

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
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GLENN SLOCUM

*Interviewed by: W. Haven North
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INTERVIEW

Q: Today is November 18, 1998 and the interview is with Glenn Slocum. Glenn, would you lead off with a thumbnail sketch of your AID [Agency for International Development] career, and then we will get into something more specific.

SLOCUM: Thank you, Haven, for the opportunity to participate in the oral history program. I joined AID right out of graduate school at the University of Maryland in 1969 as an IDI, International Development Intern. I had an unusual internship in that the entire two years of internship were in Washington, rather than going directly to an overseas assignment as the core part of the internship. (An exception was a lengthy TDY to Pakistan and to the office of the U.S. Representative to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris for two months.) The balance of the two years was in Washington in PPC and the Africa Bureau. Then in 1971, I became an Assistant Program Officer in Cameroon, which at the time was a regional office for central Africa covering Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic and Gabon. In 1976, I moved up to Dakar, Senegal, where I served as Assistant Program Officer and then Program Officer in the USAID/Senegal office for the Senegal River Basin Development Program, known by its French initials as OMVS. I stayed there about three years and in 1979 came back to Washington, and served five years in the Sahara West Africa Division of the Project Development Office. I think you and I had a lot of interaction at that point. I worked for Jonathan McCabe, who was the division chief until his death in June 1984. In August 1984, I had the good fortune of an assignment in Paris, as the USAID person on the international staff of the Club du Sahel at the OECD. This was, incidentally, an Africa Bureau position. I stayed there four years and then went to Mauritania as USAID Representative in 1988, and served there for two years. The 1989 violence between Moors and Senegalese in the Senegal River valley spread into a generalized conflict resulting in the forced repatriation to their own countries of all nationals residing in the other. The AID Mission was then reduced in staff, size and scope and I was transferred to Burundi, where I went as Mission Director for three years, from 1990-1993. Then I came back to Washington to go to the National War College at Fort McNair for a year, 1993-94. Afterwards I served as Director of East Africa in the Africa Bureau until I retired in January 1997.

A couple of interesting commonalities to my experience. Except for some of the IDI assignments already described, all of my career has been in the Africa Bureau and all of my overseas assignments have been in French-speaking countries. This wasn't by design, it just turned out that way. I came to enjoy and respect Africans for their courage and resilience in the face of widespread poverty, illiteracy and government mismanagement.

Q: Good. Let's go back to the beginning. Tell us where and when you were born and where you grew up and your early education and anything along the line that might suggest how you got into this business.

Early years and education

SLOCUM: I was born December 23, 1940, a year before Pearl Harbor. Both my parents were government workers. My father was a microbiologist with the Food and Drug Administration. His career was very different from ours in the Foreign Service. He got a Masters out of Iowa State in 1930, and came to Washington to accept a job offer at FDA,

where he met my mother, who had come to Washington herself from Vermont three years earlier. She was already a secretary in the Microbiology Division which my father joined. For 35 years he was in the same division, of which he eventually became director, I think sometime in the mid-forties, and retired in 1965. His entire Government career was in the same division. Quite a different experience from what you and I have done. She and my father were married in 1938. For many years in my youth I wondered why their courtship lasted so long. I finally figured it out a few years ago. When the depression struck, the Federal Government said that married couples could not both hold jobs. (I believe almost certainly that the couple did not have the option of choice. It was the wife who was obliged to resign.) So, they had a long courtship to enable my mother to keep her job. Another interesting aspect of life in the 30s was the very different lifestyles of young professionals. Now young professionals, even before marriage, often own their homes, drive nice cars, and vacation in exotic spots. Not our depression-era young adults: arriving in Washington, most of them stayed in gender-separate boarding houses, many of them in Adams Morgan and Mount Pleasant. Boarding cost, including breakfast and dinner, was \$10 per week. A luxury weekend was a day at the Chesapeake Bay.

This lifestyle, and the stricter mores of the period, suggest a cute story about my parents' honeymoon. They took a cruise from Baltimore to Miami. Before boarding, they decided not to reveal they were honeymooners. The first morning out, my mother gave it away when she asked my father at breakfast how he took his coffee. The other tablemates started giggling. It has amazed me that after eight years of courtship my mother was ignorant of my father's coffee-drinking preferences, but I finally realized that he never took coffee after breakfast. Apparently breakfast was not part of their routine together during their years of dating!

I was born in Washington and spent the first 11 years of my life in a garden-type apartment in Silver Spring, Maryland called the Falkland Apartments. I think they were the first garden apartments in the United States. When a baby girl came several years after my brother and me, a two-bedroom apartment became too small. So, in December 1952, the family bought a house in Kensington, Maryland, where my mother still lives at the age of 91. I stayed there through college, except for my two years in a seminary after high school. It is also the home I usually stayed on home-leave visits early in my USAID career.

I was raised Catholic, attending local parochial grammar schools, then to Gonzaga High School downtown near the Capitol, where I became motivated by the evangelistic side of the Jesuits. After giving it much thought, I entered a Jesuit seminary after high school. I stayed two years, concluding that I would not be comfortable in its highly structured and rigid environment. At the end of two years there is a major decision of whether to go forward or not, and I decided not to continue.

I then went to Georgetown University and spent a year there, in 1961-62. I had put so much of my energy as a teenager into the priesthood as a goal, that after leaving the seminary I found myself drifting and without a plan. I really wasn't sure what I wanted to

do. At the end of my first year in Georgetown, with the help of a sympathetic academic adviser, we decided that I needed time to mature by going out into the world, getting a dose of reality and learning the value of a buck. So, I worked for two years, mainly at the NIH Medical Library, which taught me what low-grade jobs pay and how narrow life's choices are without more education and training. The "therapy" worked, and I returned to Georgetown, graduating with a bachelor's degree in international relations in 1967.

Q: Why international relations?

SLOCUM: Well, that gets to what there was about me that had this international orientation, this desire to serve abroad, to see beyond the familiar. I always knew I had to see more of the world. I don't have a complete answer but it was something that I really wanted to do. Both my brother and sister do not have that optic. They are perfectly happy at home and have no interest in foreign travel. My sister did visit me in Paris, but my brother has never traveled abroad. My mother and father were a little bit different. They did like to travel and in their later years when they were able to travel abroad they took some trips.

Q: Did you go with them?

SLOCUM: No, this was after I was an adult, so I never took an overseas trip with them. My father died just before I went to Paris in 1984, and my mother came over five times during my four years there. She enjoyed coming over, loves Paris immensely, and speaks French because she grew up in northern Vermont and was educated by Québécois nuns. She has a very strong Quebec accent when she speaks but she does understand it. Her spoken French is a little hesitant, so she still takes French lessons regularly at one of her clubs.

Joined USAID as an International Development Intern - 1969

You ask why international. There was something inside me that was looking beyond the borders and wanted to have some kind of international involvement. In fact, after I got my bachelor's degree in 1967, I went to the University of Maryland for graduate studies, 1967-69. There was a federal career day at the Department of Commerce auditorium in the winter of 1968. It was then that I discovered AID and the IDI program and obtained the application forms. I also applied for internships at CIA, but because of budget problems the State Department Foreign Service exam was not given in my last year of grad school, so that was not an option. In those days you took a government-wide management intern exam and whoever passed it got on a general register. I found myself getting letters from all kinds of unusual agencies I'd never heard of. There was PACAF, which was a civilian air force agency in the Pacific. They offered me a position as personnel officer working somewhere in that region. I hedged my bets and accepted provisionally. But I really wanted AID's IDI program. I was living at the University of Maryland on a graduate residency scholarship. In March 1969, I got a call around 10:30 at night in my dorm room from Shirley Marino, whom you surely must have known. I've lost track of her.

Q: She handled the IDI program.

SLOCUM: That's correct. She impressed me by calling so late. My becoming an IDI was not as simple as I'm describing it here. The process had some bumps, which I found out about later.

Q: Let's go back a bit. What did you major in for your graduate degree and did you write a thesis?

SLOCUM: My thesis is an interesting story. I never got my master's degree from Maryland, partly because I picked a very esoteric research topic for my thesis which presented difficulties. I was in the Department of Government and Politics, majoring in international politics. The topic I picked was the effect of Nasser's revolution on local government in Egypt. The research revealed a great deal of source works, but over time I discovered that most of them were in Arabic, and I was stumped. By the time the AID offer came through in the spring of 1969, it was too late to find a new thesis topic. I had to make a choice of either taking this IDI offer or spending another semester. AID said that a class was beginning at a certain time and suggested that I simply pursue a thesis topic at night.

Once I got overseas, and in an era when communications were far slower than what today's technology offers, it was difficult to dialogue with the University and pursue a new topic. Now, of course, it is a piece of cake with e-mail and attached documents, etc. Ironically, before going to Cameroon in 1971, I went back to Maryland and asked for whoever was responsible for Africa in the Department. Professor Werlin graciously received me in his home in College Park. He knew Cameroon well, and said, "You have a golden opportunity here. Let's keep in touch as you think about research topics to undertake." Well, I got to Cameroon, with a new life and career beckoning, and the challenge of embarking on a new thesis topic gradually faded from my consciousness. So I never got a Master's out of Maryland.

Ironically, many years later, Louise Hillson, a longtime civil service AID employee, became Louise Werlin when she married. One evening, sometime in the early eighties, AID colleague Mary Ann Riegelman, at the time the Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) desk officer in the African Bureau, had a reception for some people from the field. Louise and her husband, Herb Werlin, were also there, and I realized this was the same man who had encouraged me to pursue a Cameroon topic for my thesis.

Q: What was the selection process for the IDI program and what kind of orientation did you get?

SLOCUM: In those days AID's selection process was a bit easier than the State Department process, which has a formal exam and a series of interviews. My case was a bit unusual. When Shirley Marino called me that night in March 1969, she explain that the Agency had already chosen the next IDI class of about 20 people - in those days there

were two a year. My class, when I did join, was a class of 38. She explained that AID had just received authority to hire beyond those they had already accepted for the IDI program, meaning those already selected would come into training with an overseas assignment already established, and their IDI training tailored to that post. After language, area studies, etc. they would then out go to their field post for the balance of their internship.

In my case they got additional authority to hire a certain number to be Washington IDIs with a stipulation that after two years in Washington they would be in an overseas assignment. I later learned that President Johnson had an exercise called “BALPA,” which was a budget reduction exercise related to balance of payments, and a number of people had been RIFed. Ironically, in my very first job in AID, in the Donor Coordination Office at PPC, I was occupying the desk of a woman who had been RIFed under the BALPA. Years later, in 1990, I was at the AID Senior Management Course in Baltimore and one of the participants was Bob Meighan of the General Counsel’s office. Several of us were headed to dinner in a car, and he mentioned that his wife had been with AID earlier in her career and had been RIFed. I said, “What’s her name?” He said, “Susan.” I recalled that that was the name of the woman whose job I had taken. I said, “Was she in PPC in the Donor Coordination Office and was it in the spring of 1969?” He said, “Yes.” So, years later I actually met the husband of the woman whose job I had taken. Our fellow passengers were quite amazed.

Q: Did you have an orientation program while you were an IDI?

SLOCUM: The orientation program was fairly structured. The training office was a large organization of several divisions. Mike Guido, who died recently, headed up the “in-house” training shop at the time. And, then there was a professional development side that was headed by Dan Creedon. We had evaluation seminars, project management seminars, seminars on various pieces of documentation AID had - earlier versions of what was developed in more detail in the ‘70s and ‘80s. Now the training budget has been cut back so severely that the courses offered are much more streamlined, and some courses have been eliminated, such as the Senior Management Seminar.

What was a little bit different for that period, the late sixties — a socially and politically turbulent era for America, with widespread distrust of authority and a strong sense of independence in the generation just entering the workforce — AID offered a course which was essentially sensitivity training, focusing for our purposes on preparing us to live in different cultures and be effective there. This type of training has gone out of vogue. It was called the “intercultural dynamics workshop” and was geared towards helping us understand how we came across to others, how our own cultural baggage would affect our ability to function in the overseas environment. Parts of it were unusual and parts were quite amusing. What we really did was to get into a lot of “touchy- feely” kind of stuff. For example, “Here is what I think about what you just said. Here is how you come across to me.”

We were 38 in the 1969 IDI class. The workshop divided us into three groups with two

trainers per group. It was a very tough week. Our group had, I think, the toughest interpersonal experience because we had a couple of very tough numbers in our group. One was Steve Singer, who died at 41 of cancer about 10 years ago. He was very much of an individual, who set himself apart. We would be having one of our facilitated discussions... It wasn't just sitting down and sharing our feelings, it was really geared to living in a foreign culture, there was a structure to it, but part of it was to learn more about how we came across, learn a little more about oneself. I found it extremely useful. But, there was an emotional price to pay for that kind of experience. It has stuck with me all these years. We had two women in our IDI class, and one of our trainers was a woman...and that had an impact on the dynamics of our group because Steve was showing an interest in one of the women. He started spending time with her and it took a while for the group to realize this had created a little bit of jealousy in the group. It took a couple of sessions of the group's energies to deal with this and figure out why there was so much animosity and tension. When someone finally offered his view of what was happening, it broke the ice, but Steve wasn't too happy about it. Though a rugged individualist, Steve went on to have an excellent career, with awards and kudos. After his death, Administrator McPherson paid special tribute to him.

I don't know how many years AID's training branch ran these sensitivity training sessions. I found the experience very valuable, giving me tools for living in different cultures but also some clues about my own shortcomings in how I deal with people.

Q: Did you get a chance to be exposed to the work of the agency? What was your impression of the agency at that time?

SLOCUM: Of course, as you know, AID was a much bigger organization than today, although even then some of the tendencies the agency lives with today were present. I don't remember exactly but I think there were something like 8,000 Foreign Service officers. That number may have been combined foreign and civil services, I'm not sure, but it was a much bigger agency. There were huge missions. Places like Nigeria, Brazil, Pakistan, and India. The only one left today like that is Egypt. Given the Agency's size, I think there was more compartmentalization and less interaction among the regions. So, we didn't have a lot of training about what the Vietnam Bureau was doing, or programs specific to the other regions: South Asia, East Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa. State offered, as it does today, area studies, which were available to people going for the first time to a region. Because most IDIs went abroad fairly quickly, whatever group solidarity had been formed dissipated quickly. I think most of the training in the regional bureau of assignment came in an ad hoc way as I recall from discussions with fellow IDIs spread out among the various regional bureaus.

Initially I served ten months in PPC's donor coordination office and then I went to Pakistan for six months. I was then for several months on the Nigeria desk before going into French language training for my initial overseas assignment, to Cameroon. That was how my two-year IDI period was split up. My months on the Nigeria desk were my introduction to Africa. The Nigeria Mission had a great number of Foreign Service officers, and one example illustrates the breadth of the service: one's job specialty, his

personnel classification title, was poultry breeder. In fact, his name was Arthur Hannah, the brother of John Hannah, who at the time was the Administrator. I became aware of him because at one point he had written to his brother asking for an extension in Nigeria. His brother, the Administrator, had written back to Sam Adams, the Assistant Administrator for Africa, in a hand written note in the margins of the note from his brother, "Don't do any favors." That came down to the desk and we saw it. As the years went by, AID progressively eliminated technical job classifications, so that aside from health professionals and agriculturalists, there are very few technically oriented FSOs left.

Q: Anything special about your orientation re Nigeria, Pakistan, etc. as an IDI?

SLOCUM: Starting off in PPC and the donor coordination office was not typical for an IDI, but it was useful and enabled me to learn a lot about development on a higher policy level. The work gave me contacts with donor embassies around Washington. It did give me an opportunity to spend two months in Paris on my way back from Pakistan. At the time, the AID office in Paris at the OECD had, I think, six direct-hire people, including two secretaries. Stuart Van Dyke was the U.S. Representative to the Development Assistance Committee and he had two or three other officers with him plus two American secretaries. The opportunity to add this assignment to my training package arose because some key people would be away during the period I was returning home from Pakistan, and I was asked to fill in.

Despite my desire as a youth to travel abroad I never actually left North America until I went to Pakistan in 1970. So, the Donor Coordination Office in PPC was probably an unusual way and I guess in retrospect when I had more experience a few years later I thought that probably was not the best way to learn the basics, but I then went on to the Nigeria desk when I got back from Pakistan.

Q: What did you do in Pakistan?

SLOCUM: The Assistant Program Officer was going on extended home leave and some training, and would be away for several months. So, they asked me to come out during his absence.

Q: You had to learn fast then.

SLOCUM: Yes, but the Pakistan Mission had good people. Dave Mathiason came out as Assistant Director for Program, Mark Ward was the Program Officer. Those were the days that we had much more depth, and American FSOs staffed C and R, supervised the filing system, communications system and things we just don't have anymore. I think every division in the Mission had at least one American Foreign Service secretary.

One always remembers his or her first overseas experience. It was all new to me and just the smells and dynamics of a city like Islamabad have stayed fresh in my memory. During my period in Pakistan, the U.S. Mission moved from Rawalpindi to the new capital of Islamabad, about a half-hour away. So, I was actually there during that

transition from working out of satellite houses in Rawalpindi to the main new building in Islamabad.

I got used to having servants, which I inherited from Lawrence Ervin, the man for whom I was filling in. He had an absolutely outstanding Christian Bengali cook. Lawrence had served in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) before coming to what was then called West Pakistan, bringing Anthony, the Bengali, with him. The experience spoiled me because a servant of Anthony's caliber, I was to learn later, was not the norm. I could bring some people home from the American club on Sunday night after the film and he would make pizza from scratch. He could do things like this and I thought, what a life I am going to have. However, it was never as good as that again.

The Pakistanis were also unusual in respect that the balancing act of U.S. policy vis-a-vis India and Pakistan had tilted under the Dulles years towards Pakistan because India was showing much more neutralism and Dulles had pushed them hard, declaring them immoral for not lining up with the West. On the principle that the enemy of your enemy is your friend, the Pakistanis liked America. So, there was clearly a special relationship in that geopolitical context between the U.S. and Pakistan. The AID program reflected the breadth of the relationship. The Mission employed so many people that the compartmentalization prevented me, in the Program Office, from getting out to see a field project. However, I did get experience in how a fairly large mission was run and how it was structured. Joe Wheeler was the Director and as you probably recall, he was there for about seven years. He was still fairly young, a dynamic leader, very charismatic, and he knew how to inspire people. So there was a good sense of cohesion among the Mission staff, despite its size and the variety of programs.

One of the things I was given as a very junior person without much experience, in retrospect even now, turns out to be somewhat curious. We had a PASA, Participating Agency Services Agreement, with the Atomic Energy Commission, which was giving assistance to the burgeoning nuclear power industry in Pakistan. Even in 1970 the agency had budget and "downsizing" pressures, and this project was on the chopping block. The point I made earlier was that even in the beginning there was always the tendency downward, that the agency was too big and we had to cut budget and staff, a tendency which stays to this day, of course, and with greater impact in the last five years or so. Only many years later did it become apparent that this was not just a nuclear power installation for energy purposes, but that there were probably other things going on. And, now when you look at U.S. strategic interests in the world, such as global warming and other environmental concerns, nuclear nonproliferation is close to the top of the list. The importance now of trying to get India and Pakistan to sign the nuclear nonproliferation treaty causes me to think back to what seemed to be an apparently marginal activity of the AID Mission in Pakistan, but could turn out to have indirect connections to a priority global issue in the 1990s: nuclear nonproliferation and Pakistan's wider nuclear ambitions.

Q: They were developing a nuclear capability?

SLOCUM: It was a nuclear energy power plant located north of Islamabad. I seem to recall the project included plans to design other plants, or provide technical assistance to Pakistan's power authority to design other plants.

Q: Well, that is interesting. Then you finish your internship and go off to Cameroon. How did you get selected for Cameroon?

SLOCUM: Pakistan wanted me to come back for a regular assignment, but every bureau had staff and budget reduction issues, and they were never able to get a position freed up. One of the curious things about AID that I have noticed throughout my career is that you couldn't just sit back and let the personnel assignment system work for you and assume you would be taken care of. You really had to take an active part. One of the requirements of my IDI program was to be in an overseas position within two years of my appointment. So, there was a certain amount of motivation for me to make sure personnel was looking out for me. A number of things came up and I can't tell you why most of the positions were in the Africa Bureau. Africa was just beginning to expand. It had been a decade since the independence of most of the African countries, and assistance issues were becoming clearer, with aid programs becoming better defined.

First assignment in USAID/Cameroon - 1971

Q: What year was this?

SLOCUM: 1971. I remember that Uganda was a strong possibility, but then the position was eliminated in an organizational change. In the decade of the sixties in Africa there had been small AID affairs offices in the smaller countries and major programs in what was then (and now again) called Congo Kinshasa (Zaire), Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Morocco and Tunisia. I think by the end of the sixties there had been a recognition that AID would be more effective if it regionalized some of those small offices into groups. So, the West Africa posts were centralized in Dakar with a Regional Development Office (RDO) set up there. For the interior countries of the Sahel an RDO was set up in Niamey, and, for Central Africa one was set up in Cameroon. So, some jobs had been created with this regionalization of the AID offices. Chuck Grader was to be the first regional director for Central Africa. He interviewed me and offered me the job. This was in the summer of 1971. I was assigned to French language training for about three months and then went to Cameroon in October 1971.

I had never been to Africa, had never been overseas until I had gone to Pakistan. The position was a new one which the Bureau had been trying to fill for some time. Therefore, as soon as I made my French language level, I rushed out there without the benefit of area studies at the Foreign Service Institute. I remember arriving in Douala in the early hours of a Saturday morning. I had a three-hour wait for the flight up to Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon. I can remember sitting in the cafeteria having coffee as the sun came up and the airport took on its daily rhythm. I was beginning to notice similarities between the Africans I was seeing around me and African Americans with whom I had grown up in Washington. They tended to be well-built, stocky types and

dressed pretty much like the rest of us do in slacks and shirts, etc. Then I noticed four very elegant men, very tall and thin, with flowing garments and skull caps. They were clearly different from the majority of Cameroonians I was seeing for the first time. My perceptions of the four tall men in different garb reflect how little I knew about Africa. I was writing home to a friend as they came and sat down at a table next to me and I said, "You won't believe it, but four tribal chieftains just sat down next to me." Well, of course, later I realized that the north of Cameroon was Muslim and these were simply Muslims dressed in their traditional garb. It took me a while to learn about all these differences.

Cameroon was a fascinating assignment for many reasons. I have already described the north, largely Muslims with dry, Sahel-like terrain. The south was forest, giving way to savannah and grasslands in the middle. Two-thirds of Cameroon, the eastern part, had been a French colony, so most east Cameroonians spoke French. The other third, in the west, had been under British colonial administration from Nigeria, and English was the common language. (Cameroon has about 150 tribes, each with its own language, so the colonial languages served as common tongues.) It was in many ways a microcosm of many parts of Africa. I didn't appreciate this in the beginning and it took me a couple of years to really appreciate how diverse Cameroon was. AID had been in Cameroon since the early 60s, but now the regional programs were developing. The rationale of the new regional development offices was that programs and their activities had to be regional and not just bilateral in scope.

Q: What do you mean by that?

SLOCUM: A regional activity was supposed to mean that all the countries in the region were eligible to benefit from that project. In reality, the country where the project was headquartered turned out to be the largest beneficiary. For example, one of the projects was to equip and train personnel for an agricultural economics faculty at the Agricultural University, just outside Yaounde at Nkolbisson. The regional aspect came in the form of scholarships offered as part of the project to students from Chad, the Central African Republic and Gabon. My recollection is that only a few non-Cameroonians took advantage of the offer. But most of the project activities took place at the University of Cameroon. The technical assistance team never visited the other countries, as I recall.

But there were some residual activities from the old bilateral days in those other countries which were continuing, although phasing out. I was there for over four years, from late 1971 to early 1976, and when the great Sahel drought struck in 1973-74, the demands on the regional offices to manage drought relief programs put a huge strain on the staff, and the Agency rethought the regional concept. Bilateral offices were reestablished in Chad and other Sahelian countries to handle the drought. So, you look back over 30 years in Africa and there has been a changing approach to regional offices versus bilateral offices. We have phased out of so many programs now that we are back into what it looked like in the early '70s. Most of the development program activities during my four years were in Cameroon, or at least until the drought hit and we were spending more time in Chad. The second director of the Regional Development Office after Chuck left in 1973 was

John Koehring. With the turn of events in Chad, John found himself spending more and more time in Chad, and he really wanted to keep the regional concept going and manage Chad out of Yaounde with some staff stationed in Ndjamena. The severity of the drought impact throughout the Sahel attracted a lot of attention, Congress began appropriating significant funding for relief, and AID decided to “re-bilateralize” Chad, as well as Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Mali, Niger, and Mauritania. The RDO/Yaounde, as our office was known, became active in the Central African Republic (CAR) and began to develop some programs there. The drought-related decision to open bilateral offices in a number of Sahel countries had an impact on other programs as well, such as Benin, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, which eventually had their own bilateral and independent AID offices. Of course, all that has been drastically reversed today, and the number of full AID Missions must be about what it was in the 1960s.

Q: Let's focus on Cameroon for now. What was the situation there at that time, economic, political, etc.?

SLOCUM: I talked about the agricultural program. There was also a major multi-donor project to build and train staff for a medical school at the university, which became the second major project. We provided significant technical assistance and, I believe, we participated in costs of the infrastructure. France, Canada, and WHO were the other major donors. It was called the CUSS project, which is an acronym for “University Center for Health Sciences.” Steve Joseph, who later became quite well known in a number of senior positions both inside and outside AID, was the health officer at the time, and he really was the main influence in designing that project and getting it approved, with strong support from Chuck Grader on the policy side. My recollection is that Sam Adams, the Assistant Administrator, came out for a regional conference in the spring of 1972. They used that occasion to sign the program agreement to launch the CUSS. Today it is a major health training institution for central Africa.

There was another regional health project at the regional health organization for disease control, also known by its French acronym as OCEAC. It was the successor to the original measles and smallpox activity of the 1960s which was largely successful in eradicating smallpox from Africa and significantly reducing the incidence of measles. Perhaps the most visible project was the Trans-Cameroonien Railroad, known familiarly as the Transcam. AID doesn't do this type of capital development activity much anymore, except in Egypt. Like the university health center project, several donors participated in the funding. It was an Italian construction firm. They were actually building this railroad through the jungle towards the north from Yaounde to a town called Ngaoundere. It was just getting underway when I arrived there and I think it was inaugurated just after I left in 1976. So, I really got to see most of that activity from beginning to completion.

Q: Let's talk about the medical school. Did that get completed and was it a successful project?

SLOCUM: There was initially a lot of controversy about it in the donor community. The

impetus for building this medical school was the government of Cameroon. I know that shortly before I arrived, the donors had been concerned that this was not the way to invest in the health sector, with high start-up costs and years before the benefits would flow to the people at a time when rural clinics were undersupplied. I remember Chuck Grader telling us that each major potential donor had scheduled meetings with the Minister of Plan, one after the other, to suggest that the CUSS might not be the best way to support the health sector in Cameroon. It didn't take the Minister very long to realize he was being ganged up on, which drew his complaint. Because this was so important for the Cameroonians, donors' objections were addressed, and the CUSS became more than just a doctors' training school, but much more of a health training facility (thus the title of the institutions, "health sciences center.") Donors' concerns were met, and the facility did get built. It was just getting up and running by the time I left. What I can't tell you is whether, in retrospect, it was the most reasonable investment in the health sector's needs at the time. You must be aware of the famous story about the JFK hospital in Monrovia, which apparently doubled the Ministry of Health's budget just for recurrent costs. Of course, by this time, the early seventies, all of that kind of analysis was done in advance.

Q: Did it get into public health at all or was it strictly a medical school?

SLOCUM: As I mentioned before, the training extended to the range of primary health care-givers: doctors, nursing, midwives, and others. I should stress that this was over 20 years ago, and I have not kept up with its progress, but I do know that the CUSS has become the best medical institution in the region.

Q: Anything memorable about the Trans-Cameroon railway project?

SLOCUM: It may have been the last of the heavy infrastructure projects in Africa. The other interesting aspect was its management structure, which worked very smoothly. The engineering and management aspects, including financial management, were managed by the French advisers within the railway authority. The construction firm was COGEFAR, an Italian company. The railroad entirely opened up the north to both passenger and freight traffic. I don't know what the eventual economic impact was. At one time the plan was to extend a spur to Bangui, in the Central African Republic, but that plan never got farther than the very early planning stage, due to the severe economic mismanagement of the Bokassa era.

Q: What was our role?

SLOCUM: Purely financing. We had no technical assistance.

Q: What did we finance?

SLOCUM: My recollection is that it was the rolling stock and a general operational fund [also steel railroad track]. The engineer from REDSO [Regional Economic Development Services Office] Abidjan approved the equipment plan and periodically reviewed the project. Because of the superb management arrangements, including financial

management, AID did not have to do inspection trips very often, although that was a fascinating thing to do because you were literally cutting through a jungle. I remember a spot called “elephant’s head” because it was the site where a piece of equipment had either killed the animal or come upon its remains. Transcam did become part of the tour for important visitors. You took a small plane to a town near the start of the project. I did that once with Larry Raicht, who at the time handled aid coordination with the French out of the embassy in Paris, a State Department employee. I accompanied him on my first visit to the railroad.

Q: Did it have any impact? I realize it wasn’t finished while you were there.

SLOCUM: It opened up trade and movement of people and goods in an area that had been fairly isolated. The road system was very poor. Keep in mind this was 10 years after independence and the government was still sorting out its investment priorities. The roads everywhere were in quite bad shape, even the roads between the principal cities of Yaounde and Douala. Since I left, I understand there is now a fairly well functioning road system. The old railroad between Yaounde and Douala was also rebuilt in a subsequent phase. They had asked us to participate in that project as well, but there was just not the political will to get involved in the way we had been with this project.

Q: Could you point to certain things that would suggest why it was a successful project?

SLOCUM: I think the fact that it opened up a region of the country that had not been very accessible. This was rich pastureland, and it would not surprise me to learn that the railway opened up livestock trade considerably. Of course, it also eased the transport of agricultural products from the south towards the north. The main economic impact was the livestock.

Q: Anything else you want to say about Cameroon?

SLOCUM: There were other projects. One was called the Regional Textbook Production Center. This was a facility which made textbooks locally instead of having to import expensive textbooks from outside. It was called regional because it was supposed to be a facility that would produce textbooks for the educational systems of other countries in the region. To my knowledge it never became truly regional, but remained a purely Cameroonian institution serving Cameroon’s markets.

Q: What kind of textbooks are you talking about?

SLOCUM: Primary and secondary school textbooks of all kinds.

Q: Were they written from scratch or were there some translations?

SLOCUM: I think they were a mix of both indigenous Cameroonian textbooks produced by their educational system and some reproductions from France. Sometimes they would buy copyrights from other sources, but my recollection is that it was essentially in

French, although it may have become more bilingual later in time. We provided all the printing equipment and a printing expert whom we recruited on the operation and maintenance of the sophisticated equipment, and AID also contributed to the cost of building the new structure. We also participated in the design of the factory before ground was broken, sitting in on meetings discussing the design, size of production, etc. We were in on that from the ground up.

Q: Do you know what happened to it?

SLOCUM: Well, it was functioning quite well by the time I left, but I don't know whether it ever proved itself economically vis-a-vis the cost of imports. That it would be cheaper in the long run was certainly a factor in the design, but Cameroon later experienced some economic shocks. It was still a relatively poor country, but it had good resources. Oil was discovered next to Nigeria off the coast two or three years after I left, and my understanding is that Cameroon, like Nigeria, had squandered that benefit and made some investments that may not have been the best for the economy. So, my period there was during a very different economic context from that of its "oil boom" years.

Q: Did you have any projects in the English-speaking area?

SLOCUM: We had one cooperative project which was fairly successful. One of the things that made the country very diverse was that the legacy of the colonial system brought great differences. For example, on the French-speaking side, most of the primary and secondary schools were public, and it was just the opposite in the west, where most of the schools were private, with missionary origins. So, there was a very big difference in how to manage the education sector on each side. Cameroon, with its hybrid colonial history, highlighted the differences between the two colonial administrations. The British tended to manage with a light touch, and to a certain extent empower local authorities to continue their own indigenous systems, where the French imposed a centralized, hierarchical administration. Each had advantages and shortcomings. The problem for Cameroon is that it had to adapt to two very different models, and the contradictions exist even to this day.

There was much more tradition of cooperatives in West Cameroon which could be fostered and encouraged than there was in the east. So, we were able to have a project through the Cooperative League of the USA (CLUSA). We also had a road project connecting two towns in West Cameroon near the Nigerian border. We provided all the equipment and engineering supervision and oversight to the construction of this road. It was already well along when I went there in 1971 and was dedicated around 1974. It was an all-weather road, not paved. I am sure by now they have paved that.

Q: Why this road?

SLOCUM: I do not know how it was picked, but I suspect that early elements of the AID program in Cameroon were focused on the west because of language, before AID developed greater French-language capacity by the 1970s, but that is just a guess.

Q: What was its merit economically?

SLOCUM: To open up markets between the livestock regions in the northern part of West Cameroon and the agricultural lands of the southern areas of what was then called West Cameroon. "Our" road's feasibility had been made possible by the construction in the 60s of a road linking Buea to Douala, the economic capital of the unified Republic. There had not been a road linking Buea, which is about an hour's drive west of Douala until the late sixties and at the time one had to go a very circuitous route to get back and forth between the two cities. I think the idea was that this AID-financed road would help to facilitate the passage of agricultural and livestock products to Douala for export.

Q: We had a training school in that area at one point. Do you know anything about that?

SLOCUM: Yes, it was the English-speaking branch of the Pan African Institute for Development (PAID), located in Buea, and headed by a Senegalese. We had an audiovisual specialist stationed there. The Buea branch of PAID brought in people from a number of Anglophone countries of Africa. My memory of this activity is faint. I think that the courses were in the general area of project management. The audiovisual specialist was teaching those aspects of management, how to use techniques in developing projects. I recall that he was a movie specialist but his orientation was very technical. He was a professor at Virginia Tech and had come out for a two-year excursion. He got into trouble occasionally because the Senegalese director, Ben Madi Cisse, who later became a fairly prominent politician in Senegal, had his own ideas of how the institute should be run, and the American advisor was very protective of the audiovisual equipment and its use. They would sometimes clash over control of the equipment. Then Madi Cisse would get on the phone to Chuck Grader in Yaounde and say that the AID adviser was out of control. Our input was fairly modest, but I think it was useful. We were just beginning to recognize that bricks and mortar were not sufficient, that there had to be a real transfer of know-how. I think back in the seventies that was beginning to happen and this institute was an early effort at that.

One thing that happened, in the summer of 1972, was an impetus that didn't come from us, as I recall, but from either an unsolicited proposal or from an office in Washington. A group got together and proposed the first Francophone project management seminar for central Africans. This was another sign of growing French-speaking ability in American technical assistance. A team came out in the summer of 1970 to Yaounde to put together the seminar. One of them was Jim Lowenthal, who came with his wife and young son, Yuri. He was a graduate student and the junior member of a three-person team that spent the summer conducting these seminars. This was one activity that was truly regional. Participants were invited, and came, from Chad, Congo Brazzaville, CAR and Gabon. The coursework included a visit to a major rice irrigation project in the north, at Yagoua. The team produced a very detailed, analytical, hands-on kind of seminar on effective project management. As I said, I believe that was the first of its kind in the Francophone area. Even now, in 1998, one of my associates in the partnership that I am associated with, is finding that there is a crying need for those kinds of seminars for French-speaking Africans in both the public and private sectors. One of my partners, in

association with an African trainer, is proposing these kinds of seminars. So the need is still there and, if anything, expanded. But, Jim Lowenthal, God bless him, who left us last summer, was at the cutting edge of that back in 1972. The other two people running that were a Belgian and a Frenchman. I don't remember how they organized themselves, either privately or through a university.

