

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training  
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**ARTHUR M. FELL**

*Interviewed by: W. Haven North  
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**INTERVIEW**

*Q: Today is February 15, 1997, and we are interviewing Arthur Marshall Fell who has had a long career in international development and with the Agency for International Development. How many years have you been associated with AID?*

FELL: I started in AID in December of 1969, and I retired in May of 1990.

Early years, education and military experience

*Q: Let's start out this interview with a little discussion of your early life, where you came from, where you grew up, your education, and then we'll move on to other aspects of your career.*

FELL: I was born in Bloomington, Indiana. There was a movie made about Bloomington, Indiana called Breaking Away which some people might have seen, and it's a quarry town. There are two sides to the town. One side is a Big Ten university, Indiana University. The other side of the town is like the quarry side of the town or the other side of the tracks. Every time I tell people that I'm from Bloomington, Indiana they say, "Oh, you must be associated with the university," but we weren't associated with the university. We were in the junk business. My father was in the scrap iron and steel business, so we were from the other side of the tracks. Growing up in Bloomington, Indiana where I was born in 1935 on December 19, I actually went to the University High School, sort of a training school of Indiana University. So I had a lot of association with professors' children. I suppose I sort of got a taste for international relations contact with other languages and international society from roaming around Indiana University and seeing people from all different places, and I got sort of interested.

*Q: Did you go to university there?*

FELL: Yes.

*Q: What did you major in?*

FELL: I majored in business and economics.

*Q: Were there any aspects of those courses or program that you found particularly instructive in your international work?*

FELL: Well I took Spanish, and I was always interested in Latin America strangely enough. In those days during vacation time, people would go to Cuba or Mexico on vacation. I think I did that several times. I was interested in Latin America. Insofar as the courses I took, I never really thought I would get involved in anything international. It just seemed so distant and so far away that I couldn't imagine it at the time.

*Q: When you traveled to Cuba and Mexico, how did you find those countries?*

FELL: I was absolutely intrigued and interested. I was always sort of interested in how other people lived, the languages they spoke and how their culture related to our culture. There are different approaches to history. Some people will tell you that history is created by events and great people. The counter to history is a lot of little people doing a lot of little things: the shopkeepers and artisans and farmers. I'm more interested in that aspect of things, the ordinary people how they lived.

*Q: Did you do any studies during those trips or was it just travel?*

FELL: No they were just for vacations and holidays.

*Q: Then you graduated from the university, did you go on with your studies?*

FELL: I graduated in 1957. In those days it was unthinkable not to go into the Army. I was in ROTC and I joined the US. Army. I had a commission. In those days you could sign up for Army Language School, and I went to Monterey, California. I wanted to study Spanish. They had six month courses where the Army does a first rate job like they do in teaching. Instead of taking Spanish where there wasn't any room, they sent me to French. So I took French and ended up getting assigned in France, and liked it very much.

*Q: Where were you assigned?*

FELL: I was originally assigned in the headquarters of what was then the communications zone. In those days (the late 1950s), we had about 50,000 troops stationed in France. I was originally in Orleans and then got assigned to La Rochelle and eventually to Verdun, so I had three different assignments in France.

*Q: What were you doing?*

FELL: Originally I was in the counter intelligence agency. We were doing security surveys and background checks. Then I married a Frenchwoman while I was here in France. They removed me from the counter intelligence corps and I was put into the military police. I ended up having an interesting job. This is an aside actually but it might have some relationship. I was the commander of a little depot. The United States built two atomic storage sites in France in the late 1950's. One of them was Chalon sur Marne and the other was outside of Verdun about 20 kilometers. I remember reporting to this atomic storage site the United States Army Corps of Engineers had built. It was quite an elaborate affair over 500-600 hectares. Most of it was all underground. Very elaborate with underground igloos and huge bunkers and calibration facilities. I went in there and there was a Major there he said, "I'm glad you are here Lieutenant. You are in charge of this place. Because the United States can't use it." In fact, President Kennedy had come to see De Gaulle in 1960 very early in his administration when he came to Paris. The first thing De Gaulle asked was he said, "You built two atomic storage sites in France. One thing we have to make very clear is if you ever decide you are going to push on the red

button, you have to consult with France." That phrase became very well known in France. It became "Poussez sur le bouton rouge," which was a code way of saying we have to know everything that goes on in our country, and of you have an atomic storage site, we have to have people assigned there, we have to know what is going on and how it was operating and all that. That meant we would have to share secrets with France. Kennedy blinked and he said, "No!" We were afraid of leaks. They had a lot of what we thought were Communists in government and people we could not trust, and so De Gaulle said, "In that case you will not be able to stock atomic material in France, and you won't be able to use these two depots." That's when I stepped into history, Haven, because they assigned me to this depot we couldn't use. There was nothing in it, although the United States Army decided we could put about 5000 tons of conventional ammunition, which we did in that depot. Then there was the Berlin buildup about that time. It was 1962. I was in charge of this depot and I had about 20 military police. A little known fact that after W.W.II there were many Polish and Lithuanians, and Latvians floating around, stateless people, and they were incorporated into a paramilitary organization called the Polish Guard which was used to guard American bases at that time. I had a platoon of Polish Guards and a platoon of military police and we just sort of checked on the perimeter fence, made sure all the bunkers were closed and I got a pool table. We were 20 kilometers away from headquarters. No one bothered us. The next thing you know there was the Berlin Airlift. This is a digression, but it is going to hookup with something, I'm sure, back in the Pentagon they wanted to be sure that the Berlin Buildup was not a paper operation. We were actually going to show the Russians that we were serious about what we were doing. We were going to bring 100,000 troops over from the United States and show that we were going to resist whatever happened. To show that it wasn't a paper operation they decided to bring all the logistics for 100,000 troops. It is mind boggling to think about doing something like that. The basic load of ammunition means that you have to fire for three months or something like that without worrying about where it is going to come from. I'm sure they were worrying where are we going to put all this ammunition. Someone in Washington must have had the brilliant idea, you have these atomic storage sites. Why don't we just put the ammunition in them. They decided to put a lot of it in there. We had a train coming in to the depot, and it operated right all day. It made me realize how a big organization like the US. Government can operate fast and very efficiently if the government wants to. They brought in 1000 troops within ten days. I went from being in charge of the depot to being the PX officer for the depot. In a way it sort of made me realize how big operations have to be carried out. USAID later on in my career did not do exactly comparable things but it did things that had a certain parallel, particularly in emergencies.

*Q: Did you have much time to make contact with the French community at all?*

FELL: Absolutely. I had a lot of contact with the French community, of course, having been married to a Frenchwoman. When I was there in this particular depot, we had just finished building that particular depot. This is a very important point in linking up. In building this depot we had a lot of Corps of Engineer trucks that had come in to carry dirt and bring in materials and steel and cement. We absolutely wrecked all the roads in that

region just by having trucks coming through all the time, night and day. One of the things the US Army tried to do was to repair the damage from a personal relations standpoint that we had with these villages. I went into many of these villages that surrounded the camp and met with the mayor and we'd sit down and talk. There was really very little we could do about the physical deterioration of the roads because we had a status of forces agreement with the French and they were in charge of doing the roads. But we could kind of hold their hand and try to explain what was going on and try to build better relations and if there were problems that did come up, we'd try to iron them out. We would have soldiers that would go into villages and go into bars and who knows what kinds of things could happen. All kinds of things did happen. That was one of the things I did was try to build good relations with local population and officials.

*Q: You became a public relations person.*

FELL: Exactly. Eventually one of the mayors made me an honorary citizen of his town and gave me the keys to the village. We tried to show that there were person to person relationships between us and them. We did a little bit to try to improve relations despite the fact that they had plenty to complain about the way we were operating. After I left and got out of the Army; I took an overseas discharge. In those days you could take an overseas discharge and you had a ticket back to the United States for one year. You can remember that going between the United States and Europe was not an easy thing to do in those days. It was expensive and we never really thought of going across the Atlantic that easily. So I stayed in Europe; I stayed in France. I traveled around and went to the Middle East. I traveled to Greece and went to Rhodes. I spent several months in Israel working on a Kibbutz with my wife in agricultural work. Then I came back. I remember I went to Bremerhaven and checked into the shipyard there. They said this is the last day you can get back to the United States, and they put me on a ship, and I went back to the United States, went back to law school and graduated law school in 1966.

Law school and work with a New York international law firm

*Q: Where did you go to law school?*

FELL: Indiana University.

*Q: Any particular field of law?*

FELL: There really wasn't much one could do in terms of concentration in those days. I took the standard courses. There weren't very many optional courses you could take. I took one course in comparative law. I spoke French fluently and Spanish maybe a little less fluently because the French had pushed out the Spanish. I had been overseas and I had a little different vision on things from some of my colleagues that were in law school because I was about three or four years older than most of them. I had been traveling quite a bit. I graduated law school in 1966 and passed the Indiana bar, but my wife didn't want to stay in Indiana. She wanted to see the big town. I was lucky enough I had done well in

law school and was editor in chief of the Indiana Law Journal which was a fairly prestigious. So I was able to get a very good job in New York with a very good law firm, and passed the bar in New York and started practicing law in New York. That's where I was in 1966 and 1967 and 1968.

*Q: Any particular branch of law?*

FELL: I was doing everything that you can imagine. I was working in an international law firm. It was called Davis, Polk, Wardwell, Sunderland, and Kiendl which was in the Chase Manhattan Plaza. It turned out it was a very blue blood law firm. We had some very interesting clients like the estate of Winston Churchill, ITT and CIBA, very upscale clients. I worked on many different things. I remember in those days they were going to break up AT&T. They were talking about beginning to break up AT&T. I was assigned the job of researching how this might be done. The very first one was Southern Bell that they were going to break off of AT&T and I was given an assignment is this OKAY? I found out that one of the ways they were going to do the accounting wasn't quite right; it didn't match up. They were absolutely sure that everything was clean because the AT&T lawyers had looked at it. When I told my senior capital partner who was a very famous man in those days, FAO Schwartz the toy man. I told him this doesn't match up and I showed him the statute and how it failed to meet the requirements. He said this is absolutely astounding. They are not going to believe this when they see this. We had a big meeting with the AT&T lawyers and they absolutely blew their stack and couldn't understand how this had slipped through their system. That set me up quite well in the law firm. They thought this was quite a nice piece of research. Then I had another big piece of research. One of our clients was being sued. It was an advertising agency that was being sued for Thalidomide. The advertising agency had handled the account of the Thalidomide, and they were being sued by a pharmaceutical company. It was quite a complicated case. The net result of it was that I was able to do some research that showed the agency hadn't been hurt by having handled this advertising and there wasn't any cause of action. I worked on another interesting case. They were putting cables across the Atlantic Ocean in those days. One of our clients was putting this cable across the Atlantic Ocean and had failed to get landing rights from British Telecom. The argument they made was the United States government had not put sufficient pressure on the British government to permit it to get the landing rights. We had quite a lawsuit about that issue. We lost it I think. I told them we were going to lose it.

Eventually I kind of got disaffected like a lot of people in the 60's. I heard of a fellowship offer at Columbia University called the Jervy fellowship in comparative and international law whereby we could spend a year at Columbia University and a year in France and work on an advanced degree in law. I went to that and spent two years at Columbia University in this fellowship program and studied comparative and international law and came to France. This was in 1968. 1968 in France was total chaos; it was a cleavage year. I really didn't do a lot of study in France. I remember I was wondering what am I going to do when I come back to the United States? Am I going to go back to my law firm? I put in a application to USAID.

*Q: Was there anything of particular interest in your graduate studies?*

FELL: I actually had gotten interested in a rather non-lucrative aspect of international law. I got interested in comparative historical preservation. I was very interested in the way the Europeans had and the kinds of laws and regulations they had established to preserve historical monuments. I thought that this would be a very good thing if in the United States we were able to do something along those lines to preserve physically our historical past. It turns out that I was not very realistic in my approach. I was more idealistic than I should have been. Now this is being done to some extent in the United States more and more based on tax concessions, is that historical buildings can be protected probably better through that way than simply ruling that you can't tear them down or change them.

*Q: You heard about AID toward this time. Where did you hear about it?*

FELL: I think I had seen USAID projects in various countries and heard about the Marshall Plan. You couldn't possibly have come to Europe in those years and not have heard about what the United States had done during those years and the good publicity that had done and the good feelings that had created and the fact that France was beginning to take off and other countries in Europe were beginning to take off and that the United States had played a major role in that work. I remember when I was in Israel I saw clasped hands on roads and so I knew we had done a lot of things there that were physically on the ground. I think I was looking around to get something, since I had studied comparative and international law at Columbia, that would be related to international affairs. I thought that USAID would be an agency that would be interesting and also would provide the opportunity to go overseas.

*Q: Where did you hear about AID?*

#### Work with the Office of Economic Opportunity

FELL: I think I got the actual address out of a US Government manual. There is a book that is published of all the agencies in the US Government, The US Organization Manual or something like that. I got a copy at the consulate. I was looking through it and saw USAID. I read the description of it and saw the address, and I put in an application.

*Q: You really didn't know much about the organization.*

FELL: Not really. In a very general way. I never knew specifically nor had I talked to anybody that had worked for USAID that I knew of. When I went back to the states I had put in this application and it took a long time for USAID to crank in those days, and I guess it still does with security and whatnot. So when I got back I was waiting for an answer. This is an interesting story, Haven, how I actually interviewed USAID. When I got back I started working in New York which was sort of a point of attachment. I had

friend whom I had known in law practice who was counsel for the OEO, the Office of Economic Opportunity, that was headed up by Donald Rumsfeld in those days, which was kind of the US aid program in the United States, the original one. I worked as a lawyer in the OEO in New York for several months just sort of waiting for an answer from USAID. I was doing very much community development and grants to local communities and watching out on these grants and following up on them. In a way it was kind of an introduction to the work I would eventually do in USAID. I remember holding hearings. Organizations would be set up to receive OEO grants. The OEO would once in a while figure that some of these organizations would go too far, weren't handling the money well or weren't doing a good job. In order to withhold these grants there would have to be some sort of a hearing. I handled several of these kinds of hearings we would hold for these organizations. It was quite wild because these were local level people working on local issues.

*Q: This was strictly in the New York area?*

FELL: New York, Connecticut. Some of them would be in not so very good neighborhoods. All the people would turn out trying to make a case saying that this organization was doing a good job. Usually it had been based on some information that investigators had turned up that they weren't handling the money properly or weren't being effective and we'd have a hearing and take all the evidence and make some sort of decision on it whether we'd continue or not. In most cases we'd continue the grants. It's something we found out at the AID and a principle that I learned at the OECD, once programs get started, they just tend to keep going on; it's very hard to stop them. So it is very important to start them well and get on the right issues.

*Q: You also tried to improve the program and restructure it.*

FELL: Restructure it. Try to figure out what the bottlenecks were, what the problems were, where things weren't being handled well.

Joined USAID in the General Counsel's Office, Africa Bureau - 1969

There was actually an interesting thing that happened when I came to interview USAID. The first day I came down, in those days the General Counsel for USAID was a man named Steve Ives. There was a man named Sollins who was sort of in charge of hiring lawyers. I talked to him and everything went well. He said he'd talk to a couple of the geographic offices and we'll see how it goes. I talked to Mr. Levy in Latin America where I was most interested, and I talked to Herb Morris in Asia, who incidentally is here in Paris today with his wife. He's retired now. I had a feeling after a couple of days that things weren't going very well. My mother and father had come with me just to take a vacation in Washington DC. I said, "Well, I think we'll leave." As I think back on it I can't remember how it actually happened. We had checked out of the hotel and were leaving Washington DC and driving home after the first day of interviews. I was supposed to come back the second day. My father said how did it go? I said something



like: "I guess the interviews went OKAY. I'm supposed to go back the next day, the day following the interviews. I don't think I will. We're leaving now because I don't think the interviews went very well." We were driving on the highway leaving Washington DC and my father slammed on the brakes and said, "What did you say? You told these gentlemen you were coming back for an interview and we're leaving now. How could you do such a thing, Arthur?" I said, "Yes but I don't think it was going very well." He said, "That doesn't have anything to do with it. You told them you were going back for an interview. You go back." He drove me back down to the State Department and checked into another hotel. This was an amazing thing. If my father had not put his foot on the brake at that moment, I would never have joined USAID. My father is what we call today very square. You could give him your wallet and come back the next day and it would be there. He was one of those people who lived by certain rules and ideals that are getting rarer and rarer. I went back and the next day who did I meet? Jim Phippard. He was the assistant general counsel for the Africa Bureau.

