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KEY WORDS

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agricultural universities

Agricultural Credit Project
agricultural production loans
agricultural planning
agricultural sector program
agricultural extension
agricultural policy
Agricultural Training Project
Agriculture Planning and Analysis
Ahmadu Bello University
Arusha Area Development
Aswan Dam
bean storage and marketing
biotechnology
Blacksmith Project
Botswana
buffer stock
collectivization
Consortium for The Study of Nigerian Rural Development
cooperative association
demobilized military
education
education sector program
Egypt
Egyptian irrigation system
Ethiopia
Farmer's Home Administration
fish pond loan
health sector program
Ife University
India
Indonesia
infrastructure
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INTERVIEW

Q: You served with AID for how many years?

WINTER: I joined AID in 1967 and I retired in 1994. So that was about 27 years.

Early years and education

Q: Then let's start off, Marc, with some observations about where you grew up, your education. And then we might talk a little bit about your early work experience. All with the thought about how you became interested in international development.

WINTER: I was born in Minnesota and grew up on a farm in Minnesota. Until I went to the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis/St. Paul in 1959, my life and interests basically revolved around the farm and life in a rural area. At the University I initially

planned to study Fish and Wildlife Management. However, I soon learned that there were very few job opportunities in Fish and Wildlife Management and I switched to Agricultural Economics. My advisor in the Agricultural Economics area had spent several years in the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the food consumption field. She had been involved in work on international food supply issues because of the USDA's strong interests in world food supplies and consumption patterns as they affected U.S. exports and imports. Because my advisor put agricultural issues in an international context I became interested in international issues.

Q: She was a member of the faculty there?

WINTER: Yes. She was a member of the faculty. With her guidance, I majored in Agricultural Business Administration. After graduating in the spring of 1963, I came to Washington as a summer intern in the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Foreign Agricultural Service. I spent three months in the Foreign Agricultural Service. Because I was in the sugar and tropical products division, the work was basically reporting on commodities and products that were being grown around the world. That meant that I was reading and looking at materials from all these different countries-many of which I knew little about.

In the fall of 1993 I went back to the University of Minnesota for a Master's Degree in Agricultural Economics. As I started the Master's Degree program I was uncertain about what to do next. I could go on and get a Ph.D., but I was also interested in the Peace Corps. I talked to various people including a fellow student who was joining the Peace Corps to go to Colombia and an individual who had been in one of the earliest Peace Corps groups. I finally decided that the Peace Corps was my preferred choice and I applied. I was accepted, and after finishing my Master's Degree in December, 1994 I entered Peace Corps training. I was part of a Rural Development Group that trained at the University of New Mexico for three months before we went to Peru in May, 1965.

Joined the Peace Corps in Peru - 1965-1967

Q: What did you do?

WINTER: In Peru I worked in the regional office of the agrarian reform program in the mountains of Peru. The office was in a small city called Tarma. Another Peace Corps Volunteer and I were the economics office there. We worked with Peruvian agronomists and veterinarians doing a variety of economic development projects and programs as well as collecting a great deal of economic, socio-cultural and technical information.

For example, we worked on land reform which meant the distribution of land to Indian villages. We analyzed the feasibility of a slaughterhouse; the feasibility of fruit juice processing; the feasibility of settlement in the tropical regions. We developed a system of loans for potato production; loans for guinea pig production; loans for poultry and egg production. I worked with an agricultural marketing and supply cooperative to expand its

services to members. In short, I worked on a variety of activities that were very development oriented. I saw how programs and projects could have an impact on the lives of people. I remember a loan to a small chicken producer who over a year and a half period increased his flock from fifty chickens to 2,000. There were other successes where the lives of people really did improve as a result of technical assistance and the infusion of credit, and some failures where for one reason or another the assistance didn't have much effect.

But my Peace Corps assignment was coming to an end. At that time, I was saying, "What am I going to do next." I seemed to have at least one option. I could go back to school because I knew my advisor was still at the University of Minnesota and would help me get into a Ph.D. program somewhere. However, I had generally enjoyed my experience in the Peace Corps and I was interested in continuing to work in an international setting. Fortunately, the Peace Corps regularly supplied a "green sheet" of post Peace Corps opportunities. I remember being interested in three of the opportunities that were described in one or more of the "green sheets". One was with the USDA for provincial agricultural advisor positions in Vietnam. AID had an advertisement about their Junior Officer Training program and there was a non-governmental group that was also looking for agriculturalists to go to Vietnam.

I mailed off applications and received positive responses from two-AID and the NGO.

USDA said I didn't have enough experience to go to Vietnam. I followed up with AID and, after I had returned from Peru in June, 1997, I came to Washington for an interview.

After the interview AID said, "We'd like to have you come and work for us."

Interestingly, although I had not applied, the USDA then also offered me a job as a Food for Peace Officer in India. **Joined USAID and assigned to USAID/Nigeria - 1968-1971**

Q: But you entered AID through the Junior Officer Training Program?

WINTER: Yes, that's right I entered through the Junior Officer Training Program.

Q: Did you have to take an exam or a test?

WINTER: No. I didn't. I completed several forms as part of the application and came to Washington for an interview. The interview panel, I have to admit, seemed to be stacked in my favor. I don't know if it was deliberate or accidental, but of the four people interviewing me three were from the state of Minnesota. I don't think that hurt my chances. Well, then in the fall of 1967 I started with AID after...

Q: With the IDI program?

WINTER: It was pre-IDI. It was JOT at that time. Before IDI. I came to Washington in October, 1997 and entered the training program. Before joining the program I had been asked me if I wanted to go to Ghana or Nigeria. I said, "Nigeria", not because I knew a

great deal about the two countries, but I had done a little reading and thought that Nigeria would be more interesting. It also sounded like it had a larger AID program.

Q: Did you have any training or orientation?

WINTER: Yes, I was here in Washington from October through February. I was supposed to stay a little longer in Washington, but the mission and the agricultural person I was working with at the time - Jim Emerson- suggested that maybe I should go out to Lagos. So my training in Washington was cut a little short and I went to Nigeria.

Q: What year was this?

WINTER: It was February of 1968 that I arrived in Nigeria. I spent the next two years and five months there.

Q: Where were you assigned?

WINTER: I was assigned to the Agricultural Division.

Q: In Lagos?

WINTER: In Lagos. But I was required to rotate to different offices as part of the training program. After an introductory period in the Agriculture Division, for the next six or seven months I rotated. During those rotations the Agricultural Division Staff were always trying to get me to come back. I remember them saying "although you're going to go to the program office you've got to keep that as short as you can because we want you back here." They made me feel like I was really an important part of the team. At the time...

Q: What kind of work did they give you initially to do?

WINTER: Initially in the Agriculture Division, after a short period of reading and attending meetings, I started writing and editing materials being prepared for various purposes. This mushroomed as the Head of the Agricultural Division quickly realized that I could write and re-write and edit and make materials quite readable. I ended up circulating around and working with different members of the agricultural staff on reports, proposals and internal evaluations as well as reviewing documents that were being sent to other offices in the Mission. Russell Bierman was my direct supervisor for much of the time. He was a real stickler for detail which was good.

But after about a year or so they made me project manager for a credit project in western Nigeria which enable me to start to learn how to manage projects. At the time the program in Nigeria was very broad and had...

Q: Give us a little bit of the context of which you were working in terms of the Nigeria situation and the program.

WINTER: The Biafran War was still on when I arrived in Nigeria. As a result, the programs in Eastern Nigeria had been cancelled. One of the issues was how do we clean-up what had been started? We had Nigerians in the US that couldn't return because they were from the east. We had projects and we had contractors that were supposed to do things and they hadn't managed to complete them. Terminating projects and people, getting reports written, wrapping up the small and large details required a great deal of effort.

Nevertheless, even without the program in the East, AID/Nigeria had a tremendous agricultural program in the sense that there were projects in everything: agricultural research including rubber, cocoa, maize and fisheries production, agricultural extension, soil conservation, range management, livestock development, agricultural planning, agricultural credit. You know it was just this great...

Q: Ag universities?

WINTER: Yes, there were programs to develop several agricultural universities including Ahmadou Bello University being assisted by Kansas State University and Ife University with the University of Wisconsin. To manage this portfolio of projects, there was an agricultural staff of ten or eleven people, each with fifteen to twenty years experience from around the world. I was undoubtedly the youngest person in the office by twenty years.

For me, the program in Nigeria provided a great opportunity to see the range and types of activities that AID was involved in and how we thought they should work and would contribute to economic development. And, as you probably know, some of those activities in Nigeria, and I think that was particularly true of the university development program, were trying to replicate a model that had, in effect, come from India. There was a feeling that we should be able to transfer the U.S. land grant model as it had been successfully started in India to Nigeria.

Q: That was some of the views that some of your colleagues were expressing?

WINTER: Yes. It wasn't perhaps the driving argument for the program, but you could see that is what happened. It is clearer to me in hindsight than at the time because I didn't know what was happening in India. But they came to Nigeria...

Q: Some of the people you were working with had been in India?

WINTER: Exactly. And of course we found later that conditions weren't quite the same in Nigeria. Some of the factors that existed in India didn't yet exist in Nigeria.

Q: Like what?

WINTER: The infrastructure. Some of the communications links, the pool of manpower. The base just wasn't the same. So when we tried implement university development programs like we had in India it didn't work as easily or as quickly. And secondly, the political divisions within Nigeria probably had an effect: the strong regional governments in the north, the west, the east created complexities for everything we did, particularly trying to do things on a national basis.

I remember when I first came to Nigeria, there was no Minister of Agriculture for the country. We had regional programs and regional offices. There was no real federal level. When the first minister was appointed, what could he do? It was hard to determine what he did and why we had to work with him because he had no resources. He was by himself in a tiny office.

Q: It was a federal ministry?

WINTER: Yes, but it seemingly had no real power over anything. It didn't have any budget nor staff. The Federal aspect of the program started to change when I was there but not much really happened. Undoubtedly the Biafran war was a major reason that change came slowly.

Q: Let's talk about your agricultural credit project first and then go into some of the other things.

WINTER: Okay. It was a classic credit project involving the U.S. Farmer's Home Administration. There was a technical assistance team of four or five Americans based in Western Nigeria. The project was an attempt to put in place a system that looked like our system here.

Q: Was there a credit institution to begin with?

WINTER: Yes. I believe it was called the Western Nigeria Agricultural Credit Corporation. The head office was in Ibadan and there were branches in several cities throughout the region. The idea was to make this organization efficient and able to lend small amounts of money at reasonable rates to small farmers. Our credit team was out there working side-by-side with the Nigerian staff in these offices. While I remember this side-by-side relationship as being very positive, I also remember it as bringing to my attention a problem that I think continues in one form or another to this day - the time counterparts are able to spend with technical assistance staff.

In Nigeria, one of the earliest complaints was that the staff the technical assistance team was working with spent so much time away from the office. They weren't there: what were they doing? Well, perhaps some of the time the Nigerian staff weren't doing what they should have been doing, but the biggest problem was the need to go to Ibadan for

everything-to get paid you had to go to Ibadan, any personnel action required a trip to Ibadan, there were often special meetings in Ibadan. Each trip, by the time you left and returned, consumed most of a day. The Americans would be very frustrated at times saying, well, "We were going to do this today but my counterpart had to go to Ibadan because there was a staff meeting or to pick up some forms."

I remember trying to discuss the problem with the Western Agricultural Credit Corporation management. "Isn't there a way we can reduce the time staff are away from their job site?" Of course at the time they couldn't see a way to make any changes. They couldn't or didn't want to transfer money to the local banks. They said staff had to sign for their salaries and communications links were such that when things needed to be done, staff had to come into Ibadan. In other countries and other projects, the reasons may have differed but the result was the same - U.S. technical assistance personnel unable to do as much as they would have been able to because the counterpart staff wasn't available.

But getting back to Nigeria, we were pleased because of the volume of agricultural credit going through the system. And we were not capitalizing the system per se.

Q: You were just providing technical assistance?

WINTER: We were providing technical assistance, training and a very limited amount of equipment. But we were having an impact of a modest sort.

Q: In what way? What kind of projects were your supporting?

WINTER: Basically the Corporation provided agricultural production loans. Funds were being lent for cash crops like cocoa and palm oil as well as for food crops like corn and cassava. I remember some loans for poultry and even a fish pond loan. The people who received the loans, and I did go out and interview a few farmers, were very appreciative. Of course they always complained about the time it took to get a loan, but they would also acknowledge that the loan allowed them to increase their production or income. So they felt they were better off and were very satisfied.

Q: What were some of the changes the technical assistance people were trying to introduce to work better? The volume went up. There must have been something to improve the system?

WINTER: Right. They were trying to simplify the system. Trying to simplify the basic procedural requirements: to make it so farmers didn't have to spend so much time on the application process and thus to shorten the time between the application and when the loan was actually made. The review process was simplified and standardized. Part of the reason was to ensure consistency among offices because one of the problems identified was that whenever there was any movement of staff, they didn't fit in very quickly in their new position because they either had to learn a slightly new system or they would try to bring in the slightly different system they had been using. So there was a lot of training.

Q: People were receptive to the reform?

WINTER: Yes, very much so. The relationships at that time with the host country personnel were really exceptional. My perception was that everyone really wanted to see things happen. Both Nigerian and American staff really wanted change to occur and you know, in many ways they lived under more difficult conditions than anyone would consider now and people didn't seem to mind. The Americans lived in cities that were not small but...

Q: They were not in Ibadan? They were out in the country?

WINTER: Except for the Chief of Party, the technical assistance advisors were out in places like Abeokuta. They lived there. There would usually be a small group of Westerners in the town -a missionary or two, somebody else doing something for some other international organization. But they...

Q: These people were from what organizations?

WINTER: The USAID-funded staff were from the Farmer's Home Administration.

Q: So they were under a PASA?

WINTER: Yes. It was a PASA arrangement with USAID paying for most costs but with the housing and basic furnishings provided by the Nigerian government. It was standard, Nigerian government-built housing into which AID would put in the additional refrigerator or water heater. I remember we had to put up water tanks in some locations because there were insufficient water supplies. But the advisors really were field people, excellent technical field people.

Q: Were they essentially operating staff or were they doing mostly training?

WINTER: They were really the advisors to the head of the regional branch offices. In that role they did a lot of on-the-job as well as more formal training. As I recall, they had come generally from FHA branch offices within the US. They were not headquarters type staff. They were really accustomed to talking and interacting with farmers in making loans and so that was....

Q: Was that a subsidized credit program?

WINTER: It was subsidized because the loan volume and the interest rates charged did not cover all the operating costs. But it was not that the interest rates were particularly low. They were a little bit lower than bank rates. So there was an element of subsidy provided by the Nigerian government.

It didn't occur to me at the time that the subsidy issue was a serious problem. I knew the program required one to get started and I held the view that agricultural credit programs required special assistance.

Q: At that time you weren't concerned about whether this would be sustainable or not?

WINTER: Yes, we were concerned with sustainability but more in terms of trained personnel, systems, operating procedures, etc. Financial sustainability was not the biggest issue. Although it was discussed and the need for all costs to be covered eventually when the loan volume increased was recognized. The plan was that when the loan volume increased to a certain level all the costs would be covered.

At that time inflation was relatively low. Interest rates were somewhat stable. I think what happened later is that inflation sky-rocketed. Interest rates remained the same and the de-capitalization of lending institutions became a serious problem. For us it was a problem that seemed manageable and which would be solved in the near-term.

Q: One of the other issues with subsidies is that the loans don't go to the right people. You get the better off people rather than to the poor. Was that an issue then?

WINTER: No. I don't recall that being an issue, although I do know they made some very small loans.

Q: What was small? What do you mean by small?

WINTER: As I recall some loans were for a \$100.00 or less. So they were small. Compared to per capita incomes I guess maybe they were quite large, but in absolute terms they were relatively small loans.

Q: What was the higher side?

WINTER: I only remember the fish pond loan as being fairly sizeable and I think that was \$5,000.00. I remember that because I did a special feasibility study to see whether the fish production out of such pond could cover operating costs and pay off a loan. The analysis indicated that loan repayment was possible under a reasonable set of assumptions.

Q: Were there any special issues, major issues that you had to deal with during that time?

WINTER: I don't remember any special issues. I think we dealt with the issues as they came up.

Q: Did you think the project could carry forward? I guess the inflation factor...?

WINTER: As long as I was there, it still hadn't become a big problem for us.

Q: Have you had any opportunity to know what happened to the project over time?

WINTER: No. I have not. I don't think the organization exists today, but I don't know if it is defunct, currently built into another organization or has evolved into something else. I know it doesn't exist under its old name. But that project ended after I left, so...

Q: How long a project was it?

WINTER: It was originally a four to five year project.

Q: Presumably at the end of four or five years it was supposed to carry on itself?

WINTER: Right. I think at the time we felt we were moving toward that target and the only issue was the volume of loans. We thought they were doing a reasonable job of loan collection, they had reasonable operating procedures and operating costs were not excessive.

Q: Well, now. What were some of the other things you were involved with in the Ag office?

WINTER: In addition to the agricultural credit project, I was later assigned another project called Agricultural Planning which was a new project.

Before that, to go back to AID documentation, I drafted the first agricultural project papers in Nigeria, the "PROPS" they were called. Prior to 1968 or 1969 project papers weren't required. They had done project documents, but they weren't project papers. When the new format was introduced I was tasked in our office with doing the first "props". The first one I did was for the Agricultural Credit Project. We needed them for all the projects so I ended up doing several others with members of the agricultural staff just to get them done.

Then I was assigned the responsibility for developing a new agricultural planning project. We were going to work with the FAO and support agricultural planners in four regions - one in the west, one in the mid-west, one in the northeast and one in the northwest. It was regional since the division of Nigeria into states had not yet occurred. Before implementation started, however, we were dealing with State structures and we ended up with planners in five states. We put people there to work with the ministries of agriculture-they were all agricultural planners.

Q: These were all new ministries of agriculture in some respects?

WINTER: Right. It was a great opportunity and people seemed to be eager to work with us in agricultural planning area. We were able to recruit some very experienced, direct-

hire staff for these positions. They were not contract people. So we had put these agricultural planners...

Q: How many locations?

WINTER: Five. Ibadan, Kaduna, Jos, Sokoto...

Q: Enugu?

WINTER: No. We never got to the east with a planner, but we placed one in Maiduguri in the northeast.

Q: Were you in the mid-west?

WINTER: We were in the mid-west, but we didn't have a planner in the mid-west. We had other projects in the mid-west. I worked a little bit on some rubber and some cocoa research activities. We only had planners in the states I indicated. I don't recall exactly why we didn't have a planner in the mid-west region. I suspect it was a matter of interest on the part of the Ministry there.

Q: What were these people supposed to do?

WINTER: Advise the Ministry of Agriculture on whatever plans were being developed. And of course at that time all the ministries were expected to be preparing development plans. These advisors were helping formulate the contents of those plans, trying to make sure that the economic rationale for projects and activities were sound and that the plans were not just a package of good ideas.

Q: Were they supposed to be creating planning units in these places or simply just being an advisor?

WINTER: In each case there was an intent to create a planning unit. And we always insisted on a counterpart for the advisor. We also had training funds for staff development. The quality of the counterparts was mixed. I remember in the northeast, we did not have a very solid counterpart. But we always had someone and worked on developing two or three person planning units. They were not big units but, as you've just suggested, in every case we were interested in the institutional development side.

Q: Was the advice of these specialists well received?