Q: Probably Pittsburgh.

SLOCUM: I wonder if this was the, or a, precursor of the program that David Gould initiated at Pitt which became so successful, and which he ran so well until his death in the downing of Pan Am 103 in 1988? I think we were just at the beginning of recognizing that we had to make a greater effort not just in identifying people and sending them off for training, but actual in-country, hands-on kinds of practical things they needed to learn in order to more effectively manage their own economy and development.

Q: Were there projects in the northern area?

SLOCUM: Aside from Transcam, we didn't develop any bilateral projects until the mid-'70s, following on the "reilateralization" of AID programs in the wake of the Sahel drought. We had a regional livestock project for northern Cameroon and southern Chad, known by the two towns closest in each country to the project headquarters, Assale-Serbewel. Scotty Deffendahl, who did a lot of work in Africa as a livestock expert, was the resident advisor. He was a Mormon instilled with a strong self-reliant streak who educated his two young kids at one point because of the isolated site in which he and his family lived in northern Cameroon. The aim of the project was to rationalize the livestock market structure among the nearby countries, including northern Nigeria. I think he worked mainly in Cameroon and Chad. I don't believe they got up to Niger. The idea then was simply to help the local herders learn the aspects of marketing beyond the limited areas of their experience. I think there was also an animal health aspect to that as well. But, Scotty's major impact was on marketing aspects but social and environmental aspects were also addressed.

Q: Do you think there was some benefit from it?

SLOCUM: You know, I am not sure because of the way we approached activities in those days, how much of that really became sustainable, how much really took root. Scotty Deffendahl was as good a person as I can think of who really was motivated to work in a way that transferred know-how to the herders and to the local organizations supporting them. I believe he stayed with the project for several years. I should mention that this was a regional activity under the auspices of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). The LCBC, about which I have heard very little in the last 20 years, but I think it still exists, had as its members the bordering states of Lake Chad, Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. It was headquartered in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad. LCBC executive meetings were held in N'Djamena. John Koehring, the RDO head and my boss, would usually represent AID, and Scotty would address the livestock issues. The marketing mechanisms were improved, but I have no way of knowing how the livestock sector benefitted in the long run. Chad became very volatile politically in subsequent years. My

suspicion is probably that the trading patterns began moving more south, as much for reasons of political instability in Chad as well the drought. As conditions in the north consequently worsened, there would have been a shift from the north Cameroon area of the project towards the south as Cameroon improved its roads north and then down to the railhead, from which herders could export livestock products further south. That is my suspicion but I would have to research that to know for sure.

Q: Was this the time of the Mandara Mountain program?

SLOCUM: That was just at the very early stages of development at the end of my second tour, about 1975. There was a desire to do more in the north because of the links to the Sahel region where so much interest and resources were being attached to the drought problem. The idea was to help maximize the natural and productive resources in place. I remember a major design team came from Utah State to do a prospectus which resulted in a paper on some objectives for that area.

Q: You were there then in the period when there was the beginning of the transition to the New Directions philosophy. How was that viewed in Cameroon? Did it mean turning your program around?

SLOCUM: Not immediately, because many of the program elements were still in the implementation phases, such as Transcam, CUSS and the Agricultural Faculty at Nkolbisson. The New Directions impact was felt on new program development, manifested in the recognition that more had to be done in the north. For one thing, the north had typically received far less donor attention than the other parts of the country. No, I think that the New Directions were seen as complementary and supportive of our program.

Q: What was your understanding of why we were in Cameroon at all? My impression was that the U.S. had very little interest there.

SLOCUM: I can think of a number of reasons. As I said earlier, AID had established a small bilateral office in Yaounde shortly after independence in the early '60s. The first president under independence, who was still president when I was there, Amadou Ahidjo, was seen as a stabilizing force in the region. Cameroon's neighbor, powerful Nigeria, the largest country in Africa, was so large that it had one of AID's largest bilateral Missions in the world. Chad, divided between its northern and southern populations, was in constant turmoil. The Central African Republic was ruled by a clown, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, who had no sense of governance. Equatorial Guinea was (and is) ruled by repressive leaders who terrorize their population. France took a special interest in its former colonies, notably Gabon and Cote d'Ivoire. Cameroon was in a slightly lower rank of importance for France, and Cameroonians preferred this degree of independence for reasons of pride and the country's unique status as a federation of the East and West Cameroonian governments, which changed into a unified government while I was there. West Cameroon had been a British colony; East Cameroon French. Cameroon took pride in its joint "parentage" and used that to stay one step removed from French cultural control. Putting priority on this independence of spirit, Cameroon was looking for other

sources of support. They didn't want to be seen as simply a former colony of France. I think for all those reasons Cameroon was well regarded at that time. Finally, the Agency had been looking for the logical country in which to locate its regional office, and Cameroon was the most stable and forward looking of the five countries to be served by that regional office. Those of us who served there loved it. It was a very nice country in which to live and begin my years of African service.

Q: How did you find working with the Cameroonian people and officials?

SLOCUM: That was not always as positive an experience. Cameroonian officials, at least the dominant French speakers in Yaounde, could be somewhat arrogant and difficult to work with, but part of the challenge of our work is to adapt to different cultures and views. I subsequently served in enough places in Africa to begin attributing different values or impressions of people. Keeping in mind that all my assignments were in French-speaking countries, I would say the Senegalese were the most artistic and intellectual of the Africans I worked with. The Burkinabe were probably the nicest and the Nigerians the most aloof. Over time you categorize your impressions, rightly or wrongly. I would say Cameroonian officials had a tendency towards arrogance and pride. On the other hand, at the very highest levels there was a good relationship; the Cameroonians really did want American support and the ambassador always had easy access, even to the president.

Q: How was the Cameroonian bureaucracy to work with?

SLOCUM: When I described the arrogance and pride of some Cameroonians, I was referring mainly to the officials with whom we worked. Looking back, I sensed perhaps a little more unpleasantness and haughtiness than I would experience elsewhere later in my career, but this is just an impression.

Q: Did they have a professional competence by and large?

SLOCUM: I would say so. I think the problems of corruption came later with the discovery and exploitation of oil and what that did to the economy. Once in a while there would be a problem. The technical adviser we assigned to the textbook center project reported back that the recurrent cost accounts weren't very reliable, pointing to the Center Director. But, in general, that was not the issue, it was really the question of experience in managing their activities. Because of its stabilizing influence in the region and its own internal stability, Cameroon attracted more donor support. In my second tour, reliable reports of requests for kickbacks made to representatives of other donors by fairly high-level people in the Planning Ministry surfaced. Unfortunately, this trend became standard with the advent of substantial oil resources after my time there, and I think the negative impact of this trend, greater resources poorly managed, continues even now.

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

SLOCUM: As Assistant Program Officer I was learning how a Mission program office

functions. As the Mission Evaluation Officer I was responsible for conducting or supervising the execution of evaluations of our projects. I recall carrying out evaluations of the textbook and cooperative projects. We were pretty short-staffed initially, as the new Regional Office for Central Africa had only five direct-hires. (Cameroon became a full bilateral Mission later in the seventies.) As a small regional office, we had to be flexible. Sometimes I did personnel management work. Because we had a Joint Administrative Office run out of the Embassy, and our financial control functions were in Washington, sometimes Chuck would be concerned that something wasn't being attended to and would ask me to do specific management tasks. Being spread out this way was a good way for a junior officer to get exposed to the breadth of a Mission's operations.

I had two very good program officers who taught me a lot. Jack McLaughlin was the first, who had spent a lot of time in French-speaking Africa. The second was Art Fell, before he moved to Dakar. They, along with John Koehring, were great teachers. In fact, I consider Art and John two of my godfathers. I count certain people as my mentors, under whom I "grew up," and John Koehring and Art Fell stand out as contributing mightily to taking a very inexperienced and raw piece of material and, well, making me a bit more experienced.

Q: You later became a Mission Director. What did you find you learned from that first round of being in a mission?

SLOCUM: One thing was how to write clearly and concisely, and both John Koehring and Art patiently taught me some of the basics. Another lesson a young officer needed in his first assignment overseas and not always of the highest maturity, was to keep cool. They taught me that the world doesn't change overnight and you can't control everything. It took me a lot of years to learn that well. Through their example, they also taught me to care about what we were doing, both with people in the country to which we were assigned, and more immediately with our staffs. The four years I was in Cameroon were a period of expansion of both staff and program. By the time I left, in early 1976, USAID/Cameroon had eleven or twelve direct-hire staff. It was a very dynamic period. John Koehring, whom I'm sure you know, is a very meticulous manager. He dots every eye and crosses every tee. I learned a lot from him about precision and taking great care in the work: the things that were basic. John had excellent bureaucratic instincts and knew how to make the bureaucracy work for the Mission. Observing him in action was a great learning experience for me, which stayed with me for my entire career. Despite an apparent rigidity in his approach to things, he was probably one of the kindest people I ever knew in AID, a "softy" as one colleague once referred to him, something John would probably dispute.

Art Fell and John were excellent complements to each other. They were a superb team to work for. I have lost touch with John since he retired, unfortunately, but Art and I still keep in touch. Art is a very human person who genuinely cares about people. Where John would compose his messages by pen in his very small handwriting on legal-sized ruled paper, Art would sit at his typewriter, close his eyes for a few minutes, and then hammer away. Now, of course, with computers we can make all kinds of mistakes and move

things around. In those days we didn't have that luxury, and had to pretty much visualize what it was we wanted to say and how to structure the report. Computers have clearly improved our efficiency, but the old ways required more discipline, and both John and Art displayed that discipline.

This was my first long-term overseas assignment, and I retain very positive memories of my four years in Cameroon. I came to like the Cameroonians and the country very much, and in spite of what I said earlier about some of Cameroon's officialdom. AID, frankly, was giving me a lot when I think back about how little I brought to it initially and how much I had to learn. I remember especially the spirit of camaraderie, the way people took care of each other, not just within AID, but with Embassy staff as well. As AID programs in Africa grew and staffs expanded in the 1980s, and then began retrenching in the 90s, I fear that spirit of camaraderie among the agencies eroded somewhat. But another dynamic was at work, something that I didn't fully appreciate until some years later. Over time and the growing experience of living abroad, with the coming and going of people, I came to learn to be careful about not investing too much in these relationships, because they are transitory by their nature. So, you become a little less giving, somewhat less involved with the community. But in those early days, the relationships were very important. I remember with great affection some of the relationships and friendships I had there.

Q: A good point.

SLOCUM: There was one other place, which we can get to later, Mauritania, where because of its isolation and the hostile environment in terms of the heat and desert sandstorms, people tended to put more energy into taking care of each other.

Q: Any last thoughts about your Cameroon experience before we move on?

SLOCUM: As I said, Cameroon was my first long-term overseas assignment, so even now, nearly 25 years since I left, I recall the experience as uniquely special. In later years, Cameroon lost its luster. President Ahidjo was, I believe, the first African president to voluntarily cede power some years later. But, the evidence indicates, he tried unsuccessfully to retake power a year later and spent the last years of his life living in forced exile and disgrace. His successor has over time consolidated his hold on power in ways that have not been consistent with democratic principles. The slide into corruption and manipulation of political power by Paul Biya caused Washington to reassess U.S. policy towards Cameroon. About ten years ago, USAID closed down its programs there, one of the early "closeouts." For those of us who had the privilege of serving there, we have a sense of loss in terms of what we left behind, and the impact and sustainability of our programs. We hope that the agriculturalists, doctors and health-care professionals we trained are making a difference; that the railroad and livestock projects opened up markets; that the cooperatives in West Cameroon continue to flourish. One hopes all of those things happened.

We have not discussed what the RDO/Yaounde did in other countries. Let me briefly

describe Chad and the Central African Republic. In Chad, we set up an emergency relief program in response to the drought, and continued to manage that plus the ongoing portfolio until a bilateral Mission was set up in 1974. This was the beginning of what became the Sahel Development Program. Washington provided “packages” for us to apply. For example, guidance for setting up a complete filing system at the Embassy enabled us to set up an office in the Embassy in very short order. The drought introduced the move away from strictly regional offices and programs and ushered in a return to bilateral programs. In addition to the establishment of an independent AID office in Chad, RDO/Yaounde developed a bilateral health project in the Central African Republic, managed through an institutional contract.

If you don’t mind, I would like to give a little anecdote about Cameroon.

Q: Go right ahead.

SLOCUM: It is about a little boy named Mauriac. The apartment building in which I lived was right downtown, two blocks from the AID office. Yaounde was not a big town in those days. There was a huge avocado tree about four stories high and twice a year it would produce all these avocados which would fall to the ground and smash because of the height of their fall. One day Mauriac, who was 10 or 11 years old and whom I had gotten to know just in passing, appeared. I said, “Good morning, Mauriac. What can we do about all these smashed avocados?” He said, “Well, you get a friend to hold a blanket and I will climb up and throw them down to you.” So we did. We must have gotten a couple hundred of these avocados one time and gave them to everybody in the neighborhood. I was there for four years so by the time I left he was probably about 13. He was a very nice little boy, very sweet and honest and a good student. Within a year or two after I left, I had no further word of him.

Around 1995, as Director of East Africa here in Washington, I got a call from VOA. Mr. Atwood, the current AID Administrator, had made a trip to East Africa to launch the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHAI). The VOA wanted to do something about Atwood’s trip on its French-language Africa service. Somehow word got out that I could handle French, so I got a call from a French-speaking news person at VOA here. She did about a five-minute interview on the phone, asking me questions about the GHAI and what it meant for USAID in East Africa. I didn’t think anything more about the interview until, four months later, there arrived at my desk in Washington a letter sent to Glenn Slocum, USAID, Nairobi, Kenya. It had gotten through to AID in Kenya and, recognizing my name, people there sent it on to my office here. This was a letter from Mauriac, who had been listening to his radio one evening in Douala, Cameroon, where he now lived. Now, a 33-year-old Mauriac had recognized my name and believed I must be in Nairobi, so he wrote me his letter. I immediately responded and we kept in touch for a couple of years after that. It was very heartwarming after over the 20 years since I had left Cameroon to hear back from him.

USAID Regional Programs in Central Africa and the Onset of the Sahel Drought

Q: Let's move on to some of the countries around Cameroon which you were associated with. You talked about Chad. What were we doing in Chad at that time under a regional office?

SLOCUM: I earlier indicated that the regional aspect was a little bit of a fig leaf, that most of the project activities benefitted the country where the project was taking place and being managed. However, there were some small residual activities from the old bilateral days in Chad which were still on the books, even if implementation activities were terminating. I didn't get up to Chad much at all my first year or so. Chuck would go up on a regular basis essentially to report to the ambassador up there and to monitor the activities: the regional livestock project and various other projects that I described earlier that were taking place outside Chad. I do recall there had been a project to install some kind of a feed mill on a farm right outside the capital city and it was being managed by the Israeli embassy. It had not been managed very well at all: my recollection is fuzzy, but I think that the mill had never been put into operation. I was evaluating that project and remember going to meet the Israeli ambassador. You will recall that most Israeli embassies were closed abruptly in 1973 after the Yom Kippur War, but my visit occurred shortly before that. I remember how he tried to put a good face on the project. "The project is going well, but it could be better." I remember when I recounted this to Chuck he rolled his eyes and laughed, saying something along these lines: "That is the whole problem. It's not going well at all because the equipment is not working."

Q: Why did we have a project with the Israelis managing it?

SLOCUM: You know, I really don't recall. My involvement was at the tail end of the activity. What I do recall is that there had been an AID affairs officer in the embassy until around 1969 and then when they regionalized AID operations by closing them down and creating the RDOs, as AID staff in the small programs departed, some of these small activities were continuing. I assume something was done with the Israeli embassy to have this activity completed. My main involvement was when auditors would come through to examine the project records. These were things that I had no operational involvement with at all.

By the time regional activities began in the early '70s, about the time I arrived, the main focus of regional activities in Chad was the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

Q: What kind of an organization was that?

SLOCUM: One of the things I eventually concluded about African development organizations is that there is a bit of dichotomy between what the Africans see them as being and doing and what we outsiders, the donor communities, see as their purpose. Africans often see these institutions as less of a functional contribution and more as mechanisms to attract more funds for projects. For example, the LCBC, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, had a road project they wanted to fund that went from Chad across northern Cameroon and Nigeria into Niger. There was just no way that this thing looked very feasible, yet at every LCBC meeting, which was about twice a year, the member

country delegations would bring this up: when would AID complete its feasibility studies and start funding the road? The African representatives would get upset with us because the analyses were not justifying construction of the road. The Commission's idea was to create regional cooperation among the four states in ways that would benefit all four member countries (more or less) equally. This was easier said than done just because of their disparate nature. Cameroon, for example, had much more development potential, and unlike Niger and Chad, was not landlocked.

The other rationale was Lake Chad itself, on which all four countries had riparian interests. It was here that the recession of the lake offered a very dramatic manifestation of the drought. I can remember visiting at the outset of the drought, which by 1973 or early 1974 was causing us to spend more time in Chad managing the humanitarian effects of the drought, and taking flights around the country to see its effects elsewhere in Chad. I remember sitting on the terrace of a hotel on the northern edge of Lake Chad, and looking down at what had been, two years earlier, the edge of the lake. The lake was now just barely within sight on the horizon. It had receded that far. The lake was a major source of economic well being to the people living around it: fisheries, irrigated perimeters, recession agriculture, etc. Their livelihoods were being sharply constrained by the lake's recession.

Q: Why was it receding?

SLOCUM: The Great Sahel Drought was the proximate reason. But keep in mind that this drought was just the severest in a succession of a recurring pattern of low precipitation. The drought attracted much worldwide attention, and this required our office in Yaounde to devote more time and attention to Chad. John Koehring and his staff had to spend increasing time there, and he himself would travel there with greater frequency. (His wife remarked about this!) I remember spending about two months up there at one point setting up and managing a separate drought relief office out of the Embassy.

Q: What did that involve?

SLOCUM: Hariadene Johnson had a major role as a member of the Sahel Drought Task Force in Washington, which developed the "packages" enabling us in the field to set up a nice system to get drought relief projects off and running quickly. The initial reconnaissance team, with a number of venerable and respected sector specialists, visited all the countries and established a set of priorities for each country. Once these were agreed to—and not without a fair amount of conflict among team members fighting for their own sectors - the Task Force established the framework and guidance for us in the field to set up the operational aspects. Their guidance included even a filing system. It was quite efficient and smooth. So, all I had to do was take the manual that the Task Force had produced. It was all done for you, how to set up the files, how to do quick-disbursing agreements, etc. This was in pre-computer days. It was a brilliant effort. The Embassy was very impressed, and you know that Embassies aren't always favorable to AID's highly bureaucratic processes. When I think about it now, this super effort was

really an early example of re-engineering. It was at this point that I stayed for several weeks until AID began identifying staff to manage the programs on the ground.

Q: Was this in anticipation of setting up a mission there?

SLOCUM: I don't think that was seen as the objective then, but eventually the Bureau made a decision to staff bilateral offices in the countries hard hit by the drought because of the needs. New AID offices were set up in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and N'Djamena, Chad. The other countries most affected - Niger, Mali and Senegal - already had AID Missions or regional offices. The idea was to do quick-disbursing, high-impact activities that would relieve the effects of the drought on the populations. For example, AID was able to enhance an ongoing well drilling project that the Peace Corps already had in operation.

Q: Were you involved in this planning?

SLOCUM: It was really the sector specialist on the Task Force who visited the entire region and developed the programs. These included George Klein (health), Nils Konnerup (livestock) and Milo Cox (agriculture). These are names we haven't heard in years; they hearken back to the days when AID had enormous technical depth. This team went around to the various technical offices of the ministries in Chad as well as to the donors, then came up with a set of the priorities that best matched AID's capacity to respond. It included mobile health units, well drilling projects, vaccination units, food-aid delivery innovations, and a number of other short-term impact activities.

I remember an invitation by the Minister of Agriculture to his farm down the river. It was a Saturday afternoon and he served a fabulous lunch the day before the team left. Then we came back to the ambassador's office that evening to sort out the list of activities which were going to be presented to Washington. I remember that day very well: I ate something at the Minister's country place that really disagreed with me and became violently ill during that meeting at the Embassy. Nils, the good veterinarian, had some very strong stuff for me to take and it worked. By Sunday morning I was in one piece again.

Q: This was an emergency operation?

SLOCUM: Absolutely, to counter the effects of the drought in the places and among the populations the most severely affected.

Q: Providing food too?

SLOCUM: Yes, food aid was involved. I can't recall how the food aid was managed. Perhaps it went through WFP [World Food Program].

Q: What about some of the other countries you were concerned with?

SLOCUM: Of the various countries that were part of the Regional Development Office for Central Africa, after Cameroon, Chad absorbed the most attention. Next would be the Central African Republic, and I will talk about that in a second. We never did much in Gabon. I think I made two visits there because there was a chance of doing a housing guarantee program, but this never materialized. We had no program at all in Congo/Brazzaville because the government had a strong Marxist orientation, and there wasn't even an embassy there at the time.

Equatorial Guinea is a very interesting story. Until shortly before my arrival in October, 1971 there had been a health person assigned by AID to the island country. One of the regional activities I failed to mention earlier was OCEAC, which was a sub-regional health organization for central Africa under WHO auspices, with heavy expatriate staffing. Its main purpose was to assist member governments to reinforce their epidemiological surveillance. We provided assistance to that organization, partly through the Centers for Disease Control and through a separate contract with the University of Pittsburgh. I believe, but am not certain, that the American-funded technical assistance on the island of Fernando Po, Equatorial Guinea, was from CDC. Equatorial Guinea had been a colony of Spain until 1968, which was three years before my arrival in Cameroon. The U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon was concurrently accredited to Equatorial Guinea, so he or his staff would go over there periodically. Within three years of independence, the country's character had changed drastically. The country's head of state was paranoid. There were reports of many political prisoners. Screams of prisoners being tortured could be heard in the down town capital. The American health advisor had been pulled out because of an incident involving his young son, perhaps only five-years old. The boy had been playing in his yard with a toy gun and soldiers had picked him up and taken him off. I think the little boy came out okay, but it was the last straw for his parents, and their departure ended any AID involvement on the island. (My facts here could be faulty since this all happened before my arrival in Cameroon and I am recounting this out of secondhand accounts which are now very sketchy.) The point is, Equatorial Guinea was a very unstable environment.

In August, 1971, shortly before I arrived in Yaounde, the two State Department Americans resident on the island, a communications officer and the Chargé d'Affaires, were involved in one of the saddest tragedies to befall the Foreign Service. One of them stabbed the other to death. The Charge d'Affaires had gotten on the radio one evening to the embassy in Yaounde saying that Russian ships were in the harbor and the Russians were taking over the country. He also accused his communications officer of being a communist conspirator. By the time embassy people could get over there they found the Charge in hiding at another embassy and the body of his colleague in the embassy vault, stabbed to death. The Charge was brought back and found guilty of the murder and sentenced to prison back here. These were among the reasons why AID was not involved in Equatorial Guinea. By the time I got there it was not a place that was conducive to any kind of development operation. Ironically, in the past several years an excellent, readable book on the development experience was published by a World Bank consultant who had served one or two years in Equatorial Guinea. The book is Tropical Gangsters.

And finally, the CAR is the last of the countries under the RDO's responsibility.

I earlier mentioned OCEAC, the regional health organization. AID funded an adviser to OCEAC headquarters in Yaounde, and we also had a team in Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, from the University of Pittsburgh. Among other activities, the CAR health project was supposed to identify candidates for eventual admission in the medical school in Yaounde, as well as providing training in the development of basic primary health care delivery systems within Central African Republic. That activity didn't require much visitation from Yaounde, but that changed when the Sahel drought affected the northern regions of the country.

My involvement came in kind of an interesting way. With the Sahel drought, John Koehring was able to identify some funds for drought relief in northern CAR. So, my involvement was initiated, this was probably 1974, when John had the idea to work with the Peace Corps in Chad to replicate a similar well-drilling activity in CAR, with the new Peace Corps office there taking on a new program. This turned out to be fairly successful. We had fun putting this program together. When John sent me over it was Christmas time of 1974, and I was to work with the economic officer of the embassy, who, himself was an ex-Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya, Bob Gribbin, who is currently the ambassador to Rwanda; the Peace Corps director at the time; and the head of the Peace Corps/Chad well-drilling program. The four of us took a trip up to the north into some pretty remote areas with villages sometimes miles apart. Very often we had to camp out because there was no place to stay. In that 10-day trip we identified potential sites for a more technical person to follow who could develop the technical aspects of the program. That was done and a Peace Corps activity began in well drilling that was still going on when I left two years later.

Q: This was just well drilling?

SLOCUM: Just well drilling, taking advantage of the opportunity to tap some Sahel relief money at that time.

Q: Do you remember what happened to that project?

SLOCUM: I don't because it was managed by the Peace Corps and it was still going on by the time I left. I know a lot of wells were dug and presumably they were successful wells that produced water. I do recall one offspring of it that became grounds for some disappointment on the part of some there. As the program was getting underway - the technical aspects and sites had been defined by an engineer - the ambassador fell under pressure from a CAR government minister to have a well dug in his home village. The Peace Corps director was furious, but once the commitment had been made, his hands were tied. I really don't recall how this was resolved, but I wouldn't be surprised if the Minister got his well!

Q: These were dug well?

SLOCUM: Yes. Drilling equipment had to be brought in. An engineer came to supervise the work, but then the Peace Corps volunteers would follow up on that and replicate the activity elsewhere, just as it had been going on in Chad.

Q: Was there any health component for the use of the water or anything like that?

SLOCUM: No. It was to provide deeper wells beyond locally available technology to the villagers so they would have at least a more guaranteed source of water.

Q: What was your impression of this whole concept of having a regional program and office?

SLOCUM: My impression at the time, this is early in my career, was that activities were most effectively managed and accomplishments achieved when they were managed in the same country where they were taking place on the ground. I don't think I have changed my views on that.

Q: Remote management doesn't work very well?

SLOCUM: One of the examples I gave earlier was the regional textbook production center in Yaounde. To my knowledge there was never a textbook produced for any other country but Cameroon. It would be interesting to return and verify this. My recollection is that the extent to which the project was regionalized was that the project agreement required the Cameroon government to send letters to the governments of Chad, CAR and Gabon, letting them know that this facility existed and would be available to produce textbooks for neighboring countries on a fee basis. I believe one of the governments replied that they would like to establish their own plant in their own country. So, how many scholarships offered, for example, to Chad, CAR and Gabon for the agricultural economic faculty were actually taken advantage of? Some were. I recall seeing some names in cables, but by and large the major beneficiaries of these "regional" projects in Cameroon were Cameroonians.

Q: The regional cover for this was a bit of a sham.

SLOCUM: Perhaps not in the design and concept, but in the realization, I don't think the expectations were met. I recall that the shift to the regional approach was announced during a visit to Africa by Secretary Rogers in 1970 or 1971. The decision had been made to try to increase efficiency and impact by having larger offices in a few countries, rather than small AID Affairs Offices in embassies managing small projects with very limited impact. In Cameroon we developed a number of major programs, the railroad to the north, the medical school, and the economics section at the agricultural school, all designed to have regional impact. These were fairly big deals, far bigger than the sum of the small projects which had characterized the small AID affairs offices in the 60s. So, I think there is a defensible rationale for the concept of regional offices; but it is not clear whether the intended impact of such activities in the neighboring countries turned out to be as great as planned.

Q: Were there any projects that you would consider being particularly natural for a regional approach?

SLOCUM: Human resources development and training activities are areas that have worked well on a regional platform. I cited earlier the project management course in the summer of 1972. This turned out to be very successful, and to my knowledge it was a first of its kind to be offered in the region. It offered the opportunity for people from all over the region to exchange ideas and processes they were using. This was probably the first, and later became institutionalized in the courses taught by David Gould at the University of Pittsburgh, with which Jim Lowenthal became associated for a number of years.

I think the other thing that began happening in this process, whether it is regionalization or return to bilateral programs, is that we became more savvy about what works and what doesn't work. At the end of our careers we reach conclusions about where to put the emphasis. For example, on the transfer of technology and how to make that happen, many of us have learned that empowerment is key. In the consulting firm of which I am now a partner, Associates for Global Change, half of our associates are Africans. We want to use African expertise rather than just our own. I think that, over time, we have come to appreciate the importance of incorporating African expertise and thinking because they are indispensable to the analytical and design work we do.

Q: Okay. Let's move on from Cameroon. What was your next assignment?

**New Assignment in Senegal on the
Senegal River Basin Development Program - 1976**

SLOCUM: I left Cameroon in February 1976, took my home leave and arrived in Dakar for my next assignment in May. Senegal was a different experience in many ways: both professionally and personally. Looking back on it, I realize I was very fortunate to have the supervision and guidance to prepare me in the basic skills of being a USAID Foreign Service officer. Senegal and the Senegal River Basin Development Organization, known by its French acronym of OMVS, presented some new challenges. I began to see some of the less pleasant aspects of our work. In Senegal a new setup was being tested that had not been totally vetted bureaucratically. So I found myself in a situation that I would describe as bordering on the untenable. As background, Dakar had housed the Regional Office for West Africa, just as Yaounde had been the RDO for Central Africa. With the onset of the Sahel drought in the mid seventies, the USAID Mission became the bilateral Mission for Senegal, though the Mission Director had management oversight for Gambia and Guinea, which were staffed by a junior officer in each post. There were now separate AID offices in Senegal, Mali and Mauritania. Soon Guinea Bissau would also have its own USAID Mission.

I arrived in Senegal at the time that AID/Washington, and notably the Sahel Office Director, David Shear, believed that the OMVS long-range plans to develop the river basin resources for agriculture and other economic sectors merited direct support. Therefore, the Africa Bureau set up within USAID/Senegal a separate office for OMVS

programs. It was into this office that I was recruited to be the Program Officer under a senior Foreign Service Officer who had been promised independence of authority and programming decisions from the bilateral Mission Director. The Senegal River flows out of the highlands of Guinea, through Mali and then forms the border between Mauritania and Senegal, ending up in the Atlantic Ocean at St. Louis, Senegal. The idea was that this important water resource needed to be managed better and harnessed. There was a long-term development plan done by the UN and the FAO to build infrastructure on and along the river. It was a very ambitious program of dams, navigation, agricultural development such as irrigation schemes, and related development projects.

A valuable lesson in the ways of bureaucratic maneuvering was beginning. What had not been accounted for by the AID/Washington senior managers who supported an independent field office was very strong opposition from the field to having a special AID entity in Dakar, even within the bilateral mission. Two of those people were the Mission Director and the U.S. Ambassador to Senegal. When my first boss, Harry Petrequin, a fine man whom I enjoyed working with, lost the battle to keep the operation independent, he bailed out and got reassigned. Then, the office in which I sat became a little bit of a bureaucratic battleground between the forces in Washington which wanted an independent OMVS program and those that felt it should be subordinated to the bilateral program. Unlike the earlier days in RDO/Yaounde, where no USAID entities existed in central Africa outside Cameroon, West Africa now had bilateral Missions in all three OMVS countries. The Agency tends to vest most of the authority and value in its bilateral field Missions. It's our culture. It's how we operate most typically. Bilateral Missions have always been our primary focus and modality of delivering assistance packages. And so, despite the good ideas of senior managers in Washington, the bureaucratic instincts of their field managers outweighed the concept and policy directive of more senior people in Washington; a fascinating case study in policy making versus bureaucratic power. This was a painful, but necessary, lesson in the ways of the bureaucracy for me in this assignment, which was only my second overseas posting.

Nevertheless, we were able to develop a viable program. The OMVS Master Plan called for major infrastructure investments, including the building of two major dams estimated in their early design at over a billion dollars. AID, and many of the donors, felt the feasibility and economic soundness of the dams were questionable. The dams did get built, by the way, but not with U.S. money. However, the dams would be required to undertake the other investments, because they would regulate the flow of water to permit multiple cropping on irrigated perimeters. The doubt was: would such schemes bring in more revenue than the cost of building the dams?

The Senegal River represented the only resource underpinning agricultural development in the basin. So we had a regional agricultural research program, which supported complementary activities in the countries' national research institutions. Our assistance helped to coordinate and reinforce the national programs by transferring results from one institution to the other two.

The OMVS organization, and its member countries, dearly wanted us to participate in the infrastructure program, but the era of AID's participation in major capital projects was

past. But we did do some interesting things that were beneficial to them. I talked about the regional agricultural research program, which helped prepare the national research organizations for the impending era of major irrigation schemes. Mauritania and Senegal had irrigation projects already, of course, but the dams would, in principle, see these perimeters replicated on a larger scale.

Q: What kind of research are you talking about?

SLOCUM: For a number of expected irrigation projects, from massive perimeters irrigated by pumps to low-technology gravity schemes.

Q: For what kind of crop?

SLOCUM: The planners expected the river basin to be a kind of bread basket for the population of the three countries. So they were looking at rice and wheat, in addition to other legumes and vegetables. However, the economics of irrigated perimeters was a major issue, because imported rice costs quite a bit less than rice produced on these plots. You no doubt recall all the studies done on the economics of rice and, more broadly, cereals production, in the Sahel. Donors were faced, though, with the political reality that the dams were going to be built, and the hope was that a rapid expansion of land under irrigation would somehow validate the infrastructure investments.

The second major activity was the environmental assessment of the whole basin, for which we contracted with an engineering firm. However, the scope of work for the study prevented any conclusions which called into question the fundamental OMVS development plan, which meant the two dams. I haven't described what those dams were. There would be a retention dam in western Mali at a place called Manantali which would hold the water back and regularize the flow downstream so that a regular flow of water year round would permit irrigation perimeters in Mauritania and Senegal to grow up to three crops a year. The second dam would impede salt water from the ocean to go upstream. This barrier dam was planned, and later built, at a place called Diama, about 30 kilometers north of St. Louis, Senegal. The idea was that these two dams would create a regular supply of fresh water for agricultural and other purposes. Despite reservations, some of the donors, including the World Bank, the AFDB [African Development Bank], the European Commission and France, supplied the financing to do the detailed designs, and later to do the construction of the two dams. In fact, AID's contribution was at the margins. The environmental assessment and regional agricultural activities were meant to show a commitment to the OMVS without buying into the actual development plan. It was the best we could do to manifest endorsement of the plan, until the decision to help resettle the population around Manantali, which would be displaced.

There was some concern about the impact on fisheries, but this did not persuade any donors to hold up on contributing to the river basin plan. They recommended some adjustments to the salt water barrier dam which would permit fish to continue their migration patterns. I am not sure whether that was ever agreed to or not. The other thing we did, which I think was very helpful, was a complete mapping of the basin by the U.S.

Geological Survey, ground-truthing, which would help improve the engineering design of the planned developments, mainly the irrigated perimeters.

There was another project which I should mention, the Matam Irrigated Perimeter Project. Its location of responsibility within our office was always controversial, because it was an entirely bilateral project, but because it involved an irrigated perimeter, the AID/OMVS office had responsibility for its design. This was a sensitive point with the USAID/Senegal Mission Director, who always felt that bilateral projects, wherever they happened to be located in Senegal, were his responsibility. In the retrospective of time and greater maturity, I understand his point of view, but the dispute over turf within the USAID Mission was unfortunate.

