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**ARCHIBALD GORDON MACARTHUR**

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

*Q: Gordon, why don't you start out by giving us a thumbnail sketch of your association with AID so that we have an overview of your career?*

**Overview of career with USAID**

MACARTHUR: Certainly, I joined AID in 1962, late in the year and spent 29 years with AID, retiring in 1991. Most of my work with AID, in fact, virtually all, was in the Africa Bureau. So all of my foreign assignments were in Africa; I only had three assignments overseas but they were long tours since I stayed at least two tours in every post. When I was back on rotation, I was still in the Africa Bureau as desk officer for Tunisia, Morocco, and then officer in charge of Chad and the Entente states which included the Ivory Coast, Niger, Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Benin, and Togo.

I was Deputy Director of the Sahel Development Program, the big drought relief program we had in the late 1970's and 1980s in Africa. My last overseas post was as Deputy Director of REDSO in Abidjan for four years, backstopping our missions in West Africa. There followed a direct transfer to New York where I was the AID representative at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations for five years and retired from there, in December 1991.

### **Early years and education**

*Q: Very good. Well let's go back to the beginnings and talk about where you were born, where you grew up, where you were educated and also situations that suggest why you wanted to get into international development work.*

MACARTHUR: Well I was born in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1926 of an American father and a French mother. I was a product of my father's second marriage in his late years and so I did not know him too well because he died when I was about 14. But we were in Europe and my siblings and I were born in Switzerland because my father was engaged in business in Europe. The MacArthur Brothers Company was an old American civil engineering contracting firm. My great- great-grandfather built covered bridges in New York state and my great grandfather built sections of the Erie canal. The company was over a hundred years old and was engaged in large engineering works here and abroad. At the time I was born my father had tendered a bid to build the Athens water supply and had the contract to build the docks in Palermo, Sicily. He was very often in Europe, having spent his early years, partly in Spain after the Spanish-American war and was on some other diplomatic assignments; he was present at the Treaty of Versailles when it was signed. He was pretty much in and out of business and the diplomatic service in an unofficial capacity. This is why I was born in Switzerland and I lived there until I was about seven years old.

*Q: What diplomatic post did he have?*

MACARTHUR: He was appointed Special Assistant Secretary of State by McKinley to go to Paris with the Peace Commission following the Spanish American war in 1898, and then to the Philippines with Admiral Dewey on the first Philippine Commission in 1899. Following the defeat of the Spaniards in the Philippines and the ensuing Filipino insurrection, he drafted the report from the first Philippine Commission which was submitted to Congress. After that, McKinley offered him an Ambassadorship to a Latin American country but he left the diplomatic service to enter the family firm of MacArthur Brothers Company. That would have been about 1900. My grandfather was the President, my uncle was Vice President and my father was Treasurer. It was interesting - my uncle was in the class of Teddy Roosevelt at Harvard and the family firm was the only American firm to bid for the construction of the Panama Canal. They did not get the contract because there were no other bids; and the government decided to do it on its own.

My father was involved both in business and in some of the meetings of the First World War; the conferences that took place. He was at the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne, for instance, which negotiated the results of the break-up of the Ottoman Empire and the fate of Turkey and the Near East. At the time father had a concession to build a railroad to the oil fields in Mosul. So, he was there in an unofficial capacity called upon by the government. This is how my early background fits into my future.

We came to the United States in 1932. I had had a year of schooling, the equivalent of first grade in Lausanne. One of my classmates in school in Lausanne, by the way, was Ananda Mahidol, future King of Thailand. I did not speak a word of English. We lived in Bronxville, NY, outside New York City. When we got there they put me in kindergarten just to learn the language. That was a pretty difficult time because I was much older than all the other kids. But I picked up English fairly fast; went through high school and entered Harvard in 1946. My father was a Harvard man, class of 1885, and I was class of 1949. I majored in anthropology.

*Q: Why anthropology?*

MACARTHUR: I felt it was sort of the distillation of everything that humanity had to offer. It is an overview of everything; the kernel, the nugget of knowledge about what makes people click. I had a choice - there was physical anthropology, I took courses in that with Ernest Hooten, the famous physical anthropologist of the time, but it got to be too clinical. I majored mainly in ethnology, social anthropology. I got my degree in that and then got out of college and hadn't a clue what to do. People told me that about the only thing you can do is teach or work in a museum. So, I tried both. I had applications out. I was offered a teaching job in Istanbul at Robert College and also at the American University in Cairo.

But then the Korean War broke out and I had been 4F, which meant that I failed my physical during the Second World War because I had a chipped knee cap from sports in school. When the Korean War broke out, I was drafted right away since I was among the older groups. I spent two years in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. They sent me to Germany with the occupation troops. I was one of the lucky ones because I didn't go to Korea. They needed replacements for troops in the Canal Zone of Panama and the Army of Occupation in Germany, and they sent me to Germany. I was working for the Judge Advocate section, the Legal Section in Heidelberg handling the trials of soldiers that were getting into trouble. Some of them were horrendous crimes. I was not an officer by any means; I was the lowest thing in the Army, a private E-1. I talked with the commanding officer, who was a Harvard man, as it turned out, who asked me how I liked the duty and I said that I thought they might want to use my French some place. He said that sounded like a good idea. He got on the phone, called Paris and within a couple of days my orders were cut and they sent me to Paris. I worked for SHAPE Headquarters. Eisenhower was there at the time and I met my namesake, Douglas MacArthur, who was also there at the time. He passed away last year, I think, Douglas MacArthur II, the nephew of the General. We were comparing family notes. I spent the next year and one-half in Paris.

*Q: Doing what kind of work?*

MACARTHUR: It was clerical work. I was handling files of the soldiers, their personnel files basically, in a support mission to the SHAPE Headquarters. Our unit gave logistical support to SHAPE headquarters. We were located in an old factory, in the Bleriot airplane factory, right on the Seine outside of Paris. This would have been 1951 to 1953. I went back to the states when my tour of duty was up; which was just two years. In 1954, I went back to Paris with the GI bill and I spent two years at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques, the diplomatic school in France where French diplomats and French administrative people go. My father had been there in 1887 on his grand tour following his Harvard education. The people there were rather interested to see me. I spent two years with all of the French students. It was quite difficult since I did not have a very profound command of academic French. I left Europe when I was only seven. But I got into the swing of things. I took European Diplomatic History with one of the famous professors there, Pierre Renouvin; a course in Chinese History, and a course in International Law. While in Paris, I had to keep going in the summer times, to keep in school. The first time around I went to Oxford; I took a course in British Diplomatic History and Literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century which was fascinating. Some of the professors, dons, they called them at Oxford, were famous people. Some authors, Stephen Spender, Evelyn Waugh, Harold Nicholson. They were really interesting people and it was a splendid course.

I returned to Paris to continue at the Institute of Political Science, and to make a long story short, I saw an advertisement on the Salzburg Seminar and I applied for it and got into that; a fellowship at the Salzburg Seminar, in Austria. It was founded in 1947 by two Harvard men who felt that it was important to introduce Europe to American institutions at the end of the war because there was a total lack of communication between America and Europe as a result of the war. They were able to convince the widow of Max Reinhardt, the playwright, who owned a palace just outside of Salzburg, which had been the Rococo palace of the Bishop of Salzburg, to lease this establishment to the Seminar.

The seminar comprised six week sessions in American law, American foreign policy, labor, art, all types of subjects during the course of the year. It was not designed for Americans, but rather for Europeans. They would bring American Professors over to conduct the courses. They did have a couple of token Americans there; and I happened to be one of them. The other one was Fred Holborn, who became a Professor at SAIS. Lately, he has retired from SAIS. Another was Thorwald Stoltenberg, who later became UN High Commissioner for Refugees and subsequently Prime Minister of Norway. We were only 30 people, about two people from each European country. They all went into journalism or foreign service, or what not. That seminar is still going today. I was in the 41<sup>st</sup> session and now they are up to three-hundred and something.

I finished my studies in Paris as well. I came back to the U.S. armed with a varied background and rather the perpetual student. The Hungarian Revolution took place in 1956, I believe. A lot of Hungarian refugees were leaving Hungary and many were coming to the U.S., to Canada and I got involved with the National Council of Churches,

in New York, helping resettle these refugees. I did that for a few months and meanwhile had feelers out at SAIS, the School of Advanced International Studies, at Johns Hopkins and enrolled in their program for a year and one-half. I got my masters degree from there in 1959.

*Q: Any particular concentration during that course?*

MACARTHUR: Again it was European Diplomatic history and International Law, which was mandatory in those days. They are very strong in their languages. Of course I passed the French language with flying colors, which is only natural, so I did not have to take a language at SAIS. But a couple fellows who wanted to take Italian said, gee we need a third person to make a course. So, I took and studied Italian there.

*Q: That must have been easy for you though?*

MACARTHUR: It was. It was a Romance language and somewhat related and so that was pretty easy. During the summers, I was an interpreter for the State Department on contract.

*Q: But there were no courses on Economic Development?*

MACARTHUR: No and I had had a very skimpy economics background. I was not very heavily into economics at all and I took a summer course at St. Lawrence University, just one course in basic economics which helped me go through SAIS. It was mainly Diplomatic History, International Law, and some International Economics, macro economics at SAIS. I mentioned that in the summers I did some contract work for the State Department as an interpreter. I would take visitors from overseas and travel around the U.S.. It was a terrific opportunity to see the country. It was the first time I really had been around to see the U.S. Then when I graduated from SAIS I got a job with the Special Operations Research Office. This was a contract the American University had with the Department of the Army to write area handbooks. I wrote three handbooks.

*Q: Were you there when Allison Herrick was there and did you know her?*

MACARTHUR: Oh yes, very well. Allison Herrick, absolutely. She was on my team. We divided work; we had a professional anthropologist, who is a good friend of mine still, who did the Anthropology part and I did things like Geography, Journalism, a whole hodgepodge of chapters for those books and we did three of them; on Iraq, which was quite interesting; in those days they were classified. They always had a military assessment chapter. Then I did one on Sudan and one on Cuba which were unclassified. I did three books and then left there.

*Q: Why do you think the Army was interested in having these kinds of handbooks done?*

MACARTHUR: Because they needed some quick thumbnail sketch of what a country was all about in case a crisis developed there. There was no way they could get the

information without going through a whole lot of research, really it's almost like a Baedeker of a certain country; to know something about the geography, something about the social makeup of the country, the religion, and it was a total flash picture of a country, rather dull reading because it tended to all follow the same format and was very descriptive; it had to follow a prescribed outline.

*Q: Did you visit the countries to do this?*

MACARTHUR: No we did not. That was one of the reproaches . I think later they did, but at the time I was there we did not have the funds to do any visiting. In the Cuba book, one thing that was quite interesting was that Castro had just taken over. We were interviewing refugees from Castro's regime and taking down a lot information from them which we put into our books. That was probably one of the more fascinating aspects. This was in 1961. I then joined AID. The reason I left the Special Operations Research Office was that it was like writing term papers; it got a bit tedious, frankly. We did have a carrel at The Library of Congress; we had our own little room there; we could get the books. It was mainly open material; we just had to scramble around Washington to do our own research except for, as I said, these classified chapters which later became separated from the main text.

*Q: Are the books still available? Are they still doing it?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, they are still doing it, but they have been updated several times since I was there. The earlier books used to always acknowledge previous authors but they don't anymore, it was so long ago. They still do them, and I guess they are handy for students, but as I say, for any real scholar, it's all from secondary sources and it's just a thumbnail sketch. The Army found them useful as I say because it gave them an overview of a country right off the bat.

*Q: How did you get onto the AID business?*

MACARTHUR: I was tiring of this type of work; I was looking for jobs and I saw an article in *The New York Times* one day, an AID advertisement. They were looking for foreign service people to serve in this capacity. So, I replied, but I did not hear for about six months and one day I got a call from Washington to say they would be interested in seeing me. So, I went down and they offered me a job in Sierra Leone and I accepted.

### **Joined USAID with an assignment in the Congo (Zaire) - 1963**

*Q: What was the job?*

MACARTHUR: Frankly, I cannot remember specifically but it had some relationship to the fact that I had an anthropological background; something to do with the analysis of the social problems in Sierra Leone and such. I accepted because by then I had married. My wife is German and I met her while I was a student in Paris. By then, we had a young child, Gordon, and I said okay we will take this job, but I was a bit apprehensive because

I started to read up on Sierra Leone and it said it was the white man's grave. I thought well, this is not so great but, anyway I accepted, and joined AID and was sent in November or December of 1962 to an orientation here in Washington. I brought my wife and little kid, he was born in May so he was just six months old, here to Washington and when I got down here, they said oh we are going to change your orders. They said we need you in the Congo. So, sure enough, in February of 1963, they packed us off to the Congo.

*Q: What kind of orientation did you have?*

MACARTHUR: Very little. I had nothing at the Foreign Service Institute, no language, no course on anything African, nothing. It was basically something about the State Department administrative business. My recollection of it was that it was not extensive.

*Q: Nothing on AID?*

MACARTHUR: Nothing other than administrative, basically. I don't recall anything substantive. So, I landed in Leopoldville with my wife, and Gordon, our little boy. Vince Brown and Rob West were at the airport to meet me.

*Q: Rob West was the Mission Director and Vince Brown was the...?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, and Vince Brown was the Deputy. We got there in February 1963. They gave me the job of Assistant Program Officer for Operations and I learned the job from doing it, because as I say I was a novice when I got there. I really didn't know what it was all about.