WINTER: In general, yes. There were complaints by the U.S. technical advisors that they weren't being listened to like they should have been. But it seemed to me that they wanted to be listened to 100% of the time and they wanted all decisions to be made on their criteria, which was probably not very realistic. The U.S. advisors didn't have to take into account the political considerations that the rest of the ministry did, and the other factors

that came into play in decision-making. And there were variations. Some advisors were more effective than others.

We probably had the least success in the Western State. They seemed to be the most difficult group to work with. A reason may have been that they had some of the best trained people. They also had more people working on agricultural planning so there may have been less need for an advisor.

Q: Were there any particular policy issues that stood out that your people were working on?

WINTER: I don't recall any particular policy issues they were working on. I remember we were always discussing budgets and how much funding should go for this, that or the other program. And whether or not in some regions the focus should be on cash or food crops. That debate partly stemmed from the work done with AID funding by the Consortium for the Study of Nigerian Rural Development. The consortium of US universities and organizations had completed an extensive agricultural analysis resulting in a series of recommendations. We felt that the Nigerians should follow the recommendations and encouraged our policy advisors to use the analysis and recommendations in their work.

The study didn't foresee the coming importance of oil revenues and called for an emphasis on food production in certain regions while also stressing the importance of agricultural cash crops because it anticipated that agriculture would have to be the engine of growth for Nigeria. I remember the mid-belt was where the report said that Nigeria should be really doing more on the food production.

Q: This was led by?

WINTER: Michigan State University with Dr. Glen Johnson as Director of the consortium. Others in the group were Kansas State University, Colorado State University, the University of Wisconsin and I believe the USDA. A very impressive group. In cooperation with a large number of Nigerian organizations and researchers, they completed a tremendous number of background studies and a detailed final report. It was a very thoughtful and analytical document. And I think history has shown that the document was still very relevant as late as the 1980's. When Nigeria had gone through the tremendous oil boom and was having difficulties, they finally implemented some of the recommendations of the report.

Q: Who was the report to or who used it?

WINTER: It was to the federal government of Nigeria, to the Ministry of Economic Development. However, by the early 1970's the oil revenues were removing the need for a focus on agriculture so the report was really not used. And as you know, our programs of assistance closed down in the mid-1970's.

Q: But you say subsequently after the oil boom ended then they realized that agriculture had not kept up?

WINTER: Well yes, but it took ten or fifteen years.

Q: To get the message?

WINTER: Yes. but unfortunately the timing of the recognition was not very good. When the oil revenues were available the investments in agriculture were not made because the sector wasn't considered that important. As revenues declined, there was a realization that the agricultural sector was important but now the resources for investment were no longer available at the same levels.

Q: Was there any more about the mainlines in the recommendation in that report that stood out in your mind?

WINTER: No. I'll have to admit that I haven't looked at the report for maybe ten years. I remember looking at it in the 1980's because I was reading some ...

Q: When we are finished we may want to get the title of the report and reference it. I don't know if it is in the CDIE library or not.

WINTER: I don't either. I know I have my copy at home.

Q: Well, what other things were you working on? What other activities?

WINTER: At a later stage in Nigeria, I became the Agricultural Program Officer. The Agricultural Division had its own program officer located in the agricultural office. I occupied that position for awhile. I was also the Agricultural Economist for a short period. As the Agricultural Program Officer, I worked on everything including rubber research, range management and soil conservation. We worked on planning the future of these activities or their phase-out.

The phase-out planning reflected a tremendous reduction in field staff. As I recall, the reduction was driven basically by budget and program priorities. There was only so much money and we needed to reduce the program and agriculture had to bear its share. So while at one time we had 140 direct hire and contract agricultural staff in the field, it rapidly went down to ninety. Activities just ended or were ending and they were not continued...

Q: Even direct hire staff?

WINTER: Direct hire and some contract staff. We had quite a number of direct hire staff in field, advisory positions and they were...

Q: Did this include university projects too?

WINTER: Most definitely. They were cut back or the projects that were ending were not continued. I remember a project...this wasn't a university development project...called the Agricultural Training Project with the University of Wisconsin as the contractor. The project worked in the Western Region with the government organization operating the schools and institutes that provided certificate and diploma level personnel for the agricultural extension system. I remember that project shrinking from fourteen people to four over a few months. The program at the University of Ife was cut substantially. The agricultural extension programs where we had direct-hire extension advisors in each region were curtailed. We were consolidating and shrinking most everywhere.

Q: Did you have the feeling that this was premature? That people weren't getting a chance to finish the things they were doing? Or had things gone as far as they could go?

WINTER: In most areas, I didn't think it was premature. I really can't explain why. I probably wasn't in a position where that was something I was asked to think about. I do recall a maize research program in the Western State that I thought we shouldn't be eliminating the advisors because they had just developed several new varieties. The varieties weren't quite ready for release but others thought the Nigerians could carry on.

Q: Were there other projects that you worked with?

WINTER: Well, as I said, I was the project manager for agricultural planning and agricultural credit. I also worked on an evaluation of soil conservation activities which led to a reduction of the program because the economic analysis of several activities indicated that the benefits did not cover the costs. The activities were supposed to be demonstrations but they weren't serving as demonstrations since they couldn't be replicated and we couldn't show that they were economic. The activities were just too expensive and required heavy equipment that wasn't available.

Q: Did you come up with an alternative?

WINTER: Well, we came up with a restructured project that reduced the high-cost, heavy equipment aspects of the program. They were impressive activities, but we scaled it back and put more emphasis on training and institutional development as opposed to actual hands-on field work.

Q: Was there a change in technology that you were up against?

WINTER: We were saying that we had to go to something that was lower cost. We had to think of new ways of doing some of these things that were not as expensive.

Q: Can you give any examples at all?

WINTER: Well, yes. Moving less earth, constructing smaller structures, putting more emphasis on planting grasses and managing the cultivation practices to prevent soil erosion. Just trying to get people to plant on the contour and to put in grass strips.

At times we didn't have really good, appropriate technologies to replace the ones being used. We started activities based on our experience and models used in the U.S. and they weren't always appropriate. Sometimes our technology was just too expensive and something that wasn't going to work. And I think I saw this later in my career as well where we continued to do some things that really were just not sustainable or replicable. As a demonstration the technology might have been fine, but people could not utilize it in their "real world".

I also spent some time, when the Biafran war was over, on the issue of what to do with the demobilized military. All these people had been fighting. Now what do we do with these people? I suppose I spent about three months examining alternatives. And these alternatives were nothing startling. Because there was a history of land resettlement schemes in Nigeria, I looked at making ex-soldiers into better farmers through training and sending them back to their home villages with some resources so they could make a living. I examined the feasibility of a rural road construction program using demobilized military. I reviewed training programs of various types, assuming ex-soldiers were not going to go back to the farm. And since the ex-soldiers were not all very well educated, what types of training would be needed to bring them up to a level where they could function in different jobs in the cities.

I spent most of my time looking at facilities, talking to people and developing plans and recommendations that were fed into the system. The only possibility I examined that I think they ever really tried to implement, because they had on-going programs, was the land resettlement scheme which I had concluded was not really very viable because it was too costly and the ex-soldiers were not likely to remain on the schemes. And I don't think they expanded it. The Nigerians did construct some rural roads through the military, but I do not know if they ever used demobilized soldiers.

I also visited eastern Nigeria to see what we might do to restart an agricultural assistance program there. I came up with some fairly simple suggestions to help get agriculture moving again. For example, I recommended distributing oil palm and cocoa seedlings from the mid-west to allow farmers to get back into production. And another small program I recommended was putting small palm oil presses back in operation. These were modest programs, because as others have probably mentioned, after the war there was not an immediate interest on the part of the Nigerian government in seeing large amounts of resources going to the eastern region. So the programs had to be very modest. Because this was near the end of my time in Nigeria, I don't know the final impact of these programs but I know they were implemented.

Q: To step back a little bit, what was your view of the contribution, the impact of the agriculture program in Nigeria at that time? What do you think worked and what didn't? What might have lasted?

WINTER: At the time I generally believed that the U.S. had a great deal of relevant and appropriate experience in all these areas that we could in effect transplant to Nigeria. I also thought our agricultural system was a model that would work in Nigeria. And I think that was what most if not all of the agricultural staff also felt. When you looked at the extension program or the soil conservation program or even our livestock development program and the types of activities we funded, it appeared that we were trying to replicate the systems, institutions and organizations that we have here.

Q: Was that a good idea?

WINTER: With hindsight, I think it was not always a good idea. In some cases we were trying to put in place systems and programs that were simply too complicated, too sophisticated and too expensive. They were not sustainable. But we didn't know it at the time.

Q: I assume some of the Nigerians wanted that.

WINTER: Clearly. We had brought hundreds to the U.S. for training and that is what they had seen. Also I think educated Nigerians in general at that time believed development depended on the utilization of western technology.

Q: They didn't want the rinky-dink little stuff, they wanted...

WINTER: Oh, absolutely. We were clearly meeting their expectations and providing what they wanted. We trained tremendous numbers of Nigerians. So there were U.S. trained Nigerians who had been here, saw what we were doing and were comfortable with trying to replicate the systems there. I think we all felt it was the way to go. As I said, in hindsight, it probably wasn't the way in every instance. If we had thought it through a little more...I mean, at the time we didn't have the experience. We didn't know.

Q: What parts of the programs had the most significant impact and lasting results?

WINTER: I think the University programs. The Universities we helped establish are still there. They are still functioning. They are still turning out trained people and I think that is highly significant and important to the continued growth and development of Nigeria. Without our assistance, there is a real question of whether Ahmadou Bello University, of whether the University of Ife or the University of Nigeria-whether those universities would have really developed into very much.

Q: Do you think they would fall under pretty much the same philosophy concept program?

WINTER: As I understand it, yes. Ahmadou Bello is still trying to implement the U.S., three-pronged land grant system. I do not believe the British tradition included extension, and that research-teaching approach is the alternative. With a British educational system as the general model, the extension portion, the community service part was the hardest element to install. But I think where we had the large projects and...

Q: And that did eventually take hold?

WINTER: Well, it was taking hold. And I think it, again, we have never managed to create the system we have here, which is a pretty integrated system. But I know in Ahmadou Bello a few years ago, they were still trying to do follow a U.S. model. Now how effective they were I haven't been back to see.

Q: Apart from the University projects were there any other projects or did all that just evaporate into the results? Or that you think were something...

WINTER: Again, I think you can look at some research projects and see organizations and programs that have continued. A base was created, people were trained and the programs have continued. It hasn't evaporated. But again, it is hard to say what we expected to have in 20-30 years or what we really expect to leave behind. Also what we expected to leave behind in 1972 or 1975 may not be fully relevant today. To me the fact that you can't find something today in the precise form we left it, doesn't mean it wasn't appropriate at the time or for the intervening ten or fifteen years. I would hope we did establish dynamic programs that were able to adapt and evolve as needs and technology changed.

It is easy to look back and say, "Maybe we could have done something differently or more effectively." Maybe for reasons of the time we couldn't have. I don't know. It is hard to see how for example, some of our shorter term activities probably like a planning unit could have been done differently to have a greater long-term impact. In fact I don't think we really know what impact such programs had. We put in one person. We provided some training.

Q: But they were dealing with the issues of the time.

WINTER: That's right. And I think they were training people who probably have had an impact. So I still come back to the people you work with...

Q: How did you find Nigerians to work with?

WINTER: I found them exceptional. They were smart, articulate, willing to really be engaged and often very capable. In addition, I found that Nigerians were hospitable and fun. I know that Nigerians subsequently gained a reputation as being over-aggressive. I thought that they were simply highly confident and prepared to argue with you, but

willing to listen as well. In general, I found them to be very easy to work with. And I think that was generally the experience of the American advisors.

Q: What was your experience within the AID Mission? How did that function?

WINTER: It was a large organization. When I arrived in 1988 there was the headquarters in Lagos and regional offices in Ibadan and Kaduna. In Lagos USAID had its own building - the Mother Cat Building I believe it was called. I don't remember how many direct-hire staff there were in Lagos, but I'm certain it must have been 50-60 or even more. Morale, as I remember, was good and there were USAID softball and volleyball teams and picnics and other social events.

Although I had worked in a large Peruvian organization, the AID Mission was my real introduction to a bureaucracy. At the start I didn't understand the competition for resources that always went on between different parts of the organization. And I remember how smart and articulate the staff seemed to be. People like Mike Adler, who was the Director for most of the time I was there, and Vernon Johnson who was the Deputy. In other offices I remember Bill Wheeler, Bob Huesmann, Dennis Barrett, and Lois Richards in the Program Office; Don Gardner and Bob Berg in capital projects; the list could go on. In short it seemed to be a very well-run Mission with an exceptionally capable staff.

Q: Did you have much contact with the Embassy at all?

WINTER: I didn't. A little bit with the Agricultural Attaché, but that was about all.

Q: Any particular view that the attaché was trying to put forward?

WINTER: Not that I recall. There were some PL 480 issues during the Biafran War, but relief activities were handled by a different group. So I don't remember that we were at odds in any way.

Q: Anything else about your Nigeria time? You can add it later if you like.

WINTER: No, I think that kind of wraps it up. It was very enjoyable and a good start to my AID career.

Q: So what happened after that?

Transfer to USAID/Korea - 1970-1972

WINTER: After Nigeria I moved on to Korea. I left Nigeria in August of 1970 and arrived in Korea in late November of 1970. The move was a real transition in many ways, climatically, the size of the agricultural staff - it was much smaller, and the presence of a

strong, federal Ministry of Agriculture. The Mission itself was quite large, but smaller than Nigeria.

Mike Adler arrived shortly after I did and Dennis Barrett came a little later. Fran Jones, whom I had met while he was in the Africa Bureau, was the Agricultural Officer. This was the start of a pattern that repeated itself again and again. A new post did not mean all new people, but reestablishing old acquaintances. AID often seemed like a large family.

On the surface the program in Korea looked similar to the one in Nigeria. There were programs in fisheries and agricultural planning, some extension staff, a small research program. So you had again, a range of agricultural development activities. When Fran Jones contracted with Michigan State to do an agricultural sector analysis, it really seemed like we were doing very similar things, although in a completely different environment.

Q: What was the setting at that time?

WINTER: Well, in the early 1970's Korea was not yet an Asian tiger. Chung Hee Park was still the president but the country was still struggling economically. Agriculture was important with rice self-sufficiency a prime objective. The county was very stable with disciplined people who worked, very hard.

This discipline and willingness to put in the extra time and effort to get the job done was one of the things that was immediately impressive. I remember preparing for a meeting between the AID Director and the Korean Minister of Agriculture to be held on a Monday morning. Late on the preceding Friday afternoon we identified for our Korean colleagues in the Ministry planning office several issues that the AID Director was going to raise. On Monday morning we had the meeting and the Korean Minister of Agriculture did an excellent job of responding to the issues with clear explanations and proposals. When we complimented our Ministry counterparts, they said they had spent the whole weekend, sleeping just four hours, making sure their Minister had the information he needed to be prepared for the meeting. They had to get this right because our program was highly important to them and our bilateral relationship was the most important one they had.

Q: This was the central planning office? Not the agricultural planning office?

WINTER: No, it was the Ag planning office.

Q: What was their approach to agricultural development at that time?

WINTER: Their approach was directive with very heavy government involvement. Government or government directed organizations such as the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation were responsible for a wide variety of services for the agricultural sector. They formulated plans and implemented the plans. Interestingly, although industrialization was recognized as the path to development, they were still willing to

invest in agriculture. They were not prepared to neglect or simply tax agriculture to enable industrialization to proceed more rapidly. So you saw an expansion of agricultural programs even though the rural population was declining.

This concern manifested itself in the form of land consolidation programs, the expansion of mechanization through new power tillers, credit programs that supplied inputs when needed and a range of other activities. There were loans to improve rural housing and funding to improve the irrigation network. For AID it was a very positive environment with a strong central ministry with an excellent local presence throughout the country. In contrast to Nigeria, you really had a center to work with and there were active programs in almost every area.

I remember when adequate storage was identified as a problem for many farmers - storage both for fertilizer going out in the spring and for the rice and other crops coming in, in the fall. It was decided that AID was going to work with the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation on a program to help them with storage construction. We would make a loan and the National Federation would contribute a matching amount. Just as the program was starting, the President, Park Jung Hee, visited a storage facility and said, "storage is a problem. We have got to solve this problem".

So suddenly our jointly-financed program to construct 320 warehouses was a top priority for the Koreans. And it went so fast. In our original planning we had said the program was going to take at least eighteen months to complete. The Cooperative Federation staff said "we are going to have these done in a year". And they were.

Not only were the warehouses completed in less time that we thought necessary but the quality was also better than we planned. As part of the procedures we inspected the warehouses to make sure they met agreed-upon standards and were eligible for AID financing on a reimbursement basis. And I can remember the USAID engineer visiting warehouses and saying, "they say these warehouses are costing this much to build. They can't build that building for that cost. It is too well constructed for this amount of money. They are paying more because it is a priority." I'm certain that wasn't always the case but it demonstrates the Korean ability to make things happen quickly and well when they were enthusiastically behind a program.

Q: They used these storage facilities too?

WINTER: A great deal. I visited several and they were using them as intended. The farmers were bringing rice and other crops to be sold or stored and the fertilizer was there for sale. The Cooperative Federation was a well managed group and obviously had political importance as well because of its presence all over the country.

Q: But it had some implementation responsibility too?

WINTER: Oh yes. It was staffed by well trained and well organized professionals and had offices and warehouses all over the country. It was really a farm input and supply cooperative that provided credit and marketing services as well. They were a very enjoyable group to work with and I had that opportunity as the AID Co-Manager of the Project - along with the USAID engineer. It was a very rewarding experience to go out and visit these warehouses and see that they were being well constructed, and see that they were being used and being able to recommend that we reimburse the Federation for our share of the costs of the warehouses constructed.

Q: They were being managed by the cooperative association, right?

WINTER: Yes. An issue at the time was that the NACF was not independent enough. We believed that in a cooperative the members should be the owners and decision-makers. And if you looked at the NACF that's how it was organized. But in practice there was a lot of "top-down" influence exerted by the government so while the farmer-members were the owners of the local activities they didn't have a choice in deciding whether the warehouse would be constructed for them or not.

The local cooperatives were being lent the money to construct the warehouses by the government and that is why as I said, our engineer who examined warehouses said quite often, "This warehouse cannot be constructed for the amount of money the group is borrowing. There is a subsidy being built in here that the government is making available."

But they were very, very efficient. I think generally all the Americans, were very pleased to be working in Korea and with the quality of the people they worked with. It was just satisfying to work with such willing and hard-working people. We had agricultural advisors in the provinces and they were often advisors directly to the Governor on agricultural issues.

Q: Of each of these Provinces?

WINTER: That's right. When I got there we didn't have them in every province any more. But we still had advisors in several provinces. I remember visiting our advisor in Pusan Province who was clearly on the governor's staff and an advisor on more than only agricultural issues.

Q: The governor listened to him?

WINTER: Absolutely. Many of the governors had been military officers at one time and were very accustomed to American advisors. Combined with the fact that many of the leaders had also studied or been trained in the U.S. and you had a situation where skilled American advisors were appreciated and influential.

The continued development of such linkages with the U.S. based on U.S. training was an important part of our program. We had stopped sending Koreans to the U.S. for B.S. degree training but we supported a substantial number of Master's and Ph.D. students each year.

Q: Large numbers?

WINTER: For the Mission as a whole the numbers were quite substantial.

Q: How many are we talking about?