*Q: This was in what year?*

FELL: This was in 1969. We had a good interview, and I met Jerry Zarr and Mike Hager who was in that office. I don't know who might have left at that time, but they had a lot of legal work in the Africa Bureau as you know, Haven. To make a long story short, I was hired into that office. As I look back, that was the first office that I started working in. It was in the Africa Bureau. At that time John Hannah was head of the Agency. the Deputy Administrator was Rutherford Poats the Assistant Administrator for Africa was Sam Adams. His Deputy was Phil Birnbaum in those days. In later years I said our office was an illustrious office; everyone made good except me. There was Jim Phippard who eventually became Mission Director in Tunisia, Jerry Zarr who eventually became Mission Director in Ghana and elsewhere. An individual who came into that office after I had been there was Charles Gladson who eventually became Assistant Administrator for Vietnam and Mission Director in Kenya but that's another story. For the first year I was in an office without a window, and my wife thought this was terrible. I say this because sometimes you have to labor in the vineyards and you don't always have the best of accommodations. People from the outside think everything is always clean and all that, but sometimes we work in dingy, dark offices. There were offices in the State Department Building that didn't have windows, and I had one like that.

*Q: What were you working on mostly?*

FELL: I worked on our main client in those days which was a very good office in the Africa Bureau called the Capital Development Finance Office (CDF). It managed the loans. We had two parts to our aid program. There was the grants part of the aid program and the loan part. It turned out, this is something I could never quite figure out. The loan part was extremely tightly managed. The office that managed it was the Capital Development and Finance Office which was staffed mostly by MBA's who were young business oriented individuals in an office that was headed up by Robert Freeman. His Deputy was an extremely savvy individual, Al Disdier. Under him was Ed Skoll on one

side and Steve Klein on the other and under them were several young MBA's. They managed this portfolio of the loans projects that AID made in Africa. Once a week Al Disdier would hold a meeting, and he had a great big book that had every loan AID made in Africa, and he would go page by page through that book and say exactly where do we stand with each one of these projects. The whole project committee would be sitting there and we would say has the letter of commitment been opened, has the letter of credit been issued, have the invitation for bids been issued, have you followed up on this, who checked on that? Every single item of every single loan was checked once a week. We had a very tight management system in that office. I often think as I look back that this was one of the most cleanly functioning offices I've ever worked at while at AID. Highly professional.

*Q: Were there any particular issues you had to address as a lawyer?*

FELL: The one that really stands out in my mind and the one I guess I made a little bit of a mark for myself with. I joined AID in 1969. But in earlier years many things had been done maybe expeditiously or deals were put together. Sometimes you would go back into the files and ask what were these deals exactly because they were done at a time when maybe rules and procedures hadn't been solidified in AID. One of these became what was called a chestnut, and that was in Guinea. We had made an operation. It's hard to say what it was but an operation to provide airplanes to Air Guinea. These airplanes had come from Air Alaska. Guinea had for many years been unsatisfied with these airplanes which hadn't operated, they claimed. We claimed that they had not been maintained properly whereas the Guineans maintained that they had not been very good aircraft to begin with and they shouldn't have to pay on these aircraft. The State Department was worried because there was a provision in the foreign assistance act 620Q that said that if a country fell behind in its payments of interest or capital to the United States Government they couldn't receive any new projects. This was causing a lot of political problems because we wanted to maintain relations with Guinea which is one of the richest countries in West Africa with tremendous potential but was one of the countries that voted no to the French Franc zone. So it was in a certain equation with our relationships with Guinea. The State Department kept coming back and saying what can we do about this. This had gone on for many years. I was called in. I remember the head of the West African office in those days was Rudolph Aggrey who was one of the most senior blacks in the State Department in those days. He said, "You've got to figure out something. What are we going to do about this?" I took this project and started looking at it and it turned out that it had been a very peculiar operation from the very beginning. It actually had not been, in a true sense a loan. It had been an exchange of notes. We came to the conclusion and I wrote the opinion on this, that this did not fall within the purview of 620Q because it was actually not a loan, due to the way it had been structured. This enabled us to tell the Guineans that while they were legally obliged to repay it wasn't within the purview of being a loan from the United States Government which would have prevented us from providing any additional assistance. I remember when I wrote this opinion up. I suppose in these kinds of opinions there is a certain amount of flexibility. You can see the accordion over in the corner. I play the accordion. There is a certain amount of discretion you can play. But

from a strictly legal standpoint, one was able to come to the conclusion this was not actually a loan in the sense of the kind of loan we were talking about in the assistance act because it hadn't been structured that way. It was a completely different type of transaction. They loved that, and after that I was known as the lawyer who had pulled the chestnut out of the fire. Another project concerned the Chisamayo Port in Somalia, which had had a lot of costly overruns. Actually the contract was managed by the US Corps of Engineers. The Africa Bureau was trying to figure out some way for the Corps of Engineers to take responsibility for some of these overruns since they were the ones who were managing the program. I remember Phil Birnbaum who was the Deputy Assistant Administrator called me in and said, "Can't we sue the Corps of Engineers?" Actually I looked at a lot of the aspects of this but it turned out that one agency of the United States Government can't sue another agency of the United States Government. In practical purposes there was nothing we could do about it. They in a sense were our agent for carrying out this project and if there is an overrun, that's the way it goes. It took quite a bit of our budget that particular year. I know that in those years the budget of the Africa Bureau was around \$150,000,000. This was about a \$3,000,000 overrun so it was a considerable amount. I remember when this came to a head, the head of engineering for USAID was Dan Miller. He was a rather blustery type fellow. I remember him telling how the Chisamayo Port was falling apart because the rods on the inside hadn't been grouted properly. The Corps of Engineers had done the wrong type of work or hadn't supervised it properly. Years later we did rehabilitate the Chisamayo port when Lou Cohen was in Somalia. This might have been in the 1980's. Lou claimed he found an order in the files that actually authorized the contractor to wash the aggregate with sea water which I guess was an incredible thing to an engineer to allow that type of thing to be done which may have been one of the reasons why the port had deteriorated as it had. I don't think we knew that at that particular time, in 1969. All we had was a feeling that the Corps of Engineers hadn't done quite as good of a job as they might have done and, darn it, they ought to pay for it. We arranged for a meeting with Mr. Poats and one of the generals from the Corps of Engineers to hash this out. It turned to nothing. The general came over with his staff. They presented their case and said that everything we've done is not that bad, we supervised it and the port is there and is operating. There was nothing we could do about it basically. It's a cost overrun; that's just the way things go.

Many other projects we worked on in those days, eradicating smallpox in West Africa, working on buying vaccines and letting out for bids. There were trucks that had been bought for a major operation in the eradication of smallpox. I think this is one of the great success stories of foreign assistance that has not been given much of a highlight. Think what it would cost today if smallpox had not been eradicated. That every single person in the world had to have a little piece of paper. You had to go and get a vaccination, and you were scarred for life once, twice, maybe three times. This was going on all over the world and once and for all this had been eradicated from the face of the earth. Those of us who have worked in Africa and have seen this situation work can certify morally it would have been impossible to have ever done this without foreign assistance. You had USAID out there working, carrying out training, getting the vaccinations out there to the villages. This is one of the great success stories that is not given credit. I suppose if you start

adding up what the bill would have been had smallpox not been eradicated, it would have been in the billions of dollars. We worked on malaria eradication projects. In later years I was assigned to Cameroon and I had a little bit to do with the trans-Cameroon railroad in Washington; much more to do with it when I went out to the field.

Something happened and I was about ready to leave USAID after about a year and a half after being in Washington. I can't tell you exactly why. I was finishing up a doctoral thesis at Columbia University and was getting offers to teach law. Actually I got one very strong offer to teach law from colleagues that I had known in the legal profession. They wanted me to come to Valparaiso University. I also got an extremely interesting offer working on different projects, working on the Guinea project, and somehow the Harvey Aluminum Company had gotten my name. I think I might have met someone involved with the Harvey Aluminum Company at one of the meetings we had in Guinea. They invited me to Pittsburgh and said would you like to come to work for Harvey Aluminum Company? We need a general counsel. This was a very large aluminum company, a conglomerate of all the aluminum companies in the world that were operating the bauxite site in Guinea. I actually went out to Pittsburgh twice and interviewed with them and they offered me a job. Then something happened. I didn't accept that job. Something else had happened that changed my whole life. A project was being generated in Madagascar of all places. Al Disdier was coming to Paris to talk to the head of a large petroleum company in the United States named Anderson. He was head of an equity investing firm. This Anderson was head of Atlantic Richfield, a very wealthy man. He was dabbling in livestock, and they were interested in doing a livestock project in Madagascar at Majunga, Madagascar. Al Disdier was working on this project and he wanted a lawyer to come along with him to Paris because we were going to talk to the Caisse Française and the French. Strangely enough, I now work at the OECD. The embassy of Madagascar is not 100 yards from where I work today. But this was in about 1970 when this happened. We went there. Al Disdier was I think one of the most talented people we ever had in the Africa Bureau, very well organized, and he was also a native French speaker. His family had been French trappers somewhere out west, I guess in Montana. He appreciated the fact that I spoke fluent French so we got along together very well.

Assigned to the African Development Bank as technical advisor - 1971

When we got back to Washington he said, "Qu'est-ce que tu vas faire main tenant?" What are you going to do now? I said I don't know. I've got an offer to go out and teach law out in the Midwest. He said no I've got a better idea for you. We've got a job in the African Development Bank which is being staffed by Owen Cylke, who maybe has contributed to this history of USAID, too. This brings up another interesting facet about USAID and the way we operated. At one point AID had as many as 18,000 providing technical assistance in the field worldwide. In later years we operated through consultants and through firms and government agencies and participating agency agreements and whatever. In the earlier years of AID, we actually had people on the payroll getting a green check from the United States Government in AID who were actually working on projects, were actually building roads, were actually on farms, were in the ministries doing technical advising

and that sort of thing. It turned out I did that. I think it was very fortunate. Now when people talk about technical cooperation or what a technical cooperation assistant does, I did it and so I have a little better understanding of what the role of that type of person is. Owen Cylke had been assigned to the African Development Bank. This was in the early years. It was one of the great institutions that was created in the 1960's. In 1966 it was created as one of the great institutions that would bring the African Countries together. It would bring Africans together where they would analyze projects together and finance projects together. It was an African institution, based in Abidjan. We were looking for ways that we could help this organization, help this bank come into its own. One of the things we decided to do was to help them build their portfolio. This was rather typical of the Disdier approach.

*Q: This was right at the beginning of the bank?*

FELL: The beginning of the bank. Actually the bank in its first four or five years didn't have many operations. One of the reasons the bank didn't have many operations was the same reason why others had trouble making loans in Africa, which later on we found maybe we shouldn't be making loans in Africa; it was very hard to find good projects. Al Disdier to his credit had come up with this analysis. He said the bank is not going to be operational unless it can find bankable projects. It was hard to find bankable projects or to bring projects to a position where they could be financed. So he worked up an idea that we would provide a grant to the bank to help them develop projects. At the very beginning it was to study the feasibility of doing projects. Owen Cylke was out there to help get this grant working. Because here's another aspect too I think. You almost have to be a genius to be on the other side of the counter to use USAID money. It isn't self evident. Or to use any donors money and use it well, and to make sure that it fits well with the priorities of the policies of the donor agency that is providing it.

*Q: Why did you have to be a genius?*

FELL: Well, there are a lot of procedures, requirements, the methodologies and just a lot of paperwork. In a minute I'm going to try to explain how one of these projects took place. Genius is an exaggeration. It would take more of a plugger, a plodder to get through a lot of these procedures. Al thought we ought to have a little package and have someone out there doing technical assistance to help the bank to understand how to work with us and to train their people so they could work with us and other donors, and to use this money to actually develop projects to help build up their portfolio, and by building up their portfolio and lending operations, the bank would gain experience and become a more mature operation. It was very practical. I think everyone in the history of the bank that has been written believed this was a very important element in the early years of the bank. Owen had been there for about two years, and he had not been able to use any of the grant money for any feasibility study or any loans. Not because he didn't work hard at it, he was one of the most talented people we had at USAID. He did develop a lot of ideas for projects and got things started. I was able to build on a lot of the work Owen did.

One of the first projects he identified, which was a very interesting project was a bridge over the Mano River between Sierra Leone and Liberia. We helped create the Mano River authority, draft their arrangements and come to some sort of agreement on building the bridge over the international waterway. I remember going back to Washington saying: do you have any models for building bridges over international waterways? We weren't able to come up with one that would help me. I made many trips to Liberia and Sierra Leone in those days trying to get these two countries to agree to build a bridge, so they would agree where it should be built and how it should be built and come to agreement on terms of reference. So we had four partners you had to get together on this. In the background you had, first, USAID, second, the bank itself which had people working with their own ideas, third, Sierra Leone, and you had fourth, Liberia. Of course in the countries there was local political jockeying for where these bridges should be. In those days those countries were relatively stable, I mean they weren't in the turmoil they are in today. To go from Monrovia, the capital of Liberia to Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, you had to go hundreds of miles through Guinea because there was no bridge across the Mano River anywhere along that border. I've been there myself several times, and the river is not that wide. You had canoes going back and forth but there was no actual traffic except for in a couple of places there may have been some ferryboats that operated erratically.

Owen had convinced Washington, a very interesting thing. In those days we had rough estimates of how much the bridge would cost. It would cost \$1,000,000 to \$1,500,000 to build the bridge. There were some access roads that had to be built to connect up to the main highways. He said, "Look, let's not go into a feasibility study on this. It is self evident that these countries ought to be able to commerce with each other, with a road link. We could spend \$100,000 - \$200,000 to find out what the feasibility of this might be. Let's just do it and not waste the money. It is self evident that it ought to be done." Washington agreed, and our local offices agreed that was the right approach.

*Q: You mean the lawyers on Washington let you get by the legislation?*

FELL: We had enough we felt we could make the argument. It's almost like one of these things I've seen later on. Almost on the back of an envelope you can get someone who knows a lot about the geography of a certain place or a certain thing, you can get 80-90% from a person who knows a lot about the subject. To get the other 10% you could spend a lot of money and never be sure you got the other 10% down right. I think that was an example where we had 80-90% of the information we needed. Because you are working on a hypothetical where you don't have a bridge, what is the bridge going to create, what kind of synergies, what kind of economic development? We don't know because there has never been one there and we don't know exactly what would happen. So that was sort of the argument. But we did agree to go, and this is another thing that Al Disdier was very good about. He realized the feasibility study was fine but you had to go another step forward to help the bank, and that was to help them do the design study itself so that the project was really ready to be financed. That is not such an easy step, it takes a lot of work. This is where the procedures come into play. What this took, if you are going to have open bidding, you are going to have a pre-contractor selection. Are you going to go

for a short list or not a short list. In any case you have to advertise in the Congressional Daily. We'd advertise in the Congressmen's Daily and get a hundred responses back. We'd answer those hundred responses. Then we'd do a short list and explain to everybody why they are not on the short list because we'd get reclaims. We'd get the short list of five or six and then re-do the bids, put out the bids. We'd come back and have to set up a committee, everybody has to look at these bids; we had to judge them; we had to have some system by which we look at them in some objective way, rate them and try to negotiate with the best offer. In those days you couldn't include price for the price of a consultant at least. I remember the first negotiations we had. It was with Frank Lyons. It was a consulting firm that had done a lot of work in Vietnam, and it was headed up by a fellow named Frank Lyons who was quite a well-to-do man. He came out himself to Africa to negotiate this contract to do the engineering on this bridge over the Mano River. He was quite an impressive figure, and I was impressed that he, himself had come out there. We were getting a lot of attention from high level people in these consulting firms because they wanted to get their foot in the door of the African Development Bank at an early period of time. So we were getting more than the ordinary amount of hustling from consulting firms. That means pressure from their Congressman, pressures being put back on Washington the AID Bureau, all these bids had come out; have we really been considered? So there were a lot of letters flying around. This was another thing the Capital Development Finance Office had been attuned to and able to handle. You have to massage every one of these and show there is a transferring system and show everything is done in an above board way. In this case, the African Development Bank being one step away from USAID itself, and my being in the African Development Bank, I think we wanted to show that everyone was being given a fair shake.

