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

JOHN H. (JACK) SULLIVAN

Interviewed by: W. Haven North
Initial interview date: October 29, 1996

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTERVIEW

Early education and work experience

Q: How long have you been associated with foreign assistance programs, since the early '60s? Jack, let's start back before that and tell us about your education, your earlier work experience, particularly as relates to how it became interested in the field of international affairs and international development.

SULLIVAN: I was born in Toledo, Ohio in 1935. My father was a dentist. My mother was a housewife. I went to Catholic schools there. In my earlier years my international interests probably related to my being a stamp collector. So I had a notion of geography. I was also a big fan of Franklin Roosevelt who was also a stamp collector. And then as I matured I went to Marquette University in Milwaukee to go to college and decided to be a journalist which was my career until I came to Capitol Hill in 1962, and had, I would say, probably minimal interest in international relations. After I got my Bachelors degree in journalism I stayed at Marquette and got a Masters degree in journalism and English.

Subsequent to that time I went to work on newspapers. I worked first in Ohio on the Springfield, Ohio Sun and subsequently on the Milwaukee Sentinel. When I went to the Sentinel I started my education in political science and during that period I did take some international courses. I was asked to come to Washington as the Administrative Assistant to Congressman Clement J. Zablocki of Wisconsin. At that time he was the ranking Democrat, that is, the Democrat next to the chairman, on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Work with Congressman Zablocki and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs - 1962

Q: How did you make that connection?

SULLIVAN: Through some good friends. He was looking for someone to do press work at first. I was working on the Milwaukee Sentinel. I was making too much money, a seasoned reporter with three or four years under my belt. But he knew the dean of my college, and he knew another gentleman who was my commander in the Air Force Reserve. Along the line I went into the Air Force Reserve, and the Colonel was a good friend of Zablocki's. So mutual friends recommended me. We had a successful interview, and in the meantime, his administrative assistant left and he took me on in that role, so that I was involved with all of the activities of his office. At that time I was concentrated more on domestic politics. I've always been avid about the presidency, the Congress, constitutional law.

Q: Were you covering Congressional politics as a newspaper reporter?

SULLIVAN: No, I didn't. I covered a lot of other silly stuff, but I loved covering the federal building. I used to cover federal courts. I covered a number of federal activities back in Milwaukee. I was only the relief man, so I did it two days a week. In fact, I was a police reporter for much of this time. And so when I came to Washington it became clear that, the Committee on Foreign Affairs did not have a lot of staff, and what staff they had tended not to be too interested in assisting even the ranking member. Zablocki was very ...

Q: This would be what year now?

SULLIVAN: This would be in '62. Clem Zablocki was very tight with the Kennedys. He was a very strong Kennedy supporter, and he got a lot of attention. Zablocki was personally very interested in the foreign aid program, and he was the one who carried the water. Clem would put in the bill, Clem would carry it on the floor frequently. He had to write his own speeches then. The committee staff wasn't writing the speeches so I used to write his speeches. I used to compile information about foreign aid for him but on kind of a sporadic basis because I had the whole of his work to do.

Long about 1965 I got the notion that what I should do was get into international activity, international affairs, so I went back to school...

Q: How was that?

Studied for a Ph.D. at American University with thesis on the U.S. and Indonesia - 1965

SULLIVAN: Well, Zablocki needed help in foreign affairs. My advancement was not going to be sticking to domestic politics. He encouraged me to go back and get a doctorate, so I went to American University and made a pretty good deal with them about what it was going to take to get that. I concentrated on South and Southeast Asia because the Vietnam War was heating up very strongly then, and Zablocki was at that point, chairman of the Asia subcommittee, so he needed help with Asia. So I subsequently worked half-time for him and proceeded to get the doctorate and in 1969...

Q: What did you write your thesis on?

SULLIVAN: I wrote it on the United States and the “new order” in Indonesia, and it had a fairly substantial portion dealing with foreign assistance. The dissertation dealt a bit with the U.S. government policy. It was sort of diplomatic history, but in that I had quite a bit of work on the way foreign assistance worked. Also I've always believed that U.S. foreign aid to Indonesia was handled masterfully after the 1965 aborted Communist coup in what's called “Gestapu.” At the time our ambassador was Marshall Green, and he and his people really were running the aid program. I can't even remember who the aid mission directors were at that time. But the way in which the United States positioned itself vis a vis the Indonesians was very good.

Back in those days, the ‘60s, AID had kind of a carrot and stick approach. You held the carrot out to the government, then you supposedly had a stick that if they didn't do what you asked then you wouldn't give them the money. I never thought that worked very well. The carrot was never big enough and the stick never scared anybody. I'm talking mainly about ESF or security-supporting assistance as it was called in those days, I just never thought it could create any real reforms.

Well the U.S. really did it differently in Indonesia, and I give Marshall Green credit. The United States did what I call “the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow” method. We said, "Okay, here's a rainbow of reforms we want you to put into effect. We want you to do this thing and this thing and this thing, and when that rainbow is complete, then there well may be a pot of gold at the end of it." And the Indonesians did it; they did everything we asked them to, they were actually a bit naive. In their first commercial code, after they got rid of the leftists, their first commercial code was actually copied out of a Harvard textbook, and they enacted it. And our people were saying, "Now you may not want to rush into this. You don't have to take it lock, stock and barrel." But they did it.

Q: Did they get the pot of gold?

SULLIVAN: Oh yeah.

Q: What?

SULLIVAN: The pot of gold of foreign aid clicked in about 1968. We didn't rush in to give them military aid or economic assistance. We waited to see how things were going to play themselves out. I think that was a brilliant stroke. Marshall Green's written a good book about it, he talks about the strategy, and I give him very high marks in my dissertation. I think there were others who had a hand in it. A lot of them were economic types in the East Asia Bureau at the State Department. AID really wasn't there. Basically State and Treasury called the shots.

Q: They closed down the mission at one point.

SULLIVAN: The U.S. had closed down the AID mission so there wasn't AID around. But it was people like Marshall Green and Ed Masters, he was political counselor. Actually that group of foreign service officers in the Indonesian mission were one of the best that I've ever seen. It deteriorated subsequently, but at that time, we had - Paul Gardner was another good one - an extraordinarily talented and thoughtful group. Marshall Green of course has gotten a lot of kudos over the years, and he's still around, a very bright guy. His son works for us frequently.

So when I finished my degree Zablocki had the Asia subcommittee and they moved to put me on the full committee as a staff consultant, that was in '69, and then moved me onto the Asia committee. But he quit the Asia committee almost as soon as I got there and took

national security policy and scientific development. In those days you had two assignments on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Q: Two what?

SULLIVAN: You had both a full committee assignment and a subcommittee assignment. Today that doesn't happen. The subcommittee people are quite separate. But I had a full committee assignment and a subcommittee.

Q: And you were also in his office?

SULLIVAN: No, I was finished with his office.

Q: Finished with his office.

SULLIVAN: Yes, I left his office when I was doing my doctoral dissertation. And so the first job I was put on at the Committee was to look at the Peterson report. Remember that?

Q: Yes. Describe a little bit.

SULLIVAN: Well the Peterson report was actually commissioned by President Johnson to look at our foreign assistance activities. It was picked up by Nixon in 1969. Nixon's administration endorsed it and brought it to the Congress in the form of legislation for some changes in the organization of foreign aid. The staff director gave me the job of conceptualizing what the new aid would look like, and to see where the pieces would fall. I worked with senior members of the committee staff.

Q: What was the theme of the Peterson report?

SULLIVAN: The theme of the Peterson was to rethink linking technical assistance with capital assistance in AID. Peterson was an attempt to make more spigots, to disestablish AID in a sense. It met with no enthusiasm on Capitol Hill.

Q: What do you mean disestablish it?

SULLIVAN: It was to parcel out it, to put parts into different self-contained, self-standing, separate agencies or organizations.

Q: This was a technical assistance foundation type of thing?

SULLIVAN: Yes, right, technical assistance, but not a foundation, I'm a little fuzzy on details, you probably know more about it than I do, but it was a parceling out of assistance functions. I think the one thing that did get parceled out eventually was OPIC, one of their recommendations that was put into effect. The committee staff was

completely antagonistic to most of the alleged reforms. They just didn't think it was going to accomplish much.

Q: Why was that?

SULLIVAN: There were a couple of reasons. I think some felt that if AID was disestablished functions would go to other committees, a bureaucratic reason. I think there also was a feeling that it was a premature reform, that the integrated AID hadn't worked too badly and that it ought to be continued. I don't think there was any, I don't recall pressure from AID on the committee. I know the members of the committee, many of whom like Clem had been involved in getting the AID bill passed over the years, weren't enthusiastic over the bill.

Q: Why was there this proposal to break AID up in effect? What was the reasoning behind it?

SULLIVAN: I think the reason was some people thought they could get more money. If you parceled foreign aid out, if you had several different outfits, that totally the amounts of money would be larger. The Alliance for Progress had gotten this huge chunk of money and then when there was a big pipeline, Congress came along next year and cut the hell out of them. I think that was the reason, at least that's what it appeared to me.

One of the things I wanted to mention, apropos of this, I am probably one of the few people in town who has met every AID administrator. I'm not talking about prior to AID, but I mean from Fowler Hamilton to Brian Atwood. Some of them I have known better than others, but I have interacted with all of them.

Q: Well we'll want to talk about them maybe later.

SULLIVAN: Okay, I will be happy to. So then I worked on the Peterson reforms for awhile, but I basically was involved with the Subcommittee on National Security Policy working on ABM, MIRV national security issues. But both Clem Zablocki and I would get a little depressed by these nightmare scenarios we were constantly facing -- they were scary as hell -- and I said, "You know, we've got these scientific developments. Let's look at some more hopeful things. Let's take a look at the miracle grains and the Green Revolution and just see what this is all about." Zablocki liked that. But he wasn't a farm boy. My family comes off the farm: both my mother and my father came off the farm and we still have a farm in our family, and I've always been interested in farming. Clem was a city person, but he liked the idea. We did one set of hearings. We did something on the Green Revolution and we had a one-day symposium on the Hill. We had all the big players talking to the members of Congress to explain what this “miracle” was all about, and at that...

Q: Do you remember when this was?

SULLIVAN: It was in 1973 I believe, or '74. And at that conference Jim Grant of ODC came. Jim Grant wrote in his memoirs how he sort of made disciples of or picked up young guys who were interested in the same things he was interested in, and we did get to be very good friends, and he encouraged me to continue to...

Q: What was his position at that time?

SULLIVAN: At the Overseas Development Council, I'm sure he was President.

Q: After his AID experience.

SULLIVAN: After his AID experience he was at ODC, and he thought I, he encouraged me to learn more. What I knew about development you could put in a bug's nose, it was just not a whole lot. Once, I forget who it was, somebody once said Sullivan wouldn't know a basic human need unless it bit him on the leg. I don't know if that was true or not. This brings us to New Directions, and if you want I'll go into some depth on this...

Q: Yes, please do.

Observations on Vietnam situation in the 1970s

SULLIVAN: Maybe I ought to backtrack a little bit, I was going to Vietnam for the Committee because I had Asian experience. In 1970 I made my first trip overseas by myself as a one-person staff person looking at U.S. military training. I was all by myself and the trip was fairly successful. So in 1971 and '72 I was sent back to southeast Asia and my big exposure, I went to Cambodia and Vietnam. In '74 I went back and spent a week in every core area. I spent a month in Vietnam and half a week in Laos and half a week in Cambodia. I looked at development, mainly looking at it in terms of process, not looking at what development was really occurring, because there wasn't any development. At the same time all of this other stuff was going on I was continually going to southeast Asia. At any rate...

Q: What led you onto that subject though, as opposed to the military ...?

SULLIVAN: Because we had a military expert. I traveled with Jack Brady, who later became chief of staff. He was the military side, I was the economic side, and we were a pair and we went in '74 and then again in '75. Just as things were collapsing we were sent back to do another study. While this was going on I was getting increasingly interested in ...

Q: What were the conclusions of that study?

SULLIVAN: The '74 study?

Q: You were visiting all of the Vietnam core areas...

SULLIVAN: That it was impossible to develop economically in a war zone, how's that? That's the conclusion, a no-brainer. But I'll tell you one other thing though. I became very impressed with the land reform efforts in the Delta which were genuine, there was some good stuff happening. It was kind of heart-breaking, they're doing land reform and you've got these bomb holes, these big pockmarks and also unexploded ordnance and things. It was hellish. But you could kind of sense, that the farmers were on the right track. I believe that I am where I am today because of opportunities offered my immigrant grandfather on my mother's side who had a third grade education and spoke with a German accent all his life. That family had two advantages: they owned their own land and had free public education. To get real development, a country's got to get its agriculture right first. My father always said that the Russians could never get their agriculture right because Marx was a city boy.

Q: Who was the prime mover behind this land reform work?

SULLIVAN: AID was, oh yeah, it was AID. The best and the brightest of AID went to Vietnam. I think it was frequently frustrating. The modalities were difficult. Ted Owens went, they actually sent Ted Owens to Vietnam at one point, who was the father, one of the fathers of New Directions, and he came back frustrated. I mean there was no way anyone could do development in that war zone, and in fact when the Administration talked about more money for development they really didn't mean it. I was just talking to Don Cohen about those days. He was in AID's East Asia Bureau in those days, the Vietnam bureau, and knowing the Mission lied to Washington about what the money was going for. AID/Saigon wouldn't even tell Washington AID what the money was going for.

Q: Well, what were they doing with the money?

SULLIVAN: Well, in one case Don told me about (and I saw similar ones), they were funding phantom soldiers, phantom workers, the money was being siphoned off to pay who knows what and who knows whom. I've always believed that a country has the right in a sense to lie in its diplomacy, but when you start lying to yourself, as we were in Vietnam, and just building an entire policy on a foundation of lies, it's not going to stand, it can't work. Vietnam proved that. I was young, and skeptical, and antagonistic near the end. I broke on the war in 1966, I began to think it was really a mistake.

Q: But your experience out there convinced you it was a bunch of lies?

SULLIVAN: Yeah, oh yeah. It was just, in fact this really funny, Frank Snepp's book that came out after, I can't remember the name of it, but he was a CIA person there. In the first chapter he discusses how he lied to my partner Jack Brady and me in an interview he gave us near the end of the situation. The book starts out with him lying to a Congressional staff delegation. That was us.

Q: Why do you think he felt it necessary to lie?

SULLIVAN: Because the truth would have killed the U.S. effort. There was nothing positive. The truth was that the government was corrupt, it was unpopular, it wasn't going to last, and American policy-makers didn't want to tell the American people. The United States was withdrawing drastically, but ambassador Graham Martin had everybody scared, and nobody told the truth. A Congressional investigator might get a bit of the truth if you stuck a few beers in somebody in the Caravel Hotel dining room. You know, we did our best. But it was very difficult for an independent observer to get any information.