The Matam perimeter project design turned into a million-dollar feasibility study, conducted under an AID contract with Bechtel Corporation. I should provide a little more context and background here on the overall OMVS program. An OMVS Master Plan had been drawn up in the 60s. It included not just the main infrastructure I've already described, but pre-feasibility designs on a number of possible sites for large-scale irrigation schemes. After all, this was the payoff for the member states. The Matam perimeter was one of these designs. Prepared with assistance of the FAO, this pre-feasibility study suggested the supply of water pumped from the river into a series of depressions in the ground nearby which would store the water so that water would be available during the dry season to allow cropping seasons the year round. The Bechtel feasibility study showed that the soils of those depressions were too permeable to retain the water for irrigation purposes. It would simply percolate down into the aquifer. So, Bechtel requested an amendment to the contract in order to hire a drilling rig to analyze what was known to be a huge underground aquifer. There was already a lot of hydrological data on the aquifer, and the new drilling was simply to see if it would be a suitable source of ground water which could be pumped to irrigate the perimeter. Based on this new work, Bechtel developed an alternate design, which became a two-inch thick study, proposing the use of pumped groundwater for the perimeter (instead of surface water from the River). What went wrong? The Senegalese Government had not been consulted appropriately, at least in their view. It had a firm policy, from which they would not budge, against using underground water supplies for agricultural purposes. The policy was meant to conserve the water supply for human use. It was worried about permanently depleting the aquifer, which would create greater problems later on.

Q: The aquifer was being used for community water supply?

SLOCUM: That's right. By the way, there are huge aquifers in that region, even under Mauritania. The water supply for Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania, comes from an aquifer about 60 kilometers east of the town. As Nouakchott expands, the worry is that this aquifer may dry up.

So, that study sat on the shelf and never got approved or funded. This was clearly a lesson-learning experience. One was that the bilateral director was probably correct in saying this should have been part of his agricultural program, in which his technical staff

and their contacts with the appropriate Senegalese services would have elicited the policy prohibiting use of groundwater for irrigation before the drilling had been authorized. As it was, Bechtel had obtained the appropriate permits to conduct the drilling, but the office issuing the permit was not the same one managing the water policy.

Q: There was no agricultural involvement there then?

SLOCUM: I'm sure that another donor did develop the perimeter near Matam according to a variation of the FAO plan. Matam was one of the few urban areas along the river, and it could supply the demand for the production as well as the labor needed for the site. USAID/Senegal was also developing a classic perimeter scheme at Bakel, which is further east towards Mali. This included an early use of solar energy for pumping.

Q: Wasn't there a concept of flood irrigation that was traditional in the area?

SLOCUM: Yes, recession agriculture, and that was one of the negatives of the development plan because by regularizing the flow you would lose the impact of the floods which create this traditional and important form of recession agriculture. However, in defense of the master plan, recession agriculture was unreliable. Each year, farmers had to guess when the floods would peak, which determined when they planted. Some years they guessed well; others they did not, and had reduced yields as a result.

However, AID was still struggling over what it could do to demonstrate direct support to the OMVS development plan. There was still interest back in Washington due to the impact of the drought, and the reality of this huge water resource, the Senegal river, and a master plan to maximize that resource. Almost by default, a decision was made to help finance the resettlement of people living around Manantali, where the retainment dam would be built. I had my reservations about this: why fund the resettlement if we had concerns about the economic feasibility of the OMVS master plan? But the dams were going to be a reality. This turned out to be a very interesting activity. It all happened after my departure and was run out of USAID/Mali. The USAID/OMVS office only lasted a year or two after I left, which was July 1979. Most of our OMVS activities - the environmental assessment and the mapping - were completed and residual activities were absorbed into the Senegal mission. As OMVS moved into the implementation phase, most of the activities were national, and were picked up by the USAID/Missions in the countries.

But the Manantali Resettlement activity presents an interesting study in decision-making. How did this occur, and what criteria were used? David Shear, the Sahel Office Director in Washington, was visiting Dakar and met with the OMVS Secretary General. The latter made a persuasive case for USAID involvement in the Manantali resettlement, and David agreed. It happened as quietly as that. After years of debate and schemes, the actual decision was almost anticlimactic.

I have not described the setup of the USAID/OMVS office. There was a director, a program officer and an assistant program officer, and an engineer, all direct hires. This

shows that the OMVS was being taken seriously, to assign so many staff to it. Compared to today, where USAID/Kenya has the same number of direct hires, and one sees how much the Agency has been depleted.

Just the environmental assessment itself required a lot of technical oversight, which was the reason for a full-time engineer assigned to the office. He and I shared an office for some time, and I learned a lot about that aspect of AID's work. Of course engineers are no longer an important part of the AID personnel system; we contract out for such services. The environmental work required a great deal of monitoring. The Manantali project was, as I recall, fairly expensive. I think it might have been as much as 10 million dollars, which USAID provided in the form of a grant. It involved not just the physical infrastructure costs of building a new village from scratch, but preliminary surveys and socioeconomic studies.

Q: Did it happen?

SLOCUM: Oh yes. I believe it took several years. A personal friend wound up as the projects administrator, and my recollection is that he served at least five years on that activity. He is still a PSC [personal service contractor] with USAID/Mali, but now working on one of the Strategic Objective teams.

Q: The program with OMVS was mostly planning and preliminary aspects of the program rather than long term development?

SLOCUM: Yes, both. Its mandate from the member states was to supervise the technical aspects of the Master Plan and get it implemented. The OMVS leadership was charged with what we would call in America fund raising, which was the basis for the long-term development.

Q: Was there at some point a major proposal for development in agriculture in Senegal during your time?

SLOCUM: Those all became bilateral. There already were a series of irrigated perimeters.

Q: But that was after your time there.

SLOCUM: No, they were already going on funded by many donors: France, Germany, the EC, the World Bank, UNDP, FAO, and so on.

Q: In terms of the USAID side, was there a major agricultural program?

SLOCUM: Yes, both along the river and in other regions, including the Casamance region of southern Senegal. There was a major activity up at Bakel, which I described briefly earlier, and there were some smaller programs in Mauritania. It's hard to talk about my OMVS period without reference to my later assignment in Mauritania. At that

time I reengaged with the river basin issues from a Mauritanian perspective. When I got to Nouakchott in 1988, AID was designing a major irrigation perimeter project which did not reach the approval stage. We eventually phased out our Mauritania program because of human rights problems, which is another story we will get to later.

It is important to keep in mind that the Senegal River was the only major resource in Mauritania, northern Senegal and western Mali. There was a great deal of activity from all the donors funding these irrigated perimeters. The OMVS would be dealt a major setback later, when Senegal and Mauritania fought over access rights. I will describe this in more detail later, since coincidentally I was in Mauritania ten years later. But imagine: the countries had committed and indebted themselves for at least one billion dollars for the loans provided for those dams. And two of the three member countries reached a complete impasse which took years to work out. This would seem to justify, in retrospect, the caution of donors in the late '70s, even though the source of their hesitation was economic, not political.

It would be interesting now to see how those irrigation schemes have worked out. When I was in Senegal, we worked with other donors in experimentation on different irrigation schemes. Aside from the recession agriculture, there was also some attempt at applying various schemes of drip irrigation. A team from Utah State visited several times to look at the possibility of doing another irrigated perimeter in the delta near St. Louis.

Q: Were you involved in any of the pumping operations?

SLOCUM: I'm trying to think. Solar pumps were tried in Bakel, as I said earlier, but I don't think they ever fulfilled expectations. I was not involved in that. But, keep in mind that the French settled St. Louis in the early 1800s. Some of the agricultural schemes in the delta region have ancient origins. Once when I traveled up into western Mali I saw vestiges of some major developments that went back decades. The river was navigable by maritime vessels until the early fifties.

It was said that a very solid, impressive stone building which is now a hotel in Kayes, a major town on the river in western Mali, had been the secret hiding place of the crown jewels of a number of European monarchs during World War II. Because the river was navigable, some of these precious belongings were shipped on maritime vessels which went from Europe all the way up to Kayes in Mali. This historic connection with the Senegal River may be a remote reason that European donors were the most active in the OMVS schemes. I was impressed by the fact that one could find evidence of significant infrastructure development along the river in decades past. The sugar cane plantation at Richard Toll, north of the delta about an hour's drive from St. Louis, is the site of agricultural development going back to the early 19th century.

Q: What was the major reason that the area failed to flourish over time, the drought?

SLOCUM: The drought shut down the access of maritime vessels to the interior, and that was economic death. Viewed in this light, one can appreciate the strong desire of the

countries to open up the river once again. Maritime navigation was one of the main elements of the OMVS master plan, but also its longest-range objective.

Q: Anything else on your time in Senegal?

SLOCUM: I haven't said much about life in Senegal and Dakar. Dakar is a large and fairly well-developed, sophisticated city. Former President (and French Academy member) Senghor put emphasis on culture and education. Located in Dakar are a national theater and a renowned national dance group. The issue of priorities can't be ignored, however. One-sixth of Senegal's population, perhaps more, live in Dakar. But there is a gap between the economic well being of the dakarois and the rest of the Senegalese. I haven't been back to Dakar in ten years, but as in many African countries, one finds that the higher costs of urban dwellers are financed on the backs of the farmers. Senegal has always had the reputation among donors as perpetually living beyond its means. As I say, there were some disappointments initially because of the bureaucratic battles and I was too young and naive to know that such battles are part and parcel of what we do. And, I had been so protected and coddled in Cameroon that it was a bit of an awakening to discover this reality. But we all have to grow up some day!

Q: Did you work with the Senegalese a lot?

SLOCUM: Oh, yes, and with Malians and Mauritians. The OMVS was staffed almost entirely with professional Africans from its three member states, and we worked constantly with them. In fact, since the USAID offices were, at the time, right across the Place de l'Indépendance from the OMVS offices, we were in each others' offices every day. We had a close working relationship.

As for the Senegalese, they are products of a fairly good educational system, at least it was good when I was there. I found the Senegalese with whom I came in contact well trained and motivated. At the time, President Senghor was still in power and he would later cede power to his successor. He put great emphasis on intellectual and cultural values, so that one found a somewhat higher level of competence among the Senegalese with whom we came in contact than in other African countries, perhaps. However, to complete this answer, I need to refer to later experience and impressions. I'm afraid that Senegal has acquired a less positive reputation in donors' eyes. From my work at the Club de Sahel and subsequent contacts my business partners have had, I'm sorry to report that Senegal appears to have entered a cynical phase. Corruption is rampant, official decision-making is undisciplined, and Senegalese have learned some bad habits. This could be a case for tough love on the part of donors. But I speak from afar and from secondhand impressions.

Q: What was your view of OMVS as a regional institution? Is it a viable one?

SLOCUM: It was very viable because there was so much at stake. And, as I have mentioned, the organization had a good professional staff. I do not know what the impact of the Senegal-Mauritania war ten years ago was for the OMVS in the long term. I have

not been back to West Africa in nearly 10 years, unfortunately.

Q: Were the countries cooperating with each other?

SLOCUM: They were then. Unfortunately, with the outbreak of the tension between Senegal and Mauritania in 1989, it really put OMVS on the back burner. So you had these huge investments in the dams and a highly contentious political situation between the two countries and I have no idea how they are paying off those loans for those dams. I would guess there would be some pretty serious debt issues because of the collapse of political comity.

Q: Were its operations financed mainly by the governments or by the donors?

SLOCUM: Well, certainly the construction was financed by the governments.

Q: I mean the staffing, etc.

SLOCUM: I am not aware that the OMVS operational budget received donor subsidies. I should have mentioned that the UN and FAO had a few technical advisers within OMVS, but only three or four.

Q: Anything else in that area? If not, we can move on.

SLOCUM: Because it was a regional activity I spent a great deal of my time outside of Senegal, both in Mali and Mauritania. To return a little bit to the subject of regional versus bilateral projects, which I would see again in my career, there was always a kind of tension or suspicion by the bilateral directors that regional activities were at best of marginal significance. This was for several reasons. Budget, because whatever went into regional programs meant less for their bilateral programs. Also a bit of turf entered into it. Finally, bilateral directors were skeptical that regional projects had the same payoff as national ones.

I remember there was one time when I planned a trip to the agricultural research headquarters station in Mauritania, which was located on the river, right across the river from Matam in the town of Kaedi. Instead of driving all the way up the coast to Nouakchott, Mauritania's capital, and then back southwest to Kaedi, I drove along the Senegal side of the river valley to Matam, and then took a ferry across to Kaedi. I did my consultations there and came back along the river on the Mauritania side to the town of Rosso and then crossed the river there and drove back to Dakar by car. A two-day trip, not very difficult. I had already notified USAID/Nouakchott of my plans, but they were unhappy I made the trip without asking their permission. We had an ongoing relationship with those stations, and our funding through the OMVS was supporting operations there. There was always good will because these were all friends of mine, but a cable was sent to Washington protesting the fact that I had come up there without informing them. So, I think this is a tension that we will see again and again.

Q: Okay, let's move on. What was next?

Returned to USAID/Washington to the Sahel West Africa Projects Division - 1979

SLOCUM: I came back to Washington after eight years in Africa, a good chunk of the decade of the seventies. By that time John Koehring had gone back to head up the Office of Project Development in the Africa Bureau, and my IDI colleague, Jim Graham, was the deputy in the Sahel project division under Jonathan McCabe. Jim was going off to Kenya and John asked if I would come in and take Jim's place. So, I left Dakar in July 1979 and reported the next day to my new job in the Sahel West Africa Projects (SWAP) division which we called the "swap shop." I wound up serving five years there, longer than most people serve back in Washington. It was a good experience. Jonathan was a good teacher and trainer, and loved the experience of shaping younger officers in the ways and means of Project Development skills. During my five years in his office, he became ill with bladder cancer, and died in 1994, two months before I departed on reassignment overseas.

After ten years working mainly on the program side of the shop, I was now delving into the intricacies of project development (PD). This was a period within the agency where most approval authorities were in Washington. It was a time when the Sahel program was still building up and a lot of project proposals were coming back for review and approval. So, it was a very busy office. Jonathan was very rigorous in his approach to analyzing the details of project papers, and he imparted this rigor to his staff. Many IDIs and other young officers who would become the Agency's future leaders came through that office for several months of PD training before going overseas.

Q: What were the functions of this office?

SLOCUM: These days are gone now, of course, but the regional bureaus placed emphasis on the uniqueness of officers who were trained as "Project Officers," meaning individuals specially trained to review and analyze the elements which would constitute a viable project. The office reviewed the final stages of a project proposal submitted by a field Mission and, based on the analysis, presented the projects to the leadership of the bureau for approval. As contrasted with program officers, project officers were project specialists. They were the legacy of the old capital development officers from the time when the Agency had different management and operational procedures between loans and grants. But by the time of the 1970s, the capital loan/grant technical assistance distinction had gotten blurred, but the idea of Project Development Officers (PDOs) was to have a core of officers skilled in analyzing the various components of the project proposal, knowing what to look for, how to write scopes of work for designs of projects, including such areas as institutional analysis, economic and technical soundness, social aspects, financial analysis, budget formulation and implementation arrangements, all of the things required to make a sound proposal. PDOs were a fundamental operational principle in the regional bureaus. The function of a PDO was: (1) to make sure that resources needed to properly design a project or program were in place, and (2) to

support Missions in their efforts to define and design their program by identifying individuals who could go out and help them with a design. And, lastly, by participating and managing the review process of the project papers and other proposals when they came back to Washington.

Limited authority was given to the field in those days so that virtually any project the Mission wanted to fund had to come back to Washington for review and approval. I remember Haven North very often sitting on the final review, which was called the ECPR, executive committee for project review. There were two prior levels of review, for which we developed issue papers. One level would be in the office with Jonathan, who would conduct the first review and then the next level of review was before John Koehring, who was the Office Director for Project Development. Then when we were satisfied that it was ready for approval by the Bureau it would go to the Executive Committee for Project Review. Three layers of review, and lots of back-and-forth with angry Mission Directors who felt that we weren't giving adequate due to the work that had already taken place on the project's design. There wasn't a great deal of trust between the Missions and AID/W, I must say. We were tasked to demonstrate the soundness of the proposal, so all aspects of the paper were carefully examined: often issues such as institutional analysis and implementation arrangements were looked at as carefully as the substantive details. Often criticisms were made over whether these had been adequately designed in the paper. This process was central to the Agency's work in those days.

Q: What were some of the projects that you personally worked on?

SLOCUM: I was the deputy of the division, but was also responsible for Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau. I would also fill in for other areas when there were absent staff. I ran the division for Jonathan when he was out, and as he became increasingly ill and unable to serve his functions in the final two years of my five years in that division, I was frequently the acting division chief. The division totaled 12 or 14 people, three secretaries and around ten officers, mainly Foreign Service officers. We had a number of IDIs. Over five years a lot of people came and went. Jonathan developed a special collegial atmosphere in the office; we were very fond of him. He was not an easy boss, he could be tough, get angry, blow his stack, but there was an underlying sense of great affection for him too, especially as he became ill. There was a very strong esprit de corps developed there despite the usual comings and goings of staff as they rotated in and out.

Q: What were some of the projects that stand out in your mind that you worked on?

SLOCUM: In addition to Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, I also was responsible for some regional projects. I guess I have never thought about it so much until you and I have started talking here about the extent to which I have been involved in many parts of my career in regional activities. These are the ones I remember most. I remember two of the bilateral activities in Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau but the regional projects were a little more dramatic.

Q: Talk about the bilaterals first.

SLOCUM: Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde were newly independent, and AID offices had been set up only in the late '70s. The first new project in which I was involved was fisheries. The project design had already been approved, and then I managed technical review of the contract bid proposals. Another duty of a PDO is to manage the contract review process. Usually he or she chairs the review committee and writes the memo for the contracting officer to decide on best and final proposals. I did that for the fisheries project. A major irrigated agricultural project was in the early stages of design. There was a rehabilitation activity, which was an independence gift to restore broken agricultural equipment and buildings to their function. But this was a project in course and required no support from my office.

Let me move to Cape Verde for a second. There was a very interesting project there, which went beyond the usual types of technical assistance and capacity-building projects which characterized the Sahel Development Program. One of the independence gifts to Cape Verde was to renovate and upgrade a desalination plant on one of the islands, Mindelo. The islands making up the country all suffer from a severe shortage of fresh water, and desalination is the only way to assure a regular supply of potable water to the population. We also designed a new desalination project on the island of Sal. The Sal project was relatively straightforward. We contracted with an architectural and engineering (A&E) firm to produce the design. Desalination employs a variety of technologies which vary according to location and environmental characteristics. This was more akin to the old capital projects of earlier years in the Agency. John Koehring, the Africa Bureau Director of the Office of Project Development, was from the old capital development school, and this type of project was close to his heart. The A&E firm proposed a technology known as "reverse osmosis." After our engineers reviewed and endorsed this choice, the firm prepared the design documents and reviewed the contract bids for construction. It also supervised the construction work. I think there were some technical problems on the reverse osmosis during initial operations, but they were ultimately resolved.

The Mindelo desalination project was another story. Mindelo had an old beat-up desalination plant that AID had agreed to rebuild by providing replacement equipment. About everything that could go wrong with that project did go wrong. Instead of simply hiring a procurement agent to take responsibility for defining the equipment specifications, the procurement went through a GSA services contract under which AID had no control over the specs. Moreover, the setup added another layer of management between AID and the vendors designated by AID to provide the equipment. The supplier provided new boilers and discovered they didn't have the right parts to install them. They had already dismantled the old boilers, so no water was being produced for the people of Mindelo. I recall that at one point in the staged installation process, the installers were stumped, so they left Mindelo and returned home. The island, whose principal city, Mindelo, was the second-largest city in Cape Verde, now had no potable water. As you can imagine this got some fairly high attention back in Washington, especially when the Ambassador came in screaming for an immediate solution. It eventually all fell into place

and they got the right people out there, the right equipment installed, and potable water flowing again, but not without a bit of pain.

There was also a water catchment project on the main island, Santiago, where Praia, the capital city of Cape Verde, is located. The project was in the northern part of the island, called the Tarrafal region. The aim was to help farmers improve their agricultural schemes in this very water-scarce environment. The island was entirely mountainous, so that when you drive into the high interior, you have an entirely different ecology with decent rainfall even when there are prevailing drought conditions at sea level. The idea was to develop schemes that maximize water capture in the highlands and get it down to where they have agricultural schemes on the flat land. That was an interesting project.

Q: What were some of the regional projects you were involved with?

SLOCUM: The highest-tech activity was the AGRHYMET regional project. AGRHYMET is the acronym for the Agro-Hydro-Meteorology, and it signified the Sahelian regional center for assisting national meteorological services to improve their real-time data and to exchange this information among the Sahel countries. This would improve the forecasting of weather trends for agricultural application. The Center was set up with multi-donor support to reinforce the capacity of national meteorological services to get useful meteorological data to the national services more quickly in order for farmers to plan their cropping schedules more effectively. This involved building some fairly expensive infrastructure in a regional location — near Niamey, the capital of Niger.

Q: Who ran the center?

SLOCUM: It was staffed by Africans from the member states of the Sahel countries with a heavy dose of expatriate technical assistants.

Q: Was WMO involved?

SLOCUM: Yes. The World Meteorological Organization [WMO] in Geneva was the chief technical agency providing technical oversight and direction to the Center. It also coordinated other-donor inputs. We provided some people through NOAA, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. WMO was responsible for the overall management. Technically it was a good project. The problem was its sustainability over the long term. Most of AGRHYMET's costs were picked up by the donors, with some modest contribution by the Sahel countries. Because strong donor support to Sahel regional institutions has been maintained, the sustainability issue has been suspended for the time being. The WMO's role was crucial, certainly in a technical sense, because its role allowed it to make the Sahel countries equal players on the world meteorological scene. The U.S. provided strong assistance through NOAA, as I said, and interestingly enough, one non-USAID facet of the assistance was national interest: most hurricanes that strike the Americas originate in the ocean west of Cape Verde.

Q: Does it still exist?

SLOCUM: As far as I know it still exists.

The second regional organization was the Sahel Institute, known by its abbreviated form, INSAH, located in Bamako, Mali. This was meant to be a clearinghouse of research information throughout the Sahel. INSAH never quite got its rationale. You could understand why AGRHYMET was supposed to be value-added to the national meteorological services, but in the case of the Sahel Institute, it never fully got off the ground and established itself as a meaningful organization that provided value added to national research organizations. I am not sure of its status today. There was a lot of pressure from the donors to make it more useful.

Q: What were their primary research interests?

SLOCUM: The idea was to be the central point of information of all research going on in the Sahel to serve as a clearinghouse but also to prevent duplication of effort. Of course, agriculture was the main interest, but it extended to health and population sectors as well. So, what is the value-added? Is it a place where all of the Sahel countries now to go to get comprehensive and reliable information more rapidly? Can it provide lessons learned if there is a certain kind of research activity going on, say in the Senegal river basin that could be applied to the Niger River or to Lake Chad, etc.? The Sahel Institute, known by its French acronym as INSAH, may have never established these credentials to validate itself, at least not in the early years, but I think it still exists.

Over time the donor community, I think with AID in the lead, pretty much forced the institute to take on a new unit on population research. There was a need to have a center for population research information but also to give more credibility to the Sahel Institute. But, there was another problem too, and that was staff. Sahelians in the national civil services could see the advantage of getting seconded by their government to an international institution which would make them an international civil servant with larger salaries, diplomatic passports, and duty free privileges. That would have been fine, if competency had been a condition of employment. By and large the Sahel regional institutions had competent people, but not always.

Q: More political?

SLOCUM: Political or just people who in a bureaucracy are not performing very well and are moved to another job. That would happen. My information on this goes back more than fifteen years, but there were real operational problems with the project.

Q: Let's go back to your work in the projects office. You describe a very elaborate design and analysis process. What did you learn from all that? Was it useful?

SLOCUM: Its utility was the rigor it established and, if you will, the standardization of the criteria that constituted a valid project, one worthy of funding. We have now, of

course, a different approval system. Today only the five-year strategy document which forms the “contract” between the field mission and Washington on the overall strategic objectives requires a formal review system and headquarters approval. In the ‘70s and ‘80s most projects, except for minor ones, had to be presented to Washington before being approved for funding. It is totally different now and, of course, AID is a different agency with far fewer people than it had in those days. The one “value” which has not changed, though, is the lack of trust between Washington and the field missions. I suppose any organization which has a strong field component is going to develop tensions between headquarters and the field. So, today, even though much more authority is provided to the field missions, there is a certain level of suspicion as to motives and commitment. The field believes that reengineering has not really empowered the field as much as hoped. But to be fair to the Washington-side, we did have a lot of Congressional oversight as to what kinds of things we were doing and what makes sense and what doesn’t. We will also have a kind of schizophrenic system, in which the ethic of empowerment to operating units clashes with a system of government which requires full accountability to Congress. I learned many years ago that this schizophrenia will always exist, and we are required to adapt our values to it.

But to demonstrate how much control was held by Washington in those days, a project approval process required, at one point, the submission of three different documents for review and approval. One was the “idea document,” known as a PID, for Project Identification Document. The final full-fledged document which was submitted at the end was a Project Paper (PP). For about a year or two there was an intermediate approval stage known as a PRP, for Project Review Paper, but wisdom intervened, and the PRP had a very short history. Imagine! I think, though, that the rigor of the process did help us to learn a lot about the development process and I think that probably was a precursor to the emphasis in the nineties on measurable indicators and specific results by which success could be gauged. In my early days, when we did evaluations, a project was judged successful if the technical assistance team was in place, if host-country nationals were identified and put into training, and if the project equipment arrived more or less on time. We eventually realized that these elements, though necessary for the project, were just inputs. So what if people were identified for training, was it the right training? What use of it did they make when they came back? So what if the contract technical assistant team got in place? How effective were they in imparting know-how to the country? How were the beneficiaries better able to do their tasks as a result of the technical assistance. And what about the sustainability of the activity once foreign assistance was withdrawn? Was the host country able to continue supporting the activity?

Q: This was a time when studies were very important , and you did social, economic, technical and financial and environmental studies. Weren’t they supposed to be identifying all the implementation issues? What was the significance of that work?

SLOCUM: These analyses provided the information needed to assess the soundness of the concept. But the orientation to results and measurable indicators, definers of what constituted success, only came into our lexicon about 10 years ago.

There was so much attention given to the design, to the analytical section, that there wasn't a whole lot of energy left to think through the implementation issues and measures of success. This was the wisdom on the 90s. One often heard the criticism that the same level of energy and attention that went into design and analysis was not given to the implementation phase. I think it is probably true that you have only so many people to do a job, especially in the field, and they spend so much time satisfying the requirements of headquarters that maybe they simply lost that push to keep up that level of effort on the implementation of the activity.

Q: Were the people who were involved in doing all of the design work involved in implementation?

SLOCUM: Usually not. Virtually all implementation went to contractors. In fact, even then we were contracting out for some of the design work as well as the implementation. There were always legal requirements that prohibited firms who had done the design from bidding on the implementation work. I think that is still the case. This meant that almost always, the implementor was different from the designer. At some point the concept of a "rolling design" was introduced. It was applied to complicated designs whose components could not all be defined at one stage. So a firm would be given an initial contract to start the process, and if it produced an acceptable initial design phase, it would be allowed to proceed to the next step, and so on.

Another implementation issue for AID officers was that, with the progressive downsizing of staff and programs, there was less time for us to work on implementation. Increasingly we were becoming program managers rather than project managers. This trend has only accelerated in recent years. I can remember in my field days in Senegal I was not able to get involved in the very fascinating environmental assessment work, which took two or three years to conduct and was a multimillion dollar activity. One of the engineers working on this project for the engineering firm later became an AID direct hire, and told me years later, "We were very critical of you guys in AID, you just didn't pay any attention to us. You knew we were there, but you never came to see us. We always had to come to you." I'm talking about a criticism that goes back fifteen, almost twenty years, so even then there was a problem of time allocation and how one spent one's time. There was always the criticism that implementation didn't get the proper attention. On the other hand, I think we are giving a lot more attention now to focusing on what it is that we are trying to achieve. What are the results we are trying to get from this activity?

Q: Wasn't that evident when you were doing the design?

SLOCUM: On an analytical level, yes. But the "science" of defining measurable indicators of success and results would come later. I don't think we had the level of indicator discipline and knowledge we do now. I think we worked more on the supposition that if we just got the technical aspects of an activity right the rest would fall into place. More and more now we realize that there was insufficient attention to the underlying dynamics of a society in which the project had to take root in order to succeed. We will get into this later when I discuss my assignments in Mauritania and

Burundi. We ignored at our peril some major factors in the social structure that competed with development within the country.

Q: Anything else on your experience in that position?

SLOCUM: Working at headquarters, of course, is always a very different experience from working in the field. It could be frustrating with a lot of paper work, setting up of meetings and things like that. But I remember it as a very dynamic period of my life. I was there longer than planned, mainly because it was generally known that I wanted to succeed Art Fell in Paris at the Club du Sahel at the OECD, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Art had extended for a year, and the personnel people very kindly allowed me to stay in Washington for a fifth year. That turned out to be fortuitous for me because my father died just two months before I left for Paris, in the summer of 1984, and Jonathan McCabe, the division chief of whom those of us privileged to work for him were so fond, passed away the same month as my father. So that fifth year was a significant one for me. Five years is a bit long for most people to be rotated back to Washington, but for professional and personal reasons it was an enriching experience.

Q: Did you have much contact with other divisions in the Bureau?

SLOCUM: Yes, and I am glad you brought that up. I kind of touched on this earlier and then left it. That is, the two functions within the Bureau of the desk officer, or program officer, and the projects officer. I was surrounded by people, including John Koehring, and Jonathan McCabe and others who took very seriously the separate function of a projects officer. Of course that distinction is now long lost. They felt that this was a unique category of officer, that not everybody was equipped to succeed at it. I had been both. I did program activities overseas but also a number of design activities as well. One of the things that we had to constantly confront in that job in Washington was the division of responsibilities between the desk officer and the projects officer. These functions were in different offices at that time. I guess I have to confess, and people who consult these archives later, especially my godfathers like Art Fell and John Koehring, may burn them when they see it, that I had a great deal of difficulty understanding why the distinction was so sharp. I thought the two skills were not totally separate. But, again, I think it goes back to the old capital development and design days when there really were two different ways of approaching projects — big infrastructure activities versus grant activities and technical assistance. I saw some good people on the program side get rejected when they applied for a crossover to become a projects officer. The function was taken that seriously. Jonathan really loved that work and, as I mentioned earlier, he loved the training aspect of bringing people in and training them.

Q: Anything else?

SLOCUM: I'd like to say a little more about the project review process. But first, why did the Sahel get so much attention? This was the period of the great buildup of programs in the Sahel. In retrospect, I think we went about things inappropriately, but that is

hindsight. The Sahel countries were, and are, fragile countries in every respect. Their environmental vulnerability to the unpredictability of the weather makes their economies weak. Many Sahelians leave for jobs in the coastal countries of West Africa and beyond. The drought had hit scarcely ten years after independence, so human resource capacity was still very limited. Most countries had inefficient economies driven by public-sector intrusion into most of the productive sectors. Political structures were embryonic and often favored an elite oligarchy which rarely had the interest of the population at heart. Clearly these problems were going to take at least a generation, and probably longer, to address.

USAID and other donors adopted a kind of “big push” approach. Major projects were financed, large T.A. teams were fielded, and USAID established bilateral missions in all eight Sahel countries, where only two had been before (Senegal and Niger). These assistance packages were grafted onto the weak infrastructure I just described, and no one questioned the very long-term requirement for this involvement to succeed. But we designed these big projects with five and at most 10-year horizons. The big push didn’t work, and today we remain in only two of the eight countries, Senegal and Mali.

When all of these projects came in for review and approval, it was a strain on the system, but we successfully managed the process — most of the time. The AID/Washington bureaucracy was a much bigger institution than it is today. You will remember how a typical project review meeting went: every constituent interest group within the Agency sent a representative. Each of these wanted a say in the ultimate shape of the project. If it was a road project, there might be (but not always) someone from the Nutrition Office suggesting that the impact of the road construction on the nutrition quality of the population served by the road should be assessed. (Today, the AIDS office might, if the context were the same as 20 years ago, call for an AIDS prevention and control program among the road builders.) The result was a great deal of brokering about the ultimate componentry of the project, and often the result was very displeasing to the field Mission, because the final design had changed so much from what had been submitted. Two things would happen to the decisions reached at the project review meeting: participants unhappy with the decision would come to the chairperson — sometimes that would be you — and plead his/her case for a private review of the decision. Or the Mission Director would do something similar: get on the phone to you or John Koehring and broker further changes. By the time the final paper was written and you would sign off on the delegation of authority to the field mission to negotiate a project agreement with the host government, the consensus position from the review meeting would have shifted considerably.

Part of this is the nature of organizations. I noticed the same phenomenon in the later years of my career when large, interagency meetings dealing with conflict issues and failed states in East Africa would go around and around for an hour or two without any clear decision or outcome, save for scheduling another meeting on the same subject the following week!

Q: You moved on to where?

Joined the staff of the Club du Sahel in Paris - 1984

SLOCUM: I continued working on the same region, succeeding Art Fell at the Club du Sahel position at the OECD in Paris. The Club was a donor group organized under OECD auspices in 1974 to help coordinate donor policies and strategies in the eight countries of the Sahel region of West Africa. In August 1984 I transferred from Washington to Paris. It was unusual for an AID officer to be assigned to a European post, but I was fortunate to be assigned to one of them. I had quite a bit of Sahel experience, having been posted to Senegal for three years in the late seventies, plus the five years I had spent working on projects in the Sahel region from the Washington side, which left me fairly familiar with the issues of the region.

Q: What was the setup that you had at the Club?

SLOCUM: Before getting to that maybe a little bit of background on how the office was established. I recall an evening dinner, when you were coming through Dakar and Gene Chiavaroli had you over for dinner while you were waiting for a connecting flight on PanAm for New York. I have a vague recollection of sitting in Gene's living room, out there by the beach, and talking about some of these issues.

As the drought had taken on some fairly devastating dimensions in the early seventies, by about 1974, AID was, I think, the main agency pushing other donors to have a more coordinated approach to the effects of environmental devastation and desertification and drought in the region. The Sahel region of West Africa goes from Mauritania to Senegal, Gambia and Guinea Bissau moving east across a belt south of the Sahara through Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad. (The same ecological conditions pertain to Sudan, southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya, but the Sahel region with which the Club du Sahel deals ended with Chad.) The Sahel also includes the islands constituting the country of Cape Verde off the coast of Senegal. Roy Stacy was the first AID officer stationed at the Club du Sahel. He went there in, I believe, 1974 and served there for about four years. Art Fell then was there for six years. So, by the time I got there in 1984, the Club du Sahel was a mature institution. It was headed by a renowned Frenchwoman, Anne de Lattre, who after 10 years was the driving force and, some would even say, the personification of the Club. Although AID was the main donor pushing the Club's establishment, the French were key to its success because six of the eight countries were former French colonies and French was widely spoken, and the official language of, these countries. In 1974, Madame de Lattre was named the first director of the Club, and served in that position for 14 years, maintaining an association with the Club until recently. She had already been an international civil servant, having worked for the OECD for a number of years in the Development Assistance Directorate. Though she had no experience living in Africa in the way AID Foreign Service officers did, she was a very dynamic and respected force behind the Club. The AID person functioned informally as the deputy in the Club. The Club staff has varied over the years. When I was there, there were four donors who seconded people to the Club. In addition to the American, Canada and the Netherlands posted officials there. France had a de facto

representative in the fact that Mme. de Lattre was French, but also by virtue of the Club's location in Paris, with close access to the French Government and the widespread expertise of French citizens. Italian participation was informally supported by an OECD documentalist who was Italian. Later a knowledgeable German aid person served at the Club.

The Club had been founded in tandem with a counterpart organization in the Sahel, which was known as the CILSS, the Interstate Committee for Development and Drought Relief in the Sahel, a regional organization of Sahel countries set up to combat the effects of the drought. In the first 10 years, the CILSS and Club collaborated to complete a number of sector assessments in the main areas affecting environmental degradation and food security policy in the Sahel. By the end of the '70s, there were AID Missions in all the Sahel countries, and they collaborated in varying degrees with the Club to help do these national sector assessments.