*Q: What was the situation in the Congo at that time?*

MACARTHUR: It was absolutely frightful. It was terrible. There is a whole history of the Congo which I am not going to repeat because it has been documented, but it was fascinating and very insecure. Lumumba had just been killed and there was chaos. What happened was that the Force Publique of Belgium, which was composed mainly of Congolese soldiers, but headed by a white Belgian officer corps, revolted. They had kept the country together. Right after independence, this Force Publique rebelled against the white officers and they went on a rampage. The whole country was in chaos, and it was finally quelled with some 20,000 U.N. troops that went in there. This whole history is a fascinating one because of the U.S. involvement with the U.N. And, of course, the Russians were blocking us. They were calling us imperialists for supporting this effort. So, beyond any thought of development, we were faced with all of these geopolitical problems in the Congo at the time. Now what we were doing in the Congo, in my view, did not make sense unless set against this backdrop of the desire for containment; making sure the country would not go communist.

*Q: What were we doing?*

MACARTHUR: We were trying to make a nation out of a huge country that had some 400 ethnic groups and many languages; five basic languages, a population that had no university graduates except, when we were there, I always heard the figure to be about five, and I've also heard up to 13. But whatever it was, you could count them on your own hands. So, the Belgians had not trained them. You had a literate population only up to about the sixth grade level, and then nothing after that. The Belgians having left nothing behind, we had nothing to work with. You could go to the ministries, such as the Minister of Public Works, of Finance, whatever and their staffs. You would find Congolese with a sixth grade education who knew nothing. Consequently the United Nations established what they called The Civilian Operations. This was in addition to the military, the Blue Helmets, when we got there; they were all over the place to quell the big rebellion. On the civilian side, the U.N. went in there in storm with some 2,000 civilians to man all of the country's basic operating ministries and functions.

*Q: Was this financed by the U.S.?*

MACARTHUR: Absolutely by the U.S. and through, of course, the auspices of the United Nations. We were financing the United Nations and the Russians were boycotting it; the Swedes were providing an ambulance, things like that, there were a few tokens, but basically it was a U.S. financed operation. My job there was really fascinating and I was there with some interesting people. Gene Moore was our PL480 man, an old friend of mine, I had known him for years, was a great fellow.

My job was very responsible; I had just arrived. Within a couple of weeks of landing there, they put me on a small Piper Aztec airplane with an engineer by the name of Elliot. He and I traveled up the country, we went up the Congo River as far as Stanleyville (Kisangani) looking at Public Works projects that needed repair. With the rebellion, the bridges had been blown up, water facilities had been ruined, roads were damaged, the place was in chaos. So, I was sent with this engineer to make an assessment of the damage and report it back to the Mission. We flew from Leopoldville to Matadi and followed the Congo river to Coquilhatville (Bandaka) and Stanleyville. All these names were later changed after Mobutu took over. We looked at these projects and interviewed the Public Works officials who were totally incompetent. So how did we handle it? The U.N., as I say, had some 2,000 civilians. They were Haitians, Canadians, anybody who could speak French, got a job there. They filled the jobs of untrained Congolese.

*Q: Were they technically trained people?*

Yes, they were. For instance, the person we dealt with almost entirely, on anything that had to do with Public Works was a Frenchman by the name of Larcher, working for the U.N. He had built the airport in Tahiti; a young man, very competent. He worked with the Congolese Minister of Public Works, Delvaux. So, anytime you had to contact the Ministry to document or prepare anything, you would go through the formality of talking with the Minister, go through all of the protocol, and then sit down with a technician, and that was Larcher, the Frenchman. Whenever we had correspondence, we would write a letter, attach a copy of the answer. We wrote our own answers. It was an unbelievable



situation and my job was to dispense the tons of counterpart funds we had. We had a big PL480 program; we had a commodity import program. Emmet Thomason, was handling our commodity import program where we were importing U.S. raw materials, things like raw plastics, tin plate, stuff like that, to try to keep the Congolese economy going. The local currency generated from those commodity imports was then used for budget support. It went directly into the Congolese budget. On the PL480 side, the food side, the counterparts were U.S. owned and U.S. controlled and we set up a tripartite committee. I was on that committee; it was composed of the U.N., the Congolese, and AID. We met every week and went through a list of projects that we agreed to finance. My job was to keep track of the budget. Larcher, the engineer, would say we are going to need so many millions to build such and such a bridge, and we would approve it, and so it would go.

*Q: Who did they use since they were so short on technical skills?*

MACARTHUR: They had contractors. For instance, road building was done mainly by Italian contractors. The big company was Parisi; they did an excellent job; they did the road from Stanleyville to Lubutu which Vince Brown and I visited at the time of the tape cutting ceremony. I have a movie of it. Shortly after our visit rebels murdered the nuns at the Catholic mission in Lubutu, captured Stanleyville and held our consul, Mike Hoyt, and others captive for 3 months.

By the time I left the Congo, the regrettable thing was a continued lack of trained cadres. Any trained person who happened to get caught by opposing rebel forces was usually murdered. I left very discouraged; I said I don't see this country going anywhere, for 30, 50 years. There was nothing to build upon.

*Q: Were you training any people?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, we had a participant training program, a fairly extensive one. We trained a few people and we had a pedagogical institute. We built a teacher training establishment outside Leopoldville and that was recognized as one of the critical things to do. But you don't create a nation in five years. I think that is another big failing; we were impatient and AID is not an in- and-out process. It is a long, long, haul. I don't know what the result of all that training was. I know that the chaos continued to exist in the Congo. Even when we were there, my family was evacuated to Brussels. I stayed back until my home leave. Pierre Mulele was another rebel, almost succeeding in taking over Leopoldville. We had a military mission there with helicopters to evacuate us in case of need and that continued throughout the time we were there. There was continuous rebellion. We had a store of weapons in the Astrid building, the USAID office—barbed wire and oil to block the stairways and baseball bats in case things really got bad.

*Q: Any other projects that you recall?*

MACARTHUR: We had agricultural projects. We had an agricultural research and training station in two places, in Gemena and up country in Sanga. After I had left, it all reverted to jungle; you couldn't see a thing; it totally disappeared. Most of our projects

were in training and public works and then the big commodity import program, the PL480 programs.

*Q: How was the distribution of those commodities handled?*

MACARTHUR: We would do it through some of the religious missions; for instance, the PL480 commodities would be handled a lot through CRS and others. We would have to rely on some of the Congolese for this but it was pretty tough, the oversight part of it. Regarding the industrial commodities we were importing, there was a nascent industry in the Congo and many of the Belgians were still running the plants, those who had come back. Kasavubu, the President, recognized that he needed some talent in the country. The Belgians had left in one fell swoop after independence in 1960. By 1963 many had come back to run what they had been managing before; small industries. I visited one place where they were making hoes and agricultural tools; importing the iron and forging it right there. So, it was run by the Belgians.

*Q: What was our relationship with the government and the U.S. Embassy, what was your sense of what was going on?*

MACARTHUR: We were at odds with the Belgians and I would say even with the French. They felt that America was hornning into their territory. This was the first U.S. foray into West Africa, historically a French-Belgian domain. One of my jobs, actually my idea, was to further donor coordination, to figure out who was doing what because we had no sense of the totality of the resources going into the Congo. Would it not make sense for us to get together on this? I actually spent a lot of time going to the various Embassies, the French, the British, the Belgian. We were very frank, we said "This is what we are doing, what are you people doing?" Where is the overlap? They were always very suspicious. The Belgians were behind a move to split the Katanga away from the rest of the country. This is today's Shaba province, the rich part of the Congo, the eastern Congo where the copper mines, gold mines, tungsten and other minerals are located. Belgium supported a Congolese by the name of Tshombe who was totally in the pocket of big Belgian interests. The Union Miniere, the powerful Belgian mining consortium, used Tshombe to incite rebellion and to attempt to secede from the rest of the Congo. We, the U.S. were totally opposed to that. We saw Katanga 's resources as crucial to support the rest of the country; the Congo had to remain intact, we could not let it break up. So, there was this friction.

*Q: Where were the French on that issue?*

MACARTHUR: The French tended to side with the Belgians on that issue, the business interests. On the other hand, they were afraid that the situation also not get out of hand because they had a former colony right across the river. It was pretty tricky going, there. Finally, there was a change in government in Belgium. Henri Spaak, who was one of the early Belgian premiers, had a much different view of this whole issue and supported the national unification and it became easier to do.

I have many recollections of the Congo. In 1964, Mike Hoyt, who was a young political

officer at our mission in Leopoldville, was sent up to Stanleyville to replace John Clingerman, the consul, who was going on home leave. Vince Brown and I had been there probably six weeks before, to look at a road, the Stanleyville-Lubutu Road. Rebels came in and they captured the consulate and took hostages, Mike Hoyt and five other Americans at the consulate there, plus a number of Belgians. They held them hostage for 111 days which caused a huge to do. President Johnson tried to keep the whole thing hushed because Vietnam was going on, he did not want another U.S. expedition to the Congo, reinforcing the image of U.S. imperialism. In addition we had our civil rights problems here. President Johnson did not want the image of Americans going in and beating up on the Africans. It was a very tenuous, tough situation.

*Q: What were the rebels after?*

MACARTHUR: The rebels were using the hostages as a way to put pressure on the U.S. and Belgium not to support the national government in putting down their own rebellion. They did not want U.S. planes to support the national government, the Kasavubu government. They said, look this battle is between us and the Kasavubu people, not between us and you Belgians and you Americans; stay out of our area.

*Q: They wanted to become independent?*

MACARTHUR: They wanted to become independent. It was a movement by the followers of the late Lumumba. Lumumba had been a communist supported by the USSR, who had been killed in 1961 and had become a martyr following his unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Kasavubu's central authority. Kasavubu was from Bas-Congo, the lower Congo, and enjoyed the support of the West. It used to be a kingdom of the Congo. It gets very complicated but the Congo is made up of so many ethnic tribes that the tribal warfare, basically, never stopped and so there were splinter groups from among Lumumba's followers in Eastern Congo who were against the Bas Congo represented by Kasavubu. The rebel who was trying to take over, Gebenye by name, came in from the east and incited young people, the Simbas or lions, to revolt against the central government. They were very successful in taking over almost one-third of the eastern part of the Congo. They came all the way across to Stanleyville and captured Mike Hoyt and those people. The hostages, by then had ballooned to some 800 Belgians, a number were missionaries and they were all held, incarcerated in the jail up there or at times they moved them to the Victoria hotel. They made Mike Hoyt chew the American flag and beat him and the others up. It was a terrible situation.

This history is really quite fascinating on a number of fronts. The State Department and National Security Council formed a Congo task force back at the State Department. Ambassador Godley was in Leopoldville, Ambassador MacArthur and the Belgians were operating from Brussels. This trio of involved people got terribly complicated, how to orchestrate it all. But they finally succeeded, the U.S. providing some fifteen C130 war planes. They picked up Belgian paratroopers, flew to Ascension Island in the Atlantic, refueled, and went into Stanleyville at 6:00 a.m. on November 24, 1964. The rebels were taken by surprise. The Belgian paratroopers immediately captured the airport, cleared it

of obstacles, so that the C130s could come in. The Red Berets of the Belgians got word that there was a massacre taking place in downtown Stanleyville, so they rushed down there, where the hostages all had been gathered on the street, guarded by the Simbas, these young kids. Most had spears and machetes, some had rifles. They shot one American, Paul Carlson, and killed him. Mike Hoyt jumped over a wall; he barely escaped with his life. Another American woman was killed; she was cut up and bled to death. There were some 25 to 40 Belgians killed and wounded and our C130s immediately evacuated them down to Leopoldville and took care of them medically. A problem then arose as the Russians at the U.N. were claiming neocolonialism. That made President Johnson very nervous; do we continue with the rescue operation and go to some of the other cities in the Congo where there were other hostages? It was a very difficult situation, it ended up with many more Belgian missionaries being killed in the eastern part. It was horrible. This kind of chaos was with us all the time. By the time I left some of the same bridges that we had paid for with counterpart funds were blown up a second time.

We put a lot of money into that country but there was no maintenance by the host government. The contractors would do a beautiful job of road building only to have roads fall apart from lack of maintenance. It was, really, for an AID program, I can't think of a more difficult one with virtually no results. One wonders what the consequences would have been if one had done nothing. Our fear was that it was going to be a communist country and the Russians would take over. In retrospect, that would have been impossible.

*Q: Do you think that was what was so important about this place?*

MACARTHUR: I think so, yes. Because when Mobutu took over from Kasavubu ( Mobutu was the General of the Army ) he took over as virtual dictator and just lined his pockets. He was however in the Western camp. He became a very wealthy man and did nothing to improve the situation at all. Once the Cold War ended we dropped Mobutu like a hot potato. I don't know what we are doing now, I haven't followed up. I suspect we have nothing going on at this point. Kabila is no better than Mobutu.

*Q: Were you there when Mobutu took over? What was your understanding of how that took place?*

MACARTHUR: Yes. Kasavubu was an old man, called the George Washington of the Congo. He was involved as a young man against the Belgian authorities and at independence in 1960 he became President and Mobutu was the Army Colonel, later to proclaim himself Marshal. He took over from Kasavubu in a bloodless coup. We were there at the time. Quite simply one day, he pushed him aside, and said I am taking over. Fortunately, he did not cause any bloodshed at the time. He was very nationalistic; he was just not a nation builder. I think the tribal problems continued. Mobutu was not from the Bas-Congo.