*Q: You were a staff person of the bank?*

FELL: I was a staff person, yes. There was another point I wanted to make. Being in the bank was an extraordinarily interesting period for me.

*Q: Let's finish up on the project. What happened to the bridge?*

FELL: The bridge eventually got built. It was operated and maintained by the two countries for many years. I don't think it created the fillip for development in that area that we thought. It did have a certain amount of traffic. We would have hoped it facilitated more development, but other things overcame. The events in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the almost political disintegration of both countries.

*Q: The bridge is still there?*

FELL: The bridge is still there operating and being used. I think it brought the two countries together and maybe will eventually be another asset that can be used. During my tenure I think we did at least fifteen projects that were conceived and actually built. In fact I saw one recently. I was in Cotonou in Benin. There was a bridge in Cotonou that AID had been looking at for many years that was falling apart. It dated from

the French colonial days. Quite a complicated study was done because a port had been built in Cotonou which had changed the ocean currents and this had changed the way the erosion patterns were taking place so the bridge was falling apart faster than it normally would. An American firm Sanders and Thomas did a feasibility study. Eventually the African Development Bank hired Sanders and Thomas under the USAID grant to the bank to do a study of a dam. Sanders and Thomas came up with what they thought would be an elegant solution to this problem, building a small dam across the mouth of a river that comes from an estuary inside of a lagoon which actually existed in a natural way before this port had been built and also then design the bridge itself. This was eventually built. It turned out that the dam did not work the way they hoped it would. The bridge was built and is operating there.

We worked quite a bit on transport problems in those days because there was a feeling that Africa needed better communications and better transport. You talked about the West Coast Highway when you were Mission Director in Ghana. They were somewhat grandiose plans but there were plans to build east-west highways, an east coast highway, a west coast highway, and that this would help bring Africa together. I think from a pan-African standpoint there is a certain amount of truth to that; it would be a good thing to had these routes available. One of the major links that was missing in the west coast highway was the link between Accra and Abidjan. As you may remember, in order to go from Accra to Abidjan, you have to go way up north somewhere in Ghana and over to Abengowou in Ivory Coast some ten or fifteen hours. We brought in a firm, Wilbur Thomas, as I remember, out of North Carolina, to do the feasibility study for that particular project. We had a meeting at the African Development Bank, and the people from Ghana came over, as well as the Ivorians.

The Ivory Coast delegation we were very surprised on the first day was led by a Frenchman. The Ghanaians were not too happy about that. There was a different attitude you could see. Ghana would never have allowed a Brit to head up an international delegation to one of their own institutions like the African Development Bank. On the other hand, looking with a longer view, a certain maturity would have said what's the difference? The Guineans were quite offended that the Ivorians were being represented by a French technical cooperation engineer. The next day they came in their robes. They had been dressed in suits the first day; the next day they came in African robes to show they didn't like this. Negotiations were not all that easy because the French weren't all that anxious to get agreement on doing this link. I think the Ghanaians were more interested in seeing the Accra-Abidjan link be built than the Ivorians, and much less the French.

*Q: Why weren't the French interested?*

FELL: I think they are always afraid of contamination from Anglophone Africa. I think they are almost looking at it from a cultural standpoint. They were always afraid of Nigeria, the sleeping giant and Ghana as a very active vibrant Anglophone country. Ivory Coast was constituted in a different way and they could get along without.



*Q: What you are implying is the French had a very dominant role in deciding what was appropriate for Ivory Coast?*

FELL: Yes. I think that probably in the background, they did. Despite that, we went ahead with the project. In dealing with the Ivory Coast, it was mainly dealing with French technical cooperation people, and sort of the main technical cooperation expert who was working on this dossier, kept questioning me: what is your methodology going to be, what do you know about building roads, how does this firm know anything about building roads in Africa, you don't know this or that and are you going to do this or that? He was raising all sorts of obstacles. Every time he would raise an obstacle, we had some very good people, good engineers in the bank, engineers and technicians and economists in the bank itself both African and non-African, to answer his questions.

I wanted to make this point that we worked together in the bank beautifully. I think we had all different nationalities, Anglophone, Francophone, Arabophone, my boss was an Egyptian, his deputy was a Moroccan, my immediate boss was a Senegalese. I can't remember us having any particular problems in getting together or speaking to one another and finding solutions. We had Yugoslavs who were on UNDP technical assistance project in our division. We had Guineans; we had Tanzanians, all different nationalities and we really worked together beautifully. I think that was quite inspirational for me. I remember that one of my close associates was a Togolese engineer who had studied in France and also at Purdue University. He had degrees from both universities, so he was able to cover the gap and sort of look at things from both the American standpoint and the French standpoint and bridge both cultures, if you will. His name is Gaston Dossou and he just retired from the African Development Bank about two years ago after thirty years at the bank. We went together to look at the Cotonou bridge, and both of us were looking and said where is the site where this bridge is going to be? They showed us the site. The site was actually going through one of the main markets of Cotonou. There were a lot of women who were running the markets there. Dossou said there was no particular reason the bridge has to be at this particular site; we could build it 20 yards upstream and not really disrupt this entire market here. The Dahomian said you're right and they actually changed the location of the bridge so that it wouldn't disrupt where this market had been operating for so many years. I should mention that in addition to all the other nationalities, we also had French technical cooperation people working in the bank. I always tried to get along with all of them. I think we did.

*Q: You said at the beginning that it was extremely difficult to find bankable projects. Why was that?*

FELL: Well as we all know, for bankable projects, we had to send out identification missions from the bank and get shopping lists from the countries. Sometimes these were pet projects that oftentimes had not been studied by their own governments. Then we had to sort and screen these to find out which ones might really be bankable, because we are talking about commercial interest rates. This was before the African Development Fund had been created. World Bank interest rates ran 7-9% in those days. Even in the wildly

optimistic estimates that we would make in those days, it was hard to find a project that would have an internal rate of return that would be high enough to justify a loan of that type.

*Q: Why was that? I mean what was underlying this problem?*

FELL: I suppose what was underlying it in some cases would be the sheer cost of the projects themselves for building them. Maybe the cost of building in Africa was higher; we were looking at a lot of infrastructure projects. There was always the low amount of traffic invariably on some of the roads. We were looking at transportation projects. They just generally did not high rates of return. There are different ways to calculate rates of return because behind each one of those numbers are assumptions. You can change the assumptions and get higher rates of return. We did sensitivity analysis and different types of analysis but in the end result, this is one of the reasons we argue that just because a number is attached to something ipso facto doesn't make it scientifically accurate. There are other tools of analysis that are just as accurate as the statistical or economic tools of analysis and sometimes just good judgment. I think now in hindsight we see that too many of these projects were too optimistically analyzed. They didn't have anywhere near the high rate of return we thought they might have had.

*Q: But the state of development wasn't sufficiently far along to make these projects successful.*

FELL: Yes. And then there is another argument; I don't know whether we ever get to the end of it. I worked on a project in Cameroon, the trans Cameroon railroad. This was a huge project; I can't remember how many hundreds of kilometers.

*Q: This is while you still were in Abidjan?*

FELL: No I had been transferred to Cameroon. I'm jumping ahead I guess. Maybe I should finish up on Abidjan, some of the other projects we had to do. The Accra-Abidjan road, we had to do drillings and corings and we had to look at the soils, and Wilbur Thomas was in on this, and eventually that road, that bridge was built and the access roads were built and now you can go between Accra and Abidjan I suppose in eight or nine hours where before it probably used to take you a day. I think that someday that will play a role in bringing those countries together. I remember the first time I went across the bridge, something happened to me, one of the banes of Africa because Africa is divided up into many countries. You get stopped and you get roadblocks, and you have many customs agents and people shaking you down. I remember stopping at that bridge and I almost got shook down despite the fact I had CD plates. I thought my goodness, I'd helped build this bridge and I was almost getting shook down by a policeman. This was several years later when I was based in Abidjan, we went between Accra and Abidjan by road and we got stopped 14 times at roadblocks, whether it be for customs or forestry or whatever. Each one of these was almost like medieval times. If we hadn't had diplomatic

plates we would have to buy out way through. I think this is one of the great frictions of transportation and commerce in Africa.

There were many other projects we worked on with that grant to the African Development Bank. We worked on transport projects throughout Africa and some agricultural projects. Also I got insights into some of the pressures that are put on institutions. I remember we were working on one project up in Chad. It was a small agricultural project growing tomatoes and green beans. One of those off-season agricultural projects. It was a major French investor who was going to work there. I saw a letter in one of the confidential files from the President of Chad who was named Tombalbaye to the president of the African Development Bank who in those days was a Tunisian named Labidi. He was quite an interesting figure. Mr. Labidi out of Tunisia had been President of the national development bank there. The letter from President Tombalbaye said if you do not finance this project, Chad will pull out of the African Development Bank. These were the kinds of pressures exerted, whether he actually meant it or they were actually going to do that or not is hard to say. You know they make threats like that, but whether they would do it or not is another thing. Another project we worked on was the drainage and sewage of N'Djamena in those days called Fort Lamy. We had an American company which actually went out there and looked at the drainage and sewage problems of Fort Lamy, and eventually did the design of it and I think some of the work was eventually carried out but not all.

*Q: Was part of your function to develop the staff?*

FELL: I think that was one of the main things, and it's very hard to tell whether that worked out or not. I tried to involve as many African staff as I could in the selection process, in judging, in analyzing the process, in doing the missions, in preparing the terms of reference for all these projects, in taking them through the whole cycle, and eventually bringing them up to the board of directors of the bank itself for financing. Because once we did, the final design we would take whatever feasibility information we had and put it into a package that would be brought up before the board of directors of the bank for financing. I felt that was 50% or more of my job, bringing Africans in and training them on this sort of thing. I think some of them did get a good deal of benefit out of that. I was on the task force in the bank that worked on procedures, on how the bidding procedures for the bank would be, on consultants, and on projects itself. So, some of the experience we got from the USAID grant was fed into that process and actually matured over many years.

I remember another project I worked on in the bank and eventually one of my close associates and friends in the bank was Babakar N'Djaye. Babakar and I used to go on missions together. We were friends. The African Development Bank was being called upon to contribute to the first environmental conference in Stockholm in 1971 or 1972. The predecessor of the Rio Conference. It was the first one on the environment. I was told to do some idea work on what the banks position ought to be on this. I took a rather environmentally oriented approach to this saying we ought to look at projects very

carefully and see what the environmental impact is and try to look at things from an environmental aspect. I got into an argument with Babakar. He said, "No, we need more smokestacks in Africa. This is what we need. This kind of environmental analysis is going to be very costly and if we are going to catch up, we can't afford to pay for all of this." Many years later Babakar N'Ddjaye became President of the African Development Bank which is another incredible story. I never thought that would happen because he worked his way right up through the ranks and probably the person I was closest with in the bank and never dreamed he would become President of the bank any more than I would become administrator of USAID. Many years later he called me aside and said, "You know I think when we worked on the Stockholm thing. You and later he said to me, 'You were probably right and I was probably wrong.'" It took him many years for the President of the US to figure that out. Some of these things take a long gestation period.

*Q: How did you find living in Ivory Coast?*

FELL: That was probably one of the best things. We loved living in Ivory Coast. It was my first overseas assignment with USAID. I think I reached there about January of 1971. We spent over two years there and we loved it. We loved working in the bank because we had ready-made colleagues and friends and interesting people from all over Africa who were there. From a social aspect it was wonderful. We had a very small apartment, but it was very pleasant overlooking the lagoon. In those days unlike what happened many years later, Abidjan was very safe. You could walk anywhere. We did a little bit of traveling around Ivory Coast and elsewhere. We loved it.

*Q: What was your impression of economic developmental in Ivory Coast?*

FELL: Well, in those days it was quite promising. I would say from my first contact with Africa I was amazed at how developed it was. There were all the accoutrements of developed life, particularly in Abidjan which is a bustling city. We were talking about what is typical and what is not typical. Certainly it was not a typical city in Africa in those days, because you had a very large contingent of French expatriates who provided a gloss or patina around the city and made it look like it was more advanced than the country really was. Still it was a very promising period. Ivory Coast had played a card of being very close to France and using a lot of French cooperation and technical assistance. There were more French in Ivory Coast than there had been in colonial days. There were 30-40,000 French there, mostly in Abidjan. You had doctors and architects and lawyers and technicians, all sorts of people and everything worked very well. So I'd say it was a very easy place to live and very safe.

*Q: Did you get out to the rural areas? What were the living conditions for the African people?*

FELL: The rural areas didn't look too bad to me in West Africa, and I think a lot of people who traveled around Africa would say that. If you went to villages in many places in West Africa particularly in Ivory Coast, the people were eating quite well; they had good

diets, maybe not well-balanced diets but pretty good, enough calories a day. The villages were very clean, in fact probably cleaner than they are now. In those days there weren't so many plastic bags or throwaway stuff. They had their own systems for keeping their villages clean; there was a certain discipline in the villages. I can't say that I was struck by any particular misery that I saw in the villages at that particular time. West Africans tend to dress in very colorful garb and tend to be happy. There always seemed to be some sort of festivity going on. Now it is true on another level if you got deeper in to these things which we and many expatriates don't do, there probably are a lot of things that were missing like malaria and some types of diseases, and also the lack of opportunity for the large mass of people who live in the rural areas who don't have an opportunity for good education.

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

Assignment to USAID/Cameroon regional office - 1973

FELL: 1973. I suppose this might be an insight into how USAID operates. The head of the west Africa office in those days was a man named Fermino Spencer whom you remember very well. Fermino Spencer was coming through Abidjan, and I remember sitting on the beach with Fermino. He asked me how do you like your job in the African Development Bank? I said I like it fine. He said would you like to go down to Cameroon and be the number two person in our regional development office in Yaounde? I said I hadn't thought about it very much but I guess I would. That was the way that assignment was cooked up. Next thing you know I got orders saying I was going to Cameroon.

In those days, as you know probably better than anyone, Haven, we've gone through many cycles as to how the agency operated in Africa. Right after independence in the 60's we started with offices practically all over Africa. Then the 40 country limitation was voted in the Foreign Assistance Act so the major assistance countries were parceled out all over the world. It turned out that Africa didn't get very many of them, so we created emphasis missions. Then the rest of Africa which was not going to be an emphasis place was sort of left to float. The justification by which we could operate in those countries was mostly regional. If we were working on a regional basis somehow, it would be OKAY to do projects if there was some sort of a tie-up. It wouldn't be strictly speaking bilateral projects. So for West Africa the configuration that was set up was a regional development office was placed in Dakar, another regional development office was placed in Niamey and another in Yaounde. Each of these regional development offices handled three or four countries around where they were set up. Starting in 1970 what was called the West Africa Capital Development Office and later became the Regional Economic Development Services Office in Abidjan and Nairobi to be service offices and also to be sort of like an accordion to handle places where there wouldn't be any coverage in the Regional Development Offices. So I was assigned to be the number two man in Yaounde starting in 1973. A gentleman named Jack McLaughlin since deceased who had served many years in AID had been heading up that office. Before that we had a major mission in Cameroon for many years, and then it had kind of dwindled down for some reason; I

don't know exactly the reason. Well I guess Cameroon had not been an emphasis country. We really didn't have a strictly speaking bilateral program for Cameroon. There were vestiges of what once had been a very large program which USAID, little by little phased out. The major project we had going on in Cameroon was the trans-Cameroon railroad. We were just finishing up. I went to Ngaoundere (in Northern Cameroon) to just do the last big trip to see that the systems were all working just before they were going to inaugurate the project. We had worked very closely. That project had been financed with the FAC (the French Cooperation European Commission) and the European Commission had been sort of the accounting agent for that project. We had let them do the management accounting and control of the project; we provided about a third of the financing for the whole project. It was done in two tranches. One tranche went from Yaounde to Bilbao and from Bilbao it went all the way up to Ngaoundere. We provided the rails for that project from Bethlehem Steel and the culverts for that project which came from ARAMCO. I think we provided some of the Caterpillar and bulldozer equipment which was used by the contractor which was an Italian contracting firm. It was a project of great international cooperation between our agencies. It was one of the major projects where we were working closely with the European Commission and the French.