By the time I arrived, the sector assessments had been completed for each country, and the member states had approved them. These formed the basis for the next step, forging common regional approaches to make the national programs effective and working in sync with each other. National programs of food security, environmental control and related areas had regional implications, as, for example, in pricing policy. One country's pricing policy could stimulate or discourage trade with its neighbors. If the latter, then farmers would be disadvantaged or consumer prices would be higher than they had to be. By the time I arrived at the Club, the basic analytical work had been completed, and the time had come to begin looking at national programs from both the governments' and donors' perspectives. Art had handled the anti-desertification and environmental portfolios, so I spent a fair amount of time working with the donor community in the Sahel countries helping them develop national environmental action and desertification control plans that would meet the approval of most of the donors so they could have coordinated approaches to these areas.

Q: The sector studies were for the whole region rather than individual countries?

SLOCUM: Initially the studies centered on individual countries, followed later by some "synthesis" studies bringing together some general analysis and principles, tying together the country assessments and drawing some regional conclusions. Most of the national studies were prepared in French, and they had the French-language title that became our jargon: Bilan Programmes. "Sector assessments" is a loose translation of that, but we don't have quite an equivalent.

Q: What did they focus on?

SLOCUM: The initial push was on food production. The agricultural bilan programmes looked at what they called overall cereals policy questions because they were the basis of the agricultural economies of all those countries. The others were in the areas of drought control and environment, with a focus on reforestation.

Q: They were projects?

SLOCUM: That is a good question. From the donor and Club du Sahel point of view they were not projects, they were sector assessments with policy indicators. But here is where we get into a theme that I think became a problem for the Club's network and philosophy. I touched a little bit on this earlier. From the donor/Club viewpoint, the assessments were necessary to develop consensus approaches to overcoming the effects of the drought and getting the countries back on a self-sustaining ground. A key operating, and philosophical, principle from the beginning was that the Club had to work in collaboration with the CILSS secretariat. The key founding donors of the Club, notably the French and the U.S., in effect, "created" the CILSS to institutionalize Sahelian involvement and ownership of long-term sustainable development programs. However, the Sahel states through the CILSS had a different, if unwritten, mandate, which was not in concert totally with the donors. The donor interest was to develop better policies and programs. I think the Sahelians saw the CILSS more as a mechanism to get more funding into their programs. This fundamental institutional difference was unspoken but important to recognize. It probably still persists today.

In the ten years since I left the Club the work program has branched out to include new areas, such as the linkage of coastal countries' to the Sahel countries' economies. The Club and the CILSS also began looking more to the private sector as the indispensable underpinning to growth and development. And the impact of population growth became part of the mandate. These changes have taken place since I departed in 1988. It is a sign of the Club/CILSS model's staying power that it is still a dynamic network, despite the cuts in AID's budget and personnel staffing over the years and the closure of bilateral USAID Missions in all but two of the Sahel countries. It shows that despite the divergent interests of the two institutions, their contribution has been important enough to merit continuing support.

Q: Was policy reform a major emphasis?

SLOCUM: Yes, mainly in the selected sector areas. But the implicit result was to expose the Sahelians to the regional nature of the issues with which they were working so that the countries would cooperate more closely on issues critical to their economic futures.

Q: But, it wasn't a formal program.

SLOCUM: Not as such. The idea was to spur debate among the Sahel countries to develop better policies, but to do so based on their gained experience and the added knowledge provided by their debates on the bilans programmes.

Q: How did you find this work of trying to translate a general sector analysis into a national program?

SLOCUM: It was a challenge to translate the sector assessments into national applications that had a change impact on the donors or the Sahelians. Again, the

divergence I enunciated earlier, divergent interests between donors and the Sahelians — in which donors were looking for better projects and Sahelians for more money — played out here too. An additional element was that donors' national programs were unlikely to be changed based on a Club/CILSS-sponsored meeting held in country X. Holding national “concertation” meetings to see how countries might better approach agriculture or environment had only a temporarily stimulating effect. What was needed was some sort of local incentive to take the results of those discussions and put them into a framework which would effect real changes in approaches within the national programs. But it never quite came to that. I suppose that for this to happen it would have been necessary for a Club/CILSS entity to take root institutionally within that Sahel country. But that was not the purpose of the Club/CILSS, to replicate itself country after country.

In fact, I learned that USAID Missions in the Sahel were the strongest objectors to a strong Club/CILSS network in the Sahel. They saw us as laying a competing claim to scarce resources for their bilateral programs. They rarely saw us as value-added to their own programs. In meeting after meeting of Sahel Mission Directors, complaints were lodged that USAID funds going to their regional programs detracted from their own programs. I should note here that, in addition to the Club/CILSS study program, AID funded a number of regional projects, in AGRHYMET, INSAH, Population, Agricultural Research, and Pest Control (IPM). It was a battle, and despite strong support from Washington leadership, both the Administrator's office and the Africa Bureau, the field directors never fully bought into the regional program. The field directors were part of an institutional culture that rewarded the Missions' bilateral programs. Officers rarely got rewarded for building regional programs, because they were seen as not really contributing much to their own national development objectives. This was a constant tension which I don't think any of us were ever able to abate. The debate was over how much investment should be made into regional approaches vis-a-vis national ones. It was something we talked about at every annual Mission Directors meeting.

Q: What was the receptiveness of the governments to this sector strategy for the Sahel ?

SLOCUM: At the technical and policy levels, there was tremendous receptivity. For one thing, for the first time, the CILSS/Club network provided a regular forum for exchanging ideas, for learning from country to country, and this was very enriching and empowering (Anne used to refer to it as a “privileged forum.”) I did feel that at a political level, there was this divergence in interests between the donors, who were aiming at better policies and programs, and the Sahelian governments, who saw CILSS as a fund-raising mechanism. However, to be honest, I should ask the question: if the interests were as divergent as I assert between the donor community and the Sahel governments, then why in 1998 does the Club/CILSS mechanism still exist? I think it is because the CILSS provided a needed forum for dialogue, even if the countries' economic indicators have not improved that much in 25 years, regional cooperation has been in their collective national interests, and the CILSS has fostered that and is now, a generation later, identified as an important contributor to that process. I should add also that the operational budgets of the Club and the CILSS as institutions were not large. In fact, donor pressure has seen the CILSS budget and staff cut back and their work program

rationalized.

After my departure from the Club, the CILSS secretary general, Nigerien Brah Mahamane, was hired to set up a regional office in the Ivory Coast to look at the role of the coastal states' economies on the Sahel countries. I remember hearing that there wasn't much product from that effort, but I can't be specific as to what the problems were. It was inevitable and, I think, appropriate, that the burgeoning movement to spur market-led growth in developing countries would be reflected in the Club/CILSS work program.

Q: You talked about the coastal regions?

SLOCUM: Yes, these were a critical element of economic opportunities for the Sahelians, and I don't think the Club/CILSS strategy gave them adequate attention at the outset, though it came to recognize their importance. For over 10 years the Club/CILSS looked to restoration of the Sahel's ecological capital, but it could also have taken its coastal neighbors into account. For years, citizens from the Sahel have made their way to the coastal countries for jobs and other economic opportunities. So, for example, throughout the coastal countries of West Africa you have many citizens of the Sahel countries working in the service industries. There was an attempt to look only at the Sahel countries as a unit and exclude the economic impact of their economically stronger neighbors. There were a lot of efforts in that area after I left. The point of all this is that there were constant attempts to take a fresh look and enhance the wisdom and rationale for the CILSS and Club's agendas.

Q: To raise the question of why did it survive?

SLOCUM: Well, there was a mechanism to have the "board of directors" —the donors and the Sahel countries — conduct a formal review every two years of the Club/CILSS work programs. Later, there were efforts to re-engineer, to look at what made sense in the Sahel. What is curious is that, in response to the Sahel drought, not only was this regional mechanism set up between the CILSS and the Club, but AID also established Missions in the mid-seventies in virtually every country in the Sahel, which was, I think, a sign of the strong interest and support the Agency intended to give to development in those areas.

Q: You were able to view the work of the Club du Sahel and all resources it provided after it had been in business for about ten years, what sense did you have that it was making a difference or would make a difference? What was the result of ten years of effort? In the beginning there was an assumption that in ten years we would have finished the job or close to it.

SLOCUM: I recall seeing a review of the 1960s' antipoverty program on PBS recently, and a clip showed Sergeant Shriver, the program's first head under LBJ, reply "yes" to a question "Do you think poverty can be eliminated in America in 25 years?" I think that the 10-year time frame envisaged at the outset was totally unrealistic and not based on any firm analysis of the real problems that had to be overcome: desertification, poor human resources capacity, mismanagement, donor dependency (which was probably

exacerbated during this period), inadequate macroeconomic environment, etc. We've learned that sustainability requires long-term investments. The Club has now gone on for over twenty years. Roy Stacy went back after his retirement, and became the Club du Sahel Director. He has now left, and Club donors have agreed on a replacement candidate — another American, by the way. So, despite all, the slow rate of progress in the Sahel, the closing of many USAID bilateral missions, and the historic lack of support to the operation by USAID Missions in the field, the Club/CILSS institution lives on. I think it continues for a number of reasons. One I suspect is the fact that the level of poverty in those countries, because of the low resource base and the effects of continued environmental degradation and desertification, are such that they simply cannot survive without donor support. So, collectively among the donors there is a recognition that, even if not every donor can be present in every Sahel country, as AID is no longer able to be, the Sahel needs special attention. (In fact, it could be argued that closing so many of the AID Missions was facilitated by the existence of regional sources of continued assistance to those countries.) That is one rationale that keeps it going. I think the other reason is that there probably never will be very strong results in the near term. One has learned to be very modest in the expectations as to how long it will take for these investments to bring lasting results, and that probably the best we can expect in the short term is to create a kind of standing action to keep the desert from encroaching further, to enable the nationals, both public officials as well as private citizens, to better equip themselves to manage their own development.

But, there has been another factor, and this is kind of getting us away from this assignment, but I think it is useful to put it in context because we are going to come back to it in my experience in subsequent assignments. That is, the increased propensity in many African countries towards chaos and conflict, which unsettle the already fragile conditions, have become more manifest and therefore have worsened the human condition. That means a stronger need to give some kind of attention to this. One manifestation of this is the increasing amount of funds going to relief and humanitarian aid as opposed to development aid. That is a reality. I don't have the figures on every country, but in the East Africa region four years ago, for every dollar of U.S. government money going to development, two dollars were allocated for relief and humanitarian assistance.

Q: How much would you say roughly was the aid to the Sahel over this ten year period that you can look back on?

SLOCUM: Speaking for AID, the annual Sahel development appropriation was on the order of \$80 million. It varied from year to year and eventually this special appropriation got melded back into the Africa appropriation. Early on, this level of interest was manifested by some fairly big projects. I remember one for Burkina Faso that was a fairly large integrated development project. I think it was \$80 million over ten years, or something like that. Wherever we went we saw the same tendency because of the availability of funding to come up with some fairly ambitious activities. In the countries in which I have more knowledge, for instance, Mauritania, where I was later assigned after leaving Paris in 1988, the impact of those initial large projects was unclear. For

example, in the Rural Assessment and Manpower Survey (RAMS) in Mauritania, a great deal of money went for a wide swath of technical assistance which produced a long series of studies that, regrettably, seemed more useful as shelf stabilizers than for the application of their substantive contents, and I saw little evidence of their use by Mauritians, or anybody, when I got to Mauritania several years later. I would hope that other donors coming through wanting to work in a given area where some of these overall assessments and satellite mapping and natural resources had been completed would use them. But, to what extent it enabled the Mauritians to better understand their areas of potential that they could develop, I am less able to answer that. I just don't know.

I had a colleague who worked on a huge livestock project in Tahoua, in northern Niger. He is a personal friend of mine and I see him socially. He spent two years as a financial analyst on the project, a huge technical assistance team in this remote area of Niger and the idea was to assist Nigerians to improve herd practices, animal health, management and accounting, etc. He told me that he is not sure any beneficial result was left behind based on his own knowledge and the contacts in the years following he had with his working colleagues from there. This person is still working in development and is able to place the activity in a wider context.

At the same time, I know that Mission Directors were very keen on making these projects appropriate and making them run properly and structuring them in a way that enhanced capacity locally. Similar issues were raised, I recall, with respect to the regional integrated pest management project (IPM). This concern led to a major scaling back because it became apparent that the expected results were not being achieved, mainly because of the very weak indigenous capacity to learn and apply the assistance.

Now talking historically, of course, and lessons learned ten, fifteen years ago, I think we did learn a lot of lessons which helped us improve our approaches. The focus on managing for results and developing indicators that give you a sense of how you measure progress has all come in the last ten years. But, if I go back to your question, what results do we have in the countries in which these projects were implemented, I think probably the biggest result over time is how many trained people understand the issues, understand management, understand financial controls. I think that probably it is the most important thing. Gradually building a critical mass of trained managers and technicians who can design and run these activities themselves on the ground.

Unfortunately, what has countered that tendency has been problems of governance, power oligarchies and corruption, not to mention tribal and ethnic violence. Those things were not as apparent in the Sahel in the '80s. There was one border war between Mali and Burkina Faso, but it only flared up for a few days and quickly subsided. There was a greater tendency to maintain control, but these also were essentially nondemocratic governments. So, I think the effort to focus on the Sahel made sense, because it was recognized that over time, more and more humanitarian relief would be required if we didn't try to get a basis for development established in that region.

Q: But you don't see any results on the ground?

SLOCUM: Oh, yes, once we understood better the multiple causes of the constraints, we began to design better activities. Certainly we see results in terms of enhanced capacity, both of civil servants and in the private sector. The Club/CILSS epoch coincided with the World Bank structural adjustment programs. These SAPs, plus sector investment programs, have resulted in such innovations as modern and widespread health clinics and reforestation activities that involve community participation. While the mega-projects were probably inappropriate for their time, progress has occurred in decentralization, civil society and other examples wherein nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) serve as counterpoints to governmental dominance in economic development. The Structural Adjustment Programs became very important mechanisms for economic adjustments so that the state got itself out of some very inefficient roles in the economy and allowed the private sector to take over. All these things were germinating in the 80s and later even burgeoned in the 90s. For example, were the investments in the health sector from the donor community sustainable for the host country? Probably not. It is unlikely for the national economies to get to the point that they can maintain a national primary health service delivery system without some kind of donor assistance. Whether it was for vaccinations or for drug supplies, birth control, whatever those systems were, I suspect that it was going to take a lot more than just these projects to make these activities sustainable. But something had to be done to get the basics to the people. My point is that we are learning as we go and adjusting our programs accordingly to get at the basic constraints.

Q: Do you think these countries are viable?

SLOCUM: It just occurred to me: You came through Paris and you and I sat in Anne de Lattre's office and we were talking about some of these same issues. I remember you said to Anne, "What can we do?" Anne said, "We should just build roads and maintain them forever." I don't know if you remember this discussion, it just came back into my consciousness. We were all three searching for what would really work. I think Anne's point was that they are not going to be really viable in the national sense, and, therefore, the donors have to pick out certain sectors and provide the wherewithal to make them work for the foreseeable future, relieving the pressure from the local government by a major contribution to that one sector, and freeing resources and people to work on other important sectors. That was probably a nonscientific response Anne gave you based on her years of experience and may not have been totally thought through. If one went further with that question I think one would say that even if the economy is not viable, what are the areas that these economies can sustain? There are other complications in this discussion. For example, how much of an AID budget should go to the social sectors, how much to the economic and productive sectors? Well, there you have national parliaments and our own congress saying that you will devote so much of the budget to health and family planning. Even we, as analysts, who try to determine where the best donor investments can go, have our hands tied by the fact that some of the allocation decisions are made through the appropriations process and not on the basis of a needs analysis. So, it is a very complicated game we were and are playing here.

Q: Did you get a sense after ten years that anybody was better off?

SLOCUM: I think there was the beginning of the effort to see how local initiatives could pay off. For example, I told you a lot of my time was spent in the first three years of my four years there on working with donors in countries to come together with the national services and develop a national environmental action plan. (Actually they were called “National Desertification Plan.”) In my last year, with help from my Dutch colleague, we began to realize there had to be much more emphasis on local initiatives, what we now call civil society and NGOs. So, a big conference was held shortly after I left, and my Dutch colleague took responsibility for organizing this. It was called the Segou Conference, held in Mali. That was the first effort to bring not just government officials but also NGOs interested in reforestation and similar environmental projects throughout the Sahel to come together and talk. To my knowledge this was the first effort of the Club to get involved in participatory issues. I think donors had been talking participation for some time, this was not new, but it was the Club’s recognition that we had done the sector assessments, done the regional issues, done a lot of the national sensitization programs on cereals policy and environmental issues, and now where do we take it from here? About the time I left they were just beginning to recognize there had to be much more involvement — what we now call “stakeholder” involvement — and this was the logical direction for the Club to go, a new area for them, to get broader participation in the decision making, the actual problem identification and the whole process.

Q: In the sectors you were handling, environment, etc., what were the elements of the strategy or policy that you were promoting and trying to get governments to adopt and donors to join in on? What were some of the substantive features?

SLOCUM: In a resource-poor environment aggravated by drought, rationalizing the agricultural sector on a regional basis was the first priority. Thus the bilans programmes on cereals pricing policies. The reforestation bilans were meant to help countries and donors develop coherent strategies for stopping the advance of the desert, where feasible. Later, as I just said, the Club began looking at how these strategies could be best promoted, and we realized that there were gaps at the local level. We also began sharing technical lessons among the countries. A research activity in one country might develop a special plant species that had roots that could go down low and find the aquifer, a perfect drought-resistant species for the Sahel. One of the things we were trying to do was take lessons learned and propagate them. There were things that were drawn up by the consultants who did the sector assessments and then the idea of doing these at the national level was to see what the donors and the Sahelian officials coming to the meetings thought would make sense. The result of that meeting would be a document which would provide a list of activities that would move the process forward. Was it a shopping list that the Sahelians always like to see? Well, to some extent it was. On the other hand it did get people sitting in the same room thinking about these things.

Q: What were some of the activities?

SLOCUM: Sand dune stabilization was a controversial area and applied mainly to

Mauritania and the northern regions of countries like Mali. I saw such schemes in Mauritania. Even the capital city of Nouakchott was threatened. Once those dunes start moving, they are virtually impossible to stop. The Mauritians had constructed a good road running east from Nouakchott, which is on the Atlantic. Within five years parts of it had to be regularly plowed from sand on the northern side. Eventually the dune would be so massive that no amount of plowing could handle it. They would simply have to abandon the road at some point and relocate it further south. So, technically, stabilizing sand dunes was a lost cause. As far as I know, the idea was abandoned as unfeasible. The more successful activities over time were community-based reforestation, small-scale irrigated perimeters near water areas, natural crop and plant protection.

Q: The big part was reforestation?

SLOCUM: Yes.

Q: Would that include the community tree-planting scheme?

SLOCUM: The result of Segou was to encourage countries to give farmers more autonomy and authority over such planting sites. Prudent use of water sources was another area for development, including irrigation schemes. Other lessons learned and applied included the evolving role of the state, from one of intrusion to support for private-sector and community-based initiatives. The idea also was that these local reforestation projects were more successful if land ownership issues were resolved and if the people living in the area had a sense of personal responsibility for making these projects work. There were land tenure issues involved. We did quite a bit of work in that area.

Q: Were you involved in the cereal policy exercise?

SLOCUM: Most of that work was done before my time, although I had some involvement.

Q: Have a chance to see any results of that policy exercise?

SLOCUM: Prior to my arrival, national cereals policy analyses had been completed. The effort shifted to regional coordination of those policies. A series of regional conferences were held, the last in my era was in Cape Verde. At this point discussions were shifting away from official policies, which were becoming increasingly harmonious among member countries, to private sector incentives to increase production, and more extensive agricultural practices.

Q: Did you go to the Club du Sahel conferences where the donors got together?

SLOCUM: The formal convocation of Ministers and aid agency heads occurred every other year. I went to the one in Milan in 1986 or 87, I believe it was.

Q: Who attended them?

SLOCUM: It was very high level. Donors sent the equivalent of the Administrator or the head of their Africa sections. These were major events. Usually a president of one of the Sahel countries would come to open the session. In the case of the one I attended in Milan, the Italian Prime Minister and the President of Niger presided at the opening. The agenda was twofold: to present the results of the joint work program of the past two years, and to propose for review and discussion the work plan for the next two. A number of thematic presentations were made by Sahelians or donor representatives.

These were not just sector-level presentations. For example, two years earlier, the Canadians had proposed, and the plenary approved, an assessment of the future of the Sahel over 25 years: a “Futures Study.” The Canadians funded it and contracted with a Canadian firm to conduct the study. It was a fairly extensive effort, but my recollection is that they carried it out rather in isolation. They came to the Club and met with Anne, then traveled to the Sahel organizations: certainly to the CILSS headquarters, and probably to the INSAH. As far as I know, no other donors, including USAID, were consulted until the first draft was produced. It was a Canadian effort from start to finish, from proposal to report submission. The brief was to present a picture of sliding scenarios of what the Sahel was going to be like 25 years from now, with an analysis of what donors could do to affect these scenarios. Their draft report was quite disappointing: it concluded that the Sahel was bound to fail unless donors provided what they called a “big push,” an infusion of massive donor investments that would somehow make the Sahel viable. This was an instance where Anne’s considerable diplomatic skills brought success out of failure. (Anne wasn’t always so diplomatic, but someday maybe you can get her story!) The consultants were sent back to their drawing boards, gently, and tasked with doing more focused analyses and making recommendations for ways in which both Sahelians and donors could make a difference.

Q: Back to the biannual Club meetings. What were these meetings supposed to accomplish?

SLOCUM: Taking stock of the work accomplished and getting endorsement of the work program for the following two years.

Q: The work program was a program that each government agreed to and was willing to take on?

SLOCUM: Yes, in principle. But frankly, I don’t think the Sahel national governments were as motivated by the Club/CILSS work program and its impact on their national sector development plans as they were about attracting donor attention, meaning more funds, to invest in their own plans.

They weren’t meant to be pledging sessions, but in the eyes of some attending the meeting, there was an expectation that those discussions would end in endorsements which would result in more aid. But, from donors’, and certainly the Club’s perspective,

it was important to show what had been done and get some guidance on future activities.

Let me mention one other comment on the Paris assignment. In addition to the Club professional staff of five, three of whom were seconded from donor agencies (the U.S., Canada, the Netherlands), Club funds employed a number of consultants. There was a decided bias toward French consultants, but not entirely. One of the two full-time consultants working in the Club was French, and the preponderance of the short-term consultants we used were French. As you know, six of the eight Sahel countries are French-speaking. As an American Foreign Service officer, I found this an enormously enriching experience, too, working with development experts from other donor countries, often interacting in French. Most of the work in the Club was done in French. This opened up a world which was in many ways very different: conceptually, analytically, and culturally.

As the only native Anglophone in the Club, I was the one to do the final review of professional English translations of French studies and reports. It could be tedious but always necessary to make sure the final English version flowed smoothly. I did find, in fact, that professionally translated English-language versions of the original French often were very weak and required some work. So, I began taking on that as well, just because I was under pressure all the time to demonstrate to USAID and to the Mission Directors in the Sahel the “value-added” of the Club. So these reports in English had to look fully professional and be readable. Sometimes if you took a perfectly good sentence in French, and just translated it literally into English, it wouldn’t make sense, or would come across as very stilted. I remember I would sometimes look at a sentence and wonder what it meant and would take it to my French-speaking colleagues for help. They would scratch their heads, hem and haw, and eventually we would understand each other, and I could then put it into idiomatic English. There were instances in which the sentence had to be totally restructured for it to make sense.

Q: How did you find your counterparts from other countries to work with?

SLOCUM: The ambiance was quite good. My colleagues were all development professionals and we shared a commitment to Africa. We were two groups: what I would call development managers, people like me who had “grown up” in a bilateral overseas development environment. Others were a step removed, from countries in which their aid agencies were part of their diplomatic service. The Canadians were in this category. Madame de Lattre, Anne, was the most different. She had never lived in a developing country, unlike all the rest of us, but she had a career as an international civil servant at the OECD in the Development Assistance Secretariat. So she knew the development business and the issues. She was fully bilingual, traveled well in the worlds of USAID and the ODA (British aid at the time). I would like to say a word about Anne. She was both a positive and negative influence on the Club. She was its matron. In many ways the Club and Anne de Lattre were synonymous. She put her all into it and deserved this identification with the Club’s success. For the 10 years prior to my arrival, she and Roy Stacy, followed by Art Fell, were the principal drivers of the organization. She in particular gave it its stamp. But after 10 years, she had begun to realize she wanted to

reduce her personal involvement and hand over the Club to someone else. But she was having difficulty letting go. In fact, even though she has not been the Club director since 1988, I believe she is still very influential and playing a role behind the scenes. At least that was the case until very recently. She was the driving intellectual force behind the Club, but she was not what one would call a “modern” manager. In the four years I was there, as she was slowly withdrawing, she would choose moments for intense involvement, alternating with periods of virtual absence. For example, each year she spent the spring semester teaching at Davidson College in North Carolina.

I must say she interacted very well with Sahelians at all levels. She was an aristocrat of the old school, yet loved traveling to the remote corners of the Sahel. She was on a first-name basis with many Sahelian presidents. She really was a very strong presence. This is the positive side. But I think her strength did have one negative impact: it did not allow the natural growth on the Sahelian side of strong counterpart leadership in the Club/CILSS network. But let’s give her credit: the Club and CILSS system is still a strong presence in the Sahel, even though many bilateral donor missions no longer are present.

I cannot talk of the Club without reflecting on the French more generally. As I said earlier, the Sahel region was in many ways still in the French “domain” (I realize this term could raise eyebrows.). The period of the strong donor buildup in the Sahel, roughly the first 10 years of the Club’s existence (1974-1984) saw growing collaboration between the French and other donor countries. The French were happy to have other donors share the load. The French had a burden after their colonies’ independence to keep investments and the economies afloat, and they welcomed assistance from other donors. I think that is one of the reasons the initial effort by the Americans to set up this regional system of the Club and the CILSS met strong French support, and also the fact that Anne de Lattre was such an excellent bridge builder. So this was a period of strong collaboration.

Occasionally there would be little scraps which gave an indication of French underlying attitudes towards their “domain.” I will give you an example. The French had financed a lot of big irrigation schemes in the Sahel. I remember there was an irrigation group that had a meeting in Paris and I don’t remember exactly who was attending, but one of the things I circulated was a comment from USAID/Mali that included a sentence saying the classic big French irrigation projects have been a failure in Mali. One of the French engineers at that meeting caught that and reacted strongly. He was a very nice, reasonable guy, but he saw that as America attacking the French. He came back with a very vitriolic letter, which was totally untypical of the man whom I had met at the meeting. I showed it to Anne, who said not to engage in polemics, just leave it alone and don’t worry about it. She had good political instincts, including which battles to pick (i.e., the ones you have a chance of winning!)

What has happened subsequently and especially in recent years is that the French budgets have gone down, just as the U.S. budgets have declined. But major conflicts in Africa have required the French to send their troops, and this always has a high cost. The French have started to become concerned that they are losing their hold in Africa, and fear we

are trying to replace them. Of course, the last thing we want is to see the French leave, because their influence is still needed. So, it is a complicated subject.

The last comment I will make on the French in my experience at the Club du Sahel is that the French philosophy of development is intimately allied with their own cultural values. Their cooperation missions abroad are called not just development missions but development and cultural missions. This means propagating the French language, which is the main vehicle for propagating the French culture. One cannot understand the French attitude towards its former colonies without understanding that we, as Anglophones, do not share that sense of feeling threatened. We don't feel threatened by the potential loss of English as an international language, but the French feel constantly beleaguered by the "dominance" of the English-speaking world. They feel that that is an important part of their international role, and it is in their national interest to propagate their language as a vehicle of their culture. This is the key to understanding much of France's behavior in Africa in recent years, such as in Rwanda.

Probably the best example I can make, and this jumps ahead a little bit, was in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide in 1994. The French sent troops into what was called Operation Turquoise, which was to try to stop the civil war. I happened to be in Paris on my way through and was in a friend's apartment watching the news that night on TV. The French prime minister was being interviewed by the newsman, who said, "Mr. Prime Minister, why is France sending its soldiers to Rwanda." Here is how he responded. In French it comes out much better, but what he said in English was, "Well, of course, you understand Rwanda is our friend and it is a French-speaking country." In French that makes perfect sense. But, can you imagine if you try to apply this to the American context, with our president announcing that he has decided to send troops to Nigeria to restore democracy and we are doing it because they are our friends, *and* they speak English? He would be impeached! So, there is a fundamental cultural difference in the approach and the world view the French have.

Q: A very good illustration. What about the technical orientation of the counterparts that you worked with, the French, the Dutch, etc.? Did you find them still in the old technological perspectives or were you all on the same wave length when you are talking about desertification and environmental issues and things of that sort, for example ?

SLOCUM: The French irrigation expert aside, I found that donor representatives were moving forward in technical innovations and concepts pretty much in sync. In fact, one of the Club's major contributions was its serving as a forum for bringing different points of view together and hammering out a consensus. In addition to the meetings, there was almost continuous consultation on the range of technical issues to reverse the process of environmental degradation in the Sahel. Technically, I think there was excellent interaction. In fact, as I think back on it, what the Club really represented was what USAID would call re-engineering ten years later. The principles of "customer focus" (e.g., African ownership) represented by the CILSS, "doing business differently" (hammering out regional and national consensus on approaches to development) typified the Club's philosophy and operations. The Segou Conference was a breakthrough as it

applied a broader consultative approach with the populations on the types of participatory programs which could combat desertification at the local level.

Q: How did you find the Germans?

SLOCUM: Like the Swiss and the Dutch, the Germans employ what I would call a disciplined and “pure” approach to development. None of them has colonial “baggage” in Africa. (The Germans did, but that ended in 1919.) I found the Germans at the cutting edge in technical areas, and they trained well and seemed motivated by making sure Africans were able to pick up the activities at the end. Only in later years did the Germans post someone to the Club. But I worked closely with their man in Ouagadougou, an environmental expert who headed the German Cooperation Technical Assistance office there (GTZ). Part of his work was to support the Sahel regional program through the CILSS. His name was Gunter Winckler. I liked him immensely. When the Germans later decided to place a person in the Club, it was Gunter, where he served for a number of years. He and his wife were strong supporters of the Club/CILSS process, and I worked very closely with them on a number of related issues. He had great skills for the work he did, technically, interpersonally, and so on. The Germans were very cooperative during the period I was there. The GTZ in Frankfurt at one point hosted a donor meeting on environmental programs in the Sahel, to which all the major donors and the Club were invited to participate.

If you asked me to rank the donors in terms of their interest and support — and I realize you haven’t asked — I would say in the top rank, after the U.S. and France, of course, I would put Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland, the same countries I cited above for the soundness of their programming, so this is not a coincidence that I rank them equally high in terms of their policy commitment. Canada was very interested, and collaborated closely with us, and, of course, they too had someone in the Club. Japan began getting more involved, and at one point was considering joining the Club and perhaps even placing someone, but that did not occur. Italy was hot and cold, and eventually Italy withdrew as a Club member, I understand.

Q: Were the meetings always with the Sahelians and not just among the donors?

SLOCUM: There were both. There were donor-only meetings, usually when CILSS performance issues were on the agenda or, for that matter, Sahelian countries’ performance in a given area needed airing in a frank atmosphere. There was another meeting I remember I generated with the World Bank here in Washington. I was concerned that after the national meetings on the draft national environmental action plan, there wasn’t any follow up or even an action agenda. The idea was to get the major donors interested in national environmental action plans to agree on approaches, then work out a plan of action for implementation. It was hard for us to know what practical effects these meetings had. So these meetings didn’t really push the action agenda forward on the ground. Normally the CILSS would and should have been responsible for the follow-up with their member countries, but I don’t think this was done, at least systematically.

By the way, in terms of donor interest, though the World Bank was not formally a member of the Club, it and the European Commission were interested in the process and routinely attended both donor and mixed donor-CILSS meetings. One reason for the Bank's interest was probably that it didn't have many resident missions in the field they way it does today.

Q: They didn't participate in the Club did they?

SLOCUM: As I said, the Bank never formally joined the Club as a member, but Bank staff, both technical and managerial, were very active in the policy and sector issues. The Club ethos was, I would say, very "Bank-friendly": deeply analytical, prescriptive, pointing the way to reforms. Now that I think about it, we (the Club and the Bank) were soul mates. And the Bank staff were very cooperative. This was another problem. The Club and the Sahelians generated reflection at the regional level, but the challenge became to translate that energy into national-level change. But then who was going to take responsibility at the national level to follow up? As you can see, this issue keeps popping up.

Q: The Sahelians weren't there?

SLOCUM: We had a mix of meetings. Some, especially the more formal, definitely involved national services, and Sahelian officials were active participants. But, as I showed above, we sometimes had donor-only discussions as well. But, you are touching upon another thing which is: how effective can donor-only meetings be when we are essentially trying to get the Sahelians themselves to get more involved and engaged in these areas. Once in a while someone would raise the question: why is the Club in Europe? Shouldn't it be a support organization to the CILSS in Ouaga? Well, nobody ever said so, but I think it probably was because a lot of the people who energized the Club at the OECD would not move to Ouagadougou, including Anne, herself, I suspect, if you asked her. A related proposal was to transfer people between the two organizations, to take somebody from the Club and put that person at the CILSS and put somebody from the CILSS in Paris. Implementing the proposal broke down over the practicalities: who in the Club would move to Ouagadougou? And who would the CILSS put in Paris? The problem became who they would be and how effective would they be. That never quite got to the operational stage. In fact, it didn't really come up, to my knowledge, while I was in Paris, but it had been discussed earlier.

Q: Also the question of how effective the CILSS was because you still weren't at the national level at the CILSS. How effective did you find the CILSS?

SLOCUM: Generally speaking, the CILSS had difficulty finding its proper role vis-a-vis its member countries. Though some might disagree with me, I have the impression that the CILSS's creation was more an initiative of the donors than of the Sahel member states. The Club needed a Sahelian counterpart institution with which to work. As I said before, I think there was always a different perspective between the two institutions.

Donors felt the CILSS would harmonize the policy and strategic dialogue among its member states, while I suspect that the CILSS countries saw the CILSS as opening up a wider source of donor resources for their national programs. So, CILSS's effectiveness was, in my view, constrained by this reality. But I am not saying that the CILSS served no useful purpose. Its secretariat had some outstanding people. The Secretary General during my tenure was quite good, a Nigerien former Minister of Rural Development who understood the issues and possessed excellent interpersonal skills, probably one of the most self-effacing people I've ever known. These skills helped give the CILSS a certain amount of credibility, but there was always the question of what CILSS's value-added was. People with a longer history might say that the CILSS's reputation fared better under the first Secretary General, but keep in mind that he served when the CILSS was starting from scratch developing those bilans programmes in the major sector areas concerned with agriculture and environment. He laid the foundation of the organization. Another element affecting the CILSS's effectiveness was, I think it needs to be said, the image many had that the Club drove the CILSS agenda. Was this true? Well, Anne was a very strong personality and, as I said earlier, her personification of the Club surely impacted on the CILSS. If some felt the CILSS was drifting, then the Club would pull it back. Again, I think one has to keep in mind that each institution had, by its own members' reckoning, different objectives. The Club wanted to improve the quality of development assistance going to the Sahel; the CILSS wanted to show its members that it was getting more money for them. These are not identical objectives.

About the time I came to Paris, Art Fell's counterpart for environment and forestry was a Malian who was quite good, a fairly senior man with earned credibility and respect, and an acknowledged expert in his field. Unfortunately for me, he returned to Mali (and became a senior adviser to the prime minister), and was replaced by another Malian who was just the opposite: lazy, unproductive, and lacking respect and credibility among his own peers. So, the effectiveness of CILSS varied according to the quality of its staff.

Q: How did you go about it since your primary job was to convert national plans into operating programs? What did you do and how did you get them involved at the country level?