*Q: Where was he from?*

MACARTHUR: He was from further north, up near where the Ubangi river enters into the Congo. As such, he didn't get along with the Bas-Congo people. Whenever you had a government like Kasavubu's all the people in the government were of his tribe. So, Mobutu once in power began to liquidate Bas-Congo people from the government. Under some pretext he accused the Minister of Finance, Emanuel Bamba, who was a revered, very intelligent, well respected individual, on charges of complicity in a plot and then had him hung. We were there, but certainly not to witness the hanging in the main public square. They made a big deal out of it, another example of the constant treachery going on. When a different tribal group came to power the old group would take all their files, all their papers, and you started from scratch; there was no bureaucracy with any continuity. How Mobutu was able to keep the country under his control for so long compared to others was that he was, after all, head of the Army whom he cultivated, gave them all great privileges. He just had the power, with support from the West who saw in him a bulwark against Communism.

*Q: He must have had some ability to deal with all of these conflicting tribes?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, he was a pretty ruthless man. It would be interesting to know, maybe 10 years after I had left, from some of the other mission directors, what the situation was in dealing with Mobutu directly.

*Q: What was the U.S. interest, the Embassy and all during this time?*

MACARTHUR: The U.S. interest was entirely in keeping the Russians or the Chinese out. I don't think they had any other interest. There was some trade interest. We were always accused of using our PL480 programs to export wheat and cultivating a taste for bread on the local market, introducing the Congolese to bread whereas before, they had always eaten manioc. This was a way to shore up our agricultural markets. Of course, that is what the French in particular kept thinking we were doing. I think, maybe naively, we really did have a humanitarian interest, at least on the AID side. I really think that. There was a lot of suffering; we did help in the medical area and certainly in the food area. With the AID people I dealt with, I never got the feeling that we had ulterior motives. We were rather myopic in our views. We thought, well okay, you have these people who are backward, uneducated, illiterate, poor, where do you come in to try to better them? I think there was a genuine feeling that that is what we were trying to do.

*Q: Any other programs at that time, or when Mobutu came in, was there any change in the program?*

MACARTHUR: I don't recall. This was 30 years ago. I don't recall that we changed anything as a result, not on the AID side, but the U.S. had a military mission, called COMISH, Congo mission, which was providing Mobutu with a lot of his hardware and support to keep at bay these rebellions. As I say, I don't think there was a month where rebellions weren't happening. There was one coming in from the east, there was one from the Kasai, from the south, the Kivu Province; Mulele was the rebel who came close to

taking over Leopoldville.

One night, my wife and I were in our apartment, we heard this huge explosion and all the lights went out. It was the Mulele rebels who had gotten hold of the power plant, and blew it up. So, there was a lot of nervousness. We were there to help Mobutu quell these various rebellions. Our interest was to minimize the chaos in this country, to keep the country intact as one nation and not let it explode into a number of factions.

*Q: How did you find living there?*

MACARTHUR: You would have to ask my wife that. I love to travel, I love to see different things; I found it fascinating. I read again Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. He was right on. It is a most perfect description. When I was reading it I said, well that's it; both from the beauty of the country, the heat, it is indescribable. I found it interesting to travel about, to see the people, really exciting, but very, very hard to live. In those days, not like today, they didn't evacuate people for medical reasons unless it was really critical. Two of our children, Herbert and Edith, were born at the Lovanium University Clinic, which was about 15 miles from Leopoldville. When my wife was due, it was night and we had to go through road blocks. You had these Congolese soldiers who held you up at the road and usually they were drunk, with rifles swinging around. They would poke their head in the car, ask where you were going and that kind of thing. It was dangerous. There was no question about it, it was a very dangerous place. You had to be careful. You always identified yourself as an American, because when they would see a white man, they would think you were a Belgian; you played down the fact that you were not really associated with the Belgians. It was better that way.

They jailed our Ambassador because he failed to observe a curfew at one time. There was a lot of house breaking. We lived in apartments, intentionally. The Embassy had offered us a house for a family out in the suburbs, we said in no way. There were gangs that would go to houses and steal everything. Fortunately, we had no deaths, but we had a lot of break-ins and robberies. It was insecure as the dickens and if something happened, you had nobody to call, no police. It gives you a terrible feeling.

*Q: You didn't have the Embassy's security?*

MACARTHUR: Not much. The only thing you could do is try phoning a marine guard and tell him you had a problem if you could get through on the phone. That was another problem that impeded our work at AID. You could never get hold of people by phone, the Ministry and the government, you would actually have to go there. One thing I forgot we had, which I think was important, was a public safety program. This was in the days before they did away with the program. A lot of people say that the program was terrible and I guess it was implicated in alleged abuses in Latin America or at least that was the propaganda. But I thought it was a good and sorely needed program in the Congo.

*Q: What were they doing in the Congo?*

MACARTHUR: Teaching the local police how to be policeman. AID was training them which was a dire need down there. When they closed down our public safety program I thought it was terrible. It was a good program, unfortunately it was tarnished.

*Q: How was the hospital where your wife delivered your children?*

MACARTHUR: Our pampered youth of today would never accept the conditions under which my wife bore our children. It was at a clinic associated with the University. All the staff was Congolese, all the general nurses. Fortunately, on loan from the German Technical Assistance Program was a gynecologist, a medical doctor from the University of Wurzburg and he was there to train the local people. So, my wife being German got along well with him, he was good and he took care of her. The head nurses were Belgian nuns who were also training the Congolese nurses. So there was a German doctor, and Belgian nuns and fortunately there were no complications. You still had to cope with cockroaches, endemic in Africa, and breeding frogs making a racket outside. We had two children born there, one just five days before Kennedy was assassinated. Gene Moore had one born there too. We had a standing agreement that when the time came, I would accompany him and his wife to the hospital and visa versa, so we went in two cars, for safety reasons, to get to the clinic. But we had no PX, we had to live off the local economy, you couldn't buy anything. I understand that several years after we had left the shops in the Congo were full of everything but when we were there, there was nothing; we used to go to Brazzaville on Saturday morning with our baskets and go shopping. It was quite an experience, jumping aboard the ferry with masses of people to cross the Congo river. We had a hard time when we got there, Vince Brown and Rob West couldn't believe we were coming to the Congo with a baby, because we couldn't get any milk. It was very difficult from that point of view.

*Q: Anything else on that experience?*

MACARTHUR: Not on the Congo. There are a lot of stories. As I say, it was my first post and quite an introduction and I would say in retrospect that I left it very discouraged as far as any impact we had made there. Maybe if all we can say is that we prevented the country from breaking up totally and having Communist regimes throughout the area, maybe that was a success.

*Q: Did you provide a lot of relief assistance?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, we provided a lot of relief assistance. We did help people, we prevented them from starving, we helped them medically. What this did to help build up a nation I have my doubts. I have often thought that in this and in many other posts, the NGO, the churches the missionaries, a lot of the Peace Corps did some wonderful things on a micro level. Their small projects really made sense but you could never replicate these to impact on the whole nation. We were always trying to attack things on a large scale to change the country, the nation, and we were always trying to do the difficult things. Other donors were doing visible things with high propaganda value, the sensational things., stadiums as an extreme example. It is easy to build roads, we

certainly did some of that, particularly farm to market roads. We got away from some of that type of infrastructure in my later years, the big road projects, for example. We did the more difficult things, the more intangible things; training people, helping agricultural institutes, these kinds of things that have a long-term payoff but are not very visible. Other donors didn't care to finance them because you couldn't put your label on them easily.

*Q: So, you left there in what year?*

MACARTHUR: The end of 1967. Just to finish up on the Congo, you were mentioning the conditions; it was not a very healthy post so we had to be very careful of bilharzia and malaria, among other tropical diseases. Every time you had a fever, you didn't know if it was something serious or not. It got kind of tricky. We finally got an embassy doctor there. I developed a skin problem on my feet and hands that almost forced my evacuation. I was out of commission for a whole month. I had to stay home; I lost all the skin on both feet and hands. I went to the U.N. Indian doctor and he said, "Oh, that is something related to chicken pox." He gave me some creams, but he really didn't know what he was doing. Finally, I was about to be evacuated, my wife was pregnant at the time, and I went again to the Lovanium clinic to see an Italian doctor. He said it was some kind of fungus that I couldn't get rid of. He said, "We can do this once, but we can't do it a second time." He gave me x-rays on feet and hands, just zapped me, and it killed the fungus. But, I had recurrence of that years later, it took me 10 years to get rid of it. Even after we came back to the States, I just couldn't get rid of the problem. Finally, it did disappear after some more treatments; it was something the people there called jungle rot.

I came back from Congo. Home leaves we spent at our place up in the Adirondacks but then I came back to the State Department and was the Assistant Desk Officer for Morocco and Tunisia. Gilda Verrati was the desk officer.

### **Returned to USAID Washington as Desk Officer for North African countries - 1967**

*Q: Do you remember the situation in each of these countries, back at that time?*

MACARTHUR: Of course, King Hassan was King and still is. Bourguiba was the head of Tunisia. We had projects in dry land farming, health. My recollection of the desk tours, which are so unlike a foreign service tour, is that you just get into this morass of bureaucracy with clearances from various offices at every turn. The other thing which never changed, my perception of what the job duty is here in Washington, is the amount of time taken to be sure to please your constituency, namely the Congress; an unbelievable amount of time. I have found that in my career, the oversight of Congress on our affairs became more and more pervasive and difficult to deal with; virtually took months at a time. Anytime you wanted to dot an i or cross a t on a project, you had to put in a Congressional notification, and make sure you got their okay. It was a terribly burdensome thing. It got worse as my career continued. In the early days, it wasn't quite that bad. I don't recall too much about my tour of duty on the Tunisia desk; pretty routine, no major issues.



*Q: Did you visit the countries?*

MACARTHUR: I visited Morocco. I never got to Tunisia, strangely. I ended up being stationed in Morocco. I replaced Frank Correll, the Program Officer in Morocco. That would have been in 1972. I was four years, more or less, back in Washington, then went to Morocco. Don Brown was Director. Of course, I had known Don for years, because he was also Director in the Congo just before I left. In Morocco, my duty as Program Officer was a jack-of-all-trades; you get involved in everything. You prepare the material for the Congressional Presentation, prepare the country program, prepare the operational year budget, do a lot of paper work, review the projects and do the budgeting.

*Q: What was the situation in Morocco at that time?*

MACARTHUR: You had a kingdom under King Hassan. Unlike the Congo, you had very astute, well educated local government employees. But you had a country that was not susceptible to change; very conservative. Anything that smacked of improving the lot of the population put a certain fear in the authorities because they wanted to preserve the hierarchy of those in control versus the rest of the people. You didn't have much of a middle-class; not a large business class. You didn't have a large university class that might threaten the regime. So, what were we doing there? Well, on the technical side, the project side, we were heavily into agriculture, dry land farming. We felt irrigation is okay, but it's expensive, difficult; not the way to go.

*Q: What were we doing in dry land farming?*

MACARTHUR: We were introducing the miracle wheats which depended a lot on fertilizer and water, which sometimes was a problem. So, we had a large project in dry land farming; you had pretty competent people to work with at the ministerial level. The difficulty was getting the cadres at the lower levels to work on our projects. We had these flow charts, the logical framework, where you have your PERT charts to plan for orderly arrival of materials, equipment and technicians. By then you assumed that the government would assign its own staffs to the project but that was often not the case. The idea behind the planning was great but the practice sometimes was very difficult. One of the most difficult things was to get the cadres, the people assigned to the projects. The ministry of Agriculture would promise, say, ten staff for the Agronomic Institute that AID was financing but the people would never show up. That was a big problem, to get a project going. Generally, though, I think we were pretty successful. We had a rangeland improvement project to improve grazing for cattle and sheep.

*Q: Were these large areas that we were working on?*

MACARTHUR: They were large areas. We had a rangeland expert who was introducing wheat grass at experimental stations to see which kinds of grasses do best. We had a family planning program which was rather interesting. As a Muslim country, you felt that might be taboo, but it seems not. We even got an endorsement from the Public Health

Minister and the King himself. Family planning was not forbidden under Muslim law. So we put money into a family planning clinic, financed a census, and this kind of thing.

*Q: Who would run these clinics?*

MACARTHUR: The Minister of Health, a doctor by the name of Laraki, was very supportive. He had a daughter who was educated partly in the U.S. and she was very modern, helping greatly in this effort, with local nurses. The people there were pretty competent. The other thing about Moroccans is that they are quite reserved. They have a very high culture, they are very proud of their heritage. They were never associated with the radical Arabs further to the east. They always took a moderate role. They felt “we are not part of them over there to the East.” They were very pro-American. The first treaty the U.S. ever had with any foreign power was with Morocco. This was to get the Sultan of Morocco to assist in controlling the Barbary pirates. So, there is this old tradition of coziness between America and Morocco and I think it was genuine, making for excellent working relations.

*Q: Did we have other interests there at that time?*

MACARTHUR: On the political side, absolutely. We were very interested in using Morocco, as a moderate Islamic state, to play a moderating role and exert its influence in the turmoil of the Middle East. That was certainly the political agenda on the Embassy’s part. Our role was to reward Morocco for its support, not being a radical Arab state. But, again from my perspective and from that of some of our AID people, we intended to think, well, what can we really do to improve agriculture or health in this country. That was in the background, help a friend, keep them going, do good for the poor.

*Q: We didn’t have the air bases then?*

MACARTHUR: We had a Naval air station, yes we did. I’m glad you reminded me, because that was pretty important. We had a very important Naval telecommunications center; it was all hush hush. It was located in Buknadel, outside of Rabat. In Kenitra we had a military base where we were advising and training the Moroccan military.

*Q: You’ve been describing a society that was quite conservative, did this go all the way down to the grass roots level or was there a dichotomy here or split interest?*

MACARTHUR: Interestingly, King Hassan, is both the temporal and religious leader. So, there was not the slightest bit of popular resentment against the autocrats, represented by the King and his entourage. People felt reverence for their religious leader in a strongly religious society. So, you did not have a threat from the masses against the King. Where the threat potentially was and may have increased over the years, was from the university, intellectuals and your burgeoning middle-class, small businessmen, etc.