*Q: How did you find that worked? Were there any major issues?*

FELL: I thought it worked very well. Practically no major issues until we got to the very end of the project. During the day to day operation of the project it worked very well. In fact Al Disdier's Capital Finance Office had a major hand in structuring the way that project had been set up. They insisted that a certain office be set up in the Cameroon Government that was very well staffed for managing and supervising the project, handling the accounting of the project and the actual execution of it. That was a very strong office that had been set up. We worked very closely with the French and the European Commission and had no problems until it came right down to the end. That came about around 1974. The two things I can remember when they inaugurated the railroad. The head of the office was John Koehring. We decided (I don't take major credit, but the idea came to me) that we really ought to contact everyone in USAID who had been involved in this project over the years and let them know this project has been completed and send them something to show they had been part of the project. There had been little medallions that had been made up, little coins with the trans-Cameroon railroad stamped on them and a booklet that had been published. We researched all the files and found maybe 35 people in USAID who had been fairly closely involved at one time or another in the analysis, the design, and the negotiations of the trans-Cameroon railroad. And we sent everybody one of those pamphlets or medallions. We got some very good feedback from that. This is one of the things about working in an agency like ours, you very rarely see the complete cycle of a project. You either see the beginning or you're in the middle of something, or you're winding it up. It is very rare that you see a whole cycle of something or even hear about the end results of what you were doing. I think a lot of people on AID who had worked on this project for many years (this was in 1974 and I think the project had its genesis in the early 1960's.) were very happy to hear that it had been successfully completed and what finally happened to it. Another thing that

happened, and I have a photo in my files, Haven, we got all the Assistant Administrators from the Africa Bureau up to that time, except maybe Sam Adams, came to Yaoundé for the inauguration of the trans-Cameroon railroad. I remember Ed Hutchinson was there; I'm trying to think of the others: Klein. The Ambassador was C. Robert Moore, a wonderful man one of the absolutely most cultured, highly intelligent, extremely wonderful men that I've ever met. We had a picture of all the Assistant Administrators from the Africa Bureau because this had been one of the major capital projects that the Africa Bureau had ever carried out.

*Q: Do you remember the scale of our input?*

FELL: Our input, I would hesitate to say what it was, I think it was somewhere in the neighborhood of \$30-40 million. Now it doesn't sound like very much but in those days it was a lot of money. I couldn't say what the whole project was; it was done in tranches.

*Q: You said it went well until the very end.*

FELL: Right to the end and then at the end we got hit with an overrun claim from the Italian contractor. I'm a lawyer and had worked as a lawyer, but I wasn't working as a lawyer any more because I was strictly in an operational capacity as number two man. But, they said look at these claims and tell us what we ought to do about them. I looked at the claims that were set forward by the Italian contractor, and for the life of me I couldn't see how they could have been any weaker. There wasn't one of them that was worth a nickel. One of the reasons why it was fairly easy to come to that conclusion was the office in the Cameroon government that had been managing this had done a superb job of keeping track of everything that had happened, keeping records and everything. I absolutely had a very hard time accepting any of these claims. The French were willing to accept these claims and to pay them, and the European Commission was willing to accept them. They wanted us to accept our pro rata portion of these claims. We found it very hard to recommend, even putting your best foot forward, to accept them. We were wined and dined and waltzed and given a lot of encouragement from the European Commission to come on board. I went to Brussels two or three times. Eventually these claims were sent back to Washington. Since this is kind of an unofficial historical record, I think we came to a conclusion in Washington that, in a way, to buy peace and to show that we were good neighbors and good cooperation we actually got them to reduce the claims considerably and to withdraw a number of them and we kind of stiffened the back of the European Commission and of the French. Eventually I got to know some of the inside people on the European Commission who admitted that this was kind of a game up at the European Commission to do that. But, it wasn't too welcome, the position we were taking up there. I think we eventually took a more flexible position; we agreed to pay maybe up to \$1,500,000 of the claim. Putting all that on a pro rata basis, \$5 million, I forget what it turned out to be, and the claims were settled. I was sitting there in the room when the deal was struck. The head of the Commission, Mr. Ferandi, who was a giant of a figure in those days in the European Development Fund, and the Italian contractor were sitting there, and they were speaking French for a while, and then all of a sudden they started

speaking a language that none of us understood. It turned out it was some Sicilian Italian, and they started waving their hands and the next thing you know, they said okay we're all in agreement. What have you agreed to? No one could understand. They said, Well, we agreed \$5,000,000. Everyone paid. We paid our part of it and the project was concluded. Later on , other tranches of that project were done, but I had left Cameroon.

We had other projects in Cameroon in those days. We had a project with Southern University. Of course USAID since the time of Mr. Hannah (Administrator) had done a lot of things working with different universities and bringing American universities into the USAID program. In Cameroon we had a contract with Southern University to help develop the economic school at the national agricultural college there. We had three American economists that were in Cameroon training, and they were writing articles and teaching in the school. The idea was that better economic analysis would be good for national planning. I think that was a moderately unsuccessful project or moderately successful depending on how one looks at it.

*Q: In what way?*

FELL: I think that as in many of these university contracts it turned out that instead of getting very high caliber technical cooperation unit, we got people who had been recruited off the street. It wasn't cohesive from the university itself and too much of the contract was spent on the care and feeding of the Americans and the American university and probably not enough on the locals and the local university. I think I saw this in other contracts we did both with universities and consultants. That is one of the lessons that I learned over the years. We tended to think that projects were going well when someone would give us a good briefing in our language, the way we wanted to hear it, and the charts looked like the charts we wanted to see. But, underneath, the local scene was going on. I don't think we were prepared to accept the messiness of the local development system. We wanted it clean-cut and presented to us in our way.

I'm going to jump ahead just a little bit because when I retired from the USAID, I came to the OECD working on aid reviews. I think one of the most fascinating aid reviews I worked on recently was Switzerland. We did an aid review of Switzerland. We saw a modus operandi that maybe in an idealistic way is kind of how the USAID envisions itself working but we don't really work this way. The way the Swiss were set up in Benin. I went down there and did a field trip. The Swiss, they don't talk about participatory development; they actually do participatory development. I remember when I was first asked to work on the Swiss aid review and having worked 20 years in Africa, if someone had asked me what had the Swiss done in Africa, I would have been stumped, I wouldn't have a clue because I never saw the Swiss. No one ever sees the Swiss because the Swiss are invisible in Africa practically and yet they have quite a sizable program. When I went down to Benin, first of all, you have to find their office which isn't easy because they don't have any big flags or anything around the office. There were no vehicles with Swiss flags painted on them. In fact, they don't allow it. It is illegal for them. They don't want their name on any project; they won't allow their name to be put on any project; they



won't allow it. The way they operate, a lot of their projects are set up through what they call small support offices. They will hire local Beninese. Say they are doing an education project. They would hire one or two local Beninese and say, "Here's the work plan," which they had already worked out together with the local Beninese authorities. Here's the work plan, here's the budget, Go. You work with the local people, talk it out. We will be back in three months to see what you've done.

*Q: But there's no Swiss technical people on the ground?*

FELL: No. The locals do it themselves. The Swiss say let the local people handle it themselves. They get the budget; they have their own procedures; they have their own system. All we want to do is account for the money and account for the results. We'll talk about the methodology. We'll bring people in to talk to you for a week or two if you want any particular help, but we're not going to put technical people on the project; you're going to have to do it yourself.

*Q: These are relatively small projects I suppose.*

FELL: Relatively small projects. Right. But, some of them are considerable. Some of them would have a considerable also replicative effect of the type we're trying to get. For instance, a project they were doing was a project in organizing artisans and different types of professional people. For instance, they would get the bakers together and say OKAY how can you improve the standards of the bakers in cleanliness, in training, finance and accounting and work as a group to improve the professional standards of your own profession? They helped them to set up an association. We were talking about being a genius. Well, to set up an association in an African country, you almost need to be one. Few people know how to do it. The project got lawyers and Beninese specialists and they were asked to put this on one sheet of paper. What do you have to do to be legally set up as an association, not have any trouble with the authorities? The project taught the people how they could set up their own association, how you could set up your own little savings and loan association. They set up 50 through the Swiss project, 50 of these different types of associations. We probably don't have to go into detail on the Swiss project. I think that their approach of working is very participative, of working very closely with the local society, and of doing things at a pace of the local society. And I know there are other levels of working on policy levels and various things and they work on that level too. And perhaps with a little bit more patience than sometimes I've seen in some USAID. When you are trying to do change, I think you should take a much longer view of things than I've seen in some of the ways USAID has operated. We're much too impatient. We don't do the digging and the background and the talking and the local work in helping the locals find their own solutions which are durable and sustainable over time.

Anyway back to Cameroon, we had a very small office in Cameroon. There was John Koehring, myself, Glen Slocum, and Larry Berry, I think four of us in that office at the time.

*Q: But you were handling regional projects. What was regional?*

FELL: In addition to the Trans-Cameroon Railroad and a number of projects in Cameroon, we handled Chad. Chad was quite operational in those days of because this is after the Sahel drought, we had a lot of food operations up in Chad. So one of us would go up there on a rotating basis to work on the problems of the drought. We didn't have much of a bilateral program in Chad, but it was mostly food relief. We had a very small regional project in the CAR, Central African Republic, with the regional health organization that operated out of Yaounde. It was a regional organization that operated on the health side. Then we had a very small project in Gabon in Dr. Schweitzer's hospital. We built a wing on the Lambaréné hospital where Dr. Schweitzer's hospital was in Gabon. But we never found much to do in Gabon. We were theoretically in charge of Equatorial Guinea but at that time there was a madman who was president of Guinea named Garcias Macias. We decided there was very little we could do in Equatorial Guinea.

*Q: Did you get into the discussion on what constituted a regional project, all the hairsplitting judgments about what was regional and not regional?*

FELL: Yes we had that often. As a matter of fact I forgot , we did have a regional project between Chad and Cameroon working in livestock in northern Cameroon and northern Chad which was also a cooperative project with the French, working with the Lake Chad Basin Commission which was a regional organization. In those days we tried to work with local African organizations, one of which was the Lake Chad Basin Commission. These were unstable organizations in some respects. We never were sure that their payments were coming in from their member governments and were maintained by technical cooperation coming in from the outside. The French were helping; we were helping; others were helping. There were basically many difficult to reconcile differences between members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. Ours was a livestock project, and we had both French and American people in technical cooperation on that project trying to introduce improved grazing practices and better marketing practices in that area. I think it was a moderately successful project.

*Q: Well you were there not too long at that time I guess.*

FELL: Two years. Then I moved to Senegal in 1975 which was a regional office, but we were in a period of transferring into a USAID mission in Senegal at that time. Offices had been set up in Mali and Mauritania.

*Q: Do you remember the contexts of why these changes were coming up?*

Move to the USAID mission in Senegal - 1975

FELL: The context mainly in West Africa was the Sahel drought. The 40 country limitation had less impact because we had pulled out of a lot of countries that had

previously been emphasis countries around the world, and that didn't pose much of a problem anymore. We were beginning to return to bilateral programs in Africa. We set up offices in Mauritania and in Mali which had previously been a part of this regional development office jurisdiction. When I arrived there in Dakar in 1975, our office was only in charge of Gambia and Guinea. The other countries had their own offices and they reported directly to Washington, and were getting like we were , technical assistance from the REDSO in Abidjan. So if we needed a lawyer or engineer or economist any technical help in devising projects on a first basis we would get it from the regional office in Abidjan.

*Q: What was your position in the mission?*

FELL: I was the Deputy Director there. The director was Norman Schoonover who, we could definitely say, was an old hand in AID going back to the Marshall Plan days. He started here in France probably in the 1950's. He had extensive experience. Also, like Al Disdier was one of the rare people in AID who was totally fluent in French. He spoke perfectly fluent French and was an extraordinarily good writer and was good at putting together project papers. In those days we were sort of building up our program in Senegal. We had one major project in the Sine Saloum area. It was an agricultural extension project where we were working closely with the French, in fact we were financing a lot of French technical assistance in that particular project in what they called the groundnut basin.

*Q: Was financing French technical assistance proper at that time?*

FELL: No. I don't think there was any particular restriction that prevented us from doing it. I think we bought into a whole agricultural extension program in the Sine Saloum particularly the cereals aspect of it. We paid a portion of the cost of that agricultural extension project which included some French technical assistance. In fact in Cameroon, we were paying for some French technical assistance when I was down there.

*Q: Was this the fact that we couldn't provide people with punch?*

FELL: We either couldn't produce people or we were being cooperative in many local places. I remember at one point, I forgot a major project we did in Cameroon, the CUSS, The University Center for Health Teaching. We agreed with the French that whoever won the bid, we would go in 50-50 in the actual construction of the building itself of the university health training center. As it happened a French company won it and so we paid for half the cost of constructing that building. There have been many cases where we have done that. I saw many in my experience. I didn't see many going the other way where Americans were being financed by the French. That was much rarer if at all.

*Q: In Senegal what was the strategy that was emerging at that time?*

FELL: I have to go back to something. I don't think in those days and I'm talking about in 1975, we looked at things at least in West Africa, from a policy standpoint. We were not looking at things from a policy or regional development standpoint, and we didn't realize or think that we would be able to have much influence on the actual policies of the countries themselves. We didn't realize many of the policies like the monetary policy, the agricultural policies, the input policies, and the pricing policies which were very statist and state oriented, that we would have any influence on those. If we had thought we would, I don't think we'd even have tried it. We thought more in terms of transferring technical knowledge and improved methods somehow. I think experience showed that many of these projects were destined to fail because they were in a sea of policy ambiance that wouldn't be conducive to the success of the projects themselves. I think we came to that realization maybe 10 years later. But at that time we looked at Senegal and saw food problems, and health problems, which were the main issues. If we were looking at food problems we saw three major centers. That is: 1) the fleuve area in the northern part of the Senegal River basin area where big doings were beginning to take place. Studies were being done as to what could be done to develop the Senegal River basin; 2) in the Sine Saloum area which was the groundnut basin area and what could be done to improve practices because people were worried about land degradation, peanuts wearing down the soil and all this; 3) in the Casamance area which is the southern part of Senegal which was potentially a rich area and also a rice growing area. We thought that a lot could be done to improve rice production. Looking back on this I think we were a little starry eyed about a lot of these things. We didn't think we would have influence on the government on the policy level, so we just thought we would work on the technical aspects of it. I'm not sure we posed ourselves that question. In the Senegal River basin, we were wrestling with the question of whether USAID would come in on the infrastructure or not. At this time in USAID we were drawing back from the whole idea of infrastructure.

I'd say in the 1960's we'd done a lot of infrastructure, we'd done a lot of transportation. You look around Africa. We'd done Ibadan water supply in Nigeria, we'd done the Chisamayo Port in Somalia, we'd done the Trans-Cameroon railroad, and projects all over Africa. We had quite a strong office for doing that in the Capital Development Finance Office. That office had finally been abolished; many of the engineers had been let go. A lot of the techniques and capability of doing infrastructure were lost from the agency and the idea of basic human needs came into the legislation in 1973-1974. The agency moved away from some of the infrastructure type projects we'd been doing. We began to do more grassroots type work. We were not talking about policy there as much as trying to affect the daily lives of people. Even this, now in looking at it, was through rosy colored glasses. Affecting daily lives of people. We can't work with every individual artisan. Even the types of projects we were doing were destined not to have a very major impact on the societies or countries where we were working.

That was the way things were going. We lost that infrastructure capability in the agency. We were wrestling with this question in the Senegal River basin because those were major infrastructure projects. Basically the idea of it was there would be two dams built on the Senegal River. To make a long story short, we finally concluded that USAID

would not contribute to the infrastructure itself. Since the infrastructure was going to go forward anyway, and the French were going to build the dam at the mouth of the Senegal River called the Diama Dam, a major project, and Germany would finance a dam at a place called Manantali in Mali, another major dam, we wouldn't be involved in those dam projects, but we would help with the river basin authority doing agricultural research for the projects that would justify this major infrastructure.

Also we agreed, and this was a very important thing to do, probably the first environmental impact study of a major river basin development that was ever done. We eventually hired a firm called Gannett and Fleming, an American company, that did quite a sizable environmental impact study of the river basin. Probably more important than the result of that study itself was the fact that we did such a study. We sort of staked out the fact that before you do a major river basin or major infrastructure you ought to look at it from the environmental standpoint. Whether they had the techniques or the state of the art or even the political power to get any of the ideas into the design or the way the project operated, I'm a little dubious it really took place. But it certainly staked out the fact that sort of activity ought to take place. At that point another office had been set up, sort of an appendage of the USAID Dakar. It was an office to work only with the Senegal River Basin Authority, the OMVS office that was set up by Harry Petrequin who led that office. I think Glen Slocum eventually came in and worked in that office and had several people. They were independent of the USAID Senegal. We did a major study of one of the irrigation perimeters up there called MATAM. That was done by Bechtel, but the project was never financed. That office was eventually abolished and folded in to the USAID.