WINTER: In the agricultural area we must have been sending fifteen to twenty Master's Degree candidates off each year with a smaller number of Ph.D. students. For the entire Mission I would estimate that we were sending 70 - 90 per year.

Q: What was the overall scale of the program?

WINTER: I wish I could tell you. I can't remember what the budget was at the time. The Mission had programs in a range of areas and an American staff of 40-55. The assistance and staff levels were declining, however.

Q: But it was fairly large?

WINTER: Yes, it was fairly large. The Mission had programs in a range of areas and an American staff of at least 50-60. There was a real mix of programs including PL 480 which was important enough to warrant a direct-hire staff member or two. From the PL 480 we had considerable amounts of local currency for research grants to Korean researchers, land reclamation, water supply improvement and other rural development activities. We also were dispersing or monitoring "Cooley" loans. It was quite an array of resources. The dollar amounts were not however, at least in the Ag sector, that large.

Q: And then there were regular dollar loans?

WINTER: Yes, there were dollar loans. We had both loan and grants at that time. But as I mentioned, AID had started to phase down the program. The only new activities in the agricultural sector that were undertaken while I was there was the warehouse construction program and the sector study which led to continuing AID assistance in the area of agricultural research..

Q: Whose report was this?

WINTER: It was prepared by College of Agriculture staff from Michigan State University in collaboration with Korean academics and Ministry of Agriculture staff. The report provided recommendations for the Korean Ministry of Agriculture as well as for AID.

Q: What do you think the impact of our program and agricultural involvement? How would you assess it?

WINTER: There is no doubt that our assistance programs had tremendous impact over time. Partially that is a result of the quantity of assistance we provided in a variety of areas and partially the result of the manpower we trained. An analysis of participant training done when I was there showed that ninety-four to ninety-six percent of the Koreans we sent to the US for training came back to Korea. In the agricultural sector the same analysis showed that about 80 percent of all senior staff in the Ministry of Agriculture had been trained in the U.S. on either a long or short term basis. Over time U.S. advisors had obviously done a good job of recommending people for training and then helping them move up in the system.

While AID assistance obviously had an important impact on manpower development, that was not the only area where AID assistance was important. We helped set up the research system that eventually enabled Korea to be self-sufficient in rice with some of the highest yields in the world. We financed several of the fertilizer factories that turned Korea into a fertilizer exporter. The assistance we provided to the cooperative movement was pretty significant in that it wasn't just those warehouses, but earlier we had helped them develop the entire organization via a number of advisors at a national level. That was significant because the organization is still functioning today.

At an early stage AID had also helped establish Suwon Agricultural University, the leading agricultural university in the country. We had financed irrigation systems and roads. I managed a program that funded research proposals in the agricultural area to encourage the development of research skills.

Q: All subjects? Or was there a particular focus to them?

WINTER: There were no restrictions on what could be proposed. But our selection process looked for proposals in new or what we thought were under-researched areas. Not all of the research was significant but some of the studies were of very good quality. For a couple of hundred thousand dollars a year we got quite a bit done.

Q: You said we had been involved with Suwon University. Who was the American counterpart, do you remember?

WINTER: No. I don't, that was before my time. I just know we had been involved there.

Q: It was a self-sustaining operation when you were there?

WINTER: Yes it was. At one time AID had an office in Suwon staffed with one or more direct-hire staff. I believe they had managed the University program and the agricultural research and extension programs.

Q: Any other dimension on the impact of the Agriculture program? I guess you felt it had a fairly fundamental impact on Korean approach to agricultural development and rural development.

WINTER: I believe the AID assistance helped Korea address the issues they were facing. I remember when I was there one of the major agricultural issues was: should Korea strive be self-sufficient in rice? Or should they be growing other crops? At the time there was a feeling it was probably too expensive for Korea to be self-sufficient in rice. That it would be better for them to be importing. The Michigan State Study indicated that more investment in agricultural research was warranted and subsequently, through the research, higher yielding varieties were developed and Korea did become self sufficient in rice.

AID often assisted with the fundamental analysis on key issues and then sometimes assisted with the recommended solution. I remember the issue of livestock. What should be the role of livestock in a country that has only limited land?. And should livestock receive as much attention as it was receiving? And I think again, there was a feeling perhaps that it shouldn't receive as much attention as it was receiving. There were alternative uses for the upland areas such as silk worms or fruit production. In this case, I believe they did put a little less emphasis on livestock. On balance I think the analyses done with AID assistance really did help Korea make the appropriate investment decisions.

Q: There was the issue of industrialization versus rural agriculture. Was that part of it then?

WINTER: It certainly was and that is why I mentioned earlier the continued support provided to the agricultural sector. The Korean government didn't neglect agriculture as they pursued industrialization. One of the interesting conclusions that came out of the Michigan State study was that the migration of people from rural areas to cities represented a capital transfer from the rural to the center. From the rural to the urban. So that while a budget might show that you were spending 10% of your budget on the rural areas the fact that a lot of capital in the form of people was moving to cities means that net expenditures in the rural areas is really much less.

And I think they helped the Agricultural sector argue that compensating the agricultural sector in effect or allowing them to invest in the capital items they needed to replace those people, i.e.: mechanization, inputs, etc., was needed and it wasn't that you were somehow unduly benefitting the agricultural sector. It was not saying that industrialization wasn't important. The transfer of these hard-working, well-trained people from rural areas to the industrial sector required replacement resources back in the rural sector as well. And I think that happened.

Q: Was there any view about stemming the flow to the urban areas and trying to get people to return?

WINTER: There was some talk of providing incentives for people to remain in the rural areas. And they did help upgrade rural housing, for example, But it was also clear that in growth terms that Korea needed to industrialize. They don't have the land to follow an agriculture-led growth strategy. Even in agriculture, if Korea was going to be competitive, some land consolidation, some larger farms, would be necessary. There just wasn't enough land to keep people on the farm and to provide increasing incomes. So, they needed to be investing in industrialization, they should be going full speed ahead. But at the same time they were not ignoring the rural sector which was supporting industrialization with trained people. I believe it was the Michigan State study, I may be wrong, that really put that into terms which were understood and appreciated.

Q: But you said at this time we were phasing down. Was there clear decision to cut with the government knowing that this was happening?

WINTER: Oh, yes. We were phasing down and the Koreans knew that.

Q: What was the Korean reaction to that?

WINTER: Well the Korean reaction, and I am speaking of the people we worked with, was concern. They wanted to have us remain and to provide the types of assistance we were. They were quite comfortable with our programs, at least the operational level. We really had good relations with Ministry of Agriculture staff. They weren't asking us to leave and they weren't trying to have us leave. It was just a budget question and the fact that Korea was doing well or starting to do well.

Organizationally, in some ways they were prepared for us to leave. They had institutions in place staffed by well trained people. The institutions were functioning and providing needed services for the sector. I remember a discussion we had on sustainability and on what our future links with Korean agricultural professionals should be. You could make the case that hands-on American technical advisors were no longer needed, but how do you create those links that go on post heavy involvement? I don't recall that we ever came up with a good solution on how do you do that.

Q: Links with the US?

WINTER: Yes, particularly in agricultural research where we had supported international contact among the scientific community. How do you sustain that some way? One option is to conclude it is up to the Koreans to sustain the linkages. Or assume that the American scientific community will just do it automatically. We had a dialogue with University staff about how sustain interaction. Was there some way that AID...

Q: Once the country quote, "graduates?"

WINTER: Right. Once we phase out the AID program, what happens? Do we just leave? I don't remember that we had a good strategy. And it seemed important that we have one.

The country was going somewhere. Eventually, Korea developed faster than we perhaps expected but the signs were there.

Q: What would you attribute this miracle to in the sense of the 1950's Korea was almost written off as a no hope...couldn't feed itself, etc.

WINTER: I think there were three factors. First, were the people and the priority they placed on education. In Korea education was always important. So you had well trained people willing to work hard. Second, I've always felt strong leadership and stability were important and you had that. Certainly there were some costs in individual freedoms, but it did promote growth, particularly with a leaders who were committed to Korea and the well-being of the people. They were not sending their money off to Switzerland or some place. They were focused on making things better and they had a concern for all the groups. And third, people had confidence in the government. People were not anti-government. They felt government was important in their lives and expected things from government. And the government tried to deliver.

Q: Was there an active private sector in Agriculture?

WINTER: Well, there was an active private sector of a kind. But you would have to say that the largest groups, the cooperatives, were not fully private. On paper the cooperative system was private, but in fact the government had a heavy role in how the system operated. The same with the processing facilities. Most of them were private but the government was there. Usually it was a benevolent government and I guess later on we found it wasn't always so benevolent. There were controls that none of us were aware of.

As I recall, there were a large number of equipment and other input suppliers who were private. The fertilizer factories were owned by the government or partially owned by government, I think in almost every instance. But there were a lot of private businesses in the villages that were supporting, benefitting and marketing agricultural products. So the private sector was important.

Q: Anything else about the Korean experience?

WINTER: Well, I met my wife there and that was probably...and so that brought something away besides just....some memories.

Q: So what happened after that?

New assignment to the USAID Regional Economic Development Support Office in East Africa - 1972-1977

WINTER: After Korea I transferred to the Regional Economic Development Support Office in East Africa or REDSO. REDSO was newly established and an expansion of the

East African Capital Development Office. I was the first agricultural officer. We were located in Nairobi and John Withers was the director.

Q: This was what year now, again?

WINTER: I arrived in Nairobi in December, 1972 and remained about four and a half years until mid-1977. The work in REDSO was very different from what I had been doing because of the regional nature of the office. And the role of the REDSO-the whole time I was there-was constantly being debated. Some of the confusion over REDSO was not surprising. The previous regional office managed capital projects in several countries and consisted of engineers, capital project officers and lawyers. Now we suddenly added some agricultural expertise as well as an economist or two. Simultaneously in Southern Africa the small regional mission in Swaziland started to post staff to most of the countries. So there was a USAID Direct-Hire in Botswana and in Lesotho and so on.

At the same time, there were well-staffed USAID Missions and large programs in Tanzania, Ethiopia and Kenya. When I arrived, there were no Missions in Rwanda, Burundi and Somalia. So, partly there was a need to create a niche and a role for REDSO. I think that over time we were quite successful.

I remember that I arrived in Nairobi and two weeks later I was in Botswana as part of a design team for the Botswana livestock project. That got me started on the project design side. And for the next four and a half years I basically designed new projects and prepared country and project analysis of various kinds. Those country analysis were often related to agricultural issues and many of them were related to AID documentation requirements such as Country Development Strategy Submissions. But I also did analysis of areas like education and health.

I also completed environmental examinations and assessments because Missions and REDSO did not yet have environmental officers. And I think this responsiveness was a reason for the success of REDSO-we really tried to meet mission or country needs. If they needed a rapid analysis of a health program and a health expert wasn't immediately available, we didn't wait but proceeded to do the best job that we could. If more was needed, we would make an extra effort to find someone to do it, but it was surprising how often what we did was enough. It was a fairly enjoyable four and a half years.

Q: Which countries did you work in?

WINTER: While there was a great deal of variation year-to-year in where I worked, over the 4+ years I spent the largest amount of time in Tanzania, mostly on project designs. I also worked a substantial amount on country strategies and project designs in Swaziland and in Lesotho and a more limited amount in Malawi and Botswana. I worked on assessments, evaluations and designs in Ethiopia. In Rwanda I helped prepare the first assistance strategy and the first project to begin implementing that strategy. Later I

worked on additional projects designs there as well as several preliminary project designs in Sudan.

Q: What about Kenya?

WINTER: Yes, I did quite a bit of work in Kenya on sector assessments, preliminary and final project designs and analyzing various agricultural issues. I remember working on agricultural credit, range management, soil conservation, agricultural planning and agricultural marketing. I also worked on rural road development. There was some tension between the Kenya mission and REDSO which at times limited the work, but generally I was able to work around that. Although I did work in Kenya a fair amount, I spent about 60% of my time traveling to other countries. So, the amount of travel was pretty substantial. The constant travel was getting kind of tiring by the end. Tanzania wasn't bad because you could go down and spend a week and fly back to Nairobi for the weekend for less than the cost of per diem in Dar es Salaam.

Q: What is your impression about all that?

WINTER: My impression really depends upon the country.

Q: Right.

WINTER: Tanzania, where I spent a lot of time, had Nyerere who was a special president. I really believed that we were really going to help make Tanzania into a model for Africa. I thought the variety of agricultural activities I worked on were really going to make a difference. The relations with the government were good. These were basically government programs and we were highly optimistic.

Q: What were the programs?

WINTER: Agricultural credit with the Tanzanian Rural Development Bank. Through technical assistance and training we were helping set up and get the bank organized and operating. We even provided some capital to the bank for the credit programs. There was a seed multiplication effort which involved the development of seed multiplication farms as well as varietal improvement activities. A particular focus was maize because that was the major food crop.

I worked on an agricultural research activity. I also remember working on the agricultural elements of the Arusha Area Development Program as part of a larger team. I helped design the livestock development and marketing project which aimed to improve the cattle trekking routes across Tanzania.

I remember the livestock development and marketing project because this was the first time a Project Identification Document or PID had been done in Tanzania. According to the Washington instructions the PIDS were supposed to be very short, simple documents.

So I prepared a PID consisting of the log frame and three pages of narrative. And Washington approved it. But never again were we able to submit something so brief for approval. That was the first and only time. I think because it was the first one people saw in the Mission and in Washington and they didn't know what it was supposed to be. So it was approved.

Q: They had more questions.

WINTER: Yes, the information needed to secure a PID approval expanded rapidly. I simply started doing the whole project paper at the time I prepared the PID. The way it worked operationally was that I or the team would spend 2-3 weeks developing the rough PID or PRP draft in country. If the timing allowed, I would then return to Nairobi to revise the draft and to get what I hoped would be a final draft typed up. I would then bring it back to the AID Mission for a review and to follow-up on the loose ends.

Q: Were you working with the Tanzanians on this?

WINTER: Yes with the Tanzanians and with the Mission. Unfortunately at times in Tanzania, where we had a large USAID staff, we probably didn't work enough with the Tanzanians all the time. There was a tendency to be inward looking and very concerned about satisfying AID requirements. I don't mean to imply that the Mission staff didn't have good contacts and that appropriate Tanzanians were not available. I remember spending a lot of time in the Tanzanian Rural Development Bank working with Tanzanians and an American advisor there -a person that we had brought out on a short term basis. But, in hindsight, too often we did things for the Tanzanians rather than with them.

Going back to my attitude toward Tanzania in general, I really thought that we were going to help Tanzania achieve rapid economic growth. And I guess I persisted in that view probably almost as long as I was in REDSO. Although, towards the end I was starting to wonder if the African socialism that Nyerere espoused was really going to...

Q: What was specifically coming to mind?

WINTER: I was a little uncomfortable with the forced ujamaization of villages, the collectivization. While I could understand the rationale that putting people in villages enabled the provision of services. I had visited many rural areas where the homesites were scattered all over the place there was no way you are going to provide running water and electricity to each site. But, things weren't happening as planned...production wasn't going up. People were not satisfied. Things just weren't happening.

So we were faced with this declining or at best stagnant economy. It was also becoming apparent that the Tanzanians weren't going to be able to continue or sustain the projects we had started.

Corruption wasn't an issue. The state control was starting to become one. I also think that AID was generally starting to get uncomfortable with the size of the program.

Q: What about the other countries? Which other countries?

WINTER: Ethiopia sticks in my mind because I worked on drought-related issues and while Emperor Haile Selassie was there. I remember a Mission strategy meeting on what we should do in land reform because the emperor was not going to live forever and land reform was going to be needed.

Q: This was before the revolution?

WINTER: Yes, the discussion on land reform was before the revolution. However, my most vivid memories are from after the revolution, when the Derg was in power. At that time we were we trying to develop what we called drought-proofing activities.

Q: What was drought proofing?

WINTER: It was trying to put programs in place that would enable people to have enough food even if there was a drought. That meant activities like introducing and making sure that farmers had drought resistant sorghum varieties. Looking at some areas along rivers where irrigation was possible. In general, trying to see what could be done that would reduce the vulnerability of groups living in rural areas and reducing the impact of a drought on people in very remote areas.

As part of the design process, I remember one particular fourteen day fact-finding trip. A team of 6-7 Americans and about the same number of Ethiopians went by 4-wheel drive vehicles from Addis to the far south-western corner of Ethiopia. It took nearly four days to reach the final destination on the Omo River where a number of people had been receiving drought emergency supplies. Early on in the visit we met under a very large tree with 45-50 people, going through two interpreters because we would speak English to the Ethiopian who would speak Amharic to the local person who would translate into the local dialect. We started out sitting in the front with the local group squatting or seated on the ground twenty feet away or so on. Very quickly problems with the drought feeding program started to be expressed. The group started inching forward and seemed very angry because the Ethiopian government had failed to recognize clan differences which resulted in unequal food distributions.

Pretty soon we were surrounded by the group who were speaking loudly and almost seemed threatening. One comment made by a leader of group was that "We don't think you are taking us seriously." We asked "Why do you think that?" "Because you are not writing anything down. And we know that you foreigners always write everything down" he replied. It was true we were not taking notes because we thought that might be intimidating. And then he said, "We know you have to do that, and although we can't write we do remember." So we had to explain why we were not taking notes.

Q: Good point.

WINTER: The interesting end to the story was that suddenly some drops of liquid came down from the tree. The tribal group members looked up and claimed to see a spitting cobra. Everybody scattered. There was a snake up in the tree that we could see but whether it was a spitting cobra we were never certain. Anyway the people scattered and rather than trying to regroup we agreed to meet with the leader later.

Q: Funny story.

WINTER: Based on the trip, we developed several ideas which were implemented only partially because our relations with the government deteriorated.

Q: How did you find the agricultural situation?

WINTER: Oh, not very promising. Lack of infrastructure, over-grazing, no effective input supply system and too many people for the limited land were some of the problems. Ethiopia was a tough place at the time. The Ethiopians were delightful, but Ethiopia was really a difficult place to work and I didn't see how we were going to have much impact. Particularly given the political situation, the real fear of people to say much and the lack of resources. So, I left there remembering how pleasant the Ethiopians were and how difficult it was going to be to accomplish very much.

In Rwanda, when we decided to resume assistance in about 1974 as a reward for a U.N. vote, I was a member of the first AID assessment and design team. We put together the bean storage and marketing project, I think it was called. Beans were an important food crop in Rwanda. The team actually thought we should start with a different project but the Ambassador, Ambassador Fritz, said, "No". He wanted a project that was strictly American and our first choice, a bean multiplication/bean seed improvement project, would have built on an activity supported by the Belgians. So the American project was designed, funded and started.

It was basically a project to build local storage of a type first introduced by the Catholic Relief Services. Starting in a small way, the project went on for several years, had an impact on bean prices and availability and was eventually extended. The strategy of purchasing beans during harvest and selling later seemed to work.

Once it was established that we going to be involved in bean storage and marketing, the primary design issue was whether a government organization should be involved in the implementation. We were all concerned about subsidies, the likelihood of poor management and the possible use of such a program to favor certain groups or individuals in buying and selling beans. But we couldn't identify a viable private group alternative so a government parastatal was the chosen implementor. However, we did specify the use of private buyers to try to add some balance to the project.