Q: That you found that out very early, representing Congress out there, that you couldn't get the facts?

SULLIVAN: Yes, everybody showed you what they wanted to show you. You had to be fairly astute. If you've been a newspaper reporter, a police reporter, you get a kind of investigative notion about things, but getting facts was very difficult. Some people on the Hill didn't want to believe us when we reported unfavorable developments. Other people thought we were too willing to go along with the official line, but basically that's almost all we had. I didn't speak Vietnamese, I couldn't really do the kind of in-depth look we needed. The period held a lot of frustration. That was one of the reasons I went on to something pretty straight-forward which was miracle grains, and the New Directions. Well, let me get to New Directions.

Origins of the New Directions legislation - 1973

In 1972, or maybe it was '73, at a time when I was in Vietnam, the Senate defeated the foreign aid appropriations. Do you remember what year that was? Was that '73?

Q: I think so.

SULLIVAN: Yes, it was '73. The defeat sent shock waves through Washington. I mean it was a wake-up call. Nixon was President. A group of Republicans led by Paul Findley of Illinois wrote a letter to Nixon, I think it was only Republicans, it may have been bipartisan, but it was a Republican-initiated letter, saying “Unless you change foreign assistance, it's dead. It ain't gonna fly for us." And subsequent to that, Jim Grant and Jim Howe came to Zablocki. I think they came partly through the instigation of our chief of staff, Marian Czarnecki. They asked Clem to convene a group of members, including Congressman Don Fraser who was very important on AID matters, later mayor of Minneapolis. Also Congressman Jonathan Bingham.

Q: From New York?

SULLIVAN: From New York, who'd actually worked on Point 4; Rep. Chuck Whelan of Ohio, Republican; Paul Findley of Illinois. Even the present chairman, Ben Gilman, was involved; also Wynn of Iowa who was a Republican. It was a truly bipartisan group. We met twice a week for two or three months and we hammered out a bill, a totally new bill.

I don't know that AID ever had anybody in those meetings. Well, Charlie Palillo was involved and he may have been on AID's staff as an attorney at the time, later he was ODC staff. I can't remember where he came from, but he knew the AID legislation.

Q: Who was the administrator at that time?

SULLIVAN: The administrator at that time was John Hannah.

Q: And he was involved in this.

SULLIVAN: Yeah that's true. The point of this is, in some of the stories they say he was very much involved. Again I was a spear carrier. At that point I was one of Clem's guys, having had this experience of the Green Revolution, but I didn't have a whole lot of knowledge of things. Clem made me basically the note-taker, the secretary, the guy who wrote down the decisions. Working with us was Ted Owens. Ted Owens was at AID and he had a very big part in our deliberations. We had Barbara Ward working with us. We had the "small is beautiful" guy, you know the one who wrote the books, Shumacker? And my job basically was to, and this was something I really did know how to do, and this was to get concepts down and put them in legal language. Also to understand when, you know, the one has an idea and that one's got an idea and neither is listening to the other. I would help shape the issues from meeting to meeting.

And as a result of that, that was the first time I really got involved in heavy thinking about foreign assistance. I am absolutely fascinated by Congress, the process; I'm fascinated by the Presidency, the workings of our democracy. And that's what I had spent a lot of my life on. I also worked on war powers at this time. I really got interested in development and in what the whole process was about. And ended up writing not so much the legislation, although I had a hand in that, I did almost all of the writing of the report, almost all of the pieces of paper, the report language in the House, the speeches, all of the accouterments, the policy things that flesh out the law. I had a hand in most of them.

Q: Remember the title of the report?

SULLIVAN: Oh "New Directions" it was called. That's the name it got. Also "Congressional Mandate." Marian Czarnecki, who was chief of staff, was probably the premier conceptual thinker on the staff. We had talented people, the chief of staff at that time was Dr. Bullock, he had a doctorate in economics from Johns Hopkins. At the age of 28 he'd been in charge of the chemical industry in Germany after World War II, very fine man, but process-oriented, not so much into theory, and not very much into foreign aid. Marian was interested in it, and he had done some studies and come back and said the moneys that were spent in the '60s had helped the elite classes. They had been raised, but the great mass of people hadn't been touched, and we had to change the way we were doing assistance. Those ideas were out there. I wasn't involved in those ideas, but there were people saying it, Ted Owens was saying it and Barbara Ward was saying it as were thinkers at the United Nations and other places.

Q: The theory of trickle-down.

SULLIVAN: The theory of trickle-down, absolutely, that it had failed.

Q: That was the phrase at the time.

SULLIVAN: Absolutely, and I think it had failed. If you look at the two countries that were seen, back in Kennedy's eras, the two countries that were seen by AID as the success stories back about 1967 and '68? They were Pakistan and Colombia. Today we say, "How could they ever have been considered success stories?" They weren't successes. Pakistan was a disaster, Colombia is drug- ridden. I'm not in any blame game on this. I believe we're all sort of pilgrims, and we all make mistakes and the thing to do is learn from them and not make the bad mistakes again.

Zablocki came out with this bill, with unanimity from this group, and this is the way congressional law-making ought to be. Our Congressional group had outsiders helping us, not getting paid, but they were in there working with us. Jim Grant and his folks at the ODC had a lot to do with it. We had a Congressional majority, 128 co-sponsors; I remember the bill just took off like wildfire, because nobody liked the way foreign aid had been done. Aid was very unpopular, and Vietnam was a lot of the reason. We were going to get aid more directly to the people through New Directions. We were against working in cities because we didn't want to make it more attractive for people to go to cities, we wanted to keep them on the land, we wanted to make the farmers more productive and increase their incomes where they were. We wanted to bring some of the amenities to them: better health care, better education. That's sort of in a nutshell the way this was looked at.

There were other parts. There was a subsidized exports portion of the legislation that never got passed. At the time I didn't know anything about that either, but it probably had some benefit. I used to be pretty interested in subsidization of exports, but I'm not so sure anymore. But at any rate that part got canned in the Senate. It passed the House but got canned in the Senate. The basic New Directions we were working on was passed and made it into law.

Q: Was the administration on board at that time?

SULLIVAN: The administration changed its tune. At the first hearing we had the Administration came out against the bill, and basically the committee said "Don't come back. We won't work with you. You're not going to support us." So wiser heads prevailed, and I think that's what Dr. Hannah did, he said "Okay we'll play along." And I'm trying to think who the people were that were our liaison, I know that Alex Shakow was one of them.

Q: John Eriksson wrote some of the reports.

SULLIVAN: John Eriksson was part of it. Barbara Hertzburg...?

Q: Hertzburg.

SULLIVAN: Yeah, she was involved. Dennis Neill, probably and Chuck Gladson, because they were the legal side. I'm convinced however that it was not an illusion in my own mind that it was really done in that Hill group. The Congressmen really did it. We needed help. But the bill was written. The time was right, it wasn't as if we were existing in a vacuum. The only hostility was coming out of the White House and the White House was smart enough to know that if it balked us there wasn't going to be any more aid program. The aid program would be deader than a doornail. But if they went along, they probably could do whatever it was they wanted to do, which was to keep fighting in Vietnam, and this bill wasn't going to rain on their parade.

Q: But this was mainly in reaction to the Vietnam...?

SULLIVAN: Absolutely. It was actually a reaction more to trickle down, that aid hadn't really reached the people.

Q: How did people come to that conclusion?

SULLIVAN: Good question. There are a lot of things in the literature, Barbara Ward was saying that in her speeches, there had been a conference in Geneva that Marian Czarnecki had gone to in which a number of papers were given in which this was a...

Q: This was in 197...?

SULLIVAN: '72 and '73. And of course it's all against the backdrop of the Vietnam war. The Vietnam war probably gave the impetus. I mean it was the reason the Senate got rid of, voted down the appropriation was because of Vietnam, not because of trickle down. But the point was, all over the world there was a view our aid wasn't doing much good, and people weren't benefiting from it.

Q: This may not be in your area, but this was a time, shortly before that, when you had the Nigerian civil war and the Biafra crisis and the hysteria related to that.

SULLIVAN: Right. But I had nothing to do with U.S. reaction to those crises.

Q: Did you get any sense of how that related to any of this?

SULLIVAN: The Biafra civil war, if it had any impact, the one that I recall most vividly was that it was the first time that Americans sat down to eat their breakfasts, turned on the television set, and saw a little kid starving to death. You know, today it's gotten to be commonplace. I mean you see these poor refugees, the Hutu in Zaire and we say "Oh my

God." But we've all gotten a little bit accustomed to such scenes. Biafra was the first time probably in my lifetime that people saw that kind of misery and probably reexamined their values or reexamined what they thought the U.S. ought to be doing. Is that your thought, too?

Q: Right.

SULLIVAN: But I can't recall any discussion of that at the time. But of course at that point in time we had a whole lot of other crises. One of them was the Bangladesh crisis, that debacle was keen on everybody's mind, and the terrible policies followed by Kissinger in supporting Pakistan against the Bengalis. Then the Indians jumped into the fight, I mean there was no...

Q: Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

SULLIVAN: That would have been '73. There was tremendous support for the Bengalis and the feeling that our policy was, that Nixon and Kissinger were using the Bengali situation to get a better relationship with Pakistan because they wanted to go to China. It was part of our China policy and it was taking people who were being oppressed and making them pawns in a bigger game. Just as, for example, a lot of blood is on Kissinger's hands with respect to Cambodia where he would have fought to the last Cambodian just to keep the policy in Vietnam. I think the guy was brilliant but he was amoral at best, and certainly didn't care about the people who were hurt by our policies. The Bengali situation was a strong concern.

There was a lot of feeling that giving American food was good abroad, and of course you had people like Paul Findley who really had always been very much a spokesman for U.S. agriculture abroad. And Zablocki, I mean Wisconsin had a tremendous number of...

Q: Land grant universities.

SULLIVAN: Land grant universities. It's interesting, in the middle west there is a strong philanthropic feeling for farmers and for rural people because almost everyone comes off the land. Zablocki himself didn't, but it's interesting that he always had a very strong feeling that in a state like Wisconsin you had to be concerned about the farmers. There was a relationship, he understood the relationship between city and farm. The old relationship between the farmers and the ...it was something I was very keen on. So that was really part of it. We were going to mobilize U.S. agricultural resources. Title 12, the BIFAD, that whole university effort was part of New Directions, in a sense it was grafted on. Members thought it was a necessary to get this coalition, we were coalition building, and a major part of our coalition came out of the Midwest. Most of the interested members came out of the Midwest, when you think about it. The few anomalies would be Jonathan Bingham of New York, but he had worked in UNRRA or someplace, and he had a feeling for it, and Ben Gilman.

Q: Who was chairing this operation?

SULLIVAN: Clem chaired the group, and if Clem wasn't there, I'm trying to remember who chaired it when the chairman was absent, maybe Dante Fascell, Fascell was involved too. It was a tremendous effort, and eventually we passed the New Directions legislation.

Q: Can you elaborate more on what you understood to be the problem and how it should be addressed?

SULLIVAN: Yeah, the understanding of the problem was that trickle down didn't work, that we were going to try to get our aid more directly to poor people. However, people kept talking about the "poorest of the poor," and that was not the idea. And I used to say, "The poorest of the poor are the lame, the halt, and the blind, and we don't do so well about them in this country, so let's not talk about them." New Directions was about what I would call the productive poor, the people who could benefit from some assistance in growing stuff and selling their product, and maybe small entrepreneurs, small industries. It was about getting better health care to these people.

This is all part of it, better health care, getting population control (but not as Ravenholt was doing it, and if next time you want to talk about my battles with Dr. Ravenholt we can talk about it) but in an integrated setting, where you integrate health and family planning. I think we talked about that when I visited you in Ghana. We knew we weren't going to get ahead by free-falling condoms from airplanes. In an integrated program we would have family planning and health, and better nutrition as a part of it, and then trying to improve education. But I must say better education was a third element. The first element was more and better agricultural production, using the new technologies that had been developed and getting them disseminated widely. Second was health and population. And then thirdly better education.

Our group was often seen as being anti-city, but it wasn't. It was against putting sewer systems into Cairo, yeah, or sewer systems in Jakarta, but it was in favor of assisting in market towns. You had to have urban centers, you had to have slaughterhouses and granaries and merchants who were selling food and someplace where the farmer could sell his goods, and you had to have a road for him to get there. Farm-to-market roads were big, you had to have roads to get to town.

Q: What was ruled in, in what you think AID had been doing, and what was ruled out?

SULLIVAN: What they'd been doing, we thought, was giving a lot of money to city folk, they'd been giving a lot of money to government bureaucrats and not really being very careful. The feeling was that if you just put the money in, you drop the money on a project and particularly big infrastructure projects. They'd been doing a lot of city to city roads, they'd been building big ports, big airports, it's the big capital infrastructure projects that were rejected. Big electrical complexes and also big dams, that there was no interest in doing that, big dam projects like the one in Egypt.

Q: The Aswan dam.

SULLIVAN: Right. In fact as an investigator I'd gone out and looked in Africa at the Manantali Dam situation. AID, for example, after the Sahel drought, was pushing the program. I was skeptical about the value of it, and whether any of the benefits really would reach the people. So our effort was to get to the people more directly, to give the farmers these new technologies and the package that went with them, pesticides and fertilizers and extension to be able to maximize their use. That was the concept, to try to keep people on the land and out of the cities, to make sure that everybody didn't just congregate in the cities.

Q: Were other things ruled out?

SULLIVAN: Examples of things?

Q: Economic support maybe, policy reform, things like that.

SULLIVAN: The Cold War, you know the Cold War shaped everything in this period. No, ESF, was that the period in which Security Assistance became ESF (Economic Support Funds), I think so, we changed the name, changed the concept a little.

Q: As I recall there was some question even of participant training if they worked?

SULLIVAN: Yes.

Q: What was the issue?

SULLIVAN: That was one staffer, Bill Jordan who was on Senator Inouye's staff. He felt that participant training didn't pay off because he didn't want degree training, and maybe there was a bit too much degree training. It was the cousin of the government minister who would get trained, I don't think there's any question about that.

Other things that fell out were really any major efforts to try to reform macroeconomic policy. It is very difficult for the U.S. to do it, particularly when we're not providing huge amounts of aid. We were providing huge amounts of aid only for a few countries, and those were the ones where we also had a political interest where we really weren't going to force changes in any case. By the time I got to the Asia bureau in '76 the only country where the United States had any major amount of foreign assistance going in and could directly affect its macro policies was Bangladesh. That was the only one. None of the others because we either weren't giving enough money or we had strategic objectives as in the Philippines or Pakistan, that made reform a moot issue really.