*Q: We must have had some very grand visions of what we were able to do in that area.*

FELL: I don't think we, being realistic, had very grand visions. I think we looked at ourselves as a secondary donor, a minor donor compared to the European Development Fund or to the French, who had much more of a stake in what was going on in Senegal. After I left Senegal in 1978, the mission grew considerably and the program grew considerably. It would be for others to determine if that was wise or not wise, or if it were a good investment.

*Q: It was later that it began to grow.*

FELL: Our budgets in those days for Senegal were on the level of \$5-6,000,000 a year.

*Q: Were there other significant activities that you worked on?*

FELL: We developed a program for the Casamance in those days. I remember Norm Schoonover was down there and tried to figure out what to do in this Casamance. There wasn't an obvious answer to this question, because we had sort of conflicting opinions as to what could be done in the Casamance. You had water; there was a lot of salt intrusion, and the locals had their own little systems for dealing with the salt intrusion for growing rice in those areas. And we were getting as many, and you've probably seen this in development projects, conflicting opinions from experts on what could be done, and what

should be done. We eventually thought there were things to be done in the Casamance that could improve rice growing. Frankly I don't know what the end result of that project is. I think we did a \$20-25,000,000 project in the Casamance. It started very slowly with studies looking at it. We'd just planted the seeds for studying these various projects when I left. I don't know whether it had paid out or not. I think that one opinion was that the farmers had figured out a pretty good technique for doing things themselves and that we weren't really going to add much unless we could really find much improved seeds and a much improved technology package. This was one of the big things that was going on.

When I think of things that consumed our time in those days, we had a project going on with the West African Rice Development Agency in Liberia, WARDA. Their teams would come in and come out and come in and come out, much of it financed by USAID. This was one of the major conundrums of West African development that local consumption of food was veering towards rice and wheat particularly in the cities, and the local production was based on sorghum and millet. Since all these other products had to be imported, what could you do about it? You could try to wet down consumption so there wouldn't be so much import. You could also try to work on the production side of it. Was there a way of producing rice cheaper in West Africa to feed the local market. That was the reason why the Senegal River basin project was somewhat appealing, that there would be possibly irrigated rice projects for local consumption. Now this is a major question of West African development. Probably looking back on it now it was not the center of the universe. I think now we are coming around to it. We are getting off in to philosophy a little bit. The problem now is you've got to go back to comparative government 101 and economics 101 maybe. The way the governments are managed and the participation of the governments themselves, whether the people really have a stake in them, whether the judicial systems are operating well, whether things are more transparent, and just the whole governmental apparatus and political system, how that was operating, really turns out, I think, to be more important than we thought it was. These other things will all fall into place eventually if the political systems are functioning better and there's less corruption, there's more transparency, and more democratic participation. We see countries with a lot of natural resources and maybe some technical capability that don't do very well at all because they just don't attract investment.

*Q: Did you find the government environment in Senegal not conducive to development?*

FELL: I think in many respects it was not conducive to development because Senegal was an appendage of French West Africa that had atrophied. Originally the administration was set up to sort of administer all of French West Africa, and then it reduced back to Dakar, and there was sort of the illusion of grandeur, and you had a large administration. Many of the technical people didn't want to go out in the countryside and work. And I think we had a lot of the thing we hate to mention, the "C" word, the corruption word. Low and high level corruption at all different levels and political deviations. Good intentions getting politically deviated. I remember a World Bank project that a friend of mine was working on. A very close friend of mine, one of the closest friends I had in Senegal. We

were discussing internal rates of return and why projects didn't bring in their projected return. The World Bank had done a very careful study with the segments of roads that would have the highest rates of return, what should be done and what shouldn't be done and what should be upgraded. Finally, when it came down to it and they actually did the work, none of those segments were financed, but other segments were financed for different reasons. Because some Marabou wanted the road paved to his house, and someone else wanted it paved to his village. So none of the economic analysis meant anything. I knew another project that had been managed by another close friend of mine. It happened to be another World Bank project which was an appealing idea to begin with, which was trying to take school leavers and give them vocational training. There had been many attempts at this kind of thing in West Africa. This is one that was attempted in Senegal in those days, was for middle level practical vocational training. Here again when you start pulling the cabbage leaves apart you find out there was a lot of deviation of project design from what it was originally designed to do. The centers were not put where they should have been located. There were gasoline coupons that were missing, and there was a lot of mismanagement and things like this, which disrupted the program which eventually collapsed and never succeeded. Yet the idea seems very appealing, take school leavers and give them vocational training. Yet these projects just didn't work because they got deviated.

*Q: You said you had a health project there.*

FELL: We had a health project that was another major activity we worked on. This was another thing that was the bane of USAID. Some of our projects seemed to be so far away. This was a project out almost to the Mali border in a place called Bakel which was a livestock project and a health project. It turned out that the livestock project was moderately successful, trying to improve the grazing. Here again we found that the grazers in West Africa knew a lot more than we gave them credit for knowing. We thought we would bring in western United States grazing techniques and ideas. Years later we learned that they actually knew a lot more than we gave them credit for and weren't doing so badly after all. I think we brought some minor improvements to the grazing practices in that particular area. And from the health standpoint, we tried to do a primary health project in the villages because we were introducing some irrigation to the Senegal River basin which was one of the justifications for doing this major infrastructure on the Senegal River basin. I think we were moderately successful in bringing improved irrigation practices in those villages which hadn't done irrigation. But as one of our irrigation experts told us, it takes several generations of irrigation farmers to get up to snuff in really learning the cycles of irrigation. Those projects were long gestation type of projects.

*Q: But you had a health project?*

FELL: We had a health project to go along with it. Part of the environmental things and working on the malaria aspect. Knowing that there was going to be irrigation, you were

going to have more malaria, more health problems related to the irrigation project. We brought that element into the project.

*Q: Why did you have projects situated so far away?*

FELL: I think part of it was that you were supposed to work with poorer people. Poorer people tended to be farther away from the capital city. I forgot to mention this, Haven. Probably one of the first major primary health care projects in West Africa was the Sine Saloum project. We were working on primary health care projects at the local level. And like many of these primary health care projects they tended to get sabotaged by the policies because when you go to the ministry of health you find out that the money would be going to the hospitals in the central cities. Or some other donor, in this case the Germans, came in and built a big hospital a 200-300 bed hospital in one of the major cities and drained away the resources that would have otherwise been available for the primary health care project.

*Q: That was the primary impediment to making the rural health care project function was the lack of resources?*

FELL: I think that lack of concentration from the ministry and lack of priority given to it. We tried some things, some techniques. I remember one of them that was sort of half my idea, didn't work. We were trying to figure out how can you get these local supervisors to be mobile. You see in projects the first thing they want are cars and vehicles. If you have vehicles the first thing you have is maintenance costs and gasoline costs and the price of the project starts spiraling. We said how do people get around here locally. They got around by horse and buggy, so we said the project will finance horses and buggies. I remember later on an evaluation was made of the project. This was a plausible idea to begin with but in practice it didn't work out I heard later. I had left the mission after that.

#### At the creation of the Sahel Development Program - 1973

I guess I'm going to have to jump ahead. Following the Sahel drought, a major effort was made to bring together a consortium of donors to train themselves on the problems of the Sahel and see if there couldn't be some sort of concerted action on the international level to prevent anything like that from ever happening again and trying to improve the development prospects for West Africa. The major players involved in this in addition to yourself, Haven, and Sam Adams in those days was David Shear who was head of the office for West Africa and Roy Stacy who had helped to create what was eventually called the Club du Sahel, a secretariat based in the OECD to work with the donors and help with an organization based in the Sahel in Ouagadougou, the Interstate Committee to Fight Drought which had been set up by the Sahelians themselves. I forgot to mention one of the things I had done. The person in USAID who was put in charge of the drought in 1973, the Deputy Administrator of AID, was Maury Williams who was a gigantic figure in those days. At one point he decided he wanted to make a tour of that area. They said: who's going to go with him? I hope he's not going to be listening to this. He was known to



be a person who was rather demanding you might say. He'd like things done when he wanted them done and he was persuasive in getting his points across. They called me up down in Cameroon and said: Art, get on a plane. You are going to go to Paris and meet up with Maury Williams.

*Q: You were in Cameroon?*

FELL: I was in Cameroon at the time. They said, take him around the Sahel. Show him everything.

*Q: This was before you had been to the Sahel I guess.*

FELL: Well I had been in the African Development Bank before so I had worked around the Sahel.

*Q: Of course! You knew the area a little bit.*

FELL: I knew the area somewhat. That was almost a defining moment in my career, because that could have been the end of my career. It turned out not to be. I met Maury Williams up in Paris. I remember we went out to old Bourget airport when it used to be. We met there and sat down and had something to eat and said what are we going to do about the travel plans and got on the plane and went to Africa. We traveled around together for three weeks I guess. He was out there for quite a long time.

*Q: He was what at that time?*

FELL: He was Deputy Administrator of AID It was amazing he spent that long out there. If I can remember where we went. As a matter of fact I have a record of this. I kept day to day notes of where we went. Memos of all the conversations. I've got all these in my files. We went to Niamey and visited the refugee camps there. We went to Mali and visited the refugee camps to Timbuktu.

*Q: This was still at the time of the drought.*

FELL: Still the drought. It was in 1973 at the peak of the drought.

*Q: He was on a Presidential mission?*

FELL: Right. I interpreted for him. We met the Presidents of all those countries. Maury Williams actually understood quite a bit of French and was amazingly good, but he didn't speak French and didn't want to speak it and so I was his interpreter. We went to Ouagadougou because they were setting up the CILSS. That was the inaugural meeting of the CILSS.

*Q: What was that?*

FELL: The Interstate Committee to Combat Drought in the Sahel which was a grouping of the eight countries, the Sahel countries of West Africa to band together and try and get some joint planning and joint agreements on what they could do about the drought, improve agricultural production, and improve their own food security. I remember we met with President Senghor and I interpreted for Mr. Williams about what the United States might do in the Sahel with the head of the CILSS, Mr. Dakoure, who was minister of agriculture and quite a gigantic figure in those days in Ouagadougou, sort of a key figure in setting up the CILSS. We met with President Traore in Mali. We eventually went to Chad and met with Mr. Tombalbaye. We got along very well.

*Q: What were your impressions of these presidents? What was the picture you were getting from their perspective?*

FELL: I should mention President Lamizana in Ouagadougou in Upper Volta. Actually Mr. Williams gave me the clue on how to analyze some of these things. President Senghor was exceptionally erudite. Being individuals it was hard to generalize. Of course Senghor was a towering figure, quite an intellectual figure and a very brilliant man. He is in the Academie Française now. Even today he is one of the most well-spoken Frenchmen in the world. If you can say he is a Frenchman. He is a Frenchman I guess. He gave a very poised overview of everything. He was very anxious that we do a lot for the poorer countries, particularly Chad. He wanted to see the whole region sort of move forward together. He had a real vision, a very wide perspective and long term perspective of this. He realized it would be a long term effort. I think some of the other presidents we met were under stress, and Mr. Williams pointed this out. He said in effect: these are almost desperate men. He said their governments are under tremendous stress. I'd be surprised if many of their governments are there a few years from now. He was quite right in saying that and not long after a number of those governments fell.

*Q: How did you all perceive that this stress was there? Because of the drought?*

FELL: The drought was bringing to fore many of the local problems they were having. Naturally any time anything goes bad, people blame it on the government, whether they're right or whether they're wrong. These governments had very little to do with the fact that these droughts were taking place; it was a natural catastrophe. But also the way the drought was handled and their aftermath showed how they were donor driven. I mean when you saw trucks it was the US financed trucks, it was Belgian trucks. Belgian workers, US workers, French workers. Governments were almost impotent in a way to do anything about the drought themselves. Sam Adams always used to say, "How are the people coping out there?" People had coped to the extent that they coped. Probably 100,000 had died. They lost a lot of herds. And were just invisibly out there in the country where no one could see them having a lot of trouble. Or where they were reaching feeding or refugee centers, you saw a lot of expatriate work going on trying to do something about it. It probably showed up a lot of the central government's impotence in being able to deal with a catastrophe of this magnitude. I'm sure that put them under a lot of stress in

addition to other things. And then you saw some of the nasty little problems that come up. In the height of the drought, the wife of the President of Niger was playing games and whether this was low level corruption or high level corruption, the rumors move about very fast, and people lose confidence in the leaders fast. I mean people are starving and they think that the leader's wife is doing something wrong. In Chad, I remember, we had trouble even getting some of the food through customs agents in Chad who were holding up food. These things get known very fast. They caused a lot of trouble and eventually Tombalbaye was killed.

*Q: This trip with Maury, what did you generally learn from it? What was the conclusion?*

FELL: I think the conclusion was that there was a lot of unity to the problems that all these countries were facing. That they were very much the same type of problems, and maybe we were naive about it but there was some technology that we could bring to bear that could improve things in agricultural packages, improved practices, improved grazing practices more forestry. Also there was an international cooperation that had taken place on the international level in the emergency relief operations and the aftermath of the drought, and why not try to build on that and build some international cooperative framework where the donors are working together and not at cross purposes.

*Q: Where did that idea start?*

FELL: The germ of that idea came out of USAID itself. I think that is one of the strong things that come out of USAID. It was an idea that practically speaking we could contribute toward setting up some sort of a cooperative arrangement with the other donors to work on a big "project" or program we would call it for West Africa. Well, you, Haven, were involved in this. Not only you but Don Brown, Sam Adams, and David Schear were the people that had this idea. They also were looking at it with an eye to our Congressional aspect - how could you show our Congress that we were going to try to do something new, innovative with other donors in a international framework for a very poor region in Africa.

Basic human need was big in these days; working with the poorest people. These were the people that really had been hit hard so maybe the United States ought to be there showing we can do something. It was a thoughtful idea that we could try to work together in an international way with the other donors. That's where we got in touch with the OECD. Maury Williams since that time had become chairman of the DAC and of course was well aware of what had happened in the Sahel because he made these trips and had been the President's coordinator for the drought in the early 70's. He sounded out the French, who would be a key in doing anything in West Africa and also other donors who were sitting around the Development Assistance Committee, which was a discussion body in the OECD for development, and found that there was generally agreement except for Germany to do something. The Germans didn't like the idea. He was very savvy in getting around this one way or another. A major person in the Secretariat was Anne de Lattre, who was interested in getting involved in this area and had a long standing interest in

Africa. We loaned Roy Stacy, one of our most talented officers to work with Anne de Lattre sounding out the Africans themselves and working with the donors and setting up a small secretariat in the OECD that would help work with the Sahelians and the interstate organization in Ouagadougou to develop plans, to do joint work, and joint planning and approve projects.

*Q: This was sort of unusual for the OECD wasn't it? Why would they agree to do something like that?*

FELL: Very unusual. They agreed to it because it was slipped through in an almost surreptitious way through the DAC. Maury Williams had a meeting in the DAC. He interpreted that meeting as giving him a mandate in his personal capacity as Chairman of the DAC to negotiate this thing. The Secretary General of the OECD showed his flexibility in permitting this appendage or little unit if you will to be set outside of the budget of the OECD. As long as it was not financed by the OECD itself but financed by the donors, he said well it is not part 1 part of the core budget, but part 2, part of the budget. No one was really able to raise an objection against it, so it went forward because there were enough players on the inside, like Mr. Williams, Anne de Lattre, Roy Stacy, our agencies, and on the French side they were willing to make the contributions. Some of the other donors came forth, the Dutch were very interested in seeing this go forward. The Swiss were very interested, because they wanted to see this in some sort of a broader regional framework, it fit in with their development plans. It just so happens that there were enough donors who saw this as an interesting program to get involved in, that it all jelled and came together. The financing was available for this framework.

*Q: Everybody but the Germans.*

FELL: The Germans sat on the sideline sucking their thumb and didn't like it. Eventually, grudgingly, they came on board. But much later. Today there is a German technical person on the Secretariat of Club du Sahel in Paris, but it took them 20 years to come to this. However, they actually did provide assistance to the CILSS which was more important than providing it to the Club du Sahel Secretariat. The way this was set up was we had this very small unit... Oh I forgot to mention the Canadians, My God how could I have forgotten the Canadians? The Canadians were major promoters of the Club du Sahel. Incidentally it just so happened how I had gotten involved in some of this, the first meeting of the Club du Sahel was held in Dakar hosted by President Senghor, and President of Mauritania, Ould Daddah, we met at the time. They presided over the whole session there. I remember Don Brown came, The Secretary General of the OECD was there. We, the USAID mission, helped to host and organize, and set up that first meeting of the Club du Sahel which was held in Dakar in 1975.