*Q: There were no tribal factions?*

MACARTHUR: There were no tribal factions to any degree approaching those in the Congo. There were Berbers versus Arabs. The Berbers were the original occupants of the area, pushed off into the hills when the Arab invasions came across North Africa in the seventh century. Many escaped into the hills. They were still there. In the Rif mountains and middle Atlas there were Berber communities.

*Q: Were we doing anything with the Berbers?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, we did not single them out for special treatment but to the extent our agricultural projects were located in Berber country, they were affected. King Hassan tried to cultivate their goodwill, keeping the Berbers somewhat mollified. Still, a certain tension persisted. There was a Minister of Defense, by the name of Oufkir, a Berber, who concocted a plot against the King's life while we were there. One day, I remember, we were in our home, we were about to go off to a cocktail party, given by Neils Poulsen, our Family Planning Officer and we were just about to leave the house, when the kids said "Gee, Dad, what are these planes up there?" We could hear bombs and shelling. These planes were swooping down on the palace, not far from our house. So, I called the Embassy and the Marine Guard said you better stay home because there is a plot, a coup going on, so we all stayed home. Sure enough, the King just narrowly escaped with his life. Oufkir was behind this plot. King Hassan called Oufkir in a few days later to have him try to explain his actions and Oufkir ended up shot; they think the King ended up shooting him right on the spot. It was all a mysterious affair. There was still this kind of traditional old rivalry there. Generally it was pretty quiet except on a couple of occasions when there was an attempt on the King's life. We had no difficulty.

We had good access to the local people. We trained some people, with, you may recall, Elliot Berg's CRED, the Center for Research on Economic Development at the University of Michigan. I had known Berg for years; he was also in the Congo when I was there; he had been around for a while. We had some Moroccans trained at his Center and we also had a unit of several economists contracted by Michigan to train staff at the Ministry of Plan. One of these trainees became the Minister of Plan, and eventually Minister of Health—Taib Bensheik.

*Q: Was Hassan II Agricultural College active then?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, I think we started it. We developed the Agronomic Institute, had contractors as trainers, using a U.S. curriculum. It would be interesting, I don't know what has happened to it.

*Q: Who was the contractor, do you remember?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, it was John Blackmore, University of Minnesota. He was the moving force behind this effort, together with Carl Ferguson, our agricultural advisor at the USAID mission.

*Q: So, they were just starting it when you were there?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, right. I remember going to the inauguration of it, or something akin to that. The King was there. It was a good project. If that is still going, I would claim that to be a great success.

*Q: Yes, it's very successful. Minnesota is still working with them or it has been until recently.*

MACARTHUR: That's tremendous. I had lost track of it. That goes back to what I said earlier, you don't see any impact of this until so much later. That brings to mind another thing that used to really bother me - -the physical accomplishments reports that we had to do for Congress which I thought were terrible. They wanted to know how many kilometers of roads we had built? How many schools we had built? You can't expect an impact in two years time. In 50 years you may have a better answer as to the consequences of our AID programs.

*Q: Despite that, did you have a sense that the projects you were carrying out were making a difference, had an impact?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, I did.

*Q: Any stand out in your mind?*

MACARTHUR: I think the rangeland improvement project did not do too well; the livestock one. Culture and tradition impeded introduction of new ideas. One problem I found was that as long as you had your American technician overseeing the project it did okay, but once he went it tended to just fall apart. It is hard to assure continuity even if you tried to get your locals involved. I guess the moral of it is unless the country is really committed to it, and sincerely believes in it, and doesn't just do it to please you, which is often the case, your project will not succeed. Even if you have a well crafted Project Agreement setting forth all of the conditions and approved by the Government, that is no guarantee. If they really don't have their heart in the project, it will not work.

*Q: Maybe they weren't so committed to range management?*

MACARTHUR: That's right, or at least at the level of the Ministry of Agriculture, not so. They were terribly interested in irrigation projects. We had a project on the lower Moulouya River up in the northern part of the country on the Algerian border, helping in a large irrigation system. But we were not too keen on it because the government was growing sugar cane on it. Carl Ferguson, our agriculture technician, said that it didn't make sense. He said sure you can grow sugar cane but invariably you are going to get a few years with frost up there and it's going to kill your crop; it's too risky. Furthermore, it was costing too much to produce sugar. The logic behind the government pushing for sugar was that the consumption of sugar in Morocco was huge, because the national drink is tea, mint tea, with about half-sugar and half tea. They thought, okay, we can avoid the importing of sugar; we will produce our own. It made no sense whatsoever. Because the

world price of sugar was way below what it cost them to produce their own. We tried to tell them that. It was a national pride issue that made no economic sense.

*Q: Did the family planning project take hold?*

MACARTHUR: Well, more or less. By the time I left it didn't fare too well. They liked the hardware, we built a building and provided office equipment and the like but as far as any impact, I don't recall it going very far. Maybe it didn't have time to mature while I was there. They did give lip service to the fact that they upheld the idea of family planning. Now whether down deep they did or did not, I don't know. We tried to raise the consciousness of the government to the country's serious population growth.

*Q: Did you have some research projects of some sort, technological research?*

MACARTHUR: Our dryland farming project was one, establishing field trials for different varieties of wheat. We also wanted to develop a seed production facility to produce seed locally. We contracted with a seed expert to come over to write up a project. He approached the problem from a purely American mid-west point of view, totally oblivious to local conditions. His design didn't fly and I don't think another attempt was made. The problem was trying to apply American technology to the local setting without really knowing the country, knowing the people, knowing the circumstances and modifying your design accordingly. I think we made that error in a lot of places. The projects that work best are those that already exist but may be rudimentary and only need improving.

*Q: Anything else on the Morocco program? How did you find living there?*

MACARTHUR: Well, our post was certainly a most delightful one. Both from climate, it's like California, and from the culture; a fascinating country. People are hard to get to know but once you get to know them, they are most engaging. We made some wonderful friends; I still have one who became the Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture and now he heads the Office of Tea and Sugar in Morocco.

*Q: So, they are still growing sugar?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, they are still growing it as far as I know, unless my friend only oversees imports. We met some very good Moroccan people. Our kids were at the American run international school in Morocco.

*Q: In Tangier?*

MACARTHUR: No, in Rabat. There was a school in Tangier but that was for older kids. For the younger kids, say through elementary school, and our children must have been eight, ten, twelve, something like that, there was the school in Rabat. The children had a great time. The prince, Moulay Hisham, the king's brother's son, was in my Herbert's class. The prince's father would organize a tour of the country and invite the class. They

went to Casablanca, they put on a great big show for them, a fantasia as they are called in Morocco. The kids had a wonderful time in Morocco because of these contacts and the culture. I think for children it is a great experience, this kind of life. A Foreign Service child gets a tremendous amount out of it. The children grow up mature, interested, with solid values and comfortable in almost any situation. So, Morocco we really enjoyed. Fez, Casablanca, Ourzazate, Tinerir, many other places, were fascinating. We did a great deal of traveling throughout the country.

*Q: You left there, when?*

### **Assignment in Washington with the Sahel Development Program - 1976**

MACARTHUR: We left Morocco in 1976, came back to the U.S. and I was then assigned to the Sahel Development Program. This was the period in the aftermath of the big drought. Dave Shear was the director.

*Q: Your position?*

MACARTHUR: I was the officer in charge of Chad and the Entente countries. The Entente being, in my recollection, Niger, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast, Togo and I think there was one other, Benin. There were five, that is right, Benin. So, this was a desk job. Again my recollection of all of that is typical desk duties backstopping our field missions.

*Q: Well let's talk about the Entente fund. Do you remember what the Entente fund was and what it was supposed to do?*

MACARTHUR: The Entente fund provided small loans to private entrepreneurs who could not get credit elsewhere. I don't know whether it went beyond that. I got to know Paul Kaya who was the head of it, based in Abidjan. I got to know him well because, for one thing, he came over quite often to the States pleading for funds. What they were doing, was they were providing small loans to small enterprises. I don't know what else they were doing. But that is what we were mainly involved in.

*Q: Do you understand why it was an Entente fund?*

MACARTHUR: I don't recall the background now, but I believe the Entente was a loose political union of Francophone African countries because it did not include Ghana or other neighboring countries.

*Q: You were talking about these micro enterprises.*

MACARTHUR: Yes, right. In my view, that was a very successful program because the repayment rate was excellent, some 90%. It was unbelievable. They really did a good job.

*Q: Do you remember what size loan we are talking about?*

MACARTHUR: Small, \$10,000, \$5,000, in some cases.

*Q: That's all?*

MACARTHUR: Very small, to chicken farmers, small repair shops, things of this sort.

*Q: How was it structured, administered, do you remember?*

MACARTHUR: Well, we financed it, we did not administer it. Paul Kaya was the administrator; how he handled it among the different countries, I don't recall that. Who kept the books, who made sure the loans were repaid, who did the oversight, who examined the projects to see that the money was well spent, I don't recall. Our lack of oversight was one of the reasons we terminated our support, in my view. Also, we felt that the program should be funded more by France, since it benefited mainly their former colonies.

*Q: You didn't have any technical assistance there then?*

MACARTHUR: Actually we did. There were former AID people providing technical and administrative assistance to Paul Kaya. One was Vince Brown, my old colleague from Congo days. Another was Leroy Rasmussen, an agricultural expert who had also served in the Congo when I was there. So we had those people out there at the headquarters level. But on the ground, how did you get a small-time woman chicken farmer involved in the mechanics of a loan, I don't recall how that was handled. In recent days, I have seen, I think in the Front Lines, what has been described as a novel new approach to small loans in Eastern Europe, this kind of thing. I thought this is not all that novel, we were doing it with the Entente Fund. We stopped, possibly partly because of our animosity towards Mr. Kaya who tended to be rather imperious and overbearing. But I got along very well with him, again because we could speak French together. He would come over to Washington and try to plead his cause, needing more funds, etc., and couldn't quite understand AID's reluctance. He wanted the real story, he felt cozy speaking in French. It was often a great facility. We cut him off after a few years; whether it was a budgetary thing, or whether we felt there was insufficient control may have been the reasons. I don't think it was because it was unsuccessful. I think it had some successes, on a micro level, not on a national level.

*Q: You were also responsible for which country?*

MACARTHUR: Chad. It was Chad and the Entente countries. So, the Entente fund was only one minor aspect. I was also responsible for the regular programs of Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Benin. There were desk officers for each of those countries and I was in charge.

*Q: But this was mainly part of the Sahel? What was your understanding of the reasons for the Sahel program?*

MACARTHUR: I had already heard of it before I left Morocco. AID was looking for people. The Sahel program was being developed in the aftermath of the severe drought of 1969-1973 and the ensuing need for a coordinated response. When I got to Washington, the interesting thing about the program was that it had its own budget, which I think allowed for great flexibility and innovation. I enjoyed working for the program because we didn't have the agony of justifying ourselves at every turn. It liberated us to be a little more free with our decisions and our budgeting, which can be a danger, I agree.

*Q: Who was helping you, and making it easier for you?*

MACARTHUR: There was less Congressional oversight, partly because the Congressional Black Caucus was solidly behind this great emergency program. They gave us a large budget, 100 million dollars a year, or whatever it was. Though we had to do the Congressional Presentation and all of this, we did not have the kind of micro-management that you got with the other budgets. Not only from Congress, but from the Africa Bureau as well. Now, Dave Shear was a pretty dynamic person; he was very forceful in getting his views in a lot of things. We also worked closely with the French on this program, the Club du Sahel, which was based in Paris.

*Q: What do you remember as being the program structure, what were you concentrating on?*

MACARTHUR: We did a lot again in agriculture, dry land farming. There was a big push in that area because that was mainly the problem, people starving or severely debilitated. Food self-sufficiency was at the very core of the effort. Also, reconstituting the livestock herds, as in Mali and Upper Volta. Water management, reforestation were parallel efforts. I had a chance to visit a number of those projects. They were difficult to design because one didn't know whether this was a short-term problem, the drought, or whether it was part of a more grave, larger problem that would just persist forever.

*Q: That wasn't clear at the time?*

MACARTHUR: No, that wasn't clear at the time. There was a continuing debate on whether or not the Sahel was undergoing permanent change, but there was a general view that steps should be taken to cushion the Sahel against possible future droughts. The area stretching across Africa below the Sahara has always been a fragile one. It was possible to focus more public attention on a region of the world than on a single country. Once we developed an image, the resources flowed better.

*Q: Were there any particular issues that you had to concentrate on in this position?*

MACARTHUR: Towards the end of the program, I was the Deputy Director, and Gordon Evans was the Director. My job was mainly the budget director of this enterprise. I developed a big chart on one wall showing all the countries and all the projects with corresponding OYBs (annual budgets). Every time our Missions got a funding, I put it down, and recorded obligations and expenditures. It was a most useful management tool



because you could see the entire program at a glance and it was always up to date. We used a grease pencil to change the entries as needed.

I remember one of the things that troubled me was the pressure to obligate funds. That distorts orderly and wise programming. I understand that no self-respecting Mission Director wants to return funds, but it does not make sense in the long run. Sometimes you are pushed; and I got involved in that towards the end of every fiscal year with leftover funds. I would make phone calls to our Sahel missions or to Art Fell at the Club du Sahel in Paris asking whether they could immediately use extra funds in order to fully obligate our budget by the end of the fiscal year. I often wondered how one could avoid that. If a Mission Director would ever say, look, I saved 10% of what I thought we were going to use and am returning it, it would not be looked upon too well.