Under “New Directions” a lot of other things went out the window. Public administration wasn't very much considered. And as a matter of fact, interestingly, given the interest in

developing the market town, there wasn't a lot of interest in political decentralization. It was basically the notion of, well, we're going to reach these people as directly as possible, so we don't care what these guys in the capital do. To our peril, we ignored the fact that these governments were still calling the shots in a lot of cases, and that, even though we were working from the bottom up, there were national policies that had to be changed.

And let me say the New Directions strategy made a lot of sense in some areas of the world. I think it made a lot of sense in Asia, and we've seen some of the good results of what happened in Asia.

Q: Well we'll come to that. What was the structure of the legislation, what was the form?

SULLIVAN: We amended the Foreign Assistance Act. There was no attempt to try a complete new rewrite. We sat and fretted about whether to try and come forward with a whole new bill and change things to get rid of "barnacles," because there were lots of barnacles on that bill, prohibitions particularly that everybody wanted to get rid of. When we sat down and tried to think about the job of creating a whole new piece of legislation, it was just too daunting. So we basically amended the existing act. So in fact you could say a whole lot did not change. But it was a change in the way we were going to do our aid.

Q: And that was the time you introduce the functional accounts?

SULLIVAN: Yes, the functional accounts got into it. That was a change, the functional accounts.

Q: There was agriculture, health, education...

SULLIVAN: Yes.

Q: Population.

SULLIVAN: Yes population had its own earmark in the health and family planning. It was agriculture, health, education, and there was a catch all. Yes, we had the functional accounts. And the functional accounts did put a bit of discipline on AID that it didn't have before, at least that's my feeling. And at least you could go out and say, "Okay, how are you spending this money? How does this affect agriculture?" That puts some discipline in the system.

Q: What kind of time frame were you envisioning in terms of having any impact from this?

SULLIVAN: It's interesting you should raise that. Our feeling, and it had to do with a more philosophical take, is that any congressional reform lasts about seven years, a seven year span is about what you can expect. New Directions actually had more. New

Directions lasted as a ruling proposition for AID from the time we enacted it in 1973 until the end of Peter McPherson's tenure in '86. Let's see he was in, he spent 8 years there, yeah '86. He put old wine in new bottles, so I would say basically his orientation was very much the same way.

Q: Really. We'll come back to that.

SULLIVAN: So when you consider that the mandate lasted from '73 to '86 - 13 years as a prevailing notion - it seems a success. AID learned things as it went down the line.

Q: I had the impression that at that time there was some anticipation that there would be almost an immediate impact on the poor majority, and that we were being pressed to show the impact within a year's time...Was that accurate?

SULLIVAN: I think so. Yes. I think that there was an anecdote that describes that. About 9 months after we passed the bill I was ...AID had a training course, what was it called, DSP.

Q: Development Studies?

SULLIVAN: Development Studies course, held at Coolfont, WV, Charlie Palillo and I were invited up there as two staff guys basically doing the oversight. By this time I think I was probably senior staff consultant and in charge of the AID bill. And we went up there and Dick Blue of AID came out and said, "You know, these people think you have challenged their basic raison d'etre, that you believe what they've been doing is wrong." And I said, "Hey these people are bureaucrats. We've changed the way the drumbeat goes, they're going to dance to this drum." Well boy did we get in trouble with those AID people, we took heavy weather. And I really was impressed first of all with their seriousness and with their dedication and with their feeling that somehow we were criticizing what had been done in the past by coming through with this different approach. I came out of there saying, "We've got to do more education. This course is good but we've got to get people more on board." And I think AID did. Although in 1976 when I was Assistant Administrator and Charlie was back at AID, a group of AID people asked us again to come and talk about why we didn't let AID go the way it had been going.

There were two reasons: one, AID couldn't go the way it had been because the political situation was too sour. New Directions rescued AID. You know I've had ambassadors say to me they were unhappy the money wasn't theirs to spend any way they wanted. I had a chance to go back and remind them that there wouldn't have been an AID program. I'm convinced that if AID had not changed at that point in time that there wouldn't have been a program. There would have been something. State Department would have walking around money or something, but I think our development program, our bilateral program would have languished. There was such a distaste, both because of the war and the feeling that we weren't reaching the people who we ought to be reaching. The program would have been dead. We saved a program we all believed was extraordinarily important. Clem

Zablocki went to his grave a true believer in foreign assistance and the good of it. And he took the heat every election. It isn't the case of somebody sitting in an office who never may know what somebody thinks of them. He took the heat.

Q: What was the Senate view? You worked in the House side.

SULLIVAN: Well, on the Senate side, there were two views. Senator Fulbright's view was that any foreign aid means a commitment of some kind and it's going to get us into a war sooner or later. That was his view, quasi neo-isolationist view. The other side was one of the greatest senators of our time, Hubert Humphrey. Again out of this Midwestern tradition, a dynamic tradition, one of Clem's best friends, a good friend of Donald Fraser - Humphrey was carrying our water for us in the Senate. He was our friend. If we hadn't had Humphrey we would have been in bad shape. He was key but there were others who were interested: Mike Mansfield understood that aid was helpful. Because of his interest in the Middle East Jake Javits was always pretty good; he was on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Aiken, always pretty helpful. Case, pretty helpful. And Fulbright's neo-isolationist point of view was not shared by many. His staff had that view and we always had to deal with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff. Fulbright was pretty much alone; I'm trying to think...maybe Frank Church also had that view. But the majority view was that Humphrey had the right idea. Humphrey carried the day every time.

Q: Fulbright was fixed on Vietnam, where a small involvement of U.S. assistance led to military, led to total ..

SULLIVAN: It was a slippery slope. Right.

Q: And he put limitations on a number of countries at that time.

SULLIVAN: Yes there was limitation on countries. I think in the ‘70s he also voted against the bill every time it came up. Humphrey carried the bill to the floor. And he saw things eye to eye with these guys in the House. I remember one time we finished the bill at 2:00 in the morning, and I got up at 6:00 to go over to the Senate to talk to their staff people, and the staff weren't there but Humphrey was there. And he and I sat on a bench and I told him what the House had done, and gave him a copy of the language. He was so brilliant. He took it out on the floor within half an hour and passed it. The Senate works differently than the House.

Q: What was the idea, your sense of the popular view of foreign assistance?

SULLIVAN: It was popular. The NGO's, the churches, the universities, groups like CARE and Church World Service and Catholic Relief, they were all with us. We were meeting with them too and they had their lobbyists and they were getting to their people and the churches were writing letters. This was a big deal. And we had many universities, land grant, the agriculturally big universities...we had a telling coalition. It wasn't just that

we were operating in a vacuum. The bill appealed to the philanthropic and charitable interests of the American people, but we tried to say, "This isn't charity. We're not giving charity. That's not what this is about. We're giving the chance for the productive poor to be more productive and to move out of poverty." This happened in places, like Asia.

Q: Were there any other aspects of your role in the House at that time?

SULLIVAN: Do you want me to get into the population struggle with Dr. Ravenholt?

Q: Yes. When you were in the House?

SULLIVAN: Right. In the House, Zablocki was the key to giving AID the right to distribute contraceptives. This has been written up by Phyllis Pietrow in her book and she's got it right. At that time the Catholic church was very much opposed to family planning. And when the first family planning advocates came in to see Clem, he basically threw them out of his office. When Administrator Dave Bell wanted to do something in family planning - he had a nice manner about him - he told Clem he wanted to do research. And the Senate side was for it and it was being held up in the House side, and they really couldn't have done it by without getting Clem's okay.

So for a year they had a program where they were giving money for research, and at one point AID approached me. Clem and I were working on this issue. I've been accused by Dr. Ravenholt of being an agent of the Vatican, and I'll tell you a little story about that later. Clem and I were working on our own on what was the right way to handle this. Today I am a very strong advocate of family planning. Population control is absolutely necessary for development and for the future of this planet. And at that time I wasn't quite as sure as I am now. But AID people came and said, "Look. Our programs are not working. And we need to give pills and condoms and loops. But we aren't going to do sterilization and certainly not abortion." So I said to Clem, "They want to do this." So he said, "Well I don't know. What are we going to do?" Somebody suggested that Dave Bell would make this a statement of their desires. If Clem raised the issue but didn't say anything negative when they said, "We want to do this," it would be taken as a signal. It didn't put Clem on the spot, but encouraged them to move. So Clem said, "Okay." So it went forward. And Phyllis in her book puts in all the details, but what was really interesting was subsequent to this, Clem's pastor tried to excommunicate him. His pastor in Milwaukee.

One issue came to a head with menstrual regulation kits, which were a do-it-yourself abortion kit, of Dr. Ravenholt's. I don't know if you ever were aware of that. This was in '73. I went out and looked at family planning in Africa, came to see you, and to Asia, trying to learn as much as I could about the whole process. But anyway, this is apropos of the story about Dr. Ravenholt and some of his protégés who've written books, and in one book seven times I'm pilloried as a Catholic stooge.

Interesting story, Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago was then head of Catholic Relief, he was bishop. He came to see Zablocki on I suppose food aid, or something like that. And it seemed like the perfect idea at the time to get some advice. So we met, and Clem said, "On the one hand I'm being pilloried by people advocating family planning who think I'm the guy who's standing in its way. On the other hand I've been excommunicated by my pastor for voting for this thing." I don't think his pastor knew that Clem was the key legislator or he probably would have excommunicated him twice over. And then-bishop Bernardin said to us, "Well, if both sides are shooting at you, you must be doing something right." That's all the advice we ever got from an official representative of the Roman Catholic church. I said, "Clem for crying out loud what kind of advice is this?" He said, "Well I guess we just continue what we've been doing, which is using our own judgment." And we would negotiate with Art Gardner, who was AID general counsel, what the language of the bill should be.

Q: What was your main line of...?

SULLIVAN: For example the question of these vacuum aspiration things which the U.S. was training doctors to use. They can be used for two things, they can be used for abortions; they also can be used to take care of botched abortions. All right, are those legitimate to use? And our answer was, what evolved was, because they could be used for botched abortions there wasn't any reason not to provide training. Why not, it was good technology. In itself it is not something bad. These doctors, many of them come from countries where abortion is illegal, you have to assume they're going to obey the laws of their own country. We didn't see anything wrong with that. All of those judgments, by the way, were then questioned with the coming of the Reagan administration in 1984. I was back on the Hill and Clem was chairman, and some Reaganite right-wingers from Chicago who were trying to change the policy came to see us and said, "How come you did that?"

We did stop the menstrual regulation kits that Dr. Ravenholt wanted to use. He had bought a bunch of them and never got to use them. It's just a blip on the screen, the idea, the feminists subsequently went crazy over it too. It was a terrible idea. His idea was that anybody who could wash their hands could do a D&C. It was just crazy. Dr. Ravenholt was playing fast and loose with women's health and women's well-being. And he had a whole lot of other ideas too. One of his other ideas was, in Pakistan to conduct a one-country experiment. I don't know if you ever heard about this. We had said you had to provide family planning, condoms, pills, in an integrated setting so when a woman comes with her child, it's maternal and child health, as well as population, and that's the only way it's going to work. I think that idea has been validated. Ravenholt felt he didn't want to get involved with health, etc. He felt that the demand for contraception was out there and all you had to do was provide the supply.

So he went to Joe Wheeler, the Mission Director in Pakistan, and said, "I want to try in one country that promoters will distribute pills and condoms and it will not be integrated. Do you disagree?" Joe said, "I'd like to try that." And I agreed, "Try it. Because you'll try,

and Pakistan is a perfect place to have it fail. A Muslim country, try it, cause I'm so confident that it's going to fail, go ahead." So they did it. Three months later, well the first report that came back said, "Wow this stuff's going like mad." The first months AID is showing me impressive distribution figures. Then suddenly I'm not seeing them anymore. Seven or eight months later Joe Wheeler is back in my Committee office, and he says, "We're not going to need the rest of the money." What happened was, and it makes a lot of sense, the promoters, in order to keep their jobs, had been buying pills and condoms out of their own salaries to show that they were doing something. They were buying them every month and throwing them away. And the figures just went up fast, peaked and never went any higher. The promoters were ashamed to sell in their communities.

Today incidentally Development Associates where I'm now working has been the largest for-profit firm working in family planning in the world, and we are now involved in the marketing of contraceptives. We have done brilliantly, it's a great program. It isn't integrated, but it's being done intelligently. It's being done through pharmacies, it's being done with people who have a little education. In Pakistan, by contrast, most of these guys got their job because of political connections, these promoters. So the program fell apart. Ravenholt was finished as a force in AID. That finished him. I don't know if you're aware of that.

Q: Right. Explain a little bit more about Ravenholt's line that you objected to?

SULLIVAN: He was a brilliant man. And I think looking back on his work by virtue of his personality and his unwillingness to be tethered by normal rules in AID he probably got the program out to a faster start than it might otherwise have been. He did do that. You have to give the guy credit. But he didn't understand development, he didn't understand human nature very well. He thought that if you make contraceptives available to people, they would use them, period. He would read the polls: a woman with five children asked, "Do you want anymore children?" "No." And he would say, "That means she wants family planning." No, maybe she just wants her husband to leave her alone. There are lots of other things in the equation. Was he bugging you in Ghana to take his stuff?

Q: Yes.

SULLIVAN: Sure. When I was Assistant Administrator in Asia there were 50,000 condoms in a Nepal warehouse that couldn't be used and had to be burned. This was what Ravenholt was doing. It was like the Aristotlean idea that meat gave rise to maggots, just by autogenesis. Well this was some sort of autogenesis situation that demand was created by a supply. Not so. And all the mission directors knew it. But guys who took him on got in trouble. Mike Adler, he was in trouble with Ravenholt and I wrote a report and said, "Adler is right and Ravenholt is wrong."

Q: Mike was where at that time?

SULLIVAN: He was in Korea. In Thailand because of the procurement rules AID was changing the estrogen/progesterone mix in the pill every year. Women would get used to one pill then take the new one and start bleeding between periods. The program went right down the tubes. And Ray wouldn't believe it, he thought the women were hysterical. It was a kind of mind-set that I found difficult. He and I squared off frequently. He subsequently has attacked me regularly. He still puts out a flier called "Crocodiles along the Potomac", and I'm a crocodile. I have to say, though, Ravenholt knew the bureaucracy. It's hard to get a new idea through. Getting America into worldwide population control was a good idea. I mean I think it's been extraordinarily important in lots of countries, Indonesia comes to mind, a high percentage of contraceptive users, 50 or 60%, it's been terrific.

Q: Looking ahead how would you sum up what works in population programs?

SULLIVAN: What works is the integrated program.

Q: Mixing it with child care, health programs, family health?

