competition, while it may create a stronger society in some ways, also creates tension and emphasizes many negative aspects of human behavior. Cooperation does not, and so we can build on cooperation - particularly if as outsiders, we want to cooperate with you. It becomes very powerful as a planning tool; even as an instrument for change. In the process of planning country programs or projects, engaging local people is critical to their acceptance and program execution. We found in Senegal that bringing the government into the process of self-examination with us when evaluating the program allowed us to be critical and also turn this into a very positive experience.

*Q: How do you do that, for example, when you're constantly being pressed to deliver immediately? Congress says you only have three, five or seven years to get a program in and out, and Washington is requiring that we get this money obligated. In all these kind of pressures - even in the private sector - you've got to deliver. How do you balance this question of gaining cooperation and yet deal with the pressures to move fast?*

SHEAR: It's really in the careful mix of the things you do. You must select some activities that are demonstrably effective in the short term, but they don't necessarily have to be the bulk of what you do. By demonstrating something that has a noticeable impact, one had bought time to design and develop programs where the ownership is joint, mutual and long-term. I found in Senegal, even by my second year there, that not only did our level of financial commitments increase because we could present more coherent programs, but also the level of disbursements increased dramatically because we had much greater cooperation and we had ownership by the beneficiaries. And you can distort

that, because one has to be careful not to use a single measure of what is deemed success. To spend money is not the single measure of success, but in so doing you are demonstrating cooperation and commitment to a program. That, in turn, will give you greater credibility to take on long-term goals. We frequently were asked by AID Washington to host programs in Senegal related to policy issues, because there was a trust in our ability to foster fruitful exchange between AID or other organizations and the government and that society's more serious thinkers. And that's based not on an intellectual level of interchange, but on some practical results.

*Q: Did you find dealing with local cultures an impediment to getting ideas understood or getting things carried out? After all, the sense of values and priorities can be totally different.*

SHEAR: Sometimes it was an impediment. Most often it was a challenge to understanding, because what one looked for as a development agency was to ask what people wanted and then listen carefully to their response. When we were evaluating the AID program in Senegal, we reviewed major projects in each of the four sectors in which AID was operating. We used over 10,000 household questionnaires in each of these project areas and trained local people to be the enumerators. We had to learn how to listen to thousands of people, for you can gather a wealth of information and not understand how to use it. So we engaged many local consultants and citizens who wanted to help us understand what we were reading and hearing. In so doing, we were harnessing the power of local people to do what they want to do, and that was a critical factor in success. There are times when what people want to do clearly may be inimical to what you think is best for them, but to proceed only because you think yours is the correct solution is to invite defeat, no matter how much money you throw at it. One example that was so painfully slow in Senegal was the whole area of family planning in a conservative Muslim society. As I mentioned earlier, one small way was to sponsor a seminar in which holy men of that country would relate the issue in the context of their teaching. In the process of their discussion, these people realized that there was nothing in the Koran against family planning. Indeed, the Koran encourages looking after one's family and showing concern for their health.

But results of such efforts are so slow that often to be really effective in these societies, you must look beyond your own tenure. A major frailty in AID is that your successor may have a totally different set of values and may not care about yours - and I don't know any way of dealing with that problem.

*Q: Another driving force was always, of course, the U.S. political security agenda. Did you find a conflict between what you were trying to do in development and what the ambassador or the embassy or the State Department urged you to do in terms of their political objectives?*

SHEAR: Yes, sometimes there was conflict. Fortunately, I got along with my ambassadors very well, and further, they were very competent statesmen. One can have the opposite experience. There were two extremes when I was working in the Congo on

economic reform, with the desire in part by the American political system to use armed force and the push by the Department of Defense to bring in more and more hardware. I remember tremendous disputes AID had with the Department of Defense about whether the Congolese army needed 16 or 24 brigades. Well, no one could understand what the hell the brigades would do except kill more Congolese. Africa was not terribly important to U.S. interests during the Johnson Administration; we had great flexibility in our policy in Africa because the White House was totally consumed by Vietnam as a national issue. At the other extreme, I was able to triple the size of the program in Senegal because we could show, with the help of our ambassadors, the importance of that country to the political stability of West Africa. As a result of our excellent relationships, we were given access to military surveillance of the Atlantic narrows from Senegal, which we had never had before. Skill was required politically to deal with these issues without prostituting ourselves or diluting the larger humanitarian purposes we were there to achieve.