*Q: The incentive wasn't in that direction?*

MACARTHUR. No, that's right. The Sahel Development Program was quite large, some \$100 million per year in development projects alone. It was mainly handled like any other bilateral program, with field missions in all these countries. They were doing a gamut of development projects in health, livestock, irrigation and village water supply, agriculture, reforestation. Our big emphasis was on agriculture and there was a very large humanitarian food assistance component as well, granting food to people to keep them from starving. It was all under the umbrella of the Sahel Program with its own budget line item, which gave us much more flexibility. One totally unique aspect was our close collaboration with France and other donors through multilateral mechanisms.

*Q: Were you involved with the Club du Sahel?*

MACARTHUR: I was indeed. I knew Anne DeLattre, director of the Club du Sahel secretariat in Paris. She often consulted with us. Our AID program was intricately involved with the larger multilateral effort to combat drought, and with the international mechanisms set up for this purpose. The Club du Sahel, formed in 1976, was an informal aid coordinating body which sponsored planning meetings among donors and recipient countries; sector studies, and strategies for long term solutions to the Sahel's drought problem.

*Q: Any dealings with the CILSS?*

MACARTHUR: Yes indeed. The CILSS was the French acronym for the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, an organization formed by the Sahel countries themselves to coordinate their demands for assistance from potential donor countries. Initially the CILSS had compiled a large list of projects they submitted to donors for financing, an overly ambitious and unstructured list of demands. Through the Club du Sahel and CILSS mechanisms this list was developed into an overall strategy, focusing on essentials and eliminating non-priority projects.

*Q: Do you remember anything about their operation?*

MACARTHUR: The Club du Sahel, on the donor side, and the CILSS, on the recipient country side, were really quite novel approaches to development. There was a realization that the individual countries comprising the Sahel, from the Cape Verde islands in the west to Chad in the east, all faced similar problems and that a coordinated approach to reducing their vulnerability to drought had to be made. A regional effort of large magnitude would elicit the attention of potential donors much more readily than a piecemeal, country by country approach.

*Q: Anything stand out, what you thought the Sahelian program was trying to do, or doing?*

MACARTHUR: Well, as far as regional cooperation, I thought the program was pretty successful. The program did capture attention. Congress appropriated some \$100 million annually with the stipulation that this sum not exceed 10% of the overall amount contributed by others (France, the World Bank, the recipient countries themselves, etc.) Recipient countries pooled their demands in periodic meetings sponsored by CILSS. Sector studies were commissioned in such areas as food self-sufficiency, livestock and rangeland improvement, forestry, fisheries. Strategies were developed. One major study on the economic viability of the Sahel was undertaken by MIT. It was a good way to develop regional cooperation among both donors and the African countries; perhaps more so than had you had only bilateral missions. So, I thought all told it was a success just from that point of view --the regional collaboration, and a kind of sharing of responsibilities. It certainly was unique and I think a first in the annals of development practice.

*Q: But, your job was mainly the in-house processing and budget work?*

MACARTHUR: I did attend some of the strategy and planning meetings in Ouagadougou and Niamey for example, but yes, my job was largely in-house processing of project papers, country plans, preparing the annual Congressional presentation and so forth.

*Q: Any particular issues in putting that together or just mechanics?*

MACARTHUR: Just mechanics. I often questioned why the desk officers spent so much time on the Congressional Presentation. It would have made more sense to get more input from the field, possibly sending them all the formats and having them send the material back for editing. We did a bit of that, but not enough in my view. Of course, I was a foreign service officer; I tended to be more field oriented. I thought, give the responsibility to the people who are on the ground, and not spend so much time on it back at headquarters. It was a big, burdensome and time consuming thing. Also, having to get the clearances, making sure you covered all the buzz words that Congress was looking for compounded the work.

*Q: Such as?*

MACARTHUR: Well, for example we needed to say it was the poorest of the poor that we were helping, somehow getting that in; watching out when you described a family planning program, one had to be circumspect about that; stressing attention to environmental impact, etc. The Congress had its pet projects, pet views that it had to promote.

*Q: Did you go to the hearings on the Hill?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, I did a few times.

*Q: Do you remember any of those as being eventful?*

MACARTHUR: I remember one particularly unpleasant experience, I forgot which of the Senators, this was years ago, who was just totally against the AID program. You could try to explain anything, to no avail.

*Q: Do you remember who this is?*

MACARTHUR: I would remember his name. He was our nemesis.

*Q: This wasn't Passman at that time?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, it was Passman. That is absolutely right. You could not say anything good about the program. The Sahel Development Program did not end by the time I left, it continued after I left for Abidjan. I don't quite know what its final outcome was, whether it just died a natural death or whether the individual country desks went their separate ways. The big crisis, the drought, waned and with it the mechanisms and large program set up to combat it. But, at the time, as a way to forcefully manage a crisis, and muster international cooperation, I think it was a good program.

*Q: You finished up in the Sahel Development Program in 1982?*

**Assignment with the Regional Economic Development Services Office  
in Abidjan (REDSO) - 1982**

MACARTHUR: Yes, 1982. Frank Ruddy was the Africa Bureau head. I was offered the Deputy Directorship in Mali. Just before going, Ruddy said, well we think we should send you to Abidjan, so we went to Abidjan. I was Deputy Director of the REDSO, the Regional Economic Development Support Organization.

*Q: What is that phenomenon?*

MACARTHUR: We had two REDSO's in AID, at least in the Africa area; one in Nairobi and one in Abidjan. The Abidjan office was there to provide technical, legal, contract and other support to all of our West African bilateral missions. We had a very large staff; some 100 people. I think we had 30 or so direct hires, a lot of locals. Their job was to

travel a great deal to all the missions who needed help, for example, designing a project requiring irrigation. We would send one of our engineers up to Mali, for example, where there was a big dam being built up there, to help with the project paper, develop the whole project. This saved the Mali mission from having to staff a full time engineer. We were totally a support organization and our people traveled constantly.

*Q: How big an area did you cover?*

MACARTHUR: Well, from the Cape Verde islands and Senegal all the way across West Africa to Chad. It included Togo but not Ghana, because we did not have a mission there. Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia were also covered.

*Q: A mission in Ghana?*

MACARTHUR: Well, in those days we did not have a mission in Ghana. We had one in Benin, one in Togo We had, of course, missions in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Senegal.

*Q: Cameroon, Zaire, and all that?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, on an occasional basis we served these posts. Zaire (Congo) not so much. When our engineer did go to Zaire he was beaten up and robbed in broad daylight in downtown Kinshasa.

*Q: But, I mean your general area?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, it was all of West Africa, basically. The staff traveled. This was the drawback of the REDSO; if you were young, unattached and didn't mind to travel, well okay. But, I think it was very hard on the staff; they were forever traveling. Some of them enjoyed it, they liked the adventure.

*Q: What was your role?*

MACARTHUR: I was Deputy Director. I had to keep the staff in order and to see where they went, do their efficiency reports and all of that, very administrative. I also chaired project reviews because these projects would come back from the missions and be reviewed by our local direct hire staff. Sometimes we had lawyers reviewing the legal aspects, if there were loan agreements; we had engineers, agricultural people, an ecologist, an environmental specialist, two family planning advisors, economist, project design specialists, contract specialists. Our staff was on call to go where missions needed them. Now, every year, another thing we did was to try to plan for the following year which is very hard to do with so many missions involved. But we would get the whole staff together and get input from the various field missions. Otherwise, it was total chaos. We would ask each mission to come in with the needs they would have the next year. They would plan it out, they would say, now in March, we are going to need an engineer because this project is going to be doing such and such; in September we are going to

need three people for a project design, etc. We put this big program together for the year, which of course, would have to be changed periodically. But, at least we got some feeling of where our people were needed for when and in what time frame. It worked out pretty well. We had regular scheduling conferences.

*Q: Did you get any feel for what the overall orientation of our development program was or what we were trying to do in all these countries?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, of course; but our role was not to direct the missions; the individual Mission Directors were doing their own planning under Washington guidance. We couldn't tell the mission director you should be doing this instead of that. But we could advise them on projects, our experts could. But, we were really a service organization, not a planning organization. Missions might want someone to tell them whether an irrigation project made sense and how it should be designed. We would send our engineer and our agriculture person there to advise them and help them put together a project paper. So, we did a lot of the drafting of the field mission documents, allowing those missions to be staffed with much fewer people.

*Q: Any projects stand out in your mind as being pretty interesting?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, there was a big project in Mali that we were involved in, the Manantali project. It created a bit of a problem because the government was dead set on it, and it was going to create a horrendous environmental problem, displacing a lot of people. We had some mixed feelings about that project and tried to minimize the environmental damage. Let's see, there was a livestock project in Mali, a forestry project in Burkina Faso, both addressing environmental problems. We built some schools in Sierra Leone but had an awful time getting the government to provide the inputs they had promised.

A problem we had in REDSO was that we had no bilateral assistance to the Ivory Coast. They were relatively too prosperous and stable to fall under AID's development criteria, hence no AID program. So, it made our job difficult with the local government, who questioned why we had these 100 people helping all of Africa while they were getting absolutely nothing out of this. To such an extent that we had to get rid of an IG, inspector general, office in the REDSO headed by John Eckman. The IG needed more people, so there was a proposal to build up the IG staff. Nancy Rawls, our ambassador, said in no way did she want more people, AID was already too big. It was causing her grief whenever she talked with the Ivorian government. So the IG went to Dakar, Senegal, instead. In fact my wife went with them for a month to help them set up their new office. We were always conscious of keeping on good terms with the government, citing how much our large REDSO operation was spending on the local economy as a way to mollify them.

*Q: Did we have any projects there?*

MACARTHUR: We had no project except in health and in family planning. We were helping them there as part of a regional project but we didn't even have an OYB for the

Ivory Coast.

*Q: What about the African Development Bank?*

MACARTHUR: Well, yes, there was an American advisor to the African Development Bank. It was Freed, I think. We gave support to them mainly in training and we had a participant training program with the African Development Bank. I used to attend their graduation ceremonies at Bank headquarters in downtown Abidjan. During the time we were there the Sahel drought was still going on, it was a big problem in Niger and Mali in particular and in Burkina Faso. Abidjan was the port through which all the food for these countries was coming in. It had to be transported from Abidjan up to Bamako and to Niamey and Ouagadougou. We got into one horrendous problem here; I got involved in that one because food was piling up in Abidjan and we could not get this food up to where it was needed, the interior. A train, quite inappropriately called the gazelle (I have taken that train), goes from Abidjan up to Ouagadougou and partly up to the Mali border. Once you get to the Mali border, it becomes a dirt road to Bamako. We had an awful time getting the Malians to agree to using the train to transport food to Bamako. They had their other priorities, cement for construction, this kind of thing. We threatened to cut off further PL480 food shipments if they did not agree to allow food, mainly wheat, to have precedence..

To such an extent that we had to get rid of an IG, inspector general, office in the REDSO headed by John Eckman. UNDP assigned an advisor to try to repair some old freight cars rotting in Abidjan so that we could move more food. We tried to enlist the support of local truckers, which was also a problem, because the coffee crop was coming in and all the local truckers were busy hauling coffee. We had to wait until that was over in order to get these private truckers to haul the food out.

*Q: Did you undertake any special studies during that time on regional, social issues?*

MACARTHUR: Not that I can recall. I think we were terribly operational. We had an economics staff but they mainly did the project reviews.

*Q: Any particular programs stand out that look like they were working?*

MACARTHUR: It was difficult to determine because these projects generally were designed for long term impact. There was a good project in Togo, setting up a vehicle repair shop. We had good results on millet and sorghum trials in Burkina Faso but it was much too early to determine what effect this research would have on national production levels. We had an extensive agricultural experimental station in the Gambia, but how could you judge its impact, at least in the short run.

*Q: What about Sierra Leone?*

MACARTHUR: Sierra Leone was difficult We were trying to develop schools up there and had a hard time. Our engineers were busy designing schools but ran into difficulties

with the local government, misappropriation of supplies and other irritations.

*Q: Anything else about the REDSO experience?*

MACARTHUR: I was there four years. For a time we had difficulty keeping our offices functioning. We had drought conditions which knocked out the hydroelectric plants on the lakes north of Abidjan. Our electric typewriters and computers were out of commission for days on end. The disruption to our operation was quite extreme. Finally, at considerable expense, but there was no other way, we had a large Detroit diesel generator flown in from the states. It made a terrible racket, unfortunately right below my office, but it kept us going. Conferring with our Ambassador, we also decided to provide all AID occupied houses with generators.

*Q: What did you conclude about REDSO?*

MACARTHUR: I think it was worthwhile and cost effective to have a REDSO. I believe it did save on staff. They would have had to come out of Washington on TDYs otherwise. So, it made sense to be there, closer at hand, but hard on the staff, that was the only thing. That was the tradeoff.

*Q: Did you travel around the region?*

MACARTHUR: I did, up to Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali several times. Togo and Benin as well. I went up to Timbuktu in Mali. We took landrovers and followed the Niger river, visiting irrigation projects along the way. We observed the ancient practice of flood recession agriculture, using the flood waters of the Niger as they recede to plant crops along the banks. We observed the Fulani herdsman driving cattle south to escape drought further north. Our AID mission was trying to get Mali back to its former production levels. Attaining food self-sufficiency was the driving force behind our programs.

*Q: What was your impression of the region and the development prospects?*

MACARTHUR: It is varied. You start from the tropical areas and extend right up to the Sahara. You go through many different zones. Development prospects were pretty grim in my view. You had countries with fragile environment, compounded by drought, an expanding population, largely agrarian societies, lacking stable governments and institutions, short of trained cadres, often dependent on a mono-culture (coffee, peanuts, lumber) for state resources, and excessively dependent on the largesse of foreign donors. The Ivory Coast was an exception. It was a reasonably prosperous country wholly dependent on agriculture (coffee, cocoa, pineapples, bananas, rubber and lumber) for its survival. But then it was partly in the tropical belt where rain was more abundant. Furthermore, under the sage President Houphouet Boigny the country never drove out foreign technicians and managers as did several African countries following their independence. The result was a country free of turmoil, with a consequent positive impact on the economy.