SULLIVAN: That did work. Now we can come along later with a program of social marketing of contraceptives. Development Associates experts are teaching pharmacists this right now in central Asia and the republics of the former Soviet Union, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, teaching them how to prescribe pills and condoms. There are not many doctors out there. We can't play fast and loose with women's health itself. But I think we know now that the pill pretty much doesn't have long-term side effects. A lot of people thought it was going to cause cancer, I was concerned about that. I was also concerned about, we had in Bangladesh we had fourteen women die of sepsis after having had sterilization. These were women who had four or five little kiddies at home. Terrible issue of conscience. These are human beings you've got to be concerned about.

Ray wasn't that concerned. Some of the programs that he founded tested drugs on women in Uganda, for example, without telling the women what the hell they were getting, a prostaglandin. It was a terrible thing. And Ray had all the money. And he had all the control. People didn't want to bother him. Only a few were saying, "I don't believe this guy." There got to be a group who weren't beholden to him because he had all the bucks. Dick Gamble, who ran the Pathfinder Foundation, I had lunch with him, and he said, "I don't want to have anything to do with some of this." I said, "Stand up, say something." He had received a lot of bucks from Ray and thought he couldn’t.

Q: Well maybe you want to add more to that later. Are there other issues that you were addressing, involved in?

SULLIVAN: Give me a for instance. Later I'm going to talk to you more, as the Assistant Administrator, about the food thing.

Q: Later. But about your role on the Hill?

SULLIVAN: Let me think, are there any issues dealing with AID in that period of time? In 1975 and in '76 I was chief of the staff. We had a small staff that handled the foreign aid bill.

Q: In the House?

SULLIVAN: Yes, in the House. I was the chief House professional dealing with the foreign aid bill. I also had some responsibility for Peace Corps.

Q: What were the issues you were wrestling with in that role?

SULLIVAN: The issues were, in that period, getting the New Directions implemented. Getting some of the craziness out. Holding off the people who say it's not working and saying "Give it some time." Doing oversight on the way AID was carrying it out. Looking at the development studies program, talking to people, looking at what was working. I went to Latin America in 1975. Latin America said it was doing New Directions better than anybody else. We went down and saw some progress.

Q: What?

SULLIVAN: Extension use of radio for people living in isolated areas, getting courses to the school, trying to get some of the new technology out to the highland areas of Guatemala. Let's see if I can think of some success stories of that time.

Q: This was a time when they were very interested in rural development. Were you involved in that?

SULLIVAN: Yes that was a key, absolutely, integrated rural development. That was part and parcel of New Directions. And that's where you put your money. That's what I was talking about earlier - for a market town, farm-to-market roads, working with villages... there also was an emphasis on Title IX participation.

Q: Can you elaborate on that?

SULLIVAN: There was a feeling...Title IX, participatory activities, had come in earlier 1970 or '71. And today of course it's been revived. The old Title IX has been very much vindicated. These folks that you were dealing with at the local level would band together in coops, water user groups, and we got input at the local level. We weren't just making policy from the outside. That was the thing we were trying to encourage, rural electrification and rural development. Those are still ideas that I think are viable, that prove the importance of assisting farmers with extension.

I can talk about the mistakes we made whenever you like, to inform future experience, but there were some successes. I think rural electrification is important and farm to

market roads did prove to be a key. Providing some level of extension and the technological packages to use was extraordinarily important, and later from my own point of view I can talk about how it worked in Asia. And as a matter of fact, we probably all had the Asia model in mind, because that's where Jim Grant had come from with the JCRR, the Joint Commission of Reconstruction and Rehabilitation. And Clem had looked hard at a lot of Korean development. And I had done some work in Korea and was really impressed with Park Chung Hee's, yes, General Park's emphasis on the rural areas, rural education. If you went out in the rural areas of Korea, here's every little kid dressed in a little uniform going to school. The Korean economic explosion drew on this. They were also doing it in Taiwan...so we tried to do this elsewhere. The rural parts of East Asia is where I think it worked. There are other parts of Asia where it didn't so well. Philippines. Latin America had its own problems. Africa too. It was almost as if trying to take a model from Asia and apply it elsewhere has hazards.

Q: Let's talk a little about the congressional act as it relates to the foreign assistance act. How did it work, what were the...?

SULLIVAN: The authorization, of course, was the bill I worked on, and it was usually an annual affair although occasionally you'd get a two-year authorization, and then we only worked on it every two years. It would come first to the House Foreign Affairs Committee. We would work on it and take it to the House floor. It was very controversial and it would engage huge, long hearings because the Foreign Affairs Committee, unlike the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we didn't have that much of a handle on foreign affairs. And at that time for example, the State Department authorization, which could be a vehicle for talking about foreign affairs, was no longer an authorization, only an appropriation. It only came later as a part of Congress seizing back authority from the President that it became an annual authorization. It was only an appropriation before that, not an authorization, and an appropriation's not a very good place to argue. So all the foreign policy issues got vetted in the foreign aid hearings, and they were voluminous. And they were a terrific source for future historians. By the way, since some historian may read this, up until the time that I was responsible for it, which was until about 1976, we had terrific hearing indices, every major subject was indexed. So if anybody wants to do research, it's all there on a lot of foreign policy issues, and the House is now declassified some of the older volumes. Because in the early Cold War days, hearings were all classified, not much after 1970, but before that. When I got on the staff I said, "This is ridiculous." Hearings are still indexed but they're indexed by sub-category, but for historians looking at any given issue, they may be listening to this, they can get by going to those hearings..., the Senate didn't do that. It's not by word but by paragraph heading, it's still helpful.

We initiated a number of other things to try and make those hearings more useful to future scholars. So we would struggle with this huge hearing process. A massive mark-up followed.

Q: What about the hearing process?

SULLIVAN: The hearing process was one which began with the State department always, the Secretary of State would come. Then we would hear the AID Administrator. Everything was held before the full committee until 1974 when the Congress made the subcommittees and gave them their own life, but before everything was held before the full committee. It just tied us up for months, an incredible piece of work. And then we'd squeeze all this into a bill. We would bring it to the floor and nobody wanted to vote on it, but sometimes we'd get it passed. Then the appropriations bill would come along; it had its own life. There was a rule that you can't legislate in an appropriations act, but the congressmen on that committee violated that rule frequently. One year our Committee members went out and got points of order against them and got that stopped briefly. They were putting many earmarks into the bills.

But it was as if we had two bills. The one that the agency paid the most attention to was appropriation, so I don't want you to think that we were creating huge policy every day. The major impact we had was in the change of direction of the legislation. But I mean, what was the name of the guy form Louisiana?

Q: Passman?

SULLIVAN: Passman. He had his own agenda, and he didn't like AID, and he played his own agenda.

Q: How did you interact with the appropriations process in the foreign aid authorization?

SULLIVAN: As little as possible. We didn't really interact. They did their own thing, it was just like two separate kingdoms. I still remember we were very proud of having passed the New Directions in the House and in the Senate, and Johnny Murphy was then Deputy Administrator. He said to me, "Yes, but we haven't got any money yet. We can't do anything." So it was a difficult process. And then in subsequent years we couldn't get an authorization passed.

The other issue we dealt with was whether foreign economic assistance ought to be linked with military assistance. Some were trying to de-link them.

Q: Yes, what were some of the big themes of the foreign aid authorization process?

SULLIVAN: The committee didn't want to get rid of military aid. Actually there was one year when we passed military and economic aid in separate bills, and it didn't hurt. Everybody thought it was aid to Israel that we needed to pass an economic aid bill, that without it AID was dead. I'm not so sure. Another big theme, of course, was the Cold War theme. When I first went to work on the Hill in 1962 you could get on the floor on the foreign aid bill and yell, "The Russians are coming. The Russians are coming." And everybody would salute and pass a bill. That was in the early 60's. Alliance for Progress

was a good example, the amount of money authorized. By the later 60's, by the time I had some responsibility for the bill, you couldn't get very far with a Cold War motif, it just didn't work very well.

Q: Why was that?

SULLIVAN: Well because people were tired of it. The impetus would go only so far I guess. And the real crisis in the aid program I believe, occurred because the Cold War was over, the notion that, some of the crises that occurred during the period of time of the guy (Allan Woods) before Roskins, trying to find a new theme, after McPherson left, trying to find a new rationale, thrashing around about it. It occurred because the Cold War was over. When the Cold War was no longer here, it required a new thinking through, and that's what we got in Brian Atwood's emphases, I think we got a new thinking through of the program.

Q: We'll come back to that. Are there any other themes in foreign aid policy?

SULLIVAN: There were a lot. I can't say I had a lot to do with them personally. I was the staff man on the Sinai accord, when Zablocki broke from the administration and opposed the policy because he said we're going to be paying for it for a long time. I don't think he was wrong. The man's in his grave and we're still paying for it. He knew more than I did. He lost that fight. I was in charge of the Camp David accord bill, I had been charged by the chairman at that time, Dr. Morgan, with staffing it on the House floor. It was a separate bill.

Q: How did you get a sense of what the amounts should be?

SULLIVAN: That's a good question. I would talk to AID and they would say, "We've got to do this CIP program." I understood CIP programs. I said, "Well what commodities are we going to sell?" The AID people had no idea, it was real interesting that a lot of the people who knew about commodity import programs, who'd been in Latin America back in the ‘60s had left the agency or something and there wasn't a whole lot of knowledge about how these things were going to work. So I must say I'm sure if I went back and looked at that first report I wrote on this I'd be embarrassed, because it was so thin and devoid of any real practical notion of what in the hell we were going to do. But I mean neither did the Administration...

Q: You mean what to use the money for...

SULLIVAN: Yes. One of the things I discourse on is that I think a successful foreign aid program is the result of a dialogue between the donor and the beneficiary. If we cut off aid or for some reason we’re not giving aid, it's difficult to start again, even though we have people that may know that country, because we've got to constantly be discussing with the recipients what it is that they want to do, and what it is that we do, and what we're interested in doing, and what we think they ought to be doing perhaps, and what

their ideas are of what they ought to be doing. The landscape is littered with projects that resulted from us telling people what we thought they ought to do, and they didn't want to say no because they thought they might lose the money.

Interestingly enough Development Associates has been doing a lot with southern Africa and that region, with Zimbabwe, South Africa, Swaziland, and countries like that, and I have much more appreciation of the difficulty of doing development in many parts of Africa.

Q: Well let's come back to that. Let's round out, you will have an opportunity to add anything you want to later to the congressional process, but let's...

SULLIVAN: I want to talk about two things, one part of why I left the Congress, when I went over to AID, I'd probably been in over 25 AID missions. I genuinely liked AID people; I thought that they were good; I had met a few bad ones, but in general I was impressed by them. They were dedicated and when you were spending a week with somebody in the field you got to take their measure. I really got the feeling that this was a very good group of people. I was very impressed always with the quality and dedication of AID people in the field. There are exceptions, and there obviously are missions where you get people who've lost enthusiasm after a while.

As for the institution of AID, I probably was a little naive about how much AID was really doing. Subsequent exposure, when I got into AID for example, I was really shocked by how bad the internal financial management was, really bad back in 1976 and 1977. And I didn't realize that. Other people did. Bill Jordan over on the Senate side kept telling me, "They don't know where their money is or what they're doing, that's why I'm cutting their money here and there." I think there were some problems, but in general I think during those years, that would be the years 1969 to 1976, my basic impression was good, and so it was for most Committee members.

I think when Clem went abroad he was impressed by the people he met. If he tended to get into any kind of disagreement, it tended to be with State Department guys, not with AID. There was a genuine feeling on the part of the members of Congress I worked with and with the staff, that we were all very much in this together. This was one effort of our country to bring development and a better way of life to people for two reasons: one because it was the right thing to do, and second because it was the best thing to do in the Cold War. The Cold War helped shape that.

Q: You said there was a second theme?

SULLIVAN: The second theme was that the organization was pretty good. The people were pretty good, and the organization at AID was good. It was responsive to Congress, that it was interested in what we wanted to do and was trying to implement the New Directions for example, that we weren't being balked by the institution. That some of the

people needed training and some better, but we were getting support, and it was a common effort, not a "we" and "they" situation.

Q: Well do you want to talk a little about the perception of the AID leadership up to the point you came to AID?

SULLIVAN: Fowler Hamilton didn't stay very long. I think Dave Bell was excellent, he was good at the Capitol, very good talking to members of Congress. I think a better manager was Bill Gaud. Bill Gaud was a better manager than Dave, but he also was Dave's deputy, so that period, my perception was that was a period when things were pretty well managed. Then of course when Dr. Hannah took over for Gaud, he was well-liked. The people on the Hill felt he was a little removed from the management, that he was more interested in the policy. He was respected. He had a terrible problem with all these Vietnam types, the Vietnam thing he had to deal with. Gaud and Bell connected well. Hannah I think was always not quite standing on both legs when he talked to Congress.

Q: What were the qualities you thought were expected when it came to dealing with Congress?

SULLIVAN: I think where Bell was concerned, his knowledge of the program, his reputation with Rockefeller and what he'd done before, he'd been at OMB right?

Q: Yes, he was the director of OMB.

SULLIVAN: Yes, his reputation.

Q: He had been active in the Pakistan program.

SULLIVAN: Gaud had that same aura, I think he presented himself well. Dr. Hannah was removed from the Hill, I think he had a lot of problems with the White House, I don't know, I don't remember who his deputy was.

Q: Maury Williams was there at the start.

SULLIVAN: Johnny Murphy came later. A lot of people said the Congress was responsible for bringing Murphy back. There was a strong recommendation that they do that.

Q: He was at Booz-Allen at that point.

SULLIVAN: You're right. He gave a lot of confidence in AID’s management. Dan Parker was, I knew Dan, but that's when....

Q: That 's when you entered....

SULLIVAN: That's when I entered. I guess those were the ones I knew the best. That's when I got to be senior staff consultant, and then subsequently for a very brief time I was deputy staff director.

Q: Do you remember any issues around personnel?

SULLIVAN: There was all that riff-raff about who gets to go where and things like that. In retrospect I have to think AID was doing a pretty good job.

Q: What about the politicization of AID operations up until that point in terms of White House?

SULLIVAN: It was politicized during Vietnam, Vietnam politicized it.

Q: In terms of personnel.

SULLIVAN: Obviously at the beginning of AID there was a political test for the folks going there, but actually AID was not very highly politicized. When I worked the transition from the Republicans to the Democrats, and yes there were Assistant Administrators who were identified with a party, but I fired 24 people out of AID that were political types and did not deserve to stay on. Well that's not very many people.

Q: You're talking about the whole agency?

SULLIVAN: The whole agency. So as a whole, we didn't have Republican...

Q: Do you think they went down further...