Other activities I worked on in Rwanda including a project that was never approved in Washington, the Ruhengeri Watershed Project. The concept was to develop the watershed below the national park which would prevent people from needing to go higher and higher up into the mountains to find productive farm land. In this manner we would both help the agricultural development and preserve the habitat of the mountain gorillas

However, we made a tactical mistake in our PID presentation by identifying the protection of park lands and the mountain gorilla as benefits from the project. In Washington it was labeled as the "Parks Project" and AID did not do parks at that time, at least now in Africa.

Q: We were not very much interested in environment in those days.

WINTER: No, we weren't. So, in my opinion a this good idea was rejected. But I did design an activity in Rwanda that was probably unique in AID annals. This was the blacksmith project. Hand tools for farmers were a problem. There just weren't good supplies or they were very expensive. Which, given Rwanda's location in the center of the continent where everything is so costly to import and export, was understandable.

At the same time there was a considerable amount of scrap iron or scrap metal that local blacksmiths did use to make tools. They basically took car springs and cut them up for tools. However, there weren't enough blacksmiths, there was no system for training blacksmiths and the local blacksmiths that did exist really had only limited skills. So we conceived of a blacksmith program. Totally unique for AID.

The project was approved and we located a French speaking blacksmith from Maine who came for two years. He trained blacksmiths, taught them new techniques in forging and tempering tools, and helped develop a small training facility. Graduates from the training were provided a small kit of tools which included an anvil. I always thought we should have the AID handclasp stamped on the anvil so that centuries from now if someone would uncover one in some remote location they would see the AID handclasp.

The project actually worked very well. The only difficulty was that by increasing the number of blacksmiths and making them efficient, a scarcity of raw materials developed in certain locations. There weren't enough wrecked cars and other scrap metal. I do not know how this problem was overcome.

Q: Did you have sense of the tensions that East Africa was starting to experience at that time?

WINTER: Not really. We were aware of the historical conflicts between the Hutus and the Tutsis. But we thought that had been largely resolved in Rwanda.

Q: So you worked with both and they worked together?

WINTER: Yes. Of course the Rwandans we worked with didn't identify themselves to us as belonging to one tribe or another. And I didn't notice any tension or animosity. I don't know if we were naive or insensitive or if we were there at a period of relative calm.

Q: Anything else on Rwanda?

WINTER: No. I worked on other projects in Rwanda and traveled quite a bit throughout the country, but it was pretty routine.

Q: How did you find the agricultural situation there?

WINTER: Much, perhaps most, of Rwanda has good soils and adequate rainfall. So the agriculture was generally quite productive. Because, as I mentioned before, of Rwanda's location in the center of the African continent, input supplies of all kinds were limited or high cost. This obviously had an impact on production and productivity since the quantities of inputs used were very low. However, in my opinion, the major problem was the amount of land available for the rapidly growing population. They were already farming on hillsides that appeared to be almost vertical. There didn't seem to be much unutilized land that could be put under cultivation to provide employment for more people. Faced with the land shortage, and economic limits on the application of production increasing technologies, I became a strong supporter of family planning as being the only long-run solution to dealing with these problems. We couldn't create more land.

Q: Was there anything else on the REDSO-East Africa bit?

WINTER: No, I don't think so. As I said I worked a little in Sudan but that never led to very much.

Q: Did we cover your work in Kenya itself?

WINTER: Only very briefly. I believe my first major involvement in Kenya was the development of an agricultural sector strategy for AID as part of the DAP process. The Work Bank was very active in Kenya at the time so I used a lot of their analysis and material which I supplemented with other published reports, with meetings and interviews with Kenyan government officials and the staff of other donors and with field visits to various parts of Kenya. I remember that employment was a major issue as well as the relative emphasis that should be placed on cash versus food crops. I don't think the sector strategy I developed was really ever seriously used.

What I remember most in Kenya is a proposed project that was never finalized. Land management and soil conservation were areas of considerable interest to both the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture and AID. This was particularly true for marginal rainfall areas where vegetative cover was often poor and soils were subject to serious erosion when the

rains did come. To address this problem in a particular region, two REDSO staff and Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture staff developed an activity that involved the provision of simple tools to rural residents that would work on conservation activities. In other words, farmers building terraces, water diversions and other soil conservation structures would be provided with hand tools.

Interestingly, the Kenyan government at more senior levels finally said, "No," to the proposed activity because it did include the provision of bulldozers and other heavy earth-moving equipment. We seemed to have run into a bias for more sophisticated technologies than the technologies already being productively employed. There was a feeling that the use of hand tools should not be encouraged. Larger-scale activities with heavy equipment were better. I believe that later a program involving the use of hand tools for soil conservation did go forward but as part of a drought program.

Q: They went ahead with the bulldozers or they didn't go ahead at all?

WINTER: The Ministry had a modest soil conservation program that involved the use of bulldozers. But AID did not support the bulldozer program. AID just took soil conservation off the list of areas where they wanted to be involved.

Another example of differences in approach related to the AID and other donor supported livestock development program in northeast Kenya. As part of the program being designed we were proposing the use of heavy equipment to build watering points, for land clearing and for construction and maintenance of access roads. But we were concerned about the government's ability to maintain the equipment. We were discussing this with a district-level official and he said, I think in seriousness, "that it is easier for me to get a new bulldozer from a new donor than to get my government to provide maintenance for the existing fleet". So he didn't think that this was something that he wanted to focus on because a new bulldozer would be easier to obtain than maintaining the old.

At the same time we found out that the Kenyan construction workers were using road graders for transportation forty miles or so each way in the mornings and evenings because that was the only way they could get to where they were working. You could see that some of these equipment items were not going to last very long because they weren't being used in the way we thought they would be. And this was not unique to Kenya, equipment provision and equipment maintenance were problems I seemed to face in every country I worked in.

Q: How would you characterize the agricultural situation in Kenya? Was it quite promising, or what?

WINTER: Kenya was the first country where I saw a real mix between large commercial farms and smallholder areas. And there were very well endowed areas in terms of soils and rainfall and areas with much less potential. The climatic differences also allowed the production of both tropical and temperate climate crops. I thought at the time that there

was tremendous under-exploited potential in Kenya, although they probably couldn't be self-sufficient in everything. Wheat was a good example. Substantial quantities were produced but given the expanding demand for wheat they wouldn't be able to be self-sufficient.

But there were great opportunities to expand the production of horticultural and vegetable crops. The problem was the market. The Kenyans were flying flowers to Europe but air transport of fruits and vegetables was still being developed. While I was there we really didn't figure out how to get that moving. We were just a little bit too early I guess.

But generally, Kenya was doing fairly well at the time. This was the time of President Kenyatta so it was a very tightly controlled government in many ways.

Q: How did you find working with the Kenyan people?

WINTER: Kenyan people and the Kenyan officials were, compared to my experience in Nigeria, much more reserved and conservative. Establishing social relationships had been relatively easy in Nigeria but it was difficult to establish such relationships with Kenyans. I guess there were just cultural differences. Also as part of a regional office, I really didn't have regular Kenyan counterparts. We usually worked through and with the staff of USAID/Kenya. Another factor as I believe I mentioned, was the tension between REDSO and the Mission that at times was a factor in what we were able to do.

Q: Was that just between personalities or was there something structural in that?

WINTER: I think it was largely personalities. But there was something structural in the sense that it was difficult within a country and within the same building to have separate groups with separate management and different priorities working on many of the same issues. And the Kenya mission was expected to provide the administrative support for all the groups. That had some implications in terms of rules and regulations. I remember a simple problem with travel...obviously the mission director approved all travel for the Kenyan mission staff. He suggested at one time that he approve all travel for REDSO since it was being processed by his staff. The REDSO director of course said, "Wait a minute here, that is unacceptable!" But from the Kenyan Mission Director's point of view these budget, these travel items, were handled by staff under his control. The travel, the financial people are all part of his operation. So he wanted to know what is going on and to feel he had some control over the situation.

Q: Who was the director at that time?

WINTER: Carlos Nelson was the Director of USAID, Kenya. And Hogan, Ed Hogan was the director of REDSO-East Africa.

Q: Did you have any contact with the embassy on any of those functions?

WINTER: Minimal. I had virtually no contact on a business basis with the embassy. I can't even recall working with the embassy on any of these issues.

Q: Any other countries that you want to touch on in the REDSO area?

WINTER: The only other countries I really worked in quite a bit were Swaziland and Lesotho with the OSARC office.

Q: How did that work? What were you doing there?

WINTER: I worked on a couple of things in Swaziland. One was agricultural credit with the Swazi Development Bank. We designed a program of credit for small holders—particularly small holders raising tobacco. I don't think we would do that anymore, but that was the cash crop. It was a very modest project with funding for one advisor, some training, a few commodities and a very small amount of capital for the small holder program. I believe we submitted the project at either \$500,000 or \$750,000. The Washington review of the Project Paper resulted in a recommendation that we increase the level of funding for the project to a million dollars because it seemed like a very sound proposal. I don't think that increases in funding happens very often during the review process.

Q: Did that credit program evolve?

WINTER: Yes, I believe so. However, since I had no implementation responsibilities I lost track of it after a couple of years. I know the advisor arrived and they started providing credit. I did make one field trip to visit some of the small holders who had received credit. And they seemed to be doing well. I remember a tobacco drying shed that had been constructed by a farmer who had received a loan. Nevertheless, as I said, I really didn't follow the program very closely.

I also worked on a cooperative development activity aimed at capitalizing on Swaziland's geographic location to be a supplier of vegetables to the South African market. This was an attempt in a small way to address a concern in Swaziland, and not just in Swaziland but also in Lesotho and to a lesser extent in Botswana, that so many people had to migrate to South Africa on a temporary basis for jobs in the mines or elsewhere.

There was a tremendous interest on AID's part in trying to create employment in Swaziland and Lesotho. So, one of the ideas in Swaziland, because they had an agricultural base and quite substantial agricultural and horticultural production potential was setting up a cooperative to be able to produce and market horticultural products in South Africa.

The project looked good on paper and the Swazis were very enthusiastic. In practice, however, I understand it did not work out very well because they could never organize the production to achieve the volume they needed to market in South Africa on the needed

scale. It was one thing to put together a small quantity of produce but markets in South Africa wanted large quantities on a regular basis. The marketing side didn't work like it was designed to.

Q: Was it something in the culture or the nature of the technology?

WINTER: I think it was in the organization of the cooperative members. It is difficult to organize a group of small holders to market sizeable quantities of a product on a regular basis. There may have been other problems too, but it is just complicated to deal with 100 or 200 or even more small holders to obtain enough of whatever the product. There are also quality and price issues.

Initially it simply didn't work as well as we had expected. I know it was continued for some time and there was a follow-on activity, after I left REDSO, to try to make it work better.

The need for employment underlying the cooperative activity brings to mind a suggestion we once made for Lesotho. At one time REDSO staff was looking at strategy alternatives for the AID program in Lesotho. Given the very limited natural resource base in Lesotho and the fact that so many of the men went off to work in South Africa, I suggested that we focus on providing education and technical training to individuals going to South Africa. This would make them qualified for higher level positions at higher salaries and result in greater remittances back to Lesotho. I thought the return would probably be better than from investing in the agricultural sector.

But I guess it wasn't a politically acceptable idea. So, it never went anywhere after the initial discussions that we had discussing the pros and cons of the idea. For several years I remained convinced, based on what I saw happening in the agricultural sector in Lesotho, that such a strategy made sense in economic terms.

Q: But there weren't any opportunities in the country...

WINTER: Well, it was so difficult. Lesotho is not well endowed with natural resources. The best resource, in my opinion, was the people. It was very difficult to see a good basis for development which did not involve greater linkages with South Africa. Opportunities could perhaps be created, but it was going to be much more difficult, much harder and require much more investment than we were prepared to provide.

Q: Did you get a look at the agricultural strategy that we did undertake there?

WINTER: Oh, yes. I was involved in designing various pieces of the strategy from livestock development to the agricultural farming systems research project. The last project I designed in the region was a farming systems research program aimed at establishing the research base which would enable increase productivity. The contract for the project was awarded after I had left REDSO. I heard that the results were mixed,

partly because of a shortage of personnel. And I don't know what has happened in Lesotho since. I really have not followed Lesotho at all.

Q: Did you have any feel for the OSARC arrangement, the regional approach? Who was the director then?

WINTER: Charles Ward and John Kean were the two directors of OSARC during my time in REDSO. Both were very easy to work with and for. Under their direction, I thought the OSARC arrangement worked fairly well. It seemed to be a reasonable model with the disadvantage of not having very many people in each country. You had one person in Botswana, initially one person in Lesotho, nobody in Malawi and the balance of the staff were in Swaziland. Sometimes the country staff seemed stretched. I guess they felt later that it would be better to have in-country missions of some size. I don't know how large they eventually became because as long as I was in REDSO up until 1977, there were still only one person in Botswana and I believe one in Lesotho or maybe there was two in Lesotho at the time.

Q: What did you conclude about the REDSO approach to supporting programs in a region?

WINTER: I thought that a regional office such as REDSO was quite efficient at providing certain types of services for AID Missions and Offices in the Region. Many Missions and Offices did not have a need for a full-time lawyer, contracting officer, engineer or other specialists. Regional offices were a good way of providing those needed services to the Missions. The REDSOs also provided a ready response capability that could be mobilized quite quickly, usually more quickly than similar support from Washington. However, the REDSOs were also tough on the people involved because they required a great deal of travel. So I think people kind of burned out after a few years. On balance, nevertheless, I was a supporter, and continue to be, of the REDSO and the REDSO approach. The fact that the REDSOs have survived to this day suggests they were and still do fill a need.

Q: Could you in some way give a sense of how you perceived the agricultural situation throughout the region? Since you had a tremendously broad view from Ethiopia down to South Africa. How would you characterize the agriculture problems and issues? Or were they all different?

WINTER: There was tremendous variation in the potential among countries. For example, just in Southern Africa the agricultural potential of low-rainfall Botswana was so different from that of small but much higher-rainfall Swaziland. Tanzania had large areas of well-watered land and even larger areas of un or under utilized land. But they but they weren't getting the necessary system of support services together. Kenya probably had less potential than Tanzania but seemed to be doing a better job of using what they had. There were enormous agricultural development opportunities in Sudan although the size of the country and poor inter-regional links were a constraint. I remember AID providing food relief in Western Sudan while there was a surplus of sorghum in the east.

Rwanda had very productive land but the overall potential was constrained by location. An inland location was also a problem for Malawi. But overall in Eastern and Southern Africa, I felt that agricultural production growth would be able to keep up with the population growth and that we could expect the agricultural sector to continue to contribute to development.

Q: What would you consider the primary impediments to increasing agriculture production?

WINTER: In most cases I believed that appropriate technology was available and that was it was largely a matter of getting the technology out to farmers and providing the inputs necessary for the technology to be adopted. This included making credit available for farmers to have access to the needed inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizer, etc. Without such an increase in capital availability, I did not believe farmers would be able to raise their productivity. If all they had was a hoe, there is only so much you are going to be able to do even with better seeds. Farmers needed credit for fertilizer or maybe for an animal drawn plow or something else to improve their productivity.

Q: Some people have argued that the size of the farm was just too small to produce a viable agricultural sector?

WINTER: In some areas that was perhaps the case. But in most cases production levels per unit of land were not very high. In other areas there was uncultivated areas that were not being used. In Ethiopia the population pressure on the land was apparent in some areas. Also in parts of Kenya, the land plots were getting smaller. In Tanzania I don't believe land availability was the issue. In many rural areas at certain times of the year there was actually a shortage of labor.

Q: It was more of a labor constraint than the size of the farm?

WINTER: And the infrastructure and the lack of productivity increasing inputs. As I said before, without technology and the inputs to utilize that technology there is only so much a farmer can do. When the distances or lack of infrastructure make the availability of inputs uncertain and expensive, farms are likely to be small and the returns to farm labor are likely to be low. Unfortunately, I don't believe we have figured out effective solutions to these issues yet. We have had some success in getting prices right and getting the private sector more involved in input supply and marketing. New productivity enhancing technology has been developed. But it still appears that getting the fertilizer to western portions of Tanzania or to Rwanda is a pretty high cost operation. My later experience in Zimbabwe was more positive in terms of even small holders having access to inputs, marketing outlets and credit.

Q: Well let's move on to your next assignment then.

WINTER: My next assignment was a year of long-term training at the University of Kentucky. I studied applied socio-cultural anthropology...

Q: What was the focus of that?

WINTER: The focus was on trying to understand better the people we were designing projects to assist and...

Q: What year is this now?

WINTER: This is 1977-1978. I had spent a great deal of time in REDSO designing activities to assist people living in rural areas. With consultants and other REDSO staff, I had used rapid appraisal techniques of interviewing people in rural areas on what their needs were, what their problems were and what they believed was necessary to improve their lives and economic condition. From that experience, and my interaction with anthropologists who seemed to have insights on why individuals and groups of people were doing what they were doing or why they didn't do what sometimes was suggested, I believed an understanding of the socio-cultural aspects of societies would enable me to do a better job. Hence my interest in socio-cultural anthropology. I also hoped to take some additional economics courses that were focused on an individual, family or micro-level.

A year's sabbatical at the University of Kentucky - 1977-1978

So I applied for AID-funded, long-term training, was selected and was assigned to go to the University of Kentucky. At that time Kentucky had one of the only two applied socio-cultural anthropology programs in the U.S. Other universities had anthropology programs and offered applied courses but only Florida and Kentucky had applied programs. I hadn't proposed to go to Kentucky, but it was where I was assigned by AID. The program itself was better than I expected and I enjoyed it tremendously. I worked very hard and treated the training like a job where I left our apartment at 8:00 in the morning and I returned at 6:00 in the evening.

Q: Was it a degree?

WINTER: It could have been a degree if I had completed the field research paper that was required. I finished the course work for a Master's degree.

Q: What did you find most useful to you, or most interesting?

WINTER: What I found most interesting were the study of different cultures and societies, the techniques that anthropologists used to collect information and the methods of analysis used to understand the actions of individuals and the cultural units. It seemed very relevant to what AID was doing because in the early to mid 1970's we were trying to work with the poorest of the poor which in many instances were small farmers. As I said

before, I believed that an understanding of these rural societies would enable use to do a better job of project design.

Q: Did it change your approach to things?

WINTER: I thought it would. However, it turned out that for the next three years it had only a small impact because after leaving Kentucky I went to Egypt. The issue in Egypt was not so much designing projects for the rural poor as committing the funds being made available. Certainly we were concerned that the projects had a positive effect on the people, but an overriding issue was committing money.

Assignment as Head of Agriculture Planning and Analysis in USAID/Egypt - 1978

Q: What year was this you went to Egypt?

WINTER: 1978.

Q: Your position was?

WINTER: My position was the head of the planning and analysis group in the agricultural office. I was also defacto deputy director of the office, since there wasn't a separate deputy agricultural chief position. For the next three years I designed projects, oversaw the design of others, was heavily involved in project and program management and helped develop an evolving agricultural sector assistance strategy.

Q: Large projects?

WINTER: Some were very large and a few were quite small. As I mentioned there was an emphasis on committing funds and getting projects underway to support Egyptian agriculture. And so we did. We had a team of two or three direct-hire Americans and several Egyptian staff that were always working on the planning and design of new projects.

Q: What was the agricultural situation as you saw it in Egypt?

WINTER: Egyptian agriculture, because of the Nile, was very productive in many ways. Crops were raised year around and a tremendous variety of crops could be grown. Yields for many crops were quite high, although they were not achieving the yields that were possible given the excellent water supplies.