SLOCUM: We employed experts to move from the bilan programme stage into the preparation of national anti-desertification action plans. During my time at the Club, we oversaw the preparation of these plans for about six of the eight countries. The process involved outside experts, always including Sahelians, working with national experts. Once the host government approved the plan, we would sponsor a national-level meeting among relevant services and donor representatives within the country to review the plan, revise it based on that dialogue, and finalize it for donor funding. I think it was follow-up at this final stage that wasn't very successful. Even though CILSS staff participated fully in the planning and execution of these national meetings, and even though each Sahelian government had what was called a CILSS National Coordinator responsible for managing all CILSS-sponsored activities within the country, there weren't enough personnel to shepherd this process of operationalizing the plan. Now maybe this wasn't so bad. Ultimately, the impact had to happen within the country, and whatever initiatives

generated by the CILSS national meeting took root, fine. Perhaps the seeding analogy helps: when you broadcast seed you expect some seeds to take root and germinate; others to dissipate. What I cannot tell you is which seeds among the ideas discussed at the national meetings took root. It was impossible for Club and CILSS personnel to keep track of each national program, nor should we have been expected to. I would be fascinated to see evaluations of these efforts in the subsequent years.

Q: They were national workshops about environment with specific programs?

SLOCUM: That's right. They were called "National Desertification Control Action Plans." There was a dichotomy there between our perception that these plans had to have high-quality program content based on rigorous analysis and research, and the CILSS/Sahelian perception that the plan should offer a shopping list of projects for donor funding. We always had a struggle in trying to get them to reduce the "shopping-list" mentality in the preparation of the documents and focus on quality of analysis and program development as the basis for project identification. The "first-things-first" concept. The joint Club/CILSS expert team would conduct the analysis, and when the document floated through the national services, projects for funding would be added in an annex, with little relevance to the analytical section. I think this was true in every country plan once it went through the national services.

Q: Did you find the regional meetings somewhat productive?

SLOCUM: They were useful in sharing ideas among member states and learning lessons that could be applied from one country to others. The participants, either policy-makers or technical experts, would get to know each other and to exchange ideas and experiences. I remember one technical-level meeting on agricultural statistics, which was held in Dakar. The Burkina Faso representative later became the minister of agriculture. Such meetings and discussions must have enriched his ability to direct agricultural policy in his own country.

Africa development is not constrained by the lack of good professional, analytical and technical people. I think the idea is to build a critical mass. I hope that these regional efforts by the Club and CILSS over time are helping to build this critical mass.

Q: Critical mass of...?

SLOCUM: Professionals, trained managers and technicians who form the nucleus of the institutions needed to manage the development process. Over time I think that has been developing. Institution-building has been enhanced in recent years by the revolution in information technology, which is helping to create this mass of trained people.

Q: Any other dimensions of the Club du Sahel experience?

SLOCUM: As an AID officer assigned to Paris, I was privileged to be exposed to a very different working environment in support of development objectives in Africa. I would

estimate that I spent about 30 percent of my time in the Sahel region of Africa working on the areas I have described, networking, promoting national programs and representing the Club at a number of regional meetings.

However, I would like to point out one additional area related to this assignment: it is that I don't think the agency places a great deal of value on what are called excursion assignments. These are assignments in such areas as long-term training, or an assignment to an international organization or bank. The AID promotion system does not honor such assignments because the AID "culture" regards them as outside "the mainstream." I think it is unfortunate because some of the most rewarding and broadening assignments have been these such which have served to substantially broaden one's professional perspectives. For me, the Club posting enabled me to look at development from a very different perspective in a multi-donor environment. That was very useful. Later on I went to the War College, which was also extremely enriching, but within AID, officers' chances for promotion are not enhanced by serving in such assignments.

I can tell you a story. At one point your successor as one of the Deputy Assistant Administrators for Africa, Lois Richards, pulled me aside at a meeting in Washington. She had been on one of the promotion panels and said, "I think you ought to know that when we looked over your file, someone on the panel felt if you want to get promoted you have to get back to the mainstream." She was graciously sending me an important message: to get promoted in AID, don't stay out of the "mainstream" very long. It was very good of her to pull me aside and give me that advice, because that was important for me to know.

Q: Your assignment in Paris was not appreciated by the system as contributing to your promotion?

SLOCUM: Again, I think AID's value system does not include these kinds of assignments. It would be interesting to see what the progressive downsizing of the Agency has done to this concept. If anything, it has probably hardened.

Q: I think you are right.

SLOCUM: Since we are talking about the general impressions of the Paris assignment and leading on to the next assignment, I can relate an amusing set of events. I got a cable sometime in the fall or early winter of 1987, sometime before I was due to leave in the summer of 1988, informing me that my next post would be Fiji. I thought this wasn't consistent with the discussions I had been having about my future goals, so on my next trip back I checked with people in the Asia Bureau and talked to them about the Fiji program. I was to be the number two in Fiji, not the director. People whom I knew and respected said that this was not a prominent program, and they expressed surprised I was being assigned there. I was advised by some senior people that I thought had my interests in mind to appeal it and hold out for a more senior assignment. So, I did that.

The response was that they had considered my appeal and overruled me, so the Fiji assignment was upheld. Shortly thereafter, back in Paris, I got a phone call from the head

of senior placement in Personnel, who had been a senior officer in the Africa bureau, saying not to tell anybody but I would shortly be getting a call from the Assistant Administrator for Africa asking if I would like to go to Mauritania as director. This was an unexpected and immediate vacancy. I had been hoping for a senior-level appointment, and realized this was a big opportunity even though Mauritania had not been at the top of my list of preferences, so I accepted. In the same week that I got reconfirmed to go to Fiji, I got an offer to go to a senior assignment in Mauritania.

Q: Sounds like the way the system works.

SLOCUM: That is how my next assignment came about.

Assignment as USAID Representative in Mauritania - 1988

Q: So you went to Mauritania straight from Paris as Mission Director, right?

SLOCUM: Yes, overnight; but not exactly as Mission Director. When I came back to Washington to get sworn in, Larry Saiers, the deputy assistant administrator for Africa, informed me that the decision had been made to downgrade it to an AID Representative job. He said, "Oh, by the way, Glenn, tomorrow morning you will be sworn in as an AID Rep. and not as a Mission Director." That caused some grief at the embassy when I got to post because they felt they should have been consulted by AID in that decision.

So, I went out as an AID Rep., arriving on May 5, 1988. My family here in Washington — I'm not married but my mother and sister were desirous of visiting me one last time in Paris — so, when they realized I would be leaving Paris in May they came over in April for a week and we took the Orient Express to Venice and back. It was a nice little family gathering. As soon as they left, I set to packing out and preparing to leave for Mauritania. I was leaving the Club some months earlier than I normally would have but AID wanted Mauritania covered. Off I went, from the culinary capital of the world to the Sahara Desert.

Q: What was the situation in Mauritania, the political and economic situation?

SLOCUM: At the going-away lunch with my Club colleagues in Paris, I asked Anne for her advice. She is very insightful and a good analyst. I said, "What are the kinds of things you think I should be looking at in Mauritania? What kinds of things should we be focusing on?" She thought for a second and said, "I don't think you can do development in Mauritania."

Q: That was a cheerful introduction.

SLOCUM: Yes, and that is typical of Anne, of course, going right to the heart of the matter. I kept that in mind. (By the way, she was right!) Nonetheless, donors were engaged in development activities across the board in Mauritania, and AID had a number of different activities that were in full implementation.

Q: Before going into activities, let's talk about the country.

SLOCUM: Sure. There is so much to say about Mauritania. It is essentially a feudal society. The Moors are essentially a nomadic people, although many of them have become sedentary as a result of education and the southern push of the desert. It is a country, like many of the Sahel countries, where there is kind of an invisible line between an Arab population in the northern part and an African population in the south. Over time tensions have arisen between those two groups. In Mauritania, power has always resided with the Moor group, who are light-skinned Arab stock. And they always will, as long as they can control the country and its political system. The sedentary population, sometimes called black or African Mauritians, lives along the Senegal river in the south, and they are sedentary agriculturalists whereas the Moors have been herders and traders. This distinction between the two groups took on enormous - and tragic - significance in the two years I was in Mauritania because of a sudden outburst of violence that none of us could have predicted. With the spread of the desert and the declining carrying capacity of the land and the soil, large numbers of Moors were naturally moving further south. They were running out of water and needed more land for their herds. So there became increasing tension over access to, and ownership of, the more fertile land in the southern part of the country bordering the Senegal river.

Politically and ethnically national power has always resided in the Moors. The Moors have always said that they outnumber the rest of the population by about two to one, although this is in dispute. Among the Moors themselves there are many clans and groups and a delicate partition of power among them that an outsider is incapable of understanding. Ministerial nominations are part of that balance of power. We look on them all as Moors, but in fact, they are very clannish and there has to be a division of jobs among these clans in positions of responsibilities. This also holds true, of course, for nominations of senior positions to members of the tribes from the south, the "Africans."

So, this was, and is, an increasingly desertified country which put strains on the economy and on welfare. Despite its ecological fragility, Mauritania has great mineral deposits in the north, mainly of iron and phosphates. There is a huge fishery wealth offshore, which the Mauritians exploit through lucrative contracts with countries around the world - Japan, Russia, China, and many others. The country's second city, Nouadhibou, is further north up the coast from the capital city of Nouakchott. It is at Nouadhibou that the major fisheries operations dock, and it is the point from which all the ore extracted from the interior comes by rail for shipment. Minerals and fisheries are the two major foreign exchange earners, and they are significant. But their benefits have not been used to improve the standard of living of the average Mauritanian, who remains rooted in primitive patterns of herding and farming.

Mauritania is officially called The Islamic Republic of Mauritania. The Moors, themselves, are quite hospitable, typical of the desert nomad culture. Wherever you travel you will be welcomed into a home and given a place to stay and taken care of even though the pickings are meager. You will be invited to share their meal. When I describe

them as nomadic, I am referring to their origins. Most of them have become sedentary as they have been obliged to accommodate to changing circumstances.

I think development prospects, as Anne had warned me, were limited, and we had completed some fairly major investments that hadn't shown too much success, but AID still had a fairly impressive list of activities that were going on.

Q: How big was the Mission?

SLOCUM: We must have had five or six direct hire, three personal services contractors and then a local staff of about 30. We had agricultural, health and engineering divisions (engineering because we had a fairly major roads project in the south). There was one major design activity when I got there, an irrigated perimeter project which got to the final approval stage, but it was never submitted for approval in final form to Washington because of the tragic events that occurred in 1989, which caused us to phase down the program and close out the Mission over the next two years. This is why I only stayed there two years. I would have stayed there longer but for human rights reasons.

Q: What were some of the programs and how did they work?

SLOCUM: There was a longstanding agricultural research activity through the University of Arizona. It was a classic Title XII-supported agricultural research project which included field research, training, etc.

Q: Connected with a university or some institution in the country?

SLOCUM: The Arizona team worked with the National Agricultural Research Center.

Q: There was no Mauritanian educational counterpart to this?

SLOCUM: Only to the extent that the national ag research network trained researchers and extension agents, but no, it had no connection with the University of Mauritania in Nouakchott. The research headquarters were located in the town of Kaedi which was southwest of Nouakchott on the Senegal River. Serving the agricultural sector, the Center was staffed predominantly by the different ethnic groups from the African Mauritanian population in the south, which became a problem for the continuation of the project later. The Minister of Rural Development during my period of service was a Moor without any technical qualifications for the sector. Under his tenure, he began trying to shift the focus of research to more drought-resistant crops which could be grown away from the river. This caused us problems because we were focusing on food and cash crops more appropriate to the river valley.

Q: Was most of this research along the river?

SLOCUM: Yes, just because that was where the country's large-scale agriculture took place. The rest of the country was desert, and the only agriculture was the oases and some

small gardening in villages near other water sources. There had earlier been an oasis development activity which had not given much in the way of results and was already terminated by the time I came.

Q: Were we trying to train any Mauritians to be researchers?

SLOCUM: Oh, yes. The University of Arizona program included a major training component. I don't recall how many Mauritians received long-term training at Arizona or affiliated consortium universities, but I guess it was between 10 and 20. By the way, I think in retrospect that the most lasting impact we had in Mauritania was in human resource development. We had a personal services contractor who was responsible for all the training, both project-level training as well as broader opportunities offered through AFGRAD and HRDA. By 1990 I believe the Mission had well over 100 Mauritians in training or who had completed training programs.

Q: What kind of crops were they researching?

SLOCUM: Grains, some legumes, even rice, in a variety of irrigation schemes connected with the river. Imported rice is a staple of their diet, believe it or not. I say this because rice is perhaps the most water-intensive crop in the world, and thus a fairly expensive imported habit. Garden vegetables that could be grown around homes, usually by the women, were also improved through the project.

But, something unusual happened with irrigated rice production during the time I was there. There emerged a phenomenon of Moor businessmen from Nouakchott who invested in irrigation plots in an area along the river in the delta, in southwest Mauritania. They were buying up land from the local landowners, and they developed their own rice cropping schemes that became very successful. Elliot Berg, the renowned development economist, was constantly watching for unexpected developments in food production economics in the Sahel, and alerted us to this. On a visit to Mauritania for the World Bank, he told me, "We don't know of any other experience of unique private sector investments in fairly big schemes like this elsewhere in the Sahel." So, we funded his proposal to look at that. Before we could get the study underway, however, the disruptions of 1989 prevented us from going ahead with Elliot's proposal.

Q: Were there rice varieties that were a result of our research work?

SLOCUM: I don't think so. I think we focused more on the non-rice crops more traditional to the valley. But, it was something that I think our own research activity would have gotten more involved in if we had stayed longer.

Q: What were some of the other projects?

SLOCUM: I was getting into training. We had a very good human resources person and we had a vast training project that successfully identified opportunities for at least a hundred Mauritians in a wide variety of disciplines over a 10-year period. Demand was

high, even at the undergraduate level, because of the relatively restricted opportunities for students locally. Moreover, because of their nomadic-trader tradition, the Moors had very good business instincts. We weren't involved in private sector promotion or structural adjustment as the World Bank was, but because of the Moors' own business acumen, there were areas that we found for formal training. For example, vocational training, which could support some of these activities. We did a lot in the fisheries sector up in Nouadhibou. We even helped train a Mauritanian businessman who was building a dry dock for repairs so they wouldn't have to pay for costly repairs to their fleets, and those of other countries, outside Mauritania.

Our HRD adviser (PSC) had set up a neat arrangement for vocational training activities in Tunisia. Tunisian Arabic and Mauritanian Arabic, called *hassaniya*, are very similar, and he had identified a Tunisian training organization with which the Mission entered into a long-term contract. I had the occasion to visit the headquarters of the Tunisian Agency for Technical Training. At any given time the agency had up to 100 young Mauritanians in a variety of vocation-level training programs, generally geared to private-sector employment: machinery repair and related subjects. And that was a very useful thing, to use another African country where language was not a problem and which offered very practical, hands-on courses.

We also did academic training, of course, as I described earlier, both graduate-level training through the AFGRAD program and other training through the Africa Regional Human Resources Development Activity (HRDA).

Q: Did you find a sufficient number of Mauritanian candidates?

SLOCUM: Oh, Yes. Graduates from the liberal studies at the University of Nouakchott plus Mauritanians who had profited from earlier training abroad, of whom there were quite a few. The demand and competition were intense. The one thing we never got off the ground and wanted to was an alumni association which could offer a forum for returned trainees (participants) to exchange views about their experiences and allow us to monitor their employment after their return.

Q: Did they come back regularly after their studies in the States?

SLOCUM: To my knowledge the return rate was as good as any other country. I can't cite you statistics, but it was not a problem. However, an "alumni association" would have helped get a more precise fix on this.

Q: They settled into good positions?

SLOCUM: Yes. They were well received by the government. In addition to the agricultural activity, we had a health project with the Ministry of Health which had a training component. Unfortunately, though, after the disruptions of mid-1989, many of the non-Moor Mauritanians found themselves marginalized in their civil service positions or, worse, expelled from Mauritania as "Senegalese" or forced to flee with their families

out of fear.

Q: Did the health project set up clinics around the country?

SLOCUM: The focus was on building the capacity of the Ministry to manage, expand and improve the quality of the public health clinics.

Q: To open the northern areas?

SLOCUM: No, the emphasis was less geographical than it was quality and quantity of health care services being offered in existing clinics. Mauritians number about two million, as I recall, most of them in rural areas, and the push was for better clinics. I recall that access was less a problem because drought had pushed people closer to urban or semi-urban areas. Nonetheless, given the scarcity of water in most areas and the high rate of poverty, Mauritians' health indicators were poor, with a high mortality rate. I think the lifespan was something like 42 years.

Q: Were there any cultural problems promoting health care?

SLOCUM: No. Even though all Mauritians are Muslim, they are quite open to modern health methods, including birth control. Because of the declining land carrying capacity, people tended to be living closer to public services, so that they became more used to having health services.

Q: Were there squatter settlements around Nouakchott?

SLOCUM: Oh, boy, yes. There are squatter towns on the dunes outside town with ramshackle huts made of just about anything people could get their hands on. This was another consequence of the drought and the declining "carrying capacity" of the land.

Q: Were you working with those people?

SLOCUM: Not directly, except for the health activity. But these expanding settlements presented enormous problems to already strained services. So, there certainly was an effort to expand services there. Our main effort was through NGOs using food-for-work from proceeds of Title II food aid. Even Catholic Relief Services had an active program there, along with a Christian fundamentalist group known as Doulos, something of an anomaly in the Islamic Republic.

Q: What were some of the other project areas?

SLOCUM: In the Mauritians' eyes, undoubtedly the most important contribution of the USAID program was the Title II food aid program. Given the significant structural food gap - between their own production and the population's food needs - most donors had a major food aid component.

Q: This was Title II?

SLOCUM: Yes.

Q: Used for development?

SLOCUM: Yes.

Q: In what kind of work?

SLOCUM: In addition to Food-for-Work, the proceeds of food sales were allotted to small-scale schemes to spur local initiatives. The program also had a heavy policy component. That is where we had, I think, our greatest influence. The Mauritanian official responsible for food security, the Food Aid Commissioner, was very good, a devout person of great integrity. His job was of crucial political importance. He had the president's mandate to make sure there was enough food in the country to feed the population. He was very amenable to debate the nature and pace of the reform agenda, including areas such as pricing policy to make sure that donor food aid did not serve as a disincentive to local production. So, thanks to the Commissaire, we had a very smooth relationship on the policy issues.

Q: Was that used for food for work kinds of programs?

SLOCUM: There were some food-for-work activities, but it was more tied to agricultural policy reforms in a multi-donor context. The European Community with German leadership was the other major food-aid donor. Of course, it was the World Bank which led the policy reform effort.

Q: What kind of policies were you trying to address?

SLOCUM: The policies ranged from appropriate pricing policies for agricultural products to broader efforts to support structural adjustment. We worked very closely with the Bank on these issues.

Q: Did it have an effect?

SLOCUM: I think the dialogue with the Mauritians helped them understand how to use food imports in more productive ways that didn't act against domestic economic initiatives. Food aid use became more rational, and there was some evidence of decreasing dependency on food aid. Mauritania will always be a "structurally food deficit" country, so the best one can hope for is that food aid does not serve as a disincentive to local production. Again, for production increases you had to look to the south and the proper development of the river basin. Increasingly there were investments by all the donors — the European Union, the World Bank, the French, the Germans and even some NGOs — in irrigation development along the river.

Q: Were there other project areas that you were working in?

SLOCUM: Yes. The fragile agricultural systems were very vulnerable to pest infestation of crops. We had a component of the integrated pest management (IPM) project that was very important because production was already threatened enough because of limited areas of soil fertility and water. In 1988 Mauritania had an incredible locust invasion that denuded everything in its path including virtually all the vegetation in the capital city of Nouakchott. The locusts were so thick that when you walked through them they would scatter to create a path for you to walk through. Their numbers were so great that you could hear them eating away the foliage. The only things they didn't eat were pine trees and the like. Everything else was stripped. We got emergency funds and did a lot of spraying down in the river valley where the agricultural production was the most important.

And then we had a fairly big roads project in the south with an American engineer working with the public works ministry. We provided the heavy equipment and technical assistance and oversight. The roads in question were important for opening up markets for the agricultural region.

Q: Down in the south?

SLOCUM: In the river valley, opening up the area.

Q: Nothing in the northern part?

SLOCUM: Except for the oasis project I mentioned earlier, we did nothing in the agricultural sector beyond the south. If you look at a map of Mauritania, the process of desertification has resulted in a southern progression that appears inexorable. Historically Mauritania had major population centers in the north, but those that exist today derive their economic value from the minerals and fisheries exploitation.

But the north had remnants of once great cities. One city, almost a ghost town, owed its significance to a salt mine which made it an important stop on a major caravan trail. The town, called Tichit, was no longer easily reachable by road, but on one occasion the Ambassador had use of the regional U.S. Air Force plane and we flew to the Tichit prefecture. It was a small town, barely visible from the air. In fact, the pilot had trouble finding the landing strip and asked our help in siting it. Just north of Tichit was a long, high cliff, which I guess served to protect the town somewhat from the encroaching dunes. There was a small population, and a local official, the *prefet*, who came out to greet us in a blowing sandstorm that made landing in our small plane an experience the pilot later told me he would place in the "bottom 10 percent" of his flying experience. The city had been an important Islamic center, and the remains of its school, known as a *medersa*, were still there. The remaining buildings were well preserved, and remarkably, a librarian managed the sacred texts that were dated before the year 1,000 AD. They were remarkable to behold: hand-printed and -painted, protected by the dry desert air. The man who let us in allowed us to examine those books. But one could sense that the northern

cities such as Tichit will eventually disappear under the dunes. The only cities in the north that would remain are those that are linked to the minerals exploitation and can support, therefore, the infrastructure required to keep a city intact. So, you are really talking about a country of about 2 million people with the majority living in a very small land surface area of the country, the southern region.

Q: Were we involved in oasis development?

SLOCUM: We had been.

Q: What were we trying to do?

SLOCUM: Trying to exploit whatever could be produced from oasis areas. Date palms, of course, but also vegetable gardens. However, this was phased out before my time there. I suspect that there had been some political pressure from the Moors to take a look at oasis agriculture, but it didn't get very far because of the obvious low economic return to the investment.

Q: You mentioned the RAMS project. Was that active while you were there?

SLOCUM: No, that had already been completed. I am not sure of the extent to which the extensive reports were useful. For example, in my two years there, I never once heard reference to them in discussions with Mauritanian officials.

Q: Were there any Consultative Group meetings among the donors?

SLOCUM: Not a World Bank-sponsored classic CG, no, nor do I recall any UNDP Round Table meetings. After the civil unrest of 1989, the World Bank organized a meeting in Paris, at the OECD, of donors to help get Mauritania back on path.

Q: What was it that happened while you were there?

SLOCUM: In May 1989, a year after I arrived, an incident occurred on a small island in the Senegal River. As I recall the reports at the time, Mauritanian herders had taken cattle to graze on an island in the middle of the river, where farmers from Senegal had crops. The two sides exchanged words, which escalated into fighting. The herders killed two farmers from Matam, a nearby town on the Senegal side. When word reached Matam about the killings, the townspeople began attacking Moors living there. Mauritians, as I mentioned, the Moors, are traders throughout West Africa, running little shops on the streets of towns and cities. So, in any city in Senegal, as well as other countries in West Africa, you will find stands or kiosks run by Moors. The Moors in Matam were randomly attacked and a number were killed. When word of this spread to Mauritania, Moors staged retaliatory attacks on the Senegalese population in Mauritanian cities, notably in Nouakchott. Word of this got back to Senegal, and a mounting spiral of violence was underway, with scores of Moors getting attacked and killed in Senegal, and the same fate striking Senegalese in Mauritania. There developed a spreading phenomenon of tit-for-

tat, which escalated to the point that both countries were virtually at war. I was in Washington at the time to attend the senior management seminar, but the Ambassador asked me to come back immediately because of what had happened. The fighting continued spreading, and within days any Senegalese in Mauritania were fair game and any Moors in Senegal were at risk. A lot of people were killed, well into the hundreds. The result was a UN-sponsored airlift in which all Senegalese in Mauritania were taken to Dakar and any Moors in Senegal were airlifted up to Mauritania. This doesn't capture the brutality of the events, though. One of my household staff told me he saw a Moor twist the neck of a Senegalese baby until it died. At the airport, departing Senegalese were forced by the Mauritanian military to give up all their belongings, including personal papers, photos, even money. I saw for myself torn money notes in the latrines, the departing Senegalese deciding that if they couldn't take it with them, the Moors would not get it either. They preferred to destroy their money rather than hand it over to the soldiers. One of the events that particularly disturbed me was the testimony of American colleagues who had witnessed truckloads of Moors being dispatched in the early-morning hours from a store around the corner from the USAID offices. The trucks were loaded with haratine (the Arab word for ex-slave Moors, the lowest class of Moor) and their Moor masters were instructing them where to go to kill Senegalese and destroy their houses and property. We had patronized that store regularly. It was one of those general stores where one could find just about anything. We called it "the Amazing Boutique." After hearing of the role the store owners had played in the atrocities, none of us ever patronized the store again. This was my introduction to terror and violence. Unfortunately it would not be the only episode in my career. Ironically, some of the toughest lessons of my career lay before me, lessons for which one could not possibly be prepared, and a reminder that we development officers were not well equipped to deal with them.

Removing the antagonists and victims was an immediate and necessary solution, but that didn't resolve the underlying political impasse between the two countries. What had been underlying tensions were now open hostility, and the war turned into a rhetorical war of words between politicians of the two countries, and this lasted for well over a year. Their rhetoric consisted in charging the other side with total responsibility for the violence. In the meantime, the Moors became very suspicious of their black African population in southern Mauritania and began to force a lot of the African Mauritians across the Senegal River into Senegal, claiming that they were not real Mauritians. Prominent officials in Nouakchott who were members of the ethnic groups from along the river were also expelled. The Director of Agriculture in the GIRM (Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania) was either expelled or made so uncomfortable that he fled with his family for fear of their safety. Despite the efforts of the diplomatic community to put a stop to that and get the GIRM to accept back the expelled people, they stonewalled, claiming that anyone who left had done so voluntarily and, were, by the way, not really Mauritians anyway but Senegalese. This became the status quo for months, maybe more than a year. (To the best of my knowledge, which may not be accurate, the majority of the 50,000 black Mauritians forced to resettle in northern Senegal in 1989 are still there.).

The State Department felt that it was important for AID to maintain its programs as a tool of State diplomacy to keep the Mauritians from doing even worse things. AID felt that, in that climate of killing, reprisals and expulsions of its own nationals, especially from the most productive region of the country, it really didn't make sense for AID to maintain its programs there. This thinking process developed over several months. It was very frustrating for those of us to see this turn of events. Mauritanian society was split in two, and people who before had been working together harmoniously suddenly were not.

The reaction of our staff was very instructive. They split right down the ethnic line. Moors refused to believe their brothers had committed atrocities in the quarters where Senegalese lived. Even highly educated, U.S.-trained FSNs, behaved as though nothing had happened. In contrast, the non-Moor Mauritanian staff ceased conversing with the Moor staff. Whenever I discussed among the staff the need for the GIRM to redress the excesses of recent months, the Moors would remind me that I should share the same view with the Senegalese Government with respect to the Moors who had been killed, mistreated or expelled from Senegal. This was the beginning of my education in conflict and its impact on us and our programs. I would learn in my next assignment the risks of not accounting for the potential for conflict as we designed our programs and strategies. I personally think AID's decision to phase out gradually was the right decision. I was, therefore, transferred in the summer of 1990. However, a program was maintained for some time and my deputy was kept on in an acting capacity for another year or so. I don't think the activities were fully closed for another two or three years, and even training activities were kept on for a long time, managed out of the regional office in Abidjan.

The other lesson from the Mauritanian experience was that when people in power judge that their own national interests are at stake, they will go to extraordinary means to protect those interests. In this case, the Moor power structure had determined that it had to secure its southern lands for themselves at any cost, including kicking off the indigenous population, no matter how strong the international outcry and human-rights criticisms. Our ambassador, Bill Twaddell, who now is our ambassador in Lagos, worked very hard in trying to get the Moors to reverse the expulsions, but they simply would not admit that there was an official expulsion policy of African Mauritians. "Those people left on their own. They are Senegalese" was the constant line. For me, it was a very sad wake-up call that we ignored, at our peril, these fundamental dynamics of societies in which we provided assistance. We had to close things down that we were doing well because they lay on fragile ground. The last element of the program to terminate was training. The reason for this was not that AID could no longer run a training program out of Abidjan. It was because there was very clear evidence in the selection process of the candidates that the Mauritanian government officials responsible for finalizing the list based on exam results had doctored the rank ordering of the list. Candidates were handpicked instead of chosen based on exam results. It became clear that the official responsible for approving the final list of applicants had simply moved names up to the top of the list that were Moors and moved non-Moors to the bottom. At that point the ambassador realized that we couldn't approve such a list of candidates and ordered the program canceled.

Q: Could you tell the difference?

SLOCUM: You can by the name, yes. A Moor always has in his name “Ould” which means “son of” and a woman has “Mint.” The tribes in the south also have names which show that they are Wolof, Toucouleur or Sarakhole.

Q: How did you find working with the government apart from these clannish differences?

SLOCUM: Officials ranged from fairly competent to not very competent at all. As I said earlier, appointments were often based as much on clan balance as on ability. On balance, I found an acceptable degree of competence in the people with whom we worked on a regular basis, both technicians and managers. There were some really bright people. Moors are survivors by instinct. They are astute and good business people, great bargainers. There were some cases where people were not well trained. It was not uncommon to have a minister who hadn't gotten beyond high school. The ministers were always shifting around as part of the whole process to try to keep this balance of clans. Over time a minister would bring his own clan in to occupy certain positions in the ministry. So, while I said working with the government was fairly congenial, there were some operational problems because people were constantly being shifted, and somebody with whom you had built up a working relationship could in a day be gone.

Q: Was there a professional civil service evolving?

SLOCUM: There certainly was a civil service but the civil service in the French tradition, and those countries under French colonialism, of course, imitated them. It is very different from ours. If you are a civil servant in France you can be transferred to any ministry. You may start off your career in the EPA and then get a position as a diplomat in the foreign ministry and then come back to become an administrator in customs, etc.

Q: Generalists so to speak?

SLOCUM: There were technical people who were very competent and trained in their field, but in the overall civil service system they tend to be moved around from ministry to ministry. Going into a Mauritanian office was unlike any other place that I have ever seen. You often encountered people lying on the floor. In the nomadic lifestyle, of course, when you are not moving you are reclining. That is the way of the desert. So, it was not uncommon to go into the ground floor office of a ministry and see people literally lying around on the floor. I suspect they were the unemployed clan members, just hanging around.

Q: Were there any programs supporting women's development?

SLOCUM: The only activity with direct benefits to women was the health program, with improved health service standards to women and children, promotion of family planning, and training of female health assistants. In the training activities we made a successful effort to identify women. The Mauritanian woman is fairly strong in her own right, with a

certain amount of independence. A very fine Mauritanian woman who worked for us refused to accompany her husband when he was named ambassador to a European country. She decided she liked working for us too much and wasn't going to go. We heard later that the president of the country called her in and asked her to go. She said that she liked doing what she was doing here. Mauritania is an Islamic Republic, but their application of Islamic principles is mixed. For example, some years ago they decided to prohibit the sale and consumption of alcohol products. But there was a huge black market for alcoholic beverages. I would call their approach to their religion pragmatic. But the appearance of Islam was very important.

Q: How did you find living in Mauritania?

SLOCUM: I said earlier that Mauritania is not a place I would have picked out and put on a list as a choice of assignment. Both in my earlier assignments in Dakar in the late seventies and my Sahel responsibilities in Washington, plus the Club du Sahel job, I had visited Mauritania several times. Of all the Sahel countries, I had unconsciously said to myself that Mauritania was the one I would least pick as an assignment. But, the opportunity was important to go there as director, or AID rep. My expectations of life in Nouakchott were not very high. So I went there realizing it was going to be environmentally a hostile place, with very hot temperatures and sandstorms that could turn your house into a sand palace in half a day. As it turned out, it was a very enjoyable tour, except for the tragic killings that took place a year after I got there, which was terribly demoralizing for all of us. Nouakchott was isolated; it was not very easy to get anywhere, and for half the year the weather was very hot. Socially, people took care of each other, recognizing that activities were limited and distractions had to be home grown. The isolation intensified after the troubles with Senegal, because the road south was closed at the border.

I have talked about the hospitality of the Moors and that was genuine. Whenever you were on a trip to the interior, and I never got out as much as I wanted, but on those occasions when I did get out we would be invited to the governor's house, where we sat on cushions and palavered with the governor and his staff. The first thing would be a bowl of water for you to wash your hands in. They would always bring drinks and a snack to eat despite the typical shortage of food.

Q: What would they feed you?

SLOCUM: A meal was always lamb or mutton, which is really good on the first run, when you had it specially cooked that evening with rice or couscous. Part of the best dish was called mechoui, which is a stuffed lamb or goat. It is very tender, and stuffed usually with rice and raisins and things like that. They always gave you dates as an appetizer because they are the favorite fruit from oasis palms. Usually the meal would be quite fine, although often you had to pick it apart with your hands. If you were an overnight guest, an invitation to stay in the prefet's or governor's house was to be expected. In the morning very often you would have the previous evening's leftovers for breakfast, which was considerably less appetizing. On one trip with the ambassador, I remember I had

brought my own cereal and milk, and the next morning what came out were the leftovers from the night before. I had my own cereal, milk, and banana, and the ambassador said I was smart to have brought my own breakfast.

Q: How do you sum up the prospects for development in Mauritania?

SLOCUM: Let's go back to Anne de Lattre. As she said, "I don't think you can do development in Mauritania." The combination of a determined Moor population anxious to secure the territory for its own interests, a feudal mentality and the encroaching desert does not create a very propitious environment for development. The prospects are that as long as the desert keeps moving southward, the Moors will move in increasing numbers towards the south and there will be more conflict over the land along the river. So you will have a Mauritania for the Moors and they will fend for themselves. Mauritania will always be dependent on aid, especially for food, but it's unclear how this aid can promote real development. I think Mauritania is a country where one should help them feed their population, enhance the skills they need to manage their society, and provide basic services such as health and education.

Q: It sounds like eventually they will all abandon the country. Is the population declining?

SLOCUM: I don't recall the trends. The one thing I can say about the population is that the percentage of Moors vis à vis the percentage of non-Moors is a sensitive topic. The World Health Organization had sent out a team to design a project. One of the team members had read a report before leaving Geneva which asserted that, despite Moors' statements, the non-Moor population exceeded the Moorish population. When the Minister of Health saw that repeated in one of the reports they were writing, reportedly he had the team expelled. It was a pretty sensitive topic. I think this anecdote proves my hypothesis: that the Moors' goal is to keep Mauritania safe for themselves. If the carrying capacity of the land forces more Moors further south, then the people living there are going to have to move.

Q: Anything else on Mauritania?

SLOCUM: It was my introduction to major conflicts and tragedy. In some ways I was glad I was away from post during the worst of the events because a lot of my colleagues saw some very nasty things. Andy Gilboy, the PSC human resources adviser, lived in a house almost across the street from the "amazing boutique." One of his household staff saw people being loaded onto trucks receiving orders and directions to go to attack and kill the Senegalese, as I mentioned earlier. None of us ever went back to the "amazing boutique" when we learned that it was one of the ring leaders of the teams dispatched to kill the Senegalese in their neighborhoods. We knew that people on our own block were murderers - the AID office, my home, and Andy's house were all in the same block, including the "amazing boutique."