SULLIVAN: Certainly, subsequently, I think there are more political appointments. When I took over, we looked at the Assistant Administrators, half of them were professional probably. Phil Birnbaum and Curt Farrar were professionals. There were others. Do you think it was highly politicized? Maybe I'm not seeing something.

Q: During the Nixon era, there was a movement by the White House to control personnel selections far down into the system.

SULLIVAN: Was there? I didn't see it, and I was there to fire them. Maybe they'd gotten out while the getting was good, but I didn't fire that many of them. There were bound to be some at the policy level. There weren't too many of them, and they weren't calling the shots.

Q: What about later involvement from the White House?

SULLIVAN: It's funny when I became a transition guy at AID, we were doing appointments too, and I got a call from somebody in personnel saying, "Don't you think we should take this appointment over to the White House for clearance?" And I said, "This is the Carter Administration. We aren't going to do it." The personnel guy, probably it was Fred Simmons, called me and said, "Do you want me to send these mission director nominations to the White House to check the appointments?" I don't know who was making them. Bob Nooter, Deputy Administrator, was probably on board and he and I were making them, or getting recommendations from the bureau and then making them. And I was handling them, and I think it was Simmons called up and said, "Don't you want me to send these over to the White House?" I said no.

Q: What about congressional intervention on their behalf ?

SULLIVAN: Yes, indeed, when I was on the Hill I always had that benefit. Clem Zablocki was straight as a string, and he would no more have thought of personal benefit, and his concern was, the other members I worked for, it was genuine that we were a rich nation and we couldn't live as a rich nation among poor nations we had to do something, But there were scandals involving Members of Congress. I worked on some of them.

The only problem I had with AID was that AID, as I recall, was always being pushed by some member of the Appropriations Committee staff to do something we didn't want to do. There were issues that I'll talk about later as Assistant Administrator. It was an interesting perspective to see AID from that point, which is a policy standpoint, and different from what I've been doing lately.

Obviously, people tell me about money that's being wasted and the things that were done wrong. Yes, everybody was learning during those periods, but I think a lot of things were done right. There were a lot of dedicated people working on these issues, and one of them was on population, the other one was agriculture.

Q: Well, we'll come back to that... Well, we just finished up with your work with Congress, and then you made a transition to becoming the Assistant Administrator for the Asia bureau?

Appointment as Assistant Administrator, Asia Bureau in the Carter Administration - 1977

SULLIVAN: Correct.

Q: What year was this?

SULLIVAN: I was officially confirmed by the Senate in April of 1977. I actually came over to AID early in 1977. The Carter Administration was very slow about its transition, and sometime about the day of the Inauguration, which would have been late January, I was called by Dick Moose and Tony Lake. Dick was then designate-Under Secretary of

State for Administration and Tony at that time was to be head of Policy and Planning. They asked me if I would come over to work on the transition at AID from the Republicans to the Democrats. I got Committee permission. I had been working in the Carter campaign and got permission from the Chairman, Clem Zablocki, my old boss and mentor to come over. So on one Saturday they brought me in, and then they brought Jack Gilligan in to meet me. He was the designate-head of AID. Governor John J. Gilligan had been a Congressman and then Governor of Ohio. He met me and we discussed what our vision was about what AID ought to be doing. He apparently liked what he heard and he told them that yes he would let me be his representative for this transition period.

So I was set up with an office at the State Department and began a process of looking at the positions that had to be filled, telling the Republicans who had them that they were no longer needed. We didn't have a blanket firing. We let people go on a selective basis in what I considered a very humane manner. I worked that way for weeks. A man named Ted Van Dyke came in subsequently and worked with me on this process. When Gilligan became Administrator, I moved over directly outside his office and continued that activity. I had been interested for some time in being Assistant Administrator for Asia, was nominated by the Carter administration for that post, and took over my duties unofficially in April, and believe I got confirmed in June.

Q: Were there any particular issues in the transition process, making the move?

SULLIVAN: Yes there were a few issues. A couple of things came to fruition that I had been working on on the Hill. AID had said that it did not have to abide by the environmental rules that the rest of the government did. Art Gardner when he was general counsel, and probably under the direction of Dan Parker, didn't think that USAID projects had to abide by environmental rules. The environmentalists in the country got very upset, including my wife, and she said, "Why don't you doing something?" So I got the House to...

Q: Was she in any position at that time?

SULLIVAN: No, but she was an active contributor to the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), which is the organization that took AID on. A good friend was Executive Director. I was working on this issue on the Hill. We got a resolution before the Foreign Affairs Committee that would have passed like a knife through butter. Art surrendered and said to EDF, "Okay, come in and let's see what we can do, put some rules together." And those came to fruition then as I was doing this transition. AID basically agreed to the rules and the Defense Fund dropped their case.

We also had something called the Triple-I, International Industrialization Institute, do you remember that gambit? A Dan Parker initiative. I had opposed it on the Hill, rather vociferously. Then it came up while I was sitting in the Executive. You're supposed to advise Gilligan, and I said, "I think this thing is an idea whose time has come and gone. It ought to be a dead duck." We dumped it at that point. So those are a couple of issues that

got decided basically in the transition period. But most of my effort was in terms of personnel.

Q: Why did Art Gardner feel that the foreign assistance program was not subject to environmental laws? Did you ever understand?

SULLIVAN: I don't know, I never understood. He was a friend, but he had his own ideas. You know another example occurred, now that you mentioned it, under the Trade and Development Act, the TDA. In fact I think I was doing a study on that when I first met you. The Congress had meant that it could be used to benefit private industry, which it does now, everybody agreed. But Art's reading of it was that it couldn't, and so we had put some language into a report to say, "It's not a correct reading." I mean this is a Republican Administration and he's not letting the private sector get involved. Changing policies was again easily done. There were just a whole bunch of little issues that we were able to do at the time, but none of them were very earth-shaking.

So then in April I moved over to the Asia bureau. I had nine country programs to supervise. I used to say everything from the Khyber Pass to Hawaii was in the domain. Our portfolio approached $2 billion, about $1.8. Annual allocations to Asia were in the $800-$900 million area, more if you factored in PL 480. We had more than 2000 people both in Washington and overseas, some of the biggest missions in the world, and mine was probably one of the best jobs in Washington.

I once met a woman executive from the World Bank. I can't recall her name, I met her at the airport. I knew her slightly, we were trying to get her to come into AID. She said, "The only job worth having in AID is yours" and I said, "Yes and I'm going to fight you for it, I've got it." It was a terrific job.

Asia was still sort of hanging in the balance regarding development. Some countries had really done very well. Korea, for example, you could see in Korea by the early 70's that things were really moving. But the Vietnam war was only over by a year, year and a half, so what was the future of Asia going to be? The communists had won Vietnam. The future was not really clear at that point. There were two issues that really seized me.

The first issue was that of sufficient food. We'd had a lot of problems in Bangladesh. If you think back to the early to mid-70's, there was a tremendous fear that there was going to be great food shortages, and in fact the Paddock brothers wrote the book, *Famine 1975*, and there were other grim warnings. Famine didn't happen exactly but there were some food shortages. The Indonesians had a rice crop failure in 1978. Bangladesh continued to be a problem. China was having some difficulties with its agriculture, it hadn't yet freed up its agriculture. So we had a situation where the Asian need for food was a top priority. Dick Holbrooke was the Assistant Secretary of State. It took him a while to understand it. It was only when Indonesia had the failure of its rice crop that development was a really severe problem for him. I felt the problem very strongly. I also felt that we had the means to take care of the problem. The miracle grains, the high-yield wheat and rice had been

invented. The technological packages needed were known, the pesticides, the water, the fertilizer, the training that was needed for the farmers to be able to use these advances. So I made that a major objective. As a manager you've got to know what it is you're going to do, and what it is you're not going to do, and I made a major decision to push agriculture.

Q: That was your main line. What about relief assistance? Was that also a part of it?

SULLIVAN: We didn't have much. The relief assistance was in Bangladesh only.

Q: PL 480 and so on?

Views on development program priorities in Asia:
agriculture, family planning, education, environment

SULLIVAN: Well there was PL 480 and how to use it. The only country where we had a real famine situation was in Bangladesh. When I got on the scene, the problem was not so much that there were food shortages, it was the fact that relief food had started to pile up on the docks and wasn't being used. The question was how much is in the warehouses, how much of a backlog do they have against a future famine? There was a tendency on the part of the AID mission, and that was Joe Toner and his people, not to believe the Bangladesh government about how much food was in country. And I didn't know what was going on, so I sent an independent person out to review the problem on the advice of Jim Grant. I sent out a very bright guy - I can't think of his name - and he said, "I think you'd better listen to the government," because he went around and looked at the stocks. He felt the Mission hadn't gotten out and looked enough. So it was, it actually helped us solve the problem. He was a good consultant and gave me some good ideas.

The main issue was getting the new miracle grains and the new technology to grow them out to the least farmer in Asia. That was my overwhelming objective. Easier said than done in some ways, because there were some countries where it really wasn't possible, mainly because of the social situation, and the one that comes particularly to mind is Pakistan. It never worked too well in Pakistan. It worked well in Indonesia. It worked in other countries. It worked in Thailand. It worked less well in the Philippines because they were having all this problem with Marcos and the dictatorship.

The second part of our mission was that we had begun to make some progress with family planning and I had felt for a long time that family planning programs were an important part of our USAID efforts. Concomitant with feeding people and making sure there was sufficient food we had to try to increase family planning. Because there was more food people might decide to produce more babies, and if they wanted to limit their family size, you ought to have the means for them to do that. That included pills, condoms, and loops at that time. We eventually moved into some sterilization, particularly in Bangladesh. But we met some success in Asia.

Dr. Ravenholt who headed the family planning program up at AID was not a friend of mine. He wanted to declare victory in Asia and get out because he had had some initial successes some places, but he'd had them in the cities. He hadn't gotten out to the multitudes in the countryside. I said "We don't declare victory and walk away if we're winning." In this development business one of my major tenets is, if you've got something that's working, don't declare victory and go home. Extend it, do it more. If you're in the Philippines doing family planning, it might have worked in Luzon but what's happening in Mindanao? Let's move from success. Early on in my tenure we had a meeting in the Philippines in which Dr. Ravenholt came and he said, "It's a success in Indonesia. It's over." I said, "No way it's over. We're going to continue to do this."

So those are the two things I really emphasized during the four years I was Assistant Administrator. I tried to get as much money, to beg, borrow or steal for them. I tried to get the other international organizations to back me in putting money into these activities. My wife who is an environmentalist has always thought I was a snake oil salesman. She said I was selling short-term quick solutions to major problems, that later these methods would come back and bite us. Much later I went to Indonesia, to Bali with her. She had not been in Asia. She's been with me now three times to Asia since I left AID, and she was noting all this wonderful grain growing. She said, "This is fantastic." I said, "Yes, this is what we did. This is what AID did. We provided this technology and taught the people how to use it." And she said, "Well I heard the guide say the people don't like to eat it themselves." "Well", I said, "that's fine. On other plots they grow their own rice. This is a cash crop for them. They can sell this rice other places and get the money to make their houses better."

You only have to go to a country like Indonesia and have seen it over a period of time, thirty years as I have, to see what the benefits of development have been. It wasn't just AID or the Asia bureau, it was everybody. A lot of people saw it. The World Bank was beginning to get into it. The Asian Development Bank wasn't much of a player. But food production really provided us with a focus. And I think that's one of the reasons the Asia Bureau was easily managed. Haven, you were in the Africa Bureau. It would have driven me nuts just remembering where the countries were. I had nine countries and three regional programs. I had a focus on the kinds of things we wanted to do, what we didn't want to do.

I've been faulted for not doing education programs in Asia. In countries which featured an English-style educational system, trying to impose the American-type system was not going to work very well. Secondly, I still recall somebody came up with the idea of funding textbooks in math and science for third and fourth graders in Indonesia. That was going to cost millions. And I said, "Who will pay for the books next year? Why should we do that?" I remember going to a meeting in the early '80's after I was out of office, and Charlie Greenleaf my successor, was being scored by the education lobby, people who were interested in that area, and Charlie looked at me and said, "He didn't either." So we really did have a focus about education.

Q: Well let's talk about the agricultural priority first. How would you characterize what AID did or the foreign assistance program did because as you say there were a lot of other actors in the program? What was the significant role that we played?

SULLIVAN: Our role was that we were willing to experiment. We were willing to go in and start a process. The World Bank could put the money in when we got things going. For example, I remember our experiments with the new varieties of wheat, putting wheat into Bangladesh into some of the areas where upland wheat would grow. They've been fantastically successful. We had the technical assistance people who could go in with the technical package, and show people how to use it. I would say it worked in virtually every country, except possibly Pakistan. Pakistan's big landowners did not want the small landowners necessarily to succeed. We found for example that they tended to take all of those packages themselves, that the extension agents were living at their houses and in effect being another hired hand. The poor guy with a little patch on the river bank wasn't getting any attention at all, and the big guy at the big house who wore the white suit, he didn't care. You can't do anything in situation like that.

But in lots of Asia, in Indonesia for example, there was a cultural, political, civil system that allowed us to succeed. If you look at it all, Indonesia is probably the best example of success, with Thailand being successful, but Thailand was a little different. In Thailand much of its eventual success was based on things that happened not because of AID. It happened because of private sector investment.

Q: My impression is that you went direct to the small farmers or did you get the ministry of agriculture people to do the work? How engaged were they? Were they up to this work?

SULLIVAN: Often they were. We also spent a lot of money on research universities. I think one of AID's greatest contributions to the work of agriculture was the sponsoring of agricultural schools, particularly in India, that was the first start of it, and then what we did in Indonesia and the rest of the countries. I mean we put a lot of money into building the capacity of these universities to do the research that would be necessary to keep one step ahead of the sheriff as I put it. I mean if you go in with a new variety of grain, a new rice variety, tomorrow the rice hopper may figure out how to get at it and beat it. In Indonesia, they rejiggered the rice genetically. They got more of the new rice varieties out, and they had it hopper-proofed within a year. Another example is some of the land in Indonesia was too iron-rich to let the traditional miracle grains, the short varieties, be successful. Their own research university that we had sponsored, in one year genetically changed the variety so that it was iron-tolerant. They were doing it, we weren't doing it. We continued to put the money into Ag research. That showed me that we were doing something right.

Q: But do you think they had the institutional base...

SULLIVAN: We helped them get it, yes.

Q: ...that came from the past?