*Q: Let's shift a little bit and look at the broader picture. You've been involved in foreign assistance for many years. Has it made a difference in international development? Is the world better off because we've had a foreign assistance program since the 1950s? Some people, you know, ask about what happened to all that money. Things look pretty bad still, and therefore, how would you respond?*

SHEAR: The total resources applied to foreign aid are really very modest in relation to what national governments spend on education or agriculture or health. There's been a fairly constant level of about \$50 billion a year - give or take 5 to 10 percent - in development assistance over the last 20 years. The effect of that has been extraordinarily positive in many ways. Consider levels of literacy, particularly for women and what that means for everything from child rearing to engaging women in the political process, and look at the impact of agricultural programs in the Sahel. While we didn't in a conventional way seek to achieve food self-sufficiency, we did achieve food stability, and although other parts of Africa suffered terribly in subsequent droughts, the Sahel lost very few people and managed to move large amounts of locally grown commodities from country to country. This was accomplished in large measure through U.S. efforts and our working with other countries.

*Q: You built a logistics and market system?*

SHEAR: We built a market system; we built a management capacity to deal with emergencies and an agricultural production system which was sustainable despite many, many variations in climate - not drought-proof, but certainly drought-resistant. There were lots of failures, but not all were linked to foreign aid - they were affected by imponderables such as HIV/AIDS, terrible civil conflict such as that in the Balkans for 400 years, and religious strife. Look at the Sudan: How different is that conflict of religion, race and culture, really, from the Crusades? Foreign aid cannot solve the woes of the human race. Can it bring about progress and positive change? Of course it can, and it has.



*Q: Today the big push is on governance and democracies. Did you ever worry about that kind of thing in the early days?*

SHEAR: I think that in those days we didn't have a world context because we were so much involved in the ideological conflict of the Cold War. But what excitement in the last 20 years - despite ideological conflict, despite AIDS, despite continuing bloodshed - to witness the democratization of much of the world in terms of decentralization and the process of capacitating and enabling people. A profound revolution is unfolding, accompanied by and helped by the information revolution. The globalization of the world's economies is something that I've seen since I returned to the States in 1984. Then, very few American companies had a grasp of international economies. There were a couple, like Ford and Caterpillar, which had been working for decades overseas, but they were in the minority. Today there are very few firms that remain domestic, so we've seen a radical change in our own economic perceptions. We discussed the level of foreign aid going overseas. It's dropped to about \$40 billion annually now, but the level of foreign private investment has multiplied time and time again over the last 10 years. It may have leveled off a bit with what happened in Asia, but now it's picking up again.

*Q: But statistics indicate that those investments are going to a few of the more advanced developing countries, and the poorer nations are not benefitting from such funds. And that implies that they're getting more and more marginalized. How do you view that?*

SHEAR: That's a profoundly difficult situation, and I think in large measure the observation is valid. But at the same time we can see how, where there is anything remotely like the free exchange of information within a society, entrenched power can be unseated. As much as I was a friend of President Diouf's, he had been in power too long. We saw in this last election that despite the fact that he controlled all the instruments of power, he didn't get a majority. Earlier, a runoff election would not have taken place because of the absence of freedom of the press. Now the country enjoys freedom of information engendered by the Internet, and a society with a high enough education level to know how to use its political will with a certain amount of political pleasure, if you will. In a Rwanda or Burundi, not so.

In some countries that have benefitted from foreign investment, this investment is often in isolated areas and is not very broad-based (e.g., extractive sectors such as petroleum and mining). At the same time, eastern European societies with a repressed political system under Communist régimes, such as Poland, have undergone a remarkable economic transformation. And Bulgaria (which I would not have guessed six or seven years ago) is becoming increasingly liberalized and democratized as a result of the economic revolution.

*Q: Given your long experience with Africa in particular, what do you say to people who tend to paint a discouraging picture, a bright spot here and there but by and large shrouded in despair, about whether they're ever going to turn around and become more positive in their development? One crisis after another - natural or political - seems to*

*lay Africa low. How do you respond to people discouraged about working on Africa's development?*

SHEAR: The answer is complex, and to understand it one has to look at the continent's historical origins. It's a wonder that anything positive has happened in Africa in the last 50 years, if you look at the impediments to its progress. First of all, Africa as a continent is the most poorly endowed of any other except Australia. Africa is essentially a very large, geologically senile plateau. Where rivers in Europe, Latin America and Asia all yield to access the interior, every river in Africa has cataracts within a hundred miles of its entry point to the ocean. The one exception is the Nile, but the cataract is 200 miles inland. But all of the others are within a hundred miles of the coast, so access to the interior was in large measure denied except to the Arabs, who came across the desert. Africans were subject to slavery by traders from the Arab states, Europe and the United States. Africa, more than any other continent, suffers from dreadful endemic diseases, where even now virtually everyone, every African, has at least two parasitic diseases sapping their strength and their energy. Malaria and diarrheal diseases result in an extraordinarily high mortality rate in most populations.