Basic survival in many of these countries is tenuous. Just keeping the food supply in synch with the increasing population is a problem. Overgrazing destroys formerly productive areas. Deforestation accelerates with the increased demand for fuel wood. The problems go on and on and I am not too sanguine about the prospects for a positive turn-around in the near future, if ever.

Despite this rather pessimistic outlook, I believe we did make an impact with many of our projects. Ultimately it is not climate or physical deterrents that will determine the viability of these economies, but rather stable, uncorrupt governments, a well functioning civil service and trained, conscientious cadres. These, combined with more incentives to farmers (credit, higher agricultural prices) should overcome many of the land and water constraints.

Houphouet Boigny, the country never drove out foreign technical experts and managers as did many African countries following their independence. The result was a country free of turmoil.

Among problems in other countries, I particularly recall the difficulty of getting local currency support for the projects. Governments were overwhelmed with foreign donor assistance where every project required an input of local currency from the government's own budget; they just couldn't do it. You almost had to pay for budget support for these projects, and while you were there it was okay but once you left, it never got into the budget process. That was a big problem, especially in Burkina Faso. Chad was very unstable for a while because they were going through a revolt up there. Every period of instability either destroyed AID projects, or got rid of the precious local technicians needed to keep them going. I did visit the polders project.

*Q: What were those?*

MACARTHUR: A most interesting system of irrigation along Lake Chad; the lake had a peculiar geological formation of sandbars, little islands near one edge of the lake. Before AID got involved, probably with the French, they were developing an irrigation system that connected these little islands with a dike and then they would pump out the remaining water between the islands, effectively ending up with a dry lake bed surrounded by lake water several feet higher. You could then use the natural gravity of the lake above to irrigate. Draining ditches and pumps prevented salinization from excess water. But, I visited those, in fact previously when I was in the Sahel program and on a trip with Assistant Administrator Goler Butcher. We took a small plane up to Agadez in Niger, then across to N'djamena and over Lake Chad to Bol where this project was located. It was a really interesting project.

*Q: Did it work?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, it seemed to work fine. It is always tricky under these systems to get the technical management of the water but, again, as long as trained technicians were



there, local or expatriate, it worked. Even they had problems with a shortage of supplies and equipment, a classic problem.

*Q: Well that covers the REDSO right?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, that's right.

*Q: You left there in 1986?*

### **Served on the staff of the U.S. Mission to the United Nations - 1986**

MACARTHUR: Yes, in 1986. I left in September 1986, the 41<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations was just getting under way. The U.N. works on resolutions in committees all year, but in the fall the General Assembly takes place and goes from about September to Christmas. That is when all the resolutions, all of the decisions that have been made in committee during the bulk of the year, are adopted at one continuous session. The meeting is rather pro forma because draft resolutions have been thoroughly discussed and thrashed out in committee (political, economic, social, etc.) by the time they are introduced in the General Assembly.

*Q: Did that do any good?*

MACARTHUR: The thing is there has been a lot of leg work done before it gets to that point.

*Q: Well let us back up.*

MACARTHUR: I'll back up. So, what was I doing there? Historically AID has had a presence at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York and, usually had two people there; I think it even had more at one time. When I got to New York, Irvin Coker was the AID person and I joined him. Our job was to backstop all the development issues that the U.N. handled and act as liaison with AID in Washington. It was a tricky role because the State Department had in their International Organizations office (IO) mainly AID people dealing with the development issues. The difficulty was to sort out who gave us instructions, was it State or was it AID? State and AID never really sorted out their respective jurisdiction back in Washington. "How come we were not involved?" in this or that issue was a common refrain.

*Q: Were there major differences in views?*

MACARTHUR: Not too much, but there was some concern on AID's part that if the AID person in New York was doing so much of State's work, State should fund that person up there. I was in the middle of this friction between PPC and IO. Substantively my job was mainly, almost exclusively, with the Second Committee and I had no difficulties with either AID or State at the working level.

*Q: Which is what?*

MACARTHUR: The second committee is the economic committee, a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. The General Assembly apportions work to seven main committees, for example the first is political, the second is economic, the third is social and humanitarian, and so forth.

*Q: What did they cover?*

MACARTHUR: The second committee covered everything having to do with development, finance and trade and was closely involved with the operational development agencies of the United Nations, such as the UN Development Program; UNICEF, the children's program; UNFPA, population; UNDRO, the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization, UNBRO, the United Nations Border Relief Organization for Cambodia, a host of these organizations. My job was to sit on all of their boards, all of the discussions, and present the U.S. view and often draft U.S. responses for presentation in the committee. If I had time, I would get guidance from AID, informing them of the issues and requesting the AID position on the matter. Often, I got a verbatim response to deliver. Just as often I got no instructions. It is important in that position that you be pretty conversant about development, have a good grasp of it and know the U.S. position generally because a lot of times you are on your own and you just have to wing it. The job was excruciating but fascinating.

*Q: Why was it excruciating?*

MACARTHUR: Too much work. I never worked so hard in my life. It was endless, overwhelming, just too much. At first we were two people; Irvin Coker left after the first year, and I was the only person there for the next three years. The amount of paperwork was unbelievable. You had meetings, UNDP, UNICEF going on all the time; you had volumes of documents coming in that you had to distill in preparation for meetings every morning at 10:00 where resolutions were under discussion and you had to present the U.S. position. Very often, you would call Washington and say, okay this is happening, what is our position on it? They wouldn't react right away because they had to get clearances from everybody; it was really something. You then had to make your own decision and hope for the best.

*Q: What kind of issues are you talking about?*

MACARTHUR: We are talking about, for instance, resolutions on support to the Palestinian people; on a Decade for natural disaster reduction; on AIDS; on transfer of resources to developing countries; on economic support to Yemen, Sudan and others; on food and agriculture problems; on emergency assistance to crisis countries in Africa; on rehabilitation of Angola; on opposition to the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba; and so forth. There were about 50 such resolutions on which the U.S. had to take a position. Frequently these resolutions attempted to make a political statement or commit donors to specific funding levels, matters with which we often took issue.

Besides resolutions, I worked closely with the UN development agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, etc.) . Each had its own executive board or governing council with the U.S., as a major donor, always represented. They would provide every year a report on their activities and AID would have to review these, providing comments on how to improve performance. For example we criticized UNDP for the excessive number of projects it financed and for their slow rate of implementation.

*Q: Any specific projects come up here?*

MACARTHUR: Many projects where AID had a direct interest, for example child survival through oral rehydration and Operation Lifeline Sudan where AID was working closely with UNICEF to provide assistance to the rebel-torn areas of southern Sudan.

*Q: Were there any major policy issues that you remember?*

MACARTHUR: We had some difficulties with UNICEF on the rights of the child. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was strongly supported by UNICEF which was lobbying hard to get universal endorsement, but it was not supported by the U.S.

*Q: What was the issue there?*

MACARTHUR: UNICEF wanted the U.S. to sign this convention. Jim Grant, head of UNICEF, was heavily involved in that. I got to know Jim Grant very well, I worked very closely with him. It was a U.N. convention that was a kind of Bill of Rights for children which included things like labor laws, military service, what not. Almost everyone in the world signed off on this except the United States. That gave us all kinds of grief. The reason we didn't sign was that there was a statement in the convention which forbade any military service for 18 year olds. There was an age factor. It so happens that in this country the states have jurisdiction over who can serve at what age in the military, apparently. It was some issue of that nature. But, in order for the U.S. as a federal government to sign off on this convention, they would have to get the approval of each state.

*Q: It was a draft age issue?*

MACARTHUR: It was a draft age issue if I recall, and there may have been other legal impediments. We could not go along with that. So, it made it appear that the U.S. was against this noble convention which had all kinds of good things in it. That caused much consternation among the other missions and put us in a bad light. We had to try to explain our case but it rang rather hollow.

*Q: Did you ever resolve it?*

MACARTHUR: We never really resolved it as far as I know. Jim Grant organized a big international summit for children. I think it was in 1990. I got very involved in that. This

summit of heads of state was intended to sensitize world opinion to the plight of children. It became a big political thing; Prime Minister Thatcher came over; there was Prime Minister Mulroney from Canada, and President Bush came up to New York amidst great fanfare. As part of the summit the General Assembly had a ceremony to sign-on to this famous child rights convention. So, here we were appealing to Washington to resolve this issue immediately. We had to sign off on this, the world was watching.. When you are in the hot seat, that is pretty unnerving. We were getting no guidance. A high level delegate from Washington, I forgot who that was, came up to sign off on the summit protocol, but the Convention on the Rights of the Child was part of it, unbeknownst to him. When he had to sign, he did so with a caveat in the margin. So, we never came to grips with this issue, and I don't know that we ever did. It came out in documents later that the U.S. was on board. But they really were not; we had to call Jim Grant about that to say you are pushing us on this. We had problems of that nature quite frequently.

Another example was over a resolution on assistance to Front Line states, the states bordering South Africa. We vetoed or abstained on that resolution.

*Q: We were providing assistance, right?*

MACARTHUR: Right.

*Q: Why?*

MACARTHUR: The reason we vetoed the resolutions every year is because they had a clause in there that required sanctions on South Africa and the administration did not want that put in there for political reasons.

*Q: This is before we applied sanctions?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, it was before we applied sanctions, but even after Congress had approved sanctions. There was some treatment in the language of the resolution that was offensive to the State Department. Image is a big thing in this whole U.N. business. Our veto made it look as though we were against aiding these countries, yet we were actually providing more assistance than all other countries. I had to explain that during our committee meetings. Related to this same issue, the Secretary General was supposed to report on assistance to these front line states every year. I noticed that in reporting they never mentioned anything about the U.S. I thought, well this is crazy and so I got AID to provide me with information on all the assistance we were giving to the front line states. I did a substantial report and I sent it to the Secretary General's office. I told them to include it in their report that goes to the General Assembly to show that the U.S., in fact, was doing more than everyone else put together for these countries despite our negative stand on the resolution.

*Q: But did they accept it?*

MACARTHUR: Oh yes, they put it in the Secretary General's report, which was a good

thing to do because it showed that there were other reasons why the U.S. was vetoing these resolutions. What effect do UN resolutions have? I often asked myself this question, because there are many, many resolutions that come out of the General Assembly every year, maybe three or four hundred.

*Q: How many pages in the book?*

MACARTHUR: About 700 pages.

*Q: This is a book of all resolutions?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, all the resolutions for one General Assembly; the 45<sup>th</sup> session for example. The second committee alone had about 50 resolutions that I helped to work on during the year. Each resolution went through an informal review session. You met in a room like this one with all interested parties, in what my son likes to refer to as a “bogsat” - - bunch of guys sitting around a table. We went to every one of these meetings; we had to because we had a constituency back in the State Department and in AID that insisted on it, whereas the other missions did not. They only went to ones that were of interest to them; they went to some and not to others, but the U.S. was always there.

*Q: Were we able to sponsor many resolutions?*

MACARTHUR: No, strangely, not many at all. We would often cosponsor resolutions, but rarely sponsor. I’m talking about the second committee, the economic committee. On the political side, that was different. In the time I was there I can think of maybe only a handful of resolutions that we actually sponsored in the second committee.

*Q: Where did they come from?*

MACARTHUR: They came from other countries. Some of them were very inane and not troublesome and we could easily sign on to them, such as resolutions on fisheries in Africa, assistance to Chad, assistance to Angola and other countries facing economic difficulty. But you had some resolutions on assistance to Yemen or to the Palestinian people which had political overtones that gave us some grief. We were not permitted to talk directly with the Palestinian observer delegation so I used the Moroccan delegate as an intermediary.

We got into trouble with one resolution sponsored by the Scandinavians who sought to establish a percentage of donor GNP which should go to help developing countries. The Scandinavians were all for it, setting a target figure of 2% as I recall. The U.S. was totally against it, we would never commit to any figure given our Congressional appropriations process. And here you have another example of a resolution that made the U.S. appear opposed to helping poor countries. I spent hours talking informally with the Scandinavian delegates trying to finesse the language to make it acceptable to us, because in the final analysis everyone wants to achieve a consensus resolution. A veto is a pretty radical thing in the U.N. system. To get a consensus you often have to change the resolution language

so radically that it becomes watered down to a degree that it does not mean much any more. Then you ask yourself, of what good are these resolutions ? That is a very good question. They have no operational force.

*Q: Within the U.N. system, nothing was done with them?*

MACARTHUR: Within the U.N. system itself there is no way it can enforce any of these things. What it has is the power of public opinion and in a forum like that no country likes to be on the out. At first, I thought, well this is ridiculous but once you were there a long time you realized how sensitive countries are to being singled out as not being cooperative, being opposed to a common view. Psychologically, it becomes a very important issue in the U.N. system. We did sponsor one resolution on locust plagues in Africa, for instance, that gained wide support and showed U.S. goodwill. Incidentally, on that resolution, Ambassador Vernon Walters, the head of our mission in New York, and I went to see the Secretary General , Perez de Cuellar, to enlist his support.

*Q: Was it part of an effort to get other donors to participate?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, absolutely. That was a principal intent. Many of these types of resolutions had very little teeth in them but were a kind of a guidance to the world to respond to a particular crisis.