SULLIVAN: We helped develop it in the ‘60s and ‘70s. Tom Niblock was our mission director and its to his credit, I mean that was his vision, but a vision that AID had carried forward. I think it's no question that, and we haven't had an Asian famine since the ‘70s. Well my wife says, "Just wait. We're going to get a great one." But we haven't had one, and the reason we haven't had one in Asia is that there is enough food around. Now whether it's distributed correctly and whether the poor get it, that's a different issue. Clearly however, if you look at the statistics, as Asia has developed, as Indonesia and Thailand and all these countries have developed, the nutritional status of the people has increased steadily. There's no question that with increased incomes the distribution system works better. You obviously have to have programs that help the destitute and the poor, but the New Directions wasn't for the poorest of the poor. We said that last time. And we were working with the poor, I don't even want to say how poor, we were working with farmers, small farmers in small plots. That's the way the Indonesian agriculture works, and these new varieties work very well because it's almost like gardening. If you've got a few hectares you can almost garden it. Well this kind of these new grain varieties lent themselves to that kind of attention, and it worked.

Q: You found the small farmers were receptive to this, they were prepared to take the risks that went with this new technology?

SULLIVAN: Oh yes. Absolutely. It is really interesting that the Asian farmer was receptive. That's not been the case in Africa. There were problems there and there've been problems with the highlands people in Latin America. They have not taken to this kind of agriculture, but in Asia they did. The success was built a lot on the same model we used in the United States, the old extension model, which you're very familiar with, and in large part it worked. But we weren't always pushing rice in Asia. For example, we often were talking about secondary crops. But it's very difficult to get governments to focus on secondary crops when their primary crop isn't doing very well. We were always trying to tell the Indonesians, "You've got to grow more corn." Because they like corn, sweet corn and roasted ears, they eat a lot of that. We could never could get them to focus, they called them “polawegia” crops. I was always a dubious participant in this pressure. Finally just a few years ago after Indonesia got its rice going, they're now doing terrific on the secondary crops.

But you had to have able political leaders. President Zia, the good Zia of Bangladesh, the one who was assassinated, used to drive himself home very night in a Volkswagen bug, and I think the guy was honest. He said to me one day when I came to try to talk him into cutting the rice ration, "You know, Dr. Sullivan, when the crowd comes into the square and they hang somebody it's not going to be you, it's going to be me." He made the point very well. These political leaders have got to be able to feed their city folk, and the problem so many other countries have is they don't realize that by cutting the cost to consumer, undercutting the farmer, they're in the long run hurting themselves. It's just

short-run gains. But in Asia some smart people did some smart things. It wasn't just the United States effort.

Q: Were we trying to impress on them certain policy changes?

SULLIVAN: Absolutely.

Q: Such as?

SULLIVAN: No agricultural control boards. The Philippines had them in spades. They were as corrupt as they could be and they ruined Philippine agriculture. They had not really blossomed during my period, it was after I left that they came. But in Indonesia, we really wanted to free up agriculture to the fullest extent possible, and a lot of countries did. Malaysia had certainly had, and we weren't giving any aid to Malaysia. Thailand freed up its agricultural sector. Indonesia's always had a few constraints, but they really understood the importance of being able to provide enough food.

I think the United States developed because farmers could own their own land and educate their children. My grandfather was an immigrant but he owned his own land and there was free public education. He, an immigrant, went to school to the third grade and yet had a daughter who had a Masters degree and taught at the University of Michigan. I mean that's how fast things can move in America. Development can move really fast, and it's moved fast in Asia. When you think of what those countries looked like, when I first went there, 25 to 30 years ago and where they are now, it's astonishing. It's hard to believe. Development works, I'm a believer.

Q: Let's pick up on the family planning side. You believed that worked. Why was it working, what was the key to it?

SULLIVAN: Dr. Ravenholt's philosophy was like this; if you build it they will come. He had a view that if you provided contraceptive materials the people would use them. I think the last time we talked about the failure in Pakistan. My feeling was that we had to integrate family planning with health generally, and to a lesser extent nutrition. We had to show people a full package so that - today, for example, it's not even debated - it's a full part of MCH, maternal and child health services. You have a clinic, the woman comes to the clinic, she brings the kid, you give her advice on family planning and you take care of the kid so it lives. That advances the so-called demographic transition. People had a lot of kids because so many of them died and they needed children to work the farm and help them in their old age, and so it was natural to have as many children as they did. The fact that the children weren't going to die with the frequency that they had before doesn't enter people's heads until later.

We in effect short-circuited the demographic transition. We said, "Okay, you don't have to have nine kids to have them survive to your old age. You're going to have four kids or five kids and four of them are going to survive till your old age, so you don't need all

these additional children." So we found women, particularly women, willing to adopt family planning. We always had it translated into the terms of the culture. In the Philippines we were dealing with a very heavily Catholic culture. Indonesia was to a certain extent Muslim, but it wouldn't be very much recognized by our friends in the Middle East. Thailand had no problem. Family planning was perfectly acceptable with their kind of philosophy of doing things. Burma I had to put off to the side. Burma was always a strange one. If Burma had gotten some of its politics right, Burma would be developed today, but it's in the backwaters. I also always had a lot of faith in India, being able to move itself. India and Nepal, I had those countries, and Sri Lanka. In many cases bad politics, sometimes wars have gotten in the way of things, as in Sri Lanka. But in those countries which have had relative internal stability, and peace, and have had a serious outlook on doing development, I mean there's been tremendous development.

Q: How did it happen that you came to this conclusion that family planning or population programs should be integrated with health services? It was the prevailing view, as you mentioned, to go direct and do it separately, i.e., don't get it all tangled up with health care.

SULLIVAN: Family planning had always been of interest to me. I come from, two strains in my family, one was agriculture and, I know I mentioned several times, we had farms. My father was a dentist and my mother was a nurse. The other topic of conversation at the dinner table was health.

I just always felt family planning had to be done in an integrated setting. I thought culturally that it was a new idea. I think for example that the average man, I don't care what country he's in but particularly in developing countries, is not going to be jumping up and down about family planning. This is not gonna be his idea. First his macho may be on the line in his culture. There may be situations where his mother may not like it, the mother-in-law may be against it, that's a problem in some countries. I just felt it was going to work better in an integrated setting. It might cost a little more over a period of time, but you've got to show mom and pop that this kid is going to live, we're going to take care of this kid, and then you shouldn't have another one. That is putting it bluntly.

During that period I was very hopeful. There was some thinking in the Catholic church at that time of some change if John Paul I, the one that died, had lived. There's always been a story that he had a little different idea of things. In fact some people think he was poisoned by the Vatican because he was set to see an international delegation of family planning people, which would have been a first time in the Vatican. I just felt that there had to be something done on population, but it had to be done in a humane fashion, it couldn't simply be done as, "We're not going to let you have any more kids." I also felt that societies legitimately could take anti-natalist positions.

In many countries larger families gave you a tax advantage or elites could automatically send a kid to college. The first one who took any action on that was Singapore. They took some societal actions that if you had more than two children, you had free medical care

for the first two, but the third one you had to pay for. Well I think that's completely legitimate. First of all they're giving you a favor in the first place, giving it free. Or maybe they wouldn't give you any education over two. I've always felt that as long as it's non-coercive. I'm not talking about Mrs. Gandhi, this is later, that was before I got involved and Mrs. Gandhi was sterilizing people. They've forced population control in China. That was not my idea, that's a violation of human rights.

Q: But you made some observation that we were supporting a sterilization program?

SULLIVAN: We did have a sterilization program. Probably one of the toughest issues of my time. We were doing it in Asia, primarily in Bangladesh, I think we may have had some in Indonesia, particularly or mostly for women who had a number of children, and in Bangladesh unfortunately we had a situation where, in a very short space of time, 17 women died of sepsis. Now that's prevented simply washing hands. The fact is that for these doctors, it was just butchery. Now a Congressman, Sandy Levin, headed up the bureau that had the centralized health and family planning effort. Dr. Steve Joseph also was there at that time. We had to decide what to do. Here's a woman who's already got five children running around the doorstep, and then she dies and leaves this husband and five semi-orphans. That's a terrible, terrible responsibility. And we had to make a decision whether to shut the program down in Bangladesh or to see if we couldn't get them to do things right. And we ultimately made one of the toughest decisions I've ever had to make, not to shut the program down and to keep going. And we were successful. The following year there was maybe one fatality in our program, where it had been over 17.

Q: Weren't there some protests in the U.S. about supporting that program?

SULLIVAN: There were some protests.

Q: I thought there was a ban at one point.

SULLIVAN: No, it wasn't banned. There was some protest. I never got any direct protest from anybody. There were some adverse things in the press. My feeling about development is, “first do no harm.” And if you are doing harm, if there is some harm being done, and the health area is probably the best area to be thinking about that, you should stop. But the sterilization program was huge in Bangladesh, and it was pretty successful, so we didn't stop. In retrospect it was a pretty good decision not to stop, but it was probably the most difficult thing I had to do, because if deaths had continued at the same rate I probably should have been roasted alive, and probably would have been.

Q: Were there other policy or operational issues that you had to deal with?

SULLIVAN: In family planning?

Q: In family planning?

SULLIVAN: Not really. I had some very canny people, some really bright people in that area who were thoughtful, who felt as I did. I held this conference in the Philippines to say to everyone, "You're not working for Dr. Ravenholt. You're working for me. And this is how I want this done. And if you don't want to do it this way, if you want to be his boy, go transfer to his department. If we do it here we're going to do it the best we can." I didn't figure we could change mindsets right away. Some freestanding programs in family planning continued, and in fact Indonesia is a good example, but I wanted to show the advantages of integration to the extent possible. And of course the countries were delighted. I never had any problem with any country which says, "We don't want integration." They wanted it that way. I mean they had problems explaining things to their own people, and so the governments were much more amenable.

One of the things I had to contend with was, we had these functional accounts. The health account was in one account and the population account was another account. And I tried to do that when I worked in Congress to get them in one account, and Ravenholt had some friends on the Hill and they used to stymie me on occasion. They got earmarks. But we were able to work around that.

Q: Were you able to effectively institutionalize the program so that it was sustainable in the country?

SULLIVAN: I think so. You have struck on something very elemental, that was one thing I didn't understand very well. That if social programs are going to be sustainable you had to have a viable economic base. Luckily Asia got the economic base. We'd provided a lot of rural health clinics without too much notion about who was going to pay for them when the U.S. funding ended. How were these going to be paid for? I don't think we paid sufficient attention to it, it was something we probably could have learned more about.

Moreover, we didn't, I didn't, pay enough attention to the private sector. The private sector in terms of individual farmers and maybe the small producer or the micro- or agro-enterprise, that is what I was interested in. The private sector, the big private sector as a producer of wealth to be able to keep social programs going, I don't think I paid as much attention to that as I should have. But nobody else did either. There wasn't a huge push on it.

Q: Were there other functional areas (sectors) you were concerned with? Those were obviously your priorities, but were there others?

SULLIVAN: The environment. My third priority would have been the environment. One of the problems with AID is, if you're going to work something out, if there's a problem, do you have enough resources to make a difference? So I decided that our environmental program should, and I'm not sure I made the right decision, but came up with the “tree strategy.” We wanted to do watersheds, forestry, those were the two major parts. We did have a minor move in that area. I also tried electricity. I was in favor of rural electricity. After being on the farm where we didn't get electricity until after World War II. I mean

you know what terrible labor you had to go through to pump some water for the cattle and things like that, so I was always in favor of electricity to the extent that it was being given to the little guy. I wasn't too much for the installation of big electrical generation facilities. Our electrification effort was part of this whole rural development package, to get electricity, because that was important.

I was somewhat interested in clean water. The U.S. government had pledged someplace to be for clean water. So I got involved in clean water. I saw clean water as a good for sanitation and things like that, but I also saw it as a way of encouraging growth of new crops. For example, people don't eat vegetables in countries without clean water because they can't clean the vegetables properly and they get sick. If we could get the clean water into the farm garden, we could parlay that into some additional income, particularly for women. We were all getting more and more involved in women in development. If I had stayed at AID I might have made that a priority Your traditional aggies didn't understand that, your traditional agricultural agents. They all understood the big rice, the big wheat, they were off and running on that.

Q: They did call for irrigation.

SULLIVAN: They did call for irrigation and we spent a lot of money on irrigation, particularly in India and some in Bangladesh. I never was one for the top-end stuff, the big dams and things, because I didn't like those kinds of investments. But we found other donors would invest in those things and that what we could do would be the lower-end, the secondary canals, the small locks and things like that, the small things that tended to get overlooked in the process. Because everybody wanted their name on a big dam, all the donors, and I didn't care. So particularly in Sri Lanka we did that, we did the down river work. That was appreciated by some of the other donor governments. We weren't getting individual credit because we were part of a larger system, but I think we did something important.

Q: Well, let's turn to the country perspective. You've already mentioned several countries in different contexts, but what were the interactions of our different foreign policy interests in particular countries such as Indochina? Was that in your radar scope at all?

SULLIVAN: At that point Indochina was all red. Vietnam was communist, we weren't back in Laos at all, and we weren't in Cambodia. Right after Carter took over, there was an attempt by Assistant Secretary Holbrooke to revive the Mekong Delta schemes, which would have let us be a part of an international consortium to help those countries. He brought it up on Capitol Hill and got roundly blasted. He must have been testifying. I wasn't with him, thank God. He was absolutely savaged by members of the House. He came back shaken saying, "I didn't realize the depth of feeling and hatred towards Vietnam." I had been working with him on some of these plans, and I would have liked to do something in Indochina, but we scrapped that effort and we never went back to it. It took until recently, it took until the '90's really, for things to change, so we were premature. The country wasn't ready for it.

Q: So we were doing nothing at all in that area.

U.S. foreign assistance and the Philippines, Thailand, Korea

SULLIVAN: We didn't do anything. We were watching as the Russians made Cam Rahn Bay into a major port and things like that, but no, there wasn't excessive fear of continued Russian expansion. By this time China was our ally, more or less, and so the concern about the dominoes falling was over. The domino theory was passe. Yes we were concerned about communism, that was obviously a part of all the foreign aid programs, but I think we really could focus on development.

The only place we had a high political stake was the Philippines. I did work on the Philippine bases agreement. The Carter Administration found itself with a bases agreement done by Kissinger. Just to get the thing off the table he agreed to give the Philippines a billion dollars for Clark and Subic bases. And it was way too much: it was incredible. So the new Administration came in and said "We're going to renegotiate." So they renegotiated and I did participate in that renegotiation. Basically there was an effort about how we could guarantee to the Manila government that it would get the money. I came up with a plan which was drawn out of some other diplomacy called “best effort,” that we would make a best effort to get Congress to appropriate the money. And that was the plan. So some people, State Department officers, used to call it the Sullivan plan, that was my only contribution.

Q: What was the characteristic of the plan?

SULLIVAN: There were several: first of all that our guarantees to the Filipinos would be that the administration would make its best effort to get the money, but that we couldn't commit the Congress. Secondly , that to the extent possible, the money would be given to the Filipinos, the Ambassador was very injudicious and told them we would give them money like we gave money to the Israelis.