In general, Egyptian farmers were not particularly efficient in using water because they were accustomed to an abundance of water provided virtually free of charge by the government. But as the population grew and urban development occurred, water use and availability were becoming greater and greater issues. The construction of the Aswan Dam and the elimination of the annual flood also had an effect on soil quality as the

annual flushing of the soil ended. Water logging and salinity were becoming larger problems.

The result was real opportunities and needs for improvements and changes, both on the technological side and on the policy side, across a tremendous range of crops. So we developed projects across the spectrum. In that sense, the agricultural program resembled the program in Nigeria with projects in a variety of areas. There were projects, as you would expect, in irrigation management. There were research projects on major cereals such as wheat, corn and rice, and to a lesser extent barley. We were involved in fisheries production and agricultural mechanization. We supported a poultry development activity, agricultural planning, agricultural information systems or ag management information systems and an agricultural credit program. So there was...

Q: Was this a university program?

WINTER: There was a university program, but in Egypt the agricultural office did not have a separate university development program. Under the Office of Education support was provided to several universities which included some of the agricultural universities. However, we did not have an agricultural education program per se, nor was there an agricultural extension program. Those were differences from Nigeria.

Q: Was there a core to your strategy?

WINTER: Yes, there was a core. The core was that we were trying to increase agricultural output and efficiency which required working on water issues. In effect, through the research and other programs, we were helping develop systems that would allow the use of less water per unit of crop output. How do you do that? Some of it was simply improving the water conveyance system to reduce water losses. Another aspect was working on precision leveling of fields so that it wasn't necessary to apply two feet of water to make sure the highest point in the field got wet while flooding the lowest point.

Other elements were simply understanding better the physiological requirements of crops related to water use and irrigation timing. The provision of input supplies as part of supplying credit sought to give farmers an ability to be more efficient. That program in particular was a move away from a tightly controlled system based on government determinations of how much to plant and what inputs would be supplied, to a demand based system which provided small farmers flexibility in where and when they applied their fertilizer. It also meant working with the Ministry of Agriculture's planning office to get them to look at these issues.

At the same time we were also assisting on technology development. In maize and wheat side U.S. technical advisors were working with the Egyptians to breed better varieties of maize and wheat. In particular, varieties that would be more responsive to fertilizer applications given the constant availability of water. In poultry the focus was on increased production as a means of meeting a meat shortage. The mechanization assistance

encompassed a range of activities including workshops, tractor testing, mechanization research.

Q: What was your main constraint?

WINTER: It was certainly not funding, we had adequate resources. That was not the problem.

Q: What scale of funding are we talking about?

WINTER: As I remember we were obligating \$30-40 million dollars per year in the agricultural sector. The size of our projects ranged from \$1-2 million up to \$40-50 million.

Two of the small activities were among the most interesting. In the poultry area we developed a small activity with the traditional hatcheries. By traditional I mean the hatcheries were mud buildings with a fire in the bottom and eggs lying on straw mats. Most farmers obtained their chicks from these hatcheries which were also a source of disease. By supporting simple disease control and sanitation programs in the traditional system, rather than putting in a new, modern temperature controlled hatchery, we had modest results at a low cost.

There was also a small mechanization program involving a very skilled, direct-hire agricultural engineer who worked on developing appropriate tools for small holders. Power tillers and water pumps were two of the items he worked on.

Q: Were those effective?

WINTER: Yes, they were very effective. In small mechanization, we worked with private sector companies rather than with the government. The models were developed with private companies and they began producing a more efficient grain threshing machine, an improved pump and a wider range of tools for the power tiller.

Q: What were the scale of the hatchery and the small tools programs?

WINTER: Quite small in terms of funding.

Q: Were they affecting a large number of farmers?

WINTER: We reached a fair percentage of the traditional hatcheries and were able to change their practices...

Q: And that changed the disease issue?

WINTER: It started to. It was helping. The government also had a veterinary program. As a result of both programs some of the disease problems diminished.

In the small mechanization program, I understand that one of the pump designs is now widely used. Now I can't say that is only because of our project. We did get it started but how it spread I don't know. But it had an impact.

Q: But it was widely used.

WINTER: It is widely used now. At the time we started we were in only a few locations with a small number of manufacturers. From there it spread, not always the exact design but something very similar. We introduced that technology.

Q: Gasoline powered pumps?

WINTER: Yes, small, diesel-powered pumps. Those were the modest projects. We are talking one, two or three million dollar projects.

Other projects were much larger. The Agricultural Mechanization Project was \$40 million and I believe the credit project was for \$40 million. The largest, and I would note the last, project I helped design was called Irrigation Management and Support Project. And that one reflected a change in my thinking which gets back to one of your early questions on what were the constraints? I think the Egyptian bureaucracy and the procedures followed were the biggest constraints.

It was very difficult to secure any real change in the policies and procedures of the government of Egypt. Initially I thought that the way to achieve change was to provide substantial amounts of US technical assistance. And with the large pool of trained Egyptians, there were excellent counterparts.

We ran into problems, of course, because the focus on technical assistance didn't address some of the fundamental, government-wide problems in the Ministries of Agriculture and Irrigation: low salaries, too many people being employed by government and very centralized decision-making. They also had very little money for the kinds of the recurrent costs they were supposed to cover. The low salaries ate up most of their budget.

Q: You had to deal through the bureaucracy though.

WINTER: Yes, we had to deal through the bureaucracy. All our agreements were government to government with the Ministries of Agriculture and Irrigation. I would note that we had excellent relationships with the ministries because we were the largest bilateral donor and were working on important problems. We had access at all levels from the minister on down.

Q: Did they support anything?

WINTER: The ministries supported our programs but they were constrained by these larger, government-wide problems outside their immediate control. In the Ministry of Agriculture we helped establish a pilot program to overcome the problem of low salaries. Under the program the Government of Egypt allocated money to a special fund to be used to compensate at a higher level Egyptian staff working on our projects.

But, the program never worked as planned. Because of the implications for the entire civil service, the Egyptian government concluded that unless there were really good reasons, they didn't really want one set of civil servants receiving higher salaries and the remainder receiving much lower salaries. I guess working on the nuclear program might have been a good enough reason, but agricultural research wasn't the type of special program they had in mind. So implementation problems started as soon as the program was initiated. It never worked very well. I don't know what happened eventually because as you may know, we were not at that time supposed to be paying the salaries of government people.

Q: Salary topping.

WINTER: That is right. We couldn't be doing that. So, as I said, we helped establish a special fund which used some PL 480 counterpart generations. That wasn't salary topping.

Q: What was the quality of the people you had to work with? What were their capabilities?

WINTER: In general, we had really excellent people to work with. They were very well trained with many having been trained abroad and in the US. Unfortunately they were in a system that made it difficult at times for them to be very efficient.

Q: Was the salary issue a principal one? Or were there other factors?

WINTER: I personally think that the salary issue was the principal issue. The low salaries meant for an Egyptian counterpart to survive financially he or she could not devote 100% of his or her time to working on our program. They had to do a lot of other things simply to make enough money to live.

Q: Outside of the office?

WINTER: Outside of the office or even within the ministry. For example, they were paid extra to go to meetings. Which we didn't figure out for a while. So, they attended meetings, not necessarily because they were interested in the substance of the meeting but because they were paid extra for attending. The amounts were small but even small amounts helped. That was frustrating for AID-funded TA staff, and I think for some of the Egyptians-many of them, perhaps -it was frustrating as well. They would have preferred to spend all their time working on the AID-supported program but they couldn't afford to. So, I think it was the...

Q: Do you remember anything about their salary level, what it was? What are we talking about an employee being paid?

WINTER: I guess I really don't remember what they were. I just know that they were very, very low. But this problem was not unique to Egypt, we had a similar problem in Indonesia.

Q: You mentioned a change in your thinking in your last project design?

WINTER: Yes, the last project I designed in Egypt was an irrigation management systems project. As conceptualized, the project was to be a complex undertaking with multiple components and a great deal of work on the infrastructure of the Egyptian irrigation system. To help with the design, we brought out several engineers from a well-known US engineering firm. We also contracted with John Kean, the retired former Mission Director in Swaziland, to assist in writing up the project.

Within the parameters we had established, the US engineers proposed a series of activities involving a large number of US engineers to provide technical assistance and to make things happen. I looked at their proposal with John Kean and said, "You know, the Egyptians know how to do many of these tasks. They don't need US engineers overlooking everything. Why don't we make the Egyptians largely responsible for some elements and reduce the US technical assistance accordingly?"

And so we threw out many of the recommendations of the experts and proceeded to incorporate much more Egyptian responsibility in the design. For a major portion of the infrastructure improvement components, we proposed that AID provide the funding with the Egyptians having responsibility for implementation. AID's role would be to monitor implementation. For other planning and research elements of the project, we included US technical assistance. Giving Egyptians real responsibility reflected a substantial change in approach away from US/Western experts and technology to giving the Egyptians real ownership of the activity.

I was pleased, in the end, that this strategy was accepted. And John Kean deserves a lot of credit, because when I originally put forward the idea I suggested that we start on a small scale in a couple of provinces. And John Kean said, "Will this work and is this worth doing?" And I said, "Yes, I think it will work and it is certainly worth doing." "Well then why are you proposing to do it so small", he asked? "I think we should do it on a large scale." And I agreed. So we moved to letting the Egyptians handle a large portion of the project with AID funding.

Q: Did this mean hiring Egyptians to do the work?

WINTER: No. It meant providing funds to the Ministry of Irrigation which would be responsible for contracting to get the work done and we would pay directly or reimburse them.

Q: Was this for maintenance and upgrading systems and so on?

WINTER: Right. It was to refurbish the irrigation system, to replace a lot of the gates, the turnouts, the canals, just do a lot of work on getting the system back into better operating condition.

Q: Very infrastructure related type things.

WINTER: Exactly. But not with a lot of heavy US oversight. We were going to monitor and check. Not supervise. In other components of the project our involvement would be greater. For example, there was a research element to work on issues such as lifting the water versus gravity flow. Some Egyptians felt that farmers should lift the water from a canal to the fields because in so doing the amount of water used would be reduced as farmers wouldn't want to expend the energy to raise more than the needed quantities. There were other people who felt gravity flow was a better alternative because it would save time and energy and it wasn't necessarily true that lifting the water led to more efficient use. A part of the project was to introduce gravity irrigation in a particular region along with some canal improvement work.

We were also experimenting with systems to measure the flow of the Nile in various places. All in all it was a very complex project. The project was approved at about \$120 million with the expectation that it would go higher if at all successful. I believe the project continued for ten or twelve years. And I think there is a follow-on activity still being continued. To me the continuation seems to prove that the Egyptians were able to do the work themselves.

Q: So you think it was fairly effective?

WINTER: Yes. I was optimistic from the start and from what I have read and seen the project seems to have worked well.

Q: There were some views that in terms of policy changes and pricing and all that sort of thing that you didn't get much cooperation.

WINTER: Some people certainly had that view.

Q: Why was that?

WINTER: I think it was because we did not make our programs conditional on policy change. We thought the way to change policy was through projects and by example. In effect we had decided that we wouldn't be able to affect policy at the macro level. I

remember hearing our mission director say that his strategy at the time was to deal with policy at a project level because he was convinced that trying to implement policy change at a macro level would not work. The Egyptians just weren't ready to make dramatic changes at a macro level.

Q: Were there policy issues though that needed addressing?

WINTER: Most definitely. In the irrigation area, for example, a system of water charges to raise revenue and reduce subsidies was needed. There was a debate about whether the Koran allowed them to charge for water. However, I think there was agreement that charges for conveyance systems and conveyance system maintenance, even if the water is free, was acceptable. But such charges were not introduced on a systematic basis at the time. The prices, availability and quantities of fertilizer were also issues. Agricultural credit availability and uses were issues. There were all kinds of issues related to the agricultural sector that, as I said, we tried to address via the projects. And in some cases, I think that was a successful approach. In other cases...

Q: Where?

WINTER: Agricultural credit is a good example. AID helped design and implement a new system where the credit was not simply giving the farmer two bags of fertilizer and some pesticide to grow only cotton. That was the old system. The new program enabled farmers to get the credit they needed with fewer restrictions on how it had to be used. Certainly credit was provided for crops the government was promoting such as cotton. However, credit was also available for other crops and the interest rates were higher. So via a project we changed the agricultural credit policy in terms of moving 1) to a market rate of interest and 2) to a more free credit system.

Q: What do you mean by a free credit system?

WINTER: I mean a system that allowed farmers to obtain credit for a variety of crops in the amounts needed. They no longer were only able to obtain credit for specific inputs for specific crops. The system was demand driven. The new system was less constrained-it was operated as a credit system should be operated.

Q: Did you ever get any headway on charging for water?

WINTER: Well, I would say that we didn't make much headway in being able to introduce a system of water charges. There was a lot of discussion of charges and some fees were levied for maintenance purposes. But charges for water per se, were not acceptable. It would be interesting to know if farmers are now paying for water.

Q: Why was there such resistance to policy changes?

WINTER: Because the government was not prepared or willing to deal with the political problems that might have resulted. Such water charges would have been unpopular and would have required an extensive public relations campaign. There had been riots when they raised the price of bread so perhaps they were correct to be very sensitive. There was also a feeling, perhaps incorrectly, that the people were poor and couldn't afford such charges.

Q: They could afford the subsidies?

WINTER: We thought the farmers could afford to pay for water and the government needed the money that would be raised.

Q: The program expanded?

WINTER: Only in the sense that as the costs went up, the level of subsidy also went up. I couldn't defend the Egyptian governments' position very well then or now except that they were a very large bureaucracy and such a change just couldn't move through the system. For example, I believe if you talk to others on the electric power issue-charging the full cost of power rather than subsidizing power-the concerns would be the same. The potential political costs were simply too high, perhaps reflecting past socialism and the Nasser era.

Q: What were the prospects for agricultural production in Egypt?

WINTER: They were very good given the tremendous irrigated areas that existed, the only modest yields of many crops that were being achieved and the real potential to expand the production of cash and higher value crops for export to Europe. At the time Egypt tended to be still exporting to the former Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries because of the past relationship that had developed during the 1950's-1960's. So they were exporting low quality product and getting low quality goods in return. Or they had debts to the countries in the former Soviet Union being repaid with agricultural products.

They seemed to believe that since their products were acceptable in Eastern Europe, there is no need to change to market in the West. Well, the quality of their produce needed to be raised to meet Western market requirements and over the years I think they have been quite successful. Of course, Egypt's population is such that they undoubtedly will never be self-sufficient in all agricultural crops. But I don't think that means they have reached optimum or maximum production levels even today.

Q: Were you involved in the PL 480 program?

WINTER: Only in the allocation of local currency generations and partly in the debate over whether PL 480 was detrimental-serving as a disincentive to production of certain local crops.

Q: What did you conclude?

WINTER: I concluded that we needed to be very careful, particularly with wheat. At the time the bread in Egypt was heavily subsidized. So in effect our program was supporting the urban dwellers with subsidized bread and it probably did enable the Government of Egypt to keep wheat prices lower or bread prices lower than they would have been able to otherwise. So, I thought that particular element of the PL 480 program did serve as a disincentive.

Q: But if we had cut back on the imports what would happen?

WINTER: Well, we probably would have had trouble meeting our commitments to Egypt. So, I didn't think we had a choice. Again, that was a political...

Q: So wheat imports were critical.

WINTER: Yes. They were critical. The price of bread was an important issue. To help maintain a stable government we couldn't...

Q: What if it opened up demand for domestic food production: so that you could have had more or bigger markets for local wheat?

WINTER: Egypt did grow wheat and higher prices would have probably resulted in some additional production. But they were not going to be self-sufficient in wheat. The real question was: Is there a higher value crop that they could be growing? And of course the answer was yes: fruits and vegetables. Alfalfa to feed livestock was also more profitable. It was probably the most profitable crop the farmers had because under irrigation they were able to produce eight or ten cuttings per year as opposed to one or two crops of wheat or vegetables. The government actually discouraged farmers from planting alfalfa because they wanted other crops to be produced.

I actually didn't spend time working about most of those PL 480 issues. There were other people and outside groups looking at those issues.

Q: How big an agriculture staff was there?

WINTER: In total, I believe there were about ten American direct hire staff. And then quite a number of Egyptian staff. So, it was a sizeable office with people in various areas.

Q: Did you get to travel all over the country?

WINTER: Yes. I traveled, perhaps less than I should have, but I did manage to get from upper Egypt down to Alexandria and to most places in the Delta at least once. Most of my time, however, I spent in Cairo.

Q: Turning out papers?

WINTER: Exactly. Turning out papers. And getting things approved. And providing all the reports that were necessary and interacting with the government staff.

Q: Because it was a situation where there was tremendous pressure to obligate money every year.

WINTER: That's right. We once had a retreat with the mission director and senior staff...

Q: Who was the mission director then?

WINTER: Donald Brown. As I was saying, at one point we had a retreat in Alexandria to discuss our program. One of the recommendations of the technical staff at the retreat was that we should put all obligations on hold for a year while we focused on implementation-getting the various projects up and running. I think the technical staff were quite serious but Director Brown explained why politically that was not possible, that we had to obligate the funds. That we couldn't just stop...

Q: You were always creating new projects every year?

WINTER: Oh, yes. We needed to keep on developing new activities to absorb the funds. The American staff to design and implement the program went up also. When I arrived in 1978, there were about seventy direct-hire Americans. By the time I left the staff had gone up to over one hundred Americans. So, there was a substantial group. And you had to maintain this constant flow of new activities or amendments or extensions or expansions just to utilize the funds available. I am certain they have become more efficient over time...at that time we were still building up and we didn't have a reservoir of activities that could absorb money. Overall it was very enjoyable. We developed and designed a number of activities and worked hard and...

Q: What do you think the impact of those are going to be over time?

WINTER: I think they are going to have a large impact. I was back in Egypt in 1993 or 1994. I didn't get a chance to look at a specific activity, but it was clear that Cairo was a better city to live in than it was when we were there. Things had gotten better at least from a physical appearance standpoint. So the programs we were working on as AID, as an agency...

Q: What about the agriculture sector?

WINTER: When I visited I was only there for one day and I didn't get outside of Cairo. Therefore, I didn't see any impact of the programs in the agricultural sector. I only heard that some very positive things had happened. Yields of wheat and corn had gone up. They

were producing more fruits and vegetables of higher quality and exporting to Europe. Poultry production was up.

Q: Was there any special concerns about focusing on the poor communities in the small towns or rural areas at the time?

WINTER: In the agricultural program we didn't have that focus. There was also a Basic Village Services Projects and other projects that did really try to work on improving the rural, delta villages.

Q: But that wasn't connected to the agriculture program?

WINTER: No.

Q: Was there an agriculture component to that?

WINTER: No. There was a water element to that which had some impact on agriculture but it wasn't an agricultural component.

Q: Why was that? I always thought agriculture was the core.

WINTER: Because in Egypt farmers didn't live on their farms. They lived together in villages. In the delta these villages were often elevated or on high ground so they were above the flood level. These villages lacked running water; lacked sewage; lacked electricity; lacked streets; lacked lights; lacked schools, lacked health clinics. The Basic Village Services Project, as its title suggests, funded basic village services which simply meant giving people access to water, electricity, education opportunities. There was construction of schools, water systems, sewage systems, health clinics, etc. It was designed to improve the living conditions of the villagers. The agricultural programs focused on the production aspects of the lives of these villagers.

Q: Anything else on the Egypt program?

WINTER: No. I think that it was a good three years.

Q: Then where did you go from there?

Agricultural Officer in USAID/Zimbabwe - 1981-1984

WINTER: From there, in 1981, I went to Zimbabwe. I was there for three and a half years.