*Q: Once they were done, you didn't have any responsibility for follow-up?*

MACARTHUR: Hardly at all at our mission in New York. AID or State would have that responsibility at headquarters. We did follow up on some resolutions calling for action. For instance, there was a resolution which the U.S. was opposed to initially. I got involved in it quite deeply; it was the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, INDR. The resolution was promoted and sponsored by Morocco. It sought to alert the world to better prepare for natural disasters. Morocco and others wanted to establish a UN Decade to give this problem high visibility. The King of Morocco was behind it, the Moroccan delegate was actively lobbying, and Frank Press of The National Academy of Sciences, the President's Science Advisor, was all for it. State Department was against it and here you had a conflict. I got right smack in the middle of it. Press was pushing, and in fact, he called my office to say "look we are in with the Moroccans on this and make sure this thing gets through" whereas IO was saying we don't want another UN decade, there are too many of them, they lose their impact, they tend to be bureaucratic and demanding of more staff. After a lot of lobbying by Press, we finally agreed to cosponsor this resolution with Morocco. A high level committee was formed to follow up on the resolution. Marilyn Quayle was on it. She came up to New York from Washington; I met her at the airport to take her to these meetings. The Decade resolution required that meetings take place annually, that the governments set up facilities to assure quick reaction responses; establishing building codes for earthquake prone places; prepositioning emergency supplies, and the like. The National Academy of Sciences had a strong interest in this area and the State Department relinquished follow-up largely to them.

*Q: Disaster preparedness type of thing?*

MACARTHUR: Exactly right. So, yes, the resolution urged countries to set up appropriate mechanisms . The UNICEF related resolutions did the same thing, urging universal vaccination by a certain year, putting in place various health and nutrition facilities to accomplish child survival goals. But in all of these there was no ultimate sanction to assure achievement of these goals other than public opinion.

*Q: It is used as a handle such as UNICEF uses it to pressure the countries to respond?*

MACARTHUR: Precisely. Again, when I first joined, I thought well, this is all quite ineffectual, there are no teeth in any of this. But, you realized as you got into it, given the image that the U.N. has, that UN pronouncements carry some weight. Countries fear to be singled out in a negative way.

*Q: Did you have any responsibility for the UNDP operation ?*

MACARTHUR: Well, yes, I worked closely with the UNDP. Bill Draper was the UNDP head then. Our office was adjacent to theirs and I was over there a lot, consulting with their regional and technical offices. We reviewed their programs under the rubric of operational activities for development, a resolution that we had to pass every year. We were on their Governing Board so we had to read their reports and attend their meetings. How AID interfaced with UNDP and coordination issues were a concern of ours. We were the largest donor to UNDP and we exercised as much oversight as possible. As the major donor, the U.S. was much involved not only in examining their programs but also in matters of their staffing and administrative structures. That Bill Draper was an American made access and cooperation pleasant and fruitful. I went on a field trip with UNDP to Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe precisely to look at the issue of coordination of development assistance. We went as a group of UNDP staff plus major donors, including, Canada, France, the Brits, and Scandinavians. There must have been a group of about 15 of us. We went to these east African countries and talked to their Ministers of Cooperation, and other government officials, asking them point blank, well, what is UNDP doing, or what is AID doing, or what is SIDA, the Swedish aid agency, doing. How do you people interface, how do you relate. It was fascinating.

*Q: What kind of issues did you get caught up with?*

MACARTHUR: Very often we came up with the not too startling discovery that in these countries the coordination of donor assistance should really start with the host country itself. But that did not happen. I was rather appalled to see that one of our meetings was the first time that the SIDA representatives had ever met with the UNDP representatives in a place like Zambia. I thought, this is unbelievable, but it was quite revealing.

*Q: This was in what year?*

MACARTHUR: This was in 1989. I thought it was extraordinary. We found that, exceptionally in Malawi, the UNDP representative, a lady by the name of Leitner, was very good. She was quite successful in getting a good donor group together. It depended a bit on the UNDP Resident Coordinator and very much on the host country and how effective they were on this.

*Q: Were there any other issues that you came across in that process?*

MACARTHUR: Well, I felt that the U.N. projects were generally very good though excessive in numbers- trying to cover all the bases. I visited quite a few of them, for instance a low cost housing project in Malawi where villagers were making the building materials, such as roofing, themselves.

*Q: In coordination, or just in general?*

MACARTHUR: Just in general; they were doing some good things. It was interesting to compare UNDP implementation problems with those of AID, many of the very same issues. We went to visit a livestock veterinarian school in Zimbabwe. It was a fine school. UNDP had built the building and had provided the veterinarian equipment. It was doing well until the UNDP pulled out when their project was over. Our visit revealed that nothing was happening, not many people were around. There was one local vet and he said, "well we don't have the budget, we need supplies for this and for that and we are not getting the budget from the central government." It is a classic story in that this sometimes happens with AID projects. So, it was interesting to see that UNDP had some of the same problems.

*Q: If you looked across all the agencies that you were associated with how would you rank them, as being the most efficient?*

MACARTHUR: I would say UNICEF, definitely the most efficient. In fact, as far as the amount of money going straight into the development side of it, as opposed to administrative, UNICEF came out on top. Someone did studies on that. Jim Grant was unbelievable. As I say, I saw him often. I got to work very closely with him. He was very dynamic, always got his way. As an example, the U.S. President's annual budget proposal might include a line item of say 80 million dollars for UNICEF. Grant would go down to the Congress, talk to a few people and Congress would end up voting funds in excess of the President's request. This happened a couple of times, where the amount in the federal budget for UNICEF was increased because of his lobbying. He was terrific at that, a real persuasive individual. Of course, he headed an organization promoting the well being of children that no one could say no to.

One problem concerning funding was the declining funds the United States was providing to UNDP, and others. We were holding back other donors from increasing their amount. I was talking to the Swedish representative who said that the Swedes were prepared to provide, I don't recall how much money, for UNDP and inquired what the U.S. contribution was going to be. I said ours is going to be, it was around 100 million, I



think. He said “oh, ours was going to be more than that, but we cannot go beyond the U.S., it would not be acceptable to our legislature.” So, we were impeding mainly the Scandinavians, we were holding them back. They didn’t want to get ahead of the U.S. They didn’t think it would be palatable to their own people. It ended up such that they began to question continued U.S. representation on the UNDP governing board and on the UNICEF executive board. The U.S. historically was always a representative. UNDP had a board composed of 10 or 12 major countries, major donors, and they began to say, wait a minute, it is time for the U.S. to step aside and let the Scandinavians have more of a say since U.S. funding is becoming so limited. That became a bit of a problem. Others would also criticize the U.S. for the dominant stand it would take or the conditions it would impose on UNDP programs at a time when U.S. funding was going down.

*Q: It is still a problem.*

MACARTHUR: Is that right?

*Q: What other agencies stood out besides UNICEF?*

MACARTHUR: Well, certainly UNDP. They were a big budget outfit and, of course, they tended to be spread out more than we were with their great number of projects. I thought they were very good, had good people. UNDRO, the U.N. Disaster Relief Office, run by a Tunisian by the name of Essafi, was not so effective. They were supposed to coordinate donor assistance during disasters but they were not too effective. Essafi was not all that dynamic, not all that efficient, so people tended to more or less circumvent UNDRO and go through a different channel to get the coordination. UNITAR, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, headed by, you might recall, Michael Dookingue, who was active in African development....

*Q: He used to be in UNDP*

MACARTHUR: Okay, that is it. He was now heading UNITAR and the U.S. didn’t think they were doing anything. We got heavily lobbied by them to provide more assistance but we just cut them off, we didn’t think they were effective at all. You had some, more or less temporary organizations, UNBRO, United Nations Border Relief Organization, to help the Cambodian refugees. In Thailand there were refugee camps with a lot of Cambodians and the U.N. was providing assistance to these camps. UNBRO was the organization doing that. The head of UNBRO, a person by the name of Kibria, organized a pledging session every year. Ambassador Moore of our mission or I used to deliver the U.S. statement. It took place in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

Many other organizations comprised the UN system of response to economic development and humanitarian needs. All the donors would pledge their funding to these organizations for the year at a major pledging session. I delivered the U.S. pledges from material sent me from Washington. UNDP, UNICEF, UNBRO, UNFPA, FAO, UNHCR, an almost endless number of organizations. I used to get the cable from Washington with the budget line item for each of these organizations and then declare it at this session,

together with comments on how we thought these organizations were doing.

*Q: Conditions?*

MACARTHUR: Yes, we put certain conditions on our pledges. While stating that we were providing a certain amount, we also offered advice or admonitions on where the organization could improve its operation.

*Q: What was your impression, as you came away, of the U.N. system?*

MACARTHUR: I think it is too big. I think there is a lot of inefficiency.

*Q: In what way?*

MACARTHUR: Well, for instance, and I speak of the economic development or humanitarian side, you had UNDRO, you had UNHCR, you had certain aspects of UNDP and even certain aspects of UNICEF, all attacking the same problem. There was duplication but each organization would address an issue under its own mandate, reluctant to relinquish any of its authority. We often thought, well, here is one problem and you have five institutions trying to grapple with it, no one really wanting to let the other handle it. There were overlapping jurisdictions, when, say, you had UNHCR going into an emergency situation and UNDP saying, well wait a minute, that is a long term problem and we need to get ourselves involved in that. Relief efforts in the Sudan or Somalia, or among the Kurds following the Gulf War would occasion problems of this nature.

*Q: There wasn't any management of all of this to try to sort these things out?*

MACARTHUR: No, there wasn't because these institutions had their own funding, their own boss. They didn't get an allocation from some central pot; they all had their governing councils. They were all totally independent. Their funding was derived from donor assistance coming bilaterally. So, they felt that, well, they have their own mandate and they do their own thing.

*Q: But then they are products of the donors?*

MACARTHUR: Indeed they are. This is why the donors need to sit on them and say, look we are providing you with so much but you need to collaborate with UNICEF on such and such. That is hard to do. Often the donors themselves have particular reasons why they support one organization over another. Usually the more dynamic organization prevailed. That is why UNICEF, for instance, took the lead in the southern Sudan emergency rather than UNDRO, the UN Disaster Relief Office. Lines of responsibility were not clear cut.

*Q: The donors were keeping some of them alive?*

MACARTHUR: I think so, yes. That is true. For example it is possible that UNITAR collapsed once the U.S. ceased to fund it, but I don't know

Towards the end of my tour at the U.N. in 1991, I was working with Ambassador Jonathan Moore, formerly head of the refugee bureau in the State Department. We tried to overcome a problem related to aid coordination related to natural and man-made disasters, where there was poor collaboration among donors and UN agencies and where countries did not want to accept disaster relief for internal political reasons. The Sudan was such a case. The north was pitted against the south and people were starving. The donors wanted to go in there and alleviate the famine situation but did not have the authority from the Sudanese government, which was using coercion and famine as a political tool. Ethiopia was yet another example. American television had full of pictures of starving Ethiopian children. The U.S. public was clamoring for America to do something. Retired Ambassador Millicent Fenwick, who had been our Ambassador to the UN food agencies in Rome, called me to urge action. I went to see Perez de Cuellar, then Secretary General, with one of our representatives from Congress, it might have been Tony Hall, chairman of the House Select Committee on Hunger, but I don't recall. He had been getting a lot of grief from his constituents, saying we were not doing enough for Ethiopia during the civil war and ensuing famine. So we asked the Secretary General to intervene. He said in effect "I cannot do a thing under my mandate because I have not received the request of the Ethiopian government". So there was nothing he could do. Frustrated by these repeated examples of inaction, the United States, Western donors and particularly the Nordics represented by Sweden, began to consider how the world community could overcome this problem in crisis countries. We introduced a resolution with Swedish Ambassador Jan Eliasson taking the lead, to try to give donors some leverage in a country in chaos where the legal government in authority refused assistance even for humanitarian reasons. That became almost impossible. We did finally get a resolution through but it was replete with caveats. The Chinese were totally opposed to it, the developing countries, the so-called Group of 77 (G-77) composed of third world developing countries that usually voted as a block, were strongly opposed to it. The sovereignty issue was so important to them. They were fearful of Western nations using pretenses to interfere in their internal affairs; they were fearful of "neo-colonialism". But the donors were all for it; they said, in effect, that they could not await diplomatic niceties and government approvals when people were at risk and starving.

*Q: But, you got it through?*

MACARTHUR: We got it through, but it lacked the punch and precision donors had hoped for, watered down by the insistence of the developing country bloc.

*Q: Did it result in anything?*

MACARTHUR: It created a high level Coordinator under the Secretary General, headed by a high ranking official, initially the Swedish Ambassador who had been so instrumental in putting all this together. The G-77 had wanted a big budget, a resolution establishing a 100 million dollar revolving fund. Naturally donors would not hear of it,

but did agree to some funding if I recall. I understand that implementation never got very far. The resolution was an attempt to overcome poor donor and recipient coordination in disaster situations, but it ran up against the classic problem of sensibility to sovereignty on one hand, and overlapping jurisdictions among UN agencies on the other.

*Q: Well, we went in anyway?*

MACARTHUR: Yes we did, but this was before the resolution just described had come about. We went in, for instance, in Sudan in a big way, again thanks to Jim Grant; he was unbelievable. He did a lot of traveling; he went to Sudan, he talked to the Sudanese authorities in Khartoum and he talked to the rebels in the south and, I forgot what they called these, days of Peace or whatever, he got them to set up several days of cease fire; a window of opportunity for the relief effort. He set up several of these at different times when relief materials would be allowed to flow unimpeded. It was called Operation Lifeline Sudan. It was through the force of Jim Grant's efforts that relief supplies were able to get through, but that didn't last because the government was using food as a political weapon.