Q: Writing a check.

SULLIVAN: Yes, writing a check. Well, we weren't going to write a check and the Ambassador was injudicious to have said that. So my plan was to give them the money annually up front, and then have them give us local currencies with which we would do our projects. Well, later it really did boomerang. In fact I almost got called before Congress subsequently, in that the Marcos administration was putting this money into an account and using the interest, which was a huge amount, for political “walking around” money for the party and for the party activities. Millions were scammed by the government. But the basic decision, part of it was mine. The Treasury Department wanted to give funds in short increments, like every quarter. Talking with Ambassador Murphy, who was really on the line, I thought we had to do something different. Later, Doug Bennet who was then Administrator, took over for Gilligan, called me in his office one

day and said he'd signed an agreement with the Treasury Department, we were going to give the money in quartiles. I never told him we were giving it annually and I continued to give it annually.

I felt there was no reason to upset his applecart and make him feel bad. I had made an agreement with the State Department, and he made his with the Treasury Department, so it only hit the fan after I left AID. Some of my old employees of AID/Asia were going to be called up before the Congress to explain. Jim Bond of Senate Appropriations called me and I said, "It's not their fault. It's my fault. And I'll be happy to come and testify either in open or closed session, why we had to do this to get this agreement through."

Q: This was base compensations to preserve our base access and so on?

SULLIVAN: Yes. Subsequently the Philippines threw us out. Now we read in the papers that Richard Gordon, he was mayor of the city at Subic Bay, is now the head of the authority that deals with both those former bases and he's doing great. The Philippines is going to catch up. Bad politics, you know as well as I from Africa, bad politics will screw you up to a fare-thee-well. And the Philippines had a good two decades of bad politics.

Q: The other big story from that part of the world was the successes of east Asian countries, Thailand and so on. What were your views of why this took place, and was there a foreign assistance relationship to it?

SULLIVAN: Yes there was. We had really good people. The Asia Bureau had some really bright people. Some people who came out of the JCRR, the Joint Commission for Reconstruction and Redevelopment in Taiwan. Mike Adler who was my deputy had been part of creating KIST, and all these other organizations in Korea. He helped create the Korean Institute for Science and Technology and all these other organizations that just helped Korea develop. We were attempting to recreate some of that. And we understood the role of technology. In terms of science and technology, we were doing good technology transfers in Thailand. A lot of it was the Sinitic culture. Thai's are Sinitic. Indonesians and the Filipinos aren't, the Malaysians aren't. I've always felt that Sinitic peoples are about as smart and as practical as they come. They don't let political ideology stand in their way very much. There also was a sense of a free enterprise sector. They had that sense. We wanted governments to let the marketplace be as free as possible, but what we were aiming at was to ensure that the marketplace represented the small producers, not just the big guy; that the small guy was being paid attention.

Q: How were we attempting to do that?

SULLIVAN: Well, that's where we tried to put our attention. And because most of, except for Malaysia, most of Asia is not plantation agriculture. There may be some in Pakistan, but most of...Indonesia's agriculture is mostly in small holders, Thailand's agriculture is mostly small holders except there's some in the south, some big plantations, British plantations. Mostly small holders. I just know that farmers are smart people. They

may not have any book learning, but they're pretty smart, but the one problem is sometimes they're not as smart as they think they are.

Why is it that people in a remote rural area, poor people are willing to pay for a health person, just a health promoter maybe, a midwife, but they're willing to pay for that, but nobody wants to pay for agricultural extension? Well the answer is, people when they're sick usually know they don't know how to get well. No farmer, or few farmers, will admit he doesn't know what the hell is going on on their land. Every farmer knows his land and knows it better than anybody else, so it's hard to tell him anything. So the big problem is we weren't successful then and we haven't been successful subsequently in getting the farmer to pay for extension, the government may be willing to do it, and of course the farmer paid for only a little bit for extension in this country and the government subsidized. But in health, there's no problem.

Some countries made a terrible decision. So many countries decided they were going to make health care free. And that they were going to make available free pharmaceuticals and so on. They shouldn't. People will pay for health care. So governments shouldn't give health care free. They should make education free to the extent possible and you should try to recoup some costs on extension, but we've got to have sustainable systems. In health it's possible. We're finding that.

Q: You started out saying that our relationship to some of these successful countries in east Asia was through science and technology, technology transfer process.

SULLIVAN: That was semi-peripheral. My vision, and I guess it was not just mine, mine is if you get your agriculture right, the rest, a lot of good things follow. And almost all those countries got their agriculture right. The Chinese finally got their agriculture right. I was in China in 1976 and farmers couldn't grow enough to meet needs. This was a rural-based revolution. Beijing still couldn't get the rural incomes close to urban incomes. It was a real sore spot. When China freed up its agriculture, all of a sudden the country guy is doing better than the city guy. Because they got the agriculture right.

The only country in southeast Asia that hadn't got its agriculture right, in that sense, was the Philippines. They just could never get it. They were saddled with control boards, price controls and all this bureaucracy which was simply a haven of graft and corruption.

Q: Does that explain why the Philippines seems to have such cycles of rice surpluses and rice deficits?

SULLIVAN: I think so. I told the Filipinos in a speech I made to the Manila Chamber of Commerce in about '79, I said, it's possible for the Philippines to achieve record amounts of grains annually, that they could plant three crops a year and get record grains simply by using existing technologies and existing labor. Now nobody wanted to work that hard. They don't work over Christmas, they take a week off at All Saints Day. So you wouldn't get necessarily that yield. You'd have to have work daily in the field. It's called rice

gardening. But there had been experiments made by IRRI on rice gardening and they were getting record yields. Better than the Japanese, better than anybody's harvests because of the weather, it's just good weather for rice. And we knew they could do it. And they never did because there were just lots of politics.

U.S. foreign assistance and Pakistan

Q: What country was the most troublesome, or what countries?

SULLIVAN: Pakistan was the worst country to deal with, because the Pakistanis always told you "Yes, yes, yes." They had the most wonderful five year plans you'd ever read, didn't mean a word of it, it was just words on paper. But they knew how to ring the bells right in the international community so that everybody used to think they were great. On my first trip there I went to a meeting with a guy named Gulam Ishak Khan who later became President. At that time he was the senior member of the Secretariat. I had dinner with him and our AID Mission Director. He sat next to me and talked about the golden age of Pakistan when everybody knew his place, and that we Westerners had brought ideas of democracy and equality and we'd spoiled the whole thing. So after the dinner was over and he'd gone home I said, "Well, that's the end of this program. Who wants to put money in a country like this?" But for political reasons obviously we did.

I once made a statement when they were asking us to rank-order our countries. I said, "Ranking my countries would be like ranking my kids. Who would want to rank their children in any order? They're all different. And I'm not going to rank my children." But if I were going to rank anybody, I wouldn't rank anybody tops. I had no country that was a favorite. I had studied Southeast Asia and I dearly loved all those countries. I didn't dearly love Pakistan. I've been there several times since then working for Development Associates. My attitudes have, if anything, been reinforced.

Q: But you allude to the Pakistan case, that you were there for political reasons. What about the foreign policy, political security interests of the U.S. vis a vis the development interests? Were these in sync or in conflict?

SULLIVAN: They were in sync. If Dick Holbrooke becomes Secretary of State, there are some stories about how hard he is to get along with. I was thinking of writing a letter to the editor saying, "I worked with this man for four years, and he and I never had a cross word and supported each other utterly." And I am a political scientist, I'm not a sociologist, I understood the political part of foreign assistance, and it's always going to be there, but you deal with that, you don't necessarily have to...

Q: Well what was it you had to deal with?

SULLIVAN: One thing you had to deal with was ambassadors who had pet projects. You had to deal with the disillusionment of certain officers who would think that the recipient

government wasn't doing what we wanted so we ought to punish them by withholding aid. There were various elements of that.

One example led to a National Security Council meeting. After the Afghanistan war started, President Carter was going to give some more assistance to Pakistan and their President Zia in Pakistan called it “peanuts.” Carter did not like that one bit. He was angry. So they convened an NSC meeting to decide what we were going to do. Here on the one hand we've got the security issue. We need Pakistan’s help for Afghanistan, and on the other hand, they had insulted our President. That was about the only time I ever went to a high-level meeting. I sat in the back while they discussed this issue. It was CIA’s Stansfield Turner and then Deputy Secretary of State, now current Secretary of State, Warren Christopher. They were co-chairing, and they came up with a solution I didn't understand. I leaned out from the side and I said, "Gentlemen I've been sitting here listening to this discussion, and I'm the one whose going to have to explain this to the Pakistanis and I don't understand what we did." So everybody laughed, and they put a finer point on it, and the result was I took some $46 million of PL 480 away from Pakistan because they'd insulted our President. So politics intrudes.

Also, the biggest single political issue and this again was with Pakistan, had to do with their attempt to get a nuclear weapon. Did I talk to you about this yesterday? It was an interesting issue. There were amendments on the Hill, the Symington-Glenn amendment said that if Pakistan was found to be trying to get a nuclear weapon we had to cut off our foreign aid. So when I took over the Asia Bureau, that law was on the books. Administrator Gilligan had said "No curve balls to Congress." State Department's position on this was, "We will tell you when the Pakistanis are trying to get a weapon." Well the USAID desk officer for Pakistan had friends at the CIA, and he kept telling me, "They're trying to get a bomb. CIA knows this." They were feeding this back. So I kept going to the State Department and saying, "I understand from other sources that they're trying to get...". State said,"No, don't worry about it."

So one day in 1978 I received a briefing paper indicating that the State Department's going up to brief Senator Glenn and will say, "Yes, Pakistan is trying to get a bomb." I signed off on it and sent it back and said "You just notified me. I'm stopping the aid program." So I cut the aid program off. That is one of the nice things about having some political backing, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee was right there. I never called him on it. I didn't need the 600 pound gorilla. I suppose he might have helped me and might not of, but I never had to ask. Just the fact that you've got a 600 pound gorilla sitting in your corner doesn't hurt.

So I cut aid off and I told the State Department I was cutting it off, and I told people to start no new projects, we were going to phase down. Well the Pakistanis knew something was going on, but we had no official announcement. I cut aid off in July. If you look at the history books it will tell you we cut aid off in October. But in July, I cut it off and we began downsizing. The State Department didn't know what to do. So at one point in September, they convened a meeting with Christopher chairing. I remember coming in

and everybody's looking at me because it was my decision. I don't know whether Gilligan was there or if it was Doug Bennet, but anyway the top AID people backed me on my stand. I had been notified and the law was pretty clear.

So I went to the meeting, and our ambassador in France, I can't think of his name but he was a very good guy, was negotiating this issue. I joined the meeting, and everybody's looking at me as if to say, this boy is going to go to the woodshed for what he did to the State Department guys. And our Ambassador got up and said, "What a brilliant move because the Pakistanis don't know what's going on. They're getting mixed signals. We haven't told them anything but they're worried because the foreign aid program is coming to an end." And he said, "It's made our negotiating with them so much better that the foreign aid program is going down, yet there's been no official announcement of it." So I walked out, that's one of those moments you'd like to live forever. I didn't do it because it was a brilliant move. It had to be done because having come from the Hill you didn't want to kid those members, I mean Glenn and other senators. Why should you lie to them? It's not in our national interest for the Pakistanis to have a bomb.

So anyway, State finally made it official. They continued negotiations and I continued to phase aid down. In October they finally got nowhere and that's when they cut the aid off. Then they reinstated aid at the time that the Afghanistan war started. That's how politics intrudes on those issues.

Q: But what was the effect on the aid program, the development program we were working on?

SULLIVAN: Well, it was a little bit herky-jerky I can tell you. I never felt our development methods in Pakistan were that effective anyway. We probably did a few things that were useful. One day in Pakistan they sent me out with a guy who was supposed to be doing rural development, a retired brigadier general. We went out on a site visit in a rural district. He got into a fight with a landowner who said, "I know what we need. We've got to get rid of these small farmers." This retired general got angry and told this landowner: "You and your type are wrong; you're killing this country, and we're going to have to change things." I was surprised that in front of me he was so combative. And he didn't last another two months. The power structure got him. He was a decent, well-meaning guy who was just brought to the end of his rope by the nonsense that these big farmers were talking. Here is where I saw that the regional extension agent was living at this guy's house. I asked him: "How often do you get down to help the smallholders?" "Oh, I've got a lot of work here." Baloney. Why would we want to put money into that? I still think much of the money in Pakistan went down a rat hole.

U.S. foreign assistance and India

Q: What about India, which is of course...?

SULLIVAN: Well India's problem...

Q: ...the biggest country in your block at that time. What were you trying to do vis a vis the India program?

SULLIVAN: Well vis a vis India we were trying to get the new grains in and to help the small farmer. And there as a lot of good effort. Manmohan Singh who later became finance minister, was finance secretary. And he and I got along well. I've never met a man who I had more respect for. We just seemed to hit it off. And he agreed with what we were doing in India. I restarted the India program. It had been suspended because of the Bangladesh war. I'll tell you a story about that, we restarted in 1977. I wanted to provide quick-dispersing aid. I didn't want any pipeline because as soon as we had a pipeline in India we were going to be in trouble because Congress is going to cut the hell out of future funding.

But a little story about it is Moraji Desai, the guy who used to drink his urine for breakfast. He was the Indian prime minister. Gilligan and I went to see him, we went to his house at night, and we were told we'd have 15 minutes with him. The official who opens the door was an old friend of mine. I had lost track of him, but he'd been in the D.C. embassy here, and I knew him. We went in, Gilligan and I. The problem was we knew the Indians had instructions they were to accept aid if we gave it, but they weren't to ask for it. And we had instructions not to give aid unless the Indians asked for it. So we've got 15 minutes with Moraji Desai to take care of this issue. Gilligan was a great philosopher, he was a once and future professor. So he and Moraji Desai began to discuss the notions of life after death of the Hindu and the Christian, including transmutation of souls and all that. They began to talk about this, and I'm looking at my watch. And the 15 minutes tick down to 10, to 5, to 2, and I'm assuming the Indians mean this time limit, that we've got to get out, so I don't know what in the hell we're going to do. Gilligan was brilliant. I must have nudged him and he said, "Mr. Desai," and they were getting along like two fraternity brothers, they were really hitting it off because of this philosophical discussion. Gilligan said, "If we were to offer you aid would you take it?" And he said, "We would take aid if you were to offer it." And they both said, "Fine," and that was it. That's what happened. Nobody came out overtly to ask or offer. Anyway, that was the end of the discussion. We marched on from there.

Q: What were you trying to do program-wise in India?