So Africa was poorly endowed except in very limited areas, like along the Rift valley where, because of volcanic action, rich soils developed. For the most part, the soils of Africa are senile and they leach very easily. High rainfall doesn't necessarily mean high productivity. Africa as a continent was virtually separated from the rest of the world until four centuries ago, and then it was opened up first to slavery and then to colonial rule. With the independence movement beginning in 1960, leaders of most African countries had no a model of progressive enlightenment such as what the United States garnered from Europe and ancient Greece. Instead, in Africa independence meant that a new ruling elite told everyone else what to do, and the leaders were in power for their own self-aggrandizement. So Africa has been plagued not only by a series of great physical impediments, but by tremendous political impediments as well. Only in the last decade has Africa has really begun to break away from that political past, with new leadership coming forward. Within the last five years, Africa has moved increasingly toward states that respond to popular will. There are more and more democracies or near-democracies like Senegal, responding to the will of the people. Look at the 50 years of Communist rule in Eastern Europe; what have we had? With only 40 years of independence in Africa, and given the background and the impediments just described, it's hardly surprising that Africa isn't more advanced toward political democratization.

*Q: Well, let's turn to AID. How would you characterize AID as a development agency in the world of development organizations?*

SHEAR: Although since leaving AID I have worked reasonably often with the development agencies, my knowledge of them is not as deep as I would like in order to respond fully to the question. To me, AID used to be the intellectual repository for most of the creative thinking going on in the development process. It no longer is and hasn't been, probably, for the last 15 years or more. We used to be able to attract the best and the brightest - from both in and outside of the public service - in terms of intellectual,

organizational and professional interests and skills. That doesn't seem to be the case anymore. I was struck by this when we did the evaluation of FAO four years ago, going to AID and trying to get some sense of what they were doing in agriculture. The answer was virtually nothing. And there wasn't even anyone to talk to; only a few consultants who were there temporarily from institutions like Michigan State University. In contrast, the World Bank has an extraordinary concentration of great talent (frequently misused, too layered, etc.), AID as a development agency is a shadow of its former self.

*Q: You've talked about a fairly creative period. Apart from your own work on the Sahel, which was significant, are there other examples?*

SHEAR: AID's work in agriculture comes immediately to mind. Recognizing that what the Rockefeller Foundation was doing in India was very significant, AID then put substantial resources behind that effort and brought about revolutions in agriculture. And the Green Revolution in the Philippines may have been IRRI's work, an example of what other foundations were doing, but AID had the good sense to know what to do to take it forward. In its enormously important training programs, AID brought up to 20,000 people every year to the United States. The impact on these individuals' lives was tremendous (both in knowledge and attitude). Observing how our society worked was profoundly important, even though they were often unable to apply what they'd learned because of civil strife or limited opportunities in their countries. I go back to Nigeria now and I see people who are graduates of Nsukka (University of Nigeria), and from Kaduna (Ahmadu Bello University) and they recognize what AID did. We had tremendous impact there. We were an instrument, even though we financed only a portion of it, for bestowing 16,000 engineering degrees from 1975 to 1985 to Nigerians who came to the United States for training. A tremendous amount of the progress in Latin America in terms of agricultural productivity is directly related to very successful credit programs AID developed over a 20-year period. Because I'm an Africanist and I spent my career there, my perspective and my perceptions are limited. Still, one thing that struck me about working in AID was that there was no excuse for not being able to mobilize the talent needed to work on a problem. As Americans, as representatives of America, and with a reasonable amount of financial resources, we've called upon the best talent in the world and mobilized it around what we wanted to do. I don't see that enormously rich ability in AID now.

*Q: Were there other sectors or areas that stand out in your mind?*

SHEAR: Without question, I think the whole family planning movement, although it went in fits and starts in AID because of ideological differences. AID has been unquestionably the world leader in understanding family planning, maternal and child health care and nurturing those linkages. What now has become a common concept was very uncommon 25 years ago. In issues of certain aspects of epidemiology, infectious diseases, AID had a profound grasp, using its own institutions like CDC, as well as the Yale School of Public Health and Johns Hopkins, drawing upon groundbreaking progress in public health issues.

*Q: Related to your career in U.S. foreign assistance, how would you characterize the overall experience?*

SHEAR: I feel honored to have been a part of it. As a human being I was tremendously enriched by it. It has made my life to this day an amazing adventure. I have had the opportunity to see that change is possible, but also to realize that change is ephemeral and to accept that fact. It's really been an enormous privilege for me, and a wonderful journey which still continues.

*Q: Thank you very much. It's been a remarkable series of interviews and a great story.*

*End of interview*