The tragedy of 1989 changed our attitude towards the country forever, and made us

profoundly sad. I guess it was the professional equivalent of the adolescent loss of innocence. I spoke earlier of the inhumane treatment of the Senegalese leaving on the airlift who were forced to give up all their possessions, including personal photographs. I remember visiting the site where they had been airlifted out and seeing the remnants of their possessions which they had destroyed rather than hand over to the Mauritanian soldiers. There appeared to be no way to stop that. It was a UN-sponsored airlift and couldn't there have been some measure of security provided so that the people could at least get their personal papers and possessions out? This was my first experience of seeing this kind of brutality. Unfortunately not my last; I would see a lot more of that later. It kind of marks the rest of my career and would have a profound impact on my sense of the priorities we should have for Africa.

New appointment as USAID Director in Burundi - 1990

Q: Where did you go from Mauritania?

SLOCUM: I left Mauritania after only two years because of the phaseout, and Burundi opened up unexpectedly. For the first time in my career I was going to a different region, East Africa. Except for some of my early training assignments, I had been dealing with French-speaking countries of West Africa, including the Paris job. So, I packed out, returned to Washington for the swearing-in, and arrived in Burundi in August 1990. The World Bank Resident Representative in Mauritania was a Burundian, so I looked him up when I came to Washington. He gave me a perspective, most of it very helpful since I knew very little about the country, but he was off the mark in some curious respects. He told me not to expect any decent bread because "we don't have good bakeries in Bujumbura." That turned out to be wrong. I discovered perfectly good bread in Bujumbura. Etienne Baranshamaje had lived outside his country for more than 20 years, so he was a little out of date, even though he returned annually for family visits.

He talked honestly to me about the Hutu-Tutsi phenomenon. The Tutsi is the ruling group but a minority, only 14 percent of the population. The Hutus constitute about 85 percent of the population but are way under-represented in professional positions relative to their numbers. There is also a very small group called the Twa, which are the original, indigenous pygmy group. Etienne was clearly Tutsi, very tall and lanky, with aquiline features. I had asked him for names of people I could look up whom he would recommend for me to meet and to help me get acquainted with the country. In providing some names, including some fairly senior officials, he offered that he didn't know any Hutus because "all my Hutu friends were killed in 1972." He was referring to the worst massacre in Burundi's history, when, in retaliation for attacks by Hutus on Tutsi civilians, the Tutsi-controlled Army, supported by the government, eliminated all adult educated male Hutus. So, it became clear fairly early that this was going to be in the background, the historical enmity between the two ethnic groups. It did not become a major issue during the three years of my assignment there. The military president was enlightened, realizing that he had to lead his people out of this penetrating ethnic hate. So I arrived to hear him preaching "national unity." It was no longer inappropriate to utter the words Hutus and Tutsis, as it had been, but the order of the day was "we are all Burundians."

President Buyoya's vision helped attract donors, and our program flourished.

Burundi is a very beautiful country, situated in one branch of the Rift valley. The capital city sits on the edge of Lake Tanganyika against the mountains of eastern Zaire, which has now reverted to its former name of Congo. This area of eastern Congo is called Kivu. Burundi is a mountainous country, and its people reflect the reserve often associated with the topography. Like other mountain people, the Swiss, for example, they are not very trusting and it takes time to develop relationships with them. I had been briefed on these features and arrived with minimal expectations of developing close relationships with the people, just as I had arrived in Mauritania with minimal expectations of that country. As it turned out I found Burundians quite charming, very nice, very competent to deal with, well trained, at least at the level at which I dealt with them professionally. It is a country that is self-sufficient in food, which I hadn't seen in my Sahelian experience. Most of these countries were not food self-sufficient. But Burundians were in many respects self-reliant. They have good agriculture in the plains, mountain agriculture elsewhere and they produce high-quality coffee and tea for export. They also produce tobacco, which is the major foreign exchange earner in the plains. The country had about six and a half million people when I was there.

I inherited a program with a number of active projects. As in Mauritania, we supported the national agricultural research program. There was a vaccination program linked to basic health services, and a program of private sector support in the context of the structural adjustment program was just getting under way. We were becoming involved in HIV/AIDS prevention and control through social marketing of condoms. A lot of my time was spent managing a growing program because Burundi, a development pariah since the massacres of 1972, had begun redeeming itself under the political and economic reforms of the Buyoya regime.

Rwanda is the neighboring country to the north, and with similar characteristics. About the same size of population, though slightly larger, the same exact ethnic proportion of Hutus and Tutsis. The minority Tutsi population controlled the political, economic, commercial and the security systems because of historical circumstances. Over the centuries they had gained the upper hand over the Hutus through conquest, and by the time Europeans arrived a hundred years ago, a fairly rigid social structure was in place, Tutsi rulers and Hutu subjects. At the time of independence, each country took a different direction. In Burundi the royal Tutsi group maintained its hold on power. In Rwanda, the Tutsis were overthrown and a Hutu government installed. Burundi maintained its status quo and Rwanda began its independence with a revolution.

Because the Hutus in Rwanda had overthrown the Tutsis in a violent way, with thousands killed and many more forced into exile, the remaining Tutsis were very disadvantaged. Because the Tutsi minority in Burundi retained its hold on power, they maintained their advantage in a somewhat different way. They could not threaten to wipe out the entire Hutu population as the Hutu population later tried to do to the Rwanda Tutsis in 1994. But, what they did do was to periodically target certain Hutu groups for extermination, 1972 being the most egregious example.

Beginning in the late sixties, Burundian Hutus were inspired by their Hutu brethren in Rwanda and resisted the dominance of Tutsis in the ruling structure, which controlled the economy, the finances, the military, the political system, and held all of most of the key posts in government. Periodically the Hutus would get upset about this and take their frustration out on the Tutsi population. Usually they would start killing Tutsis in the countryside in order to challenge the Tutsi hegemony but also to show that the status quo was unacceptable. Because the Tutsis controlled the military, the military would conduct massive reprisals against the Hutus, targeting educated Hutus. The worst episode was the 1972 massacres, when all educated Hutu men, civil servants, teachers, professionals, business owners, etc. were brought in for “questioning” and never seen again. The documented stories are incredible and show the dark side of the Burundian mentality. The Hutus would be herded into areas, such as the local stadium, and slaughtered by the soldiers. The story is told, albeit incredibly, that when the sun went down, the soldiers would tell the remaining Hutus to go home and come back in the morning. And they did, according to published reports of the time. This “do-what-you’re-told” mentality, as baffling as it appears, was also responsible for the genocide of Tutsis by Hutus in Rwanda in 1994.

Q: In 1972, they returned to be killed?

SLOCUM: Yes, it appears the victims accepted this fate. By the time I got there in 1990, 18 years later, I met young Hutus in their early to mid twenties who remembered that their fathers had left for work one morning and they never returned. By 1990 many of these young men and women had entered the higher-education system, and carried within them the pain of 1972. They told stories not just of their fathers being taken away and never seen again, but the confiscation of their fathers’ cars and bank accounts, and of cases where mothers had to take their children back to the farm, because the authorities had seized their houses in town, the surviving widows having no property rights. As you can imagine, there was a great deal of repressed anger about this. For many years after 1972, it was forbidden to talk about any of this within Burundi. Throughout the seventies and eighties, because of 1972, Burundi was a pariah country. Its government was reviled and saw a succession of poor military leaders, and the country received very little foreign assistance. In 1987, the eleven-year rule of a man named Bagaza was ended and a young colonel named Pierre Buyoya replaced him. He began to approve some political reforms and, the following year, in response to a bloody ethnic outbreak in the north of the country, he began working in earnest to encourage fundamental political changes in hopes the two sides could see through their historical enmity and achieve enough common ground to forge a new political approach. He must have realized that the Tutsis couldn’t keep the Hutus down forever, because they constituted 84 percent of the population. But his task was tricky: Hutus had to be empowered in a way that wouldn’t expose the Tutsis to risk. He undertook to open up the political system to give Hutus a sense of their proportional power. So, he did a number of things.

By the time I got there in 1990, two years later, the international community was recognizing Burundi for the reforms Buyoya was trying to promote. He had realized how

close the country had come to another 1972-like conflagration when violence erupted in northern Burundi in 1988, in which several thousand killings took place. Though he managed to limit the area of atrocities and damage, he must have said to himself, “there must be a better way.” Somehow he had to change institutions and enact measures that would bring the two groups together and get them to start talking. So, he had a constitutional commission formed with broad representation. There was a successful referendum on the constitution after I was there, I would say it was in 1991. Then, after opening up the political scene to political parties, he scheduled elections for the presidency. My three years in Burundi were a period of dynamism and hope for the country. Donors reacted positively to these hopeful signs of political evolution and major investments were being developed. A Structural Adjustment Program, which our program supported closely, signified Burundi’s “recovery” from its 18-year pariah status. Though a program of support to private-sector reforms, health and agriculture were already in place, we were developing a new strategy to react in tune with the positive changes. It was an exciting time to be in Burundi. At times the President would enlist the help of the American ambassador to encourage leaders of the new political parties to move forward. The American establishment was well regarded, since we had no “baggage” from the colonial period as did the Belgians and the French. We thought we were having a positive impact with our program, and were playing a supportive role in the political liberalization.

In terms of our own program, we developed a \$50 million, 10-year health activity which was probably the best-designed program I had ever been associated with. A design team was assembled, of course, but it operated in a very collaborative way with Burundians and other donors. The Secretary General of the Ministry of Health chaired weekly meetings during the design process. Design team members would report on progress of the design — it was called the Burundi Health Systems Support Project (BHSS). All the donors were invited to comment on the evolution of the design. The result was a product that had the ownership of the Burundians, fit in neatly with what other donors were doing, and had every chance of having a major impact on health-service delivery systems for the next 10 years.

Q: A lot of participation.

SLOCUM: Yes. The design was affected by those weekly sessions. A lot of what we did while I was there, in addition to agricultural research and structural adjustment, involved close consultation and collaboration with other donors. The BEST/BEPP program was a combined technical assistance and budget support vehicle working with the World Bank on the structural adjustment program. BEST was the acronym for Burundi Enterprise Support and Training, which was the project side, and then we had a policy reform side called BEPP, which was the Burundi Enterprise Promotion Program. As they enacted policy reforms to help the private sector environment, we provided annual transfers of cash to support the adjustment program. This work included a fair amount of assistance on their privatization program. I was fortunate to have a good team which worked well with the Burundian officials.

Q: Were the meetings with both Hutu and Tutsi mixed?

SLOCUM: The professional cadres were, and are, predominantly Tutsi. This is the effect of the 1972 atrocities, which wiped out the educated male adult Hutu population. Some survived, fled into exile, or whatever. So there was increasingly an effort to put balance into the ethnic composition of the ministerial cabinet. I recall that some key ministers were Hutus, such as the Finance Minister. The Prime Minister appointed by Buyoya after the 1988 events was a Hutu, the first in the country's history. But in general the great majority of our Burundian collaborators were Tutsis. But, 18 years after the massacre of Hutus, their children were now old enough to begin entering the work force after university graduation. So you did see growing numbers of young Hutus getting trained for professional-level positions. But make no mistake about it, power remained in the hands of the Tutsis.

One indicator of the disproportional influence of the Tutsis in Burundian society was the National University, which had about 3500 students, of whom only about 800 were Hutus. Given that the population is 85 percent Hutus, but the university student body is mainly Tutsi, that does tell you something about the social structure. But, the fact is, I met Hutus at the university who weren't politically plugged in. One young man, whom I got to know well, and his family, exemplify the opportunities that awaited Hutus who worked hard and could get into the University. This young man came from a peasant family whose father, a Hutu, had been killed in 1972. Although his mother was a Tutsi, if you are of mixed parentage, you follow the father's lineage. So, he was a Hutu, and identified himself totally as a Hutu. He made it to the university level. But Hutus still had a hard path: to show you one example, virtually every professional position at USAID was filled by a Tutsi, until we identified a qualified Hutu to occupy a senior FSN position in my last year there. Because educated Hutus were not very numerous, at least not yet, there was strong competition in the job market for them. But you were better off if you were a Tutsi.

Q: Did you run into conflicts between the two groups?

SLOCUM: Not visible conflicts. But, the horror of 1972 had been suppressed for many years. It was only under Buyoya that the existence of two ethnic groups and their bloody history could even be acknowledged in public. I was at a conference on the ecology of Lake Tanganyika, where I met a European woman who had been there in 1972. I asked her about the experience of living through that period. She said, "We couldn't talk about it. We knew that lots of people had disappeared, but couldn't utter a word, not even in private."

An anecdote demonstrates how suppressed the topic of ethnicity was. An American woman in the AID office who had been there eight years could compare the relatively liberal atmosphere of the early 90s with the repressive rule of the previous regime. You may recall there was a movie, I think in the mid eighties, called "Tootsie" with Dustin Hoffman. The lead character was an actor who was unable to find acting jobs, so he dressed as a woman and found work. Lorraine told the story that she was with her

husband and other friends in a restaurant one night, talking about the new film they had just seen, "Tootsie." Conversation at neighboring tables stopped abruptly, and they were met with astonished stares. You weren't even supposed to say the words Tutsi or Hutu. Just saying the word was a violation of convention.

By the time I got there that wasn't true. You couldn't politely come up to somebody and say, "Are you a Tutsi or Hutu?" That would be too bold. But, after getting to know a person you could inquire.

Q: But you didn't find conflicts among your staff or elsewhere?

SLOCUM: Not openly. It was underneath, but it was there, much as we deal with racial issues in our own society. As I said, we had no professional Hutus until my last year; they were all Tutsis. That was also true of the Embassy. USIA had one professional Hutu. To give you an idea of the sensitivity of this, the Ambassador, who was an African-American woman, said one day in a country team meeting, "We have to do something to break this. I want all of you, each agency head, to make a considered effort to hire professional-level Hutus." I came back to my American staff and very discreetly said, "Here is the Ambassador's policy. She's right; let's make an effort at the next opening of a professional slot to identify a qualified Hutu. We held this meeting in my office, and this subject occupied perhaps one minute of the meeting. We were successful in hiring a Hutu within a few weeks, something I was very happy about. You know, within weeks word got out to the Tutsi community that the Ambassador had declared that no Tutsi would in the future be hired to work at the Embassy. What had been very quietly touted as an effort to identify some Hutus was interpreted (I don't know how it got out) by the Tutsi community as: "no Tutsi need apply," which was totally false. The fact is, all of the professional-level people were and probably still are all Tutsis. But, that, again, is for historical reasons, a lot of the professional Hutus having been wiped out a generation ago.

That being said, there was a rising "class" of educated Hutus who found themselves in demand. I would guess that, by the time I arrived in 1990, nearly half of the cabinet was Hutu. Key ministerial posts and the army were all Tutsi-occupied, of course. When political parties got established, there were two main parties and a proliferation of less important parties. It turned out that what had been the only ruling party became a predominantly Tutsi party and the other principal party was predominantly Hutu. The constitution tried to prevent parties from being ethnically identified. A party couldn't form based on ethnicity or regionalism. Despite the best efforts to de-ethnicize the new parties, the fact is that the 10 or 12 that were allowed were considered as one or the other.

In the course of time, things looked quite positive on the surface and the president, although a military man, was clearly trying to lead the country into a new era which would have offered a more promising future of national unity and common purpose. He eventually set the stage, once parties were approved, for presidential elections. Each party came up with a candidate. Some compromised and came up with joint candidates. The candidates of the two major parties were the most prominent and the race was really between those two individuals, and their parties. One was the existing president, Buyoya,

and the other was Melchior Ndadaye. Buyoya, we felt, was very popular and the incumbent leader who had brought the country to this point. He looked like a winner. In the meantime, I, because I lived near one of the campuses, had established some relationships among some of the students over time as I often took evening walks up the hillside behind my house. I had gotten so that I could speak a little more frankly with some of that group, some were Tutsi and some were Hutus, though they tended to keep to each group. I noticed they didn't socialize with each other very much. The ones I spent more time with for no particular reason happened to be Hutus. About three weeks before the elections, I was in a car driving with another AID person and three Hutus in the back seat. We were going outside of town to set up a trail for one of our Hash House Harrier runs. The Burundian Hutus in the back seat began saying that Ndadaye was going to be elected. This was the first we had heard this. We in the foreign community felt that the incumbent was so popular he would be a shoo-in. He would win a five-year mandate by the people and consolidate real democratic gains. These fellows kept saying that this was not true, that Ndadaye was going to win.

I took that back to the next country team meeting and said, "Some of my Hutu friends are saying that Ndadaye is going to win." Only the economic officer, who also served as political officer, was prescient enough to realize the situation and, ten days before the elections, she called Ndadaye the victor, but the DCM made her take the prediction out of her reporting cable. He wouldn't let the Embassy go on record as calling it. Well, she was very right. We provided, along with the European donors and the UN, significant assistance for electoral monitoring. The DCM was having a dinner party for the monitors after the elections, and at 7:00 that evening the news was announced on the radio, but in the national language. I was due to be at the DCM's house at 7:30. My household staff, my cook and my housekeeper were listening to the news on the side porch of my house. Of course, I couldn't understand the announcement, but it didn't matter. At the moment they announced the landslide Ndadaye victory on the radio, I was standing on the porch with my employees, up on a hill overlooking the city. The population of the neighborhoods below broke into screaming and applause. For forms sake, I asked Amas who had won. I need not have, of course. Ndadaye had won 2 to 1. What would happen next? Would the army come on the radio and cancel the results? I didn't know what to do. Do I dare even go out that night, to the DCM's dinner? As I drove the few blocks down to his residence, the streets were bare: no cars, no people. In the total uncertainty of what would happen next, I wondered if I should return home. But I kept going. I had called the DCM and he said he wasn't canceling the dinner; come ahead. So I drove down, nobody in sight, got to his house and about the time I got there the head of the armed services, equivalent to our chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, was coming on TV. We got the cook to come out and translate for us and he was saying, "We accept the results of the elections." We knew that was the defining moment. It didn't matter what the chairman of the elections committee said. As the Embassy political officer, standing beside me watching the military chief's statement, said, "He is the one who has to say it."

A month later, July 1993, five days before I left the country for good, a very moving ceremony marking the transfer of power took place, and Melchior Ndadaye was inaugurated the first democratically elected president of Burundi. Outgoing President

Buyoya passed the symbols of authority to the new president. The head of the Structural Adjustment Program, Sylvie Kinigi, with whom I had worked so closely, was named Prime Minister. She was a Tutsi, and a member of the major Tutsi party. She had been at a dinner party offered by the Government the night before for me. She had arrived late, and rumors were rife that she was to be the New Prime Minister. She was very shaken, her pallor ashen, but she had the grace to come to my dinner. Everybody knew, but no one spoke of it. The next morning, there she was on TV at the inauguration, sitting unsmiling and looking very ill at ease. She was the new Prime Minister.

I had three very positive years in Burundi. I haven't talked too much about the program yet.

Q: Well, let's hear about some of the programs you were concerned with and how they relate to this situation, if any?

SLOCUM: The underpinnings of Burundian society were very fragile. There were a lot of things beneath the surface that we didn't see and probably should have been a little more careful to make ourselves aware of. We programmed as programmers do. We helped to support the Structural Adjustment Program, which was certainly worthwhile because there were some major distortions in the economic structure, especially in the government's role in the productive sectors of the economy, which created major inefficiencies, so we did a lot of good in that area and in promoting private sector development. We had provided private sector services to new businesses forming. We looked very closely at women's issues because women suffered from inequitable legal constraints which were gradually disappearing. For example, a woman could not start a business without her husband's signature in applying for a business license. Nor could she have a bank account in her own name. So, we dealt with a lot of those things, and over time the reform picture was nearly complete.

HIV/AIDS was becoming a phenomenon that had to be dealt with. A society of fairly conservative, reserved people did not like to deal with open discussions of matters such as HIV/AIDS, and it took some concerted activity to get Burundians to recognize the issue. That became a major area of involvement for us.

I have already talked a little bit about the design of the health program, which, had it gone to implementation, could have been a model of collaboration and ownership. Another innovation we introduced was creation of a project support unit, set up to handle administrative support for all programs, using project funds. That brought efficiencies to that element of the program. We were so positive about the direction the country was taking that we got permission to use local-currency generated from our program assistance, the BEPP, to buy an office building. We also bought two residences, from the same trust-fund source. Everything pointed to our being there for the long term. The democratization efforts I discussed earlier were worthy of support. I will talk a little bit more about that later. All of these positive indicators enabled us to develop a new strategic plan which built upon the results we were already achieving. In the private sector, for example, we proposed to enhance business opportunities in the agricultural

economy, notably by helping expand its small export market.

Q: What did your privatization program involve?

SLOCUM: We got involved after seeing the efforts being supported by other donors - the World Bank, EU, France, and realized we could help accelerate the momentum. We looked at two state-owned enterprises. One was cotton and... I don't recall the other; I hope it comes back to me. We invited people from the International Executive Service Corps to advise on updating the technical side of the operations and make them more self-sustaining and competitive in the international marketplace.

Q: Did it work? Were you able to privatize some?

SLOCUM: By the time I left, we were at the stage of engaging contracts to value the assets of the two companies, and I did not participate in the follow-up. You will see, as we discuss events in Burundi later, that, three months after I left, political events went very sour, and USAID had to phase out. In that sense, it was Mauritania repeating itself.

But, getting back to the privatization effort, it was a part of what I thought was an excellent private-sector promotion program, the Burundi Enterprise Support and Training (BEST). BEST was managed by Chemonics, who employed the best chief of party and technical assistant I have ever seen. Jean-Robert Estime is a Haitian, a former foreign minister and ambassador to the Organization of American States, and educated in France and Belgium. His father had been a president of Haiti for a few months in 1949. A lot of the Burundians he worked with had also studied in Belgium because Burundi and Rwanda had been Belgian trusts (colonies), and he knew some of those officials from his student days. He was very elegant, extremely smooth and substantively very skilled. Here we had somebody who spoke the language fluently (French), who had credibility and worked with his counterparts with complete respect, many of whom he had already known from a younger age.

Q: Was he an American citizen?

SLOCUM: I don't believe so, but he must be a permanent resident because his children are being educated here.

Q: How did we hire him?

SLOCUM: Chemonics had placed him as the private-sector adviser on the T.A. team, and when the original Chief of Party left, Jean-Robert replaced him. I don't really know what in his background made him so expert in private-sector skills, but he had them. He also had superb interpersonal skills, which of course makes all the difference in the world. I'm sure you've known competent people whose deficiencies in dealing with people hampered their professional performance. He currently is chief of party of a private sector/cum environmental program in Madagascar.

Q: The government was supportive of the privatization effort?

SLOCUM: How supportive requires some analysis. Burundi is a landlocked country, historically isolated from the world at large and even in many respects from its own neighbors. After independence it had developed the kind of economy which was seen in most African countries, in which the government drove many of the investment activities where it didn't really have the comparative advantage and where its involvement stifled private-sector growth. This happened, I think, because the newly-independent governments were feeling their way, and in the flush of victory over the colonial powers, the new leaders saw the government as the only show in town. Besides, Africans were not trained, by and large, to manage their resources and institutions. They were forced to learn by trial and error. So by 1990 Burundi had monopolistic parastatals which employed people and were seen as valid extensions of the civil service. Schools prepared its graduates to enter the civil service or quasi-civil service (a.k.a. state-owned enterprises). When the economies became badly distorted over time, structural adjustment programs were imposed/introduced (take your pick) to get economies on tract. I imagine it was very hard for countries like Burundi to move away from the security offered by parastatals and pave the way for an embryonic private sector whose future path was uncertain.

It also has to be said that the peculiar ethnic structure of that society, in which it is a relatively small minority group that controls the reigns of power, including the economy, made privatization reforms threatening. A small group was involved in both the government and the private sector, and part of this clique controlled the investments. Further distorting the picture was the fact that state-owned businesses are great places to employ lots of people. So, a lot of factors and interests argued against privatization. To deal with Burundians in this environment required the right kind of person who understood the scene and was capable of giving the right kind of advice. We had a very good person.

I mentioned the head of the Structural Adjustment Program who became the prime minister under the first democratically elected President, Melchior Ndadaye. Her name is Sylvie Kinigi. She was competent and strong-willed and a close friend of President Buyoya's wife. (Buyoya, by the way, retook power by a military coup in July 1996.) She was an economist by training but she didn't let the traditional African male apprehension over advancing roles for women prevent her from doing her job. She was quite forceful, and I was not privileged to escape the brunt of her force. I remember once there was a misunderstanding about something we were proposing — I think it might have been allocations of the counterpart budget — and she said to me, "Mr. Slocum, this whole episode risks injuring our relationship." This was on the phone and I suddenly sat up straight and said, "Madame Kinigi, I had better come over and talk to you so we can straighten this out." She was very effective as well. We had a good joint team on the private-sector promotion program, both on our side and the GOB.

During my second year in Burundi, we developed a new strategy which included the new health program I described earlier plus continued work in the private sector, with an agricultural-sector strategy more closely linked to the private sector reforms. Of course,

HIV/AIDS was becoming an increasing problem, and we proposed to increase our efforts. And we had an excellent human resources development program.

Q: What were you doing on the agriculture side?

SLOCUM: When I arrived, we were well into training of Burundians in alternative crop research to expand crop choices for the farmers. About 30 research scientists received Masters degrees, mainly at land-grant American universities (Title XII). (I recently learned that 15 of them are now dead. You will learn why later.) The agricultural officer at post when I arrived, Larry Dominessy, had been there for about four years, so he was very engaged and knew the sector thoroughly. Shortly after my arrival, he took me on a tour of Burundi (not very hard to do in a country the size of Maryland!) and showed me the results of a completed peat development project in the highlands that wasn't very successful. (The only users of peat for energy uses turned out to be hospitals and prisons.) There were also some small agricultural activities that had terminated but whose history Larry was very familiar with. But, the current thrust was research. The Director of Agriculture for the Ministry was a man named Cyprien Ntaryamira. He will also figure a little later in the story, because after the assassination of President Ndadaye, he became President for a few months until his death in the shooting down of the plane in Kigali, Rwanda, in April 1994. But I'm getting ahead of the story.

So we brought a new strategy in and got it approved. On the democracy side at that point in 1992 we weren't very far along and the Embassy and State wanted us to do more to assist in the country's democratic transition. We asked them to examine whether the stability was going to hold. Their assessment was that the positive factors underlying the opening would hold. I recall at the time that I had asked them to assess the impact of the Tutsi-dominated army: what was its probable impact on democracy? One of the assessment team, who had lived in Burundi three years while her husband was serving as the U.S. Ambassador, declined to include the military factor in the report. It was considered too sensitive, and the Embassy was very reluctant to open this issue to analysis and debate. These turn out to have been critical mistakes.

This is not to say that the military issue was off the table. Earlier, before political parties had been allowed, President Buyoya had asked the Ambassador for some help in funding and organizing a regional seminar on the role of the military in a democracy. We went back to Washington with that request and the request almost got turned down over the issue. The Democracy/Governance (D/G) specialists loved the idea, but insisted that to be effective, the seminar should be uniquely Burundian, not regional. Negotiations went back and forth, but Buyoya wouldn't (couldn't) budge. The compromise was that other African countries would be allowed to send not only delegations, but also some of their own academic experts on the subject. The African-American Institute was contracted to organize the agenda and the seminar. It was an unusual event, and had little precedence. Although AID's role on the ground was peripheral — the Embassy wanted the money but not our involvement; they believed that dealing with the military was no business of AID's - we did provide the funding, or rather, the Global Bureau did. The event drew much attention. This was a country whose military had been one of the most repressive -

of its own population - of any in Africa. Yet its leader, a military officer, had asked for help in having its military leaders and some civilians debate the role of the military in a democratic environment. You get a sense here of how positive the trend appeared to us. By the way, the AAI official opening the two-day seminar was Vivian Derrick, now the Assistant Administrator for Africa at AID. AAI assembled a number of experts. Representatives of about 10 other African governments came, and African experts from countries which had the experience of making the transition to democracy. This included the former military leader of Mali, who had voluntarily ceded power to a democratically chosen leader. It was a French-speaking conference, and came off very well, with extensive local press coverage. The President helped open the conference. But there were curious little things beneath the surface. For example, a Togolese academic offered an analysis of the Togolese military. Togo, like Burundi, had had its military composed of one ethnic group, the president's ethnic group. And over time the military had been reformed to include more ethnic balance reflecting the Togolese population. The point, he emphasized, was that you can't have a mono-ethnic military, it doesn't work because it does not receive the support of the population at large. In the local coverage of his presentation the following day, this last point was omitted. It hit too close to home, in Burundi.

Q: How was that conference received? Did you get a sense of its effect on the military?

SLOCUM: How do you answer that question? If you look at future events the answer is that it didn't have any effect at all. If it raised the military's need to sensitize themselves to what a military's role is in a democracy, maybe it opened up a few eyes.

One thing I didn't mention about Mauritania and I need to mention it with respect to both countries, including Burundi: I came out of my Club du Sahel job imbued with the importance of donor coordination, so I made a strong effort to coordinate our programs with those of other donors in both countries. I was fortunate in both countries in having very good deputies who had good program officer skills, and who were good managers. This allowed me, as the director, to spend some of my time externally focused, which was useful and necessary. I think in subsequent years as AID has progressively downsized there are fewer deputy positions anymore, so it is going to be harder for a director to balance his or her time between those demands.

Q: What did you do in the aid coordination business?

SLOCUM: I was so full of my Club experience, where I spent much of my time trying to get donors and host governments talking and coordinating their programs and policies, that I was convinced this made any bilateral program more effective if it were carefully linked to what others were doing. In both countries the first thing I did was to set up appointments with the donor representatives, one at a time. So I presented myself, asking them what their programs were and what they thought we could be doing to complement them or what were we doing that might be of interest to them. Unfortunately, I don't think the AID system rewards us for spending time externally in coordinating, but the extent to which you can do some of that at least harmonizes programs a little more

closely. I think it was worthwhile.

Q: Was there a Consultative Group for Burundi?

SLOCUM: No, but the World Bank had an office. Burundi was a “Round Table country.”

Q: Did it function?

SLOCUM: Not formally. The GOB took the leadership on coordination meetings, which is the ideal, of course. But both the Bank and the UNDP held briefings when important missions came through. Most coordination meetings, as I recall, took place at the sector level. Because of the importance of the Structural Adjustment Program, the World Bank had the most clout.

Q: These were local meetings?

SLOCUM: All the meetings took place in Bujumbura. There were never any external meetings that I recall, not while I was there.

Q: But there were sectoral meetings too?

SLOCUM: The UNDP convened meetings to provide donors details of their consultations with the Burundians on their development plan. These plans had sector goals with a fair amount of detail. Donors would come to these meetings, but I can't say that this mechanism produced important results. My recollection is that these meetings served as information exchanges, but they failed to get donors to change their sector programs in ways that complemented them more closely, either with Burundian priorities or with other donors.

Q: Who led those? USAID people?

SLOCUM: No, usually the UN chaired those meetings. And the World Bank called meetings on the macroeconomic reform policies.

Q: Did you find those particular sector program meetings effective?

SLOCUM: Mainly as information exchanges. I have always felt that the ideal development strategy is directed by the citizens of the country in which you are working, in which the host country invites donors to work, in the earliest stages, on development of the plan, and then they decide mutually on which donors will invest in which sectors. In this way, a three- or five-year development plan, including an investment strategy with names of pledging donors by sector or programs, would reflect joint ownership. Donors could decide to invest in the plan by sector or by region of the country or by any other criteria. This is too idealistic, of course, and will probably never work in practice, but such a system provides a vision for us to be guided by. Maybe if we work towards that ideal and achieve only ten percent of it, we would be do better at coordinating than we do

at present. Each donor has its own programming and funding cycle, and a legislature which provides not just the appropriations but the categories of assistance by sector. So planners on the ground do not have total liberty to commit their own government's funds.

Q: Was it only the donor program cycles that caused a problem or was it more basic than that?

SLOCUM: Well, certainly ownership of the coordination process is one major issue. The other is individual donor priorities. Most donors are sometimes constrained by the appropriations process by their parliaments, in our case the Congress, as to how funds should be allotted and to what sectors.

Q: You didn't have any instances where you saw this vision, even the 10 percent, working?

SLOCUM: In the case of the Burundi Health Systems Support program (BHSS), the design was substantially affected by the weekly meetings with the Ministry of Health and the views of the Ministry and other donors who came and suggested modifications. So the final product really was a jointly owned design. That is a good example. We talk about participation, empowerment, ownership, attention to women's issues and now, in recent years, decentralization of authority and community involvement in decision-making. BHSS went a long way to incorporate these principles.

But there is another factor that is more fundamental which I touched on before. Donors who fail to include in their analysis the underlying social realities do so at their own peril. I think we saw that in Mauritania. To be fair with Mauritania, one would have had difficulty predicting that the Moor/African tension would have flared up so quickly and caused so much destructive disorder. In Burundi, we knew full well that there were some basic inequities in that society that were, and are, unsustainable. We knew that there had been a huge massacre bordering on what today we would call genocide in 1972 and that the international community failed to deal with it, effectively sweeping it under the rug and allowing the status quo to go on and without making corrections. So, you had this huge mass of population of angry young Hutus who felt very vengeful. You had power concentrated in the hands of an ethnic oligarchy. I think the key African problem linked to democracy and economic growth is that national power, by which I mean economic, financial, commercial, political, security, etc. is in the hands of an oligarchy. So you have very much a top-down approach within the country to managing its own resources. By not addressing these issues in their strategies, donors are deluding themselves. And, unfortunately, the makers of foreign policies want it that way. They fear that to address the fundamentals could be more destabilizing and harm their bilateral relationship.

I think one of the collective efforts of the donor community has to be: how do you get these largely oligarchic governments thinking about shifting the focus of power away from the center, giving up some of their power and allowing their societies to flourish? There are a number of efforts in this direction, and we are beginning to see some areas which we can foster and encourage, but during my time in Burundi, we all knew about

the very sensitive area of ethnicity and its potential for disaster. We went merrily along assuming that the right economic policies would spur economic growth and raise incomes across the board, and that this economic empowerment would bring with it an adequate amount of political power-sharing. T'was not to be. Sure, we made some attempts to address the problem, such as seeking more Hutu professionals on our staff, but they were feeble when measured against the depth of the problem.

This was a very strong lesson to be learned. But has it really been learned? I think this has been happening in the decade of the nineties, as evidenced by Mr. Atwood's (former USAID Administrator) linking of relief and development increasingly in different parts of the world. He is confronted by widespread concerns that USAID may be irrelevant in the post-cold-war world. There is an attempt to come to grips with these issues, but it remains to be seen whether the Agency will be successful in redefining its role in the family of foreign-affairs agencies. The fact that in many parts of the world, especially in Africa, more AID and other U.S. government money is going for relief and humanitarian aid than for development signifies the challenge. When you look at the proliferation of peacekeeping requirements around the globe, but especially in Africa, you are talking about an enormous financial requirement which cannot be met. But these resources are going to have to be found if the international community wants to keep these countries from getting even worse and creating more human disasters.

What we saw in Burundi in 1993 happened in Rwanda in 1994 and is happening now, since last year, in Zaire. A forum known as the Great Lakes Policy Forum, which meets every month at the Carnegie Foundation and is sponsored by a coalition of NGOs and official organizations to assess current events and programs in Zaire (Congo), Burundi and Rwanda, has become an important body. Ambassador Bogosian, who is now retired but works for AID on the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative, usually provides an analysis of events in Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo—DRC) from the U.S. Government. At the last session, he said that things are going to get very bad in Congo and ex-Zaire. There is going to be a lot more fighting, yet no one has a solution to mitigate it.

I guess the point I am making is there are a lot of fundamental challenges for those of us who continue to work in Africa, including USAID. It is going to take a lot of imagination and dedication to keep dealing with these crucial issues. I haven't yet described the events that occurred after I left in July 1993, but they have had a profound impact on me. A year later I wound up heading the office back in Washington that dealt with Burundi and other countries in East Africa.