Q: What was your position?

WINTER: My position was the Agricultural Officer in Zimbabwe. This was shortly after Zimbabwe gained independence and the AID program was just starting. When I arrived, I believe the AID Mission consisted of three Americans.

Q: A lot of contrast with Egypt.

WINTER: Yes it certainly was. Eventually the staff increased to eight direct-hire Americans but it was nothing like Egypt. The program, although quite substantial, was also very different. We were responsible for developing and implementing the U.S. commitment made at independence to provide \$70 million in assistance per year for three years.

In addition, additional resources were made available through a housing program and through a commodity import program. So we were really dealing with an annual budget of \$100 million in a country that was relatively small in terms of population. A high level of resources and a small staff meant we needed to do things differently.

Doing things differently largely took the form of sector programs and the allocation of local currencies for programs of the Government of Zimbabwe. There was basically a health sector program which included family planning, an education sector program, and an agricultural sector program. We were not developing projects, per se.

In the agricultural sector, the concept was that we would set targets-policy targets-and we would support government programs in the country. We would then measure our success, and determine whether to continue the program, based on progress toward achieving those policy targets.

On that basis I designed the Zimbabwe Agricultural Sector Assistance program or ZASA. The program was quite unique at the time. It resembled some programs that had been implemented years earlier in Latin America where they had done agricultural sector programs. But it was also different.

Q: What were the chief characteristics; you said targets and what else?

WINTER: Basically we were trying to help the Government of Zimbabwe provide support and services to small farmers, the group that had received less assistance under the former white government. The sector targets were in areas such as the percentage of government resources in the ag sector going to "small holder" programs, the expansion of agricultural research activities focused on small holder problems, pricing policies for agricultural products, the amount of agricultural credit being directed to small holders. We established a series of rather broad objectives which, I will note, were not quantified in precise terms but more in terms of direction. We expected changes in the identified areas in the direction of additional resources and programs directed toward the needs of small holders. It was on that basis that we went forward.

Q: Was this done jointly with the Zimbabweans?

WINTER: Oh yes. The target areas were worked out and agreed upon with the Zimbabweans. I would mention that a majority of the resources were going to be spent on local costs. Of the initial \$45 million agricultural sector program, a minimum of \$30 million was allocated for local costs; with up to \$15 million for foreign exchange costs. These foreign exchange costs could be for technical assistance, training, equipment or whatever the Zimbabweans and AID decided was needed. To generate the local currency for the local costs, we used a commodity import program or CIP which financed the importation and sale of commodities to be used by the agricultural sector.

Under the CIP, private sector companies in Zimbabwe were allocated foreign exchange on the basis of approved applications, purchased the agricultural sector related commodities from US suppliers, handled the importation and sale to their customers and deposited the equivalent value in Zimbabwean dollars into the a special account in the Central Bank. From this account allocations and disbursements were made for agreed-upon purposes. Using this mechanism allowed us to do two things with the AID funds being provided.

One, we were able to provide some support for the large, commercial farm community which was very important in overall agricultural production terms and very dominant in the production of certain export crops like tobacco and cotton. These farmers and the industries providing goods and services needed inputs. The commodity import program was a means of supporting that segment of the sector in a way through financing for imports which ranged from tractors to combines to lamp black for tire production to packaging materials for the sorghum brewery, a tremendous range of agricultural products were imported.

Two, we used the local currency generations to support a variety of programs that impacted on small holders. I'll talk more about those in a minute. But first let me elaborate a little on the agricultural CIP.

In general the foreign exchange allocation system and private sector importation system worked very well. Since we approved each foreign exchange allocation, it enabled us to be dialoging with the government on the needs of the large farm sector as well as on programs aimed at the small holders. We also interacted with the commercial farmers. There was a great deal of dialogue, a lot of discussion on what should receive a foreign exchange allocation. We didn't always agree. I remember one time the Ministry of Trade and Commerce proposed an allocation for the importation of "oats." And we said, "Why do you want to import oats? Oats is a feed grain and you have sufficient maize for feed. What do you want it for anyway?" They said, "We want it because we need oats to feed the race horses. The government makes money from the taxes on the racing industry." I said, "No. That doesn't sound like the type of agricultural product we should be financing. It is true that it is an agricultural commodity but that is not what we had in mind." And they agreed. In other instances I became convinced that some unusual allocations did

make sense and were appropriate. It was the open and free dialogue that went on all the time about what should be imported that was so enjoyable.

Q: Who were you dialoging with?

WINTER: We were dialoging with the Ministry of Agriculture as well as the Ministry of Trade and Commerce which was actually making the foreign exchange allocations. But we also had almost daily contact with the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development and the Ministry of Finance. It was a very small government so we knew people at all levels and had tremendous access. You could literally pick up the phone and call the Minister and he might answer his own phone because his secretary was out to lunch. It was an easy place to work and things could happen very quickly because decisions could be made quickly.

One of the features I liked most about the ZASA program, although I had gotten some advice during the design phase to the contrary, was that we didn't need a lot of US experts there to get things done and to have an impact. There were local experts that knew what to do. If you looked at the large farm sector, they were producing at high levels and often using very sophisticated technology. If we needed expertise, it was probably already in Zimbabwe. So we did not need to make US technical experts a requirement. The only real technical program we financed was to expand the agricultural faculty at the University of Zimbabwe-where we did do a competitive procurement to bring in a contractor to work with the University on their faculty development. That did involve US staff-six professors-from...

Q: From a traditional university development program?

WINTER: Yes. Traditional university development focused on the Faculty of Agriculture which was part of the University of Zimbabwe. It was a very traditional program in that we provided, through a direct AID contract, six faculty members in selected areas from a Michigan State University and the Pennsylvania State University consortium. Each professor was there for two or three years with responsibilities in the areas of teaching, course development and research design. The assistance was part of a larger effort to double the enrollment in the agricultural faculty. As part of that effort we also funded and helped equip through the local currency element a large, multipurpose teaching, research and faculty building. We even, and I don't know if this has been done elsewhere, financed a farm: a research and teaching farm for the faculty of agriculture.

Q: You bought it?

WINTER: Well, it was purchased by the University using local currency generated by the CIP that was allocated for that purpose. By financing the farm we were seeking, in effect, to create something like a US land grant system where we had a University faculty and a research farm that would be used for both research and teaching. The farm was actually

too large for only research and teaching purposes so the University farmed part of it commercially.

An underlying feature of the University program and all the programs was our intent, and this was before sustainability became a focus, to make sure these programs were Zimbabwean programs not US programs. So what did we do? We didn't design the programs and projects. We designed an agricultural sector mechanism that could provide resources. And then we said to the Zimbabweans, "Okay, now the way it works is: you develop the development proposals, you plan and design what it is you want to do and we will cooperate with you in financing the activity. But it is your activity and it has to appear in your budget. It is not outside your budget and you have to obtain approval through your system, show that it is in your budget and that the recurrent costs are taken care of".

Q: The local currency portion, not the dollar portion.

WINTER: Yes and no. As part of the development activity the Zimbabweans could propose to use foreign exchange for say, heavy equipment. However, they needed to demonstrate how the recurrent costs of that project were going to be met. Even the local currency being provided from CIP generations was not to be initially used for recurrent costs or if that was the proposal, a plan to cover those costs in three years or less was needed. To make this work, we established a ZASA committee. I was an ex-officio member of this committee that was set up within the government of Zimbabwe and chaired by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development. Proposals for the use of ZASA funds were reviewed and approved by this committee.

Q: Was this was a government program across all programs?

WINTER: We had a small, separate committee for the agricultural sector. There were similar committees in health and family planning and education.

Q: What was the problem you were trying to address with the sector program?

WINTER: An agricultural system that did not provide much support for the small holders who made up a majority of the rural population. Under the pre-independence government small holders had their own extension service. They had their own cooperative system. They had participated in the marketing system but were not really targeted. Under the post-independence government, small holders were going to receive more support and attention. So, what we were addressing was the development and implementation of programs that the Zimbabwean government decided were needed by small holders. I will admit that we did initiate some ideas and said that we would be very interested if something would be done in certain areas. However, I never took such an initiative without some indication that there was interest on their side to develop these ideas.

For example: making inputs available for use by small holders. How do you do that? The obvious method, and the method used by the commercial farms, was to buy the fertilizer directly from the fertilizer companies and to make the necessary applications. The problem was that the fertilizer companies sold at their front gate. They didn't have system of distribution. For large commercial farmers that wasn't a problem. They phoned in their order, and made arrangements for truckloads to be delivered. Small farmers-what do they do? They are not going to travel a hundred miles to get a bag or two of fertilizer. So through the cooperative system, we helped finance the development of a network of cooperative warehouses through a cooperative warehouse loan program. The cooperative warehouses were of various sizes depending upon the anticipated demand, rural population and agricultural potential of the area. Construction was by a private company and was done very quickly. In a very short time we had 250 rural cooperative warehouses providing inputs. The same warehouses also served as collection points for the maize that was marketed. It wasn't our program. It was Zimbabwean planned, organized...

Q: And staffed?

WINTER: Yes, staffed also. We provided the local currency that enabled the program to be undertaken. The Zimbabweans were responsible for implementation and AID monitored the implementation. In the Agricultural Office we had one Zimbabwean whose job was to monitor the programs we were supporting. That meant receiving and reviewing implementation progress reports, but more importantly, it meant visiting the field sites where activities that had been allocated funds were to take place. So he traveled all over Zimbabwe comparing what was supposed to be happening with what was happening. In most cases, the Zimbabweans were superb in following plans developed. Activities were implemented on schedule.

One other strategy that I think helped was making the ZASA allocation committee a real part of the process. We arranged for the committee members to make field review visits. Seeing activities being implemented certainly encouraged the committee members to take an active interest in the allocation process. Over time the committee evolved into a pretty effective group.

Q: What was the make-up of the committee?

WINTER: Well, there was one representative from the Ministry of Trade and Commerce, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development had two members, the Ministry of Agriculture had one member, the Ministry of Lands had one member, the Ministry of Finance had one member, and I was on there as an ex-officio member.

Q: Who chaired it?

WINTER: The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.

Q: What level of people were on it?

WINTER: The Chairman was a Deputy Under Secretary. So he was...

Q: He was a political figure?

WINTER: No, he was a professional staff member who had been trained in Canada. He had a degree from a Canadian university and was very articulate.

Q: And the other representatives were...?

WINTER: Nominally, the committee was made up of Deputy or Under-Secretaries. However, except for the Ministry of Lands, normally a senior staff representative from the planning offices of the various ministries attended. The Under Secretary came from the Ministry of Lands. He always came.

Q: You mentioned that the committee evolved over time. In what way?

WINTER: Initially, brief proposals were developed, there was limited discussion by the committee members and small amounts of funds were allocated for various activities. But I don't think the committee members really expected things to happen. There was some reluctance to publicly discuss and analyze the proposals. So I would have to ask the leading questions about the proposals: What are we trying to achieve here? Is this a priority? How will this benefit small holders? Is the budget realistic? When will...

Q: Who put the proposals forward?

WINTER: A ministry. A ministry representative, either the regular committee member or another individual with greater knowledge and familiarity, would put the proposals forward. And I would say, "This proposal doesn't seem to address small holder issues or how does this proposal address what we know are the criteria for the ZASA program. We are trying to help small holders", and so on. In a short period of time, however, the committee members just took over the process. They would come prepared and have really reviewed and analyzed the proposals or reports being submitted. They would debate the pro's and con's of proposals. They didn't hold them up. It was a simply a review process that enabled a thorough understanding of what was expected to be accomplished at what cost and over what time period.

What I liked was how they really started asking the tough questions. I can remember one proposal dealing with a conservation activity that I thought was appropriate for support but that the committee turned down once. In so doing they said to the ministry representative, "You need to go back to your planners and if you address these issues and we will consider it again." At the next meeting the ministry had a revised proposal and the committee said, "We agree that this proposed activity would be of benefit to small holders in marginal areas. However, you still haven't adequately addressed the recurrent cost question. You want us to fund the operating costs for the new equipment now, but

how are you going to pay for these costs two years from now? To operate this equipment? Where are the funds in your budget?" And the ministry staff said, "Oh we assume". "No, you can't assume that you are going to get an increase in budget to cover the additional costs," the committee said. And the committee turned it down. They just said, "No." To see the concern the committee had about sustainability and not wasting the money was really encouraging.

Q: You had some very talented people to work with, I guess?

WINTER: Yes, we did. But they were also keenly interested and that was perhaps equally important. As I noted before, I think the field trips that AID sponsored really added to the enthusiasm and interest of the group. Seeing the projects they had approved and how they were being implemented gave them real ownership of the projects and the ZASA program itself. It also help create some bonds between committee members.

Q: Did they monitor implementation as well as approving new projects?

WINTER: Absolutely. Committee members made selected visits although my AID staff actually did most of the monitoring. As you would expect it was difficult for the staff of the ministries to be gone for more than a day or two at a time.

Q: But the committee itself did not review implementation?

WINTER: They did after we started making these field trips.

Q: What kind of activities were supported?

WINTER: Activities were funded in a wide range of areas. Some of the things that were funded and supported included: the cooperative warehouse program I already mentioned. We funded the expansion of agricultural training institutions that provided extension agents, including women extension agents. In fact the first women trained to be extension agents were a result of ZASA local currency allocations used for an expansion of the training facility including a dormitory exclusively for women. As a result, rather quickly the percentage of women extension agents being trained went from zero to a significant percentage which was important given that women were agriculturalists. I would emphasize that these were not home economics advisors. They were farmer extension agents. We financed the university. We financed grain storage. We financed cotton production training. We financed research on small holder crops. We financed extension information materials. We financed natural resources conservation education programs. We financed market information programs.

Q: Many of these ideas were initiated by you and put through their processes?

WINTER: Initiated only in the sense of an idea. I didn't develop the proposals. The Zimbabwean staff at the ministries also had a lot of good ideas of their own. Often, prior

to the preparation of a proposal, I would have contact with people in the ministries and we would talk about problems and needs and then they would develop a proposal. Other times they would develop a proposal and I would not have discussed it at all prior to the committee meeting.

What made it really exciting was, although I was only in Zimbabwe for three plus years, that in that time so many activities went from a proposal to completed implementation. Facilities were built, training programs were completed, an impact was visible.

Q: Was there some recording system that recorded the progress?

WINTER: Oh yes. We had two types of reporting. One, of course was the Government of Zimbabwe system which required that the ministries provide regular reports on activities undertaken to the Ministry of Finance. This system was written into our Cooperative Agreement with the government which required the regular submission of reports. I would note that when the AID auditors came for the first time to look at the ZASA program the only thing they could find to suggest was that we needed to make sure the reports were received in a more timely manner. The requirement was that the Ministry of Finance should receive the reports within thirty days from the end of the month. On average, it was actually forty days before they received the monthly report. The auditors said, "That is all we can find." Of course we were very pleased. There no problems with disbursement and the use of funds for agreed upon purposes in a timely manner.

The second type of reporting related to whether or not we were meeting the policy requirements. To help us in that process we had an outside evaluation team come in once a year to review the program and the actions being taken by the Government of Zimbabwe.

Q: Were the Zimbabweans involved in that evaluation?

WINTER: The Zimbabweans were involved as members of the policy evaluation team. We always had a Ministry of Agriculture representative plus someone else. In addition the team would meet with the ZASA committee and ministry staff to look at how things were going. And the committee prepared a report for the team. Both years I was involved the evaluation team said everything looks fine. "There has been tremendous progress."

Interestingly, I do remember one policy element related to rural credit that we included which turned out to be a bad idea. There was a system of rural women's clubs that was working well. We included a policy target that the Zimbabweans should provide additional support to the women's club movement as a means of encouraging women agriculturalists and as a credit mechanism. However, it turned out that additional government support meant the informal clubs would have to be registered. Once they were registered a morass of requirements applied that would stifle these simple, unsophisticated clubs. An example was a requirement for an accountant to keep more detailed records. After getting a better understanding of what "additional support" might

mean we decided that in the interest of those clubs it would be better if we didn't require additional government support. We dropped this particular policy element.

Q: This registration, was it simply a matter of being sure they were responsible or was it a political effort to capture them?

WINTER: Well, probably it was intended to make certain they were responsible. However, the legal requirements that came with formal registration made it very difficult for small groups. According to the law they needed to have a particular structure, follow certain financial procedures, submit reports in a certain manner. The law was really applicable to larger NGO's.

Q: Related to NGO's generally?

WINTER: Yes, I think that is correct. It was simply too complicated for these women's groups. So we dropped the requirement rather than undermine a system that was working. This flexibility on AID's part, being able to make changes quickly, helped make the program work. I remember another instance related to the project agreement we had with Zimbabwe where we made changes to reflect reality rather than take a hard line position. In this case, one of the requirements was a submission by the government initially on a yearly basis regarding resources to be allocated to various activities. But with some experience, we determined it wasn't working that way, it was working another way. And I can remember the REDSO lawyer saying, "Well, we have two choices. We can either say you've got to do it this way because this is the way we negotiated the agreement. Or we can change the agreement. What do you want to do?" I said, "Look, it is working this way. The other way, I don't know exactly at this point, why we thought that would work better but let's change the agreement." He said, "Fine, let's change the agreement." And we did.

Q: One of the big issues in Zimbabwe was the land distribution question. Did you get involved in that?

WINTER: Only to the extent that we decided, for US political reasons, that we would not provide funding for any resettlement or land distribution programs. Being seen as helping take land from the large farmers and distributing it by some method was judged to hold political risk for the entire assistance program. So we did not support land reform.. And we were up front with the Zimbabweans about that and said, "Look, it is just not politically feasible for us to assist in this area."

Q: But you were supporting farmers who had been involved in the distribution program, I suppose?

WINTER: Yes, to some extent. The small holder programs we supported did not discriminate against individuals who had received land under a government program. One of the items funded under the commodity import program was a cotton gin that went in an

area where some of the land had been redistributed to small holders. This gave these small holders a place to deliver their cotton and it had quite an impact on cotton production. Similarly, the establishment of input supply centers and markets for maize had an impact on the quantities of maize produced by small holders. Again a small percentage of this increase came from areas where land redistribution had occurred.

Q: Were you there when the program had to be stopped?

WINTER: No, I had left. I was very disappointed, nevertheless, because the agricultural sector program was the one that suffered most immediately. As I indicated, as originally designed the ZASA program was funded at the \$45 million dollar level. Just before I left in December, 1994 we had completed an amendment to add more resources to the program because of its success. The amendment was being submitted early in 1995 for Washington approval. At the time AID was also changing mission directors - Roy Stacy was being replaced by Allison Herrick. Well the additional funds were agreed upon and the project agreement amendment was ready to be signed by about March, 1997. However, the funds were not immediately needed and it was decided the actual obligation should wait until Allison Herrick arrived. Signing the amendment would be a nice entree action for her. Well, she came all right, but before she could sign the amendment the July 4th Carter flap occurred and the proposed ZASA amendment was cancelled. A big disappointment for me.

Q: I'll bet. That was the core of your program, I suppose?

WINTER: Yes, there wasn't much else. And because most of the resources under the original ZASA grant had been used, the opportunities to assist in new areas almost disappeared overnight. There were a few resources left so the program did continue but at a very reduced level.

Q: Was there any PL 480 activity?

WINTER: The only PL 480 activity related to the drought in I believe 1993 and to food needs in Zambia and Mozambique. We received various proposals for PL 480 activities, regular PL 480 activities such as child feeding, but we were skeptical of PL 480 in Zimbabwe because we were concerned that it would enable or serve as a detriment to local food production.