*Q: This was when you were in Senegal?*

FELL: When I was in Senegal, yes.

*Q: So you were in on this early part?*

FELL: Yes I happened to be with Maury Williams in Ouagadougou in the setting up of the CILSS, I was at the very first meeting of the Club du Sahel in Dakar. Eventually, when Roy Stacy rotated out of Paris, he was made head of development planning in Washington. I replaced him in the Club du Sahel Secretariat. I stayed here for several years, spent a lot of time in Ouagadougou or all the Sahel countries working with the Club du Sahel's framework.

*Q: What happened at this first meeting?*

FELL: The principal event was that the partnership between the donors, mainly represented by the OECD donors, and the CILSS, the interstate committee was sealed, and they made a resolution, the Dakar resolution that they would work together within this club which included both the Sahelians and the OECD donors and any other donors that wanted to get involved including the African Development Bank, the World Bank and others, to get involved in this planning and programming their effort, and trying to understand better what the problems were in West Africa.

*Q: Were there any issues that were addressed during that time?*

FELL: I think the main issue was that the Sahelians were leery that this would become donor driven. They wanted to make sure that their organization was in the drivers seat., and that it wouldn't be taken over by the donors.

*Q: Was there any issue about the Sahelians cooperating together?*

FELL: I think at that particular moment, there weren't any burning issues between the governments that divided them tremendously. Later on, I think some of these issues came to the front. Little problems between Upper Volta and Mali, maybe there was a small war that had taken place but generally speaking I think the Sahelians had quite lucidly seen the value of doing work and cooperation. I think that Mr. Dakouré (Minister of Agriculture of Upper Volta) and President Senghor (of Senegal) had talked to many of them saying: look our best chance in getting a major effort in this is to show that we have some cohesion, and we're going to work together in this. If we don't work together , we'll hang separately as we say, so I think this message got across, and they were trying to show a fairly united front. I think their major worry was that it would become too donor driven. I think that it did become too donor driven at times. It shows that oftentimes our recipient countries are more lucid in seeing some of the problems and that we don't see them quite so clearly. Also there had been a lot of background studies about what could be done about the Sahel about reaching better food security. That was major objective in setting the objectives, what would be the objective? The objective was food self-sufficiency which was a watchword for saying improved self-reliance in food production.

*Q: It was strictly food related?*

FELL: It was mainly food related, but it included the environmental aspects of the drought and to combat the drought and the encroachment of the drought, and improved land practices so that environment was a part of the analysis.

*Q: Was there a clear strategy for the Sahel program at that point?*

FELL: I think there was a clearer strategy than we thought. The strategy we thought was there would be technical packages that would be very performing, and we were optimistic that a lot more irrigated land would go into production and provide more security in a zone that had very erratic rainfall. That was the major thing. We were operating against some of the most difficult parameters: low rainfall, erratic rainfall. Those are difficult parameters to operate against to try to get more secure food production. We probably underestimated the number of years it takes to develop that capacity.

*Q: What sense did you have of the capacity for the Sahelian countries to carry out a program?*

FELL: On a very surface level we were impressed by some very fine individuals. Sometimes we tend to generalize from these individuals and think that there are more there than there are. In fact there was not enough technical capacity to carry a lot of these programs out. It was a much longer term effort than we ever thought it would be. It is still going on. There was another aspect that the Club du Sahel got involved in, which had a spin-off that had immense importance, that had been neglected. For the first time, and this was initiated by USAID, we looked at policy instead of just looking at technical aspects. As a stroke of genius, we brought in CRED the Center for Research in Economic Development from the University of Michigan which happened to be headed up by a very ambitious strong economist named Elliot Berg. Elliot Berg got involved in a study that was launched by AID but funded through the Club du Sahel network with the French playing a very minor role in it which was Cereal Policy in West Africa. It turned out to be a landmark study, because he basically said a lot of these projects don't matter if your pricing policies and your input policies are not good, and if there is not a more liberal approach to the way marketing of cereals is done and more information given to farmers and a whole lot of other things related to policy. If these policy problems are not addressed, none of the projects are going to work.

*Q: How was this perceived by the Sahelians?*

FELL: Not very well. Up to that time it was not considered fair game for us to comment on their cereals policy because that was internal. It was almost like a sovereign domain. It was like saying we're going to come in and work on your judicial system or your department of interior government system and get into the inner workings of your own government. They didn't like it very much. Eventually it was put on the table in working groups. I think that if this had been done in the wrong way it could have fallen completely flat, but luckily the Sahel network was set up in such a way that even an idea like this was

able to be put on the table; people were able to read it; it was able to get some kind of discussion and sort of took on a life of its own as certain of these things do. It became part of the agenda of the club to work on that issue. Another issue that was raised in those days that was a ground breaking issue was the question of recurrent costs. I think this came out of Washington and USAID, one of the many good ideas that came out of USAID. The idea was that a lot of new projects were going to be started up; the donors were starting to take renewed interest in the Sahel. The Dutch and Swiss were increasing their programs. The Italians were beginning to gear up. The French, I don't think they were increasing their program, but were cooperating more with the other donors at least in talking within the club network. The US had been able to develop the Sahel Development program through the Club du Sahel network, and the fact that it even got into legislation that we were doing this, we were able to increase our budgets. The Canadians had increased their budget. There were more projects. We became worried that if these projects were not well thought out and the recurrent costs of these projects were not taken into account, what we now call the sustainability of these projects would be doubtful. They are all going to end up fighting for central resources that are not going to be there. This was capsulized in the idea of recurrent costs. So we asked HIID, Harvard Institute for International Development, to look at this issue. We were absolutely dumbfounded when the results came in. They studied dozens of projects for the World Bank, the African Development Bank, USAID, other donors, and did a major study. They found that almost none of these projects addressed this issue. That even the World Bank in all its majesty had neglected to think about not only recurrent costs in their own projects but the cumulative effect of looking at it from a program standpoint when projects were over, how are these going to be maintained? What's going to happen; where are the national budgets going to come up with resources to maintain some of these things? Whether it be infrastructure or software or whatever. This concept of studying recurrent costs wormed its way in to a lot of projects and had a spread effect of immense proportions in the way we look at development and has threaded its way through development planning. The other way that cereals project had a big effect was the World Bank had seen it and said this is really important stuff, so they hired Elliot Berg who had been our economist working on it, to do the first major study of sustainability in Africa and in general which eventually set policy in the World Bank for the next two decades.

*Q: What was the eventual outcome of the cereals policy? What do you understand happened to it?*

FELL: Well, it became a major issue and I think it eventually led, over a period of many years, to the structural adjustment agenda. It got into the discussions of the reform agenda that was picked up in structural adjustment. It was one of the major items of discussion and dialogue that was put into structural adjustment. Eventually many of these policies were changed or completely amended. So the seeds were set by some of this work that was done at the early days of the Club du Sahel.

*Q: Did anybody make any change at the time or was it longer term?*

FELL: In the short term I don't think there were major changes made. We were still thinking within a state operated system whereby you had state operated warehouses, state operated marketing boards and agencies. But within five to seven years many of those had collapsed because the donors began to withhold financing for them. That might have been a not very visible effect of what caused the collapse of some of those marketing boards. They also imploded from their own inefficiencies, became bankrupt or just inoperative. So just by the sheer fact of the way things were operating, the cereals policies couldn't be continued. A lot of them were changed; import policies were changed. But I still see rearguard actions going on of even donors supporting these state operated marketing boards. Inefficient operations like that still exist. But major changes in liberalizing the practices in West Africa have taken place. I think that many of those would not have happened, had those discussions not begun at that time in the late '70s.

I stayed at the Club du Sahel to 1983 and worked on environment, and forestry programs, among others.

*Q: You started at the Club du Sahel when?*

FELL: 1978 and I left in 1983 and went to Kenya as the Deputy Director of the REDSO office in Nairobi.

Deputy Director of the USAID Regional Economic Development Office in Kenya - 1983

*Q: Well I think there must be more on the Sahel we need to cover. Why don't we leave that now because that is something you could add on your own. Let's go on and finish out Kenya.*

FELL: Incidentally, when you say a career, I actually never considered myself in a career. I considered myself in a series of jobs in AID or a profession, maybe. It is sort of like sinking into the ooze; I eventually was caught up into it.

*Q: Each was self contained.*

FELL: Anyway, a colleague of mine who worked in West Africa, Peter Bloom, was Deputy Director of REDSO in the early 80's. The Director at that time was my old colleague from Cameroon, John Koehring, who was the director of REDSO, which was a service operation based in Nairobi. It had survived from the early days probably having been set up by John Withers in the early 1970's. The other office on the other side had originally been set up by Don Gardner, and then David Shear became the Director. The REDSO/Nairobi handled East Africa from Ethiopia all the way down to South Africa and had programming responsibilities for the Indian Ocean countries including Madagascar, Comoros, and the Seychelles, and Mauritius. It was one of the larger offices in Africa.

*Q: How large was it roughly?*



FELL: I think we had about 25 or 30 direct hire in the REDSO/Nairobi itself. The Kenya complex was a very big complex, probably the largest complex in Africa, because we had a regional finance office there that did the accounting for almost all the missions in East Africa. We had a RHUDO office, a housing office, there with three or four direct hires. We had a Kenya mission which was quite a large mission, 25 or 30 people. All together we had about 70 US direct hire based in Kenya at that time. We were all in one building, and REDSO occupied a couple floors of that building. We were under the management of the Kenya Mission which did the administration for that mission. I think Charles Gladson was Mission Director at that time when I first arrived. Barry Reilly who was a colleague of yours in earlier years in Ghana or Nigeria was the Deputy Director of the Kenya mission. Anyway I replaced Peter Bloom as Deputy Director of REDSO, and John Koehring was the Director. We provided technical services to all the missions in West, in East Africa, and as I say managed those programs for those four Indian Ocean countries.

*Q: What was your specific function?*

FELL: My specific function was an alter ego. I absolutely did everything John Koehring did when he wasn't there. John liked to do things hands on. He liked to see things and get involved in the field a lot. He would travel a considerable amount, and I would travel a considerable amount, so we just alternated being in charge of the office so when he wasn't there I would do whatever needed to be done.

*Q: Well what were some of the most significant projects that you were directing?*

FELL: That I was directly involved in?

*Q: Right!*

FELL: Well to talk about the projects we actually managed when you were working in REDSO, even when you were working a mission, sometimes you get the feeling that you are one step or two steps removed from the action in the field. We have contractors or technical assistants actually doing the projects themselves, and we are in an office. So we are one step removed. At REDSO we were not only one step removed, we were two steps removed. In fact three steps removed when you are the Director or Deputy Director because it is the actual people in your office that are doing the work. What we were doing was a lot of programming or planning for who would be available to cover what activities. So we would help the missions plan out what projects there are going to be designing? What inputs the need to do those designs or implementation or evaluations? What resources could we provide as a first line of resource to help or if not, get them from Washington, or contract for it. So a lot of that is an administrative aspect of finding people for planning or for doing certain activities. So that's a planning activity. Another activity we did was sometimes we'd do functional studies and we'd actually go out ourselves and do things. I'll just take an example - Burundi. At one point, we were at complete odds with the government in Burundi. I can't even mention on this tape how much we were at odds with that government at that time. The object was to send out a

mission from REDSO or Washington and REDSO to go there and see if it was possible to carry on any sort of program in Burundi at that time.

*Q: This was political?*

FELL: Political, yes. It was an extremely bad political situation, almost to the point that they were going to break relations with the government we were so mad at them over certain things they had done. This was 1985 or so. They brought two people out from Washington and myself. I led this mission to go to Burundi to see what is going on at least from a development standpoint. How can we continue having an AID mission operating in this atmosphere? Our results were there was absolutely no reason why we shouldn't continue our AID mission. Our relations with Burundi on the development side were perfect. It couldn't have been better in a way given the status of the country and the way they were operating and who they were. Of course a lot of problems, and ethnic problems of all types. But as far as a development program goes there was no reason why. The problem was strictly on the State Department side, on the political level, that they were having a serious problem. So we have to divide these two. We said look, if you want to have a development program, there's no reason not to; they accept us; we can talk to them. They are perfectly cooperative, as cooperative as any government can be in the situation they are in. If you have problems on the political level, that's another type of decision you have to make. The decision made was to keep our AID program going because that was our thread to talk with many Burundian officials at the time, whereas the State Department people were absolutely behind their desks not talking to anybody.

*Q: You kept the door open.*

FELL: We kept the door open, absolutely. I think that is an example of what we talk about when we refer to development diplomats.

*Q: But there was pressure to terminate the program.*

FELL: Yes, heavy pressure to terminate the program.

*Q: From where?*

FELL: From Washington, from the State Department side. They wanted to close up the whole thing.

*Q: As a show of displeasure.*

FELL: Serious displeasure. I think there were legitimate reasons for displeasure, but we don't want to talk about them.

*Q: But you were able to turn that around.*

FELL: I think we were able to turn it around. I think this was the most development diplomacy as far as the development side goes, the Burundians had no quarrel with us whatsoever. They were relatively happy with the program and the way it was going. They were happy to see us in there and were delighted the AID mission was cooperating with them.

We had another example of a different type. We were on the verge of pulling out of Tanzania in 1985 at the end of the Nyerere years. The economic situation in Tanzania became very bad. We'd almost come to the point where we were going to wind up the mission in Tanzania.

*Q: This was on development grounds.*

FELL: Strictly on development grounds. We can't go any further; this had gone to the end of the wire. When you think this is one of the grand imperial missions we had in Africa with one of the emphasis countries, and we had done lot of projects there. So our assignment in REDSO/Nairobi was to wind up everything and to take possession of all the properties USAID was responsible for in Tanzania and wind everything up. We were taking steps to do that.

I remember going to Arusha. Those were the days when we had outlying offices, one of three places in Africa where I worked that had outlying offices out of the capital cities. One of them was in Cameroon; we had an outlying office in Buea. In fact Sheldon Cole who was later an aide to Samuel Adams worked in that office. We had our main office in Dar es Salaam and our outlying office in Arusha. We actually owned real estate in Arusha. We had two nice pieces of property in Arusha owned by USAID, the US Government. And in Sudan we had in Juba an outlying office out of Khartoum. I can't think of other examples of this where we had actual mini AID offices outside of the capital cities. It was interesting to go to Arusha where you find sort of a miniature USAID office that was still ostensibly operating 20 years after it had been ostensibly shut down practically. Still with all the old forms from the old mission and people. There was one local hire who was keeping everything going, maintaining in Arusha we called the guest house in those days. It had been headquarters for AID operations in northern Tanzania. I remember looking at our properties and determining what they might be worth and if we want to sell them and making recommendations and things like that. At the last minute, a new election was held and President Mnyini was elected in Tanzania. New hope came on the horizon and USAID in its wisdom decided not to wind up the AID office. I think Fritz Gilbert went down there and became the director and we continued operations down there.

Many years ago in 1969, a project in Madagascar had gotten me into Africa to begin. In the 1980s, we began to warm up to Madagascar after many years of being on the outs. We'd pulled completely out of Madagascar in 1972-73 with the Ratsiraka government (who had just been re-elected incidentally), a very socialist government which took an anti-American approach to things. We just closed down completely and didn't do any

more cooperating with Madagascar starting in 1973 or 1974. I think they PNGed our ambassador Marshall out of Madagascar.

*Q: What happened to that livestock project you were on?*

FELL: The project never came to fruition because our bad relations with Madagascar shut it down. We went back in to Madagascar with a PL 480 Title I program in about 1982-3. It was a rice project program that was using PL 480 Title I. We sold the rice and generated counterpart funds and started programming the counterpart funds with the Madagascar government and actually found they were quite happy to work with us and were inviting us to come back and wanted us to come back. Then we developed a kind of a hybrid agricultural import-technical assistance project for Madagascar. Madagascar agricultural research I think it was called, a MARS project. I think it was developed by Jim Graham who was one of our project officers in REDSO/ Nairobi. I worked with Jim on that and went to Madagascar several times and developed that project, also with Bob Kidd who was our PL 480 officer there. We re-instituted the program there in Madagascar and ultimately assigned, Sam Ray to become our Mission Director there. We set up an office there starting in '85 or '86. That was one of the things I worked on.