Q: What stood out in your mind about the effectiveness of the program? You mentioned health and some of the others, but in terms of its impact and its reaching the people, etc. what stood out in your mind about development programs?

SLOCUM: I am going to start this off a little differently than your question but will get to your point.

Q: All right.

SLOCUM: The American presence in Burundi was important because, unlike the Europeans, especially Belgium and France, we had no “baggage.” They were not trusted, but we were. Therefore, I think we had a special role to play. So, anything we did attracted a certain quality of attention, which gave us some unique leverage; not in the way the Bank and the Fund have leverage, of course, but in terms of the political reform agenda, the President and his Prime Minister often came to us for help. I cited the example of the PM’s request to the Ambassador to get the heads of the new parties talking to each other and help them get some fundamental understanding of their roles in a democracy. And the holding of the regional seminar on the role of the military in a democracy. (Would that the army had learned some lessons here!) So, while other donors had more money, we had a comparative advantage in some areas, such as in legal reforms in support of the private sector. This kind of “entree” enabled us to have influence on behavior change in the socially sensitive area of sexual practices with the HIV/AIDS prevention and control program. We were funding through Population Services International (PSI) some very graphic training materials in cities and villages, letting people know why HIV/AIDS was being spread. In a very traditional society this was a new venture, but it was effective in imparting needed information. So I think we broke a number of barriers in those areas. On the policy reform agenda, we worked very closely with the World Bank and I think it was a good model of collaboration.

Q: But you did provide balance of payments assistance.

SLOCUM: Yes, with the cash transfers under the Burundi Enterprise Promotion Program (BEPP), which annually provided a tranche of cash in return for specific reforms.

Q: What scale of funding did we have?

SLOCUM: Do you mean the entire program or just the balance of payments?

Q: The AID program.

SLOCUM: It was about \$20 and \$25 million annually, of which the cash transfer was, as I recall, around \$10 million.

Q: That was a good size program. Well, continue on, you were talking about the impact of the program.

SLOCUM: Yes, the uniqueness of our role there at a pivotal time in Burundi’s attempts to enact profound reforms. I’ve covered the major programs. Our style of operating, the kinds of people we had running our programs, some of the chiefs of party, also impacted on the program. I was most fortunate to have a good team. A tandem couple covered the program and project sides. Toni Ferrara was the Program Officer, and she was excellent. Though not deeply experienced at that point, she made up for this in hard work and eminently good sense. Her spouse, David Leong, was an excellent PDO and served as my

deputy. The PSC health officer working for him, Janis Timberlake, was the leader of the major health project design which became a model of collaboration and host-country ownership. She is now the TAACS advisor (Technical Assistance in HIV/AIDS and Child Survival) in Tanzania. I was equally fortunate to have two great support-staff heads, Mike Fritz as the EXO and Jimmy DuVall as the Controller. Rich Newberg and Duca Hart headed up the agriculture and private-sector portfolio management. These were (and are) all good officers and their competencies and dedication made my job a delight. In the subsequent years of budget and personnel cuts, Missions could not count on such an array of talent within the Mission.

Q: Did you find your health care services were spreading out throughout the country?

SLOCUM: Well, health received a lot of donor assistance given the widespread poverty and the Government's need for support in financing the social sectors. Our newly designed project would have tied a lot of elements together with what the other donors were doing. It's distressing to imagine how bad things are now, with five years of civil war. But during the time of my management of the program, we assisted the national vaccination program with commodity and vehicle support to the MOH [Ministry of Health], and got involved deeply, as I said, in the social marketing of condoms.

Q: Are there any projects that preceded you that you ran across? We often have remnants of things we have done before, were there any that stood out in your mind?

SLOCUM: I talked earlier about the peat project. That did not succeed because the planned market for peat did not materialize. It turned out to be uneconomic for household use, and became viable only in a limited number of large institutions. I think there was a problem with burning inefficiency. And then there had been smaller agricultural commodity projects in the 80s and I recall that the larger research project built upon those earlier activities. Keep in mind that Burundi had received very little development aid between 1972, the Tutsi army massacre of Hutu civilians, and 1987, the end of the Bagaza regime.

Any road projects?

SLOCUM: Not in Burundi. Other agricultural projects, linked to the research activity, included cash crops in the plain north of Lake Tanganyika which goes up towards Rwanda. It is a very flat and fertile plain thanks to the Ruzizi river flowing southward out of Lake Kivu. But as an essentially mountainous terrain, there were also numerous opportunities with highland crops, such as potatoes, beans and farm vegetables. Thanks to that, we were able to find on the market in Bujumbura such products as artichokes, broccoli and cauliflower. Introduction of these crops had a very positive impact on household food security - but not because these crops changed the peasant diet, but because farmers could sell them in the city markets.

One area that was running against the agricultural sector was soil degradation due to overpopulation and tree-cutting. Other donors were doing a lot of tree replanting which

was restoring environmental balance, or at least beginning to.

Q: On the Structural Adjustment Program there had been criticism that it was insensitive to the poverty conditions of the country and in fact impoverished more people in the process of trying to get the economy straightened out. How did you find it in Burundi?

SLOCUM: The program in Burundi was recent enough that the reforms had not yet had a discernible impact. But, from other studies that have been done elsewhere, the evidence is that those countries that have committed themselves to a solid reform agenda have seen positive results in terms of impressive economic growth rates higher than for those countries which haven't reformed. Now, that still doesn't answer your question about the extent to which the lowest economic groups in Burundi were affected. Because of the overall food self-sufficiency of the population and the historical reliance on cash crops, mainly tea or coffee, the population was relatively well off, despite generally low incomes. Unlike most countries, and this probably makes Burundi atypical, the negative impacts of adjustment were in the cities where the educated classes live: civil servants and employees of state-owned enterprises. But rural Burundians, farmers and herders all, probably benefitted more readily from the effects of adjustment. It's not adjustment that harmed them, but political instability and civil unrest.

Q: Anything else on Burundi that you want to add from your time there? You finished up when?

SLOCUM: I left in July 1993. The story gets very sad a few months later, but we can come back to that because a future assignment put me back in the thick of Burundi.

Q: What happened after you finished in Burundi?

A Sabbatical at the War College - 1993-1994

SLOCUM: Because I had been accepted at the National War College, whose ten-month academic year was starting in mid-August, I left Burundi in July to have time to reclaim my house and get settled. I had been overseas this time - Paris, Mauritania and Burundi - for nine years. I really enjoyed Burundi, and I think in some respects, having just gotten the strategy approved, it would have been good to stay another year. In hindsight, Burundi fell apart very quickly and dramatically, so it would have been a very bad year, but we'll get to that later. At this point, Burundi was looking quite good: the political reforms, the hope instilled in the country's first democratically elected (and first Hutu) President, the country's commitment to reforms — these were all attractive factors. And we had a promising health program (\$50 million for ten years) just getting underway. But the Bureau had offered me this superb training opportunity.

Q: How did you find the War College?

SLOCUM: You recall my earlier comments about excursion assignments as not being valued within the USAID "culture." I think that is changing now. It was a fabulous

experience. Just a great experience.

Q: Why?

SLOCUM: Again, like the Club du Sahel assignment, it offered the opportunity to gain new and broadening perspectives. In the Club du Sahel assignment it was getting exposed to how other donors program, working with them to achieve common strategies and programs. And the War College ... first a little history.

The service branches of the military have always had their own colleges for training senior officers who are thought to be flag-rank material. After World War II, Generals Marshall and Eisenhower were concerned about the lack of what they called jointness in the conduct of the war. They identified this lack of “jointness” as a major issue, and decided to recommend creation of a National War College which would produce army, navy and air force officers who experienced each others’ operating “culture” and learned from the year in training how to work together, jointly. The National War College was authorized in 1946 and established at Fort McNair in southwest Washington, DC. The State Department was very much involved in its creation, and George Kennan was the first State Department professor there. The foreign policy establishment very much wanted to have a different title than “War College.” Eisenhower and Marshall insisted on this, however, because the military’s job is to go to war. The curriculum exposes promising mid-level officers to the wider concepts of national security and the components of national strategy. Military officers constitute about 80 percent of the student body, the rest civilians from foreign affairs agencies. AID has two student slots and one faculty position. All the services, plus about ten from State, and one or two from USIA, CIA, DIA, OSD, and the Secret Service. There was a small group of international fellows, military officers from other countries. There was one African the year I was there, a Kenyan. The syllabus consisted of five core courses which last about six weeks each in addition to two elective courses each semester. A “regional studies” program is in preparation for a two-week trip towards the end of the academic year, in May. In my year there were 19 choices in the regional studies program. They decide the very first week on the assignments, and we were asked to list five choices. I got my first pick which was a combination of Russia and Kazakhstan. We were encouraged to pick areas with which we were not very familiar.

Mary Kilgour, fellow USAID officer, was my faculty advisor. That was her first year there and I had never worked with her before, and we established an excellent rapport. She was very supportive and an excellent faculty advisor to have throughout that year. We have maintained our contact since then even though she has retired from AID and relocated to Florida, where she remains active both as an adjunct professor at the University of Florida and doing occasional consulting work.

Q: What were some of the core courses?

SLOCUM: The first course presented the basic elements of national security strategy: What are its components? How define to national interests? It was very basic stuff, but

detailed and comprehensive. The second core course focused on history and economics. Another was on the history of national security strategy, which was essentially 20th century history. Another core course was on the history of military strategy, which was especially useful for us nonmilitary students. Each morning, prior to the individual classes, we would start off the day with a plenary session. It could be a lecture related to the core course, but at least once a week an expert on a related field would be invited as guest lecturer. The faculty was not only from the services but from civilian agencies as well, and retired officers. Very good people. We had some excellent historians talking about presidents and presidential policy-making in the 20th century. For instance, we had the author, Robert Dallek, who wrote a landmark book on Theodore Roosevelt. I think he is currently working on a book about LBJ. We also had lecturers from a variety of fields in public life. Cokie Roberts talked about foreign policy and the role of journalists. She took the military to task about the tight controls that had been laid upon journalists during the Gulf War, saying that the media establishment would not allow that to happen again. Pierre Salinger came to talk about JFK. Justice Scalia discussed the Supreme Court. The Chairman of the Economic Advisors spoke to us about national economic policy-making. On occasion we would join students from ICAF, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and the sister institution to the NWC, for certain high-level lectures, such as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Russia Defense Minister.

Q: After you had the plenary, what did you do?

SLOCUM: We would go off into our core courses, which would take the rest of the morning. Each class was about 25 students. The elective courses were in the afternoon, I believe two or three days a week. The rest of the time was devoted to research on papers — each course required a research paper — and course reading. There was a lot of reading, about 600 pages a week. It was highly structured. The military student body benefitted from the presence of the civilian students. And of course we derived a great deal of benefit from the insights the military officers gave us. Thanks to them we obtained insights into the military culture and what the military establishment brings to the U.S. foreign policy apparatus. The capability of the American military is the best in the world, and plays a crucial role in world peace and stability, goals which our own Agency promotes, of course, at a different level in terms of economic and social development. The level of military officer with whom we studied was the Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel, or the equivalent for their service, just before General or Admiral rank, and they were a highly motivated group. They know they have been selected because they are likely to be promoted to flag rank. Among the skills they bring to their profession was their discipline and sense of organization. The military culture is different from the civilian culture. The military stresses cohesion and control, essential elements in a military campaign, which after all is what they are training for.

Q: That's for sure.

SLOCUM: Of course, their sense of discipline and self-control has a physical component, so NWC had a great physical fitness facility. Even though most of us were in our 40s and early 50s, they held intramural games, and they were serious about them. “The Navy

guys will lose because they're ugly, the army intramural coach told us." I didn't participate in the games, but I did use the exercise equipment regularly.

Back to the core courses. Components of national strategy, 20th century history of national strategy and presidential decision-making, economics and its role in national strategy, definition of U.S. national interests and military history.

For the elective courses the choices were quite varied, from peacemaking to gaming a nuclear war, from basic economics to the United Nations. For the regional studies, which were geared to our trip of choice, I took a course each semester on Russia and Kazakhstan. As I mentioned earlier, each course required a paper. In the 20th century history course I chose Charles de Gaulle for the research topic, because of my knowledge of and interest in France. For the military history course, I did a paper on Hiroshima and the strategic choices facing Truman. I was surprised by how little historical data and analysis I could find on that, one of the crucial events of the 20th century. Since I wrote that paper (in 1993) the 50th anniversary of Hiroshima occurred (1995) and some fresh information and analysis have come forth.

As the year went on, a little tension between civilian and military values and attitudes emerged, but nothing serious. There was very little rivalry at all that year, either between civilians and military or among the services.

On certain weekends, the military services would offer a weekend trip to one of their bases to expose us to each service. These were budget trips for which we paid nominal costs of lodging, with the military providing charter flights in most cases. We usually doubled up in rooms. I chose to go to most of the site visits offered, including weekends at Camp Lejeune, Fort Benning, Air Force bases in Las Vegas and North Dakota, and Governor's Island in New York harbor (Coast Guard). At Fort Benning, we were allowed to participate in an army Rangers' anti-terrorism exercise in which we were passengers on an aircraft that had been hijacked. The Rangers stormed the plane (we were in a mock cabin) and it was truly terrifying. They dashed in, automatic weapons pointed at us, and yelled as loud as any voice I have ever heard, "GET DOWN. NOW!" We did that.

The regional studies trip in May 1994 was also on a budget, so we were doubled up. I lucked out to get a civilian retired from the Navy who was in the Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD), which is, by the way, a separate government agency all to itself. The trip started off in Moscow, where we spend five days. Our agenda included an hour with President Yeltsin's national security adviser, an acquaintance of one of the two War College faculty members accompanying us. He pleased us by saying he had reported to Yeltsin that he would be meeting us, which strained credulity a little bit but it was nice to hear him say that. Most of the Russian contacts we had were with military officers. We had, of course, a full briefing with Embassy people. Part of the Embassy briefing included time with the officer heading the unit responsible for searching for traces of the missing-in-action from the Korean War. Apparently there is evidence that some of the prisoners of war were brought back to the Soviet Union. That was of great interest.

Evenings included cultural events, including the Bolshoi Ballet, museums, and a trip to one of the universities. You can understand the interest of our military officers in the Soviet military. Most, if not all, of the military in our group had not had this kind of exposure. I remember that the Air Force officers from our group met a German military officer from the former East Germany, who briefed them on Soviet-era fighter aircraft used by the former East German military about which the Americans had heard but never seen. Our people learned information about those aircraft they had not known before and came away amazed.

From Moscow we flew to Almaty, Kazakhstan. It was a memorable flight. The travel agent had tried to avoid our having to take Aeroflot, the Russian state airline not known for the quality of its aircraft, flight comfort, or punctuality. There was a new private airline - I can't recall its name - leaving Moscow at one o'clock in the morning, and after a four-hour flight we were in Almaty at dawn, with three hours of time change added. The plane was a Boeing 737 and we had a dinner (in the middle of the night) that was totally American, right down to the little Land o'Lakes butter pads.

In Almaty, we spent more time proportionally with the American Embassy than we had in Moscow. You probably know that Almaty also houses a fairly large (by today's standards) regional AID mission for central Asia, covering about five countries. The charge d'affaires started us off with a thorough briefing by the entire Country Team. I would say that an assignment to a place like Almaty, the capital of Kazakhstan, would be as challenging, if not more so, as most of the African assignments that I have taken.

Q: Different, I suppose.

SLOCUM: Remote, culturally isolated, a country trying to accommodate two cultures: the indigenous and traditionally Islamic Kazakhs and the Russians, of European stock, from the Soviet era. The two are so different that you pick them out instantly. The appearance of the city is a contrast between heavy Soviet architecture and the central Asian Islamic design. Our visit didn't focus much on development issues, though a Chevron Oil representative did provide us an excellent presentation on the petroleum deposits in the Caspian Sea and the enormous potential for the region. The big issue for them was, as it is now for many countries, the location of the planned oil pipeline. The most desirable route, geographically, is south through Iran. But geopolitical considerations make this route less desirable. Many of our conversations while in Kazakhstan dealt with the country's future via-a-vis Russia and the relationship between the two countries.

Q: Did you write a paper?

SLOCUM: We wrote a joint paper, dividing up responsibilities among ourselves. As you can imagine with the military, all of this was duly established well before the trip, so each of us had specific roles on the trip, from the paper to representational responsibilities at various stops.

Q: Did you write one for the whole course?

SLOCUM: For the trip?

Q: No, for the War College.

SLOCUM: No. Each course had a research paper topic, and at the end of the year, a panel judged the best of them. Not surprisingly, the CIA students won most of the awards. Superb analysts.

The last stop was in St. Petersburg, a very different city from Moscow. The city has relatively recent origins, established by Czar Peter the Great in the 18th century. He was heavily influenced by the French Empire architecture. Flying in, we observed a number of chateaus along the river. There were two things that marked this last stop of our visit. One was the meeting with the American business community and their perceptions of the economic transition from state-controlled to the private sector. The five or so Americans agreed that Russian employees over the age of 35 were not trainable, but under that age, they had uniformly positive experiences of their adaptability. They learn new systems right away and make the transitions. Those above 35 have been so inured to the kind of rewards and incentives of the old economic system that it is just impossible for them to make the transition.

Our hosts discussed stability and the country's direction. There was concern about corruption and the growing influence of the so-called Russian Mafia. Their comments revealed deep concerns about the future. We also were able to visit a couple of war sites, which of course were of particular interest to our military officers. One was the Leningrad Memorial, which honors the siege of Leningrad by Hitler's army in 1943, I believe, which lasted over a year during which the city's population was essentially starved out. A very touching memorial site and burial ground. A small museum beside the cemetery contains mementos, such as letters written by starving citizens discussing their efforts to derive nourishment from items such as shoe leather. Our Russian guide translated for us from some of the letters, crying as she read. We also went to Kaliningrad, a large naval base outside of town, on the North Sea across from Finland. We later decided it had not been a good use of our time. A long drive to get there and much of the base in "mothballs," a sign of Russia's decline. Kaliningrad had been the USSR's premier naval base. We also met with service academies, one in St. Petersburg and one earlier in Moscow. So, you can see the trip had a strong military flavor, which one should expect.

Q: How do you size up that experience as relevant to your career and interest?

SLOCUM: I think it was extremely relevant because it pulled me out of my AID "box" and broadened my view of AID's role and capabilities among the USG's foreign policy instruments, and helped me reflect on AID's links to national security strategy. I think the timing of my training was good because the rationale under which we had operated, without full awareness, at least on my part, of how dependent our rationale and funding

were on Cold War objectives. With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the props had been taken out. I think we are still in the process of working out a new rationale for how economic assistance to developing countries serves U.S. foreign-policy and national-interest objectives. We were just beginning to consider those issues then (and are still at it!). I and probably most of my AID colleagues had gone along in those years satisfied with the rationale that we were contributing to a better world, healthier and better societies, stronger economies, creating wealth and building middle classes. All of this is true, but we were doing it in a different context: against the objective of protecting American interests against a major enemy, a major threat. A lot of the rationale for what we were doing in managing our foreign aid program, whether we liked it or not, was keeping the world safe for democracy and trying to create other democracies as a buttress against the communist influence. Once that rationale diminished, beginning in 1991, we have been and are still struggling at defining a new rationale to justify foreign assistance as part of our overall foreign policy. I don't think we are there yet. But the experience at the War College helped me to understand more deeply the necessity of linking our objectives to the broader strategic context. At the same time, it helped me better understand how we fit, both in terms of humanitarian relief and development assistance, with other "instruments," such as the importance of the military's role in peacekeeping and conflict prevention which are sometimes necessary in conflict-prone countries. This experience enhanced my skills for the next assignment, where I had to confront a number of state failures and a region in conflict.

Q: Did you find much interest in the military in AID and the development program?

SLOCUM: I would say they found a lot of interest in AID and in State Department representatives because of increasing demands on their services in Africa and parts of Asia. Somalia had taken place the year before, so there was a lot of attention to that operation: you'll recall that the Clinton administration inherited the starvation mission from the Bush regime, and converted this success into what they called a nation-building mission. The failure of this latter mission was the subject of a great deal of interest. And of course those of us who had served in Africa offered complementary insight and context. During this year the genocide in Rwanda took place, which included the failure of the UN peacekeeping mission, called UNAMIR, to stem the violence — another military failure resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of displaced, which was followed by massive airlifts of humanitarian supplies to the region. We who had served in Africa had a lot to offer the discussions.

Q: Did you have an opportunity to talk to the groups?

SLOCUM: Absolutely, and give them briefings on the background of the country, the social structure, etc. It worked out very well, a lot of give-and-take. The military had a lot to teach us about their capabilities, and we who had served far from American shores and in areas not typically identified as strategic to our interests, complemented the military expertise.

Q: So you finished that up when?

SLOCUM: We were the first class to receive accredited Master's degrees, in National Security Strategies Studies, in June of 1994. Secretary of Defense Perry spoke at the ceremony on a hot June afternoon at Fort McNair, near the spot where, 129 years earlier the suspected conspirators with John Wilkes Booth were tried and hung. The site is now a tennis court.

I then returned to AID to head up the East Africa office.

Assignment as Director of the East Africa Office, USAID/Washington - 1994

Q: What did that cover?

SLOCUM: Ten countries. Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Madagascar. I came to the office fresh from the heady atmosphere of the War College experience and plunged back into the AID mainstream. My arrival coincided with a drought in some of the countries in East Africa and Mr. Atwood, the AID administrator, was concerned about how much money was going to disaster relief and rehabilitation in Africa compared to development. It was a two-to-one ratio. He asked a team to go out and assess why this was the case; to examine the possibility of a new approach to these countries and whether there might be a better way to deal with such crises by linking relief and development resources together to achieve better results in terms of crisis prevention and sustainable development. This mission to East Africa spawned what was called the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative, soon to be known as GHAI. Simply explained, the GHAI attempts to lessen countries' vulnerability to conflict and food insecurity by addressing the root causes more directly and devising more fundamental solutions to them.

When I first came into the office, there was a lot of skepticism in the Bureau about this new effort. My predecessor told me it would pass in a few months, and we would be back to doing business as usual. That was inaccurate. GHAI did and still does have significant influence on how AID programs its resources in that region. It involved not only coordination of AID resources but also inputs from other USG agencies. It included looking at early warning systems. Just as we had been doing for years on famine warning, maybe there could be a kind conflict warning system. Conceptually, the Initiative began auspiciously, but as Chief of Staff Dick McCall likes to say, "the devil's in the details." As the strategy and its implementation modalities were being worked out in interminable interagency meetings, State became nervous about the prospect of AID's playing a role in political elements of conflict prevention. Analysis and prediction of unrest and civil breakdowns? That is the CIA's business. After a couple of years, it became obvious that these issues had no easy resolution. The interagency bureaucracies were never finessed and I think at the time I left, two years ago, there still was a major problem of how to manage the conflict scenario. But, again, going back to my 10 percent perspective, I think my attitude about the GHAI was that we will never have the pure world that the GHAI envisaged: in which strategies embrace root causes of conflict and famine, and use both the humanitarian side and the development side with all USG resources put in a common

pot to address these problems comprehensively. But maybe we will change our ways of doing business enough that we will achieve ten percent of what the initiative promises, which still gets more results than through the way we are doing business now. It is hard to say whether that is going to work. The fact is, in the course of my two and a half years in that job, and since I have left it, I think the conflicts have probably deepened and gotten worse despite the U.S. Government's desire, along with our colleagues in Europe and elsewhere, to reduce the potential for conflicts and to get those countries onto a more promising development path. A current theme is "African Renaissance." I'm not sure how many Africans feel they are being reborn. I see too many whose lives are at best at the margin, in the cities and in the rural areas. And when you add famine and conflict to this, they are not just on the margin, they are in a catastrophe involving loss of life and limb. I mentioned the disastrous state of the Democratic Republic of the Congo earlier and indications that that country is sliding progressively downhill, and the victims, of course, are the great numbers of the country's impoverished civilians who have the severe misfortune to have been born Congolese.

Q: In this Greater Horn of Africa effort was there a concept of conflict resolution or conflict anticipation, etc?

SLOCUM: Mr. Atwood presented to the President a proposal for how AID and other agencies could more effectively address the humanitarian problems. I think he initially put greater emphasis on food insecurity than on conflict. But as the task force looked at the issues, they fixed in on the multiple areas of real and potential conflict throughout the region. In terms of your question, I think the term "conflict" embraces the range of approaches which has been encapsulated into the acronym CPMR: Conflict Prevention, Mitigation and Resolution. This provides the preferred order of action: first, you try to foresee the event and prevent it. If that doesn't succeed, or it happens before you anticipated, then you try to mitigate. And finally, when the conflict situation is operating at full force (a la DROC), then one must undertake efforts at resolution.

But then, at whatever stage a given situation is, we come back to the operational issues: how to manage the process. As I said earlier, if you try to create a conflict early warning system along the lines of what we have been doing fairly successfully in famine early warning, who is going to be responsible for it? Who provides the analysis? Who manages it? Those issues were never fully resolved. AID retains responsibility for rapid response to crises and analyzing the best way to put an end to it. That is the BHR/OFDA side of the house, and therein lies a problem for the Agency. People like you and I see ourselves, and the centrality of the Agency, I think, as lying on the development side. But there is a large body of expertise on the emergency side: food aid, response to all kinds of disasters, relations with the NGO world, and the more recent Office of Transitions Initiatives. On "our side," we program development assistance based on in-depth analyses of the development environment. In the two and a half years I was in AFR/EA, most of the countries in that region came in with strategies: Madagascar, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Eritrea. Ethiopia was still operating on an recently-approved strategy. GHAI's influence on us operationally and analytically was strategy preparations which analyzed not only the development constraints and solutions, but also the potential for

disaster and conflict. For example, I remember the Tanzania strategy came in and there was no discussion of what would happen if the country had a drought and what impact such an event would have on the strategy plan. The Mission was required to do such an analysis before the strategy was approved. So one immediate impact of GHAI was sounder, more realistic and comprehensive strategies.

Getting back to the fundamental issue that I mentioned before, I think of my years in Burundi, where we didn't adequately analyze the potential for a blowup. We based the plan on a continuation of the progressive era Buyoya was bringing to his country. That was fine, but we should also have included a short section on "what if?" I can cite another example: in Kenya, what if Moi dies suddenly and some of the tribal groups which haven't benefitted from Moi's largesse assert their interests violently, and incite a violent response by the army, resulting in a collapse of democratic institutions? These are the kinds of things GHAI is supposed to help us do better.

But how effective can we be in strategizing uses of relief funds and development funds? For one thing you have different legislation governing the use of OFDA (Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance) money. Then you have PRM, the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. If we apply GHAI principles, the AID country strategy should factor those resources into a strategy. To my knowledge, that hasn't yet happened. What if you need to have recourse to military support? I don't think GHAI can take AID to that point, as desirable as it might be. Such planning is more ad-hoc, and in response to crises. But, I think GHAI is a step in the right direction if we want to be more effective.

The fundamental question is: how does all this advance U.S. interests? There I think one has a harder sell because if you talk about the Middle East and oil and Israel, the definition of U.S. national interests is not difficult. If you are talking about financial collapse in east Asia, I think that one can draw a linkage. If you are talking about nuclear proliferation in south Asia, it is not too hard to identify the U.S. interest. I think we can demonstrate that we don't want to see rogues getting ahold of nuclear weapons. But what is there about a Kenya, Tanzania or Madagascar that involves U.S. national interests?

Q: What was your conclusion?

SLOCUM: Again, I think this debate is going on between the Administration and Congress as we speak and will go on for a number of years. The easy answer is the American citizen wants to help people in need and distress. It's not hard to get Congress to increase BHR's IDA account. But it is much harder to argue for increasing the development accounts. The best rationale is, I think, that a safer, less conflict- and famine-prone world produces more services and goods, creates more markets for U.S. exports and increases wealth for all. The issue is, do we need concessional funds to achieve that safer, better world? In the course of my last two or three years in AID, we saw the budgets plummet mainly because of the overarching domestic political importance of balancing the budget and reducing the deficit to the extent that in the last few years AID has lost major resources both in terms of budget and staff. It certainly is a

very different agency from what you and I knew.

Q: What about the interest in the cost consequences of failure to present disasters, whatever kind they are, and therefore the impulse that we have to respond; it costs us hundreds of millions of dollars every time we do? Does that ever factor into this consideration?

SLOCUM: This is precisely the rationale behind the GHAI. But I think we need to wait for at least a couple of years before we see what the impact of GHAI will be. If it demonstrates an increased ability to head off disasters and reduce the IDA account, that will be very good news for the Agency's future.

Q: During this period were there any country experiences that you found unusual?

SLOCUM: I guess I should start off by saying my last assignment in AID was not the happiest period of my career. There was the downsizing, the re-engineering, and the RIF (Reduction in Force) which took place in my last year — these all were major factors in my decision to retire at the end of 1996. These were not failures of the agency. Some people may argue that they were, but I don't think so. In the post-Cold War world, the props were taken out for development assistance and it became a lot harder to justify our continued existence. The pressures I described earlier led to a scenario in which we had reduced staff, reduced budgets, closed many of our Missions, and all this led to greatly reduced capacity. This sapped our common spirit that defined us collectively.

Q: The question was: what was our mission?

SLOCUM: That was part of it. I think those of us who have an historical perspective still believe it is good to help reduce poverty and strengthen fragile economies. It is better for countries to have better policies for their economic development. It is better to have well trained people who can manage their economies and their societies. All this is good and I think continues to be good. The problem is, of course, the context in which the agency is operating.

One of the rewards in AID historically was our relative strength and independence from State. AID's fairly robust status meant that we got our rewards for accomplishments within our own system: building good programs, obligating funds on time, increasing our office's or Mission's budget. We got no rewards, I don't think, from appearing to cower to a strong ambassador who might apply pressure for a pet project or for something a key minister was pushing him for. I didn't feel that, in most countries to which I was posted, the State people and often even the Ambassador, fully understood what AID was about. This is because the two organizations are very different animals, and possess quite different "cultures." State's value system rewards officers who promote and achieve tranquil and productive bilateral relationships, and who represent U.S. interests in that country effectively. AID does programs. We manage resources to manage for results. A good example is "policy dialogue." Most of what we do involves pushing for change of various kinds in country X. Often this change is unsettling. Structural adjustment is by its

nature policy dialogue: getting a hesitant government to make some fundamental changes in its economic management. Vested interests are at stake. The status quo is threatened. Some people reading this may object to what I am about to say, but I think the State culture promotes not rocking the boat, because to do so risks jeopardizing what is normally already a relationship resting on a complex balance.

I will give you one small example. When I was in Burundi, the private sector adviser was disturbed about a piece in the local paper, state-controlled, of course, which objected to a reform proposal (for which all the donors were pushing) to liberalize foreign-exchange markets by creating private forex bureaus. He drafted a letter to the editor responding to the article, explaining the advantages for the Burundian economy of liberalization. When he showed it to me, I said, “looks good, but let me run it through the Embassy.” After a couple days the answer came back, “No, this is interfering with their own decision-making process.” When I explained that we engaged with the government all the time on this and many other issues (“policy dialogue”) their response was that such dialogue didn’t belong in the newspaper. What did our adviser do? He gave his draft to a Burundian colleague, who sent it in to the paper under his own name. One can argue this example both ways. My point is that I don’t think State really understood what our programs were trying to accomplish: change; rocking the boat.

However, as I reflect back on the last few years, and with the experience of all the conflict situations on the African continent, my thinking has turned 180 degrees. I now believe that AID needs to be closer to State, and, in fact, we have become closer to State by the force of events. We are probably most effective and can justify ourselves best if our strategies are closely related to overall U.S. foreign policy interests, which is the purview of the State Department. To illustrate how far I have come around, let me tell you of a conversation earlier this decade. I was hosting an informal dinner party of friends in Burundi and, describing in some exasperation my woes of dealing with an Embassy that, first, didn’t understand some elements of our program; and second, was gently pushing us to help do something that we couldn’t possibly do. It might have been pressure from the President to help him out of a jam and get him off the hook for a warehouse full of ivory tusks that were banned produce. Could AID provide funds to pay off the owners (this was a pre-CITES lot, but nevertheless the ivory was now banned)? Of course, we had no way to do this, and I think in this case the Embassy understood. But whatever the cause of my exasperation, I made the statement that the biggest enemy to our effectiveness in Burundi was not poverty, or lack of skilled managers and technicians, or corruption and mismanagement, it was the State Department. At the time I made that statement with great conviction mainly due to the frustration of having to spend so much time “managing” the Embassy. But I have come around full circle. I really feel, and given the terrible political disasters I have seen in countries with which I have been involved — Burundi, disillusionment over Kenya, corruption in Madagascar and Tanzania, war in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Somalia and its collapse into anarchy, Sudan and on and on. We need to have a more coordinated approach to get at the underlying factors of instability. I guess I’m a GHAI convert. If we want our investments in development and humanitarian relief to be effective, in the medium and long term, they have to address these underlying factors that are not being addressed.

Q: Are these things that the State Department can address?

SLOCUM: The idea of GHAI is that a truly coordinated USG approach, with State in the lead, has a better chance of success. Frankly, GHAI may not work. I talked earlier about the State “culture” and the AID “culture.” I could have talked about the cultures of DOD, CIA and others. It’s very hard to meld those different cultures into a smoothly functioning unit. But we have to try. I take us back to my “10 percent” vision. Maybe if we keep trying to apply GHAI principles, we will do things ten percent incrementally better than we used to. I think it’s worth a try.

In the worst case when a society breaks apart, when a government can no longer serve the very basic needs of its population for security and social services, the international community has to find a smoother response mechanism. The “collapse scenario” I just described we are seeing in so many places in Africa today, where the government is no longer capable of providing the minimal standard of security and services to its population. Let’s review: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Congo, Angola, Somalia, Sudan, Burundi, CAR. Can’t the international community devise some sort of systematic remedy and response? I say yes. We have all kinds of international bodies that can sit down and debate these things and come up with approaches, but the main problem is the high expense of such operations. They require stand-by forces and the airlifting of troops to restore peace or provide humanitarian relief. This is very expensive, and it comes at a time when other agencies, not just the U.S. but most other donors, are budget-strapped. So that is the dilemma. I think we have a better understanding of what is required conceptually, but making it operational and implementable is the real challenge. At least our deepening understanding is a step in the right direction.

Going back to your question, I have dealt with some of these issues to some degree in all those countries. In Kenya the U.S. government became increasingly disillusioned with corruption. In 1995, there was a huge, \$300 million financial scandal in Tanzania. Uganda, the pariah under Idi Amin, has been molded into a star because the former rebel leader Museveni appears to be trying to bring lasting reforms and integrity to his country. We were dealing with these on a continuing basis in the East Africa office. Burundi plunged into disorder as a result of the assassination of Ndadaye in 1993, then Rwanda, reacting to that event, brought itself to one of the worst genocides in human history.

The problem that occurred to me was when Burundi and Rwanda exploded. I had some expertise from having been in Burundi and a number of visits to Rwanda. Because of the downsizing in general in the Bureau, USAID staff are very stretched. In the course of my two and a half years in that job Burundi and Rwanda had four different desk officers because it was just so stressful. I found I had to spend a lot of my time just dealing with that. Briefing papers, interagency meetings, talking points for the administrator, etc. I depended on my office deputy to watch the country programs and directly supervise the desk officers so that I could spend more time on Burundi and Rwanda. That worked out fairly well. What happened over time, though, was a perception that I was spending “all my time” on Burundi and Rwanda, which was not true, to the detriment of the other country programs. Well, in fact, we had a structure where the deputy was keeping me

abreast of the other countries. I represented the USG at Consultative Group meetings in Paris for Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. I chaired the meetings on the country strategy reviews. In addition to Burundi and Rwanda's demands in Washington, Sudan was also a major pull, not because of AID so much but because of policy considerations and overall U.S. policy towards Sudan. Somalia had actually gotten pretty quiet. The war was over and we had pulled back people to Nairobi.