Our concern was based on the fact that in normal years Zimbabwe was able to produce nearly enough wheat to meet local demand, and a surplus of maize. They exported tobacco and cotton. On balance they were an agricultural exporter. So while some groups argued there were humanitarian or health reasons to allow NGO groups to bring in food aid to distribute through clinics, we weren't convinced.

Our position was that only in these years when there was a drought and Zimbabwe faced a food deficit or when a tripartite arrangement could be negotiated would we seek PL 480

resources. These tripartite arrangements (which we arranged a couple of times) involved the import of wheat into Zimbabwe in exchange for the export of Zimbabwean maize to Zambia or Mozambique. Such a program had two benefits from our perspective. One, the maize that went to Zambia and Mozambique was white maize which was preferable to the US yellow maize. Two, the wheat was needed by Zimbabwe because they were always only on the margin of self sufficiency and could always use some wheat.

Q: They didn't produce enough wheat for their own?

WINTER: As I said, in a good year, in a normal year they would be close to self sufficiency. They might be short ten, twenty or thirty thousand metric tons. But in a drought year...

Q: But that didn't prove to be a dis-incentive to local production?

WINTER: I don't think that it did. Because Zimbabwe operated a system of minimum prices for wheat and maize and other products that were announced at the time of planting, I don't think imports later in the year had much of a dis-incentive.

Q: They were subsidized were they?

WINTER: Not really. Prices were very close to market rates because they adjusted them upward and downward on an annual basis. An element of our policy agenda was that their market prices should be close to world market prices. However, one of the problems for Zimbabwe was its geographic location. It is a landlocked country and the transport costs to get things in and out are very high. So, a border price in Zimbabwe included quite a transport element.

Q: Anything done to try and address that problem?

WINTER: Well, there was not much you could do about their being landlocked. We did work with the maize marketing board on the programs where they were buying and selling maize and moving grains around the region. But the South Africans controlled the basic transportation routes because the route through Mozambique was not very secure. It was a touchy issue. Not one that people wanted to be in the headlines because no one really wanted to acknowledge how dependent they were on South Africa for transportation of commodities in and out. And the South Africans knew that they had that lever so that they could exert influence but were not doing it very overtly anyway. On the issue of grain prices we never tried to be involved.

Q: I understood that or remember that there were times when there was a great surplus of maize and there were times when it was in great shortage. This was a drought issue or...?

WINTER: I'd say that most of it was related to rainfall. Of course, pricing could have some effect in the sense that if there was a tremendous surplus the government was not likely to announce a substantial increase in price because they had a surplus on hand. But I think it was the weather more than anything else. Mostly because the rains are irregular.

Q: Were they trying to preserve a reserve stock situation?

WINTER: Yes. They had a buffer stock target. There was some debate over what the level of that buffer stock should be. Whether it should be 800,000 metric tons or 1.2 million metric tons or 1.7 million metric tons. At one time the Zimbabweans put forth a proposal that the donor community should finance a buffer stock that would be held in Zimbabwe and used as needed in other parts of the region. The donors weren't enthusiastic. Nobody likes to plan ahead that far. We assume droughts won't happen.

Q: Well, anything else about your experience in Zimbabwe?

WINTER: No. It was just very positive and I liked the sector support mechanism that...

Q: And you think it was effective and had an impact?

WINTER: It had an impact. An impact on the Zimbabweans and an impact on other donors.

Q: How was that?

WINTER: Because our program was, from the Zimbabwean point of view, very easy to work with. They were basically developing the program and we were funding their program within limits. Other donors came along and tried to do their what I would call a more "traditional approach"-come in, design a project and implement the project. The Zimbabweans said, "We like the US government-US AID model better. See how they are doing it." So there were soon a number of other programs, from the Europeans in particular, that strongly resembled our program because it was the one that the Zimbabweans said they wanted. It was working and other donors as well as the Zimbabweans could see that it was working.

Q: That was based on, partly because they had a capacity?

WINTER: Right. Zimbabwe had a good capacity to plan and implement programs. It wasn't a large government or a large civil service but it was a well trained government. There were a lot of Western-trained people. After independence the old civil service didn't leave "en masse". Consequently you had an old government structure that had worked and a new infusion of people. The "new" and the "old" got along well and I think worked well together. Obviously, there were some problems in some areas where they couldn't replace the people that were leaving or retiring quickly enough but generally the pool of civil service manpower was adequate with real competence.

There was also a good relationship between the government and the private sector. The private sector was able and willing to implement activities. This was true of both commercial activities like grain storage construction and activities carried out by groups such as the Private Farmers Association. The government didn't try to do everything itself.

Q: Anything else on Zimbabwe?

WINTER: Only to re-emphasize that I believe the Agricultural Sector Program was really an excellent program that was perfect for the Zimbabwean situation in the early 1980's. I think that is all.

*Q: That sounds very good. So, you left Zimbabwe. **Return to the Africa Bureau in USAID/Washington - 1984***

WINTER: Then I came back to Washington. To first head up the...

Q: This was what year?

WINTER: 1984. I left Zimbabwe and started work in Washington in December of 1984. Initially I was head of the Agricultural Division, as it called at that time, in the Africa Bureau. It was quite a large office at the time. We had over twenty staff. This was...

Q: The agriculture office alone?

WINTER: Yes, including a number of PASA and RSSA staff who provided technical expertise in various areas. You can see how my career goes from large to very small-to two of us in Zimbabwe-and then back. In the mid-1980's, there were quite substantial agricultural programs in most countries in Africa and my predecessors in Washington had made certain the Agriculture Division could provide the needed backstopping and management. Overall, it was quite a challenge.

Q: What were all those people doing?

WINTER: Going to meetings, backstopping Mission programs, managing studies, interacting with the S & T Bureau, going on TDYs, a range of things. It was very convenient to have a staff that enabled us to respond to almost every need. And you have so many countries, and we had people assigned to backstop and follow each country. However, I soon concluded that the agriculture staff was too large. I guess I don't know if I should be satisfied to say or sorry to say that over time I reduced the size of staff. I just didn't feel comfortable having all staff members who I didn't feel were occupied 100 percent of the time.

Q: What was the function of that office?

WINTER: At that time I think we had a total of 370 separate projects or activities related to agriculture in Africa. Nearly every country had four or five agricultural activities and many had 10-15 or more. These were not all large projects or activities but often very small ones involving the S&T Bureau. So there was a large number of agricultural activities. We had one person in the office whose primary job was to maintain the office data base on what was being done and to provide that information via a management information system. This data based was used to report on what was being done in the projects and also to report on what our office was doing.

In addition we had technical advisors. There was a expert in extension, another in agronomy, an irrigation expert, several agricultural economists. We also had staff that were more generalists with particular country expertise. We had the Africa Bureau's PL 480 Officer Finally, we managed a few projects out of Washington, particularly some research activities in both technical and policy areas. At a later point we took over the natural resources, forestry and environmental activities. It was a separate office when I arrived but became a part of the agriculture division shortly thereafter.

Q: Was there a strategy for agriculture in Africa-an African Bureau agricultural strategy for Africa?

WINTER: I don't recall an African Bureau strategy for agriculture that was continent wide. We used some general guiding principals with an emphasis on research and institutional development, but we were to be supportive of country strategies. Over time we did develop, with Calvin Martin as the leader of the effort, an agriculture research and university development strategy for Africa. The strategy grouped countries into categories and took the position that not all countries could afford to have the same depth of research or university systems. In particular smaller countries should be assisted through regional groupings and regional cooperation activities.

Q: Groupings of countries with common agricultural conditions?

WINTER: Yes, of common conditions but also considering the size of the country and what that country could afford to support. So, Nigeria with diverse regions, a large number of trained people and financial resources would be considered suitable for a very wide range of activities. I would note that we weren't involved in the agricultural sector in Nigeria at the time but that is good example. Kenya could have a broader program than Rwanda. I remember the Mission in Somalia proposed developing an agricultural university. According to the strategy, and the decision finally reached, Somalia wasn't large enough to support a full-blown agricultural university. I would also note that in implementing the strategy there was good cooperation with other donors such as the World Bank.

Q: What was the result of this work on the research effort?

WINTER: I believe the answer to that question is related to the attitude in AID in the mid to late 1980s regarding assistance to agriculture. At that time there was considerable pressure in the Bureau to reduce our support for agricultural activities. There were competing demands for declining resources, agricultural growth in Africa had not kept pace with population growth, most of the assistance programs were with inefficient government organizations and agricultural sector success stories were few and far between. Senior Mission and Bureau staff, with a few exceptions, were not very enthusiastic about new programs in the agricultural sector. I should note that the S&T Bureau under Dr. Nyle Brady worked hard to maintain AID interest and support for agricultural research and programs involving US universities. I sometimes speculate that his success in protecting certain parts of the AID agricultural program helped accelerate the decline when he left his Assistant Administrator position.

So this was a period of some frustration for agricultural staff as the Bureau kept concluding that old programs should not be continued and new programs should not be started. The result was a fairly rapidly shrinking agricultural portfolio which also meant that only a few new research activities were started. However, it turned out, thanks to some work that started when I was there but didn't come to fruition until later, that the attitude of the Bureau eventually changed. Some research demonstrated that the returns to agriculture were perhaps reasonable after all and that in particular the returns to agricultural research investment were very good. And so finally...

Q: So the strategy that you developed for research was again...?

WINTER: There was a greater attempt to utilize it. Even during the agricultural contraction phase it had been used in continuing some research programs. Cal Martin had also worked a great deal with the World Bank on regional research cooperation and influenced their SPAR program-I forget what SPAR stands for-which did result in a more coordinated agricultural research program involving the World Bank and other donors. He was really the leader of that research coordination effort.

I might also mention that we developed and began implementation of a natural resources strategy when I was there. Because of the multiple outside interests in what should be done in the environment and natural resources area that was a real struggle. But through a process of involving a lot of groups and Deputy Assistant Administrator Ray Love's willingness at a key point to say, "It is time for the strategy. Let's get it out there.", we were able to put it in place. This strategy also grouped countries and problems. It also clearly stated that AID was not going to support work on every natural resource problem in every country, only some key problems in some countries. I think it really did provide direction and a basis for saying "no" to many proposals.

Q: What was the core of its objectives?

WINTER: As I remember, there were several objectives. First, we wanted to support natural resources management rather than only conservation. We agreed that while there

is a place for conservation, a more feasible approach was to manage resources in a sustainable manner which also allowed people to survive. Second, not every country would have the same type of program. Larger countries would have larger programs and would be able to support more activities than other countries. Third, we would focus on certain areas of natural resources activities. We would not be doing much in coastal resources management for example.

In my opinion, such strategies have both internal and external benefits. Internal benefits because they do provide discipline and guide program development. External because the strategies help explain to outside groups that there is a plan, a program and we aren't doing things in some ad hoc manner. And since we had developed the strategy with outside input, I think it gave us some credibility in dealing with various external groups. Which was important. Often, very important.

I should note that I was Chief of the Agricultural Division for only about a year and then I moved up to be Assistant Director for Natural Resources in the Office of Technical Resources.

Q: In the African Bureau?

WINTER: Yes. In the African Bureau.

Q: What was that function?

WINTER: Well, the Office of Technical Resources had quite a span of technical staff and it was decided that there should be two assistant directors.

Q: Who was the office director?

WINTER: Keith Sherper. There had previously been one Deputy Office Director and as part of a mini reorganization that position was replaced with two assistance directors. I don't know exactly why. As Assistant Director for Natural Resources I was responsible for agriculture, natural resources and environment, engineering and selected regional activities. The other Assistant Director had education, health and family planning. We both were also involved in a number of Bureau initiatives. In hindsight, I don't think the concept of two associate directors worked very well. I had a good feeling for part of the TR program but knew little about the other part. So, the only person that had the overall picture was the office director. So when he was there, things operated fine. He could deal with the policy questions and with outside groups with multiple or specific interests. When Keith Sherper was not there, neither one of we assistant directors could answer questions about the full range of TR activities. It never quite worked. And I would note that after they tried it, they went back to a single deputy director again.

Q: Were there any particular initiatives you were trying to take?

WINTER: At that time I was still trying to support the agricultural research strategy, to get the Natural Resources Strategy implemented and trying to do more in the agricultural policy analysis area. Trying to look at some of the broader issues. As I look back, I don't remember that much about this effort. It was really a blur of papers. I never felt that we got very far.

Q: Well, then you finished up in the African Bureau in 1988?

WINTER: Yes, in 1988.

Transfer to USAID/Indonesia as Head of Agriculture and Rural Development - 1988-1992

Q: Where did you go next?

WINTER: To Indonesia. Where I spent the next four years. I arrived there in January of 1988 and I stayed there until July, 1992.

Q: And you were the Agriculture Officer?

WINTER: I was head of the Office of Agriculture and Rural Development which, when I arrived, was a large office. We had thirteen direct-hire and contract staff in the office. In addition there were over fifty contract staff working on projects and a Foreign Service National staff of about forty-two.

Q: What was the situation in the country and our US relationship to it?

WINTER: Indonesia was starting to do very well in growth terms and viewed very positively. The government was very stable. AID had been providing substantial amounts of assistance to Indonesia since the late 1960s and, although smaller, the program in 1988 was still substantial. There were assistance activities across a wide spectrum from stock market development to family planning to private sector support to small credit. All part of the program had very good working relationships at the national and the provincial levels.

In agriculture and rural development, the environment was equally positive. Agricultural production was going up, rural services were improving and government programs were generally viewed as effective. AID had a long history of assistance in agriculture and rural development and a large on-going program of twelve or thirteen projects. The activities were scattered both in terms of technical areas and in geographic regions. We were supporting programs in crops research, soil conservation, agricultural planning, provincial rural development, rural road construction, irrigation improvement, upland crop production, fisheries development, livestock research, soils research, watershed management and perhaps something else that I am forgetting. Three of the projects were

new-one in irrigation, one in rural roads and one in fisheries, but the remainder were basically in mid to late stages of implementation.

I can characterize my time in Indonesia in two ways. One, we managed to begin a few new assistance activities in a systematic manner. Second, we completed a large number of programs and consolidated both activities and staff as requirements changed.

Q: What do you mean by requirements changing?

WINTER: Driven partly by budget, but also by a change in what Indonesia seemed to need most, we moved from a hands-on, field-based program to a more policy-oriented effort aimed at some of the macro level issues. Put another way, we moved to a substantial extent from assistance at a local level to a more Jakarta-based program. Projects that were largely field based were allowed to come to an end, were not continued or extended. And even the three new projects I mentioned-rural roads, irrigation management and fisheries were shrunk in scope just as they were starting to reduce the field activities. Reducing the fisheries project by 50 percent before it started was one of the first things I did.

Q: Was this strictly a budget issue? Or were there reservations about working...?

WINTER: It was a budget issue related to the feeling that we needed to be devoting more resources toward policy and private sector activities. So, it was a rethinking of the assistance strategy. There was also a new mission director.

Q: Who was that?

WINTER: David Merrill. He certainly brought in a focus on the private sector and policy change, not just in agriculture and rural development but across the board. And it was time for AID to acknowledge the results of some assistance activities and move on.

Q: Which ones would you cite-of ones that had been there for awhile that were the most significant of the programs?

WINTER: Probably reflecting my bias, I think the agricultural research program we been involved in since the late 1960's was the most significant. Cooperating with the World Bank in the research program, we had helped develop the research system and the rice varieties that enabled Indonesia to be basically self-sufficient in rice.

Q: Was this at the university or was this...?

WINTER: No. This was through the Agricultural Research Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. We helped establish the research system, including working with the World Bank and others to construct it, to staff it and to train the people in it, and to put in the

actual research programs. It was really a massive effort over more than twenty years. There were others involved but we had a real leadership role.

Q: We were at the heart of it, right?

WINTER: Yes. We were at the heart of it. By the time I left Indonesia our assistance in agricultural research basically ended except in the area of bio-technology. I really felt we still had something to offer in that area and that we needed a little phase-out period.

Q: And successfully?

WINTER: Yes. I think we ended successfully.

Q: People had been trained, it was sustained and it was going forward?

WINTER: The system was operating and producing new varieties. They were facing problems, of course, as any system does. For example, the problem of low salaries was there-just as in Egypt. Funds for maintenance and operating costs were issues which we were trying to address through the policy work we supported on resource allocations within the Ministry of Agriculture.

Q: What was your view of the quality of the research that was being done?

WINTER: I believe it was quite good. Basically the Indonesians were carrying out a program that had enabled them to develop high yielding varieties and take new germplasm from domestic and external sources to produce new local varieties and extend them to farmers.

Q: And they had a system for extending them?

WINTER: Yes. They had a system for providing seeds and inputs to farmers and they did it well. We also supported an integrated pest management program that dealt with of problem of overuse of pesticides that was very successful. It enabled the Indonesians to reduce pesticide use substantially while not having serious out-breaks of plant-hoppers. They may still be receiving some very limited support for this very successful program, but I think it is now being continued completely on their own.

In general, I believe the US can be very pleased with the success of our assistance in Indonesia in the agricultural research area. I think we could have productively continued our support in a different mode, but that didn't happen. What I had in mind was to continue the relationships that were established between US and Indonesian scientists and to continue supporting the relationships established between Indonesia and international research centers. We no longer needed to have an in- country presence but enabling the Indonesians to travel or enabling the links to continue in some other way would have

been useful. The same problem I saw in Korea. We didn't solve the problem there and I don't know that we have yet. There is really...

Q: It was important to Indonesia to maintain its link with international US system of agriculture research and not become isolated.

WINTER: That's right and they are managing to do so. I think we could have helped them do it better with benefits to US agriculture also. I realize that there is no easy way to say how you do this in perpetuity. When do they finally have to "bite the bullet" if effect and assume all responsibilities. That isn't clear.

Anyway, the final research assistance was through a small biotech activity which involved the private sector there and a private company here with some AID support. Robert "Woody" Navin, the project officer was initially, I think, frustrated because we didn't have any money or very little money for the activity. However, in the end, the shortage of money was actually very good. In developing the program with the Indonesians, they realized that the US wasn't going to put in a lot of money because there was no new money. The money we proposed to use had to come out of the existing, terminating research project. And there was a small amount of money from something that didn't get done. This process and activity helped the transition away from US support. It was also useful because it brought in the private sector and their resources. And I think it helped the Indonesians to start thinking that they should get the private sector involved. That was important.

Q: Private sector in research?

WINTER: Right. They have a role and I think...

Q: What was the bio-technology that you were...?

WINTER: There were several things that the biotech activity involved. One was to put in a gene that would help control stem bore in corn. A second was to help develop micro-propagation of some planting materials. With a US company they were working on propagating genetically superior varieties of bananas and pineapples. Local Indonesian companies were interested and Woody Navin, without money, spent a lot more time talking, linking people up. Everybody realized that couldn't do this by ourselves and this led to what is considered to be a pretty successful effort. As far as I know it is on-going.

Another assistance program that I would cite as highly significant was the provincial area development program. These were programs of providing the infrastructure, the services that people needed throughout the rural areas of Indonesia. While we could never finish these local level activities, we really had an impact. We trained a tremendous number of people at both the national and provincial levels in the process of rural development and in doing things in rural areas. We made them comfortable with determining what to do and in managing small activities, in analyzing the problems and options and trying to

respond to rural needs. So as we left, we not only had assisted in completing thousands of small activities such as rural roads, schools, clinics, tree nurseries, but there were also systems and people in place. And the program didn't stop. Indonesia continued to operate and support that program.