I remember going to Mauritius on our little program in Mauritius. It was an interesting program. Mauritius is one of the countries we point to as a success program, a success story in Africa. Maybe, as we say, there are no typical missions, no typical countries. It is atypical because there are many Asians. It has a different ethnic mix than any of the other countries, because they have Indians. It is also both Francophone and Anglophone. The Seychelles, too. I was involved in both of those programs. In Mauritius we helped work on the export zones. They had export processing zones which was a concept set up in Mauritius whereby they could import raw materials, process them and sell them. They actually got quite an export market going.

Observations on the REDSO role and promotion to Director of the REDSO/East Africa

FELL: The point I'd like to make in programming, we were operating the REDSO office. We basically had three roles I would say. The first of the roles was as a service organization to provide service to the missions. We were spending a lot of our time programming out people, the experts we had on the staff, the engineers, the lawyers, the economists, the project officers, the social analysis officers, the various disciplines we had represented. We had approximately 30 direct hire people on the staff of the REDSO. We were servicing all the countries in East Africa. That was our first role, the main role for which the REDSO was set up. The second role was to provide programming and oversight in those countries that didn't have an AID presence or where the AID presence had to be pulled out for reasons of security or one reason or another there wasn't any AID presence. That happened a couple of times in Uganda. There were some posts that were very small like Djibouti. There was only one person there, our friend John Lundgren. At various times I went up there to help out. At one time working with the EGADD the regional organization for the horn of Africa that was based in East Africa for the horn of

Africa bringing together Ethiopia, Djibouti, Sudan, Somalia, and Uganda, and Kenya I believe. These countries tried to do something similar to what was done in the CILSS, the interstate committee to fight drought in the Sahel zone, but of course had much more difficult political problems overcoming their differences to set up a viable organization. Anyway, REDSO provided services of various types.

The second role was operating programs in countries where there was no presence. At one point there were the Indian Ocean countries: Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius, and Seychelles. We had to manage all the programs in those countries until we did set up an office in Madagascar, and then we took care of the other three countries. We provided a great deal of support for Madagascar in the early periods. Setting up a program in Mozambique at that time 1984-1985, was a major thrust. There was very little representation in Mozambique at that time, maybe one person if at all in the beginning and then someone was assigned. So REDSO had a very big role in designing the early projects there. Of course this means discussing strategy and trying to stake out what AID would do in a country where we hadn't been present before.

The third was regional projects. There were a number of regional projects still floating around. Regional projects with regional organizations, pest control projects, working with the lake, with the countries around the great lakes. There was an economic organization that had been part of the East Africa development group of countries, formerly based in Arusha which still existed. So we had several of these regional type projects, and we supported those and in many cases, managed them.

When John Koehring left REDSO to become director in Khartoum in Sudan, a major mission that we provided a great deal of assistance to particularly emergency assistance, I became Director of REDSO/Nairobi. I would say that my main thrust was to keep things going. I think we had an excellent office. John Koehring was a first rate project officer, a very far sighted program person, and REDSO had an excellent staff. I think that was one of our big jobs, trying to get a good staff because this is a staff that is helping and doing jobs, for other staffs, and in some cases doing things that the staffs in the missions themselves either didn't have the technical expertise to do or the time to do. So we devoted a great deal of time to selecting staff going through the USAID grapevine to see who was competent and good and trustworthy, and who could operate with a good deal of independence and flexibility in the field. REDSO people would fly in and do their work in two, three, four weeks, whatever it took to design a project, or help implement a project. They had to know quite a bit themselves to really do their jobs. So we wanted to get good people. We were successful and had an excellent office.

#### Move to the Director, REDSO/West Africa - 1987

I was asked by AID Washington if I was interested in moving and becoming Director of the REDSO office in Ivory Coast because I spoke French and had worked in West Africa quite a bit. I actually expressed an interest in doing that. Ray Love called me up and said would you be interested? Just as that happened, the Director was leaving. So he left and I

moved there in 1987. I went to Abidjan just before and interviewed with the Ambassador there, Ambassador Dennis Kux, and he approved my nomination there. That was a bigger office than the REDSO mission in Nairobi. We serviced all the missions and AID representatives in West Africa out of that office. We had a comptrollers office that did a good deal of the comptrolling or handling of financial accounts for missions and offices in West Africa. I think we had a direct hire staff of 42 Americans and approximately 120 local hires working both in the comptrollers office and as professionals in REDSO. We also had support staff: drivers and typists and secretaries and assistants. We had a hard working office there too. We had two types of missions in Africa. They were divided A and B missions. The A missions were able to do everything on their own and really called on REDSO sparingly. The other missions which were small missions of one to five AID staff to which we provided more services.

The REDSO office in Abidjan was also doing the three things I mentioned before: Doing service, managing projects where there was no AID office and also a number of regional projects. For example we had regional projects in West Africa, the ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West Africa, the common market of West Africa, if you will, based in Lagos. We had grants to that organization, grants to various regional organizations in West Africa, to the African Development Bank which was based in Abidjan. So my career really came full circle. A friend of mine who had been a project officer when I was with the Bank had worked his way up to become the President of the bank Babakar N'Diaye. So we managed a grant, we still had a grant to the African Development Bank which had moved through many phases since the time I had been there in earlier times. Some 15-20 years later I came back, the grant was now being used to provide many technical assistance maybe eight or nine technical assistance full time in the bank; not AID people now but technical assistants to help them in their computer operations in studies, and in economic studies of one sort or another that the bank had chosen to get involved in. The grant had grown quite a bit. I think it was up to \$15,000,000. I think over the years we had provided \$25-30,000,000 range of assistance to the bank for that type of cooperation since those earliest says. I should refer back to that; it started with about a \$300,000 grant, so things had taken on quite more importance from the time when I myself was a technical cooperation assistant at the bank.

Then we also had the job of managing AID programs in REDSO in countries where there weren't any AID offices. We did have at that time Sao Tome, a little country off the coast of Gabon that we managed by remote control. Finally we negotiated an agreement with the Portuguese Government in Lisbon with one of our lawyers. We worked this agreement up where they would manage the project more or less. We would help them pay for it and evaluate it and support it but without people on the ground because we didn't have the people to put in to Sao Tome, a little island country 60,000 population off the coast of Gabon as I said. I eventually went to Sao Tome. It was a cocoa production project, a training project, agricultural training in the cocoa plantations which was the main activity in Sao Tome, a former Portuguese colony.

The other country we managed was the Ivory Coast itself. Quite a large country, and we had many projects in for many years. It had never been a concentration country because it had been a successful country that we felt was receiving sufficient aid from other donors, particularly the French. Now strangely enough, and I had forgotten to mention this, one of the first projects I worked on when I first came to AID as a lawyer, was for a housing project, one of the first housing projects in the Ivory Coast called the Fairmont housing project built in the late 60's. I did the closing as the lawyer for that project in 1969. Lo and behold, I came back to the Ivory Coast and one of the major projects we had in the Ivory Coast was around the housing project. Now housing was a program that had very little grant money to it; it was basically loan money of regular commercial term loan money. It wasn't really aid or what we call official development assistance. We eventually did negotiate some small projects with the Ivory Coats. One Title I project for the import of rice which I worked on with our PL 480 food aid expert Bob Kidd. That was eventually successfully negotiated. I think it was considerable aid in the area of \$ 20,000,000 with the Ivory Coast in the earliest tranches. Eventually we increased our program in the Ivory Coast into other areas after I left. I retired in 1990.

Observations on international development;  
working for the Development Assistance Committee - 1990

I'd like to come to some of the key questions. Then after I'd left USAID, I was hired by the OECD to work on aid reviews in the development cooperation directorate of the OECD, which is a part of the secretariat of the OECD that backstops the Development Assistance Committee, the DAC which had always been chaired by an American up until now. The DAC was chaired by Mr. Maurice Williams at one time we mentioned earlier, by Mr. Rutherford Poats by Mr. John Lewis, former professor of economics at Princeton and AID director in India, and Joe Wheeler who was Deputy Assistant Administrator of USAID. Then Ray Love replaced Joe Wheeler. Now the present chairman of the DAC is Mr. James Michael who was formerly deputy Assistant Administrator of AID and at one time headed up the Latin America Bureau and had been an ambassador in a Central American country. In the aid review division where I was hired, our job is one of the key activities of the DAC: to carry on the peer group reviews of the DAC. Clearly it is one of the basic core activities of the DAC and it is an operation that has been going on since the earliest years of the DAC which was set up in 1961. The United States was very influential in negotiating the creation of the DAC. The OECD is actually the successor to the Marshall Plan organization set up to provide the framework under which the Marshall Plan was provided with the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, OEEC which became the OECD and the United States joined the organization itself, which it had been assisting. Then all the Western donors and Western countries have joined. The United States wished the DAC to concentrate at that time on more burden sharing, getting other donors to pick up the slack so the United States wouldn't have to be the only donor which it practically was. Not really, as 60% of the aid was provided by the United States. The purpose in setting it up the DAC was to encourage improved efficiency and effectiveness of aid and also more volume. Well the DAC has been wildly successful in this to the point where the United States is the lowest ranking donor in the DAC the real

comparative basis being GNP to ODA (official development assistance). The DAC also define what assistance would be. They called it official development assistance which would have a certain amount of conditionality to it. It would be given for economic and social development purposes. There are many financial guidelines as to what qualifies for ODA, official development assistance and what doesn't. Military aid is completely excluded. The aid which is not aimed at those purposes, if it is commercially oriented is not ODA. If the main purpose is commercial, it doesn't qualify as ODA. And now other donors are very active and provide a much higher percentage of their GNP for this purpose than we do. Ours is below .15%, while some provide 1% of their GNP, mostly the Nordic countries, to this purpose. And to the DAC, The Development Assistance Committee, the peer group review is one of the main things this group does. I'd say the three main core activities are collecting statistics, organizing high level meetings of the ministers of cooperation to discuss policy and strategies and approaches and compare notes and conducting peer group aid reviews. The collection of statistics on how much aid was provided to what countries in what manner and all that. The third main core activity is the peer group reviews themselves where the committee itself looks at each one of its members, sort of, if you will, puts them on the grill, does studies about them, tries to understand how they are administered, how they are organized, where the aid goes, what the policies are, what the purpose is, how the aid is evaluated to determine if they are trying to improve the efficiency and quality, staffing and delivery of their aid that is being provided. The peer group review operates in a way where the Secretariat does some basic studies, the country itself submits a memorandum. Two of the committee members are each time assigned as examiners who help the secretariat and work alongside the secretariat, or the secretariat works alongside the examiners to sort of prosecute if you will the peer group review. They bring out as much information as they can about it by visiting capitals, visiting the capital of the country that is being examined and also developing countries where aid is being provided to the extent that time is available to do it, and collecting information about it and writing a report which describes in fairly complete detail, we hope, as many of the salient aspects about the program to make it understandable to the other members. Then these are critiqued, discussed, and ideas are exchanged both favorable and unfavorable. Many good ideas come out of these aid reviews. In fact we try to put the emphasis on the favorable and the good ideas. I have conducted between 18 and 20 aid reviews from the time I began there in 1990 when I retired from USAID. I've conducted three aid reviews of the United States itself, three on Japan, I've worked on the European Commission, the United Kingdom, Finland a couple of times, Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, and did I say the European commission? I've done other things in the Secretariat. Followed up on the aid coordination, which is another aspect of the DAC. Many years ago the DAC suggested the World Bank do more in aid coordination. They started the consultative groups which are normally held in Paris. The consultative groups train on a certain number of countries developing countries and the World Bank holds annual meetings in Paris. The DAC has a monitoring role since it was a key organization in trying to see how aid coordination takes place, both on the upper levels and on the field itself. We backstop the UNDP round tables, which handle many of the lesser developed countries. Strangely enough in earlier times I conducted the US delegation to consultative groups like for Madagascar when we were representing



Madagascar in earlier years in the 1980's. So there I was on the other side of the table sort of monitoring these consultative group mechanisms and writing reports on them. So this is feedback on aid coordination mechanism.

### Views on USAID as a development organization

I'm going to append to this report a short history of USAID that I wrote for the last aid review and may be of interest to those who are sort of looking at the history of AID, because I was asked to capsulize it in a very short report of two or three pages, so I think this might be of interest. In this report I've tried to describe my career. I've spent all of it working in Africa.

The major changes were cycles in how the program was managed in Africa. First of all we had many bilateral missions, and AID offices everywhere. Then, we went to emphasis countries that were major missions like Ghana, Liberia, Tanzania. I remember when I first came into the Africa Bureau, North Africa was still in the Africa Bureau which included Morocco and Tunisia. Then they were moved off the Near East Bureau. Tanzania and Kenya were emphasis countries. The rest (not "emphasis countries) were in a regional framework. At least in West Africa, we had regional development offices. I mentioned that I was assigned to the regional office in Yaounde and then in Dakar. As years went by we became more bilateral and were able to set up AID missions in almost all African countries. I mean in almost all the countries, some 40 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, we were able to have either AID missions or AID offices. Now as I look at Africa in 1996, we are closing down many AID offices and missions. I suspect we will be going back to managing many programs in a regional way or not having programs at all in certain countries, somewhat as it was 25 years earlier in the late 60's early 70's. So we see these things as cycles.

I also saw cycles as to whether we managed things on a geographical basis or on a sectoral basis. There were various offices set up at different times jockeying. Some had a sectoral focus, others had a geographic focus. Of course in the very earliest days we had loans going to Africa managed in the very strong capital Development and Finance office, extremely well organized, with well prepared projects, infrastructure project mostly. That completely disappeared and that capability disappeared from the AID staffing. What I would like to say about staffing and personnel is that I always had the impression that AID offices in the field spent too much time catering to the needs of AID/ Washington answering questions which undoubtedly seemed important coming from Congressional sources or other constituents in the states, but did permit us in the field to spend sufficient time learning about the country itself, dialoguing with the local government, and really understanding the local scene better.

On a long term basis, we should be talking to the target people who would be involved in projects. I think we satisfied ourselves by talking to more educated elite type people who were one or two steps removed from the target group we were working with. We rarely had the time to do as a colleague if mine did one time in Cameroon. He was with the

UNDP. Actually it wasn't the UNDP it was a UN office called MULPAC. All I can do is tell you the acronym. There were several of these MULPAC offices setup by the UN in the 1970's and they disappeared. He was assigned to one of those offices, and instead of doing the kind of regional planning that was envisioned, he was a type of a person who believed more in participatory development. He spent many weeks going out talking, or rather listening, to target groups. He would actually sit around the fire, go into the homes and meetings and villages and spent hours and hours trying to understand the development situation of people in a given area in Cameroon. Now, very few USAID officers ever did anything remotely like that. This man's name was André Lefever. I'm still in contact with him. He's retired and lives in France. But he was one of the few people I ever knew who actually went and listened to people in villages. One of the things I remember him telling me was that one of the major problems that people had in villages was roaming animals. I had never heard of this problem but when that I met him and he told me about it, I, too, became sensitive to it. In certain villages particularly in the rain forest area there was no way of controlling roaming animals. We always encourage people to improve their nutrition by setting up gardens and school gardens and whatnot, but these needed to be protected because there was nothing to prevent chickens and goats and animals of one sort or another from just roaming around and rummaging around and destroying whatever gardens were being tended to by people in villages. He probed the difficulties of making village woodlots on a communal basis work, questions of land tenure, and local questions.

It is very hard to find out things like that from elite people who distance themselves from village life. They understand it little better than we do ourselves as outsiders unless they go down and spend a lot of time talking to villagers who will actually be involved in projects. Now this is the different type of project I'm talking about; I'm not talking about policy projects but projects that are going to be aimed at people's lives. But some of the projects we were doing in health and in agriculture were related to these things. I think we didn't have the time, the leisure, the ability, and the personnel on the staff to really take the time to understand the societies we were working in as well as we should. I was asked what projects that I worked on that might have succeeded. I remember one project I worked on in Cameroon. It was a Swiss project on the training of farmers. They would take young farmers, from the villages and they would spend one year on a model farm station, but it wasn't model in the sense that it was modern. It was model in the sense that it was using local material, local resources to teach youngsters, young farmers how to do better with what they have. To plow better, to use inputs better, husbandry, also how to simply improve their own skills at making their own tools, and understanding markets better, and just getting an education for being better farmers. This was a project that we started in 1975. I heard 20 years later that it still was operating as a flagship project for the Cameroon AID mission. It had been successful I understand. At least it was pointed out as a successful project which is one of the things we never know sometimes and don't hear which projects have turned out successfully over many years because we are either at the beginning or the middle or the end.