Q: What was happening in Burundi and Rwanda to take up so much of your time?

SLOCUM: In October, 1993, four months after his inauguration, President Ndadaye was seized in his residence in the middle of the night by some Tutsi soldiers. They moved him to a nearby army camp and some hours later killed him, allegedly after torturing him. Underlining the organized and planned nature of the event, at the same time, several Government ministers and the head of the National Assembly were hunted down and killed. Other senior officials of the new government fled to western embassies for protection. Sylvie Kinigi, the new Prime Minister, fled to the French Embassy. Ex-President Buyoya camped out with his family at the American Embassy for several days, though this has never gotten much public attention. When news of the presidential assassination got out, Hutus in the countryside went on a rampage and killed hundreds of innocent Tutsis in retaliation for the murder of "their" president. Then the Tutsi military dispatched soldiers to the scene of the violence and cracked down with their own indiscriminate killing of innocent Hutus. What is sad is that most of the victims were innocent, poor, rural civilians. So there was general chaos and violence. This event set in motion just about all the other events in the region which have made it today one of the most unstable in the world. I was personally touched by these events. A number of people I knew in the Government were slain, others forced into exile.

As an illustration of the senseless yet logical nature of the killings, I will provide an example of someone I knew. He was the son of peasants, in his mid-20s, and worked in a low-level ministerial job in Bujumbura. He happened to come from a region not far from Bujumbura where a lot of killing took place, in both directions. Influential Tutsis from that hillside, furious at the destruction of their property by angry Hutus, provided lists of names of Hutus from the hillside who had no connection with the violence. But, in the tit-for-tat, eye-for-an-eye tradition of the Tutsi defense strategy, the young man was taken from his small house in front of his family and neighbors, told his papers were not in order, and carted off. The following day his body was found off the road to the airport, his throat slit. What makes this doubly tragic is that his family and neighbors saw the soldiers who picked him up and could identify some of them. Yet to this day not one of them has been brought to justice, and I predict will never be. These revenge killings went on for years, slowing down into a few of single-episode revenge and counter-revenge murders.

Q: Was this a maverick group of Tutsis who set all this off by taking the President or was there some concerted military fear of his presence, or influence? Do you know?

SLOCUM: I think we know. The Tutsis, being a minority in what to them is a hostile

environment where they are outnumbered 7 to 1, have legitimate security concerns. Unfortunately, the “hard-line” radical Tutsis take an all-or-nothing approach to assure their security. Taken to its extreme, the most radical approach, as practiced in 1972, is to eliminate any Hutu that is thought to be a threat. The point is, the Tutsi community is not monolithic, but there is a tendency in the Tutsi power structure to approach the issue of the Hutu majority with great apprehension, and when the Hutus go on a rampage and start killing Tutsis when their frustration boils up over the extent to which Hutus are disenfranchised from the centers of power, the only way the Tutsis know how to react is a massive crackdown especially targeting the educated Hutus. That is what happened in October 1993. Keep in mind, though, that it was Tutsi soldiers who set the whole thing off by assassinating the first democratically elected president of Burundi. Tutsis in positions of authority now try to distance themselves from this reality by saying the operation was carried out by a renegade band of noncommissioned army officers acting on their own. No one believes that, and human rights reports point to higher-level command involvement.

Q: This was triggered by the Tutsis?

SLOCUM: Yes.

Q: What frightened them that they would take such action?

SLOCUM: The fear that the new president would not be able to control Hutus’ desire for revenge over what happened to their people in 1972. Another reason is that most of the Tutsi military were very reluctant to go along with Buyoya’s democratization efforts. In getting the army to do so, Buyoya pulled off a major achievement. The army leadership had to agree to elections in the first place, and then to their results, the victory of Ndadaye. We probably will never have the whole picture, but within three or four months some elements of the Tutsi military, and probably other parts of the Tutsi power structure, concluded that the election of a Hutu president was too dangerous, and that Ndadaye would not be able to control the desire for “revenge” by some Hutus. In a worst-case scenario, all Tutsis would be killed and/or forced into exile. A lot was at stake for them; in fact everything, if you accept the possibility of the worst-case scenario. “So, let us retake power while we can” must have been their reasoning. Within a few hours of Ndadaye’s death, Burundi Radio announced the establishment of a new, multiparty government with a Hutu figurehead, but the reaction, both domestic and international, was so opposed that this newly announced government never sat. Instead, the two major parties kept trying to adopt a formula for power-sharing that went on for three years, in fits and starts. Multiple efforts over the next three years to cobble a unified government met with only limited success. Although the mainly Hutu party dominated the parliament, the Tutsi party was careful to out-manoeuvre it. They vetoed a number of choices to succeed Ndadaye as president. Finally a compromise candidate was chosen. They agreed upon Cyprien Ntaryamira as the new Burundian president. We knew him well. He had been Director of Agriculture during my time there, and was our key interlocutor in that sector. The mainly Tutsi party jockeyed for greater share of ministerial posts and influence. Negotiations continued, ceased, recommenced, new accords, periods of unrest

and fighting. Two Hutu parties fled into exile and became an armed rebel force, which is rising in influence.

In July 1996, while I happened to be in Burundi, Buyoya, since 1993 a private citizen, took power in a military coup as a last-ditch effort to prevent a total collapse into anarchy and civil war. The Hutus became more radicalized. Rebel groups operating in the countryside supported by their parties in exile in Tanzania, continued to create disorder in much of the country. Increasingly, the Tutsi army and political leadership has made Bujumbura and its environs a Tutsi fortress. It is very dangerous to travel around the country. A couple of years ago, while on a trip in the northern part of the country, the American Ambassador's convoy was fired upon by unidentified attackers shooting from a hillside. Well, you see that October 1993 was a very bad event for Burundi. But not just for Burundi.

In April 1994, the Hutu government in Rwanda, which had had its own series of struggles with an invading Tutsi army force from Uganda in 1990, unleashed its "final solution" to the "Tutsi problem." The Tutsi exile army, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) had sought to redress the rights of their people forced into exile in 1959. The RPF was becoming more influential in the north and taking more territory. There had been a series of attempts to work out an arrangement between the two groups, the Hutu power group and army and this invading Tutsi military group. The Hutu power structure in Rwanda, deeply fearful over the assassination of the first Hutu president in Burundi six months earlier, concluded that there was no way they could let the Tutsis return "because we know what Tutsis do when they have power and we can't trust them." One night, as the Hutu president was coming back from the last of many peace talks in Arusha, Tanzania, coincidentally with the Burundian president, Cyprien Ntaryamira, the plane was shot down as it was landing in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. The two presidents were killed and within 45 minutes the army and paramilitary militia were out in the streets of Kigali with lists of Tutsis to round up and kill on the spot. The horrible Rwandan genocide of Tutsis was underway, and the killing went on for three months.

Because the RPF occupied part of Kigali under one of the Arusha agreements, Tutsis living in that part of the town were protected and survived. But the fact is, the Rwanda Hutu army, known as the FAR for its French acronym, supported by militia groups known by their Kinyarwanda name as the *Interahamwe*, began spreading throughout the country and giving orders to local officials and the population to begin killing Tutsis. Estimates are that between 800,000 and a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed between April and June 1994. Since September 1994, I have been in Rwanda several times and have talked to people who survived this period. Over time the RPF army, though outnumbered by the FAR, was able to drive the Hutu army west into Zaire and eventually take control of the country. I am simplifying events. Eventually a determination of genocide was made and a structure was set up to deal with its aftermath.

I happened to go there with John Hicks, the Assistant Administrator for Africa, in September 1996, not long after hostilities had ceased. We drove up from Burundi. It was an eerie sight to see the effects of war as soon as we crossed the border into Rwanda. I

had never seen a war zone before. The destroyed buildings, the cars along the side of the road with bullet holes and bloodstained seats, the paucity of population along the road except for the occasional child who would run out from his hut and wave to us as we passed. Some nascent signs of activity were appearing, but no economic activity at all, not yet. The only vehicles moving were UN and NGO relief vehicles, and trucks loaded with relief supplies. NGOs were in full force. Reaching Kigali, we met a few FSN survivors that night at the Ambassador's residence, one of whom I knew fairly well. His name is Bonaventure Niyibizi, a longtime USAID economist who in 1997 became Minister of Commerce. He lost many members of his family, including his mother. His and his own family's survival is a marvelous, heartrending story captured by Philip Gourevitch in his book We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will All Be Killed with Our Families.

When we made it up to Kigali, the Ambassador informed us that we were five minutes late for a meeting he had arranged for John with the Rwandan president, Pasteur Bizimungu. (The RPF victory had been so rapid and complete, that a new Government, an RPF Government, was already in place.) The new president was a Hutu, but the real power resides in the vice president and the head of the armed forces, General Paul Kagame. We were taken to the president's residence near the airport and only later did we learn that the room in which the President received us was the same room in which the bodies of the two presidents and the other passengers had been taken and laid out after the plane crash.

Q: How did this affect you and AID and your role in AID?

SLOCUM: Because of my familiarity with the two countries, especially Burundi, I was called upon to be active in deliberations - interagency meetings, contributing to policy papers, advising the Bureau and the Administrator on program options.

Q: What kind of response were you recommending? What were we doing?

SLOCUM: Rwanda was quickly moved to a different level because of the genocide determination, a legal determination by the Department of State which recommends to the United Nations Security Council that the world body make such a declaration. This engages a number of international conventions, such as the jurisdiction of the International Court to adjudicate crimes against humanity. So, we proceeded in Rwanda on many fronts. One was to support establishment of an International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) to develop and process cases of people accused of genocide. AID was able to reestablish itself on the ground fairly quickly after the civil war had ended. The fighting had broken out April 4, 1994. The Tutsis had pretty much consolidated their hold on the territory by July, so by August things were stabilizing much sooner than expected. AID immediately began programming humanitarian relief through OFDA and related offices.

Q: Stayed through the war?

SLOCUM: No, at the sudden outbreak of violence and generalized disorder in early April, all foreigners had been evacuated within days. A token UN military force stayed in a defensive position, and a small UN humanitarian operation was operating throughout the war, but these were modest efforts relative to the crisis. Only in July did relief workers begin to arrive in force.

Q: The function of AID at that point was relief?

SLOCUM: Yes, entirely. In fact when John Hicks and I went up there in early September, an OFDA DART team was fully operational. “DART” means Disaster Assistance Relief Team. The Africa Bureau had someone on the ground very soon after our visit, certainly sometime in the fall of 1994.

Q: What kind of activities were you undertaking?

SLOCUM: Massive relief supplies: food and other necessary goods, medicines, mobile clinics, etc. This relief effort was aimed both at Rwanda but equally at the Hutu refugees who had fled into Zaire along with the defeated FAR and *Interahamwe*. Estimates went as high as two million refugees in the camps, though later that number was reduced. However, counting the refugees outside Rwanda and the internally displaced population (IDP), an estimate of 4 million is usually used. Because an agricultural season had been lost, an essential relief commodity was seeds and other inputs. Another urgent need was for the immediate restoration of water, power and communications, which donors worked together on. There had been a lot of destruction. The government had been pretty much devastated. Most of the people staffing the civil service positions were either dead or had fled. One study I saw in 1997 estimated that the Health Ministry, for example, had only 17 percent of its positions filled, two years later. So, following the emergency phase, and connected to it, was the urgent requirement to restore services. By 1995 a staff of four Direct Hires was in place, and AID developed a transition strategy consisting of the restoration of key Ministries, including justice, health, agriculture, rehabilitation and finance, reestablishing a police force, and working with the ICTR. These were a good start, but was it enough? I think Mr. Atwood had this vision, centered in the GHAI, that if AID could not prove its worth in responding to these kinds of crises and making a demonstrable difference, then it was unlikely that the Agency could justify its continued existence to Congress and the American public. Again, this was part of the dilemma of what AID would be in a post-cold-war world.

Analytically, when you realize what the problem areas are, where do you strike? Where can you be most effective? The needs were so vast and total, one could start almost anywhere. But there had to be a rationale, and this led the Mission to develop an Interim Strategy Paper (IPS). Because the RPF set up a functioning government so rapidly, with the same professionalism as its army, we had counterparts with whom to develop priorities and plans. The Mission focused upon restoring justice, demining, police training, provision of basic services in key ministries, and health/humanitarian and food aid.

I said that an AID office was reestablished, but it was difficult to find people to go there. The previous staff had been allowed to transfer to new positions for a number of reasons, including the trauma of their having witnessed the outset of the genocide and the loss of many people they knew; and the fact that no one expected a military solution so quickly. So most of them had already gotten new assignments. The Agency by this time no longer had the numbers of people it had had in the past to tap.

Q: Was it the same kind of function in Burundi?

SLOCUM: Burundi still had a full operating Mission despite the events of October 1993. Over time, of course, the programs would be wound down because of their inability to function in the tense political atmosphere. But at this time, we tapped the Burundi Mission to support Rwanda. We even came up with a name for the joint Mission, COBRA, for Combined Office of Burundi and Rwanda. This turned out to be not such a good idea. At the time, it made perfect sense to tap the Burundi Mission while Rwanda was in chaos and everyone had departed. But over time, as Burundi became increasingly unable to implement its regular development programs and Rwanda's management demands expanded exponentially, trying to run things from Burundi became problematic, to say the least. Daily decisions had to be made on the ground. And the Mission Director in Burundi, my successor, had a management style that didn't favor delegation of authority to the Program Officer in Kigali, who was the senior AID person at post. But this was temporary, and by 1997 Rwanda had its own Mission Director, George Lewis, and was developing an innovative program which, I believe, stands out as a model for responsive "transitional" assistance in a post-conflict environment. We proved that with police assistance, which required a Presidential Waiver, by the way, rebuilding the justice sector by providing new equipment and training magistrates, etc., AID could make a difference. We also provided creative technical assistance, such as a French-speaking law professor with prosecutorial skills.

Q: These are happening now and are working?

SLOCUM: Yes, this is a long-term effort. It's really twofold: first is rebuilding capacity in general, given the killings and flight. The second is dealing with the crimes committed in 1994, which poses an additional burden on the government. As we speak, the justice system has jailed well over 100,000 suspects of complicity in the genocide, but the justice system is unable to handle anything near that caseload.

Q: Do you have any observations on any of the other countries in your area?

SLOCUM: I don't think I mentioned this before, but the watchword(s) of GHAI are: "assume instability." The fact of instability has become, I'm afraid, more widespread in East Africa. Each country has real actual or potential flashpoints of instability. Ethiopia has overcome 17 years of poor governance, but is vulnerable to major famine. Now it is at war with its former province, Eritrea. No one wanted this, and it is the worst possible thing for either country.

Sudan has its north-south divide and a civil war that is at least a generation old. There is also a major humanitarian relief program in the south which is run out of the regional office in Nairobi. Curiously, a residual program continues out of the Embassy in Khartoum, which manages some NGO humanitarian projects around Khartoum. But the great bulk of our resources are programmed and managed out of REDSO in Nairobi for southern Sudan. We support humanitarian efforts in Somalia through a UN office for Somalia in Nairobi, which receives multi-donor support and funding. We still have classic development Missions in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Madagascar. But we are programming increased levels of resources through NGOs, either because, as in Kenya, we are not satisfied with the quality of management of funds, or because country strategies have shifted some focus to the nongovernmental areas and civil society, not at the expense of aid to governments, but as a complement to them. One other observation: AID Missions, except perhaps for Egypt, no longer have any “redundancy.” The personnel and budget cuts of the 90s have taken away just about all second positions in Mission offices, including Deputy Directors. Typically, this means only one Direct Hire in the Controller, Executive, Technical, Program and Project offices of a Mission. This has obviously reduced management span but has one bright side: it allows AID to put more emphasis on the Foreign Service National staff (FSNs), which is salutary: the growing professionalization of a permanent staff within the Mission.

The “favorite son” in the region is Uganda, which has achieved the second-highest economic growth rate on the continent after Ghana. In Uganda AID programs significant resources to the Government, largely in support of policy and sector reforms with the context of the World Bank-led adjustment programs. Unfortunately, stability has decreased there because of problems in the northern and western parts of Uganda.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DROC) is now deep into a civil war which is supported on both sides by a lineup of other African states. It is a mess. But DROC’s dilemma points to the need for AID to anticipate the potential for recurring episodes of instability, and I think AID is becoming better prepared to address these complex emergencies.

Even Kenya, the rock of East Africa, has been a major disappointment to this administration. Mr. Atwood came out of the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and as its president prior to becoming AID Administrator, he had been disinvited by President Moi to visit Kenya and advise on democratic reforms, so as AID Administrator Brian has not been keen on Kenya. AID and State have discussions regularly on this issue: how hard to be on President Moi? The State Department having a perspective that we have broader policy issues and interests with Kenya, a number of areas in East Africa where we need Kenya’s help, such as transshipping relief supplies to neighboring countries. Kenya is also a major staging area for peacekeeping when required, so in many ways we “need” Kenya. Nevertheless, we had major budget and staff cuts in Kenya. Not just because of the overall agency staff cuts, but because of disenchantment with the regime.

Tanzania is more benign except there are publically recorded and acknowledged levels of corruption which at times have been fairly shocking. Documented cases of hundreds of

millions of dollars of customs revenue siphoned off at the bonded warehouses on Zanzibar at a time when school kids lacked basic supplies and books, and public clinics didn't have basic medicines. But the donor community came together and worked very closely with the Tanzanians on the corruption issue.

Q: You attended some of the Consultative Group meetings for these countries, didn't you?

SLOCUM: There are CG meetings for Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania and Uganda about once a year or less.

Q: How did you find those meetings?

SLOCUM: I think it is useful to get donor representatives from headquarters coming together with officials from the guest country and the World Bank officials to look at performance issues. What I think is useful is that increasingly, and with less and less reluctance, the Bank has started to look at political issues related to development, management and poverty. They don't like to introduce them, but they do not impede donor representatives from raising them. So, increasingly we are getting into the discussion factors of governance and the governments' democratization efforts (or lack of them), corruption, human rights and other related areas.

Q: How is that received by the developing country representative?

SLOCUM: They don't exactly embrace such discussions, but the dialogue helps them see what the depth of donor concerns is.

Q: Is it a productive process, this discussion?

SLOCUM: The African delegation is always high-powered, and their presence provides donor delegates a unique opportunity to push policy dialogue to this captive audience. I say unique because all the high-level donor representatives are all in the same room. It's a great chance to push the envelope. These sessions are usually in Paris, as you know, and the night before the meeting the Bank hosts a dinner to give heads of donor delegations the opportunity to sound off more frankly than in the formal CG sessions on concerns and issues. This enables us to brief each other, see how much convergence on the issues we share, and in general help prep ourselves for the formal session. Such discussions have allowed the World Bank to acknowledge a gradual shift away from the traditional pure economic focus of these discussions. The other thing that they are focusing on more now is poverty alleviation, joining the economic discussion with more attention to poverty. In my own consulting work in which I am now engaged, we are seeing, on the UN side, a growing interest in mounting programs which specifically address poverty at the local level.

I was usually the head of the U.S. delegation at these meetings. At the last CG on Kenya which I attended, sometime in the fall of 1996, I argued for inclusion of human rights and

governance concerns in the communique, as this had been a major point of delegate's interventions during the two-day meeting. But arguing for inclusion of these issues in the public communique became controversial, with a few delegations arguing strongly for it, but most preferring not to. Acting on instructions, I made my points, but in the end these aspects did not get included in the report. (In fact, the World Bank chairman, who was an American, said to me privately (and jokingly) at the end of the meeting when we got the final text, "You are a pain in the butt"). The debate on the issues was more important than what got into the final communique, which is always a pretty anodyne statement anyway.

Q: Was there any follow-up showing impact of these meetings?

SLOCUM: Yes, because the CG deals not just with macroeconomic performance but also with sector issues and other types of analyses, which are presented and commented upon. Typically, the prominent donors bring people from the field as well as from headquarters, while the smaller bilaterals are represented by someone from their headquarters. For example, throughout all the Kenya meetings, the DCM from Embassy Nairobi, in addition to the Mission Director, usually attended. (I think the Embassy wanted to make sure we didn't get too aggressive in our statements.) But to answer your question more specifically of policy changes impacting from these discussions, the host delegation returns home with an idea of what donors overall will support and what might jeopardize future support, especially financial aid and support to debt relief. There has been more coordination of debt analysis or debt relief issues which have become a major issue. Of course, the World Bank programs, themselves, contributed a lot to the indebtedness.

Q: Was there a system of sector follow-up meetings?

SLOCUM: Yes, but back in the country. Usually the CG discussions identify the principal donors supporting the host country and Bank's sector programs, and they are invited to participate jointly on follow-up actions in the country. Speaking of in-country meetings, periodically there are discussions about transferring Consultative Group sessions to the host country. This happened in Ethiopia, where the last CG was held in Addis in December 1996. It remains to be seen if this will be replicated elsewhere. One issue is that a European locale is more likely to attract senior donor representatives from their headquarters.

Final Days in USAID and after - 1997

Q: Any other dimension of your final AID years?

SLOCUM: The last two years were difficult ones for me because the agency was going through some major changes, driven largely by reduced appropriations, which translated into fewer personnel. But I understand the underlying rationale, that the U.S. role in the world has changed drastically since 1991. The impact at the operational level was profound. I found that there were fewer people available to do the work and this created more stress. I found myself routinely putting in 12 and sometimes 13 or 14 hour days without a break except to go to the snack bar to get a salad to eat at my desk. This caused

me to neglect other aspects of my life, especially exercise, and this was all taking a toll on me. I had put on a lot of weight, and felt I wasn't taking proper care of myself. This began to concern me, and my family and friends. I began to realize that maybe the time had come to shift gears. So, in the course of 1996 I began thinking seriously of retiring earlier than I had planned. I was 55 years old and normally thought I would work until I was about 60. Because of my aged mother, I did not feel I had an option of going back overseas. So I thought long and hard and gave myself June 30, 1996, as the deadline for deciding whether or not to retire at the end of the year.

I will recount an amusing episode in this process which came to be known as the "Betty Ford night." Betty Ford, the wife of the former president whose family confronted her with their concern that she was mishandling alcohol and pharmaceuticals, sat her down and told her she had to get attention. My addiction was not to these substances, but perhaps to too many hours in the office. I was having a dinner party here in my house one Friday night and several people, including one or two from AID, were invited. I was an hour late for my own party. I had some houseguests available to let them in and fix dinner, so at least my guests were welcomed and taken care of, but my tardy arrival led to a discussion of what I was doing to myself. This was all friendly banter, which resulted in a show of hands after dinner about what I should do. They all voted that I should retire. I tell this more for the humor of the event. But I had already been giving this option serious thought.

I kept the June 30 goal in mind. On June 15 the Foreign Service RIF was announced, and a number of colleagues were axed, many of them very worthy and totally undeserving of a RIF. Not a morale-boosting event at all. June 30 happened to be a Sunday, which enabled me to make my decision in tranquility, but in truth it was a decision that had already made itself. I needed to talk to Carol Peasley, who was my immediate boss, the ranking career person in AFR. (John Hicks had become an Ambassador to Eritrea.) But the end of June fell right between the Foreign Service RIF and the RIF of General Service employees, which would be announced in mid-July. I didn't think the timing was right for me to take my decision to Carol, and besides, I had six months to go. The GS RIF was equally devastating, if not more so, because so many lower-grade people got notices, including three in the East Africa Office. In late July I was taking a trip to a CG in Paris and then down to Burundi and it was early August when I got back. So it wasn't until the middle of August that I informed Carol of my decision. I was not totally comfortable about telling her, because she had had to bear the brunt for the Bureau of all the bad news of the year: the RIFs, the reduction in personnel in field Missions, the departure of other office directors earlier in the year, the budget cuts, and so on. But Carol, the supreme professional that she is, spent a few minutes to reassure herself that I was comfortable with my decision, and then expressed support. I can't finish this exercise without a word of admiration for Carol Peasley. Here is an officer who works longer and harder than anyone I know, and unlike me, doesn't complain about it. (And she kept her weight down, too!) She produces at least twice as much as anybody else and gives herself entirely to her job. She kept the spirit of AFR alive during this tumultuous period.

In October 1996, I attended the job search seminar provided by the State Department for

retiring Foreign Service officers. My retirement date was January 3, 1997. Carol and the office put on a very nice party for me. Then, at the Mission's request, I went out to Rwanda under a personal services contract (PSC) for three months. I saw this as an opportunity to bridge the gap between my AID Foreign Service career and a new life still working on African issues.

I think I have made most of the points that I had wanted to say. The challenges to management where you have fewer people doing more work, I touched on earlier. It is a dilemma and challenges one's management skills to figure out how to make the right priorities and maintain effectiveness.

I avoided one USAID policy throughout my career, and that is service in more than one region. I don't know if that was good or bad, but I am certainly very satisfied with my years of service in Africa.

Q: Let's come back to that in a minute when we get to some general observations. You retired then in January 1997. Give us a thumbnail sketch of what you have done since then. You don't have to analyze in depth, just gives us the flavor of the kinds of things you have been doing.

SLOCUM: Two friends with lifelong experience working on Africa had been talking about setting up a business partnership which would allow them a corporate "face" under which to do contract work in Africa. For a variety of reasons, they wanted to get away from consulting work through the major companies. They were considering the establishment of a partnership which would allow them to pick and choose the things they wanted to do, have a small group of associates, both African and non-African, and they wanted to know what I thought about it. I supported their idea, and expressed my own interest as well. While I was in Rwanda in early 1997 they set up the partnership, which I joined upon my return. We added a fourth partner a year later. At the same time, May of 1997, I required some surgery to correct some unexpected cerebral bleeding from a benign acoustic neuroma tumor which had been operated and removed two years earlier. The hemorrhaging had caused some brain damage, and I was unable to read for some months after the surgery. During the lengthy recuperative period, I took advantage of the time to attend to my weight, joining Weight Watchers and the gym at American University, which is near my home. In six months I lost 50 pounds, an important goal. I have put back 10 or 15 but I feel great. I began working on administrative aspects of our partnership, which is called Associates for Global Change (AGC), though we work almost exclusively in Africa. I also got involved in a number of groups which meet regularly on Africa around town. It is amazing how easy it is to stay active. Without having too much of a schedule things just seem to fall into place. My mother requires a little more attention so I have had time for that. So, I had a very good year.

In terms of AGC contract work, I worked several weeks last year in Morocco on strategy development. This was my first major contract with AGC. I have a number of other potential assignments for next year, including in Rwanda, where I expect to make several

trips for USAID. I am very happy with this arrangement. I work with partners who share the same values about Africa and its development, and find that I don't miss the bureaucracy at all. I still have links to what a lot of AID is doing and certainly to Africa.

Observations on USAID Experience and the Foreign Assistance Program

Q: Okay, let's have some concluding observations, a general wrap up. One of the questions I often ask people is do you think foreign aid has made a difference anywhere?

SLOCUM: There is no question that we have made a major impact, across the board, in training Africans in the technical and management aspects of their societies. Even if we didn't do anything else well, we could certainly point to the great variety of training programs that have made such a difference in capacity building and institutional development throughout Africa. All of the kinds of training we do, from U.S. university training to capacity building in Africa; from short-term training such as seminars and workshops either here or in Africa to NGO and civil-society promotion in Africa—these are all high value added.

In terms of in-country development projects, I am not certain whether some of the mega projects, notably the ones we designed in some of the small, resource-poor Sahel countries in the '70s and '80s, paid off. They involved major expenses “grafted” onto a very weak institutional environment, and I think these may have turned out to be fairly questionable in terms of what was left behind and sustainable. I mentioned earlier, for example, the Rural Assessment and Manpower Survey (RAMS) project in Mauritania, about which I could find very little trace when I got there some years later, except for the studies on shelves. But to be fair, I did not conduct a survey to see how useful they might have been to a number of services, so my comments are empirical. There were certainly benefits, as in the training side and provision of needed equipment. But in terms of having long-lasting impact on the economy or the sector, I am less certain. I think we would have to look at that.

Q: What's missing?

SLOCUM: Well, I think there were lessons learned. In the Sahel, we expected way too much out of the indigenous ability to absorb and make appropriate use of the assistance being offered in those major projects, and I mean mainly those that involved the major technology transfer. There is a salutary emphasis in the 90s on reducing government involvement, decentralization, increased local empowerment, and civil society. There is still room for, and the necessity of, public-sector capacity building in terms of policy reforms, for sure. But attention has to be paid as well to the bottom/up approach to encourage local initiative. But this raises issues: How do you deliver resources to stimulate local initiatives efficiently? How do you empower grassroots organizations with so little development and management experience? How do you get governments more responsive to their populations' needs? Answers to these questions inform the kinds of activities donors will do in the future, I believe.

I think if we had had more knowledge of how to approach these issues in some of these severely resource-scarce countries, we might have been more effective. I am not sure that the big budgets that we put in the Sahel really justified themselves, but I am not basing that on a lot of scientific analysis, I'm just giving you my impressions. But, getting back to lessons learned, I don't think those "mega" projects are so typical anymore. We have learned to be more precise to link investments to results, and to devise measurable indicators to assess those results.

Q: Any particular program areas where you think the foreign assistance program has been distinctive?

SLOCUM: Certainly, the area of agricultural research should be cited. There is no question that our support has helped countries be much more participatory in the international research networks than they would have been. The training of host country nationals, of course, and making sure that improved varieties appropriate to the environment were introduced. I don't think there is any question but that donor support to agriculture writ large has been essential. (Essential, but not enough, because most African countries are not going to find major economic growth and linkages to the global economy uniquely through agriculture.) Support to health and education has been significant, but sustainability of such investments is an issue. And, of course, programs supporting family planning have prevented countries like Kenya and Morocco with high population growth rates from economic disaster. When I was in Morocco recently, the USAID power-point program showed that, had it not been for long-term support to family planning by AID, Morocco's population would be nearly double what it is today. I don't recall the exact population data, but it is impressive. And it has been almost entirely through USAID assistance.

Q: You are talking about population programs ?

SLOCUM: Population, family planning, maternal/child health, health delivery systems, etc. The Mission's challenge in Morocco today is to make these things sustainable with reduced budgets and to identify viable private sector alternatives to government support of some of these programs.

Q: Other areas?

SLOCUM: I think we have identified very useful complementary efforts working with the IMF and the World Bank on some major reforms through our grant-funded technical assistance and training; these have been very effective. We have been able to use our grant assistance to complement their macro-level efforts. We do not have the level of resources in terms of money to leverage the kinds of reforms we used to.

I haven't talked about the environment, but we have advanced the thinking in this area by promoting community-based and private-sector-driven initiatives in reducing and reversing environmental degradation.

I just heard on the radio coming back this afternoon that HIV/AIDS in Africa is going to get worse, the impact is going to be much more horrific in future years than it is now and that is going to require a lot of attention. I think we have been among the most proactive donors on HIV/AIDS for many years, and have introduced prevention and control programs into existing health-care delivery programs. Only more recently have other donors come in with similar assistance programs, though WHO and the UNAIDS agencies have been working with us for a number of years now.

Q: You did talk a little bit about the relationship of the U.S. political security interests and development interests. Do you conclude that they have been mutually supportive or have they been at odds?

SLOCUM: I would address this on two levels. On the policy level, I think there was always mutual support and that remains even truer today. At what I call the “working level,” meaning where the typical AID FSO is engaged in the field, we tended to isolate ourselves from those higher-level geopolitical-cum-U.S. interests and focus on the job at hand. When we were larger and more independent, this did not really matter, and both the higher-level policy interests as well as our “working-level” concerns were satisfied, I think. But we have been cut down to size and operate in an almost totally different environment, and will work much more closely in sync with the overarching objectives.

Q: How did we ignore them in the past?

SLOCUM: Every year the Secretary of State along with the Aid Administrator presented the budget to Congress, so at that level there was coherence. But, at the typical AID working level, we, the operators, had enough to keep us busy managing development programs to pretty much ignore those higher-level goals, and my experience was that we worked somewhat apart from the Embassy.

Q: Were there occasions when things you were trying to do were upset or disrupted because of political or security interests?

SLOCUM: I can’t think of any examples of instances where security interests intervened, but certainly political factors could. It was my experience that some, but certainly not all, ambassadors did not understand programming principles and the funding cycle, nor the significance of a program strategy. I cited the example of the ivory tusks in Burundi. The ambassador felt, and understandably, that if the issue was important enough for the president of the country to come to her, we should try to be responsive. In this case we reached an amicable understanding that we simply had no way to make a private reimbursement for the millions of dollars worth of ivory they could no longer cash in. But this example illustrates what can be a clash between long- and short-term objectives.

Q: How would you size up your career in AID and how would you size up AID as an agency?

SLOCUM: I think the agency has learned from its mistakes over time and made major

adjustments as a result. Each decade brought its influences. The '60s were the time of big government projects and industrial development in Africa in the flush of independence. This was followed by a recognition that Africans lacked the capacity to manage and direct their own economies and societies, so the rush was on for major technical assistance development projects. About the end of the '70s, we were called to help the developing world to meet basic human needs. I think the eighties brought a recognition that we had to pay more attention to the private sector as the engine of development in most countries. This coincided with a conservative Republican administration. In the nineties we are getting at more fundamental issues such as local-level empowerment, decentralization of government authorities, and the emphasis on poverty reduction. All of these represent cumulative learning that I think has enhanced our effectiveness in terms of results. At the same time the agency has been adversely affected by the staff and budget cuts. But, as I think back, as long as I have been with AID I have seen this process in motion. It just accelerated in the last five years. That is just the reality. In view of the collapse of the communist empire, AID will not be likely to have the same influence in the U.S. foreign policy establishment it once had. But, I think it still has a role. Mr. Atwood has been successful in staving off what could have been its incorporation into State two years ago. We are still there although we may not be kicking with the vigor we once had. We are still operating in a lot of countries and I still think we are making a difference, and getting better at what we do in terms of impact and results on the ground. But we are in fewer and fewer countries, and that trend seems inexorable. Thus, on a global level we will continue to lose influence.

For me, despite a little bit of grumbling about my last job, it has been a very privileged career. I neglected to mention at the beginning of the interview, when you asked me when I got out of graduate school why the Foreign Service, why international development. I told you that there was always something in me that had a faraway vision but I didn't know quite how to satisfy that desire.

I remember on one of my trips home, not too long after I had gone out, maybe in the first five years of my work in AID, I was having dinner at my parents house and we were talking about my work abroad and my enjoyment of it. I suddenly remembered myself as a young child sitting on my father's lap as he read to me from Robert Lewis Stevenson's "A Book of Childhood Verses." Each page of verse had a picture accompanying it. One had a little towhead boy - and I was towheaded as a youngster - sitting in a cherry tree looking out over the horizon. The verse read in part: "Faraway places with strange-sounding names, calling, calling me." I was that little boy looking at the horizon, wanting to reach those faraway places someday. And, I have been able to fulfill that. My career choice has allowed me to travel to those distant places with sometimes strange-sounding names, living in different cultures and seeing how other people relate to their environment, trying to understand their different value systems. It has been a terrific privilege. At the end of my career I can look back with great satisfaction.

I owe so much not only to the Agency, but to the Africa Bureau and to Africa. Africans have taught me a great deal. Africans have taught me that being human does not require material things; that with very minimum resources they can live a life that is full of

meaning and love. Despite conditions of often severe deprivation and insecurity, they never lose hope in themselves and their future. In their poverty they are rich, and they have given some of that richness to me. They have changed my life, and to my dying day I will be in the deepest admiration for their courage and hope.

Q: That is an excellent way to wrap up the interview. Thank you very much, it has been a very enjoyable time.

SLOCUM: Thank you, Haven, for taking so much of your time to listen to me and to allow me to contribute to the Oral History Project.

End of interview