*Q: Anything else on the U.N. experience? You can add it later if you like.*

MACARTHUR: I can only say that it was extremely varied and covered every conceivable matter, though my responsibility was limited to just the development side, not much on the political side. I did get involved, sometimes on the political side, for instance, on the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba. For years we had been the target of acrimony on the part of the world regarding the embargo we had imposed on Cuba. Everybody, even our friends, were voting for a resolution which criticized the U.S. for this embargo, and calling on the U.S. to lift it.

*Q: What were you pushing for?*

MACARTHUR: Well, we were trying to line up other countries to support us. We were never successful. We went into the meeting in the Second Committee when this resolution was being adopted. We began to receive tirades from the Russian delegation. It got very nasty; we were sitting at the U.S. desk, and the head of our ECOSOC office was there. We decided to stage a walkout and we did just that. That was the only walkout I experienced in my five years at the U.N. There were about three or four of us. We just walked right out of the committee room and it caused a bit of a sensation because the U.S. had never done that. As far as I know, that resolution . . .

*Q: It passed though?*

MACARTHUR: Well, it passed, but not by consensus. The U.S. of course vetoed it, the only veto. It was a typical Cold War type of confrontation. I was at the U.N. when the Cold War was still on in 1982, and I left when it was all over.

*Q: How did you see the difference?*

MACARTHUR: Phenomenal. A lot of our work was in what they call informals; these would be in rooms about this size, interested delegates going over resolutions. Of course, the Russians were always there. Every time we would say something, the Russians would counter it with a negative. It was just a knee-jerk reaction; not at all helpful. Then, about half way through, probably about 1987, 1988, you had “ perestroika”, the Russian move towards more openness. A couple of the Russian delegates were beginning to cozy up and they would actually talk to you now and then. By the time I left in 1991, and the reason I mentioned this Cuban resolution, is that I got a call from Edouard Kudryavtsev, Russian Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, saying, well, the Cuban resolution is coming up, is there some way we could be helpful to you on this thing? Not that they were going to vote for it, but maybe with some finessing of language, they might try to accommodate us to see if an issue that had been festering for years might not be resolved; a total reversal of their previous attitude. It was extraordinary and it was amazing to see that transition.

I was there in the General Assembly when the East German representative relinquished his seat to the now unified Germany; they had a little bit of a ceremony there. Also, I was outside at the flag raising when Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania became new members.

I would say that aside from the purely AID work, my peripheral responsibilities and involvement were fascinating, just the whole political scene; the people you got to see. I met Prince Phillip because he came over to promote family planning and population programs. He made a speech on it, and I got to see him after that. Mrs. Nelson Rockefeller was one of our delegates on our floor. She was, what they call a public delegate. At every General Assembly, the United States had public delegates, usually people of note. It was really neat to work with her. Pearl Bailey, the singer, was a delegate on our mission, appointed by President Reagan. Maureen Reagan, the President’s daughter, came up every year on UNIFEM. She was active on the United Nations Fund for Women. She was our delegate to their annual meeting, presenting the U.S. position. I met President Nixon and Henry Kissinger in the hall of our building and had a chat with them. I accompanied Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel to a meeting with Ambassador Pickering and did the reporting cable to Washington. These were often spur of the moment encounters which gave some spark to the job.

*Q: Was it your job to help coordinate these delegations?*

MACARTHUR: Not Maureen Reagan, AID was not much involved with UNIFEM. But I did on others, for instance, I coordinated the visit of Linda-Bird Johnson, President Johnson’s daughter, when she came up to New York to sponsor a conference on infant mortality. I was coordinator with UNICEF of President Bush’s visit on the occasion of the UNICEF sponsored World Summit for Children, and got a letter of thanks from him afterwards. The whole aura of the U.N. was interesting; for example, in the General Assemblies, the first sessions were always attended by the heads of state who would all deliver their speeches. So, I got to hear Gorbachev, and all of the U.S. Presidents, and many other leaders.. It was very fascinating; we all went to these sessions. I think that

was one of the benefits of the job, besides just your AID work, you also got to see much more of what the U.N. was about.

*Q: Well what is your overall feeling about the U.N.? There are people in this world who don't think it is very effective.*

MACARTHUR: Well, I share part of that view. The problem is it is too big. It is too bureaucratic. We have been trying hard get the U.N. to achieve administrative reform and that is one reason the Congress has withheld funding. We are in arrears with our dues there. That was a big problem when I was there; we were not paying our dues. Our feeling was that the organization was too cumbersome, duplicative and bureaucratic. All that is very true; but how you resolve that, I do not know because you have too many entrenched little bureaucracies in there. You have to remember that almost all of these U.N. agencies and offices are staffed with people from around the world and they are not about to lose their jobs. Mr. Essafi of UNDRO, whose effectiveness was questioned, and who is Tunisian, did not want to lose his job and continued to get strong support from Tunisia and Japan. To try to combat that, it was almost impossible. So the U.N. set up another secretariat to do essentially what UNDRO should have been doing, in the resolution I mentioned earlier, thus establishing two organizations with essentially the same role. And so it goes. I don't know how you force reform unless it is just through withholding the funds.

*Q: But, did that have any effect?*

MACARTHUR: It didn't seem to have any effect. At least while I was there, we were still complaining that it didn't seem to have any effect; I don't know how much the new Secretary General, Kofi Annan, has done to reform the U.N. but our support of him was with that hope in mind.

*Q: But, what would be the primary task that if you had the power to do it, what would you do?*

MACARTHUR: I think, for one, if you look at the structure of the U.N., it is horrendous. There are too many small offices. I think sometimes you don't know what they are doing. They have some role that was perceived years ago but is now obsolete. What has happened is it is too easy in these U.N. resolutions for the respective member countries to say, well we should set up an office to study this or that situation. They end up doing just that.

*Q: Rather than assigning it to one of the existing organizations?*

MACARTHUR: Right, or they task an existing organization which then has to add to its staff to follow through. That was one of our objections to setting up the Decade on natural disaster reduction. We didn't want them to set up yet another office, yet another entity to follow up on this business, again building up the bureaucracy. This has been going on for years. It is hard to know how to control it because the people who set it up

are not the people necessarily who are directly involved in budgeting it. I think the operational agencies are probably too large but quite good; UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, although we had problems with UNFPA because of our own problems with family planning.

There are a number of organizations and offices that I think are redundant. How you would go about eliminating them; it would be easier in one country, like USA, all Americans; okay you all get a pink slip. You can't do that when the whole organization is totally staffed by everybody in the world. That is one of the problems. As far as what the U.N. does, and is it effective? I think it is critical. I think that the U.N., if it didn't exist, would have to be reinvented. I think that its value is in the fact that you can get together in one building, and a lot of it is maybe just through informal sessions, and meet a delegate from Burkina Faso, or from here or there, and there is so much interchange. You get to know what the world is about, what people are thinking. You have no other forum to do that. It seems to me that this is important. A lot of animosities and misunderstandings can be resolved through these kinds of interchanges in that building. People say, okay, why is your government doing this and you get to really feel out people. You can report to your own government whether a country really feels deeply about an issue, or is taking a stand only for public image reasons. You get to know these kinds of feelings. They are intangible, but it is really important for a world body to meet like that.

The role of U.N. peace keeping and relief has been criticized but I think, it invariably boils down to a budget issue. The U.S. was always concerned because somehow the U.S. so often ended up having to pay the lion's share. But, from what I saw the U.N. staff were a pretty dedicated bunch, in pursuing these operational activities; they were really concerned about conflict in places like Angola. For instance, in Angola, the peace negotiations, with Savimbi and UNITAS, included a concern for the mass of soldiers who had been fighting for 20 years; putting them back into the civilian world since they had no jobs, nothing; a potential threat for more mischief. So, again, the U.N. got involved and made an appeal to the donors for funds to try to resettle these soldiers. A special facilitator under the Secretary General, an African by the name of James Jonah, handled these appeals and I think this one person was more effective at the very outset of a crisis than the cumbersome large organizations involved in relief work. He would make a personal field visit and report his findings to us (a small group of potential donors). I attended his informal meetings. My role would be to telephone Washington and AID and say this is the issue, what do we do about it, what can we support..

*Q: Did you get good backstopping from Washington?*

MACARTHUR: Yes.

*Q: Did they care about you or were they preoccupied?*

MACARTHUR: Well, I got good backstopping from the Office of Disaster Assistance, OFDA; Andrew Natsios, the Director, came up a few times and several of his people, like Bill Garvelink and a few other people; they were really helpful. Of course, we had a lot to

do with them. But, I would say generally we had more backstopping from the State side. The reason for that is because IO was staffed with Joan Gayoso, and Pat DeMongeot, AID people who were really doing the AID job in IO. This is what I alluded to earlier; this is what rather miffed AID. The Policy and Program Coordination (PPC) crew was saying, “ why do we have this AID person up there in New York when he is just dealing with State.” That was a constant problem in Washington, and I got caught in the middle of it. It got to the point where Ambassador Pickering was sending letters to PPC asking, now how do we handle Gordon up here. On an administrative level, when I first got there, we all had a housing allowance and then they dropped it because Congress said these people are back home and they should not be getting a housing allowance. That created a big rumpus. Finally the State Department ruled that 18 positions could have housing allowance at the U.S. Mission, but AID would not be one of them. So, I ended up having to pay for our own apartment which was horribly expensive in mid-town New York, and very discriminatory against AID.

*Q: Expensive?*

MACARTHUR: Oh, it was terrible. Pickering was calling Washington to say, “look we need to resolve this.” AID needs to fund your man up here. It ended up to be kind of nasty towards the end, that is the trouble. Basically, what happened is that AID said, “well Gordon is really your employee up there, you take care of him.”

*Q: Did that happen?*

MACARTHUR: When I left, they didn’t replace me. As far as I know they still haven’t.

*Q: There is no AID person?*

MACARTHUR: Not anymore; I thought that was a big mistake.

### **Concluding observations**

*Q: Well, let us go over some concluding observations, You’ve had a long and varied experience in foreign assistance , particularly in Africa. What would your conclusion be as to whether foreign development assistance has been effective; has it made a difference in the world?*

MACARTHUR: Viewed from the global perspective, nobody will really know. You have to consider that we went in there largely with a political agenda of containment. The question is whether we would have had an AID program without that overriding concern, I am not sure. You started out with a Truman Point Four program, and the Marshall Plan certainly. The Marshall Plan, indeed, made a lot of sense and it was easy to achieve results because you had all of the human elements in place. All that the Europeans needed was capital. You didn’t have that in Africa, so you went in there with none of the human elements in place and only capital, and that mix didn’t go right. I am talking mainly about Congo and Africa generally. My views are rather distorted, possibly because of my long



tenure in Africa. I didn't serve in Latin America, or Asia, where maybe things were different, but from the African perspective, I think we were able to keep the lid on total chaos and we kept the Communists out. Whether Communism would have succeeded had we not been there, I don't think so. The Communists would not have done any better than we did. So, it may all have been unnecessary, except that I think we had an impact in specific areas. We did train people effectively, they became educated, they occupied important positions. We did physical structures, we built buildings, we built institutes, we built roads. Whether that translates into national development is where I raise a question. So, you had these mini- successes, all over. But have we done anything to really put countries on a secure, self-sustaining basis, I don't know. Maybe you can only know that over a very long term.

*Q: Are there any areas in which the agency, AID, has been particularly distinctive or noteworthy?*

MACARTHUR: I think we should have put more emphasis on training. I think we started out that way, we had a very substantial participant training program. For some reason, we began to limit training to be associated specifically with projects. But, in the early days we had participant training programs that were more general, not specifically tied to a project. We sought talented people who would be good administrators, good managers, good generalists and we tended to get away from that. I think that was a mistake. I realize that one of the problems was that these trained people often would not return to their home country where they were needed.

*Q: That was a major area where you think we made a difference ?*

MACARTHUR: I think so, yes.

*Q: Are there other sectors or areas?*

MACARTHUR: I think in agriculture certainly. We made a huge impact on agriculture mainly because of our technology; with the miracle wheats, the introduction of better strains of rice, corn and wheat. We turned India totally around. That was a U.S. endeavor and accomplishment, totally.

*Q: Where else?*

MACARTHUR: Health, a substantial impact. Of course, UNICEF takes a lot of credit but the U.S. was often out in front. With Oral Rehydration Therapy, for instance, we saved the lives of thousands of kids. We had a big impact on public health. In family planning we have had our hands tied, but that is such a critical thing. We have had limited success because we can't go too far on that. For instance, in Morocco, the U.S. financed a census, which was important to sensitize the government to the real problem of population growth down the line. So, again on the health side, water distribution, village water supply, all very important contributions. I think on the humanitarian side, we've been in the forefront, have saved millions of lives, and have done remarkably well. Again,

whether that translates into nation building, who knows.

*Q: How do you view your experience in AID?*

MACARTHUR: Well, I have often thought about that. Our generation was out to save the world after World War II. Our enthusiasm developed from the times in which we lived. It would be different now. But, given the same circumstances, in retrospect if I had to do it all over again I would not hesitate. I think it was exciting. The bad parts, mainly the bureaucracy, the paper work, the process work was a negative, much more so in Washington than in the field. In the field you had more of a hands-on approach with the local people, you were right there and so that was more rewarding than back home. But, generally, overall, with 30 years of hindsight, I think it was a wonderful experience. Financially, nobody gets rich out of this process, but you do get a view of what's what in the world, like no place else. Compared to my peers at college, some of them highly successful, wealthy people in big organizations and influential in business, like my Harvard classmate, George Putnam of the Putnam Fund, we AID Foreign Service people saw more of the world and probably had a more exciting life, where duty was combined with high adventure.

*Q: Well, that is a good note to end on. Thank you for an interesting interview.*

*End of interview*