Q: Was it run by the Ministry of Agriculture?

WINTER: No. It was run by the Ministry of Provincial Development. It involved assistance with agricultural activities and on roads and on other rural development activities in an integrated sort of way.

Q: But it was working? Because there was a lot of controversy over integrated rural development activities.

WINTER: The program worked at a provincial and local level. But it was not the same type of integrated rural development that we saw in Africa. Those were more complex with a new infrastructure system set up just for that purpose. The program in Indonesia was more a series of discrete activities carried out in the same area over time. There were activities in literally dozens of sites. The program did not depend on complicated coordination arrangements among ministries. Unfortunately, I didn't visit enough of these sites to see all the things that were going on. At one time we had US advisors in a number of provinces to monitor and to assist with implementation. And actually, I think it might have continued but we had an audit that said that AID was not adequately monitoring the rural activities. In point of fact, given the variety of places we were assisting, we would have had to expand our staff to the monitoring suggested. And that was not going to happen.

Q: We had technical people working in all these areas?

WINTER: I had Indonesian staff that were based in Jakarta. We also had contract people in each of the provinces we were working in to start with.

Q: Do you remember how many different locations?

WINTER: I have a feeling at one time we were in nineteen provinces. The number dropped and the program ended while I was in Indonesia. Although from our perspective, and that of the Indonesians, it was a successful assistance program, we were unable to manage, supervise or monitor it to the extent that the auditors felt was necessary. There is no doubt here were opportunities for abuses given the number of provinces and local areas where activities were undertaken.

Q: We were financing operating costs as well as...?

WINTER: Yes. We were financing operating costs through the budget as well as technical assistance. Through to particular local...

Q: Local currency generation?

WINTER: These were actually dollars, so it wasn't local currency.

Another assistance activity with impact was the rural roads project. In this activity we were attempting to assist the Indonesians build better rural roads in selected provinces. The project only operated in, I think, three provinces-maybe four. Our project included local cost funding of host country contracts for the costs of constructing roads to the design specifications. In the process of implementation we became involved in some very interesting areas related to the contracting process and contract awards and construction standards. From this experience we understood why many roads seemed to have such a short life. The strategy was not to build good roads and then to maintain them, but to build, let the road deteriorate and reconstruct in about three years. We found that in many cases the problems started with the competitive award process. The process of making contract awards to private sector firms to build the roads was far from transparent. Further, once the awards were made, the roads were not built to the specifications. The reasons for the lack of transparency and the poor construction turned out to be linked. To secure a road construction contract it was necessary to pay off a number of people. After the contractors made the payoffs, they no longer had enough money to build the road to the design specifications. But that wasn't a problem since the people making the awards also certified the construction. The system did result in roads, but roads of poor quality. When we became we involved, we insisted on our own certifying engineer. And that caused all kinds of consternation and problems for the existing system.

Q: Why did we feel we needed to get into rural roads?

WINTER: Good question. There seemed to be several reasons. First, rural roads were needed and several other donors including the World Bank and the Japanese were involved. Our commitment was for a piece of the larger effort. A need to improve the quality of rural road construction was a second reason. A third reason seemed to be an AID desire to have a project or two that could absorb large amounts of capital. "Where can we put money?". The rural roads activity and the irrigation activity had the potential capacity to absorb large amounts of money. You could expand these activities quickly by simply agreeing to construct more roads or to construct more irrigation system structures.

Q: This was part of a multi-donor programs?

WINTER: Not formally. Earlier on, AID had been involved in the construction of some major highways in collaboration with other donors. The collaboration in that instance was more formal. In this case, we were demonstrating better rural road construction techniques with other donors financing something similar in other areas.

Q: Were you developing rural road institutions?

WINTER: Yes, we were trying to, particularly at the provincial level. The project included training programs and technical assistance in design, road selection and other areas as well as assistance on contracting and certification. Under the program some very good roads were built. I remember some rural villagers say, "Oh, this road is fantastic. Before during the rainy season, we couldn't get out of our village because the road would simply dissolve and would be all mud. The teacher at the school wouldn't come because she didn't want to walk the half mile to our school. Now the school is open in the rainy season and we have new shops in town." It was really convincing testimony to the importance of good roads.

Q: Was there an evaluation of this apart from the audit question?

WINTER: Yes. There was an evaluation that concluded that we were successful in many locations with a real impact in those areas. A scaled down program was still underway when I left Indonesia. However, I really don't know what happened.

Q: Were there other significant activities? You also said that you were evolving more toward policy orientation?

WINTER: Yes, as I mentioned, in addition to research, provincial development and rural roads, there were projects in irrigation uplands agriculture, fisheries, and also in agribusiness development and natural resources management. These were all rather significant activities. Several had policy elements. In addition there was an agricultural policy project. Under that project AID helped set up a separate office in the Ministry of Agriculture to handle policy. We also supported some smaller activities related to policy, particularly rice policy.

Within AID, a separate Policy Office was created to provide a focal point for all policy efforts. One of the activities transferred to that office was the agricultural policy program.

Q: Were there any major policy initiatives though, in the agriculture area that you were attempting?

WINTER: In cooperation with the AID Office of Policy, we had extensive interaction with the government on a variety of policy issues. This involved the Ministry of Agriculture as well as the Indonesian Ministry responsible for economic planning (BAPPENAS). AID had provided some funds for to support policy change and we worked with BAPPENAS on determining which activities would be supported. One of the areas supported was the integrated pest management program.

Q: That was a policy issue?

WINTER: It was a policy issue because it involved a change from regular applications of chemicals to control insect pests on rice to a program where chemicals were only a last resort. In terms of government budgets this made quite a difference. But we also dealt

with issues such as funding for research facility maintenance, input supply systems, policy analysis - a whole range of issues.

We were also heavily involved in policy in the natural resources management area. While I was in Indonesia we designed and implemented a new project that had a major policy component involving national issues and on-the-ground activities in two locations looking at policy issues in coastal zone management and forestry management via pilot activities. In addition to project staff at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, I had a natural resources policy advisor on my staff who also had an office in the Ministry.

One aspect of that initiative, that we thought we were going to get started but really didn't, was a system of natural resource accounting. The concept was to value things in terms of their cost in natural resources. The normal system was that when you cut down a tree it added to your Gross National Product. But there is no recognition that there had been a subtraction from the natural resource base. So we were trying to introduce that approach in looking at logging and other natural resource extraction activities.

Q: A real pioneering effort in that one.

WINTER: Yes, it was. We weren't alone. The World Bank was also providing some support. But, although they were involved, I think we were providing the intellectual leadership.

Getting back to the Natural Resources Management Project, the work in forestry was aimed at greater sustainability which implied changes in policies regarding the sale of forestry concessions, the length of the concessions, the terms of the concessions. The coastal zone management element involved the establishment of an aquatic park and the management of the surrounding area to protect and sustain the park while also encouraging tourism and income-generating activities based on the park. A number of policy areas related to pollution, fishing, local community involvement and other areas were being addressed. Shortly before I left we also started a "brown" environment activity under the project to introduce low-cost or no-cost pollution prevention technologies to industrial companies and in so doing to help the Indonesian government with environmental protection and monitoring. Again, the activity had a real policy bent to it. There are other examples from every activity we were supporting.

Q: Did you get a feeling that the program was less essential to Indonesian needs and that they had the capacity and they were carrying forward as some people have commented recently.

WINTER: Clearly, they were much more capable. They had substantial numbers of trained people and were able to do many things without external assistance. Sometimes there was a certain security that having an external advisory there or a program that could support more innovative ideas but in many areas they were fully capable. For example, the Indonesians could do much of the policy-related analysis leading to policy

recommendations. But it was reassuring to have an outside expert come by now and then and say, "That looks right". Particularly in sensitive areas like rice production. Originally, AID had funded some experts. Using their own resources the Indonesians continued to bring them out just to...kind of review where they were and what was happening. To confirm what was being done and to give them the confidence that yes, what we are doing is more or less right.

For example, one of the changes in rice policy revolved around the question of whether Indonesia needed to be rice self-sufficient on an annual basis or was trend self-sufficiency more appropriate. In other words, did the Government of Indonesia have to guarantee through high-cost programs that domestic rice production exceeded demand every year? Which meant that there was going to be over-production much of the time because they would have to ensure that in the worst year there would still be enough rice. Or could a longer-term approach be used which aimed at increasing rice production to meet the growing rice consumption in most years. Sometimes rice production would exceed demand but if demand exceeded production in a particular year it would not be a national crisis. When I was there the Indonesian policy makers became convinced that thinking over a little longer period-not just annually-made sense. It wasn't something that you had to panic about or worry about if demand exceeded production now and then.

Q: Smooth out the curves.

WINTER: Yes, so you didn't have to over-invest in rice production. And they didn't have to be worrying much of time about disposing of a surplus and operating large storage systems.

Q: Was there a PL 480 program?

WINTER: Small and very specific to NGO's. I did not work with the PL 480 program.

Q: Did you have a relationships with NGO's generally within the agriculture sector?

WINTER: Actually, not very much. We were involved with NGOs in the environmental area but we had no project per se with NGO's.

Q: How was the private sector part of this working out? I mean ag business...?

WINTER: Our agribusiness project was just getting underway as I left. In developing the project, we had quite a debate with the government on the issue of whether or not projects should be supporting the private sector and what part of the private sector. Many Indonesians felt that the AID program was should be used to support Indonesian government programs only-that the private sector should get along by itself. And we were saying that we should be fostering and supporting the private sector.

In the agribusiness project we proposed focusing on getting the government to work with private associations and to think of their responsibility not as controlling the private sector but as facilitating their activities. Working with trade associations and examining export potential, we had identified fisheries and tropical fruits in a couple of regions as places to start. This had also involved interacting with US companies who were coming to source products out of Indonesia. To see how they might work with them. Finally, we reached an agreement with the Government of Indonesia, but I wasn't certain that they were completely pleased.

Q: What was sustained?

That is an interesting question, As I argued with the auditors at one time, it seems to me that the continuation of an AID program in its entirety is probably not the criteria you should use to judge success or sustainability. I believed that because it was hard for me to believe that AID and AID contractors always knew exactly how things should be done and that we always left the perfect system in place. So when the auditors suggested, "Well, they didn't continue this, therefore you've failed", I was willing to agree that the program didn't continue exactly as before. However, if you looked at what the Indonesians were doing you could see how they had taken our assistance and were using pieces of it here and a piece of it there. So we had this on-going debate. Does sustainability mean continuing exactly what the AID project supported?

Q: What was your definition?

WINTER: Well, I argued that by design, at least most of the time, project activities can't be sustained after AID support ends quite the same way because we introduce external factors such as foreign technical assistance experts and support systems that we think should be sustained. My definition of sustainability was that the program we were supporting was continued. For example, the provincial rural development program had evolved during the years of our involvement. Expecting it to continue in the same form as we were leaving it in 1991 was unrealistic.

Q: What would you say...?

WINTER: First of all, I would say the program doesn't look today like it did five years ago or eight years ago either. It has changed already so why would we expect it to just continue?

Q: What was sustained?

WINTER: Well, programs for example, of support to rural communities in that case, to engage in small scale activities, i.e.: a drainage ditch, a terrace, a road.

Q: Some of the technological components or ideas?

WINTER: Right. A livestock program that was dealing with small ruminants is going on. So, yes, it is being sustained.

Q: The concepts and the ideas and the trained people, I suppose.

WINTER: Exactly. The trained people have come back and are working in Indonesia. I think that has always been our strength. That is what we have done so well. And I think over time they are what make the difference.

Q: Any more on Indonesia?

WINTER: At the time I was there, as I said before, there was constant consolidation of the program. At times it was a real struggle, and I guess this is what every down-sizing program faces, to maintain morale and maintain production from individuals, particularly Indonesian FSN staff, when there may not be a job for them next year. The American direct-hire staff when their projects ended could transfer, but the Indonesians didn't have that option. But we certainly had staff stability. Over the time I was there, we had one new US direct-hire, in charge of the environment, and that was all. Everybody else kind of came when I did. We didn't turnover. So we had the same staff the whole time I was there, just a lot fewer of them as people left and as we shrunk the Indonesian staff.

All in all it was a good program and I think we wound things up in a way that, in almost every instance, was quite satisfactorily.

I left at a good time for me to leave.

Q: You left when?

WINTER: 1992.

Q: And then what happened?

WINTER: I came back and was in the Asia Near East-Bureau for about a year and a half and then I retired in 1994, January 1994. During that period my most notable experience was working on the Middle East Peace Process.

Q: What did that involve?

WINTER: AID provided some funding to support the State Department-led efforts to get the Palestinians, Jordanians, Egyptians and other Middle Eastern countries talking to the Israelis. We provided funds for small joint activities involving the Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians. The theory was that if you could get people from these groups working together on common problems it would facilitate the discussions on larger issues. So we had a working group on water and another on environment that planned and implemented a few, small activities. The forum for planning and agreeing on these activities was a

series of workshops held in various parts of the world - the U.S., China, Switzerland, Oman and I believe Tunisia. At the workshops there were representatives from the Middle Eastern countries as well as the European countries, Russia, Australia, Canada, etc. It was an opportunity to see diplomacy and the peace process in action.

Concluding observations on international development

Q: Well, you can add some more on the Asian Near-East Bureau if you want. But let's just talk more broadly, go back over this tremendous experience you've had. Briefly, what do you feel really works? What was the core of your experience that says that these are the things that work in development programs and agriculture?

WINTER: I'm still a believer that manpower development is key to our programs and their sustainability. Therefore, training programs including US training programs, and I know they are expensive, are one important element. I also think we need, to the maximum extent possible, to give host country people responsibility in the countries where we are working, to make every effort to make the assistance program their program and not AID's program. When we are working with the government, the government should be responsible. It shouldn't be "our" program. It should be "their" program. That was a major reason why the Zimbabwe program was so successful. It truly was their program.

If we are dealing with the private sector or private groups, it must also be their program. And somehow you've got to work and to install that and bring that in.

Q: Are there special techniques for...?

WINTER: Well, I think that's where NGO's are probably most effective. By NGO's, I don't mean American NGO's with their own imposed program. I mean working with local NGO's and spending time at that level.

At the same time, I am a firm believer that macro issues and our ability to influence things from the top are important. I can remember back in Nigeria talking about developing policy recommendations based on good analysis. Then the question was, "is there a market for them? How do you market them? Who is willing to do what is necessary?" It is easier to come up with recommendations than to climb that next step-to get the recommendation implemented.

In Indonesia I remember an advisor telling me that he thought the key was to have the analysis and the recommendations ready and on the shelf. And then, when the timing is right. You are ready.

Q: That was the case in Nigeria, wasn't it?

WINTER: That's right, when the oil boom came along they said, "Okay, forget those agricultural development recommendations."

Q: But later they...

WINTER: Yes, exactly. The recommendations were then relevant and the time was right.

Q: Are there some elements of your experience particularly about our agriculture programs that you think are important?

WINTER: I don't believe that the issues or problems we faced in agriculture were really all that unique. There are perhaps some climatic problems that other assistance efforts didn't face, but in general it seems to me that the problems confronted in urban programs or in education or in health programs were often very similar to those of the agricultural sector i.e., a need for technology, too few trained people, a lack of recurrent budget, an unresponsive bureaucracy. I wish we in agriculture had done as good a job as the population people did in systems research area. From the research they really were able to understand why people were adopting contraceptives or practices or why they weren't.

Q: Farming systems research didn't...?

WINTER: Farming systems did address some of the issues, but it really didn't do very much operations research. In most instances it didn't really go very far beyond the technical to work with extension staff on why things working or not working. We seemed to believe that since people had been growing crops and livestock for centuries and somehow surviving we only needed to provide better technology...

Q: It was an old, old sector as opposed to family planning and population. It was a brand new concept.

WINTER: And maybe it just overwhelmed us at times. Agriculture is always such a big sector in most places. And it is hard to...

Q: Explain a little bit more what you mean about operations research?

WINTER: Well, as I understand it, population personnel were constantly evaluating, in a real research based way, what they were doing and why it was or wasn't working. "Did the message get across? What impact was it having? Why wasn't it having impact? Why was it effective?" Using information from the research, they were able to constantly evolve their programs slightly to make them more effective for this group or that group. So, the programs weren't "one size fits all" efforts.

And that made a difference in impact while also enabling the population programs to do a good job of reporting. In agriculture we seemed to do less country specific work on issue such as why did somebody decide to use fertilizer versus not use fertilizer. We'd say we

had early adapters and we had late adapters but we didn't analyze why people acted as they did. We didn't seem to be as systematic as some other sectors.

Q: Good point. Anything else of significance?

WINTER: Time is probably more important than money. Good programs take time to develop and mature. Expecting changes to occur rapidly is often unrealistic. Persistence and a willingness to stick with something is often the key to long-term success, not the amount of money. I was sorry to see what I perceived as a trend away from longer-term efforts toward short-term activities.

Q: Well, then, what were your feelings about AID as an organization to work in?

WINTER: I don't think I could have had a better job all these years. The assignments were interesting and AID had very interesting people as well. Nevertheless, I think we in AID have become more homogeneous over the years. We don't seem to have the same characters and personalities we used to have in AID.

Q: Interesting.

WINTER: I also believe, in spite of perhaps what some outsiders might say, that AID in so many cases, led international development efforts. People might say, "The World Bank was doing this". But if you look at which organization initially put forward the ideas, it was so often AID. Maybe we didn't have the resources the World Bank did, but the new ideas came from AID.

Q: They were pioneers.

WINTER: Exactly. Pioneering the ideas and getting programs started and the bank followed along. In so many countries and in so many technical areas, AID was in the forefront utilizing collective wisdom from across the US. We brought in good people from the university systems, experts from the private sector and skilled people from federal, state and local organizations to work on designing and then implementing programs. I really think we did a good job of bringing the best talent to bear on the problems. Obviously, over the years, AID became less important in terms of our size as more donors and more groups became involved in providing assistance, but as an organization we solved problems made a difference.

And I guess, over time, we have in effect, lifted ourselves away from the rural roots of the programs. We don't have field staff anymore. The field now is...

Q: Is that good or bad?

WINTER: Well you have lost something and that is the field understanding. We now have an agricultural person and she or he is in the capital city. Consequently, we don't

have the same level of understanding what we once did about what is happening in the rural areas.

Q: That is where most of the people still are.

WINTER: That's right. On the other hand, believing as I do that we should make the local people responsible, you could say, "Well, you need to have them tell us..."

Q: As a last comment from your perspective and your experience, do you think foreign assistance has made a difference in international development?

WINTER: I am absolutely convinced that there are many programs in many countries that have made a tremendous difference. In Indonesia, for example, there is no doubt in my mind that the rice research program benefitted from foreign assistance and would not have achieved the same level of success without assistance. There is no doubt that the provincial development program benefitted from foreign assistance and improved the standard of living of thousands of rural residents. The all weather rural roads enabled children to receive a better education and rural residents to have more services.

In Korea and in Zimbabwe there were activities that raised rural incomes, that gave people new opportunities, that simply made a tremendous difference in the daily lives of people. In other fields, like family planning and education or health, the same is true. The lives of millions of people are better today because of foreign assistance programs. And I think that such results will continue. Perhaps it's not as easy now because the world is a more complex place and the easiest solutions have been put in place. So the incremental change may be harder. But on balance, foreign assistance has made a difference in every place I've been.

Q: Well, that is an excellent way to end. And a very interesting interview.

End of interview