We rarely see the whole cycle of projects. For instance, take the African Development Bank. Some projects were so big, so massive that it is difficult to encompass them as projects themselves because they have such an enormous impact. I worked on the African Development Bank as an institution which has been variously criticized and yet it's a thoroughly African institution in many ways with all the foibles and problems that any African institution will have in a national setting and trying to avoid corruption. Corruption creeps in, poor quality overcomes better quality, with political pressures. I mentioned how a President of a country wrote a letter to the president of the bank on one project. That it might be a pet project, and that is how projects get deviated. Well these things are part of political process in any country. They take place in our country, too, in a different way, but they are almost unavoidable. What we've attempted to do in many of our programs and projects is to create the processes whereby these things don't take over and become the main thrust of activities. Enough rules, regulations, processes, trained people are there to keep things on track.

A point on how USAID operates I want to make. I've always felt that USAID missions were too muscle-bound, that there were too many people in our AID missions for their own good. This may be somewhat in contradiction to what I said earlier that we didn't have time to really learn about the local situation or get into it enough. I think the solution has to be to somehow lighten the burden of requests for information from Washington. If we had better information systems that were linked together, whereby we had contracting information, design information, and accounting information, more homogeneously contained, it would improve things. I understand that systems like this are being put in, so many of the statistical questions could be answered more easily. I think if we had clearer objectives, which I understand that AID is adopting now, called strategic objectives, we might be able to spend more time in the field. I think my experience was that by having so many people in the missions we spent so much time managing ourselves that we didn't actually have time to manage projects, the programs the programs and projects in the country. That is somewhat of an exaggeration, but I think there is a lot of truth to it. I spent much more time managing and worrying about the 40-some direct hire in REDSO Abidjan which was the largest mission in sub-Saharan Africa than we did worrying about the 120 or so local hires, the Ivorians and other nationalities, we hired in our REDSO office. I think the most effective little office I was in, was in Cameroon where we only had four direct hires for the program and had a regional responsibility in addition to that. I think we all substituted for one another and were all on top of the program. I remember later when I was working on an OECD review, I was doing an aid review of Japan and I went to Indonesia. In fact I've been to many countries in Asia and looked at aid programs there since then and found out that although one could have an inferiority complex in Africa about some things, I've come to the conclusion that the programs weren't any worse in Africa, and I could say the same for Central America where I've also been on missions since then. But to return to going to Indonesia working on the Japanese aid program.

I went to the OECF office which is the Organization for Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan, their loan arm. I went to their office, this was in 1992, they had one billion dollars

a year going to Indonesia, the largest aid program perhaps in the world. I went into the OECF office and they had clean desks all over and five Japanese staff, their entire staff, and maybe one or two secretaries. They had 150 active infrastructure projects. Maybe 10-15% of all the roads, ports and electric projects in Indonesia. A huge program. They answered my questions very calmly with no seeming problems, and they had lists, and reports and we learned about their program. I went to the USAID office and they had something like 40 direct-hire people at the time. There was sheer pandemonium in the USAID office. People I had known from other parts of AID running up and down the hall, saying, "Hello, Art, talk to you later" and running down the hall with papers strewn out behind them and cradling phones in their offices at the same time talking. I went to the program officer who was running out of his mind cradling the phone and trying to talk to us and giving us a piece of paper that would be our briefing. I said what's the program here? He said oh we got \$30,000,000 a year. I thought: There has got to be something wrong here. How could we be doing \$30,000,000 a year with 40 direct hires and something like 150 local hires, about 180 people and the Japanese have five hires and are doing a billion dollar program. Maybe there's something wrong here.

I think one of the problems with USAID missions in the field and with USAID in Washington is "frenetic." The frenetic atmosphere one finds in USAID missions and in Washington. We just don't seem to be able to do things calmly, take decisions based on more field experience, on what is going on. I think we have an enormous amount of commitment in people in the agency that I have met and known, a great deal of expertise about how to do economic development and how to carry on dialogue, and how to manage and implement projects. But a system that pushes all of this into a frenetic activity that was often not trained at the objective of helping developing countries develop, but was trained at meeting certain self imposed deadlines within the agency that created a certain frenetic aspect to the way we worked. I think this prevented us from understanding many things in the field that would have improved the quality of our aid.

Another example of this, I think there was a major shift from doing infrastructure which Africa needed badly in many respects and a failure to recognize that one can do an enormous amount of training, of transfer of technology, and actually do something physical on the ground that needed to be done and otherwise wouldn't be done in Africa through infrastructure projects and the belittling of that type of project in comparison to the softer type of projects, There are social type projects, the technical assistance projects, the training projects, and I don't belittle them. I think they are very important in their own right. I think an approach marrying up these two doing something useful - doing and learning at the same time, would be good.

During one of my training seminars, I took the development studies program when I was in AID which was a two month training seminar in development studies. We went to Tuskegee Institute. I remember the Institute had been built by the students themselves. The students had been trained, this was back in the 19th century, George Washington Carver was behind the Tallahassee University, I think in Alabama. You could see the school was built and how the bricks had been laid by the students, and they were teaching

the students carpentry and masonry and how to build while the Institute was being built. I think a lot of this should be done in Africa. I think there is much useful infrastructure that could be built, and the training could have been done at the same time. I think that AID at the same time gave undue emphasis to written policies which would never be carried out and couldn't be carried out by governments instead of working on the conditions under which the policies could be carried out.

I think that is one area where the Club du Sahel made a real contribution, to try and talk and understand, to try to create the conditions under which things could be done. The countries themselves will find their policies when the training atmosphere is improved, but imposing these from the outside in conditionality is not very permanent or durable or sustainable. In this respect I think I learned a great deal from the Swiss Program in Benin and doing the Swiss aid review, which I just did last year in 1996, that allowing local countries to do more themselves, not depending so much on outsiders such as USAID, universities and large technical assistance teams, which I think create the wrong type of atmosphere and get things kind of turned around. It gets us thinking things are better than they are because they are being artificially held up and being artificially carried out by people we are paying. They are from the outside and are not really reaching the people themselves. It means taking a much longer view of things, of being willing to take a slower pace of development and being willing to see mistakes made. But they would be mistakes made by the countries themselves, not our mistakes and living with that. I think that is the kind of development which is more sustainable and is internalized better by the countries themselves. I think some of the most satisfying projects, at least that I worked on, tended to be the projects that combined both training and actual physical infrastructure of one sort or another.

I felt one of the prime examples was the Trans-Cameroon railroad where hundreds of carpenters and welders and heavy equipment operators, stock room people and accountants were trained and the trans Cameroon railroad was built itself, and engineers were trained. We did this with road building projects in various places. We did it in a small way. I can think of other small projects we did this with such as the Bakel livestock project (in Senegal) where there was some very small construction done and training done and at the same time a couple of things were done that we thought would improve livestock practices. Also, in the irrigation perimeters in the Bakel region. We had a regional project in Nairobi when I was there. It was the remote sensing project where many Africans were brought in with European assistance to try to learn to use this technology and we provided equipment and training together with technical assistance. I think when things are put in to the context of a project, aimed at a product that is something of its own, and not just training in an abstract sense, it might tend to be more sustainable and have more effect. I think that many of our efforts in regional development were overly optimistic and didn't take into consideration the level of commitment the countries would make to those regional programs, which they would make by paying their dues and supporting a regional approach. Here I think we simply misread the tea leaves or thought that by leading and providing assistance, by cajoling, begging, pushing, we would get some results. The net result after 20-30 years of working with regional organizations

particularly in Africa was that if the countries aren't ready to do it, it is very unlikely that anything will come out of it.

So it is not the push that is going to do it, it is the countries themselves and we can maybe help on the sidelines, but I'm really doubtful whether the donors can do much in regional cooperation until the countries themselves are ready to put a commitment behind it. In this respect I think that the Club du Sahel process was quite illuminating. It never attempted to be a regional organization in the sense of a common market or anything like that. It was more of a regional network in the sense of building up dialogue and discussion between the countries themselves with respect to common problems. Then from there it would be a slow process over a number of years better chances for regional integration could come about.

I know other parts of Africa where other attempts like the Sadec part of Southern Africa, different approaches have been used and that's another lesson learned. All the lessons learned are local lessons learned basically. I think Tip O'Neill said it. All politics are local politics. It seems to me that there are some general ideas and theories and approaches one can extract from USAID and other donor practices. The DAC has done so and has published a book called *Effective Principles of Development Cooperation*. To most USAID officers this would be like reading *Mary had a Little Lamb* because they are quite basic. If you are going to do a project you ought to study the project beforehand and you need to watch out for the implementation of the project, you ought to evaluate it at some point. They were all pretty basic things, but it was amazing to me how many donors actually didn't take some of these things very seriously. Strangely enough, even AID at various times did not take some of these basic principles as seriously as it might have because of lack of time. And that we would do the formalistic steps of having project papers and covering all the bases with elaborate project analysis and study, but those that were close up and inside the process knew that many things were being left aside because of this and I go back to it, this frenetic, this activist approach and not allowing sufficient time to carry things out.

I think in that respect there might have been a fault in the entire USAID system of not allowing sufficient resources for what they use in the United Kingdom parlance, process projects or rolling process projects. At one time we did have that kind of a project in the US that was called a rolling project but we didn't really believe in it and our system didn't allow it to operate with the kind of flexibility that it should have. But permitting missions to do studies over time that would be between a study and a project, learning while you are designing the project and taking the time to provide resources that would develop the idea over time and work with the host government and the local people in a slower process and reaching eventually a project. I think we had an article in the Foreign Assistance Act (611) which required adequate feasibility studies and so on before a project could be undertaken. I really don't think that kind of a legal requirement poses an insurmountable impediment to looking at projects. Particularly projects involving people in a process oriented way.

Now I'm asked here what was my favorite overseas post. Far and away my favorite overseas post was my first posting to Abidjan, Ivory Coast in 1971 working in the African Development Bank with many different nationalities, We had an Egyptian who wrote my efficiency report. I worked side by side with a Moroccan. I had a Senegalese gentleman who was sort of my immediate boss. I worked side by side with many nationalities, French, Yugoslav, you name it. Ivory Coast in those days was very safe and very lovely. We had glowing memories from that period. I think that anyone who listens to USAID people who have worked overseas, we all got sick at one time or another. I enjoyed working in Cameroon because of the major project we had, the trans Cameroon railroad. We had a small mission there that was very active. We worked up in Chad which was interesting, but I got sick down there so that sort of put the kibosh on my memory of Cameroon. I got amoebas I guess or some sort of a parasite, stomach problems. That carried on somewhat while I was in Dakar. I found that a rather nice posting in Senegal but not as nice as the Ivory Coast. Then being posted at the Club du Sahel in Paris actually turned out to be interesting and rather pleasant but a lot of travel. I spent nearly half my time in Africa.

I forgot to mention one of the most memorable people I met I suppose was the President of the United States' mother, Lillian Carter. When I was at the Club du Sahel, I was the officer in charge of taking her to the Sahel on her visit when she went there. She was working with a fellow named Hardin who was out of the White House. We took her to the Sahel. I remember we went with her to Ouagadougou in Upper Volta, to Mali and Timbuktu, also to Gambia. I had to make all this trip twice. We went first to check everything out; then I had to go back a second time when we actually made the trip with her. She was a very interesting lady. At one time she looked at me and said you don't seem to talk very much. And it was true, I was more of a listener than a talker. She said, "I'd like to know more of what you're thinking." So I told her things somewhat similar to what has been on this tape. At that time we were trying to "sell" the Sahel program and to encourage the administration to do as much as we could for those countries and to keep the network we were trying to build going. We were always afraid that the United States would just lose heart and pull out. That was all started in 1973-74-75 and the actual Club du Sahel process was started then. It is still going today in 1997. I suppose we shouldn't have been so worried that things were going to collapse at any minute and they did continue.

I think the major accomplishment of USAID that I saw in the field, and this may be sort of a strange response, was actually the professionalism of the organization itself. I think I saw many devoted staff who worked very closely with their local counterparts who really put their hearts in to what they were doing. I wouldn't want to pick out an individual project or program, although I have a few little pet favorites. I thought the Trans Cameroon railroad was good. If I thought about it I could probably pick out a few other infrastructure projects that I was involved in, even the training projects. I haven't even mentioned population which was extremely important. We did some very good population programs of all types in training, in private enterprise. We brought population projects into Senegal, the Ivory Coast. We did population programs in Kenya while I was

there. I think the United States assistance program has left an extremely favorable impression with many people in Africa who looked to us as professionals. Who even distinguished it from diplomacy. They might have disagreed with the United States at various times or our various positions on different things. But I think they looked at USAID itself as really an institution that was helping, that was there when things were needed, when emergencies broke out knew they could count on USAID. When the government was trying to do something, they consulted with the local USAID mission; they knew there were people there who were experienced, that were interested, that would try to provide advice, consult, and provide assistance when they could. I think that was the most important thing, the presence of USAID. But I don't think large USAID missions were necessary.

I think smaller, harder hitting, professional, three and four and five person missions would be best, perhaps backed up, or backstopped by a regional office in strategic locations where more expertise in other disciplines could be represented and that aren't needed on a continual basis in the country itself. Lawyers, engineers, economists, maybe you don't need them on a continual basis, but you need generalists that are well trained. I think that is another aspect of development that we tend to underestimate. The fascination of it is that you work in so many different sectors and activities. We were working on policy, we were working on various sectors in economic development, economics, technical aspects of various projects that you have to have more than just a smattering of knowledge in order to work on them, and putting projects together, designing projects, the discipline of that, with the legal backdrop we have in our whole agency.

I think that it is an activity of tremendous variety that extends over the whole of human experience, if you will, of looking at things in education, health, infrastructure, economics, political science, population, what have you. All these different activities provide fields that are interesting in their own right and taken globally provide a wide variety of interest. USAID was able to bring together people that could help these developing countries, and I think that was our most lasting and important contribution. I don't think that looking around at other donors as I have done in the OECD and the DAC, few donors have that kind of committed professionalism in their aid offices. Most other donors I think, I don't say all of them, tend to take a more of an eight to five attitude towards their job. They're not career development professionals often. There could be advantages where they are more detached. They certainly don't have the terrible frenetic aspect that our USAID missions have, but they don't have the commitment the USAID officers and staff have.

I think I've come to the end of this. It has been a very fascinating discussion for me to look back on a career in USAID. When I left USAID, I thought that I was almost like leaving my mother or an organization that had looked over me, that I had felt part of, that I was very attached to. I had a great deal of difficulty in leaving USAID behind. I didn't for the first few years; I kept thinking about it; I kept worrying about it. In fact I still do in aid reviews but in a somewhat more detached way because it has a life of its own and will carry on without me. I know that. But when I left AID I thought cymbals would crash and



something big would happen. Nothing really big happened. It went ahead; its life went on, and mine has done likewise. Just as an example, one year after I left the organization, I happened to pick up an awards pamphlet and I saw in there that my name was there and that I had gotten an outstanding career award. I called up our AID DAC delegate who at that time was Martin Dagata and said "Martin I see my name here. I haven't gotten any certificate, I haven't been advised of this, I didn't know anything about it." He said, "Gee, that's interesting." He sent a cable back to Washington. I didn't get the certificate for another year after that. Which goes to show you that once you are gone they don't really think about you very much because the agency doesn't think. I'm sure that many individuals I've met in the agency and locals that I have met do think of us, though.

I should add one other thing that has been a great pleasure. I think I've tried to give a helping hand to others, both locals and Americans to further their own careers. I know others in AID have had a very conscious effort in trying to do that, of trying to pass the baton, of trying to help others, of getting them jobs. We had a program when I was in Senegal of hiring former Peace Corps volunteers. Many of these people have joined the agency. Probably some of them are dictating tapes like this about their careers in USAID or on the verge of it having also turned in a career. I think that was something I've tried to do and still try to do to give good advice to people who want to go in to international development. It is a very satisfying and interesting career, varied, providing the opportunity for travel. I wish I could have heard a description of it as I think I've attempted to do before I started and I might have been able to get even more out of it. I wish anyone who is going to do a career or is looking at this subject all the best.

*End of interview*