SULLIVAN: Well interestingly enough the State Department came to me and said, "We're not going to do anything in family planning." And I said, "Well that's too bad I really would like to get into family planning in a big way in India." The ambassador wasn't for it. In fact I had a lot of trouble with that ambassador, Goheen. He'd been former president of Princeton. He always said it was two hard-headed Irishmen fighting it out. Might have been. But he didn't want to do family planning for one reason or another. I was sitting in a meeting with Cyrus Vance, when the Indian foreign minister came into this meeting and said, "Will you give us family planning?" I almost fell on the floor.

We didn't have any AID people in India when we started out. And that was a mistake. There was a big error in judgment. The State Department didn't tell us that the Indians thought we were going to give them something like $800 million a year, when really we only had about $200. We got into a big meeting in New Delhi with all the secretaries and ministers there and they said to Gilligan, "Okay how much are you going to give us?" This was after we'd talked to Desai. "Are you going to be willing to give us $800 million? We understand you have $800 million for India." And we didn't. Very embarrassing. And apparently it caused a tremendous ripple in India that we didn't have as much money for them as they thought. And the State Department economic counselor really was not very good. He never let us know the expectations. So we had some terrific misunderstandings with the Indians in the beginning about how much we were going to spend.

All development requires dialogue. You've got to talk. When you start a program in a country, even if you've worked there before, you've got to talk to these people and see what they want, and not assume it. We'd been making some assumptions, the State Department particularly. They used to say in India before the Bangladesh war that the only traffic jam in New Delhi was when the AID mission went home. There was something like 500 people in it at one point before the war. Well, State Department didn't want that crowd anymore. And I didn't blame them. But they didn't want any AID presence or much of a program. But they didn't know what they wanted. So we went in and did some useful things. We piggybacked a lot of money on World Bank activities.

Q: In what? In irrigation you mentioned?

SULLIVAN: Irrigation. But I want a quick digression. We gave India fertilizer which I thought was fine, a commodity dump. We gave them pesticides. And we had some real effect on things. We gave pesticides and India had really no good laws on pesticides. We said, "In order to use these pesticides, your laws have got to be better." So they looked at the issues and they adopted our requirements in the Parliament, so that our requirements became their laws.

A couple of other things. We had real bottoms-up policy dialogue with them. The Indians are bright people. I like the Indians. I've always had an ability to work with them. Development Associates is working with them today. We've got a project with Price-Waterhouse to assist them with their stock markets. Indians have a lot of cultural problems toward development, but the potential is so magnificent. But ours was a good aid relationship. At least I had a good relationship. In fact I had good relationships with most countries. And I think we moved the ball down the field everywhere. Philippines was a disappointment. That was my biggest disappointment. And Pakistan was the one where I was disillusioned.

Comments on human rights and democracy programs in the Carter Administration

Q: Well you may have some more thoughts about that and we can come back to that another time. Talk a little about the AID operation. The one I wanted to touch on, the

substantive issue, was the human rights area, because this was during the Carter administration and human rights was a very important priority. How did you perceive that in your work?

SULLIVAN: I disagreed with the Carter administration's position on human rights. I thought that rather than nickel and diming, the kind of thing that Patt Derian and Warren Christopher were doing, that we should take certain "worst case" countries and consider them pariah countries. And they would be "beyond the pale," like South Africa, and we would not have anything to do with them. But I didn't feel any of my Asian countries fit that profile. In the other countries we should encourage respect for human rights, but that you shouldn't be putting huge pressure on them. More recently I might have changed my mind. The pressure the U.S. brought to bear probably was responsible for some prisoners being released in Indonesia. It probably had some good effect.

The Asia Bureau had a few small human rights projects. We started the first project in human rights in Asia under my auspices. I had little to do with it. It was Mark Ball who was the AID general counsel and wanted to start some things. I believe in human rights, but even more deeply I believed in development. And if human rights stood in the way of development, unless government practices were egregious, I was for development. My wife's a great supporter of Singapore because they're green, but they're authoritarian. I just felt that, you know, some of these countries had to get their development act together and then they could think about democracy.

Q: Did you have at that time any particular views about democratic reform processes as related to the development process?

SULLIVAN: No, I didn't.

Q: It wasn't a theme?

SULLIVAN: No except the participatory activity, participation in the Title IX kinds of things. That yes I was in favor of, but how that played into a national policy, I don't think anybody much thought about that in those days. And I certainly didn't have much of a view on that. I think I'm more sensitive now. Development Associates does a lot of this democracy work. I have been surprised and pleased I guess by the willingness of countries to let us work in that area. I always figured that was pretty sensitive stuff. But because of the international community and all these observer teams looking at elections, countries are opening themselves up to talk about these issues.

Q: But at that time, the prevailing view as that it was too sensitive an area to get too aggressive about.

SULLIVAN: That's right, and that would have been my view. I don't remember ever talking to a leader of government about human rights.

Q: Or democratic society, government...?

SULLIVAN: I don't think so. Indonesia had just gone through a horrendous situation with the communists. With the communist threat and with Vietnam and China being red, democracy was not a major concern. Through development we felt that a prosperous happy small farmer is not a likely target for rural red rebellion.

Comments on USAID as an organization

Q: What about the AID organization, in which you were very much a key figure?

SULLIVAN: It worked in those days. I think the fact that the AID Missions were on the ground. One of the big problems then was a concept that if we had an education guy in a mission then we had an education project. And that was wrong. This new strategic objective thing is much smarter. I think that the missions' structures were good. I think that our people understood the countries. I was there when IDCA was created, that was a mistake, a big mistake. Holbrooke once said, "When you and I started out in this game you and I were equals, and you had some clout. Now you've become a petite functionaire." He was right, I couldn't make a decision stick. It went up to a bunch of bureaucrats at the top who didn't know anything, who were second-guessing me and Bennet and everybody else in AID. So that was a problem.

Q: That was a great idea though from your colleague Senator Humphrey.

SULLIVAN: And Clem Zablocki. It also was Clem's problem. If he had gotten the whole loaf of reform he'd have been all right, but he got half the loaf. And Clem's view always was, Clem was a great small-stakes poker player, he said, "If you've got half a loaf this year, you're gonna get half a loaf next year." But you don't do some things, they can't be half-loafed, and he made a mistake, he and Humphrey made a mistake.

Q: What about the rest of the AID organization?

SULLIVAN: I had marvelous people. The people I had in the Asia Bureau, I would have gone into battle with those people. We had bright, dedicated people who really worked hard. I had been in many AID missions as a congressional investigator and I knew a lot of AID people, probably had been in more AID missions than many AID people had been in.

Q: Right.

SULLIVAN: I had super people, bright people. When I went into the bureaucracy I said, "I'd just like to get in here as a manger and see if I can manage and just ratchet performance up one notch. We'll try to speed the process by one notch, we'll try to improve just this one little bit." And people really responded. We made a few changes, we speeded up the processes and I tried to make people feel part of an organization. Only

a few people let me down. Occasionally an individual would, but the institution as a whole worked and the morale, the elan, the intelligence, it was there.

Nobody, least of all an Assistant Administrator, does everything. He doesn't do very much at all. If he's trying...I used to work flexi-time. I worked anytime anybody in the bureau was working. So I came to work at 7:30 in the morning and I left at 7:30 at night. It was interesting because at one point in the Clinton Administration, my name had come up to go back into AID. And Brian Atwood sent me a little note. I had indicated I would be interested in going back to AID, I was just one of a number of names being considered, and he wrote me a little note and says, "It's amazing you'd be willing to put those hours in again." And I thought, "Oh my God. I'm not." And I dropped it. I think I sent him a thank you. I'm no longer interested in putting in those hours. Development Associates is a great place to work because they don't expect a lot of overtime. When it's needed we do it, but I've been able to do a lot of civic work in Alexandria.

Q: Well maybe we should comment a little about what you've been doing since you left AID. What are the main elements that you've filled in a consultancy role?

SULLIVAN: I'd always looked at development from a policy point of view, and then operational, but I never looked at it from contracting. What I knew about contracts as an Assistant Administrator, was that an Assistant Administrator ought not be involved in those kinds of things. I didn't think I ought to try to influence who AID picked, whether we contracted with AT&T or XYZ. That was not appropriate. Procurement should be kept as much out of politics as possible. Here at DA it's like looking at the project with a microscope. Because you've got to know how these U.S. procurement laws work. And over 15 years I have some expertise in how this whole system's supposed to work. The first couple of years were a tremendous learning experience.

I've seen AID's morale go down over the years and peoples enthusiasm be blunted. I think many of the things Atwood has done in terms of a few emphases is good. We've gotten away from agriculture, but in a certain extent that's not too bad. We were beginning to compete with American farmers and they didn't like it, so we lost some constituency there. And I think the emphasis on democracy is probably not misplaced. Environment's probably a good emphasis except nobody knows what to do in that area. The emphasis on health and family planning is one I would really be strong on, and we do a lot of that here. And then finally the emphasis on economic growth and in privatization in the former Soviet Union and former Soviet bloc which is well-placed, and secondly in other countries it's been micro-enterprise, which I've always had an interest in. I find that these emphases are congenial. It's part of this whole effort to find out what we are and what we're going to do in a post-Cold War era. They're intelligent things to do.

But I do think it's too bad that so many intelligent people have been retired out of the service or RIFed. It just been such a horrendous crunching of people. People don't do their best in a situation like this. They've got to be in a situation where they feel comfortable and know that managers are interested in them and their future. If a

bureaucrat thinks he's alone in some kind of big, buzzing confusion, he's covering his backside and he or she is not doing what they've got to do. And AID, because of the big salaries they were making, got rid of a lot of the top people and brought in a lot of young people, some of whom have not gotten sufficient training to know what in the hell it is that they're doing. So we're constantly faced with that, of basically untrained people, people with tremendous power to tell us what to do, who really don't have much grounding, and for whom one doesn't have a tremendous amount of respect. And that's a problem. Now some people at AID might say they have a problem with me, because I tend to be prescriptive, to say, "I don't think you want to do that."

Q: And they don't want to hear about the past.

SULLIVAN: They don't want to hear about it. You and I have been in this game so long we know how to make mistakes as well as anybody, but I don't think you ought to make them over and over again. And if there is something that can be learned, I just think it should be a little more humility on the part of these folks. It's not that I know all of it. But I know where we made mistakes in the past. I have testified before Congress on various aspects of foreign aid, not recently but in the early ‘80s. Since then I have not spoken out on issues dealing with AID.

But my position on contractors is this, if you say nice things about AID, and there are many nice things to be said, then people looking at it say, "Well he gets his bread from them so he's going to sing their song." If you start being really critical, then people say, "Look at that bastard, he's biting the hand that feeds him." So the best thing to do is to say nothing. I write a lot of letters to the editor on all kinds of other issues, but I seldom make any comment publicly on AID and maybe I should have been a little bolder, but didn't want any confusion. Also the company could get hurt. This is not just me, it's the company, these people give me a nice salary to do what I do. They should not get hurt because I speak out.

Observations on U.S. foreign assistance and its contribution to international development

Q: If there's something you want to add to each of those parts or more, you'll get a chance to review the tape, but let's sit back and take a broad view. One, did the foreign assistance program make any difference in world development and can it make a difference as we look ahead?

SULLIVAN: You betcha. The bilateral program?

Q: U.S. foreign assistance program.

SULLIVAN: I think the U.S. foreign assistance program has a terrific story to tell. There's a lot of money been wasted, no question about that, but the successes really have made a difference. And I think those successes are in agriculture, they are in health and family

planning. For example the oral rehydration therapy developed in Bangladesh, that was one of the things I funded out of the Asia bureau, and I think that the U.S. was probably putting almost all of the money in on that. Wiping out small pox. But yes, our program has meant a great deal. I think the very fact that we haven't had a famine since about 1973-4 is completely due to the fact of what the international aid community did. Now AID is part of this. AID has always been on the cutting edge, we're on the front end, the ones that are always out there experimenting, that don't have to show like the World Bank does, some kind of bankable project. AID can experiment. And the same way with family planning. Everybody's taken this up, but the Bank was very reluctant to get involved and so were other countries. We spearheaded in that area.

Q: So you found that AID was very much the pioneer constantly anticipating development issues and trying to determine what the course should be?

SULLIVAN: Absolutely. I think the question is how does that translate into the new era. I think that's what AID does today. It takes new ideas and tries to get them currency. One of the things we're doing today, we're helping...if somebody came to me and said, "I want you to rationalize the stock markets of India," back in my era, I would have said "Go jump in a lake." Today that's what we're doing, we've got a project going there. That is so smart and so needed. Formerly of AID, Dick Breen at Price Waterhouse put this proposal together and DA's going along for the ride. There are more private investors in India than there are in the United States, and if you knew what it took to invest money in India, you'd say "I can't believe that. That people would go through those things just to put some money in their economy." Those are the kinds of things....

Q: Things have opened up a lot in development.

SULLIVAN: Things have opened up, yes.

Q: Despite the turmoil and tragedies.

SULLIVAN: It's two steps forward for one step back in India always.

Q: And generally throughout the world?

SULLIVAN: Well in Asia things have been booming. You look at the last two decades in Asia, and AID deserves a lot of credit, really a lot of credit. We haven't always done things intelligently, sometimes politics has intruded. We haven't always done things as well as we should have, but I'm convinced from what I've seen that the programs have been in the interests of the United States, probably some of the best. When you consider that the money we spent every year on oral rehydration in Bangladesh, that probably wouldn't have bought one bomber or the avionics for a fighter plane. Look what it's done in the world. You can waste a few bucks when you've got big-time impact from what you do.

Q: You're implying you don't need large sums to have an impact.

SULLIVAN: I don't think you need large sums. There's a lot of people who would like to get back into funding big electrical systems and schemes. I consider that dumb money. Anything poured into cement is dumb money. You ought to train people, provide them with technical assistance...to a certain extent that's what we do at DA, and maybe I'm prejudiced that way, I'll have to give that disclaimer. But I felt that way before.

I don't think the amount of money has that much to do with it. I think that our intelligence and our ability to engage the people of the country in which we're working, and to convince them that what we've got to sell is worth having, and then the money comes. It's ideas. You need some money. But in the United States today, the amount of money we provide, even when I was Assistant Administrator, the only country where we really swung a big stick in terms of the percentage of our contribution to the national income was in Bangladesh, we were putting in about twenty percent of its foreign exchange. Indonesia we were down to five percent, something like that. You're not making any difference with your money, so you've got to make a difference with your intelligence, with your brain, with the kind of people you put in and what kinds of programs they do.

I think a life spent in development in this day and age in the United States is well spent. I haven't done what you did, Haven. Many people did a lot more. I'm just one of these sort of inners and outers. Those are lives well spent. AID people did good things. AID people can be damn proud of what they did. And I think this oral history may bring some of that to light.

Q: Well that's a great interview and fascinating discussion.

SULLIVAN: Well, I appreciate it.

End of interview